

INDIA THROUGH EASTERN AND WESTERN EYES:
WOMEN'S AUTO/BIOGRAPHY IN COLONIAL AND POST-COLONIAL INDIA.

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

This thesis, unless indicated otherwise, is my own work and has not been submitted at any other time for another degree.

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ABSTRACT

During the course of my dissertation I demonstrate the way in which Anglo-Indian women writers of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century diverge from the genre of the “feminine picturesque” as explained by Sara Suleri in her book, The Rhetoric of English India. I look too, at what Indo-English women use as a genre, instead of the “feminine picturesque”. I also apply Spivakean ideas on representation to their writing in order to see the similarities and differences between my primary texts and the theory.

I begin my dissertation by explaining what Sara Suleri means by the “feminine picturesque” and how I intend using it to better understand the primary texts I look at. I also explain Spivak’s ideas on representation and how I intend using them to further my appreciation of Anglo-Indian and Indo-English writing of this period.

I conclude my thesis by discussing my findings with regard to the theorists looked at, and how their ideas have been reflected in the four principal texts I examined.

CHAPTER ONE. THE “FEMININE PICTURESQUE” AND REPRESENTATION.

In *India through Eastern and Western Eyes: Women’s Auto/biography in Colonial and Post-colonial India*, I intend examining contemporary ideas around the “feminine picturesque” and representation, in order to prove that these two areas of interest provide valuable tools in better understanding Anglo-Indian and Indo-English writing of this historical time period.

In this chapter I discuss the two theories put forward by Sara Suleri and Gayatri Spivak on the “feminine picturesque” and representation respectively. I state what these two theories involve, what their particular characteristics are and how I plan to use them to better understand the complex nature of the Anglo-Indian and Indo-English auto/biographies I looked at. I found during the course of my dissertation that although Suleri’s genre definitely existed in early nineteenth century Anglo-Indian writing, it was later replaced by a more positive, less psychologically troubled style of writing amongst Anglo-Indian female writers. In terms of representation I am interested to find out how the representing process was carried out before Spivak’s time, what were the similarities and what were the differences between her ideas and those of the female authors I looked at. The first chapter is essentially a brief explanation and a summary of the two theories that underpin my thesis.

In particular, I will be looking at this work in relation to Lady Curzon’s letters which constitute both an autobiography and a biography, M.M. Kaye’s autobiography, divided into two books, Attia Hosain’s autobiographical novel and Pupul Jayakar’s biography on Indira Gandhi. I chose these four works because I wanted to cover

both an Anglo-Indian private and public life as well as an Indo-English private and public life. I also chose these particular works because they represent women who were unique in their achievements for their time in history. I am hoping to show in my thesis that my two areas of theoretical interest, the genre of the “feminine picturesque” and representation, provide valuable tools to better understanding the four works studied and the land they portray.

I chose these two theorists as Suleri puts forward new ideas on the style in which Anglo-Indian women wrote, and I wanted to see whether the Anglo-Indian women I looked at, namely Lady Curzon and M.M.Kaye, in fact wrote in this way, and if they did not, why they did not and what style they elected to use in its place.

I chose Spivak’s work because she provides vital points as to how the accurate representation of third world/subaltern or illiterate women should be carried out. I wanted to see how the women I looked at, writing for the most part during the last part of the nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, gave voice to this group of women, and in particular I wanted to look at the differences between the way they chose to represent and the way Spivak advocated going about the representation process.

The genre of what Suleri calls the “feminine picturesque” is a genre utilised by Anglo-Indian women as a means of suppressing their fears regarding the alien land they came to inhabit. It represents an attempt on the part of Anglo-Indian women to overcome their alienation from the land. It is characterised chiefly by a somewhat breezy and domestic tone. In Suleri’s eyes the “feminine picturesque” enables the Indian experience to be objectified and owned, and is characterised by its tendency to be anecdotal rather than

historical; it is also characterised as being quasi-religious.

In *The Rhetoric of English India*, Suleri comments: “Anglo-Indian women were amateur ethnographers confined to the periphery of society, entering the political domain in order to aestheticize as opposed to analyzing” (75). Anglo-Indian women entered the political domain as the wives of military or political men, who ensured the smooth running of the Raj apparatus.

Suleri feels that the Anglo-Indian woman’s function “was to produce both visual and verbal representations of India that could alleviate the more shattering aspects of its difference, romanticizing its difficulty into the greater tolerability of mystery, and further regarding Indian cultures and communities with a keen eye for the picturesque” (Suleri 75-76).

According to Suleri, “for the female as colonizer, the picturesque assumes an ideological urgency through which all subcontinental threats could be temporarily converted into watercolours and thereby domesticated into a less disturbing system of belonging” (75-76).

Suleri suggests that “English women stood for the all that made up the English home, that they were the embodiment of all that the Englishman must protect and that they were a so-called safeguard against the imagined dangers posed by the Eastern woman” (75-76). Chief amongst the dangers posed by Eastern women was that of contaminating the Anglo-Indian race and rendering Anglo-Saxon blood less pure through mixed relationships between the races.

Suleri implies that the “feminine picturesque” used by Anglo-Indian women “manipulates the genre into a complex, cultural expression of ambivalence about her role as a segregated and segregating presence” (80).

It was also, according to Suleri, a style that showed increasing helplessness in the face of Anglo-Indian feminine vulnerability, especially immediately before and after the Mutiny of 1857.

In conjunction with the “feminine picturesque”, I will also be looking at issues of representation, issues discussed by Gayatri Spivak in her essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” This essay focuses on the issue of whether the First World, Western academic is able to “speak to” as opposed to “speak for” the Third World woman. In the auto/biographies I look at, I will see in what ways the Western or elite colonial subject represent Third World/subaltern or illiterate women.

This role of the First-World, Western academic is succinctly put in Spivak’s own words:

Reporting on, or better still, participating in, antisexist work among women of color or women in class oppression in the First World or the Third World is undeniably on the agenda. We should also welcome all the information retrieval in these silenced areas that is taking place in anthropology, political science, history, and sociology. Yet the assumption and construction of a consciousness or subject sustains such work and will, in the long run, cohere with the work of imperialist subject-constitution, mingling epistemic violence with the

advancement of learning and civilization. And the subaltern woman will be as mute as ever.

In so fraught a field, it is not easy to ask the question of the consciousness of the subaltern woman; it is thus all the more necessary to remind pragmatic radicals that such a question is not an idealist red herring. Though all feminist or antisexist projects cannot be reduced to this one, to ignore it is an unacknowledged political gesture that has a long history and collaborated with a masculine radicalism that renders the place of the investigator transparent. In seeking to learn to speak to (rather than listen to or speak for) the historically muted subject of the subaltern woman, the postcolonial intellectual systematically unlearns female privilege. (Grossberg 295)

Spivak highlights the extremely important point that we never have complete access to self-understanding, that there is no such thing as self-understanding and that people have very different desires which underpin the process of representation on both sides, namely that of the First World woman and that of the subaltern.

She says in her essay that the act of “standing in for them” by first world women is extremely problematic as one is never just transmitting knowledge, but that one is always making decisions and choices as one goes along. The first world woman decides how to write things down. Spivak makes the point that it is vital not to deny the role of the subaltern woman in representation; she feels that the subaltern needs to be acknowledged and made “visible”. Spivak suggests that the first world

woman doing the representing should say that she is unfortunately being forced to represent, portray and speak for the subaltern. Spivak stresses that the First world woman needs to make as visible as possible the ways in which she is shaping the material, she needs to constantly reflect on her position – for example how her class position affects the decisions she makes. Spivak reiterates that the first world woman must be as open as possible, that she should not downplay or deny the way she is “standing in” for the subaltern. For example, if she is doing a feminist reading, she should state this, the fact that she is representing the subaltern in a certain way and that it is not just her/the first world woman’s voice. Spivak highlights the point that one brings one’s own politics and class assumptions to bear on the representation process and that these need to be made visible. At the same time, Spivak says, one needs to make the subaltern’s position visible; she is also interpreting and shaped by her culture. One as a first world woman, needs to be alert and clear as to what factors, cultural assumptions etc she is bringing to the interview. What is being represented is the text of two people in all their complexity, and this needs to be brought out and highlighted.

Spivak suggests that one will never get the whole truth from this exchange between the First World and the subaltern woman: it will most definitely be distorted; it can never be the truth of their experience, given the fact that we do not have full understanding of ourselves. Nevertheless, the first world woman must recognize that the full truth is not being represented, but that what is being represented is extremely valuable all the same. Spivak suggest that what is gleaned from the subaltern is distorted not only by ideology but also by one’s fears, desires, prejudices,

assumptions and preconceptions, and that what is ultimately represented is not a full truth about the speaking self describing its own understanding of the self; she says that one can never fully understand oneself completely, in that one does not have access to the unconscious, and that this needs to be taken cognisance of.

Spivak suggests that in order to circumnavigate the political minefield around speaking for other people, one has to ask pertinent questions such as what does this woman know, what is her experience of the world, how can I enter into her consciousness? Spivak says that one needs to be more open about both subject positions, more honest and to make clearly visible the limits of the representation process. As a representor Spivak suggests that one needs to make sure that people understand that this is a conversation from both sides, that it is a series of give and take, that it is ultimately a two-way process.

Spivak concludes her paper by stating categorically the importance of effective representation:

The subaltern cannot speak. There is no virtue in global laundry lists with “woman” as a pious item. Representation has not withered away. The female intellectual as intellectual has a circumscribed task which she must not disown with a flourish. (Grossberg 308)

Although most of the woman authors I looked at in my research were writing before the work of Spivak was available, I am interested to see the way in which they represent the subaltern woman, how they record her voice, what they include and

what they leave out both about her and about themselves. It is interesting that the women I looked at all gave mention of the subaltern woman from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. Spivak would I am sure have approved of the fact that they were concerned with and in fact did in some cases, give voice to these underprivileged women, no matter how distorted their representation of voice may turn out to be.

CHAPTER TWO. LADY CURZON'S LETTERS ON INDIA: LETTERS OF A VICEREINE.

Although Sara Suleri's idea of the "feminine picturesque" most definitely existed in Anglo-Indian writing, especially of the mid-nineteenth century India of the British Raj, I did not find much trace of it in the letters of Lady Curzon addressed to her mother and father. Lady Curzon was writing during the period 1899 –1905, almost forty years after the mutiny took place in 1857; and this may go some way in explaining why her writing is not characterized by this distinguishable Anglo-Indian characteristic. I found her writing for the most part to be realistic, outspoken and honest; at times she was almost patronizing, and lacked in-depth understanding of the culture within which she lived. One can perhaps conclude from this that the "feminine picturesque" was a genre that characterized Anglo-Indian writing of the mid-nineteenth century, but that it almost disappeared in the later writing of Europeans living in India.

A particularly useful insight of Suleri's is her gloss on the remark, "What sketching I shall do!", as "Rather than suggest any uncomplicated aesthetic self-gratification, her remark reflects a long-standing nineteenth-century tradition through which British women in the colonized subcontinent were required to remain on the peripheries of colonization, collecting from that vantage point peripheral images of people and place" (78). Suleri describes this particular brand of woman as being "amateur ethnographers, entering the political domain in order to aestheticize rather than to analyze" (75).

In an extract from Lady Curzon's Letters, I think one can easily comprehend what Suleri's understanding of the Anglo-Indian woman being placed on the fringes of society

as a mere decorative feature entails. The Curzons had an extremely good marriage, a fact that is reflected in the Vicereine's Letters; and although she was close to her husband, nothing in her letters reflects her being intimately involved in the formation and creation of British foreign policy in India. She was very supportive of him in her capacity as his wife and constantly refers to the weight of his work-load, but she never gives graphic details of what this work-load entailed, or if her input on his affairs counted. In the extract I shortly quote one can see her lack of analysis. What one is given is a detailed description of what she saw in her semi-privileged position as Vicereine; she does not go into the political ramifications of what the various meetings with Indian nobility meant to her husband. She gives detailed, intimate details of the scene before her, of political and diplomatic protocol. The fact that she is restricted to the "periphery" of the proceedings is highlighted by the fact that she was "hidden behind a screen". She seems to imply that she had an interest in her husband's affairs, but was offered no visible outlet for this interest by Raj protocol. Although Lady Curzon is aware of certain aspects of Indian culture, she is also oblivious as to why her husband and his Indian counterpart should partake in a "lame conversation", the one culture being dominated by the other and there probably being a lack of cultural awareness on both sides. Her lack of cultural sensitivity is highlighted at the end of the extract when she gives the accoutrements of Indian diplomacy to her child to play with.

Saturday morning George received the Maharajas of Kashmir and Patiala. He sat on a throne made of silver with huge golden tigers for arms, and beside the throne to right and left were rows of chairs, a high

silver one for the Maharaja. Behind the chairs stood red-clothed chaprasses [attendants] holding peacocks' tails, yak tails with silver handles and huge maces, quite twenty of them, and the big Hall was lined by the Guard of Honour. When the Maharaja arrived nineteen guns went off, and he marched up with his ministers and brothers, George advancing the necessary distance to the edge of the rug; he then led him by the hand to his chair, George sitting down on his throne (I was hidden behind a screen)]. Then began a lame conversation, George making polite remarks, then came the giving of pan -- a kind of nut in silver paper - which was brought in a dish on a tray by a chaprasse, and George pressed a piece in the Maharaja's hand, and the Foreign Minister, Sir W Cunningham, did the same to the rest of the Maharaja's suite. Rose-water was then brought in silver flagons on a large tray and George put some in a golden spoon on the sleeve of the Maharaja, Sir W Cunningham doing the same to the Maharaja's suite.... The whole of Monday George spent returning these visits to the Maharajas in their houses taken for the occasion; they received him in state, but as I wasn't there so I can't describe. He returned from one visit with a huge tinsel chain round his neck -- the ADCs and secretaries also festooned in the same way. These decorations were promptly bestowed on Irene [one of Lady Curzon's two daughters], who now prances about hung like a Christmas tree with tinsel garlands. (Curzon 22)

What the above extract clearly highlights is Lady Curzon's "periphery" role in the entire proceedings. She was not physically visible, but she took an active interest in the goings-on of her husband. It also highlights her lack of cultural knowledge at times and her insensitivity, a feature which is to be repeated in her letters. Suleri suggests that the "feminine picturesque" was a genre used by Anglo-Indian women in order to suppress their fears regarding the alien nature of Indian culture. Lady Curzon didn't find Indian culture alien, not that she expressed this aspect in her writing, which puts a distance between herself and the people she and her husband governed. Suleri also suggests that the tone of the "feminine picturesque" is breezy and domestic. I think one can characterize Lady Curzon's writing in this way in part as she downplays her cultural difference to the people of India. Her writing would seem to indicate a surface knowledge of the people she governed as well as a need to justify this governance.

The Hindu is very superstitious, and many things which have happened since our arrival have meant prosperity. Firstly, rain fell all along our journey from Bombay and the weather is cooler than it has been for many years. Secondly in many places the crops have been splendid. Thirdly in Bombay two little cows – you know they are worshipped by the Hindu – joined our procession and ran in front of the state carriage, and this incident was very popular. Then we look so young and happy and bow and smile unceasingly when we are out and this pleases everybody. (Curzon 25)

Lady Curzon clearly articulates her alienation from the land she ruled, and in fact in

the following extract, she claims to miss and see as a positive attribute Indian cultural features, although she is probably incapable of describing their cultural significance. In this respect I would differ from Suleri's observation that Anglo-Indian women feared the alien nature of Indian culture and strove to hide this fear in the breezy, domestic tone of their writing. Lady Curzon was obviously an exception to the Anglo-Indian rule, clearly relishing as opposed to fearing the alien, as well as giving voice to what she saw as different from her own European culture.

...[W]e went up on the roof of the house to watch an Afridi Khattak sword dance. It was strange and weird as they wore flowing white garments and sung round a bonfire in a huge circle waving swords in dangerous proximity to their neighbours' heads and as they grew more and more excited kerosene was poured in the flames and the band grew so excited that the players turned summersaults over their drums and danced too. There is an activity in native bands which I miss in ours.
(Curzon 44)

Lady Curzon throughout her letters shows great appreciation and sensitivity towards the beauty of the Indian landscape and its architecture. She is in fact deeply critical of her race's spoiling of this beauty through the erection of architectural eyesores that do not blend in with the harmony of the existing architecture and landscape.

The Mosque dignitaries met us.... You walk into a courtyard the size of Grosvenor Square with lovely pink sandstone colonnades on the right and left and in front

the most beautiful mosque in the whole world – its face is white marble framed in the beautiful rose red Delhi stone . I laughed with satisfaction and joy as it all surpassed anticipation, but the ghastly monstrosities of modern barracks of yellow brick three stories high fairly crushing all the beauty is a rude reminder of the present masters. All the other conquerors have beautified Delhi but the British have disfigured existing beauty and invented the most frightful iron and brick modernities to stand alongside the splendour and beauty of the past...

(Curzon 45-46)

In her first description of a meeting with a “native” woman, Lady Curzon illustrates to the reader that not all Indian women posed a threat to the European woman. In this instance Lady Curzon is in fact aiding her husband to bring about British diplomacy; she as a woman is able to establish more of a rapport with the Begum than he in fact would be able to do. In Indian culture there would appear to be somewhat of a segregation between male and female, especially amongst the ranks of the nobility, a segregation which Lady Curzon was able to breach by being female; the Begum feels closer to her as a fellow woman than she does or is able to be to Lord Curzon for example. In this instance the Begum as an Indian woman does not represent any “imagined dangers posed by the Eastern women”; she is in fact an ally who needed to be brought on board the Raj apparatus, and Lady Curzon successfully accomplishes this feat as an Anglo-Indian woman. In this instance of diplomacy, Lady Curzon is far from banished to the

“periphery” of political events. Once again in the following extract one is given a feel for Lady Curzon’s appreciation of Indian culture which is both respectful and irreverent:

She met me at the door and took my hand, and to my utter surprise led me to a dais, on which sat the Viceroy’s chair of state. This she motioned me onto, while she sat on a less grand chair on my left, and Mrs Barr on my right: the big room – all ugly chandeliers and candelabra on the floor and pillars wreathed in paper flowers – reeked of attar of roses. We talked a little, and I admired the magnificent gold carpets with which the whole room was covered. She presently garlanded me with flowers, and sprinkled me with attar, and gave me the inevitable pan, a kind of nut to chew and then, with all her nobles, in the gorgeousest clothing I ever saw, we started a tour round the illuminated gardens. Captain Marker was waiting outside, and his face was a study as I emerged hand in hand with the tiny masked Begum, and we walked in procession through the hundred thousand twinkling lamps.... It came off in a huge tent, all hung with gold brocade and after the ices the little Begum came and sat between George and me, and made a speech in Urdu. It was the climax of the Begum’s day: to see the tiny veiled woman standing and making a speech proclaiming her loyalty to England; to which George replied proposing her health.... (Curzon 48)

In terms of representation the above extract illustrates the way in which Lady Curzon “speaks for” as opposed to the more enlightened “speaking to” a subaltern woman. In this exchange between the Begum and Lady Curzon there is no dialogue between two equals, as Lady Curzon would appear to be “standing in for” the Begum, making decisions and choices for her as she goes along. Lady Curzon in this representation fails to make the “other woman” “visible” as she denies her an active role in the representing process. Lady Curzon does in no way make apologies for the fact that she is being forced to represent, portray and speak for the “other woman”; she never seems to reflect on her own subject position. What we find in this extract is purely the voice of the first world woman who fails to highlight the stance she is taking with regard to the way in which she is representing the “other woman”, in this case the Begum of Bhopal. Lady Curzon also fails to make the “other woman’s” position clear in that she does not indicate in any way the way in which the “other woman” is also interpreting and being shaped by her culture. Spivak stresses the fact that one needs to be aware of the factors such as cultural assumptions etc that one is bringing to the interview; Lady Curzon would appear to be totally ignorant in this regard. Spivak states that what is being represented in an exchange of this nature is the text of two people in all their complexity, and that this needs to be brought out and highlighted. Lady Curzon in her interview fails to achieve this objective; hence, what we as readers are left with is a distorted view of the exchange between the first-world woman and the subaltern. This distorted view of the “other woman” is a feature that is to characterize all of Lady Curzon’s exchanges with “other women”; one can only assume that the distortion of the exchange is the unconscious result on Lady Curzon’s part of the crucial role she

could have played in accurately portraying the role acted out in the interchange between the subaltern and the first-world woman. I think that although one can severely criticize Lady Curzon's representation of the exchange between herself and the subaltern, she was a product of her time and this is reflected in her representing process; she at least does take cognizance of and an interest in these women whom later twentieth century intellectuals would more accurately portray given Spivak's more detailed advice with which to conduct an interview that involves representation of this nature.

In another extract between Lady Curzon and the "other woman", one is given physical details of the exchange but no in-depth mental observations. Lady Curzon simply reflects on the physical beauty of the exchange and the diplomatic decorum, but the reader is never given insight into the "other woman's" view of the exchange, in other words it fails to be a two-way process of representation; one is only left with Lady Curzon's impressions, which although interesting, leave one wanting to know more about the Indian women she met. Once again the interlude referred to in this extract illustrates the segregated nature of Indian society; the Vicereine deals with the Maharani and her female entourage as well as all matters relating to female issues, whereas the Viceroy deals with the Maharaja and the masculine side of Indian society. I think Suleri is right when she suggests that one is often left with a feeling of the "picturesque" in Anglo-Indian women's writing; this is clearly the case in this extract, where one is left with a rather superficial rendering of what had the potential to afford a deeper insight into the female side of Indian and indirectly European public life under the British Raj. One is, I think, rather annoyed with Lady Curzon's inability to initiate a more

meaningful exchange between herself and the subaltern women she comes into contact with. In this extract one is given a physical appreciation of these women but no rendering of the inner workings of their individual psyches and intellects. Again, I think Suleri has a point when she says that Anglo-Indian women appeared to be “restricted to the periphery of society entering the political domain only to aestheticize as opposed to analysing”; in this extract Lady Curzon had ample scope to analyse the situation in which she found herself, but instead she chooses for whatever reason to remain merely decorative, which is somewhat annoying for a twenty-first century reader who would like more of a representation process along Spivakean lines rather than the account given, which, although not wholly governed by the “feminine picturesque”, is sufficiently tainted by it to leave the reader with a representation process which is somewhat inconclusive and frustrating. Lady Curzon in her capacity as Vicereine had a golden opportunity to provide posterity with valuable information regarding the “other woman”, an opportunity she fails to fully seize.

At 11.20 I went with Captain Marker and Mrs Barr to see the school for Native girls which the Maharaja has endowed and housed in the old palace in the Native city.... A dais with a silver canopy stood at one end, with a crystal chair on which I sat gingerly. Several ladies were present, and I was told the Maharani was behind a curtain looking on opposite. About 60 native girls of all sizes, dresses, and shapes, proceeded to sing me a song of welcome and then do an English drill. It was droll and graceful, as they did it with Native music, and the silver anklets on bare limbs, gauze attire, and frequent view of the leg,

made a very Oriental rendering of dumb-bells and crossbars [also] the slow graceful swaying and flower wreathed sticks and drowsy cadences of Indian guitars. After they had done their drill and heaped garlands of flowers at my feet, Mrs Barr and Mrs Heyland, the lady who is teaching the little Maharani, took me over to see her. She and her mother-in-law and their ladies were huddled behind screens and sitting on stamped velvet Maple chairs. I shook hands and sat down and tried to talk to them all. Such jealousy exists between Mother-in-law and daughter-in-law that any too frequent remarks to the latter were resented by a good kick to her daughter-in-law under the chair, which I saw and so devoted my attention to both. The Maharaja's wife is a dear little person about seventeen, with a bright pretty face and the tiniest little form. She is not much bigger than Irene, and was married at eleven. The mother is a huge, fat, cake-coloured lady. Both were dressed in gauze draperies and wore very fine jewels. The little Maharani had the most splendid nose ring of pierced diamonds. I presently went away and promised to come and see them after dinner.

(Curzon 49-50)

Other extracts show, that despite the fact that Lady Curzon can be accused of employing the “feminine picturesque” in some of her letters, what she cannot be accused of is a fear and dislike of the alien land she inhabited from 1899 to 1905. Her letters continually testify to a great love and fascination with the Indian landscape. In her writing she at times demonstrates an in-depth knowledge of Indian cultural and historical facts. She is

also deeply appreciative of the Indian architecture she stays in and visits. Her visits to famous and not so famous architectural sites signal an avid interest in the buildings, if not in the Indian people themselves; she did not isolate herself from the culture within which she lived; instead, she actively took measures to expose herself to it and to get to know it better.

This morning at 9 we drove to Brindabar, eight miles away. Krishna spent his childhood here, and left his sacred foot steps in some stone which is duly worshipped. We first drove to see a new temple which the Maharaja of Jeypore has spent fourteen lakhs [one lakh = 100,000 rupees] in building. He will not complete it, as his priest told him he will die when it is finished. We then went over a grand old temple built in 1575 by a Jeypore Maharaja, and much mutilated by the bigot Aurangzeb in the last century. The crowd in the great open space in front of the temples was enormous.... George and I are living in the Palace enclosure at Akbar's Prime Minister's house, which is a beautiful eight-roomed red sandstone house exquisitely carved. The girls are living in the house Akbar built for his Christian wife.... After dinner, which I had in my room, we went to see the mosque illuminated: it was magnificent, and Sulim Sheikl Akbar's tomb was absolutely beautiful seen by moon and lamps. The marvellous open work, glistening marble and the mother-of-pearl tomb I shall never forget. (Curzon 53)

Throughout her letters Lady Curzon gives the reader a detailed physical description of what she sees and is exposed to, but she fails to provide the reader with a detailed analysis of the significance to her of what she sees and experiences, in for example political terms.

As vicereine she was exposed to the most elite social stratum in Indian society – the Maharajas and Maharanis of her day, yet she fails to give details of for example the families of the women, or even descriptions of the Indian women themselves who took care of her children, or of the numerous servants who catered for her and her husband's every need. I don't think one can accuse Lady Curzon, as one can other Anglo-Indian female writers, of rendering India mysterious; she in fact lifts the veil on many so-called mysterious elements of the culture; one thing she can be accused of is "regarding Indian cultures and communities with a keen eye for the picturesque" (Suleri 75), a feature which is noted in the following extract. Also notable in the extract is Lady Curzon's on-going love affair with Indian architecture; in this case one is made aware of her intense appreciation of the Taj in Agra.

The Maharajas of Bharatpur and Dholpur came and the [illegible] was covered with gorgeous pearls. He brought his two little boys: the one of six was a little dear; he was very sleepy and lay down on the sofa and went fast asleep, and remained oblivious to the noise of the party for the whole evening. His pagri, or turban, which was a mass of jewels lay on the floor by his side, and I stationed a guard over him as we all went to supper and left him alone fearing his emeralds the size of eggs might vanish in the night. This afternoon Captain Maler and

Captain Baker-Carr and I went to the Taj. I had seen it once but it is so exquisite that we went again, and climbed a minaret. No words of mine can give any idea of the Taj. It is the most divine creation of a building in the whole world, and it quite silences my meagre descriptive powers by its appalling beauty. After dinner, on our way to the station, we went again to the Taj, and saw it by faint moonlight. It seems more lovely and ethereal in this light.... (Curzon 54)

Lady Curzon does not seem to apply her love and interest in Indian architecture to the country's people, including Indian royalty. In a description of an Indian Rani she met in Calcutta, one is again left with the impression of an opportunity missed to provide a rich representation an East-West exchange between a first-world European woman and her "other woman" counterpart. Instead, what one is left with is a detailed comic description of the physical features of an "other woman" with no feeling for the give and take needed in a beneficial and accurate two-way representation process. Both women come off badly from this cultural and social exchange; the European or first-world woman comes across as being critical, condescending and even patronizing, making no attempt whatsoever to come to terms with the "other woman's" cultural difference; the "other woman" on the other hand comes across as being somewhat exotic and even strange or bizarre in dress and mannerisms. Lady Curzon's description reinforces Suleri's idea of Anglo-Indian women writing as "amateur ethnographers" as seen in the following extract:

At 3 a Rani, who is in strict purdah, came to see me. Her sedan chair

was brought to the door, and she popped into the drawing room, wearing huge Turkish trousers of bright pink, a white jacket, and at least 60 yards of bright blue gauze wound about and dragging behind her; and on her head a very quaint silver ornament, fan arms of a Dutch windmill, eight inches across, fastened on her forehead, and two wreaths of silver flowers forming a kind of hat. Her hair was parted up the back, and bunched amidst the silver roses on the top of her head. She spoke a little English, and I asked her how long it had taken her to come in her litter, expecting her to say five minutes, but she said twenty years! She said to Lady MacDonnell that her health was poor, and Lady MacDonnell asked her from what she was suffering. She replied, 'Me inside out'. The trial of holding grave faces was terrific, and as soon as she had gone we roared with laughter. I forgot to say she had white silk gloves on, with rings on each finger over the glove.... (Curzon 56)

Lady Curzon's encounter with "other" women, for the most part members of the

various Indian Royal families or their entourage, renders these individuals little more

than exotic birds of paradise. These opportunities which could have given rise to detailed

representations offering valuable information to both the First World and the "other

woman", give little more than physical descriptions of meetings between the two

different types of women from the viewpoint and perspective of the First Worlder. No

valuable cultural interchange occurs between the two groups of women as a result of

their meeting, largely, one assumes, because of cultural obstacles on both sides, as

opposed to language barriers which translators and interpreters would have

surmounted. The impressions of the first-world-the other woman meetings one is left

with in Lady Curzon's letters are disappointing for the lack of adequate and accurate as

well as informative representation they offer; what one is left with is a form of

representation unflattering to both sets of women, but this is probably a

reflection of the cultural codes and mores of the time. The following extract taken

from a visit Lady Curzon paid to the court of Hyderabad illustrates this impasse:

Hyderabad was restful and hot, and the Purdah party very amusing.

All men were banished from the Residency for an hour and a half, and

a screened entrance arranged where veiled ladies got out of their

carriages after the horses had been taken out and the coachmen had

retired. The wives of the Nizam's officials came, and most of them

wore cloth of gold tight trousers and long saris twined about their fat

forms, bare arms covered with bracelets, and anklets twinkling and

necklets jangling. None of the Indians had seen each other before, as

the purdah is so strict here that they never go out and had only come to see me, and then were as interested in staring at each other as at me. Mrs Barr interpreted for me, while I made feeble conversation and Evey played for them, and we fed them on tea and they went away giggling and pleased. One huge lady amused us. She wore green plush trousers, and above her waist was a broad expanse of nakedness, then a short transparent green lace coat, and over all a transparent gauze sari. So very little was left to the imagination... (Curzon 143)

Lady Curzon's *India, Letters of a Vicereine* leaves one with a sense of the vicereine's great love and interest in India's architecture and landscape, but she also leaves one with a very limited insight into the Indian people, especially the women. The few encounters with women that she does record leave one with a sense of the "other woman's" cultural difference, and her exoticism if not oddity in the eyes of the first-world woman. In Lady Curzon's eyes one gets the idea of "excess" on the part of the other. This is seen sometimes with revulsion but sometimes with admiration, for example her pleasure in the sight of the emeralds. What also comes across is her need to protect the other, as well as their so-called child-like qualities. She is also highly patronizing when she says, "we fed them". This also comes across in the tone of mockery at the Rani wearing her rings over her gloves; once again Lady Curzon suggests the superiority of Western etiquette over that of the indigenous.

I think one can see in Lady Curzon's writing traces of what Sara Suleri calls the "feminine picturesque" although she does not fulfil the criteria of this genre fully,

having moved on to a more progressive form of the style, being less neurotic and parochial. In terms of representation it is interesting to note how fractured and limited her representations actually are. What they in fact tell us, is the degree to which she was biased in favour of her own culture, as well as her lack of knowledge concerning for example Indian religious mores and etiquette. She comes across as being somewhat culturally naïve. Her representations tell us more about her own attitudes and beliefs when faced with the “other woman” than they tell us about the “other women” themselves.

CHAPTER THREE. M.M. KAYE'S THE SUN IN THE MORNING.

In M.M.Kaye's autobiography of her Indian childhood, the genre of Suleri's "feminine picturesque" is to be found even less than in Lady Curzon's Letters, perhaps because the book evokes the author's childhood which began almost three years after Lady Curzon left India in the early twentieth century. The genre has not totally disappeared, however, as one still finds instances of alienation vis-à-vis the land within which the Anglo-Indian child lived. As in Lady Curzon's Letters there is a great love for the Indian landscape and her civilization as well as for her people. Turning to representation, "the other woman" is "spoken for" by the author, which reflects the balance of power in Spivak's eyes, but at least the Anglo-Indian child was aware of this discriminated group of underprivileged people at such an early age. It is interesting to look at the instances of representation in the autobiography, in order to see the more progressive view they provide the reader with, and finally one is able to look at the ways in which they can be improved upon and brought up-to-date.

Early in the autobiography Kaye explains her close relationship with India and her people; the true extent to which she was integrated into the culture in which she lived and grew up. This extract shows how, within a time frame of approximately five years, the Anglo-Indian appreciation of living in India has become more comprehensive and less distant than in Lady Curzon's time; however, the fact that it is an adult writing about her childhood could have something to do with the change. In terms of the early style of the genre, gone is the idea of being banished to the "periphery" of an event; once again writing of childhood could have something to do with this. Gone too is the

aesthetisizing as opposed to analyzing function of the Anglo-Indian woman; the Anglo-Indian child provides the reader with deep, well thought-out ideas about certain issues. One thing Kaye is not guilty of is “providing visual and verbal representation of India that could alleviate the more shattering aspects of its difference,” neither does she romanticize its difficulty “into the greater tolerability of mystery”: she presents the land and her people first-hand through glasses which are not rose-tinted. All the above features can be noted in the following extract.

There was a popular song in the 1930s with a refrain that began:
 ‘When I fall in love, it will be forever. Or I’ll never fall in love’.... I don’t know exactly when I fell in love with India, but it was certainly forever and it must have happened at a very early age. About the same time that I began to talk, I imagine, for the first language that I spoke with any fluency was Hindustani and all the earliest songs that I became familiar with were the old, old lullabies of India: ‘Arre ko ko; jarred ko ko’; ‘Nautch kurro, Baloo’, ‘Ah’za dindah’; ‘Ninni, baba, ninni’: and many others. I loved the sounds of India. The myriad noises that seem weird or harsh, or merely ‘foreign’ to the ear of the average Westerner, will always spell ‘home’ to me . I loved the scent of India. The look of it. The colour of it. And most of all I loved the people. (Kaye 81)

A lot of Kaye’s ability to integrate with the land and especially the people was largely due to the open-minded attitude of her parents, who had both been educated to

have a wider outlook on life and the issue of race. We are not given any details of Lady Curzon's parents, but one can perhaps rightly assume that they were more conservative in their outlook on life than, say, Kaye's were. Kaye's appreciation of her lifestyle is less painterly and more reality based, less detached, withdrawn and intellectual, and more involved. Kaye finds nothing "disturbing in her sense of belonging to India, she experiences no "subcontinental threats which she needs to convert into watercolours." There are no signs of "helplessness in the face of Anglo-Indian feminine vulnerability". At no time throughout the autobiography, which spans from 1908 to approximately 1930, does she experience a sense of vulnerability; she consistently feels herself to be at one with the Indian culture and in fact has difficulty accepting her own native British culture when confronted with it during her boarding school years.

To begin with it never occurred to me that I wasn't one of them. I merely thought of myself as belonging to a particular sect in a land that was chock-full of sects and castes and races speaking a wide variety of different languages and a bewildering number of dialects. It was as simple as that. And fortunately for me, neither of my parents would have known what you were talking about if you mentioned that modern and grossly overworked epithet 'racist'. To Tacklow [her father], as with the early Greeks and Romans, and in their day the Venetians, all men were 'people' irrespective of race or colour: there were good people and bad ones, nice or nasty ones, clever or stupid ones, interesting or boring ones – plus all the degrees that range

between those poles. But all the same. Just ‘people’. His fellow men. As for mother – born in China of devout missionary parents who believed that the Bible was an exact account of man’s beginnings – she assumed that all men and women, no matter what country of the world they were born in, were descended from Adam and Eve; and that was that! (Kaye 81-82)

Kaye’s autobiography is full of descriptions of the author’s integration with the land; mention is also made of “the other woman”, a mention that is severely lacking in terms of adequate representation. The “ayahs”, those women who played such a vital role in the upbringing of Anglo-Indian children, are in this instance not personalized by race, neither is the reader given details of age, where each came from, whether she was married, had children, spoke English, what her level of education was; instead this very important woman is described in passing, so we know of her presence but very little of substance is given regarding her background, similar to the royal Indians in purdah that Lady Curzon encountered. Their insubstantial, fleeting representations leave the reader feeling justifiably infuriated with the lack of vital information that they could provide. These unknown women facilitated the Anglo-Indian child’s integration into Indian culture by teaching him/her their language and the folktales of their civilization, amongst other important functions.

The nanny-children envied our greater freedom and our ability to chatter to any Indian we met in the Bazaar or the Mall, in our own or other people’s houses, or anywhere else. Their nannies would read

them stories at bedtime; Peter Rabbit or Little Red Riding Hood. But our ayahs, together with our many acquaintances in the town, would tell us enthralling tales about the doings of gods and heroes. We learned early why Ganesh has the body of a man and the head of an elephant, how the langurs – the grey, long-tailed and white-whiskered monkeys that were Kipling's bandar-log – acquired their black faces, and how Rama rescued Sita from the demon king of Lanka (which in my day was known as Ceylon) with the help of the monkey god, Hanuman. Our ayahs would sing us to sleep with the age-old nursery songs of Hindustan, and let us run wild in a way that no British nanny would have permitted. We felt truly sorry for the nanny-children.

(Kaye 87)

The all important presence of “the other woman” in the shape of the Anglo-Indian child's ayah facilitated entry into a world that would have been very difficult for the Anglo-Indian woman to have entered, especially given the language barrier. The speaking of Hindustani enabled Kaye to penetrate a world hidden to the average Anglo-Indian woman. This penetration enabled her to experience the culture of “the other woman” first-hand, and to formulate her own thoughts on it. Unlike Lady Curzon, who had to make use of an interpreter nine times out of ten, Kaye had direct access to Indian culture; this enabled her to make friends with “the other woman”, a feature that Lady Curzon was unable to entertain, primarily from a language point of view, but also culturally; she felt the Indian culture to be alien, and almost comic in its strangeness compared to her own cultural norms.

Our servants and their families lived in quarters behind their employer's house and since children are indifferent to colour, creed, class or rank (until or unless they are taught otherwise by some grown-up) every inmate of those quarters was a personal friend.

There was far more caste discrimination between the occupants of the servants' quarters than there was between them and us, and we absorbed them through the pores of the skin. Bets [her younger sister] and I learned without being told that this or that food or action was taboo to Sundria because of her caste, but all right for Kullu and his nine-year-old daughter Umi because of theirs. That Ahmad Shah could do things that little Mira Singh couldn't, because one was a Pathan and the other a Sikh – and so on. This is the best way to learn anything; particularly languages. (Kaye 92)

Kaye's exposure to another culture taught her valuable lessons for living in a multicultural world. Also the fact that she was a female child gave her access to worlds she would not have had access to as a male child. This feature provides the reader with interesting and valuable information regarding the lifestyle of "the other woman"; however, she, like Lady Curzon, does not seem to take maximum advantage of this privileged position, giving details of "the other women's" culture on a superficial level only. Opportunities for Spivakean type representations are sadly missed on numerous occasions, presumably because the author is recalling her childhood, and not interested in giving details of the kind needed for an adequate two-way

representation to take place.

I can still remember the shock that a small girl, brought up to believe that lying was a major sin experienced in hearing such a loved and admired grown-up calmly admitting to telling lies as though it did not matter at all! It stood all my ideas of morality on their heads and left me totally bewildered. But it taught me an early and valuable lesson: that people of different nationalities do not necessarily hold similar views or think in the same way – just as they do not worship the same God or conform to the same laws. If the Khan Sahib felt it was all right for his people to tell lies, then it must be right – for them. But that didn't mean it was all right for me, for I was an Angrezi (English) and Angrezis obviously thought differently. And why not? After all, my father only had one wife, but I knew that rich old Mahommed Bux had three, because Jinni, one of his daughters, who was a particular friend of mine, had told me that her mother was only the second wife and therefore of less consequence than the senior one; and also that both Number 1 and Number 2 would gang up on the junior one who, being the old man's favourite, had it in her power to put both their noses out of joint – which, according to Jinni, she did on every possible occasion...

I also knew that the luxurious Simla-style chalets that stood in the grounds of a palatial house owned, and occasionally occupied during

the season by a certain Croesus-rich ruler of one of India's many semi-Independent states, were bibi-gurhs, women's quarters, that housed three Maharanis – His Highness's mother the Dowager Maharani, and his senior and junior wives – together with at least two other lovely ladies of no specified rank, plus the usual quota of female relations, royal children and a swarm of waiting women. Of these only the children and one of the lovely ladies (who happened to be Polish) and the humbler waiting-women, were not in purdah. The Maharanis could only attend purdah-parties, but their children were invited to all the birthday and fancy-dress parties that Bill [the author's elder brother] and I, and later Bets and I, attended, and ayah would often take us to play in their beautifully kept garden. (Kaye 98-99)

Kaye seems to have come a long way from the genre of the "feminine picturesque" used by writers immediately before and immediately after the Mutiny of 1857; she seems to have almost replaced this genre with a new type of passionate realism. This new style seems almost entirely devoid of all the neurosis which accompanied the old. Gone is the quasi-religious element, as is the somewhat domestic and breezy tone, which is here replaced by a heartfelt sense of belonging, appreciation and adoration of the land, especially after returning to her native land of England, where the differences between the two countries are made very clear. Gone too is the idea of suppressing fears regarding the alien land the Anglo-Indian woman/child came to inhabit – in the following extract the idea of experiencing fear is completely missing. The overall picture provided by the extract

is of an individual at one with her landscape and deeply observant of its awesome physical beauty.

The trees and flowers in Belait had lacked the flamboyance of those of India; as had the plumage of the birds and the colour and size of the butterflies. Then there were no monkeys or pi-dogs or jackals, and (this was a distinct asset) no dangerous wild animals either. But apart from the last, I had seen very little to admire in my native land and had been delighted to see India again. India never let me down; not then or later. And one of the clearest memories I have of my first rapturous homecoming is of standing in the garden of a house on Bombay's Malabar Hill, where we were staying with friends for a few days after disembarking, and seeing the fishing fleet put out to sea in a spectacular sunset – the kind you never see in Western countries. The last low rays of the sinking sun had caught the sails and made them look like a flight of pinkish-gold butterflies drifting out over the darkening water, and overhead the sky was turning green, while on Malabar Hill the trees were full of birds coming home to roost and the air smelt of jasmine and roses, and I could hear the far-away sounds of the city drifting up from below. (Kaye 172)

In stark contrast to the lyrical descriptions of landscape, important humans are given short shift. In talking of one of the Hindu celebrations, a glancing reference is made to “Punj-ayah” the author's Indian nanny.

Again, we are given no personal details of this very important woman in the life of the Anglo-Indian child, such as an accurate representation would put across; instead we are left with a semi-detailed account of her menial role in the cleaning up of the Anglo-Indian child after the festivities have taken place. We as readers are given information as to her physical role in the life of the child, but none whatsoever of her mental make-up. There is none of the two-way dialogue that Spivak calls for, the giving of voice to the subaltern through the intermediary voice of the Westerner, hence once again valuable knowledge is lost in the one-sided representation process offered by the Anglo-Indian child. This fractured process is going to occur again and again through the autobiography where the all-important Indian nanny is referred to by name alone, and then her physical actions in relation to her charges is detailed; we are left with no personal information regarding these subaltern women who played crucial roles in the bringing up of Anglo-Indian children.

In addition to our personally invented diversions, and all this prancing around on the exciting side of the footlights, there was also the time-honoured festivals of the country, to which our Indian friends could be counted on to invite us. There were the annual celebrations of Holi, which is the great festival of the lowest and by far the largest of Hindu India's four major castes. It is a colourful and joyous Saturnalia that lasts for several days and appeals strongly to the child who never quite dies in even the oldest of geriatrics, since while it lasts people squirt each other with coloured water and pelt each other with fragile tissue-paper packets of vividly tinted powder that explode like miniature

smoke-bombs. We enjoyed this exhilarating pastime enormously, but poor Punj-ayah, lumbered with the task of cleaning us up afterward, strongly disapproved of it. And no wonder! For a topi, a frock, or a pair of shoes that have been doused with alternate jets of scarlet water and green and purple powder is practically a write-off. (Kaye 200)

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the alienation talked about as a characteristic of the “feminine picturesque” has not disappeared entirely in the writing of Kaye, and the following extract is an example of this. Although the sense of alienation is clearly articulated, it does not underpin all her writing as it did with the earlier Anglo-Indian writers; it is a single instance which I was able to find in her autobiography, and I think most people who were not members of Indian culture would find the sight she describes somewhat alienating and discomforting, even if they knew the cultural reasons for the religious ritual.

The first Mohurran procession I ever saw was in Simla, and I suspect that I may have badgered the Khan Sahib to take me to see it. But though I remember being charmed by the glittering, swaying tarzias, my clearest memory is of the horror of seeing them followed by squads of vociferous devotees, naked to the waist, who carried short-handled, many-thonged whips, each thong ending in an iron nail, with which they flogged themselves in time to the shouted chant of : Yar Hussan! Yar Husain! while the blood poured down their backs and stained their white loincloths scarlet. It was a horrid sight and it darkened my

day. (Kaye 202)

In the following extract we are once again given a brief glimpse into the life of the Indian nanny; she is mentioned briefly in passing, as are her ideas regarding the spot where the author and her sister liked to play. Needless to say, this important woman is not given vital details other than the fact that she was a constant presence in the lives of the children, and she did not approve of what they did, for reasons not explained in detail by the author. What one gains in this extract is the idyllic world of childhood in a foreign land, where perhaps some of the difficulties experienced by Anglo-Indian women would have been unknown to children. The author's deep integration with India is, I think, greatly facilitated by the fact that she experienced it as a child, so numerous barriers with which Anglo-Indian women would have had to contend did not apply to her. Her experience of India is portrayed as magical and romantic; she has no need to turn her experience into something quasi-religious, as she is not faced with the hurdles of her Anglo-Indian women predecessors.

Punj-ayah could never understand our fondness for the cemetery, which she herself regarded as a 'place of the dead' and therefore an ill-omened spot. But it never occurred to either of us to think of those who lay buried there as 'dead'. John Nicholson – Nikal – Seyn – and all the men who had died in the battle for Delhi and whose names were carved on the worn, lichen-blotched slabs and headstones, together with the many British men, women and children who had joined them here in the long years since then, were only asleep; drowsing

peacefully in the warm silence under the grass and flowers and the lilting butterflies, lulled by the soporific cooing of the little grey ring-doves, and dreaming of home. (Kaye 212)

The following extracts, which detail the author and her sister Bets' playing in the gardens of Old Delhi, all give us examples of Anglo-Indian children's identification with the foreign land they lived in, together with brief glimpses of their Indian nanny and her psychological make-up. The author is observant of her Indian nanny and comes to the realization that she liked to chat with her fellow nannies; also, as another extract details, she was not partial to insects, a feature which allows the two children greater freedom to roam. Through the extracts one comes to the realization that the children seemed to spend more time with their "ayah" than with their actual mother, and it is a great pity we are not given more insight into the way this woman and others like her functioned.

Close to the cemetery were the Nicholson Gardens: a public park full of trees and lawns and neat flowerbeds, where there was an ornamental fountain that was supposed to have come from Chatsworth – or was it Blenheim? – and two stately avenues of bottle palms at the junction of which, perched on a high plinth, stood a statue of John Nicholson, sword in hand, facing the battered walls of Delhi and the shell-pocked Kashmiri Gate near the spot where he had fallen. Punj-ayah approved of the Nicholson Gardens. It was a nice tidy place in which the dota-missahibs were unlikely to get up to any mischief or dirty their hands,

shoes or clothes. Besides, there were always plenty of other ayahs as well as European nannies and their charges in the gardens, and she enjoyed a good gossip with her fellow countrywomen. (Kaye 213)

I don't remember how we managed to beg, blarney or possibly blackmail Punj-ayah into letting us go on using the top of Kidsia Begum's gateway as a secret hideaway and playground. We probably used a mixture of all three. But whatever it was, it worked. She refused flatly to climb up after us (she was scared stiff of all forms of creepy-crawlies and not particularly partial to any form of animal life), but she never gave us away and we continued to use it for two glorious cold weathers. But alas, nothing lasts forever.

(Kaye 217)

The fact that children are able to cross barriers and overcome hurdles that adults, especially Anglo-Indian women, could not, is illustrated in the following extract where the two girls meet and befriend a saddhu, something one cannot imagine Lady Curzon or even the girls' mother doing. This ability to break down barriers provides them with access to Indian life not normally accessible to Anglo-Indians, especially the women.

We had passed the time of day with many holy men; met with by the roadside out Mashobra way or in the streets and bazaars of Simla and Old Delhi, so it did not occur to us not to speak to this one. And like the other wandering, ash-smeared ascetics of India whom we had from

time to time had speech with, this one too presumably regarded the foreign baba-log as being below the age of caste, for he did not shoo us away but became a great friend. We called him Bappu-ji, and whenever we passed that way we would stop and talk to him and bring him presents of fruits and rice, which he accepted courteously, though I don't know if he ever actually ate them. Possibly not, though it seemed to me that he was holy enough to have sanctified anything he cared to eat or touch. He had an endless fund of stories to which we listened round-eyed and enthralled; squatting on our heels Indian-fashion in front of him – an art that many Anglo-Indian children learned when young but which few, if any, can have retained, since without constant practice it is soon forgotten; and once that happens it is lost for good. Bappu-ji told us stories about animals, gods and demons, and it was from him that we learned how the little tree-rats, the Indian chipmunks, got their stripes, and how the peacock acquired the eyes in his tail, and scores of other legends and folk-tales of the land. He had been born and spent much of his youth in Delhi, but after he became a bairagi he had roamed all over India and visited so many places of pilgrimage that if the tale of his travels had been written down it would have filled a dozen books. (Kaye 219-220)

What the extracts in this chapter have shown in terms of the “feminine picturesque” is that there has been a definite shift forward away from the paranoia and neuroses of the old style, to be replaced by a new genre which I have characterized as being that

of a passionate realism. As already noted, the alienation is still there, but it was noted on one occasion only, and this one occasion being an understandable one. The fact that the author is an adult, looking back on her childhood, gives the autobiography an all-encompassing romantic, magical and enchanted tone, Anglo-Indian children not being subjected to the numerous barriers and obstacles faced by Anglo-Indian adults, especially women.

In terms of representation, there has not been much change from the representation found in Lady Curzon's Letters. Again, the reader is somewhat frustratingly left with brief physical descriptions of "the other woman" which could have been substantially filled out, if the author had been using a Spivakean framework. Alas, the representations all tend to be very one-sided, in favour of the opinions and viewpoints of the Western onlooker, with little or no two-way process taking place between the two parties. Nonetheless, "the other woman" is seen by the author, and mentioned in her writing, along with a minimal description of the way she was seen to operate in Anglo-Indian society of the early twentieth century.

CHAPTER FOUR. ATTIA HOSAIN'S SUNLIGHT ON A BROKEN COLUMN.

In this chapter I will be looking to see if the “feminine picturesque” is characteristic of Indo-English writing, which can also be characterized as being of a passionate realist genre, but without the nostalgia and romance of a work like Kaye’s, as well as observing how representation is carried out amongst non-Western women.

Sunlight on a Broken Column is semi-autobiographical, with “Laila” representing Attia Hosain. It was written and first published in 1961 and recounts the author’s life: born in Lucknow in 1913, she was educated in Lucknow and was the first woman to graduate from university from the traditional and feudal “Taludari” class into which she was born. She comments on her English liberal education which was combined with growing up in a Muslim household where she learnt Persian, Urdu and Arabic. In 1947 she moved to England with her husband and two children and worked for the BBC as a journalist, amongst other things.

The novel starts out with a description of Hakiman Bua, the author’s Indian nursemaid; as in. Kaye’s autobiography the picture we are given of her is sketchy, to say the least. She comes across as a traditional Muslim woman, devout and concerned with the marriage of her charge.

I began reading even more than I normally did, with no censor to guard Baba Jan’s library now, until Hakiman Bua, who had fed and nursed me, changed from her admiring “My little bookworm finds no time for mischief” to remonstrating, “Your books will eat you. They will dim

the light of your lovely eyes, my moon princess, and then who will marry you, owl-eyed, peering through glasses? Why are you not like Zahra, your father's – God rest his soul – own sister's child, yet so different from you? Pull your head out of your books and look at the world, my child. Read the Holy Book, remember Allah and his Prophet, then women will fight to choose you for their sons." (Hosain 14)

The descriptions of the "other woman" are still restricted to the physical, with nothing said of their inner mental state. Laila, the narrator; is sympathetic to their plight; whilst her cousin sees this empathy as coming from Laila's Western education, she herself feels that the servant woman gets what she deserves.

At the far end the sweeper woman was sweeping dead leaves from the path. Behind her trailed two of her children, naked, thin-limbed, big-bellied, with dirty noses and huge black eyes. She came nearer, bent over her broom of thin sticks.

"You blind fool," shouted Zahra, "do you want to bury us in dust? Can't you see the dopattas are lying there, still wet? Is this the time to be sweeping here?"

"Bitia, forgive me, but there is so much work inside the house. This is the only time I have for sweeping here."

I felt a guilty wonder at her resigned lack of resentment. (Hosain 45)

It is interesting to note the derogatory way in which the Indo-English woman views the Anglo-Indian woman. The comical way in which Lady Curzon described the

Indian ladies in purdah and the various royal ladies she met, is here reversed, when Laila and her cousin Zahra condemn the unfortunate Mrs Martin, a friend of their aunts.

As she gushed towards us in her flowered dress and feathered hat, her voice smothered in refined cotton wool, we giggled our surprised greetings, then politely and seriously wished her “Good Afternoon”.

Her eyes were blue and lashless, her hair soft as buttermilk, her lips thin and blue-tinged; and many Eastern years had dried and dulled her skin and netted it with little veins. (Hosain 46)

In her grandfather’s house, Laila is exposed to a broad spectrum of women, not all of them subaltern, but Indo-English women all the same. Again the representation process is far from adequate; what one is given is a brief physical description plus what makes that particular woman stand out in Laila’s eyes. It is interesting to note the vast range of women to whom the author had access during her childhood in the early twentieth century just before the partition of India.

The Hakim’s wife, for instance, perpetually, gigantically pregnant, who complained that in restoring the youth of senile Maharajahs, Rajas and Nawabs her husband unduly prolonged his own; and the lawyer’s wife who made annual pilgrimages to the saint’s tomb at Ajmer Sharif because each winter she was possessed by a spirit that recited lewd Persian and Arabic verse and mocked at God; and the painted,

powdered, scented young Rani of Bhimnagar with sad, doe-like eyes, whose husband brought home from each annual trip to Europe a new young woman, ostensibly as a companion for his wife; and the Indian Christian lady doctor who wrote a text from the BIBLE on each prescription for non-believers.

But the most interesting of all was Mushtari Bai. (Hosain 63)

It turns out that this woman was a courtesan who, having lost her singing voice, fell on hard times and turned to religion to absolve herself of her past sins. We are not given the woman's social class, but as a result of her profession she inhabited the higher echelons of society. Once again, as in all her previous representations, the author fails to engage in a two-way process of dialogue between the narrator and Mushtari Bai, and as a result valuable information is lost and we are left with a very one-dimensional representation.

Laila's contact with the female servants in her grandfather's house results in superficial observations which fail to provide the reader with detailed information about the personal status of these "other women"; they are merely referred to in passing, as part of the landscape of the house which she shares with them. Unlike Lady Curzon she does provide a summarized version of their collective history, relating how they came to be part of her grandmother's household.

Ramzana was her tiresome self, too ready to giggle, too ready to wail.

(Hosain 68)

They were stupid but cheerful, not much older than Zahra and I. Their

dark and pockmarked faces were saved from ugliness by the beauty of youth, though its privileges were prohibited, and its spontaneity suppressed. (Hosain 71)

They had helped their mother work in the house from the moment they had been able to fetch and carry to the time she had died of consumption. She had been sold as a child during a famine, and given to my grandmother who had brought her up, trained her as a maid-servant, then married her to a young man whose family had served our family for generations. He had abandoned her and his daughters for a smart, rustling-skirted, red-coated Ayah, who had found him a job with the English family where she worked. (Hosain 71-72)

Laila is a very astute observer, as her comments on her uncle's wife's blending of Eastern and Western ways reveals. Laila gives a very detailed physical description of her aunt, which hints at disapproval.

Aunt Saira was Uncle Hamid's echo, tall and handsome, dominated by him, aggressive with others. He had her groomed by a succession of English 'lady-companions'. Before she was married, she had lived strictly in purdah, in an orthodox middle-class household. Sometimes her smart saris, discreet make-up, waved hair, cigarette-holder and high-heeled shoes seemed to me like fancy dress. (Hosain 88)

The narrator allows her female servant Saliman to speak, and her speech is deeply critical

of the female servants employed by Laila's aunt Saira. Her speech gives the reader insight into her traditional education steeped in folklore.

“This Nizaman Bua,” she told me, “has a long tongue and when she nags, I feel as if I had cleaned my teeth with a neem twig dipped in sour lemon juice. Her heart isn't big like Hakiman Bua's: it is like a dried mango seed. As for Begum Sahib's Ayah, I think she's sucked the blood of one of those fine mem-sahibs she worked for, she puts on such airs and graces you'd think she were a white woman come out of a charcoal pit.”

“Are they unkind to you?”

“I don't give them a chance, Bitia. I don't go looking for thorns to prick me. But you should see them sometimes – like snakes hissing at each other, and watching which strikes first.” (Hosain 121)

Sometimes the text gives voice to the subaltern and they are allowed to tell part of their story. Perhaps because Laila is roughly the same age as the servant girls, they confide in her, and instead of speaking for them, a classic Spivakean mistake, she allows them to speak for themselves. What we gather from their speech is that their life is in fact a very difficult one in which they see the only way out as being a fairly-decent marriage arranged by their father; until such time they seem to be at the mercy of the various males they come into contact with, fellow servants or masters. What their speech also conveys is the close network of female companionship amongst the female servants; they provide support for each other should the need arise. What the

extract shows us is how little control over their own destinies these women actually possess; their lives are very much in the hands of other people.

“They took Saliman [Laila’s maid] away and who or what could stop them? Not all your kind thoughts and good intentions. Better to be my father’s mule that sometimes digs in its heels and will not move even when it is beaten, than to be poor and a woman.”

“Laila, Bitia, you don’t know what life can be for us. We are the prey of every man’s desires. But only if that fool Saliman had listened to me. I could have told her no man is worth a woman’s loving or trusting. Believe me, I’ll marry the first old goat my father finds me if he will keep me in comfort.” (Hosain 168)

“Poor fool! But they will arrange something, you can be sure. Some old man will want a young slave to cook his food and press his feet. But she must suffer first. I know, and could have told her. But do you think she would have listened to advice? Did I? Does anyone? No, Bitia, we cannot escape our destiny or the devils inside us. Oh, Bitia, my heart is so heavy.” (Hosain 168)

Laila gives an Indo-English impression of “the other woman”, a Rani who has come to vote in a local election. Laila’s reflections on this woman demonstrate the complexities of a society formed by Eastern and Western philosophies; she sides finally with the former, deciding that they are more genuine and truer to the people of

India.

I smiled mechanically as I led the simple Rani outside, but I felt anger building up inside me against Mr Cowley because of the patronage that had crept into his voice. Who was he to expect her to understand what it had taken his people centuries to learn? But for the grace of circumstances and education there go I, I thought, looking at her ugly shape heaving into the curtained car. Yet she is more true to herself than all the simpering, sophisticated ladies with their modern small-talk oozing out of their closed minds. She is closer to the people than us, sitting, standing, eating, thinking and speaking like them, while we with our Bach and Beethoven, our Shakespeare and Eliot put ‘people’ into inverted commas. (Hosain 258)

Laila is a very perceptive observer of “the other woman”. She clearly describes, with no comment, the wife of her cousin, who has embraced Indian Nationalism in the wake of India’s Independence.

Perin Wadia, like others of her group, has transposed the Ajanta look into the twentieth century – the manner of her dress and coiffeur, though she spoke of ancient culture in European idioms. She had even tried to learn the Bharata Natya style of dancing, and gone to an ashram in the south for a period of meditation. (Hosain 282-283)

The narrator observes the subtle and not so subtle changes in the non-Western woman as

a result of an element such as a Western education and Indian Nationalism. When describing her female servant, Laila is a total realist, relating what has happened to Nandi since she herself married and Nandi came to work for her.

Nandi was, at this moment, in my home looking after my daughter. She was no longer the girl who had tantalised men and antagonised women because she was so completely naturally and fearlessly feminine. Ghulan Ali [Laila's uncle's butler] had scarred her face, the years had added unsightly layers over the lines of her nubile body, and respectability had smothered her mind and spirit since she had stopped being a washerwoman and become an ayah. (Hosain 290)

Laila lets Nandi speak for herself when the latter describes her life up until the time she comes to work for Laila and her daughter. Nandi's speech reveals her to be a passionate woman with strong feelings, who is at times hard, but always a realist when it comes to her own life and destiny. Nandi's speech also reveals her to be a loyal person who sticks to her word.

She said quite simply, "It is not my husband's, of course. How could that old dotard give me one? If I had stayed at home, even if he had not dared, my father would have thrown me out. Or the old fool might have fancied his youth had returned and claimed the child, and I would have been tied to him for ever. I could not endure him any longer, and I wanted the child. So I came to you, knowing I would be safe here. But, believe me, Bitia," she added quickly, "I would have come

to you and my little one anyway.” (Hosain 291)

Nandi is an independent woman with high hopes for her child; she wants a better life for him than the kind of life she or her family endured.

She said, “I will not let my son become like my people, washing the dirty clothes of others, standing in the waters of ponds and rivers, winter and summer. I shall send him to school, and one day, who knows, he may become a babu in a big office.” (Hosain 293)

Laila is very fond of Nandi and does all she can to help her and her son, including sending her son to a good school. Laila’s relationship with Nandi goes back a long way to childhood.

So I sent the little boy to a school run by Jesuit Fathers. Maybe one day he would become more than the clerk Nandi dreamed he would be. Maybe he would be a civil servant, an officer in the Army or Police, a Member of Parliament. After all others from his school were that today.

I smiled, thinking of Nandi as I walked towards the unkept garden where she and I had played as children. (Hosain 293)

Throughout the semi-autobiography there are shifts in description between the subaltern and the non-Western woman. In a description of Sita Agarwal, her old Indo-English school friend, Laila reveals herself to be an astute judge of character.

Sita was a leader in the new social world. She won people with her charm intrigued them with her calculated attack on conventions, titillated them with her cynical coquetry, impressed them with her hospitality and her wealth. She had become a patroness of the arts, a benefactress of impecunious writers and artists, a collector of ancient works of art and young lovers.

She had little time for her husband, but he was ambitious, fond of drinking and gambling, and glad of the progress he had made because of her. He had been made a director of Agarwal's concerns.

They built a beautiful house in New Delhi, very modern and Western in appearance and conveniences, very Indian and ancient in its decoration. It reflected Sita's character.

(Hosain 295)

The narrator's broad spectrum of friends, reveals the widely divergent strands of culture that contain the non-Western woman. Laila gives a very clear, detailed and perceptive description of her fellow Indo-English school friend, Romana who in her words:

...had been the beautiful, fairy-tale Cinderella who had married a Prince, lived in marble palaces, worn pearls, the size of pigeon eggs and traveled from one capital of the world to another. (Hosain 307)

Laila's comments about Romana show her to have an astute understanding of how the West perceived the Indian subcontinent and its inhabitants, especially its female royalty.

So Romana continued to be her husband's most valuable companion, especially in Europe and America where the mixture proved irresistible of Romana's exotic, Eastern beauty and her husband's centuries-old title. (Hosain 307)

Laila also gives a sympathetic portrayal of her Anglo-Indian friend Joan, which illustrates the complexity of the Anglo-Indian born and brought up in India of British parents.

We corresponded with each other, not frequently, but with constant affection. She had not wanted to leave but her parents had insisted on going 'home' to England after independence, and she had too strong a sense of duty to leave them alone in their old age.

She had written once, "It is not possible – at any time, at any age, to forget the place and the atmosphere where one was born and brought up. I find myself comparing, and contrasting everything with India; and would you believe it? – when my parents now talk of 'home' they do not mean England!" (Hosain 307-308)

The narrator gives voice to both the Anglo-Indian who genuinely established some kind of rapport with India and the one who never truly integrated. Laila's description of the Anglo-Indian governess Mrs Martin is quite acerbic and suggest a rather silly woman living in a nostalgic past which did not take cognizance of the vast changes that had occurred since Independence.

Mrs Martin kept in touch also. Every New Year she sent a card, writing a

short letter at the back. She still made tender inquiries about her 'young charges', her 'dear, dear Ranis and Begums' as if she were still a Governess on holiday from some Maharaja's palace, and not ending her days in a House for Retired Gentlewomen with Spiritualism as her sole interest. The nostalgic dreams of an old woman over seventy remembered comfortable, far-off days and had forgotten the changes between. (Hosain 308)

Mrs Martin is seen to be somewhat patronizing and condescending when it comes to the

question of Indian Independence.

Mrs Martin had been too ladylike to say what she thought of Independence, though she applied to the British Government for an assisted passage home within a few months, but she said with ponderous solemnity, "My dear, we have done our best, and now it is for you to carry on. What is so comforting is that the man at the helm of affairs is so much like a British gentleman". (Hosain 308)

In terms of a style of writing I think one could say Attia Hosain uses a passionate realism, similar to that of Kaye, but at the same time slightly different; gone is the romance and childhood magic of Kaye, gone are the comic interpretations of Lady Curzon. The author writes about her life and about India in meticulous detail; she is an acute observer of the society she inhabits and gives a critical analysis of all that she sees; no-one is spared her eagle eye and ear. She feels strongly about such

issues as the devastation caused by the partition of India into India and Pakistan, and comments on this event with emotional intensity. She is more a natural inheritor of the landscape than the previous two authors.

In terms of representation, there has been a progression with the “giving of voice” to the subaltern maid servants, but there is yet to be the advanced representation found in Pupul Jayakar’s biography of Indira Gandhi. Although there has been a marked improvement in representation, it still has a long way to go in order to provide a Spivakean model.

CHAPTER FIVE. PUPUL JAYAKAR'S INDIRA GANDHI: AN INTIMATE BIOGRAPHY.

In this chapter, as in the previous one, I will be looking at what genre replaces the “feminine picturesque” in Indo-English writing, as well as looking at the ways in which representation of the subaltern or the “other woman” take place.

Indira Gandhi: An Intimate Biography was published in 1988 after Gandhi was assassinated by a Sikh body guard in 1984. Pupul Jayakar, who wrote the biography, was a friend of more than thirty years' standing, and hence was in a position to offer unique insights into the life of this extraordinary woman. Jayakar is chairperson of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage and Vice-President of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. She has also written a biography of Krishnamurti.

Gandhi's grandfather and grandmother used to accept the visits of numerous ranis and begums, and a detailed physical description of these “other women” and what they did in Gandhi's home is given in the biography. Not much detail is given of the inner life of these complex women, and they are not given a voice with which to articulate their feelings. No detail is given of the Indian female servants who serve these begums and ranis.

Motilal Nehru's [Gandhi's grandfather's] practice at the Bar flourished between 1922 and 1929. Indira enjoyed meeting the more colourful of his clients, the begums and ranis who came to consult him. Strict purdah was observed on these occasions. Kanats would be erected at the entrance and only women attendants were present as the veiled

women arrived in curtained cars or elaborate horse-carriages, dismounted and entered the study to sit behind a screen, on the other side of which Motilal Nehru sat, with his law books.

They were tough women who understood the nuances of property rights and adoption law, and they would listen carefully to the legal advice of Motilal. Later they often called on Swaroop Rani [Gandhi's grandmother].

On these occasions men, both relations and servants, were forbidden entry into Swaroop Rani's rooms. The richly dressed women, smelling heavily of rosewater and attar, would enter the room where Swaroop Rani held court. Delicate sweetmeats sprinkled with rosewater and covered with silver foil served on silver plates, and sherbets in crystal glasses would appear. Gold-embroidered fans with lacquered handles would be gently manipulated by women servants so as not to ruffle the hair or the harmony of the ladies visiting the house. At the time it was expected of aristocratic and rich ladies to be fragile in health. It was necessary to their station that they swoon easily and be so wellborn and well brought up that the slightest noise or disorder could destroy their delicate emotional balance. (Jayakar 14-15)

Throughout the biography detail is given of the formation of the classical "other woman" in the sense of being non-Western. Gandhi is however not strictly representative of the "other woman" at this historical juncture as she is not othered in the same way as the

subaltern, given her heritage and class. Nevertheless it interesting to observe the development of a non-Western woman who would have been considered “other” in the past. She was a child born of an Eastern and Western education, which was reflected in her play. It turns out that Indira was a loner mesmerized by strong or individual female characters from Indian and European history and folklore.

At times she would seek a hollow within the tree she was on, where she would nestle and read Alice in Wonderland, tales of Hinduism, fairytales, stories of Rajasthan’s past. She would savour her fantasies, re-enact in her mind imagined adventures.

...At times she would be Alice, and defied the imperious Queen of Hearts, faced a trial where she saw the court collapse like a pack of cards. Yet again she would be Joan of Arc or the Rani of Jhansi leading her people to battle and death. She was always at the center of the stage. (Jayakar 16)

We are given detailed insight into the growth of the non-Western woman throughout the biography, and she is allowed to speak for herself in places. This gives the reader the image of a very independent, forthright woman in the making.

He [Nehru] soon decided to let Indira travel to school on her own. Kamala [Indira’s mother] was anxious Indira felt self-reliant and capable. “I had this tremendous feeling of responsibility, I didn’t think I had a dividing line. I felt I was looking after myself, and whether I

was or wasn't, I was looking after my parents." She had a toughness lacking in most children her age [eight]. (Jayakar 20)

Jayakar mentions the way in which the ordinary "other woman" took up arms in response to the British occupation of India. She shows the way in which they became more public rather than private figures, giving voice to their need to see the foreign invader out of their country. These women broke old traditions in order to come out in support of the struggle.

If the government was dazed by the revolutionary role of women, so was Motilal. In his own house, Kamala, Vijayalakshmi [Indira's aunt], Krishna [Indira's other aunt] and even Swaroop Rani came out to picket, to face the police. The young women wore kurtas and pajamas with white Gandhi caps on their heads. The women of the Nehru household suddenly became orators addressing public meetings, moving from door to door, persuading women who still observed purdah to break free and join them. Indira felt part of it all. (Jayakar 27)

From childhood Indira was a leader, taking the reins of power from as early as twelve years old. As she was not allowed to join the Congress Party, being too young, she formed her own political grouping:

The children of the brigade were between five and eighteen years of age. Indira as General controlled the movement of her army from Anand Bhawan [the Nehru family home]. The little monkeys addressed envelopes, cooked meals, attended to wounded volunteers, sometimes

acted as couriers carrying secret messages to hiding Congressmen.

(Jayakar 28)

The genre employed by Indo-English writers when writing about India is lyrical in tone. It is at the same time realist taking cognizance of monumental historical changes, and taking in all the minute physical details. In the following extract we see India through the eyes of a young Indo-English woman (Jayakar). Gone is the romance and magical enchantment of Kaye's Anglo-Indian childhood.

I remember the scent of flowers and of fresh wet grass; the sound of crickets, the croak of frogs, the cries of the koil bird heralding the monsoons. I remember the first rains, and the inhaling of rain on parched earth. We lived close to the earth, in a tranquillity and an easy flow of time which is the birthright of people who live on soil that has known millennia of civilization.

We played tennis, wore roses in our hair; we invited young professors, middle-aged lawyers, junior bureaucrats to our home; we arranged boat rides on the river, treasure hunts in cars, where we raced through the town, to end with dinner at the house. We sang, told tales. Traditional Allahabad was agog. (Jayakar 34)

The depth of Gandhi's character is conveyed in a letter to her father from school in England. The letter suggests an Indo-English woman who is deep-thinking and sensitive, with a sense of her own destiny.

It is difficult to fit in with the usual British school girl. I have inherited a different life – an entirely different background....I hate chatting unless I have something to say. I can get used to it, as one does to everything. Though having settled down in a regular school life I feel dead (that is the only word which approaches the meaning I wish to convey). (Jayakar 64)

Jayakar, in her biography of Gandhi, gives the reader insight into the complexity of the Indo-English woman. We are given detailed and in-depth knowledge of her character, something which is not afforded the subaltern in this biography or any of the other books I looked at.

Indira was made of many elements. Her close association with the freedom struggle and the stalwarts of the independence movement had molded her life. In many ways she was a reflection of her father's mind. But her years in England and her association with Feroze Gandhi's left-wing friends, journalists and political thinkers had given her a radical conditioning. She was a rebel, anti-traditional and anti-establishment, but a natural cautiousness kept her far away from any major Left commitments. Her early upbringing and her father's interests gave her a love of adventure, a fearlessness, an inbuilt sense of the secular; it also awakened a live curiosity and a constant search for new frontiers. From childhood she had an intimate feeling for nature. But in spite of her early exposure to intellectuals and powerful

activists, she had lived within the confines of a society which hemmed her in, gave her little opportunity to reach out, meet people, explore the arts or investigate a life of the mind.

She had her own refuges: her world of fantasy and an inner sanctuary where from childhood on she could take shelter when threatened. Her early years in Allahabad, her sharing with her grandmother in seasonal festivals and her grand-aunt's tales, exposed her to living myth and ritual that quickened the ground of her mind, made it rich and potent, but the seeds of that living energy were still dormant. They awaited germination. (Jayakar 98)

Pupul Jayakar carefully charts Gandhi's rise to power with the Indian government and at the same time gives an accurate assessment of a unique Indo-English woman.

Indira is shown to be a woman of the people with ample leadership skills.

With her children in boarding school she had time on her hands and travelled extensively throughout the country. She visited small towns and villages to come in direct contact with the problems of village India. She began to recognize the faces of important people – social workers and political activists – visited their homes and ate at their tables. She had an uncanny memory for faces and names, which proved to be a powerful skill when she became Prime Minister. She kept a low profile, but was seen physically by a vast number of people

in the country. (Jayakar 107)

The author represents Indira, the non-Western woman, as being a woman of the people, open to and available for all the people of India. She probably was the successful politician she was, for the above reasons; no-one was too inferior to be admitted to her audience; she was literally there for all Indians.

Every morning, before she went to the office, she started seeing a vast number of people from all over the country. She would go around, meet people individually, listen to them, accept petitions, ask her secretary to take notes and take follow-up action to provide relief wherever possible. There was no letter that remained unanswered. On any single day she would meet between two hundred and five hundred people. (Jayakar 135)

Pupul Jayakar also depicts Gandhi as being a versatile, dexterous woman well suited for the job of Prime Minister. She is seen as someone able to deal with and speak to people from all walks of life, both from the subcontinent and abroad.

To renew herself, in between the most tempestuous meetings she would find time for artists, painters and dancers. Her management of her eighteen-hour day was admirable. She was available, punctual, and could switch from political problems to administration, with its entangled decision-taking, to scientists, to her chiefs of staff, to a visitor from abroad, an architect or a poet. (Jayakar 135)

Pupul Jayakar represents Gandhi in a two-way representation process, giving her voice to articulate her own thoughts and ideas. Gandhi comes across as an astute, shrewd and down-to-earth political leader who spoke her mind.

“Poverty is not an abstraction. It means physical things – food, clothing, a roof over one’s head. We have to get down to concrete action. Bank nationalization was inevitable if Communism had to be stopped. The business community don’t understand that there is no alternative, the extreme Right position has just no place in India. The whole mood of the country was Center Left”. (Jayakar 154)

In her speeches Indira Gandhi comes across as an Indo-English woman determined to be left in the dark about no aspect of running a country. She also comes across as being open, honest and direct, as well as being a good diplomat. The speech below shows that her priorities revolve around the upliftment of India and its people.

“Morarji Desai [Former Finance Minister] knew something about Finance, I know nothing. I have taken this portfolio because the Prime Minister of India should understand the economic problems of the country and also know how to comprehend the budget. So it is up to you to see how soon I can achieve this”. (Jayakar 155)

Throughout the biography Jayakar succeeds in giving a comprehensive representation of the non-Western woman who may not have been a subaltern, but was at least not of Europe. Through her comprehensive representation we get an all-round

idea of the woman, Indira Gandhi.

Indira Gandhi now rarely ate, rarely slept. People flocked to her, grew aware of her determination, her courage, her sense of responsibility. They felt a sense of protectiveness in her presence. They were aware that she could fight like a tigress for the people. It was a triumphant Indira who returned after the election campaign to await the results. (Jayakar 160)

Jayakar brings out Gandhi's personality when she quotes an interview between an American journalist and Indira Gandhi on what enabled the latter to survive the Indo-Pakistan war; Gandhi replied that it was "Hindu philosophy and a deep commitment to India."

Jonathan Power: "And what is this Hindu philosophy, which is often regarded as passive and acquiescent?"

Gandhi: "No it isn't. It just faces reality. It's something that gives you an inner strength. I don't get uptight, as the Americans would say. In a situation of war you must face the situation as it comes. You give it your all. You do your best. That's all you can do. You can't do better than that, and then you shouldn't be bothered about the rest". (Jayakar 172-173)

In her representation of Gandhi, Jayakar succeeds in conveying a strong woman who speaks her mind and is not afraid of the international community. In her

comments to a British journalist on his suggestions that India should be patient and perhaps accept UN observers, she replies that what he is in fact supporting is genocide on a vast scale; in her reply to him she refrains from mincing her words.

“Would the massacre have stopped? Would the rape have stopped? Does your question mean that we allow massacres to continue? Do you support genocide? Does your question mean that? There has been the worst possible violence. When Hitler was on the rampage, did you keep quiet – let Jews die?”

“How do you control an exodus? If the world community had awoken to the situation, would it not have stopped?” (Jayakar 174)

Gandhi's comments on the Indo-Pakistan war reveal the depth of the woman, as well as her humanity.

“As a woman and a mother, I know war is a deathly thing. I have grown older, suffered, have survived and matured.” (Jayakar 185)

What is apparent throughout the biography is that Gandhi was a dedicated diplomat, committed to the future of India and the Indian subcontinent. At the same time she is a realist with astute analytic powers which were put to good use when diagnosing her country and Pakistan's problems. She seems to have been strongly motivated by the ideal of peace throughout her years as a politician. This is seen in her meeting with Zulfikar Bhutto at Simla during the end of the Indo-Pakistan war.

“We believe, as India has believed and India does believe today, that our interests are largely the same, that the major problems we face are the poverty of our people and the economic backwardness of our countries and the incessant efforts of foreign powers to pressure us”.
(Jayakar 188)

In her representation of Indira Gandhi, Jayakar does not refrain from criticising her subject.

Indira’s monumental error was the imposition of censorship...

Since independence, India had been proud of her free and independent press; vernacular newspapers reached distant villages, where farmers and artisans gathered in the evenings in village squares to have the news read out to them. As newspapers stopped reporting the real news, people turned to rumours to satisfy their curiosity.... The culture of censorship ensured that even Indira received from her information bureau only such reports as were palatable to her. Visitors to the Prime Minister were carefully screened so that all flow of news was controlled. India was totally isolated from the protests, disturbances and firings in the country. (Jayakar 228-229)

Throughout the biography Jayakar displays a shrewd insight into the representation of the non-Western woman. After Indira Gandhi’s defeat in the elections of 1977 the author reflects wisely on the implications for India and the former Prime

Minister; she highlights the crucial role and actions of the woman she represents.

In the haze of her defeat and the grace and dignity with which she accepted it, few people have acknowledged the nature of Indira Gandhi's action. No authoritarian ruler in supreme control had ever given up power or submitted to possible political extinction with such integrity. Her action brought strength to the democratic roots of the country and give its vast electorate a never-to-be-forgotten understanding of the power of the vote. Perhaps her action was the most significant of any since India's independence. (Jayakar 251)

With the losing of the election of 1977 Gandhi displayed no animosity; India remained uppermost in her list of concerns as did the people who helped and supported her through her many years as Prime Minister. She had nothing but good wishes for the incoming party and continued to reinforce her support of the democratic process; as always the Indian people were her main concern. Her departing statement shows Indira Gandhi to be a woman of courage, still devoted to her country and its people.

"I hope that the secular, socialist and democratic foundations of India will be reinforced. The Congress Party and I are ready to give constructive cooperation in the common tasks that face our nation."

"Elections are part of the democratic process to which we are deeply committed. I have always said, and I do believe, that the winning or losing of an election is less important than the strengthening of our

country and ensuring a better life for our people”.

“We are proud of a great country. As I take leave of you as Prime Minister, I should like to express my deep gratitude to my colleagues, to my party and to the millions of men, women and children who have given me their trust, cooperation and even affection over the years. My love and concern for the welfare of every section of the people remain unchanged. Since childhood my aim has been to serve the people to the limit of my endurance. This I shall continue to do. My good wishes to you now and always”. (Jayakar 252)

I think one can say that the Indo-English texts I have looked at have been characterized by a passionate realism in terms of the genre of their writing. They suggest a deep affection for the subcontinent and its people, minus the absurd preoccupations that characterize early and to a limited extent late Anglo-Indian writing. Indo-English writing is imbued with a patriotism not found in the Anglo-Indian writing of Lady Curzon and Kaye. Jayakar’s biography is characterized by a transparent, lucid style of writing that reflects the reality she remembers. It is a style which is straightforward and stark, almost spare in its account of the various anecdotes around the life of Indira Gandhi. Its style has impact and is hardhitting through the way in which solid facts are related without any flowery or romantic detail. She tells of great beauty and great tragedy in the same no-nonsense style of writing. Her portrait of Indira Gandhi is both warm and stark at the same time; we see the Gandhi of her close friendship as well as the Gandhi observed by an objective journalist, which

makes for a relatively unbiased picture of the formidable woman. Pupul Jayakar recounts the life of Indira Gandhi from her childhood right up to her assassination in a meticulously detailed compassionate way, showing her subject in all her frailty and strength.

When it comes to representation, I think Jayakar's portrayal of Gandhi comes closest to the Spivakean ideal I have seen covered in all the texts so far. We have two Indo-English women "speaking to" each other as opposed to the one "speaking for" the other. The author is never just "standing in for" the "other woman", she almost never makes the mistake of just transmitting knowledge, she shows the reader that she is actively making decisions and choices as she goes along. The author does not deny the role of the "other woman" in representation, she renders her "visible"; Spivak stresses that the person doing the representing needs to make as "visible" as possible the ways in which she is shaping the material, she needs to constantly reflect on her position; I think Jayakar successfully performs this task as Gandhi's intimate friend and confidante. I don't think one ever gets the impression throughout the biography that one is hearing just the voice of the person doing the representing. Spivak suggests that one brings one's own politics and assumptions to bear on the representation process, and that these need to be made "visible", a process which the author successfully achieves. Spivak says that at the same time one needs to make the "other woman's" position "visible", how she is interpreting and being shaped by her culture; this the author successfully shows. All in all, the representation of the "other woman" by an Indo-English author is done in this biography in such a way as to bring out the text of two people in their

complexity.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Sara Suleri's idea of the "feminine picturesque" genre, characterized by hybridity, motherhood, imagery, moral panics, the body of the native woman as site of bestiality or infection, the clash of cultural codes and myth making, most definitely existed, but I would say it was a genre which characterized Anglo-Indian writing of the early to the mid nineteenth century. The Anglo-Indian writing I looked at, which was written towards the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, was far less neurotic and more in tune and at peace with India and her people. I think this was because, especially in Kaye's case, of her parents' liberal education which was conveyed to her, and which made her more open, receptive and less judgmental of the land she lived in as a foreigner. In Lady Curzon's case, the reasons are more difficult to pin down. Her husband was a highly educated individual, deeply appreciative of the finer intricacies of Indian culture, and especially interested in Indian architecture. Lady Curzon's fascination with Indian culture and architecture is seen as being a more rational and less emotional appreciation of the Indian landscape and its culture than that expressed by her Victorian predecessors.

What was noticeable in Lady Curzon's case, was the way in which the emotionally turbulent and troubled writing of the earlier Anglo-Indian women is replaced by an almost comical rendition of the people she met, especially the female Indian royalty. She is in fact quite condescending and downright patronizing of royal Indian women's culture, their way of speaking English and their way of dressing. Although in the late nineteenth century writing there is more of a sense of contact between the females of

both races, there seems a bias in favour of the more puritanical and rational Western mores and culture.

The distance experienced between the two cultures has narrowed down, but has not disappeared completely. It is interesting to note that with Kaye the distance between the two cultures becomes even narrower, but as I have said previously this probably had a lot to do with the fact that the author was recreating a female childhood. With Kaye the comic, patronizing depiction of Indian women is replaced by a more sensitive, deeply appreciative description of Indian personalities. Kaye is more deeply integrated in the Indian culture largely due to being brought up by an Indian ayah and speaking Hindustani fluently, a barrier which prevented Lady Curzon from appreciating the finer nuances of Indian life.

When it comes to the question of what replaces the “feminine picturesque”, I think one can say that in the cases analysed it is a genre of what I have called passionate realism, especially in Kaye’s case, where she reflects what she sees around her with clarity and an unjudgemental eye. Being born and living in India brings out strong feelings in her, especially when she contrasts the land of her birth with the land of her parents’ nationality. Lady Curzon, on the other hand, still retains strands of the earlier genre of Anglo-Indian writing, in that one sees the breezy and domestic tone utilized by the earlier genre continuing to persist in her writing. Lady Curzon has, however, progressed, and there is a distinct move away from the more negative aspects of the earlier style, which has been replaced by a tongue-in-cheek rendition of her time in India and the Indian acquaintances she met, probably as a result of her restricted Western upbringing.

The passionate realism found in Kaye's work and to a degree in the two Indo-English authors I looked at, although somewhat different in that they lack the romanticism and nostalgia of Kaye, is entirely missing in Lady Curzon. The only thing Lady Curzon seems to feel strongly about is the destruction of traditional Indian architecture in Delhi by ugly, modern British barracks; otherwise she remains somewhat detached and analytical of what she experiences on a day-to-day basis. The fact that Lady Curzon was not born and brought up in India could go a long way to explaining her detachment and her comical rendition of certain individuals. Both Anglo-Indian writers are far more appreciative of Indian culture than their predecessors, and this is reflected in the far less negative quality of their writing, especially Kaye's, where the change from the earlier genre of the "feminine picturesque" is marked indeed.

When it comes to representation or the way in which the illiterate third world woman is depicted, one finds a trajectory from fleeting, superficial portrayals to the detailed depiction of the non-Westerner as seen in Jayakar's biography of Indira Gandhi, where her character is examined in minute detail and she speaks for herself.

In both Lady Curzon and Kaye, mention is made of the ayah, the third world, generally illiterate woman who played a crucial role in the upbringing of the Anglo-Indian child. In Lady Curzon, reference is made to her, but no intimate details are given of her character or her upbringing, she is just mentioned in passing. In Kaye, on the other hand, she is named, and a few details of her psychological make-up are provided, but nothing like the detail one would expect, given the fact that Anglo-Indian children spent more time with their ayahs than they did with their actual mothers.

In both Anglo-Indian books I looked at, mention is made of the contact with the “other woman” in the form of Indian royalty, but again not enough detail is given of these personalities, no mention is made of their psychological make-up, their education, or what they thought of the Anglo-Indian. Instead, they are rendered in both texts as exotic birds of paradise, very different in their dress and customs to the Anglo-Indian. No attempt is made by either Lady Curzon or Kaye to get to know them beyond surface contact.

Although both Anglo-Indian authors I looked at are aware of the presence of the subaltern, they fail to give her voice, and hence they render an inadequate representation. This failure is somewhat rectified in Attia Hosain and Pupul Jayakar’s, writing where the maid servants are allowed to speak up for themselves, to speak of their difficult lives and are actively helped by the upper middle class more affluent and educated Indo-English woman. In Attia Hosain in particular we see through Indo-English eyes the various permutations of the “other woman” from the traditional Muslim female servant to the younger more frivolous servant girls, to the courtesan, to the true Anglo-Indian (the South African “coloured”), to the originally understood Anglo-Indian, the European born and brought up in India, to the nouveau riche daughter of a successful Indo-English business man, finally to the author herself, a Muslim “Talukhdar” or upper middle class, land owning member of Indian society. This plethora of insights of both the subaltern and of the “other woman” gives insight into the complexity of mid twentieth century Indian society. Spivak would be pleased to note that not only is the subaltern taken cognizance of, but in some cases she is given voice, in a two-way dialogue that shows both her own culture and that of her interlocutor.

Representation is complete of the non-Westerner but not the subaltern in Jayakar's work on Gandhi. We are given an in-depth portrait of the non-Westerner, complete with family and educational background, to the woman active in Indian and world politics in later years. Throughout the biography Gandhi is allowed to speak for herself, and we are given glimpses of an intelligent, profound woman who was independent and an extremely shrewd politician, especially concerned with the plight of the majority of India's population.

In terms of representation, the texts I looked at progressed a long way from the fleeting, insufficient representation of the subaltern in the Anglo-Indian works to the varied perspectives on both the subaltern and the non-Westerner in the Indo-English works, where a more detailed perspective is given, together with the giving of voice in mid-twentieth century India. It would be interesting to compare these descriptions of both the subaltern and the non-Westerner with research being done now on these women in modern-day India, Pakistan and Bangladesh to see what changes, if any, have taken place.

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