

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY
Central Department of English

Hybridity in *Burmese Days*

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Abstract

Based on his firsthand experience in the colonial life in Burma, George Orwell's first novel *Burmese Days* recounts the story of an Englishman based on the far away Burmese village of Kyuaktada. Orwell served as a colonial policeman in Burma for a short time, the experience during which he lavishly and artistically utilized in writing this novel. The novel has as its protagonist a timber merchant disfigured by a birthmark which the very thought of which erodes his confidence, and separates him from his compeers. He does not have the moral courage to stand up for himself to defend his beliefs, his friendship with the doctor, and to expose the villainy of the cunning magistrate. But there is the presence of a romantic streak in this otherwise completely unromantic Orwellian protagonist: when Elizabeth Lackersteen, the bobbed blonde, arrives from France consequent to her mother's death, Flory catches her fancy at once. And truly: he is ready to accept her as his better half well after the revelation that she had jilted him for a more prospective youth, a certain Verall of the Indian Infantry.

The plot of the novel recounts the conflict between a plotting Burmese and an anglophile Indian doctor named Veraswami. The Burmese magistrate eventually works out an irrevocable downfall in the social standing of Flory by exposing his liaison to the whole community, and also of the doctor for whatever power the doctor has is dependent upon his friendship with Flory. The novel, essentially, is dedicated to exposing the hypocrisy of the Europeans, the villainy of the Burmese magistrate, and the subservient mentality of the Indian doctor. While doing so, it also throws a critical gaze at the British Empire that has done little more than destroy the life of the people under its colony.

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