Chapter One

Humour and its Use in *The Siege of Krishnapur*

This Research entitled "Humour in *The Siege of Krishnapur"* focuses on J. G. Farrell's novel *The Siege of Krishnapur* from the perspective of humour. This research seeks to examine master--British--and subaltern--Indian--relationship through the use of humour in the novel. *The Siege of Krishnapur*, as a postcolonial text is set in a fictional Indian town of Krishnapur and tells a story of a besieged British garrison which holds out for four months against the army of native sepoys. The story is based on real events such as the siege of Cawnpore and Lucknow during the Indian Rebellion of 1857. The novel portrays an India under the control of East India Company, as was the case in 1857.

Though the story of the novel is set in a fictional Indian town of Krishnapur, Farrell has not talked much more about the India as well as Indian people. Farrell has never shown the native sepoys as people at all but as a comic and cannon fodder. The Indian native people and sepoys are dehumanized, marginalized and treated as laughable object. Only one Indian character, the Maharajah's son Hari is individualized in the novel. His individualization is also stereotyped as a typical Indian babu. Hari is portrayed as an anglophile, an upper-caste mimic Englishman. This statement can be justified through the following textual evidences. The encounter of Fleury with an individual but never individualized native sepoy is an example of dehumanization and comic fodder and cannon fodder of Indian sepoys in the novel. Farrell describes this encounter in detail. Fleury encounters with a giant bearded sepoy who is ready to chop Fleury into two lengthwise with one stroke with his sabre but Fleury unhopefully punches at the bearded face. The sepoy, then grows larger and

larger becomes redder and redder but when he drops his sabre to his own stomach, "the sepoy stopped swelling and began to shrivel" (97). Here, in this encounter sepoy is compared with a monster in an animated cartoon. Unlike the other nameless Indians in Farrell's novel, Hari is comically portrayed as an upper-caste mimic Englishman who pays more interest in Western innovations like photography. He prefers ill-cut English clothes and professes "a boiled egg and Blackwood's is the best way to begin the day" (Farrell 45).

The creation and use of humour is an exercise of power. One may or can exercise of power through the use of humour to fulfill the major purpose. One can fulfill his repressed desires by creating humorous situation in the texts. One can assert one group against of another group through the use of humour. Creation of a comic situation in the text has its symbolic value. This hypothesis can be exemplified through the following textual evidences. Rayne, the local Opium Agent, names his native servants after the animals they supposedly resemble; 'Ram,' 'Monkey,' 'Ant' to the delight of his British colleague Fleury: "We call this lad 'Ram.' That's not his real name. His real name is Akbar or Mohammed or something like that. We call him Ram because he looks like one. And this is Monkey" (Farrell 33). Rayne ignores the name of his servants and their individuality. He gives them nicknames which are the names of animals and insects, is a degrading and typical colonial practice about which Farrell is not critical. It is the dehumanization of the servants. It can be taken as aggressive humiliating hegemonic type of humour.

Before talking more about the purposes of using humour in the literary texts, it will be better us to understand something more about the word 'humour,' its origin, associates and different humour theories.

Humour means to arouse laughter through the creation of a comic situation. The word 'humour' does not refer to humour as we understand today. The word 'humour' is "ascribed either to a comic utterance or to a comic appearance or mode of behaviour" (Abrams 331). When the word 'humour' was originated, it was used in the physiology. In this connection, Abrams writes:

> The humours were held to be the four primary fluids-blood, phlegm, choler (or yellow bile), and melancholy (or black bile)-whose "temperament" or mixture was held to determine both a person's physical condition and the character type. An imbalance of one or another humour in a temperament was said to produce four kinds of disposition, whose names have survived the underlying theory: sanguine (from the Latin "sanguis" blood), phlegmatic, choleric, and melancholic. (41)

From the above statement we come to know that the origin of the word is Latin, which is used for "liquid," "fluid" or "moisture." In early western physiology, one of the four fluids of the body that were thought to determine a person's temperament and features, when the four humours --fluids-- of the body --blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile-- were in proper proportion. When one fluid exceeded its normal amount, then disproportion occurred. These four fluids are to remain in balance otherwise the normal temperament of a person happens to be imbalanced. It was believed that the individual, in whom this disproportion occurs, would be in a sanguine --happy-- humour if blood were predominant. There will be choleric --argumentative, stubborn-- humour if yellow bile were predominated and phlegmatic --cowardly, passive-- humour if phlegm were predominant. Similarly, there will be melancholy humour if black bile were predominant. What humour is predominated;

the lack of balance indicated a deviation from normal. It is an access that requires correction.

It was in the nineteenth century that humour acquired the status of a cardinal English and became an integral part of English life style. With the political predominance of British Empire, positive connotation of the term sense of humour became definitively rooted overseas, and it is still surviving nowadays. In daily language, "sense of humor is taken as socially desirable assets, whereas humour came to acquire multiple applications and to be used rather comprehensively, even within the academic world" (Ermida 5).

Despite the fact that most of the greatest philosopher from Plato onward have had something to say on the matter, the question of what humour is remains notoriously problematic. Most explanations are placed into one or other of three theoretical traditions, which attempt to explain the phenomenon in term of incongruity, superiority, or the release of energy. Many thinkers, while talking about humour, write about laughter rather than humour. It is because laughter can arise as a result of experiences other than humour. Several theorists have attempted to explain all "laughter in term of a single theoretical formula, that is to say, humour. And wit, satire, jokes, irony, etc., may be viewed as subcategories of humour" (Davies et al. 334-335).

There are different types of humour. Humour can be either verbal or nonverbal. It can be a subjective experience or serve communicative purposes. It can be a simple joke told among friends. Nowadays, there are also many humour media like "literary farce and limerick. Likewise, humour can be seen or realized in TV sitcoms to comic movies, cartoons in the daily and weekly press, and internet gags"

(Ermida 2). Besides, humour also varies according to age, gender, social group, situation, epoch, culture and civilization. Everything can become an object for humorous use but the truth is that there is no specific humorous theme. It is true that one laughs at the frivolous and sacred alike, just as one laughs at both happiness and pain. Similarly, one laughs at one's illusions, deceptions and dreams. But one can also laugh at death and many other fears. In this regards, Emelina says, "absolutely nothing escapes from laughter; it is not a question of matter but of manner, context and perspective" (qtd. in Ermida 2).

We use humour in our daily language knowingly or unknowingly and intentionally or unintentionally. Isabel Ermida says that humour is used as an "umbrella term covering all the phenomena in this field. In this way humour replaces the comic and is regarded as a neutral term which admits both positive and negative meanings" (3-4). So, humour has come to preside over numberless subcategories, such as parody, comedy, satire or farce.

We study laughter, wit and irony as the devices of humour. "Prior to the lexical establishment of the word 'humour,' the term laughter used to be the core of scholarly discussion about the nature of comic" (Ermida 5). Different theorists have expressed their different views while talking about the laughter and humour. Some say that it is a false proportional to say humour is what causes laughter and laughter is what is caused by humour. There are many causes which laughter may or may not coincide with today's concept of humour. Many authors have pointed out the fallacy of equating humour with laughter. It is a crucial point when we start to approach any of the two phenomena. In this regards, Isabel Ermida agrees with the ideas of Paul Lewis, Levine and Keith-Spiegel who respectively claims, "we need to avoid tripping over crucial term by distinguishing the broad phenomenon of humour from laughter (a

response to some humorous and some non-humorous stimuli)"; "we laugh for many reasons, some contradictory; we may laugh in sympathy or in scorn, for anxiety or relief, from anger or affection, from joy or frustration"; "one can be amused and not laugh, especially if alone" (qtd. in Ermida 6-7). Thus, Ermida comes to the conclusion that "laughter is, therefore, a rather versatile phenomenon, which may or may not accompany the humorous stimulus. Humour, similarly, is very flexible in terms of the reactions it causes, laughter being just one of them" (7).

Wit basically refers clever use of language. But on the other hand, it also refers to the character. There are two aspects of wit which refers to character: true and false wit. A character that makes many plans and gets success on it is true wit and who makes many plans but fails is false wit. Clever uses of language basically have two aspects: repartee --quick reply-- and riposte --sharp return in speech--. This kind of language is very brilliant in surface level but empty within. More important still is the difference that "wit refers only to the spoken or written word, while humour has a much broader range of reference. We find humour, for example, in the way Charlie Chaplin looks, dresses and acts and also in the sometimes wordless cartoons" (Abrams 331). Freud also regards humour as a strategy of self-defence before the external aggressions and as a means of escaping from a world that causes fear and uncertainty. In this sense, "humour has dignity that wit totally lacks, for the latter only aims at pleasure; or rather it directs this aim at aggressiveness" (qtd. in Ermida 10).

Irony refers to the gap between the appearance and reality. It is always expressed through the feeling, emotion and manner of the character. The main purpose of irony is to give an opportunity to correct the drawbacks for the people and society. The analogy between verbal humour and irony has common characteristics: having one 'signifier' which conceals more than one 'signified'. Both the humourist and

ironist hide their true communicative intention beneath at least two possible interpretations, while using one and the same verbal form. In both cases, "language is used in a non-serious register which the interlocutor will have to decipher" (Ermida 11). Some authors attempt to compare irony with humor. Some say that irony is a kind of tool which helps to interpret the texts and reveals the meaning. Evrad is one of them:

> Irony is different from humour as far as its objectives and seriousness are concerned. Whereas irony makes a judgement and tends to determine meanings, humour looks at the world and doubts it, hesitating, refraining from interpretation. (qtd. in Ermida 13)

In this sense, irony has objectives as well as seriousness. It makes judgements. But in contrary to this, humour looks at the world of doubt. It means we can say that humour is the realm of the uncertainty and doubt. But Isabel Ermida opines that "the distinction of the two phenomena between irony and humour merge together, rather than draw apart, when it comes to the use of rhetorical irony for humorous purposes" (13-14).

There are many theories of humour. It seems difficult to comprise one with another and no one includes all aspects of humour. All want to overlap to one theory to some extent. In general sense, all theories of humor could be divided into three groups: (I) Theories of superiority and degradation or disparagement theory, (II) Theories of relief of tension and free from inhibition and (III) Theories of incongruity.

Throughout the ages, theories of superiority and degradation have been remaining most persistently. The most commonly quoted superiority theorist is Thomas Hobbes. For Hobbes, "laughter is nothing else but sudden glory arising from

some sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves, by comparison with the infirmity of others, or with our own formerly" (qtd. in Davies et al. 336). We laugh when we realize or perceive ourselves as being superior to the object of our laughter. Another philosopher Henri Bergson says that laughter's function is to act as a social corrective:

> Laughter is, above all, a correction. It is meant to humiliate and to hurt its object. (. . .) Laughter punishes certain flaws more or less like the disease punishes certain excesses, catching innocent people, sparing the guilty ones. In this sense, laughter is not entirely fair. And let me repeat that it cannot contain any kindness. It aims at intimidating, through humiliation. (qtd. in Ermida 19)

It means he also conceives of laughter as a socially hostile element, which carries a corrective function and a revengeful purpose. Laughing at someone means applying a punishment, public humiliation and it is also means asserting the superiority of the one who laughs. Through laughter, we direct our aggressiveness towards a vulnerable target. Freud also divides wit into tendentious and innocent wit. He further divides tendentious wit into two tendencies: hostile and obscene. Freud states:

> By making our enemy small, inferior, despicable or comic, we achieve in a roundabout way the enjoyment of overcoming him- to which the third person, who has made no efforts, bears witness by his laughter. Wit will allow us to exploit something ridiculous in our enemy which we could not, on account of obstacles in the way, bring forward openly or consciously. (qtd. in Ermida 20)

If we examine the above mentioned lines by Freud, we come to conclusion that hostile humour can be understood as an instrument to exercise power through humiliation. When humour is used in this way, it not only voices but also implements and strengthens destructive ideologies and politics. In this regards, Levine says that "humour as an interpersonal process, is much more than the disguised and mitigated expression of aggression" (qtd. in Ermida 21). In Poetics, Aristotle also talks about the comedy and its characters:

> Comedy is, as we have said, an imitation of characters of a lower type- not, however, in the full sense of the word bad, the ludicrous being merely a subdivision of ugly. It consists in some defect or ugliness which is not painful or destructive. To take an obvious example, the comic mask is ugly and distorted, but does not imply pain. (52)

Thus, the superiority and degradation theory of humour refers that the laughter is in the position of superiority, and the object of laughter is in a position of degraded. We laugh at that which is ridiculous and out of place. Comedy can be found in the ridiculous which is the species of the ugly and the ridiculous may be defined as mistake or deformity. The joy which causes laughter frequently has tinge of hatred.

Release theory of humour is that laughter which provides a release of tension. When we laugh we become free from tension and forget all our daily affairs for the time being. It means we discharge something from our mind through laughter. Borrowing the idea from Sigmund Freud, Stephen Davies and others elaborate the theory of relief of tension or release from inhibition:

> Freud divides jokes into two main categories: innocent and tendentious. The latter one is subdivided into hostile and obscene jokes.

> The pleasure attainable from innocent jokes comes from their technique alone, whereas tendentious jokes have purpose such as aggressiveness or exposure as well as technique. Civilization forces us to repress both our aggressive and our sexual desires. Tendentious jokes allow us to enjoy these pleasures by circumventing the obstacle that stands in the way of the hostile or lustful instinct. Such obstacles are of two kinds: external--the difficulty of venting our aggression on someone more powerful than ourselves-- and internal -- an inner civilization-induced aversion to smut and hostility--. A tendentious joke either saves us from having to create the inhibition necessary for self-restraint, or allows an already existing inner obstacle to be overcome and the inhibition lifted. (336-337)

If we analyse the above mentioned statement, we come to know that we get pleasure from the technique of the innocent jokes whereas we have purpose such as aggressiveness or exposure as well as technique in tendentious jokes. Tendentious joke is also subdivided into hostile and obscene jokes. Civilization forces us to repress both our aggressive and our sexual desires. Through the use of tendentious jokes we can enjoy these pleasures.

To understand the theory of incongruity, we should understand the ideas of Kant and Schopenhauer. Kant and Schopenhauer have expressed their views about the incongruity theory of humour. For Kant, "laughter is an affection arising from a strained expectation being suddenly reduced to nothing" (qtd. in Davies et al. 335). Kant seems close to Schopenhauer regarding the theory of incongruity of humour theory. The core of Schopenhauer's idea is that, "in every case, laughter results from nothing but the suddenly perceived incongruity between a concept and the real object

that had been thought through it in some relation; and laughter itself is just the expression of this incongruity" (qtd. in Davies et al. 335).

Ulrike Erichsen says that Koestler's idea of the theory of superiority and theory of release "investigate the emotional side of the problem and incongruity theories emphasize a cognitive perspective on humor" (29). Victor Raskin, whereas, sees the different theoretical approaches as complementary rather than contradictory; he argues:

> The three approaches actually characterize the complex phenomenon of humour from very different angles and do not all contradict each other- rather they seem to supplement each other quietly nicely. In our terms, the incongruity- based theories make a statement about the stimulus; the superiority theories characterize the relations or attitudes between speaker and the hearer; and the release/relief theories comment on the feelings and psychology of the hearer only. (40)

Theories of humour help us understand the typical concerns and contexts in postcolonial writing. The use of humour in the postcolonial text is to indicate cultural differences and uncover cultural stereotypes. In his introductory remarks to *The Book of Negro Humor,* Langston Hughes gives a description of humour that emphasizes this particular aspect:

> Humor is laughing at what you haven't got when you ought to have it. Of course, you laugh by proxy. You are really laughing at the other guy's lack, not your own. That's what makes it funny- the fact that you don't know you're laughing at yourself. Humor is when the joke is on you but hits the other fellow first- before it boomerangs. Humor is what

> you wish in your secret heart we're not funny, but it is, and you must laugh. Humor is your own unconscious therapy. (qtd. in Erichsen 31)

For Hughes, humour is used to fulfill desires indirectly. By creating a comic situation, we want to have something which we don't have. We laugh at creating a similar kind of situation. While so doing, we target others and definitely it hits the other fellow first at the same time hits ourselves too. If we look the novel from the perspective of Hughes, we can say that Farrell is creating humorous situation to retain British colonialism in India. The colonizer can't say it directly that is why they take the help of humour to reveal their intention in the novel. Britain wants to colonize India for a long time but it is revolted by the native sepoys. Thus, to camouflage pain of mutiny, Farrell has self-consciously employed humour in the novel. Regarding the humour construction in the postcolonial text Manfred Pfister puts it as follows:

> [L]aughter is always caught up in the kinds of distinctions between centre and margins every society employs to establish and stabilize its identity: in one society, the predominant form of laughter can be that which aims from the site of the ideological or power center at what is to be marginalized or excluded altogether; in another, the most significant form of laughter can arise from the margins, challenging and subverting the established orthodoxies, authorities and hierarchies. (qtd. in Reichl and Stein 9)

Laughter can be taken as an unaccommodating power dynamics between center and margin, power and powerless, ruler and ruled. A powerless, marginalized and ruled one can create laughter to challenge the established hierarchies, authorities and orthodoxies for his identity. If we connect the idea of Pfister in the text, British--

master--are in the position of power, centre and ruling over Indian whereas, Indian--subaltern-- natives are powerless, marginalized and ruled. For their identity, they challenge and subvert the established British colonialism in India through their humorous behaviour. So, "one or two soldiers saluted Harry with their left hands" (Farrell 24).

Here, the relation of power and powerlessness, center and margin, ruler and ruled, meet in a relationship that is fundamentally inequitable. So, "postcolonial satire refers to this common characteristic of humour and postcolonial models as non-accommodating power dynamics, i.e. as a fundamental power imbalance" (Reichl and Stein 9). Whereas, Joseph Boskin writes that humour is a form of rebellion against unbearable social condition:

> Humour's peculiarity lies in its elastic polarity: it can operate for and against, deny or affirm, oppress or liberate. On the one hand, it reinforces pejorative images; on the other, it facilitates the inversion of such stereotypes. Just as it has been utilized as a weapon of insult and persecution, so, too, has humour been implemented as a device of subversion and protest. In the absence of cosmological affirmation, humour fills a void. (38)

The above arguments suggest that humour can be used for and against, deny or affirm, oppress or liberate. Through the creation of humour we can support as well as oppose to the ongoing situation. So, it can be taken as a device of subversion and protest. Susanne Reichl and Mark Stein talk rather differently about the use of laughter. For them:

> Firstly, laughter is not always used as weapon; it can perform a conciliatory function, constitute an intellectual stimulus, expresses linguistic finesse, or imply a slightly nostalgic notion. Secondly, even if subversiveness is detected in laughter, its targets are varied so that it can be directed at colonizer or colonized; it can be self-deprecating or stereotyping; it might be read as an empowering move or a resigned comment on a status quo; it might trigger Medusa's triumphant laughter or merely elicit a tired smile. But it will raise the complex question who laughs at whom? (12)

Reichl and Stein talks about the reconciliatory function of humour in the postcolonial text. It means humour should not always be used as a weapon to subvert and protest.It can play the role of negotiation between two conflicting groups. If subversiveness is dected in laughter, use it in such a way so that it can be directed at both laughter and the object of laughing, i.e. colonizer and colonized. Ulrike Erichsen is one who also talks about the transgressive potential or what she calls productive potential of humour and laughter. She states:

> Humour in postcolonial texts can be used as a means to defuse cultural conflicts by offering a strictly limited context for such conflict. Many cultural conflicts stem from differences in cultural values and norms; or are related to superiority/inferiority problems, real or assumed. In such cases, humour can have a socially regulatory function, providing an outlet for criticism without aggravating the initial conflict. As far as the reader-text interaction is concerned, humour can be used to highlight a doubly coded situation. It can function as a means to alert the reader to cultural barriers that need to be overcome in order to fully understand

> the text, and thus, can encourage intercultural communication and understanding. (30)

If we talk about the ideas of Ulrike Erichsen, we come to know that humour in the postcolonial text can be employed as a means to defuse cultural conflict by pointing out cultural differences without siding either of the culture. Humour also bridges gaps in cultural knowledge by making intercultural communication and understanding. Theories of humour can provide sharper focus for the understanding and enjoyment of humorous situations. It alerts the reader and helps understand that humour works on different levels and can fulfill different functions simultaneously. Humour functions differently on all levels of verbal utterances. It expresses a certain emotion. In a postcolonial context, however, "humour is often used to camouflage rather than express emotions, for instance to cover up aggression or the pain of being an outsider or being considered inferior" (Erichsen 31).

Freud's theory of the joke is equal to laughter as aggression. According to Freud, the greatest pleasure is gained either by obscene or by tendentious jokes, i.e. by jokes directed against somebody --e.g. a member of an ethnic group-- or something --e.g. religion--. They can be said subversive in the sense giving voice to the forbidden truth. But in the name of social functioning, they also contain their own subversive. For Freud, jokes are based on the release of repressed sexual or aggressive impulses. Freud describes jokes as manifestation of a symbolic victory over an enemy, a victory that is confirmed by the laughter of the third person --the audience--. In this context, Virginia Richter explains the idea of Freud regarding the humour in detail:

> By laughing the indifferent listener is transformed into someone who shares the hate and contempt of the narrator for the object of joke. In

> this way, a coalition is formed between the first person --who tells the joke--and the third person --who listens and laughs-- at the expense of the second person --the butt of the joke--. Freud makes the abundantly clear that the primary impulse of the joke is not funny but hostile intended to humiliate and vanquish the enemy. (63)

In this constellation, the role of the third person is quite crucial: the listener is the authority who confirms the defeat of the butt, the triumph of the teller, and consequently, the establishment of a hierarchical power structure. At the core of the joke is the stereotype. Richter joins with the idea of Bhabha regarding the stereotype of joke and she argues:

> In fact, this is the basis for the 'coalition' established by joke: persons A and C distance themselves from B, who fully personifies the stereotype. The notion of the stereotype is related with the question of laughter and aggression in postcolonial discourse. Homi K. Bhabha points out the importance of ambivalence in the colonial stereotype. The otherness expressed in the colonial stereotype is an object of both desire and derision. For Bhabha, the colonial stereotype is always already known, but has to be constantly reiterated; it is structured by a simultaneous recognition and disavowal of racial, cultural, and historical difference- colonial discourse produces the colonized as other and, at the same time, as fully knowable. (64)

According to the above statement, we can say that colonizer always treats colonized as other at the same time fully knowable. If we analyse the different postcolonial texts by different writers, we get laughter as central element and humour as a key feature

which tries to examine textual strategy of postcolonial cultural practices. Every now and then, all these texts provoke laughter. Thus, "laughter is rather considered a device which is self-consciously employed and strategically positioned in textual constructions- or an effect elicited by these constructions" (Reichl and Stein 1-2).

Whether we read laughter or humour in a particular text as subversive or not, in fact, is a consequence of the way we read, the way we understand postcolonial literature, and the way we know and view the world. Laughter and humour are primarily highly subjective. For Helga Ramsey-Kurz, "humour offers an opportunity for postcolonial writers to side with rebellious characters without being accused of political or religious fanaticism themselves" (qtd. in Reichl and Stein 15).

Regarding *The Siege of Krishnapur*, different critics have posited various views since its publication in 1973. In this regards, Peter Morey puts his views about the novel in his own words, "J.G. Farrell's fifth novel, *The Siege of Krishnapur* offers a wry twentieth-century take on this spirit of melodrama doused with sentiment, and a Victorian confidence and faith in progress more generally. In doing so it explores notions of civilization and history in a specifically post-colonial context" (110). Another critic D.C.R.A. Goonetilleke views that this story is based on the real events of India when it was under the control of East India Company. And he also opines why J.G. Farrell has chosen a fictional Indian town instead of Lucknow as the setting place of his novel. He says:

> The Mutiny is remembered for events that has become legendry: the massacre at Cawnpore, the Kashmir Gate at Delhi and the relief of Lucknow. *The Siege of Krishnapur* is based on the last and, therefore, on a major and memorable event. Farrell's city is not named Lucknow

> but Krishnapur, the city of Krishna. The name appears genuinely Indian generic one. The Farrell has chosen it in preference to a precise and real Indian city for two cogent reasons: firstly, it gave him freedom to give play to the farcical aspect of his art whereas, if he used the name Lucknow, he would have set up expectation of seriousness. (408-409)

Astrid Erll also talks about the Indian soldier who have been serving for the East Indian Company, started to revolt against itself. After this mutiny the British created a colonial narration which had little to do with the actual events. It prominently figures the themes of Indian atrocities and as far as the British side is concerned of extreme heroism. She states:

> The term 'Indian Mutiny' has been (and still is) used in Great Britain to describe the rebellion which broke out in northern and central India in 1857. It indeed started as Mutiny of disconnected sepoy regiments, that is, Indian soldier in the service of the East India Company, of the subcontinent. But the soldiers' uprising speedily turned into a popular revolt, also involving the tax-drained Indian peasants and disinherited Indian princes like the Rani of Jhansi and Nana Sahib. One year later, in 1858, the British had re-established power, with hitherto unknown cruelty-burning, for example, whole villages, and executing every single man in them, in order to avenge to British victims and to deter any other rebels. In the history of British imperialism, the Mutiny turned out to be a watershed: it led to the transformation of an informal Empire, controlled for more than a hundred years' by the East India Company, to the formal empire under the British crown, the Raj. (164)

Going through the various views of different literary critics, the researcher finds that the novel is based on the real events in which Indian sepoys revolt against East India Company, and it explores notion of civilization and history in a specifically postcolonial context. Departing from the above mentioned ideas of the critics, this research aims to examine the master subaltern relationship through the study of postcolonial humour in the novel, *The Siege of Krishnapur*.

The methodology of this research project is primarily based on humour theory in relation with postcolonial study. The term 'humour' refers to arouse laughter through the creation of comic situation. This comic situation can be seen either in utterance or in appearance or in mode of behavior of the characters. Nothing can escape from humour. Everything can be an object for humour but it is true that there is no universal theme of humour. It is because humour depends on various aspects like context, perspective, age, gender, ethnic, religion etc. If humour is used to assert our own superiority and degraded position of others, to get rid of from tension, and is suddenly perceived incongruity, it is at this point a question arises, why a postcolonial writer uses humour in the text? What is the purpose of using humour in the postcolonial text?

Humour is used in different texts but the use of humour in the postcolonial texts has its own significance. The use of humour in the postcolonial texts can be understood as a major means to fulfill the purpose. If humour is used in postcolonial texts to fulfill the purpose is known as politics of humour or postcolonial humour. Postcolonial humour tries to expose the colonizer colonized relationship through the use of humour in the postcolonial texts. Creation of humour in the postcolonial texts is a means exercising of power. A humourist can exercise of power mainly in three ways: he/she either wants to fulfill his/her repressed or aggressive desire or wants to

critique or subvert the established orthodoxies, authorities, hierarchies or wants to defuse cultural conflicts through the use of humour in the postcolonial texts. Humour in the postcolonial texts often used to camouflage rather than express emotions for instance to cover up aggression or the pain being an outsider or being considered inferior. In the postcolonial texts humour can be understood as an instrument to exercise power through humiliation. Humour voices and strengthens destructive ideologies and politics. Humour is an interpersonal process and is much more than the disguised and mitigated expression of aggression. It also can be taken as the manifestation of a symbolic victory over an enemy. The primary use of humour in postcolonial texts is not funny but hostile intended to humiliate and vanquish the enemy. We get racial, cultural, historical stereotyped in the postcolonial texts especially that of colonized. Colonial discourse exoticizes and produces the colonized as other and at the same time as fully knowable. Writing on humour is a form of rebellion against unbearable social condition. One can also create humorous situation in the postcolonial texts to side with the rebels without being accused of political and religious fanaticism themselves.

To make easy understanding, this research project is divided into three different chapters. Chapter one talks about the general introduction of the research which includes context of the novel, theoretical insights and review of literature. Chapter two is about the use of humour in the novel or what we generally say textual analysis and finally chapter three is a brief conclusion of the entire research and its finding.

Chapter Two

Humour in *The Siege of Krishnapur*

This project explores the master-subaltern relationship through the postcolonial study of humour. *The Siege of Krishnapur*, as a postcolonial narrative, portrays an India under the British East India Company as was the case in 1857. Indian Rebellion of 1857 primarily was a mutiny in which Indian native sepoys revolted against their British master. To examine the relationship between British and Indian, Farrell has used humour as a main tool in the novel. Therefore, this project explores the master- subaltern relationship through the postcolonial study of humour.

The Siege of Krishnapur, as a postcolonial text can be interpreted through the perspective of humour. The term 'humour' in general refers to arouse laughter through the creation of a comic situation. This comic situation can be seen either in utterance or in appearance or in mode of behavior of the characters. Nothing can escape from humour. Everything can be an object for humour but it is true that there is no universal theme of humour. It is because humour depends on various aspects like context, perspective, age, gender, ethnic, religion etc. Humour is used in different texts but the use of humour in the postcolonial texts has its own significance. The use of humour in the postcolonial texts can be understood as a major means to fulfill the purpose. If humour is used in postcolonial texts to fulfill the purpose is known as politics of humour or postcolonial humour. The postcolonial writers self-consciously employ and strategically position humour in their texts. The major purpose of using humour in *The Siege of Krishnapur* by Farrell is to examine master-subaltern relationship in this postcolonial text. Therefore, on the basis of above characteristics of postcolonial humour theory, Farrell's *The Siege of Krishnapur* can be surveyed as a postcolonial

humour narrative. Thus, the master-subaltern relationship can be examined through the postcolonial study of humour.

The setting of the novel *The Siege of Krishnapur* is placed in the fictional Indian town of Krishnapur and tells a story of a besieged British garrison which holds out for four months against an army of native sepoys. This story is based on the real events such as the siege of Cawnpore and Lucknow during the Indian Rebellion of 1857. The book portrays an India under the control of East India Company, as was the case in 1857.

Farrell creates humorous situation and examines colonizer-colonized relationship in the text. When the novel opens, the Collector of Krishnapur, Mr. Hopkins is in his study room and opens a dispatch box and instead of the document he has expected, finds four chapatis. The following afternoon, he also finds four more chapatis on the desk in his office, neatly arranged beside some papers. As soon as he sees them he knows beyond doubt that there is going to be trouble in the Krishnapur. So it is humorous to find chapatis in the dispatch box of the Collector. The Collector says to the Magistrate, Tom Willoughby as the meeting breaks up, "by the way, Tom, I found something odd on my desk in the office just now. Four chapatis, to be exact. And yesterday I found some in a dispatch box. What d'you make of it" (8).

It is so humorous that the chapatis are appearing not just in Krishnapur but in stations all over northern India. Padre has found some chapatis on the step of the church. Mr Barlow, who works in the Salt Agency, has been brought some chapatis by his watchman. Mr. Rayne, who, in addition of his official duties at the opium factory, is the Honorary Secretary of Krishnapur Mutton Club, is shown chapatis by the watchmen employed in the protection of both these institutions. It soon becomes

clear that it is among the watchmen that the chapatis are circulating. In other words, they have been given them by watchmen from other districts, without knowing for what purpose and told to bake more and then pass them on again to watchmen of yet other districts. The collector discovers by questioning his own watchman that it is he who has left the chapatis on the desk in his office. Although he has baked twelve more chapatis and passed them on, as he has been instructed. He has felt it his duty to inform the Collector Sahib and so has left them on his office. He denies any knowledge of those in the dispatch box and portico. Where these come from, the Collector never discovers. Again and again the watchmen are interrogated, but they seem genuinely to have no idea what the purpose of it has been. It is humorous in the reply of the watchmen. Some say, "They had passed on the chapatis because they believed it to be the order of the Government that the purpose had been to see how quickly messages could be passed on" (8).

Any reader can't remain without laughing when he/she looks chapatis on the desk in the office of the Collector. The Indian native sepoys aim to subvert British imperialism through the creation of comic situation. Chapatis in the office and study room of the Collector shows not other than the rebellious syndrome which will burst in near future in Krishnapur. Showing chapattis to their masters by the watchmen is the means of protest. This idea can further be strengthened connecting with the idea of Joseph Boskin. For Boskin, "humour has been implemented as a device of subversion and protest" (38).

Knowing the forth coming situation, before leaving Krishnapur to escort his wife Caroline to Calcutta, where she is to embark for England, the Collector takes a strange decision and orders the digging of a deep trench combined with a thick wall of earth all the way round the perimeter of the Residency compound. The Magistrate and

Mr. Ford smilingly survey the progress of this work. Farrell writes: "The Collector's weakness appears to have found him, observed the Magistrate lightly to Mr. Ford, one of the railway engineers, as they smilingly surveyed the progress of this work" (9).

In the above mentioned quotation, Farrell has created irony. There lies irony in the smiling of the Magistrate and Mr. Ford. They smile when they know the weakness of the Collector but they don't know that it is not the weakness of the Collector but of their own. The Collector is foresighted about the upcoming Mutiny in Krishnapur. So he orders to build the compound but the Magistrate and Mr. Ford are unaware of this fact.

As the story develops, we come to know that George Fleury and his sister Miriam has arrived in Calcutta from England. There is a rumor regarding the arrival of Fleury to India. Farrell, in this connection, writes:

> It seemed that he was coming to India to visit his mother's grave (twenty years earlier when Sir Herbert himself had been in India his young wife died, leaving him with two small children); at the same time he had been commissioned by the Court of Directors to compose a small volume describing the advances that civilization had made in India under the Company rule. But those were the ostensible reasons for his visit. The real reason that young Fleury was coming was the need to divert his recently widowed sister, Miriam, whose husband, Captain Lang, had been killed in Sebastopol. (10)

The above quoted lines help us understand that Farrell has created humorous rumour. He has created humorous rumour to bring out the colonial motif in general. The colonizers always think that native people are uncivilized and barbaric. So, they need

to be civilized through colonization. By this way, the colonizer makes his position secured to exploit the native people in the name of civilization. On the surface level, Fleury has come to India to divert his recently widowed sister Miriam but in the deep level, he has come to India not other than to compose a small volume describing the advances that civilization has made in India under the British Company rule.

When Fleury and many others are on the way from Calcutta to Krishnapur, Fleury has observed something odd and mysterious. Farrell has made clear how colonizer creates a myth about the native culture. Indian culture has been exoticized in the gaze of Fleury. Farrell writes:

> The carriage had slowed down to pass through a densely populated bazaar. Fleury gazed out at a sea of brown faces, mortified by his mistake. A few inches away two men sat crosslegged in a cupboard, one shaving the skull of the other from a cup of dirty water. A cage containing a hundred tiny trembling birds with black feathers and red beaks crept past. To Fleury, India was a mixture of the exotic and the intensely boring. (14)

If we scrutinize the above mentioned lines, somehow, we find that Farrell's idea has been tinged with the idea of orientalism. Firstly, native culture has been exoticized then orientalized. In the novel, we see many glimpses of colonial motif. For instance, Fleury is quite active and he has his book about the advance of civilization in India to consider. So this is one reason why he has taken more interest in the behavior of the Collector. He asks a great number of questions and even buys a notebook to record pertinent information. To Fleury, British India is an example of good governance. He thinks that "whatever good is in India had only made by the Britisher and Indians are

misgoverned by the Indian ruler" (20). Hyderabad is an example of such misgoverned native state. It is too humorous that only Britishers are good governors but not the Indians. They always create binaries between good and bad. They associate themselves with the positive values of the binaries whereas they associate native--colonized--norms with the negative polarity of the binaries. The following lines make it clear: "why if the Indian people are happier under our rule, he asked a treasury official, do they not emigrate from those native states like Hyderabad which are so dreadfully misgoverned and come and live in British India?" (20). If we analyse the above mentioned statements, we come to the conclusion that colonizers always want to distinguish their culture, civilization, manner, behaviour etc. from the so called colonized culture. They distinguish themselves from the colonized only to be superior and civilized. In order to justify the above textual evidences as a postcolonial narration with relation to orientalism, Said's definition of orientalism becomes relevant: "Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and (most of the time) "the Occident" (2). According to this definition, the west is both educationally and existentially superior to the non-west. This definition makes the binary opposition between the east and the west and privileges the west over the other. All the positive attributes are given to the west and negatives are given to the non-west. According to this definition, it is a kind of mentality that constructs we/they hierarchy. In the text Fleury exoticizes Indian culture and says that Indians are misgoverned by the Indian ruler.

When Fleury and others are approaching Krishnapur they see a few travelers on the road including some sepoys who look very fine in their red coats and black trousers. As they pass, the sepoys salute them with their left hand. Farrell writes:

> Only Harry noticed with a frown that one or two of them had saluted with their left hands. If he had been alone he would have stopped and rebuked them for such a deliberate lack of respect; as it was he had to pretend not to have noticed. (24)

It is very amusing that sepoys salute with left hand to their officer. As per army rules, any junior sepoy has to salute to his seniors to show respect. And it has been established as drill that salutation should be made with right hand. But one or two sepoys salute with their left hand which Harry notices. Any reader who knows a little about the army drill will laugh looking the behavior of saluting of the sepoys. If a non-military man salutes with left hand it can be taken as due to ignorance but sepoys who fully know the drill salute with left hand instead of right hand. It means we can understand that sepoys are expressing their anger through salutation. They salute with left hands not because they are ignorant but because they want to direct their aggressiveness towards a vulnerable target. In this regards, sepoys' subversion can be interpreted from the perspective of Manfred Pfister's idea of humour theory. According to Pfister, "the most significant form of laughter can arise from the margins, challenging and subverting the established orthodoxies, authorities, and hierarchies" (qtd. in Reichl and Stein 9). The colonizers are in the position of authority and centre so they are exploiting colonized people. To overthrow this authority of colonizer, Indian sepoys seem ready. Creating a comic situation, they want to vanquish to their enemy. They are going to challenge the established authorities, hierarchies and orthodoxies.

When Doctor Dunstaple and Fleury move towards the door to greet the ladies, as they do so, the Doctor's sleeve brushes a vase standing on a small table and it is shattered on the floor. The ladies enter with cries of grief and find the two gentlemen

picking up the pieces. We can observe laughter in the behavior of Doctor Dunstaple when he breaks the vase but he wittingly consoles Fleury as if Fleury has broken the vase. It is humorous how cleverly the Doctor has spoken to Fleury, "My dear fellow", the Doctor was saying consolingly to Fleury. "Please don't apologize. It wasn't least your fault and, beside it was an object of small value" (12). And he smiled benignly at Fleury who stared back at him in amazement. Farrell has made very clever use of language on behalf of Fleury's reply to Mrs. Dunstaple regarding the witty behavior of Doctor Dunstaple. Farrell writes that, "I'm frightfully sorry", murmured Fleury, in spite of himself. He was painfully conscious of the loveliness of Louise who had come forward to watch this regrettable scene" (12).

Farrell has comically stereotyped Indian sepoys in the novel. The sepoys are never shown as people at all but merely as cannon fodder and comic fodder. The indigenous rebels are dehumanized, marginalized and rendered laughably expendable. Indian native sepoys have been reduced to the level of animal. Examples of such reductiveness come up frequently when the rush of a howling mobs of sepoys advances towards the bungalow. Farrell explains the action of the sepoys in the following way:

> When they heard [the Collector's order, "Padre to fire"] the sepoys threw back their heads and uttered a howl so piercing, so harrowing that every window in the Residency must have dissolved if they had not been already broken. With that, bayonets glistening, they began to charge, converging from every angle of the hemisphere. (187)

The crying of the sepoys is rendered laughably expendable. Their howling is compared with the sharp instrument which is harmful. Farrell makes an encounter of

Fleury with an individual but never individualized sepoys in the novel. The way Farrell has explained this encounter is full of humour:

> A gaint, bearded seopy standing a yard in front of him, his sabre already raised to dispatch him[. . .]somehow he managed to parry the blow and struck at the sepoy, but the sepoy turned his sabre with ease, twisted it out of his hand and threw it away, grinning. Fluery unhopefully punched at the bearded face with his bare fists, an attack which unfortunately passed unnoticed by the sepoy, who was busy preparing to deal a death blow with own sabre. Fleury, too weak to run, watched his adversary fascinated. The sepoy seemed to swell as he drew back his sword; he grew larger and larger until it seemed that his tunic, on which Fleury could see the unfaded marks left from where he had ripped the insignia of his rank in the Company's army, must burst; his face grew redder and redder, as he raised his sabre in both hands, as if his motive were not merely to kill Fleury but to chop him in two, length-wise, with one stroke. But the stroke was never delivered. Instead, he removed his eyes from Fleury's terrified face and dropped them to his own stomach, for a bright tip of metal had suddenly sprung out of it, a little to the right of his belly button. Both he and Fleury stared at it in astonishment. And then the sepoy stopped swelling and began to shrivel. (96-97)

In this farcical encounter between Fleury and native sepoys, the latter one is wholly objectified. The native sepoy is compared with the monster in an animated cartoon. The sepoy grows larger and larger, his face becomes redder and redder but at last he stops swelling and begins to shrivel. Farrell has not treated native sepoys as human

being rather they are dehumanized and treated as laughable object. Thus, Farrell's dehumanization and his laughable treatment to the sepoys can be justified by the humour theory of superiority. Laughing at someone means applying a punishment, public humiliation and it is also means asserting the superiority of the one who laughs, since the laughing individual proudly affirms himself and humour can be understood as an instrument to exercise power through humiliation.

Fleury's struggle with the sepoy is related with cultural symbolism. "Fleury snatched a violin from a rack of worm-eaten instruments, snapped it over his knee and leapt on the sepoy's back at the same time whipping the violin strings tightly round the sepoy's neck and dragging on them like reins" (191). If we analyse this statement we can see the intention of the colonizer which is hidden. We only laugh if we read this statement without taking it seriously. If we open our mind and concentrate on this statement the action of Fleury here, amusingly suggests the futility of Western attempts to impose European culture on the supposedly uncultured natives. Farrell mocks at the sepoy in joking behaviour:

> He even had red welts around his throat where the violin strings had been chocking him. Moreover, he was chuckling and making humorous observations to Fleury in Hindustani, his eyes gleaming as black as anthracite, pointing at his neck occasionally and shaking his head, as if over an unusually suggestive jest. (191)

The sepoy's joking is not other than his otherness. Farrell tells how Indian native sepoy is defeated by Fleury in the struggle. The way he describes the incident is no less humourous: "Indeed not just one barrel fired, but all fifteen; they were not supposed to, but that was what happened. He found himself confronted now by a

midriff and a pair of legs; the wall behind the legs was draped in scarlet. The top half of the sepoy had vanished" (192). The colonizer is displaying Indian sepoys like clownish joker and full of amusing object. By doing so, they are affirming their superiority and sepoys are degraded. To hide their pain of besieged by the native sepoys, they create humorous situation. This statement can further be supported borrowing the idea of Levine. For Levine, "humour as an interpersonal process, is much more than the disguised and mitigated expression of aggression" (qtd. in Ermida 21)

Only one Indian figure in *The Siege of Krishnapur* is individualized: the Maharajah's son, Hari. He is, however, individual within limits. He remains at bottom a comic babu stereotype. Unlike the other, nameless Indians in Farrell's novel, Hari pays more interest in Western innovations, like photography and phrenology. So it can be said that Hari is portrayed as a comic, an upper-caste mimic Englishman. His portrayal as a native character who tries to behave like an English gentleman is so humorous. Hari is laughable not because of Indian but because he has a weakness for faddish European novelties. Hari is in many ways a parody of Western culture with his devotion to photography, European literature and so on. Farrell has ridiculed the young man's devotion to the Western culture. Hari's obsession with daguerreotype indicates his native weakness. Hari says, "In Krishnapur I am only one who make daguerreotype and all who want picture come and see me. Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins, Collector and his bride, come to me, and many other married persons in cantonment. I have made pictures to send to England for absent brides and love ones." (48). His later interest in frenlouji--the fashionable pseudoscience of phrenology--makes him an imitator of western culture. Farrell has portrayed Hari as an anglophile native to show

the English culture is more superior to Indian culture. Farrell has been shown Hari as admiring Fleury's coat as such:

> This English coat, sir, is it very costly? Forgive me asking but I admire the productions of your nation very strongly. May I feel the material? And this timepiece in pocket, a half hunter is it not called? English craftsmen are so skilled I am quite lost in admiration for, you see, here our poor productions are in no wise to be compared with them. Yes, I see you are looking at my coat which is also of English flannel, though bought in Calcutta, unfortunately, and cut by _durzie_ from bazaar and not by your Savile Rows. (46)

Quite contrary to the above mentioned lines, to show the Indian culture as uncivilized and uncultured, Farrell gives the details of Indian way of clothing which Fleury observes to the Prime Minister:

> They waited for him silence. When he at last appeared he proved to be a stooped, elderly gentleman, also wearing a frock coat but without trousers or waistcoat; he wore instead of dhoti, sandals, and on his head a peaked cap covered in braid like that of a French infantry officer. He evidently spoke no English for he put his palms together and murmured "_Namaste_" in the direction of Fleury. (46)

If we analyse the above mentioned lines, we come to know that, for Fleury, Indian way of wearing clothe is not the proper way. For Fleury, the way how Prime Minister is put on his dress is not the way of proper clothing. The Prime Minister is looking like a joker for Fleury. Even he does not consider Indian language as a language. In this regard, Farrell is not critical about the Indian culture and language.

Hari is an imitator both of his own and Western culture. He is a copy of his ancestors as well as western culture. Hari prefers ill-cut English clothes, and he professes, " boiled egg and Blackwood's is the best way to begin the day" (45). Farrell indicates that Hari is a copy of both his ancestors and the English. When Fleury and Harry go to the Maharajah's palace, Fleury observes:

> Near a fire place of marble inlaid with garnets, lapis lazuli and agate, the Mharajah's son sat on a chair constructed entirely of antlers, eating a boiled egg and reading _Blackwood's Magazine_. Beside the chair a large cushion on the floor still bore the impression of where he had been sitting a moment earlier; he preferred squatting on the floor to the discomfort of chairs but feared that his English visitors might regard this as backward. (44)

Hari is an unstable mixture of East and West. Hari feels proud because he has all those things that we find in an Englishman's house. He wants all those new things in his house only to be a cultured and civilized man in the presence of his English visitors. But being an Indian he does not feel comfort on the chair so prefers to squat on the floor but he fears that his English visitors might regard him as backward. It is at this point, Indian culture is so contaminated by the Western materialism and Indian civilization is decadent. The decadence of Indian culture and civilization is frequently evoked in the following way:

> Suddenly there came what sounded like the lowing of a cow from the adjoining apartment; Hari frowned and spoke sharply to one of the servants, evidently to tell him to steer the animals in another direction, but already it was clattering towards them. "This is most backward,"

> muttered Hari. "I am sorry you have witnessed such a thing, Mr. Fleury. My father should not be permitting it. Always in India cow here, cow there, cow everywhere!" The cow, alarmed the servants, hastened forward and was only diverted at the last moment from charging the sleeping Maharajah. An elderly servant hurried after it with a large silver bowl. (49)

Indian civilization is pictured as decadent here. Farrell has portrayed Hari as a mere babu type. Hari represents an almost stock figure in British fiction about India, the Indian educated in English language and literature. The babu Hari speaks clinches of English. When Collector and Hari are together, the way Hari speaks English becomes the matter of surprise to the Collector:

> "I became devotee of Frenloudji!" exclaimed Hari.
>
> "Frenla-ji! Correct? Science of head!"
>
> "Oh, phren_ol_ogy! I see what you mean!"
>
> "Correct! Let me explain you about phrenology. . . . (115-16)

When conducting Fleury around the palace, Hari indicates "a small, fat gentleman sprawled on a bed and clad only in a loin cloth," and explains oddly and unnecessarily, "father is asleeping" (48). The aim of showing Hari as anglophile can be argued that to show the superiority of the western culture than Indian culture so Hari loves to eat boiled egg as his breakfast and read Blackwood magazine as an Englishman does. He admires Fluery's coat. Farrell has portrayed Hari as a typical Indian babu. Hari feels humiliated and degraded in front of Fleury when Fluery witnesses cows in his palace. Farrell has shown Hari paying more interest in

daguerreotype--an early photographic process--and phrenology--science that studies about the human skull--. Farrell has depicted Indian way of clothing is decadence and Indian language is not like language. The only reason to portray Hari the way Farrell portrays is to privilege western culture over Indian culture. This argument can be linked with the idea of superiority theory of humour and release theory of humour. According to the humour theory of superiority, we laugh when we realize or perceive ourselves as being superior to the object of our laughter. Release theory of humour is that laughter which provides a release of tension. When we laugh we become free from tension and forget all our daily affairs for the time being. It means we discharge something from our mind through laughter. In the text, the colonizers are laughing at the Indian culture. Hari has been humorously treated in the entire novel. This narrative humorously others Hari. As often in comic narratives, for the most part we perceive the young man through the eyes either of Fleury or the Collector. They have witnessed Hari as the best example of exotic in this comic novel. Farrell alerts us how humour can aggressively be aimed at an object.

This novel sometimes targets the aggressive humiliating hegemonic type of humour. Rayne, the local Opium Agent, names his native servants after the animals they supposedly resemble; 'Ram,' 'Monkey,' 'Ant' to the delight of his British colleague Fleury: "We call this lad 'Ram.' That's not his real name. His real name is Akbar or Mohammed or something like that. We call him Ram because he looks like one. And this is Monkey" (33). Rayne ignores the name of his servants and their individuality. He gives them nicknames which are the names of animals and insects, is a degrading and typical colonial practice about which Farrell is not critical. It is the dehumanization of the servants. Such sadistic joke of Rayne seems very arrogant and cruel. He has been shown chapatis by the servants employed to his institution as a

protest in return he names them after animals. He is in power position so is exercising his power through the use of humour. In this regard, Freud statement of hostile humour strengthens this argument. Freud states that "by making our enemy small, inferior, despicable or comic, we achieve in a roundabout way the enjoyment of overcoming him" (qtd. in Ermida 20). If we examine the above mentioned lines by Freud, we come to conclusion that hostile humour can be understood as an instrument to exercise power through humiliation.

Farrell has used humorous scenes to focus how colonizer uses English literature to motivate natives. English literature was used in the colonies to make the native malleable. Farrell, in this context, writes:

> The Collector, in a remote and academic sort of way, was musing on this question of ammunition, considering whether there was anything left which still might be fired. But surely they had thought of everything. All the metal was gone, first the round objects, then the others. Now they were on to stones. Without the doubt the most effective missiles in this matter of improvised ammunition had been the heads of his electrometal figures, removed from their bodies with the help of Turtons' indispensible file. And of the heads, perhaps not surprisingly, the most effective of all had been Shakespeare's; it had scythed its way through a whole astonished platoon of sepoys advancing in single file through the jungle. (197)

Towards the end of the siege of Krishnapur, the British, short of regular ammunition, use the Collector's electrometal figures as missiles, the head of Shakespeare was the most effective and scythes its way through a whole platoon of sepoys. The head of

Shakespeare is the most effective weapon to neutralize natives. Literature appears both literally and metaphorically a weapon of the colonial masters. The metaphor of Shakespeare is the real exercise of power. They have created a kind of colonial discourse through English literature and they want to use such a metaphoric weapon to rule the natives.

During the course of the development of the novel, the Collector takes Miriam on a tour and, at the Opium Factory, she is taken to watch the workmen making the finished opium into great balls and Mr. Simmon, one of the deputies there, explains that each of the head sized balls "would fetch about seventy-six shillings while to the ryot and his family the Government paid a mere four shillings a pound" (50). Farrell sharply conveys his awareness of the economic exploitation of colonialism. But the Collector himself proceeds to tell Miriam, "What use is it if we bring the advantages of our colonization to India without also displaying a superior morality?" (51).

He evidently sees nothing wrong in the Opium Trade. We also come to know that the colonizer always exploits to the natives. For their happiness, natives have to be suffered. To say how colonizer exploits natives, Farrell brings a humorous scene:

> It was already daylight when Fleury awoke. A deep and oppressive silence prevailed, as if the bungalow were deserted; above him, the punkah, which had been flapping rhythmically through the night, now hung motionless; in the stagnant air his nightshirt clung to his skin. But when he looked out on the verandah everything was normal. The punkah-walllah had simply fallen asleep; he squatted there on the verandah still holding the rope which led up to a hole high in the wall. Beside him the _khansamah_ was buttering some toast for Fleury's

> breakfast with the greasy wing of a fowl; seeing Fleury he woke the punkah-wallah with a kick and without a word the man began again the rhythmic tugging at the rope which he had maintained throughout the night. (31-32)

In the above given lines, we can simply assume that colonizer always dehumanizes the natives. For the sake of their pleasure, natives have to serve whole night without sleeping. Looking such an amusing as well as pathetic condition of punkah-wallah, we can understand how natives have been physically and mentally exploited by the colonizer. Farrell tells us that colonizer uses human being as a machine.

We see the comedy around Farrell's presentation of the Military at the beginning of the novel and later during the siege. The General at Captainganj, the military station of Krishnapur, is an amusing and pathetic figure; "a man over seventy years old promotes in the Army depended on seniority, portly and small, having to be lifted up and down from his horse, with a straying memory, on the brink of the crisis, his preoccupation is cricket" (39). When the story develops, we can see Lucy Hughes invites the men for a tea party. It is so humorous that there is not tea but only hot water available. Farell writes:

> Now in the banqueting hall another pleasant tea-party was taking place, even though tea itself was in short supply there was really only hot water to drink, and evidently not even the Magistrate, for there he was, drinking his cup of hot water with enjoyment and gazing in fascination at his hostess. (157)

The details given here seem as comic. Even in the critical situation, the garrison people are arranging a tea party. They are doing so is not other than to show only they

are brave and daring. There is shortage of everything in the cantonment. They arrange tea party but they drink hot water instead of tea. Arrangement of tea party can be understood as they are in normal social life even under condition of siege. In *The Siege of Krishnapur*, Lucy Hughes invites the men for a tea party --though it turns out that only hot water is available-- to attract them as she would under normal circumstances and with the same motive. We also note similar kind of attitudes in the behavior of Fleury when he makes a birthday cake for Louise Dunstaple "bartering his gold cufflinks, a silver snuff-box and a pair of shoes in exchange for two lumps of sugar to play up to her" (181). The price of the sugar is so expensive and unusual because of the siege, but the motive is true to his normal character.

Farrell similarly tries to uncover the plight of the besieged community. At the same time we are shown their will to survive and to make the best of a critical situation. On the eve of young hero Fleury's birthday, he exchanges his threadbare garments for a green suit cut from the baize of a billiard table, which makes him resemble that archetypical English hero Robin Hood but which also be the visible and become target for sepoy snipers. Louise's brother Harry, a young officer teases Fleury by saying that "he looks as if he has just come from Sherwood Forest" (126). Fleury pretends to dislike this remark, but he was "delighted with his new coat and secretly pleased to be compared with Robin Hood" (126). The Robin Hood legend appeals to him both as a lover and as a fighter who defends his lady Louise in distress. Farrell defamiliarizes the underlying traditional story. Fleury insists on wearing his green coat although the colour makes him an easy target. He seems unaware that in Sherwood Forest the colour helped to Camouflage Robin Hood and his men. Concealment was at the heart of their strategy, while for Fleury, concealment is unheroic. Green for him becomes the colour of courage.

The above mentioned arguments suggest that even in the very critical situation of the siege, the garrison people are doing one or the other thing. They do such activities to show as if they are not in the trouble. Their true intention is that they are in normal condition and are not affected by the siege. It is at this point the idea of Erichsen's use of humour in the postcolonial text can be fruitful. For Ulrike Erichsen, "humour in the postcolonial text is often used to camouflage rather than express emotions, for instance to cover up aggression or the pain of being an outsider or being considered inferior" (31). In the text, the besieged people organize different activities to camouflage their pain of besieged. Because of the siege in the Krishnapur, there is shortage of everything. There is no easily available of sugar, milk, clothes etc. So, Fleury exchanges his gold cufflinks, a silver snuff-box and a pair of shoes for two lumps of sugar to celebrate Louise's birthday. Likewise Louise makes clothe cutting the baize of billiard table to Fleury for his birthday gift. And Lucy arranges tea party but only hot water is served to the guests in this very party. One can easily examine that about how critical life of garrison people is in *The Siege of Krishnanpur*.

Farrell draws our attention towards the Victorian religious controversies and large place occupied by religion in the novel even during the siege is true to the Victorian age. Christianity and religious controversy were in central during the period. He depicts the Padre, a typical Victorian clergyman, as an unimportant but comic character. The Padre's view of the Mutiny as God's punishment of the Christians for their sins appears an absurd misinterpretation. Padre says:

> Brethren, if our little community is now in peril it is because of _Sin_. The bad lives that are led by many of the Christians among us are a cause of discontent to Him and make Him, Who is above all, withdraw

> His protection. _Sin_ is the one thing above all others which grieves Him. Sin is the thing which God most hates [. . .]. (71-72)

But indeed, ironically they are being punished for their sins of ignoring Muslim and Hindu religious belief. And the Padre's intervention is shown in a humorous light. When the Padre and the Roman Catholic chaplain Father O'Hara dispute regarding the size of their respective burial plots or the identity of the corpse, religion is being reduced to the mere matter. To expose this humorous dispute, Farrell states:

> The Collector was displeased; he had just had to arbitrate a dispute over the graveyard between the Padre and the Roman Catholic chaplain, Father O'Hara. A small portion of the graveyard had been reluctantly allotted to Father O'Hara by the Padre for his Romish rites in the event of any of the half dozen members of his church succumbing during the present difficulties. But when Father O'Hara had asked for a bigger plot, the Padre had been furious; Father O'Hara already had enough room for six people, so he must be secretly hoping to convert some of the Padre's own flock to his Popish idolatry. The Collector had settled the dispute by saying with asperity: "In any case, nobody's dead yet. We'll talk about it again when you can show me the bodies." (64-66)

In the above mentioned lines, we see the dispute between the Padre and the Father O'Hara regarding the size of their respective burial plots of a corpse. But Farrell ironically satires at the hollow belief of the then Victorian Christian Orthodoxy. We also come to observe the evidence that Race counts more than religion. The British agree to protect the Eurasians but not the native Christians. A crowd of Eurasians and

native Christians assemble with bundles of bedding and other possessions loading on to hackers or balancing on their heads. In this regards, the Magistrate speaks:

> They want to come into the enclave. They say they are loyal to the Company and that as Christians they'll certainly be murdered by the sepoys. They are probably right, at that .I know, but what can we possibly do? I suppose we could take in the Eurasians at a pinch but we can't possibly have any more native Christians. We have more than enough as it is. We haven't enough food. (70)

It is no less humorous behaviour of the Magistrate of the Krishnapur. It is not the Magistrate who permits to defend his race but ironically, is the colonizer. It is the colonial motif to Christianize the natives so they did but at the difficulty they ignore it. The Magistrate permits Eurasians to take in not only because they are Christians but because they are same by race. Similarly, the Magistrate denies native Christians to take in not because they are native Christian but because they are only natives. So Race counts more than religion.

Farrell humorously highlights the causes of Mutiny. Mutiny was literally triggered off by a cartridge smeared with grease made out of pork or beef fat. Farrell writes:

> Of course it was, that's what worried Jack Sepoy! Some how he got the idea that the grease comes from pork or beef tallow and he didn't like it touching his lips because it's against his religion. That's why there was trouble at Barrackpur. But now Major Bontain has suggested a change of drill in future, instead of biting off the end we'll simply tear it off. That way the sepoy won't have to worry what the grease is made

> of. As it is, the stuff smells disgusting enough to start an epidemic, let alone a mutiny. (17)

If we analyze the above mentioned lines, we come to know that native sepoys are either Hindus or Muslims by their religion. But the army drill they follow under the Company is against of their religion. The drill in which sepoys have to tear off the end of the grease packet with their teeth, thereby offending the religious susceptibilities of both Muslims and Hindus. Ironically, religion was important to the Victorian Britishers but they ignored its significance to the Indians.

The actual Mutiny shocked people in both India and Britain by its atrocities. Britishers were horrified by the murder of women and children by Indians. A rumour spread through the camp a reliving force from Dinapur had been cut to pieces on the way to Krishnapur. It was also said that a massacre had followed the surrender of General Wheeler at Cawnpore and that delicate "English girls had been stripped naked and dragged through the streets of Delhi" (135). Not only this but there was talk of "shooting wives if the situation became hopeless, to spare them a worse fate at the hands of the sepoys" (92). But yet the British reprisals were no less horrific. This is the resulting scene:

> There appeared to be a carpet of dead bodies. But then he realized that many of these bodies were indeed moving, but not very much. A sepoy here was trying to remove a silver fork from one of his lungs, another had received a piece of lightening conductor in his kidneys. A sepoy with a green turban had had his spine shattered by "The Spirit of Science." (188)

Although the scene is very horror some, Farrell has portrayed it to show even the trivial of Western civilization can be as fatal, lethal as gun powder. The scene where the cockchafers envelop Lucy's naked body Fleury and Harry wipe them off with the boards of Fleury's Bible, is more than merely amusing. The operation is described in great detail:

> Her body, both young men were interested to discover, was remarkably like the statues of young women they had seen like, for instance, the Collector's plaster cast of _Andromeda Exposed to the Monster_, though, of course, without any chains. Indeed, Fleury felt quite like a sculptor as he worked away and he thought that it must feel something like this to carve an object of beauty out of the primeval rock. He became quite carried away as with dexterous strokes he carved a particularly exquisite right breast and set to work on the delicate fluting of the ribs. The only significant difference between Lucy and a statue was that Lucy had pubic hair; this caused them a bit of a surprise at first. It was not something that had ever occurred to them as possible, likely, or even desirable. (151)

In the above mentioned lines, Farrel satires to the Victorian Patriarchy's treatment to the women. Here in the novel, Victorian Englishmen regard women as Greek statues. The young men discover that Lucy's body was like the Collector's plaster cast of Andromeda Exposed to the Monster and then they notice difference between Lucy and statue. The difference that they notice is the presence of pubic hair on Lucy. As this stage they are discovered by their sisters who are utterly shocked, and by the Padre who was unable to find any word at all. The incident ends on a note of good humoured farce in Fleury's final remark: "You couldn't have come at a better time.

Harry and I were just wondering how we were going to get her clothes on again" (152).

A similar kind of humoured farce is noted by Fleury in the behavior of Harry. When he returned to the banqueting hall he found Harry behaving rather oddly: "He was gazing in a trance at the brass cannon and running his fingers over its soft, hairless, metal skin. It might have been a naked young girl the way Harry was looking at it" (64). If we apply the release theory of humour, Freud's idea of obscene joke directly suits in the behaviour of Harry. According to Freud, civilization forces us to repress both our aggressive and our sexual desires. We enjoy our repressed sexual desires through obscene jokes. Obscene jokes help us to circumvent the obstacle that stands on the way of obscene jokes. And this obstacle is not other than civilization. In the above given statements, Harry discharges a kind of energy built up in his psychology through his joking behaviour then he is released from his repressed desire.

JG Farrell, in one way or the other, tries to give even a very small clues either of natives or colonizers that arouse laughter to the readers. Let us see how the following lines create humour:

> There was a new rumour in the bazaar this morning, said the Magistrate as the General disappeared from view. "They said that because so many British were killed in the Crimea there's nobody left in England for the membership to marry. And so they're going to be brought out here and forcibly married to the native landowners. Their children and the lands they own will thus become Christian." (39)

If we analyze the above mentioned lines, we can understand the colonial motif of Christianizing the natives is clear. But ironically we also understand that colonialism

is going to be ended up not only from India but also from Crimea. It means Farrell is indicating towards the perishing of the British colonialism. It is also humorous that the situation of the English ladies is pathetic rather than bizarre. English ladies are being victimized in distress but not Indian Landowners.

But Farrell has reversed such sadistic jokes of Rayne. When, much later, the local natives entertain themselves by taking up position above the beleaguered British garrison and watch its suffering. Even the Collector, observing the scene through his telescope and expresses: "How happy they are!' thought the Collector, in spite of the pain. It is good that natives should be happy, for surely that is ultimately what we, the Company, are in India to procure" (140).

Native people get a kind of cruel amusement through the Whites' agony. By the end of the novel, the English people have been metamorphosed into natives and the Indians are watching them through telescopes. The Collector, his notion of belonging to a superior civilization shattered, sits "cross-legged in the native fashion beside the parapet and listened to the flag stirring restlessly in the light airs above him" (187). If we analyse the above mentioned statement, we can understand that Farrell seems taking the side of Indian native people. So the collector sits cross-legged in a native fashion. His superior culture is shattered and he seems hopeless. It is at this point the idea of Helga Ramsey-Kurz regarding the creation of humour in the postcolonial text strengthens the aforementioned arguments. According to Ramsey-Kurz, "humour offers an opportunity for postcolonial writers to side with rebellious characters without being accused of political or religious fanaticism themselves" (qtd. in Reichl and Stein 15). In the text, Farrell seems taking side with Indian rebellion sepoys through the use of humour so that he would not be politically accused of.

Britishers came to India for material benefit. They lived the life of material luxury in India. They exploited natives on various grounds. But during the siege, theirs luxurious life turned out into a very pathetic and miserable which is amusing to the natives. In this regards, Farrell writes:

> The cause of the trouble among the ladie-s was, as he suspected, not simple but compound. Many of the ladies were now having to look after themselves for the first time in their lives. They had to fetch their own water from the well behind the Residency when they wanted to wash. They had to light fires for themselves (sometimes the old gentlemen from the drawing-room helped them in this but they took such a long time about it that the ladies found it almost easier to do it for themselves) and to boil their own kettles for tea. (100)

What can be the worst than this to the Victorian ladies in India. Any native reader laughs at the Victorian ladies' situation. We are shown the Collector taking in the ladies' dilemma and their response to it. At the same time we are given internal views of his character. He may be good at handling a crisis and acting as a leader, but the end of the scene indicates that he, too, is stuck in the ideological grooves of his times. He left the room thinking: "Women are weak, we shall always have to take care of them [. . .] they are made of a softer substance. They arouse our desire, but they are not our equals" (102). It is a sign of change when the collector eventually decides to wash his clothes, thus serving as a good example to the ladies.

Through the creation of comic situation, Farrell makes counter discourse in his narrative. At the beginning of the siege native sepoys are seemed to fire any things they get at the bungalow at the same time Britishers fire six pounder, new Enfield

rifles at the sepoys. But when their ammunitions get finished Britishers throw anything whatever come in their hands. Cholera, starvation and the sepoys have killed off most of the inhabitant, who are reduced to eating dogs, horses and finally beetles, is a comic delight. In this context, Susanne Reichl and Mark Stein's idea of using humour in the postcolonial text can be empowering support to the aforementioned arguments. According to them, "Firstly, laughter is not always used as weapon; it can perform a conciliatory function [. . .]secondly, even if subversiveness is detected in laughter, its targets are varied so that it can be directed at colonizer or colonized" (12).

Reichl and Stein talks about the reconciliatory function of humour in the postcolonial text. It means humour should not always be used as a weapon to subvert and protest. It can play the role of negotiation between two conflicting groups. If subversiveness is detected in laughter, use it in such a way so that it can be directed at both laughter and the object of laughing, i.e. colonizer and colonized. In the novel, Farrell has created humour to reveal the hostile relationship between colonizer and colonized. While so doing, both the colonizer and colonized has been targeted at the same time.

Finally, from all these references, *The Siege of Krishnapur* portrays colonizer colonized relationship which is hostile and unaccommodating. Thus, this project examines the master--British--and subaltern--Indian-- relationship through a postcolonial study of humour in J.G. Farrell's postcolonial novel *The Siege of Krishnapur*.

Chapter Three

Conclusion: Master-Subaltern Relationship through Humour in *The Siege of Krishnapur*

JG Farrell's novel *The Siege of Krishnapur* makes a good-humoured ironic treatment of master-subaltern relationship when India was under the control of East India Company. Basing on the real events such as the siege of Cawnpore and Lucknow during the Indian Rebellion of 1857, Farrell ridicules certain aspects of besieged colonizers' daily life styles, Victorian religion as well as the behaviour of the colonized. Satire and irony are freely used as a means of creating humour. The Indian natives and the British audiences should have viewed *The Siege of Krishnapur* with tolerance of good humour. It is noteworthy that Farrell's criticism of garrison's people is very subtle. He attacks the conventional kind of relationship between colonizers and colonized in those days. Colonized were expected to submit to the authority of the colonizer, especially by the native sepoys of their senior master British officers. The comic exposure of this unsatisfactory relationship between colonizer and colonized is more remarkable in the case of Fleury, Harry, Collector, and Hari and native sepoys. They are extremely unpleasant to each other. *The Siege of Krishnapur* refers to more than just the plight of the beleaguered garrison; what is under siege is in fact an ideology, a culture, a whole system of values.

Then there contains an indirect attack on beleaguered British people for their attitude toward the native sepoys. The glorification of the British rule and culture by Fleury, Harry, Collector and other seems to us to be the most irrational. Now it is possible for us to be interpreted the glorification of western civilization by the

Maharajh's son Hari as a satire on his anglophile mentality. The attitude of Hari towards daguerreotype and phrenology is by no means commendable. The novel is obviously poking fun at all these people including Hari who is found praising western culture. From all these points, it can be concluded that Hari, the Maharajah's son not only glorifies Fleury's dress up but his social conventions and individual behavior are also full of humour with strong sense of satire behind it.

Farrell tries to dismantle the discriminating master and subaltern relationship through the use of humour in *The Siege of Krishnapur*. When we study this novel from the perspective of postcolonial humour, we come to know that the relationship between master and subaltern is hostile. The behaviour of the master to the subaltern is very cruel and antagonistic. Indian people have been dehumanized by British master. Colonizer have exploited Indian subaltern physically and mentally as well. Indian subaltern have been named after animals for the delight of British master.

Though this novel is set in Indian fictional town Krishnapur, it does not talk more about the native Indians. We can see that Farrell has made silence to the native Indians nevertheless we can claim that it is not a weakness of Farrell but rather a strong strength. Silence may be a source of resistance and challenge.

In *The Siege of Krishnapur*, the principal characters all survive their colonial ordeal, but Farrell had not yet imagined colonized other as vital to the survival of displaced European. If the Indians are humorously exoticized, the British Victorians are no less comically portrayed. Humour here is a two-edged sword, and one side of the blade seems more dangerous than the other.

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