

CHAPTER V

ORWELL

George Orwell was Eric Blair's pseudonym. He was born of British parents in 1903 at Motihari in Bengal, India, where his father worked as a minor customs official. In 1916, he won a scholarship to Eton where he subsequently claimed to have learned little but the English class system which he abhorred. During 1922-1927, he joined the Indian Imperial Police in Burma from which he came to the conclusion that British Imperialism was "very largely a racket."¹⁰⁴ He then retired with a determination to write. After returning to Europe, he lived in great poverty in Paris and London. He became publicly noticed first because of his book describing experiences during this period: Down and Out in Paris and London (1933).

Orwell was above all a political writer, and his politics were socialist. Animal Farm (1945) is considered by many to be one of the finest pieces of political satire. Although Orwell considered himself a Marxist and was a fast supporter of the left-wing of the British Labour Party, he was against any form of totalitarianism, whether fascist or communist, capitalist or socialist as expressed in Nineteen Eighty Four (1949).

Orwell also wrote some less distinguished novels,



and a number of brilliant essays on social and literary subjects. He died in London on January 23, 1950.

Because Orwell was born in India and lived among other Anglo-Indians there, his relationship to India is of one who has belonged to this society. He felt a great involvement in it. He could not help identifying himself with the English there. Consequently, he felt terribly guilty witnessing the failure of the British Raj in neglecting to perform its duty and the rejection of the Raj by the colonial peoples. This was also the reason why Orwell returned to Europe besides his desire to write.

Orwell was by no means one-sided. His disillusion or distrust towards the British rule in India was of a Britisher who felt ashamed and angry at his own government and at himself as well. He did not think in terms of connection with Burmese or Indians; he straightforwardly identified with the English community.

A comparison with Forster is illuminating. Forster did not belong to Anglo-Indian society, although he had a real involvement in India. He still was an outsider who looked at India, or at least examined it, as a detached observer. He sympathized with both parties, the British and the Indians, because he did not identify himself with either party. As a matter of fact, Forster's ideas add up to a balanced point-of-view. He did not put the blame for the problems on anyone. He even tried to find excuses for both.

The British could not help behaving badly because of the environment of the country, strange and hostile to them and very far away from home. The Indians were misunderstood, and sometimes the fault was their own. Forster's belief that all problems came from misunderstanding between the two peoples might be right. Yet his hope for good-will and human understanding was superb in theory but hard to realize in practice. Orwell was, by contrast, anything but a man of good-will. He saw only an incurable failure. He did not try to seek any way of connection between the British and the Indians. He completely rejected the whole system.

In one of his essays, "Shooting an Elephant", he revealed his attitude and feelings toward British imperialism. His beliefs come mostly from emotional and mental involvement with the problem. This essay was written some time between 1931 and 1936 about one of his experiences during his service in Burma. He was sub-divisional police officer of the town of Moulmein, when the anti-European feeling was very bitter though aimless and petty. Orwell, at that time, determined that:

...imperialism was an evil thing and the sooner I chucked up my job and get out of it the better. Theoretically - and secretly, of course - I was all for the Burmese and all against their oppressors, the British.¹⁰⁵

He thought of the British Raj as an "unbearable tyranny"¹⁰⁶ clamping down upon helpless peoples but he also wished to hurt these people, "the evil-spirited little beasts who

tried to make his job impossible."²⁰⁷ These feelings, he said, were normal by-products of imperialism.

The incident which he chose to illustrate his feelings about imperialism happened one day when he was called to do something about an elephant which was ravaging the border. The elephant had gone mad, killed a man and destroyed much property. He decided to borrow an elephant rifle from a friend's house nearby. His intention first was to defend himself if he was attacked. As soon as he saw the elephant, he knew that it should not be shot because its madness had gone. But suddenly, in the crowd of people that have followed him and gathered around him, expecting him to shoot the elephant for their entertainment, he realizes that he has to shoot the elephant after all. If not, he will be laughed at by the natives for being frightened. More important, the power and the dignity of the Empire are resting entirely on his shoulders. It is absurd that he must shoot the elephant, and it is not easy to kill it. He must aim carefully at the special point so that it will die immediately and be unable to attack him. The actual shooting is dreadful too for the creature does not die at once. Orwell must pour bullet after bullet into the suffering animal before it finally dies.

The story has unmistakable echoes of an Orwellian fable about the British Empire. The elephant becomes the symbol of the Empire, the huge, hulking mass, highly valuable but unmanageable, gasping to a clumsy, undignified

death. It is ironical in the essay that the Englishman, who seems to be the leader with arms in hands, is in fact "an absurd puppet pushed to and fro by the will"¹⁰⁸ of the people behind. This is due to the fact that:

...when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom that he destroys. He becomes a sort of hollow, posing dummy, the conventionalized figure of a schid. For it is the condition of his rule that he shall spend his life in trying to impress the 'natives,' and so in every crisis he has got to do what the 'natives' expect of him. He wears a mask, and his face grows to fit it... every white man's life in the East, was one long struggle not to be laughed at.¹⁰⁹

In its madness, the elephant has killed a man; drunk in its greatness, the empire has oppressed its people.

The scene in which Orwell describes how he is careful in shooting the elephant and how terrible its death-agony is, is so intense because he feels guilty. It is even more dreadful to see the great beast lying "powerless to move and yet powerless to die, and not even be able to finish him."¹¹⁰ As an image of empire, it is bitter.

MYRESE DAYS

Orwell wrote this novel in 1934, during the time he was struggling to earn his living in Paris. Fresh from the experience of working in Burma, he wrote the absorbing story of the white men's life in Burma in a remote back-country Asiatic station. Although it is not as subtle as E.M. Forster's A Passage to India, the story is fast-moving, entertaining, and well worth reading. In fact, many now think that it is his best novel. (Orwell himself later dismissed it as youthful romanticism.) The story of the

attempt of a corrupt native chieftain to get into the white man's Club, thereby causing the ruin of almost everybody, especially the hero, may be regarded as a romance. But what underlines the whole scene reveals to us the author's attitude toward the British Empire, his great bitterness and his despair before its absurdity. The basic meaninglessness of the central action - the attempt of the chieftain to maneuver himself into the British Club - is itself an image of the absurdity Orwell felt the Empire reduced men to. The intensity of all situations shows his involvement, emotional and mental. The novel is intended as a satire, a comic but serious attack on the British Empire as a whole and also on the ruling white men there, whose folly, laziness, arrogance and recklessness cause troubles in all directions.

One of the things that gives life to the novel is the actuality of Burma in it. Although there is no extra purpose in putting this description in, as there was in the background in Forster's A Passage to India, the description of Burma is more than perfunctory. Orwell successfully gives a picture of Burma, a sub-tropical country, real in every sense of the word. We can feel the heat, the glaring, blazing sun and the humid pressure on us as the English do there. The forest, the trees, the flowers and even the animals become vivid like illustrations. We can smell the oriental atmosphere, see the bazaar and the dusty roads.

With lightness of touch and great animation, Orwell makes all his descriptions seem necessary to the plot. The "two - dance" when Flory takes Elizabeth in order to see the real Burmese life is one of his best descriptions:

...In a moment the girl began to dance. But at first it was not a dance, it was a rhythmic nodding, posturing and twisting of the elbows, like the movements of one of those jointed wooden figures on an old-fashioned roundabout. The way her neck and elbows rotated was precisely like a jointed doll, and yet incredibly sinuous. Her hands, twisting like snakeheads with the fingers close together, could lie back until they were almost along her forearms. By degrees her movements quickened. She began to leap from side to side, flinging herself down in a kind of curtsy and springing up again with extraordinary agility, in spite of the long longyi that imprisoned her feet. Then she danced in a grotesque posture as though sitting down, knees bent, body leaned forward, with her arms extended and writhing, her head also moving to the beat of the drum. The music quickened to a climax. The girl rose upright and whirled round as swiftly as a top, the panniers of her ingyi flying about her like the petals of a snowdrop. Then the music stopped as abruptly as it had begun, and the girl sank again into a curtsy, amid raucous shouting from the audience. 111

amid this sub-tropical, oriental atmosphere, the story is divided into two main currents: the attempt of U. U. Kyin, the powerful Burmese politician to get into the English club with whatever tricks and plots no matter how much harm will be done; and the ruin of Flory, the decent Englishman who loves the natives but is too weak to appeal for them among his fellows and thus is destroyed by them.

As news is heard that the Commissioner requires a native to be elected as member of the British club at Syauktade, (the entire of this token gesture of connection is delicious!) U. U. Kyin, once a gutter boy when the

British troops marched into Mandalay but now subdivisional
 Registrar of the town and the most powerful native there,
 decides that he must be that first active member of the club.
 Unscrupulous as he is, innocent and obscure plots are made
 against Dr. Veraswami, the Indian doctor who has the great-
 est chance to be elected and Flory, the English timber mer-
 chant who will vote for him. U So Myin is successful in
 making Dr. Veraswami appear as a corrupt, untrustworthy and
 odious figure to almost every white man except Flory.
 Therefore, he makes Flory his new target.

In his long lonely years Flory has kept Ma Ma My, a
 Burmese girl as his mistress in spite of the dread of his
 own action. But when he meets Elizabeth Lackersteen, a
 young English girl who has just come from Europe after her
 mother's death to stay with her uncle and aunt, he falls
 in love with her and decides to marry her. He sends his
 mistress away and returns his life to decency. Elizabeth,
 who for some time has experienced hardship in Europe, comes
 to the East with the intention of getting married with any
 man who is available to avoid poverty and spinsterhood.
 However, although she is interested in Flory at first, she
 coldly casts him away for a more distinguished man Verrall,
 the military policeman with some blue blood but little hon-
 esty or responsibility. She has to turn back to Flory again
 when Verrall leaves suddenly without even saying goodbye
 to her. They nearly arrive at a happy ending but then,

driven by U So Kyin, the Ma Kay disgraces Flory in front of every white man there while they are all gathered in church. Flory falls to pieces. After he has been rejected by Elizabeth, he commits suicide. With his death, Dr. Verasami completely loses his reputation and is sent to work in Mandalay. U So Kyin succeeds in being elected a member of the English club but he dies before he can rejoice wholeheartedly in his success. Elizabeth marries Mr. Macgregor, the Deputy Commissioner, and she reaches the position that is natural to her, that of the "turre messahib."¹¹²

Serious as his purpose is, Orwell's method is comic, though a diabolical kind of comedy. It is this comic intensity that does reveal the bitterness and anger of the author, resulting from his personal involvement in the situation. Experiencing it himself, his satire on the Empire is very piercing yet very funny because he is so angry and bitter that he cannot do anything about it, except find the release of laughter. Joking in Orwell indeed is as Freud said, "a very serious matter."

One comic element Orwell uses is coincidence. In such a novel - really more a fable than a novel - coincidence is understandable. Orwell produces earthquakes or leopards whenever he needs to trot his characters into a situation that will illustrate the polemical point he wishes to make. The earthquake is a very obvious illustration.

Flory and Elizabeth go shooting together one day.

After killing a leopard, Flory appears a hero to her and they feel very close to each other. That evening, Flory is planning to propose to Elizabeth and she would have accepted if the earthquake had not suddenly occurred. Flory then misses his best chance because the arrival of Verzall the next morning turns her interest completely away from him. This earthquake is so sudden and so unbelievable that we feel that the author invents it just to serve his plot.

Another comic element is Orwell's use of character. Most of his characters are stock, comic characters except Flory, the hero. However, they all further the polemical purpose. And they are all very funny.

John Flory seems the most real of the characters. He is noticeable first of all because of a birthmark on his left cheek. He is quite aware of its hideousness and this birthmark is responsible for his inferiority complex. It makes him conscious of the sense of not belonging he has had since childhood. Yet, he is afraid to be alone. He, in spite of himself, signs a public insult of Dr. Veraswami, his friend, rejecting him from membership in the club because he lacks courage to be different from other people. Flory came to Burma when he was not quite twenty and after eight years of loneliness and debauchery in the East, he had decided to return home, but circumstances called him back. He realized suddenly then that this country which he hates is now his home. The only solution for him who must

✓ stay here in this alien and hateful country is to find someone who can share his life in Burma, socially and non-socially as well. Thus, he falls catastrophically for Elizabeth, believing she is the right girl. He is too weak to get rid of his mistress and lets himself be blackmailed.

✓ He is, on the other hand, very human and torn by his own moral consciousness. Yet when the time comes, Flory shows his courage. When the club is attacked by the Burmese who are aroused by U. So Myin and demand Ellis, the English timber merchant who has blinded one of the boys by beating him cruelly, Flory succeeds in escaping out of the club to ask for help from the police. It is Flory who gives the order to shoot. The Burmese are frightened and they finally run away. Although Flory sometimes seems to be comic too, he becomes more and more a very pathetic figure. That he is the victim of the Empire is Orwell's reason for creating him.

Flory is also sometimes Orwell's self-projection in expressing his attitude toward the English in Burma and toward Burma. Flory is Orwell's mouthpiece to let off steam against imperialism. Flory's early life in school is Orwell's criticism of the educational system in England: for a boy to be a success at school, what is absolutely necessary is to be a liar and a good footballer and that the boy learn as little as possible.

Everywhere, Orwell's political opinions control plot

and character. Consequently, Flory's life in the Indian Empire is the reflection of what Orwell has experienced and what he believes: "...The Indian Empire is a despotism... with theft as its final object."¹¹³ And the English in the East, in spite of the "sahiblog" they are entitled to, have an unenviable life: "...On the other hand, the sahiblog are not to be idealised,"¹¹⁴ because it is a delusion that these men are able and hard-working:

Outside the scientific services - the Forest Department, the Public Works Department and the like - there is no particular need for a British official in India to do his job completely... The real work of administration is done mainly by native subordinates; and the real backbone of the despotism is not the official but the Army... And most of them are fools.¹¹⁵

It is a world that no one in England can imagine:

...It is a stifling, stultifying world in which to live... in which every word and every thought is censored... even friendship can hardly exist... Free speech is unthinkable. All other kinds of freedom are permitted... you are not free to think for yourself. Your opinion on every subject of any conceivable importance is dictated for you by the pukka sahib's code.¹¹⁶

In the end, this life to Flory is a life of lies, full of hatred for one's own people and of longing for a revolt of natives that will destroy the Empire in a torrent of blood. There is nothing honorable and sincere here because no Englishman can really care whether the Indian Empire is a despotism or whether its people are pressed and exploited. What he cares about is his own freedom which he loses in becoming "a creature of the despotism, a pukka sahib, tied tighter than a monk or a savage by an unbreakable system of tabus."¹¹⁷

In Flory there is special feeling for the Burmese which is balanced by his animosity towards the British. Although he hates Burma he realizes that it is the only home for him. Therefore he has adjusted himself to the place, and feels a real kinship with it. He tries to make Elizabeth see Burma as he sees it. He does not understand why Elizabeth runs away from the pre-dance which shows a rare variety of civilization to him but which is obscene and unbearable to her. He also takes her to a native bazaar which appeals to him as interesting and very pleasant; to her it is filthy and abominable. Thus, he annoys her and she hates him in spite of his good intentions. And he is so naive that he does not know the real cause of her disgust and anger. In fact, he detests what she likes, the sahiblog of the English people. Deep down, he has seditious opinions against them. To him, they are hanging together as a political necessity. They pretend to be friends though they hate each other. They are in Burma just to make money and the British Empire is simply a device for giving trade monopolies to the English. They of course modernize the country, but in such a way that before they have finished they have wrecked the whole Burmese national culture. They are "a kind of up-to-date, hygienic, self-satisfied louse. Creeping round the world building prisons. They build a prison and call it progress."¹¹³ Orwell's remarks on Kipling's "white man's burden's" would have been brief

and blunt.

✓ Flory's criticism is so bitter and pungent because Flory is one of them himself and does not have enough courage to reject them. The intensity here comes from the fact that Orwell is using Flory to express his own animosity and what comes from Flory is his own anger and bitterness. Here also Orwell is completely different from E.M. Forster. Forster's point-of-view is always an attitude of balance. He sees the problem of Anglo-Indian relation from both angles of vision. He is probing and exploring rather than preaching. As an outsider he is able to adopt this mediating role. ✓ Orwell on the other hand has been inside the problem. He feels involved with it; he feels guilty for having been a member of the English administration. He is angry and Burmese Days is a brilliant and engaging sermon in the guise of a novel.

The other characters in the story are all funny. Mrs. Lackersteen and her niece, Elizabeth, are brilliant portrayals of English women in the Asian Empire. They are ✓ cold, heartless, silly and snobbish. To criticize them, Orwell emphasizes their comic aspects. To get a husband for her niece, Mrs. Lackersteen even lets her husband go alone to the camp and also to prostitutes and alcohol, so that she can arrange for Elizabeth to make an acquaintance with Verrall. The ladies' pursuit of Verrall, walking across the meadow to greet him while he is playing polo,

is funny yet pitiful. They obviously degrade themselves. Mrs. Lackersteen is also very hypocritical. Returning back to Flory after Verball has gone, she calls him dear overnight after she has said she cannot bear his appearance and his manner just because she is desperate to get Elizabeth off her hands.

Elizabeth is none of the type which is considered a race apart by the natives, "possibly not even human, and so dreadful that an Englishman's carriage is usually the signal for the flight of every servant in his house..."¹¹⁹ Elizabeth is an orphan whose life has been a struggle from poverty. Thus, she detects hardship of any kind. She has adopted her whole code of living from a short stay in an expensive girl's school: the Good is the expensive, the elegant, the aristocratic, and the Bad is the cheap, the low, the shabby, the laborious. Her words for her versions of the Good and Bad are "lovely" and "beastly." She also believes that real people are not brainy and ^{that} an excess of intellect is "beastly." This shows her own unsubtlety and lack of intelligence. After a difficult life in Paris, her longing for a "lovely" life is increasing. On the way to the East, from the other passengers' conversation, she has formed a picture of her new world as being pleasant and exciting and as leading inevitably to wealth and personal happiness. She is not prepared for such a life as Flory's. She gives Flory hope only because she has nobody else and

she dreads spinsterhood. So she casts him away easily and heartlessly when there is a better chance in Verrall. Elizabeth is above all selfish and conceited. She cannot think about, let alone care for and love, other people except herself. That is why she accepts gladly Mr. Macgregor's proposal shortly after Flory's death, in order to have what she has all along desired - wealth, position, and power. In Elizabeth, under the same tone, Orwell strikes seriously ^{at} the cruelty, coldness, crudity and insensitivity of English females in the Empire.

Verrall, the Military Policeman who is Flory's rival despite himself, is what Orwell thinks of blue bloods in the Army. Arrogant and harsh, he despises all the club members, believing he is superior. Orwell believes that people like Verrall can either be highly honored or greatly detested: Verrall is detested by all who know him. He uses his grossness, his cunning, and his heartlessness to take advantage of everybody. Verrall is a robot-like person who cares for nobody and nothing except horses and clothes. Drinking and women are his part-time pleasures and he is very clever in getting out of the grip of the latter. It is funny yet ironic that he can get away with any wrong by only his appearance - the bold, arrogant and cold look. When he leaves, he orders the station master to get the train off ten minutes before the time it is scheduled. He succeeds in getting rid of Elizabeth and his creditor at

the same time. Here, it is clear enough to see that Verrall is a rascal who uses his rank and personality to cruelly deceive everybody for his own benefit. Although Orwell makes him comic, it is obvious enough to see that he detests and despises Verrall and what he stands for, a man with rank and intelligence who abuses them to hurt others. Orwell thinks the Empire is stocked with such types.

The other English characters are comic chorus to the plot. Neither Mr. Macgregor, the Deputy Commissioner and secretary of the Club, nor Mr. Lackersteen, the local manager of a company, nor Maxwell, the acting Divisional Forest Officer, nor Mr. Westfield, the District Superintendent of Police, emerges importantly from the group. Collectively they represent what Orwell calls the despotism of the British Empire. They are lazy, foolish, and highly prejudiced against the Burmese. They are hyperconscious of their mastership and believe themselves the only humans in Burma. They do not do anything but drink, wax important in their status and destroy themselves. They do not know or even care to know anything about the Burmese. Believing that the Orientals are too foolish to do harm, their folly and ignorance are part of the cause of the Burmese attack on the Club and the death of Maxwell.

Their conversation reveals their characteristics and mentality entirely. They speak always about "the old, never palling subject - the insolence of the natives, the

expensiveness of the Government, the clear dead days when the British Raj was the British Raj..."¹²⁰ In the most hilarious scene in the book they get hot arguing about the possibility of having a native member in the Club. Ellis who is completely against this idea, says in his sour way:

'Here, Macgregor...we all think this idea of electing a native to the Club is...absolutely uncalled for. After all, this Club is a place where we come to enjoy ourselves, and we don't want natives poking about in here. We like to think there's still one place where we're free of them. The others all agree with me absolutely.'

'I gather,' [Mr. Macgregor] said, 'that our friend Ellis does not welcome the society of - Ah - his Aryan brother?'

'No, I do not,' said Ellis tartly. 'Nor my Mongolian brother. I don't like niggers, to put it in one word.'

'Is it quite playing the game,' Macgregor said stiffly, 'to call these people niggers - a term they very naturally resent - when they are obviously nothing of the kind? The Burmese are Mongolians, and all of them are quite distinct---'

'Oh, rot that!' said Ellis,...'Call them niggers or Aryans or what you like. What I'm saying is that we don't want to see any black hides in the Club. If you put it to the vote you'll find, we're against it to a man---'

'Hear, hear!' repeated Mr. Lackersteen. 'Count on me to blackball the lot of 'em.'¹²¹

Although these chorus characters are comic, their comedy is satirical and points to the unhealthy condition of the Empire in Orwell's opinion.

The Asian characters are no better than the English. They are also a critical target of Orwell. Most of them are also comic and come out as stock characters. The three most important are Dr. Veraswami, U Po Kyin and Ma Hla May - Flory's mistress. Ma Hla May, however, only serves a plot function and is not fully developed.

Dr. Veraswami, the Indian Doctor, a native friend of Flory, is comic first in his queer English and English accent. It is ironic and very funny that he, enslaved by the Empire, is its defender against Flory's attacks. He has a high regard for this institution and really believes it to be a benevolent and worthwhile gift the British have given to the Indians. It is prestigious for him to be a friend of the white men and with this prestige he can stand against the Nyan to the last minute. That is why he fears losing it so much and he keeps flattering and pleasing the English all the time. He hopes to be elected a club member, he feels agitated when he listens to Flory's attacks on the "English", the people who he thinks possess "the great, sterling qualities that Orientals lack."¹⁸² He is somewhat like Forster's Jain in trying to please the English and believing that friendship with an Englishman is pure bliss. However, Veraswami's behaviour is more extreme than Jain, much more caricature than character. He is so servile to the English and their Empire that he completely destroys his own dignity. "He would maintain with positive eagerness that he, as an Indian, belonged to an inferior and degenerate race."¹⁸³ When Flory kills himself, Veraswami's ruin is inevitable. Dr. Veraswami nearly collapses. His prestige also with Flory and he is sent to Pondaloy to work as a doctor but get less pay.

As to Nyan, the Purusa chief who kills himself

property, rank and honor through all sorts of cunning, believes that in entering the British Club, his real goal of life is fulfilled. His appearance is funny, he is so fat that he cannot stand up without other men's help. His appearance also shows his greediness and lust. All the troubles that happen are caused by U Do Kyin. There are many comic touches, for example, his claim to be the heroic defender of a village against native rebels even though he himself is the leader of the rebellion. It is also ironic that the fat, unscrupulous Burman is after all elected member of the Club. He is decorated "for long and loyal service and especially for his timely aid in crushing a most dangerous rebellion in Kyauktada district."¹²⁴ It is comic to see U Do Kyin, who believes in making merits and building pagodas to outweigh his sins so he can be reborn in a man's form again, die before his pagoda is built. And he must be now as his wife believes:

...wondering in God knows what dreadful subterranean hell of fire, and darkness, and serpents, and genie. Or even if he has escaped the worst, his other fear has been realised, and he has returned to the earth in the shape of a rat or a frog. Perhaps at this very moment a snake is devouring him.¹²⁵

Veraswami and U Do Kyin are both very far from well-rounded characters. They function as necessary components in Orwell's plot. They both represent qualities Orwell finds very unhealthy among natives, exaggerated of course for comic and satiric purposes. U Do Kyin is unbelievably bad and Veraswami is too self-demeaning to be really credible. But in Burmese Days they are just right.

The characters in Burmese Days are comic, but there is a serious polemic intent behind them. Caricature and satire combine to dramatize Orwell's attitude. The book is one of the best political novels of the 1930's and certainly one of the most enjoyable.

In his essay, "Rudyard Kipling," Orwell makes a serious attack on Kipling's attitude toward imperialism. He calls him "a jingo-imperialist who is morally insensitive and aesthetically disgusting."¹²⁶ Orwell criticizes him as being cruel and vulgar and for believing that "men can only be highly civilized while other men, inevitably less civilized, are there to guard and feed them,"¹²⁷ - the British and the Indians. Kipling may be a real jingo-imperialist but in part Orwell is unreasonably hostile to him, (Orwell uses the word "disgusting" in the essay three times) and underestimates his ability as a writer. The main fact is that they belong to different periods and generations. Kipling belongs to the first generation and accepted the Empire as a successful and efficient institution. Kipling has no sense of guilt because he is not conscious that any problem can occur in such a state of peace and progress under a lawful and well-received government. In fact, what he really cares for is the Anglo-Indian society there. Life there may seem a hardship and very cruel but the cause is not the Indian people but the place itself, alien and so far away from home. The Indians in Kipling's works are not

treated as nonhuman but appear gentle and generous, as in Kim. Kim is a reflection of the India of Kipling's childhood and was written some time after he left. The tone of the book reveals that he accepts these people and feels sympathetic to them (though he does not think they are his equals), and that he cannot be intentionally cruel to them.

Orwell's is another story. He belongs to India's next generation, the period in which the pressure of liberal criticism against the Empire has grown. The atmosphere in general is anti-imperialistic and this is the atmosphere into which Orwell was born and to which he belongs. It should be noted that the Indian Independence movement was very much in full swing by the time Burmese Days was written. Orwell himself is a critic of the Empire. His psychological involvement in the whole situation in which he senses that the British have not done anything but wrong explains the special venom for Kipling too. Kipling, with all his smugness and complacency, figures as the archetypal Great White Sahib in Orwell's imagination. To Orwell, the damage done to India (and to England) by that generation of Anglo-Indians is responsible for the mess in the Empire in the 1930's. It is damage that is irreparable and Orwell is angry and bitter.

Orwell does not give any solution to the problem. The clear implication, however, is that since the British are displaced here, they do nobody any good and also destroy

themselves. They should wash their hands of the whole sub-continent and go back home. The English characters in Burmese Days do not belong at all to this place so the best thing is to call them home. Even Flory, the only person who seems to be able to stay, ends his life in tragedy. Flory does not belong to this place. He believes it to be his home because he has no other place on earth left for him. Thus he deludes himself. He makes friends with the Burmese; yet it is the Burmese who destroy him ruthlessly, cruelly, even comically. Flory seems to be the last word of Orwell about the Empire. Even a person who tries to adjust cannot stay and falls to pieces because he does not understand and can never understand the natives.

Perhaps Orwell's case is overstated. Orwell's attitude^{is} of a person who is disillusioned with the Empire releasing the pressure of his own disillusionment into fiction. The emotional content of Orwell's attitude must be taken into consideration in any assessment of its validity. As Kipling is the spokesman of jingo-imperialism, Orwell is the spokesman of anti-imperialism.