

I. Sensibility of Cultural Hybridity in Orwell's *Burmese Days*

Burmese Days is Orwell's first novel dealing with the colonial experiences of the writer himself. He sees the degradation of the English values due to the corrupt conduct of the colonial officers and the formations of the hybrid values due to their affinity with the native values. *Burmese Days* is regarded as an autobiographical one to some respect as he shares his bitter hatred to the British imperial mechanism on the basis of his experience of the empire when he served as a colonial police officer in Burma during 1920s. When he joined to the imperial police and became a cog of empire-machine, he experienced the bitter hostility and resistance of the Burmese people to the imperial mechanism. As Edward Quinn locates the historicity of such resistance in his book *George Orwell: A Literary Reference to His Life and Work*:

He was not prepared for the hostility that greeted him as a member of the Imperial Police. In the 1920s, the anger he encountered was not personal but the product of a nationalist spirit that had begun to surface across a broad spectrum of the Burmese people. The reform movement led by Gandhi had won concessions in the Government of India Act (1921), but at first, no such accommodations applied to Burma. (Under British rule, Burma was treated as an administrative province of India.) The result was a marked Burmese increase in activist resistance to the colonial government, often led by Buddhist monks. (8)

This unwelcome experience of the empire made Orwell skeptic to the functioning of the empire-machine as immediately and gradually, the first hand experiences of the of the vile

interest and corruption of the colonial rule turned him anti-imperialist denouncing the evils on both the colonizers and colonized. Quinn clarifies further:

Ambivalent at first and later fiercely anti-imperialist, Eric confessed to an early feeling that the greatest joy in the world would be to “drive a bayonet into a Buddhist priest’s guts.” But doing “the dirty work of empire” and expected to restrict his socializing to the whites-only club in whatever town he was stationed in (*Burmese Days* contains a remorseless account of such a club), he eventually came to see British colonialism as hypocritical—“the white man’s burden” lie—and mutually corrupting for both colonizers and colonized. (8-9)

The anti-imperialist criticism has been the seminal subject matter in his novel *Burmese Days*. The scathing criticism of the moral degeneration and the formation of hybrid practices brought to existence by the contact between the values of empire and the colonies, the rampant corruption in both the colonizers and the colonized, the functioning of the imperial mechanism with virtually incompetent, irrational officers, the doom of rationality in both the colonizers and colonized, use armed-force and terror to rule has become the basis for the novel.

The protagonist of the novel, John Flory, is a discontented timber agent who is both lonely and violently resentful of his fellow-colonials and of the colonial reality in which his life is cast. He has a Burmese mistress, Ma Hla May, whom he is getting tired of, and a Tamil physician friend, Veraswamy. Veraswamy is talkative and submissive to the white men, but Flory's friendship with him is upsetting the wily Burmese magistrate U Po Kyin who realizes that in order to rise in the local hierarchy in the manner he wishes to,

he must get ahead of Veraswamy and in order to do that he must first destroy Veraswamy's white patron, Flory. Flory, meanwhile, falls in love with the husband-hunting Elizabeth Lackersteen who, after a brief idyllic phase, discovers that Flory has a Burmese mistress, and breaks off relations with him. Then there is a curious episode at the Club house, where the colonials are gathered, anxiously arguing about how to evade an official directive which might require them to admit 'native', Veraswamy, as a Club member. The Club house is attacked by a mob of 'natives', and Flory, who had failed earlier to make a stand on the behalf of Veraswamy, rises manfully to the stereotyped occasion. Flory tries, again, to regain the affections of Elizabeth Lackersteen, but she despises him. Then, in a powerful final scene, when the colonials are again gathered, in the Church, for the police chief's funeral, Flory's mistress, Ma Hla May, breaks into the church and humiliates herself and, thus, humiliates Flory before the assembled multitude. Flory blows his brains out, Veraswamy is disgraced, and U Po Kyin is made the token member.

In many ways, Orwell's novel is located deliberately to depart from the conventions of colonial fiction. A protagonist such as Flory, weak and dissolute, can only be a calculated departure from the traditional heroes of colonial fiction. Then again, by showing the whites of the colonial station off-duty, so to speak, Orwell breaks away from exquisite effect the mystique of the 'pioneers of civilization'. Elizabeth's aunt in *Burmese Days*, for instance, is a furiously parodic reincarnation of a traditional stereotype. She accompanies her husband into the malarial jungle, if only in order to prevent him from drinking and fornicating. The necessary counter-point to the 'Strong White Man' in colonial fiction had been his equally staunch mate, not rough and unmaternal, but

transformed by the spirit of sacrifice and a devotion to duty into something far above metemorphosis and human weakness. Orwell's protagonist is a hybrid character who loves both the native and colonial values.

In the novel, the Protagonist Flory has been represented as attracted to the native Burmese values. He befriends native doctor, Dr. Veraswamy which is regarded as very uncommon act by his colonial counterparts but he braves the shame of being an ally to the native values in the club of all Europeans. Dr. Veraswamy, the native doctor, also shows excessive faith upon the Europeans and the colonial values. To study such unusual and socially unacceptable behavior of both the colonial and native characters is the basic problem of this research.

As Mary Louise Pratt claims in her travelogue *Imperial Eyes*, "Transculturation is a phenomenon of the contact zone" (7), this research focuses on the study of the transculturation in the contact zone between English values of the colonizers and the local values of the Burmese people. Transculturation in the characters due to their distraction from their socio-cultural values and attraction to the other cultural values in their social contact will be carefully examined with the study of Englishman Flory's attraction to native values and the native Dr. Veraswamy's attraction and obsession to the European values.

Since the publication of this novel, it invited the strong criticism from various quarters. This novel is written by a colonial officer showing the injustice the colonizers were perpetuating in the orient over the natives. Many colonial officers were offended with its daring content criticizing the action of colonizers themselves.

Renowned critic of Orwell's fiction, Maung Htin Aung, in his famous article on Orwell, claimed that *Burmese Days* was a "valuable historical document" because it "recorded vividly the tensions that prevailed in Burma, and the mutual suspicion, despair and disgust that crept into Anglo-Burmese relations as the direct result of the Government of India Act leaving out Burma from the course of its reforms" (19).

Alok Rai in his essay "Colonial Fictions: Orwell's *Burmese Days*" writes:

The background to *Burmese Days*, like the troubled background to Orwell's own time in Burma, is the rise of Burmese nationalism during the 1920s. Moreover, there is evidence to show that Orwell was, in the main, sympathetic to those nationalist stirrings. (50)

Thus, Rai emphasizes on the role of growing nationalistic consciousness in Burma and Orwell's sympathetic attitude to it as the motivating force behind the writing of *Burmese Days*. In his book *Critical Companion to George Orwell*, Edward Quinn talks about hegemonic binarism the colonizer use as the measuring rod to talk about the orient Burma. He observes, "Beastly would come to be enshrined as one of the signature Orwellian words. In Orwell's first novel, *Burmese Days*, a "memsahib-in-the-making," Elizabeth Lackersteen, is seen as one who divides all experience into two categories, "lovely" and "beastly" (3)."

The orientalist conception of binary opposition has been observed by the critic in the quote. Kermit Lansner reviews Orwell's novel in his review article "Burmese Days by George Orwell" as a piece of superb satire on the relations between the British colonials and the people they rule more than a crafty fiction. He writes:

As a work of fiction it is not fully satisfying, not really comparable in felicity of style, depth of imagination and moral complexity to Forster's *A Passage to India* with which it has been so frequently coupled.

Nevertheless it is one of the few convincing pieces of fiction about India - or for that matter, about the Orient - that I have seen. Its strength is its superb satire on the relations between the British colonials and the people they rule. Orwell is impartial in his bitter satire. (559)

Thus, instead of comparing this novel with the brilliant fiction like Forster's *A Passage to India*, Lansner's argument leads the readers to pay attention on its satirical aspects.

Even though many critics debate over the issue of representation of the colonial Burma, the issue of problematic relationship between colonizer and colonized, the satirical aspects, the issue of cultural hybridity is overlooked. So this research attempts to shed light upon the issue of cultural hybridity in colonial Burmese society.

The postcolonial theorists and cultural critics will be drawn into the debate while analyzing the novel. The postcolonial critics like Homi K. Bhabha, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith, Helen Tiffin and other cultural theorists will be brought into conversation discussing the related issues as the basis for the examination of the novel. The valuable guidelines of the lecturers, library consultation, and internet research will help further to shape the research.

Hybridity is the concept that originated from biological term hybrid. Originally from biology and referring to the selective breeding of plants to produce new varieties with specific qualities of improved performances, its initial use in wider discourse was as a stigma in association with colonial ideas about racial purity and a horror of

miscegenation. In the colonial experience the children of white male colonizers and female 'native' peoples were assigned a different and inferior status in colonial society or a society which refused to even consider the possibility of white women with black men. They were often shunned by both the colonizer and colonized. The same process is evident with language, food and other aspects of culture. The term 'Creole' was used, initially in the Spanish and French Caribbean, to describe 'mixtures' of European and African culture and again this was deemed inferior. The fear of hybridity and creolization can also be found in the metropolitan centre when the postwar migration of people from Africa, the Caribbean and Asia began to reach Europe.

Various attempts have been made to maintain the purity of English culture but they are both disturbing and futile. 'Englishness' is essentially a social construction based on a reality of cultural mixing over centuries. Hybridity is visible everywhere in present world. Popular music since the 1950s has been energized by the merging of folk or roots styles from Europe and Africa to create virtually every new music from rock 'n roll to contemporary dance culture. The street language of Europe and North America has developed similarly and even the foods we eat come from various cultures and thus, are hybridized. These observations are the proofs how our lifestyle is affected by hybridity.

Hybridity is a fundamental feature of what is now commonly termed 'the postmodern condition'. This concept is popularized as a post colonial trope by Homi K. Bhabha. Ashcroft et al. define hybridity as "One of the most widely employed and most disputed terms in post-colonial theory, hybridity commonly refers to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization" (*Key Concepts in Post Colonial Studies* 118). The contact zone is necessary condition of hybridity; the

contact between races, ethnic groups, language, cultures and so on is the essential for it. Since the phenomenon of colonialism brings various cultural groups together and creates the contact zone, hybridity becomes the phenomena of the colonies. As Ashcroft et al. clarify how Homi K. Bhabha uses the term in post colonial studies:

The term 'hybridity' has been most recently associated with the work of Homi K. Bhabha, whose analysis of colonizer/colonized relations stresses their interdependence and the mutual construction of their subjectivities. Bhabha contends that all cultural statements and systems are constructed in a space that he calls the 'Third Space of enunciation'. (118)

Bhabha uses the term 'space' in at least two different but related ways which are often difficult to distinguish. 'Space' refers to an enunciative position in the territory of a discourse-hence the contradictory and ambivalent Third space of enunciation. 'Space' also refers to a hybrid cultural position, a liminal space between designations of identity, seen as a site of disruption, intervention and innovation. Much of the power of Bhabha's argument comes from the dialectical interplay between the two meanings of 'space'. Yet there are some problems here. Bhabha is master of ambiguity, not only in seeing its fertility, but in using enigma as a method of conviction: that is, he convinces the reader not of the truth of his statements, but of their interest and importance, through the powerful device of vagueness. In the wrong minds, triggering through what is probably an inevitable five years of Third space preoccupation, this could lead to the deliberate pursuit of ambiguity in a kind of 'spacey competition' within a literary-philosophical elite as to who can be most enigmatic yet still suggest a distant message for those clever enough to

follow. Geography could become obsessed with never making direct statements; indeed direct opinion could be mistaken for Fascism.

In his book *Location of Culture*, Bhabha's analysis of racial "stereotypes" in terms of the Freudian theory of fetishism, his theorization of "mimicry" and the production of the colonized as "a subject of difference that is almost the same but not quite" (86) as a mode of disruption of colonial authority, his reading of several texts of British colonial administration to indicate a fracturing of colonial strategies of surveillance, as well as "Signs Taken For Wonders", the text which introduced his "trademark" concept of "hybridity" describing the pluralization of colonial discourse. His more recent essays, which extend the problematic of (anti)colonial subjectivity in terms of a more "up-to-date" focus on "agency," include readings of Fanon alongside contemporary (post)colonial poetry, of the fiction of Salman Rushdie and Toni Morrison, as well as a more traditional engagement with the canonic cultural writings of colonialism via Conrad and Forster. Also included is "Dissemination," which provides a theorization of the "nation" as performatively constituted and "Race, Time and the Revision of Modernity" which argues for an understanding of "race" as a differential articulation of cultural difference. The sole new essay in the book is "How Newness Enters the World" framed, in terms of the problematic of "agency" and concerned with the "poetics of translation" and the "migrant experience" (212- 224).

Hybridity allows for new combinations, new mixtures and new relationships to form between formerly disparate peoples and ideas thus, it is the space other than the two things coming into contact, the Third Space. Throughout his works, Salman Rushdie also praises the "hybridity, impurity, intermingling that comes when cultures are brought in contact with one another" (*Imaginary Homelands* 394). This newness of culture and

understanding is, as Rushdie states, “the great possibility that mass migration gives to the world” (*Imaginary Homelands* 394). The position of the migrant- one living between cultures- no longer needs to hold the negative connotations of dislocation, displacement, or homelessness. Rather, as Homi K. Bhabha states, the migrant can live within the “empowering condition of hybridity” (*The Location of Culture* 325).

Furthermore, Bhabha asserts that the story of the migrant is the most relevant and applicable model for understanding today’s world culture. He states in *The Location of Culture*, “Where, once, the transmission of national traditions was the major theme of a world literature, perhaps we can now suggest that transnational histories of migrants, the colonized, or political refugees- these border and frontier conditions- may be the terrains of world literature” (17). Hybridity is thus, can become the fertile domain according to Bhabha as it is the Third Space that has the possibility of new world literature and the expression of the experiences of the migrants, refugees and the colonized.

As the notion of hybridity means the contact zone or the Third Space, it turns to be cultural hybridity if we consider the cultural admixture and the creation of new, in-between culture with the contact of two or more cultures. Brah and Coombes define cultural hybridity in familiar terms we have discussed so far. For them, “Cultural hybridity is a phenomenon in which two or more cultural forms from different domains co-exist. *Hybridity* is primarily a biological term meaning the outcome of a crossing of two plants or species. This term serves as a metaphor for describing the combination of two or more cultural forms” (28). Thus, they see cultural hybridity as a metaphor that describes the combination of two or more cultural forms and creation of new form of culture. For the cultural hybridity, colonialism and globalization are two important factors as they are responsible to bring two or more cultures in contact.

Globalization plays an important role in the debates on cultural hybridity.

Globalization leads to the interaction between global cultural flows and local culture, the result of which is global-local intermingles. Nonetheless, it is crucial to state that all cultures were in fact hybrid before the advent of the globalization era. As Said explains in *Culture and Imperialism*, “All cultures are involved in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated and unmonolithic” (xxix). Correspondingly, Pieterse Nederveen states that “Cultures have been hybrid all along, hybridization is in effect a tautology: contemporary accelerated globalization means the hybridization of hybrid cultures” (64). Therefore, it is more precise to state that globalization accelerates the speed and extends the scope of hybridization of hybrid cultures. According to Samper, cultural hybridity brings newness to the world as Samper argues:

It is through globalization that cultural expressions are deterritorialized and decontextualized, and together with other cultural expressions are recontextualized in different settings and places. Hybrid expressions are thus created; in other words, a little bit of this and a little bit of that brings newness into the world. (28)

This newness in the cultures when the two cultural groups come into contact is seen in the hybrid culture. This phenomenon is called “transculturation.” As Mary Louise Pratt claims in her travelogue *Imperial Eyes*, “Transculturation is a phenomenon of the contact zone” (7), she also gives importance to the space between two cultures or the contact zone and sees transculturation or the formation of new cultural practices in that zone.

The main objective of this research is to explore the issue of cultural hybridity in the contact zone during colonial period. The study of the cultural admixture in people in colonial society due to social contact will be the objective of the study. Even though this research primarily examines the issues related to cultural hybridity during colonial period, the analysis

will be totally textual. Only the textual evidences will be drawn into the discussion. The field study and direct experiences of the hybrid cultural groups will not be incorporated due to the limitations of time and necessary resources.

This research will be remarkable contribution for the study of cultural hybridity in the colonial and post-colonial society. The instance of cultural hybridity in Burma is the instance from Asia and the future researchers will be able to understand the history and condition of Asian socio-political admixture with the help of this research.

The present research work has been divided into three chapters. The first chapter fundamentally deals with introductory outline of the present study. It introduces critical review and the writer and her characters in relation to hybrid cultural formation in the contact zone between the colonial and native values. Thus it presents the bird's eye view of the entire research. The second chapter aims at providing the theoretical methodological reading of the text briefly with both the textual and theoretical evidences. It attempts to examine the impacts of colonialism and its pivotal role to construct the hybrid cultural practices and the values. On the basis of post colonial theorists of cultural hybridity, the novel has been analyzed in this chapter. It will further sort out some extracts from the text to prove the hypothesis of the research. This part serves as the core of the present research. The third chapter concludes the ideas put forward in the earlier chapter, focusing on the outcome of the entire research. The various logical conclusions are summarized as the proof that hybridity is a transcultural phenomenon and the site of resistance in the contact zone as seen in the contact of colonial and native values in colonial Burma in *Burmese Days* highlighting the conclusion of the whole research.

II. Cultural Hybridity in *Burmese Days*

This research is an attempt to study the phenomenon of cultural hybridity in the contact zone between the colonial and native cultural values in George Orwell's novel *Burmese Days*. Homi K. Bhabha, in his interview with Jonathan Rutherford, "The Third Space" compiled in the book *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* clarifies the role of hybridity in the formation of culture as:

All forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity. But for me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom. (211)

With the interaction between the two different cultural values in contact the new 'third' culture is evolved and thus, there is no culture as an original or authentic rather it is evolved out of the many contacts and hybrid conditions. Since the two cultures or values come into interact to form a new third culture and values, ambivalence plays major part for the hybrid cultural formation. Ambivalence at once points to two directions; both love and hate; attraction and repulsion of a colonial subject towards the values of the colonizers. The colonial subject, in fascination to the values of the colonizer, starts copying the values of the colonizer but it is unable to copy them exactly the same as the colonizers and thus, it becomes a mockery. That situation is called mimicry where the hybridized colonial subject mocks the colonial authority and the colonial authority is

subverted. The characters of the novel *Burmese Days*, both the colonizers and colonized, are ambivalent, somewhat mimic and hybridized. Such condition can be examined in the case of John Flory, Dr. Veraswami, U Po Kyin, Ma Hla May and the Eurasians more explicitly and implicitly in other characters.

John Flory works as a timber merchant in the colonial mechanism. He is a white man but is fascinated by the Burmese culture and the native values. John Flory has the prominent birthmark on his face and the deep psychic effect it has on him. He advocates the views that are quite different from those of his fellow white Club members. He has ambivalent attitude to the Burma and the colonial values both. However, instead of situating himself in ambivalent position, he is motivated throughout the novel principally by his desire to belong. This desire is not surprising as it comes from his loneliness in Burma. Ambivalence, hybridity and mimicry come into play in him that makes Flory a character who appears at times weightless and untrustworthy to his fellow colonizers. He is willing to publicize high moral and political standards in private conversations with Veraswami or with Elizabeth, but then he acts in complete opposition to these standards when they are put to the test, in the small but very public world of the European Club. Flory hates the European colonizers even though he belongs to the colonizers and so, he bitterly criticizes their motive behind coming to the colonies:

. . . the lie that we're here to uplift our poor black brothers instead of to rob them. I suppose it's a natural enough lie. But it corrupts us; it corrupts us in ways you can't imagine. There's an everlasting sense of ways you can't imagine. There's an everlasting sense of being a sneak and a liar that torments us and drives us to justify ourselves night and day. It's at the

bottom of half our beastliness to the natives. We Anglo-Indians could be almost bearable if we'd only admit that we're thieves and go on thieving without any humbug. (37)

In contrast to Flory, Dr. Veraswami is a hybrid character who is very faithful to the English values even though he is a native. He is a mimic man, the native who mimics the colonial values faithfully. He sees the world through the eyes of others, the Europeans even though he is a member of the colonized group. He also keeps himself away from hating the Englishmen. As Flory speaks against his own Europeans Dr. Veraswami defends the English people and the European values as:

Why is it that always you are abusing the pukka sahibs, ass you call them? They are the salt of the earth. Consider the great things they have done—consider the great administrators who have made British India what it iss. Consider Clive, Warren Hastings, Dalhousie, Curzon. They were such men—I quote your immortal Shakespeare—ass, take them for all in all, we shall not look upon their like again! (36)

Thus being a native, Veraswami defends the Europeans and their values. His language is hybrid and it subverts the colonial authority mimicking it. He speaks “iss” instead of “is” and “ass” instead of “as”. The immortal British poet Shakespeare has been mimicked as “ass” which means donkey and ironically, it means anus in slang language. The language is thus, site of hybridity and mimicry and the refusal of the colonial authority. The colonial language has been subverted in him.

His identity is ambivalent, splitted into two, the native and European. In his essay “Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities” compiled in *The Theories of Race and*

Racism: A Reader, Stuart Hall sees the identity in the splitting the division between the self and the other, the native and the European, the colonized and the colonizer which is clearly the condition of both Flory and Dr. Veraswami in the *Burmese Days*:

Identity means, or connotes, the process of identification, of saying that this here is the same as that, or we are the same together. . . . But something we have learnt from the whole discussion of identification . . . is the degree to which that structure of identification is always constructed through ambivalence. Always constructed through splitting. Splitting between that which one is, and that which is the other. The attempt to expel the other to the other side of the universe is always compounded by the relationships of love and desire. (146-147)

The split between the two, and to show both the feelings of love and hate, is the condition for ambivalence and the condition of the identity formation in the colonies where the values of the colonizers and the colonized interact. It is seen both with Flory and Dr. Veraswami. This situation of ambivalent identity is not inevitable among the colonized. It is also seen in U Po Kyin, the native Magistrate of Kyauktada whose sole motivation is the destruction of Veraswami's reputation in order to secure his own eventual membership in the Club, has the tendency to love the European values and corruption and to hate the European colonizers at once. The complex nature of U Po Kyin's corruption is perhaps best summarized by his practice as magistrate:

Even for the vastest bribe he would never sell the decision of a case, because he knew that a magistrate who gives wrong judgments is caught sooner or later. His practice, a much safer one, was to take bribes from both

sides and then decide the case on strictly legal grounds. This won him a useful reputation for impartiality. (3)

U Po Kyin is corrupted and a powerful magistrate. The corruption is the value of the colonizers brought to the colonies by the European colonizers. He cleverly abuses the power and exploits the people.

Ma Hla May represents the situation of ambivalence and mimicry properly. Even if she is the mistress of Flory, she has kept a Burmese lover. Her position is thus, destructive of the colonial authority of Flory and eventually leads his downfall. As Ashcroft et al. discuss the notion of ambivalence in their book *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*; they clarify from the similar point of view. They assert:

Ambivalence disrupts the clear-cut authority of colonial domination because it disturbs the simple relationship between colonizer and colonized. Ambivalence is therefore an unwelcome aspect of colonial discourse for the colonizer. The problem for colonial discourse is that it wants to produce compliant subjects who reproduce its assumptions, habits and values – that is, ‘mimic’ the colonizer. But instead it produces ambivalent subjects whose mimicry is never very far from mockery. Ambivalence describes this fluctuating relationship between mimicry and mockery, an ambivalence that is fundamentally unsettling to colonial dominance. (13)

Besides subverting the dominance of colonial authority of Flory and loving a Burmese man secretly, Ma Hla May is also motivated mainly by self-interest, her desire to maintain her elevated status as a “*bo-kadaw* a white man’s wife” (53), even though she does not

love Flory and has a Burmese lover as well. Ma Hla May's corrupted state, though, represents the more intangible costs of imperialism, since Flory has actually bought her from her parents for a very tangible "three hundred rupees" (52). So it is fitting that she becomes the principal instrument U Po Kyin uses to bring about Flory's downfall at the novel's end. Although objectified by the magistrate as by her parents and Flory, at least she is able to exact some revenge upon the Englishman who purchases her humanity.

The combination of his birthmark and the effect it has on his outlook, as well as his interactions with others, would suggest John Flory as the sort of person who both love and hates his own existence in Burma. His initial description is divided into two parts, both rendered with Orwell's characteristic attention to detail:

Flory was a man of about thirty-five, of middle height, not ill made. He had very black, stiff hair growing low on his head, and a cropped black moustache, and his skin, naturally sallow, was discolored by the sun. Not having grown fat or bald he did not look older than his age, but his face was very haggard in spite of the sunburn, with lank cheeks and a sunken, withered look round the eyes. (13)

As the narration continues, we know that he has not shaved this particular morning, that he is dressed in the usual manner for an Englishman living in Burma, and that he is accompanied by his dog. We are even told his dog's name, Flo. This first impression, then, is of a recognizable, although undistinguished, servant of the British Raj, a pukka sahib. And yet, for all the detail of this introductory description, these facts are immediately reduced to the rank of "secondary expressions" (14):

The first thing that one noticed in Flory was a hideous birthmark stretching in a ragged crescent down his left cheek, from the eye to the corner of the mouth. Seen from the left side his face had a battered, woe-begone look, as though the birthmark had been a bruise—for it was a dark blue in color. He was quite aware of its hideousness. And at all times, when he was not alone, there was a sidelongness about his movements, as he manoeuvred constantly to keep the birthmark out of sight. (14)

It's a crucial detail that the mark on Flory's face is a birthmark and not a scar. A scar is the result of some action or accident and so is easily understood in terms of causation. A birthmark, by contrast, is more mysterious because innate and so brings with it associations of fate and predestination. That the birthmark is on Flory's face and is so prominent adds further resonance to its importance. It's a mark that simply cannot be missed and so helps determine his very identity. The birthmark is metaphorically the flaw of colonial rule that exists in colony with its ugliness by its birth. It serves as the third space where the colonial values come to be subverted and discarded as it gives Flory both the love and hate to himself. It has given him the hybrid position, the in betweenness in the British and native cultures. M.A. R. Habib in the book *A History of Literary Criticism and Theory* writes about such in betweenness in hybrid position:

Hybridity expresses a state of "in betweenness," as in a person who stands between two cultures. The concept is embodied in Bhabha's own life (as in the lives of many intellectuals from colonial nations who have been raised in Western institutions): born into a Parsi community in Bombay, India, he was educated both in his native country and at Oxford University; he

subsequently taught at universities in England and America, and now teaches at Harvard. (750)

It is due to the birthmark; Flory has the continual mental torment and the sense of being inferior to the British people. So, he has the great inclination to the native values. Like Bhabha, he stands between two cultures- the British and Burmese.

The birthmark literally affects Flory's perspective on the world since it causes a "sidelongness" in his movements (14). He physically alters his orientation with respect to his surroundings because of it. Like markers of race, gender, class, or any other determinant that might affect one's relationship to some norm or to prevailing power arrangements, a birthmark is beyond one's control and yet can have substantial consequences for its wearer.

For Flory, the mark on his face exercises great influence on the way he interacts with others and has as long as he can remember. It is a mark of difference that has always made him feel vulnerable and like he did not belong:

Flory had been fifteen years in Burma, and in Burma one learns not to set oneself up against public opinion. But his trouble was older than that. It had begun in his mother's womb, when chance put the blue birthmark on his cheek. He thought of some of the early effects of his birthmark. His first arrival at school, aged nine; the stares and, after a few days, shouts of the other boys; the nickname Blueface. (64)

So, on top of the reality that one does not oppose public opinion in Burma, this is even more the case when one wears a mark of difference as publicly as Flory does.

The sidelongness of his movements also manifests itself in his personality and in the formulation of his opinions. Like any other stigma that might be held against us, Flory's birthmark might have been the impetus for an ambivalent point of view that takes into account the positions of others in the hope of contributing positively to the larger world. It is less easy to allow oneself the narrow, exclusive focus of a privileged perspective if a personal flaw might at any moment expose one to ridicule, rejection, isolation, or oppression.

Flory is lonely and homesick; so was Orwell. But for all Orwell's distaste of his life in Burma, Flory's comment to Elizabeth, that Burma could be paradise if one weren't alone, only points up the ambivalence. Orwell's description of the train journey northwards from Mandalay gives a further inkling of this ambivalence. "White egrets stood poised, motionless, like herons, and piles of drying chilies gleamed crimson in the sun. Sometimes a white pagoda rose from the plain like the breast of a supine giantess" (99). He was moved by the beauty of the country and the grace of its people, and perhaps if he could have shared these rich experiences and his doubts with a close companion, life, as Flory hinted, might have become quite different.

Flory is very conflicted character, and his birthmark, which he always remembers when he has "done something to be ashamed of" (53), reminds him of his own vulnerability within the English society of Kyauktada. This sense of inner conflict that exposes Flory's failings when judged by the criteria of ambivalence.

Flory is neither English enough, in the way that the rules of colonialism dictate he must be English, nor is he Burmese. While it is tempting to be very hard on him for his hypocrisy, to Flory's credit, he does learn more Burmese and Urdu than the other

Englishmen, and he educates himself on the Burmese culture far beyond what is required of him to do his job. He would also love to be able to raise the level of conversation among the English to subjects other than shooting, riding, the bloodiness of the weather, and the myriad problems of living in Burma.

Central to the plot are his attempts to educate Elizabeth in the ways of the Burmese. In these scenes, he appears quite progressive, even as he annoys her, giving her the sense that he has not the sorts of views “an Englishman should hold” (121). In response to Elizabeth’s remark that she cannot see how anyone could bear the black skin of the Burmese, for instance, Flory says, “In fact they say—I believe it’s true—that after a few years in these countries a brown skin seems more natural than a white one. And after all, it *is* more natural. Take the world as a whole, it’s an eccentricity to be white” (122). In another example, Elizabeth reacts with horror to the deformed feet of a Chinese woman. Flory tries to explain to her that “they deform them artificially Those small feet are beautiful according to Chinese ideas” (133). When she is still unconvinced, he lists other cultural practices and adds, “It’s no queerer than bustles or crinolines” (133). Flory is remarkable among the English for his willingness to try to understand the Burmese people and their culture on their own terms. Here, at least, he exhibits the ambivalence and hybridity, as he looks at Burmese culture in an open-minded and inclusive way.

He eventually proposes Dr. Veraswami for membership in the European Club, facing the controversy he knew would result and which he does not have the stomach for earlier in the novel. In the boldest step he ever takes inside the European Club, he stands up for Veraswami against Westfield, who has become annoyed by what he sees as Flory’s delight in always choosing the “wrong” opinion, “when there was so clearly a right and a

wrong opinion about everything” (197). Flory shoots back at Westfield, “Oh, shut up! I’m sick of the subject. Veraswami’s a damned good fellow – a damned sight better than some white men I can think of” (198). This outburst is described as blasphemous. His hatred to the Britishers and the love towards the native people is reflected here, that gives Flory the in betweenness of the colonial and the native cultures.

Flory’s ambivalence towards the colonial rule is reflected on his criticism to the colonial notion of progress. Questioning the view that the mission of the British was to bring "modern progress" to the Burmese and other native peoples, Flory criticizes British motive behind it and speculates on the local culture:

Sometimes I think that in two hundred years . . . all this will be gone- forests, villages, monasteries, pagodas all vanished. And instead, pink villas fifty yards apart; all over those hills, as far as you can see, villa after villa, with all the gramophones playing the same tune. And all the forests shaved flat-chewed up into wood pulp for the News of the World, or sawn up into gramophone cases. (40)

Flory rightly predicts the future of the native culture, villages, monasteries and so on as they are bound to be affected by the colonial culture and colonial products. As the colonial culture comes into the contact with the native culture, no culture remains unaffected. Hybrid culture is bound to evolve and there remains no place for pure colonial or pure native culture. The new syncretic culture is born as both the cultures are reshaped by the influence of each other. *The Edinburgh Dictionary of Continental Philosophy* analyses the concept of hybridity as:

The concept of hybridity complicates and deconstructs all such oppositions based on determinate cultural identities. This deconstruction works both ways: just as there is no ‘pure’ native culture to which a people might return following its liberation from colonialism, so the culture of the West is continually reshaped by its contact with formerly colonized territories and peoples. (296)

Hybridity in terms of miscegenation or the giving birth of the children of mixed blood is responsible to give rise to a new cultural group. It is the third space that is different than the both two earlier cultures that interact to form it. In the novel, the Eurasians, the hybrid children of the British colonizers and the Asian women are presented. Flory, the ambivalent colonial officer, shows his inclination towards the Eurasians as he is only the British man to talk and to sympathize them. An example of Flory’s exploitation of his position occurs in the conversation with Elizabeth, as he explains to her why he is willing to speak to Mr. Samuels and Mr. Francis, the two Eurasian men of white fathers and Burmese mothers who are, as a result of their mixed heritage, people without significance to both the English and the Burmese: “Oh well, I break the rules occasionally. I meant that a pukka sahib probably wouldn’t be seen talking to them. But you see, I try—just sometimes, when I have the pluck—*not* to be a pukka sahib” (127).

The hybrid cultural group of the Eurasians is the phenomenon of contact zone where two different cultures meet according to Mary Louise Pratt. Like Bhabha, she also sees the hybridity in the contact zone as the new space; “the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact

with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict” (6).

This ambivalence, the hatred to the role of the colonial officer, or a pukka sahib, emphasizes his mimicry, the duplicity that marks his willingness to exploit his privilege as a white man when it suits him. There is little principle in doing things this way, since such conditional resistance to the code of the pukka sahib is just privilege in another form. Flory can decide when he wants to contravene the rules of social interaction and when not because he is an Englishman. Veraswami would be taking a genuine risk were he to walk uninvited into the European Club, for instance. But Flory can talk to Samuels and Francis because he is confident he can rely upon the status of being English. His is not resistance at all. Both Elizabeth and Veraswami must accede to prescribed roles—the former because of gender, the latter because of race— but Flory can transgress as he wishes. Instead of using this ability to transgress in the service of revolutionary ends, he acts in ways that leave the oppressive hierarchies intact. From the most powerful position within the stratified society, the white man can, as he chooses, manipulate the system to suit his own desires.

John Flory’s reliance upon his status as an Englishman and his exploitation of this privilege lead directly to his fate at the end of *Burmese Days*. What he never realizes is that he cannot both try to maintain his standing within the stratified system he claims to despise *and* step outside of it, whenever he has the pluck. He would have to risk renouncing the privilege that he only sometimes sees as grounded in injustice in order to become a doubled figure. Another factor that Flory overlooks, and this is very important, is how he appears to others, both to the Burmese and to the English. While he hopes he

can move back and forth between the English world and that of the Burmese, he never realizes that what finally determines his place within the complex world of Kyauktada is the impressions others have of him.

Flory's ambivalence in his actions is almost always underlain by the hidden motives of his own self-interest. In the case of his relationship with the other Englishmen, Flory's knowledge of Burmese society allows him to feel himself superior to "that herd of fools at the Club" (103), as he thinks of them. But we can believe the word of Flory, a man who simultaneously spends so much social time at the Club trying to secure his own acceptance and yet secretly hates the people with whom he spends that time. As the narrator says, "it is a corrupting thing to live one's real life in secret" (70). It is Flory's hybridity that leads to his corruption and his eventual downfall.

As Ashcroft et al. clarify the dislocation as "a feature of all invaded colonies where indigenous or original cultures are, if annihilated, often literally dislocated, i.e. moved off what was their territory(75), Flory embodies the sense of dislocation and moral paralysis that can befall the in-between individual who takes on the ambivalent position in the colonial Burmese society. Moreover, he is never willing to criticize the hierarchical system that oppresses everyone in the novel publicly. In fact, he actually relies on the privilege that still accumulates to him from being a white man, enabling him to exploit, in different ways, Elizabeth, Ma Hla May, and Veraswami. Flory's reliance, when it suits him, on a system he rails against exposes his hypocrisy and his inability to treat others, particularly those who are below him in the social hierarchy of Kyauktada, with decency. By spending as much time as he does criticizing the other Club members, he draws unflattering attention to his own moral shortcomings.

His attempts to educate Elizabeth on the ways of the Burmese are vital elements in his own self-interested pursuit of a mate. He is ambivalent to his role as a *pukka sahib*, a colonial officer, so, he wants to hybridize Elizabeth as an ambivalent mate who supports him. As he thinks to himself in a moment of particularly maudlin self-pity: “Alone, alone, the bitterness of being alone! So often like this, in lonely places in the forest, he would come upon something—bird, flower, tree—beautiful beyond all words, if there had been a soul with whom to share it. Beauty is meaningless until it is shared” (57). This proceeds the arrival of Elizabeth Lackersteen, implying that there is nothing necessarily special about her in particular, but that just about any Englishwoman, any soul, would do. As a result of his consuming desire for companionship, for someone to help ease his loneliness, Flory is incapable of seeing Elizabeth for what she really is, a female version of the narrow-minded prejudice he so despises in the members of the European Club. He tries to make her into a version of himself, again without taking in anything about what kind of person she actually is. As Flory is in the contact zone or the in betweenness of the British and native culture, he attempts at the transculturation of Elizabeth like him.

“Transculturation is a phenomenon of the contact zone” (6) according to Mary Louise Pratt observes.

The beginning of the relationship between Flory and Elizabeth is marked by his ability to appear more courageous and self-assured than he really is, an illusion facilitated by Elizabeth’s lack of experience with Burma. He appears fearless to her during the scene involving the water buffalo because of the imbalance between Elizabeth’s lack of knowledge about this new land and Flory’s fifteen years of living there. He can expertly explain to her, “They’re only water-buffaloes. They come from the village up there” (81),

when Elizabeth is frightened by the beast. He knows the animals are “harmless really. Their horns are set so far back that they can’t gore you. They’re very stupid brutes. They only pretend to show fight when they’ve got calves” (82). This encounter with the buffalo is Flory’s first meeting with Elizabeth and he benefits from his insider knowledge.

Later, on the leopard hunt, the hold he has over her as a result of this appearance of expertise is again made clear: “She loved Flory, really loved him, when he talked like this. The most trivial scrap of information about shooting thrilled her” (167). He appears a real man to her when he talks about things any Englishman would know after being in the jungle as long as Flory has. But for him, his status as an expert allows him to pursue the selfish objective of marrying Elizabeth and mitigating his own loneliness.

An especially telling example of how Flory exploits his insider knowledge for his own selfish purposes regarding Elizabeth occurs when Ma Hla May and the young Englishwoman meet for the first time. The two women represent the obvious tension Flory experiences—he can have the Burmese woman whenever he wishes, although this relationship will always be nothing more than a taboo assignation; his success with the Englishwoman is dependent upon his ability to curry favor with a local English society he finds repellent. “No contrast could have been stranger” than this initial meeting, “the one faintly coloured as an apple-blossom, the other dark and garish, with a gleam almost metallic on her cylinder of ebony hair and the salmon-pink silk of her *longyi*” (88–89). The meeting sets up a competition for status as dominant female within Flory’s household, a competition Ma Hla May instantly recognizes; “‘Who is this woman?’ she demanded sullenly” (89). She immediately sees her disadvantage as a Burmese woman when pitted against an Englishwoman for the attentions of an Englishman. By contrast, Elizabeth has

the luxury of not even being certain that Ma Hla May is female; moreover, she could never conceive of a Burmese woman as a threat to herself. Elizabeth is used to being the standard by which conventions of femaleness are judged. The thought of competing with a Burmese woman for Flory's attentions or for anything else, for that matter, would be completely beyond and, to her mind, beneath her.

But it is when Flory intervenes in this meeting that we see an extreme example of his exploitation of local knowledge for his own aims. In response to Ma Hla May's inquiry about the identity of the Englishwoman, Flory "answered casually, as though giving an order to a servant: 'Go away this instant. If you make any trouble I will afterwards take a bamboo and beat you till not one of your ribs is whole'" (89). Once Ma Hla May heeds his cold-blooded warning and leaves, Flory lies to Elizabeth by telling her that the woman who has just left is "[o]ne of the servants' wives, I believe" (89).

Orwell is very careful in the narrative of *Burmese Days* to remind us at various points that characters are speaking in English or in Burmese or Urdu and it is important to remember the *sounds* of characters' voices as well as noting their words. He highlights the hybridity in the language too. Sometimes the shift between languages is marked, "Well, Ko Ba Sein, how does our affair progress? I hope that, as dear Mr. Macgregor would say'—U Po Kyin broke into English—'eet ees making perceptible progress?'" (5) But sometimes the shift is silent. This meeting of Elizabeth and Ma Hla May is one of the times when the translation is silent, and its silence is significant. Flory is able to utter such a horrible threat to Ma Hla May "casually"—in front of Elizabeth—because he does not say it in English. His violence is thus hidden from Elizabeth because of the language

barrier. Especially since Elizabeth is new to Burma, Flory can be confident that she will not understand his vicious threat.

The mimicry of Flory is twofold. He treats native mistress Ma Hla May harshly but he also gets away with it because of his position of superiority. He knows the language; Elizabeth does not. Instead of taking into account the values of the Burmese culture—in this case, the language—in order to contribute constructively within the stratified world around him, he uses his knowledge to reinforce the oppression of a Burmese character, an oppression he otherwise rails against.⁵ If he were just another Englishman threatening just another Burmese woman, he'd only be exploiting his privilege: hardly admirable but not unexpected given the setting. But since Flory has already attempted to identify himself as better than his fellow Club members in part because of his appreciation of the Burmese culture, he is also hypocrite mimic man. This scene demonstrates emphatically the difference between mimicry and ambivalence.

As he relies on the advantage of being English, Flory exposes himself to the Burmese characters' unfavorable judgments. When he and Elizabeth happen upon a *pwe*, which he describes to her as “a kind of Burmese play; a cross between a historical drama and a revue, if you can imagine that” (104), their presence becomes the central focus of everyone at the event. While Flory's stated intention is merely to stop and “watch a few minutes” (104), the special attention he and Elizabeth receive—they are offered chairs in order to sit with the Burmese clerks and officials in attendance and the best dancer is asked to perform well ahead of schedule in honor of the English couple's presence—is something Flory could certainly have expected. He is, after all, trying to impress Elizabeth. As we find out as the scene ends, though, with Flory and Elizabeth leaving

before the performance has been completed, the Burmese do not see him as a sympathetic, independent Englishman trying to appreciate their culture, which is how he sees himself. As the two hurriedly leave the *pwe*, because of Elizabeth's growing anxiety about stopping at the event, the Burmese crowd "made way with a sulky air. How like these English people, to upset everything by sending for the best dancer and then go away almost before she had started!" (109). This observation is significant because it paints Flory merely as one of "these English people," without any of the sensibilities that he sees as differentiating him from the other English people. Flory would see such a characterization by the Burmese as a demotion, since he usually conceives of himself as different from, and more sensitive than, the other English characters.

The description of Flory and Elizabeth as they leave the *pwe* shows that he does not understand the subtler rules governing life in Burma as well as he thinks he does, for all of his demonstrations about understanding Burmese culture. The stratified relationship between the English and the Burmese does not permit him, or anyone, for that matter, to stand just incidentally with one foot in each world. The analogy in the text for Flory's vulnerability is the liminal position occupied by Mr. Francis and Mr. Samuel, the two Eurasian men. It is a nice irony that Flory understands their situation well enough to explain it to Elizabeth without seeing how their condition implies his own. Flory usefully explains to Elizabeth why Francis and Samuel must rely on the charity of other Burmese in order to survive:

You see, Eurasians of that type—men who've been brought up in the bazaar and had no education—are done for from the start. The Europeans won't touch them with a stick, and they're cut off from entering the

lowergrade Government services. There's nothing they can do except cadge, unless they chuck all pretensions to being Europeans. And really you can't expect the poor devils to do that. Their drop of white blood is the sole asset they've got. (126)

Of course, holding non-negotiable assets is the equivalent of having no assets at all. The two men stand insecurely between the opposing cultures of their parentage but lack the power to transform this in-between status into constructive ambivalence. As a result, they are isolated, vulnerable to and ostracized by both cultures.

Flory understands the vulnerability of Francis and Samuel but never sees it in himself, even though his birthmark is a conscious and visible source of insecurity for him. It is fair to say that he doesn't draw the connection between himself and the two Eurasians because he is English and as such assumes he is acceptable to the English characters by default as well as immune to the judgments or schemes of the Burmese. He says as much early in the novel when Veraswami warns him that U Po Kyin is plotting to tarnish Veraswami's reputation and that only membership in the European Club might protect him. Veraswami also explains to Flory that as a friend of the doctor's Flory might also be susceptible to the machinations of "the crocodile," the nickname Veraswami gives U Po Kyin because "he strikes always at the weakest spot" (48). Flory's dismissive response to this news foreshadows his demise and emphasizes his incomplete understanding of the world he has lived in for fifteen years, "All right, doctor, I'll beware of the crocodile. I don't fancy he can do me much harm, though . . . I'm an Englishman quite above suspicion" (47-48).

Flory never makes the complete, exclusive commitment to these rules. Only such an all-out adherence could have protected him, unless he had adopted a truly independent position from the start, in which he would have rejected these rules as a matter of course. He follows the rules when they suit him. Such a contingent commitment leads to disaster. After he receives a letter purporting to prove Veraswami's moral lassitude, Flory first realizes that the "obvious, the decent course was to give the letter to Dr. Veraswami and let him take what action he chose" (79). But Flory immediately retreats from this considered, decent, position, even though he recognizes it as such, to one that relies on what he understands to be his status as an Englishman:

And yet—it was safer to keep out of this business altogether. It is so important (perhaps the most important of all the Ten Precepts of the pukka sahib) not to entangle oneself in 'native' quarrels. With Indians there must be no loyalty, no real friendship. Affection, even love—yes. Englishmen do often love Indians—native officers, forest rangers, hunters, clerks, servants. Sepoys will weep like children when their colonel retires. Even intimacy is allowable, at the right moments. But alliance, partisanship, never! Even to know the rights and wrongs of a 'native' quarrel is a loss of prestige . . . if he, Flory, were too conspicuously the doctor's partisan, there might be hell to pay. Much better to pretend the letter had never reached him. (80)

All of these intricate and largely unstated relationships Flory understands. Yet, instead of adopting the doubled position that might allow him to do what he knows to be the decent thing (to bring the letter to Veraswami's attention), he leaves himself vulnerable to the rules as they stand by trying to use them to his own advantage. He takes the "safer" route

out of a “native” quarrel involving the man who is supposed to be his friend. In other words, even though his birthmark suggests that he might be able to perceive his world through a point of view synthesized from others’, he never abandons his own narrow, self-interested point of view, which is determined by the privilege of his Englishness.

But if his image in the eyes of the Burmese is complicated, so is the way the English see him. Flory does not belong unproblematically among them, either. Westfield, in an attempt to be tolerant of Flory early in the novel, calls him “not a bad chap Says some Bolshie things sometimes. Don’t suppose he means half of them” (31). To Westfield, the only way to make Flory’s difference acceptable is to dismiss it. Macgregor agrees, “Oh, a very good fellow, of course” (32). Conscious attempts must be made by the other Englishmen to authorize Flory’s membership among them. He is not accepted as an unstated article of faith as is the case with the others, but must be affirmed aloud by the other Club members.

His downfall is anticipated by the narrator’s interruption in this early scene: “Every European in India is ex-officio, or rather ex-colored, a good fellow, until he has done something quite outrageous. It is an honorary rank” (32). Flory’s “outrageous” crime has less to do with Ma Hla May’s accusations in the climactic scene in the church and more to do with his refusal to completely accept or reject the prevailing rules of the empire. His honorary rank as a “good fellow” is finally revoked during the scene at the church where Ma Hla May publicly defames him for his exploitation of her youth.

As the hateful Ellis makes crystal clear early in the novel, even Flory’s color is the subject of some dispute: “He’s a bit *too* Bolshie for my taste. I can’t bear a fellow who pals up with the natives. I shouldn’t wonder if he’s got a lick of the tarbrush himself. It

might explain that black mark on his face. Piebald. And he looks like a yellow-belly, with that black hair, and skin the colour of a lemon” (32). Ellis’s observations about Flory’s skin color show just how honorary Flory’s membership is; they also connect explicitly the protagonist’s physical difference with the “bolshie” nature of his opinions. Finally, Ellis’s remarks associate Flory with Francis and Samuel.

Ellis uses the same expression to describe Flory that Flory later uses to describe the two Eurasian men. When Flory explains who Francis and Samuel are to Elizabeth, he tells her that “yellow-bellies” is the “friendly nickname” the English have for them (125). Of course, when Ellis uses the expression it sounds anything but friendly. Ellis’s use of this expression to describe Flory stresses from the beginning of the novel that Flory’s standing with the English is always in some doubt.

British men attempt to appropriate Flory from the ambivalent position and want to make him follow the code of pukka sahib. Even the Elizabeth, an inexperienced character of the native and colonial values, recognizes the rules under which the English are expected to live. We are shown by the narrator what Flory never seems to see in her:

It was not unnatural, with the example of her mother before her eyes, that Elizabeth should have a healthy loathing of Art. In fact, any excess of intellect—‘braininess’ was her word for it—tended to belong, in her eyes, to the ‘beastly.’ Real people, she felt, decent people—people who shotgrouse, went to Ascot, yachted at Cowes—were not brainy. They didn’t go in for this nonsense of writing books and footling with paint brushes; and all these highbrow ideas—Socialism and all that. ‘Highbrow’ was a bitter word in her vocabulary. (96)

Very soon after meeting Flory, Elizabeth starts to suspect him thinking that he'd committed a murder or other serious crime after he might have been an educated person:

“For she perceived that Flory, when he spoke of the ‘natives,’ spoke nearly always *in favour* of them. He was forever praising Burmese customs and the Burmese character; he even went so far as to contrast them favourably with the English. It disquieted her. After all, natives were natives—interesting, no doubt, but finally only a ‘subject’ people, an inferior people with black faces. His attitude was a little *too* tolerant” (121).

There is irony to the mimicry in the disgusting tone of Elizabeth's thoughts, just as there is in her earlier definition of “decency,” one that involves shooting grouse, going to Ascot, and yachting at Cowes. But it's also very clear that she understands that Flory isn't like the other Englishmen and she does not approve of his difference. His views, as it turns out, make him vulnerable to the humiliating scene in the church that seals his fate. By not completely committing himself to the rules of the *pukka sahib* but still being observed to the prevailing social and racial rules instead of carving out some independent place for himself, Flory accentuates his own vulnerability.

This vulnerability of Flory is because of dislocation from his culture to the third space or hybridity. In the space there lies the vulnerability of the colonial authority. In their book *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory* Raman Selden et al. discuss Bhabha's concept of hybridity as the vulnerability and rejection of the colonial authority as:

Bhabha sees hybridity as a ‘problematic of colonial representation’ which ‘reverses the effects of the colonialist disavowal [of difference], so that

other “denied” knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority’. Once again, the ‘production of hybridization’ not only expresses the condition of colonial enunciation but also marks the possibility of counter-colonial resistance: hybridity ‘marks those moments of civil disobedience within the discipline of civility: signs of spectacular resistance’. (227)

Focusing upon the resistance in the hybrid situation Selden et al. continue that the very third space in the contact zone asserts the difference rejecting the colonial culture. They add further:

Such a theory of resistance is further extended in his theorization of the ‘Third Space of enunciation’ as the assertion of difference in discourse: the ‘transformational value of change lies in the rearticulation, or translation, of elements that are *neither the One* (unitary working class) *nor the Other* (the politics of gender) *but something else besides* which contests the terms and territories of both’. (227)

The rearticulation of new value and resistance to colonial value is clearly seen in the character of Flory in the novel *Burmese Days*.

III. Hybridity as the Dominant Phenomenon in *Burmese Days*

As we analyze the novel *Burmese Days* from the postcolonial perspective of cultural hybridity in the contact zone between the colonial and the native Burmese culture, we see the instances of hybridity in various characters in the novel. The central character of the novel, Flory, a colonial timber merchant, is the representative character who shows the ambivalence and hybridity between the two cultures and he shows the mimicry which threatens his colonial authority. As Bhabha and Mary Louise Pratt both see the new third space in the contact zone between two cultures in which the new hybrid culture emerges. This phenomenon is transculturation or the cultural hybridity.

In the colonial Burma, the British culture comes into the contact with the native Burmese culture and the cultural hybridity, ambivalence and mimicry are clearly visible in the contact zone or the in betweenness. Flory is inclined to the native values and criticizes the colonial rule in Burma but he also enjoys the superior, dominant position being a colonial officer. This hybrid position makes him to mimic the native as well as the colonial values that threaten his position on the one hand and the colonial authority on the other hand. This brings the confrontation between him and his fellow colonial officers in the all European club of Kyauktada.

Dr Veraswami, the native doctor of Kyauktada is also a mimic man who blindly favors the colonial rule and the British colonial authority which never gives him the importance. He tries to copy the cultural values of the Europeans and finally becomes unreliable person both to the natives and the colonizers. Ma Hla May, the native mistress of Flory, is also the ambivalent character who wants her great social reputation of the wife of a white man. She is corrupted by the European way of life which she enjoys being the

mistress of Flory. She secretly keeps a Burmese lover even when she is a mistress of the white man, Flory, thus, she rejects the colonial authority of a white man.

Further, the hybrid generation of Eurasians is seen in Burma that comes from the physical relation of the white men to the native women. This group is neither the white nor the native. Flory shows sympathy to this group of people and talks to them even though they are ostracized both by the colonizers and the natives. The inclination of Flory to the hybrid generation is also the example of the cultural hybridity. The colonial whiteness is mimicked on the skin of the Eurasians and the colonial blood and its purity comes to end with this group of people.

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