

THE PAINTBRUSH AND THE SCALPEL

Sara Jeannette Duncan Representing India

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To be a European in the Orient *always* involves being a consciousness set apart from, and unequal with, its surroundings. But the main thing to note is the intention of this consciousness: What is it in the Orient for? Said, *Orientalism* (157)

THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH Sara Jeannette Duncan discusses the problems of the administration of India in her later novels (and the seriousness with which critics of her novels, myself included, have discussed them) often overshadows the fact that India and the Orient were fashionable in the late nineteenth century. "There was the virtual epidemic of Orientalia affecting every major poet, essayist, and philosopher of the period" (Said 51); one has only to think of Liberty's peacock print fabric, willow pattern china, Victorian wicker furniture and indoor ferns, botanical gardens, Kipling, the vague and titillating threat of opium dens and red silk, to realise that when Elfrida Bell (of Duncan's *Daughter of Today*) arranges her Buddha and her Syrian dagger in her London apartment, she expresses the height of rebellious chic. Oscar Wilde's *Salome* (and Beardsley's accompanying drawings) were the dangerous outer limits of the frightening sexual and gender liberty that the Orient suggested to the sophisticated reader of the 1890s; yet the tamer, unabashedly imperialist stories of Kipling also suggested "the exotic, the mysterious, the profound, the seminal" (Said 51) in the cultures of the Arab world, India and Asia, indiscriminately known as "the East." This fad for the Orient was an integral part of the discourse of British decadence as it surfaces in Duncan's early novels; decadence, emphasizing the aesthetic as opposed to the moral, the advances of science and the breakdown of traditional ideas of definition and order, provides an important intertextual referent for understanding Duncan's representations of India.

For Duncan's generation, even to be in India was to accept the imperialist assumption that India exists to do something for Europe, to be of benefit to Europe. Thus, when Said interrogates the texts about "the Orient" produced by that generation, the way he constructs the question is important — not, *why* is the narrator in India, but, what is she there *for*? The answer, in Duncan's case, is shaped by the discourse of English decadence. Duncan spent much of her adult life in India; on a personal level, presumably, she was in India to live with her husband.¹ But she also set nine of her books in India² and two more had significant Indian content; the narrators of most of these books are self-consciously writing about India, describing India, experiencing India, and later explaining India. To explain what they are in India *for*, they adopt two metaphors for fiction writing which were common to the decadents: to gain artistic "impressions," as defined by the aesthetic movement, and to analyse "material," using the techniques of scientific realism. These two metaphors, of the paintbrush and the scalpel, structure the representations of India and of Indians in the novels.

ARTISTIC "IMPRESSIONS" are the object of *A Social Departure*, a fictionalized book of travels relating the adventures of the narrator and her English companion Orthodoxia. The novel was published in 1890, at the beginning of the decade in which the role of "impressions" in the ideology of cultural decadence would be elaborated. The leaders of the movement argued that since science seemed to prove "that nature was 'an unfeeling and pitiless mechanism'; religion, a 'nostalgic memory'; and love, a biological instinct for perpetuating the species" (Showalter, 169), the only real moral obligation was the refinement of the intellectual self and the appreciation of beauty. "Walter Pater became the father of this philosophy, writing in *The Renaissance* (1873) that 'our one chance lies in . . . getting as many pulsations as possible into the given time'" (Showalter 170). Duncan's narrator in *A Social Departure* (identified with her own initials, S.J.D.) echoes this philosophy when she and Orthodoxia explain the principle that guides them in their trip round the world: "being our first and probably our last trip around the world, we naturally wanted as many novel and original experiences and sensations as possible, the planet having become very commonplace . . ." (SOC 281). Following the lead of the decadents, for whom European culture had become "commonplace" ("and we were opposed on general principles to the ordinary and the commonplace" SOC 203), the pair choose to try anything that seems novel in each "Oriental" locale they visit, from mangoes and custard apples to a rather wet trip in a Cingalese catamaran which has only the merit of being "an innovation" (SOC 203).

For these two characters, the Orient is predetermined as the location of the exotic, and the impressions it creates therefore have more force than those created by the exhausted cultures of Europe. Although the journey originates in Eastern Canada and ends in England, the descriptions of these locations comprise less than a chapter each. The reason for the lop-sided narrative lies partly in the argument that England, like the earlier empires of Greece and Rome, had reached the point of material excess and intellectual stagnation; only the barbaric places of the world could offer vibrant physical and emotional sensations. More immediately, however, Duncan recognised that in the present state of intellectual surfeit she had little hope of making her mark by commenting on the well trodden ground of European culture — “it was not in her to give an old thought a new soul” — what she needed was “some unworn incident, some fiber of novelty or current interest to give value to her work” (*Journalism* 9). She depicts the dilemma of the journalistic novelist in Elfrida Bell, the heroine of *A Daughter of Today*, whose deep philosophical articles are always refused by the major magazines because they lack both originality and logic; Elfrida must find, instead, something exotic to write about, as her editor Arthur Rattray advises: “you only want material. Nobody can make bricks without straw — to sell, — and very few people can evolve books out of the air, that any publisher will look at. You get material . . . and you treat it unconventionally . . . It’s a demand that’s increasing every day — for fresh unconventional matter.” (DAU 184-85) “Fresh impressions,” (*Journalism* 9) are required to make a book, and the narrator of *A Social Departure* finds them in a locale which is the definition of the exotic.

Such “impressions,” as the choice of words makes clear, are structured by the preconceptions of impressionist art. Duncan had commented upon the Impressionist painters in her art reviews in *The Montreal Star* and her columns in *The Week*; the protagonists of *A Daughter of Today* and “The Pool in the Desert” are both impressionist artists, and she often uses terms from art criticism in her descriptions. “Impressionists” were reacting against the accumulation of photographic detail in all art in order to create “sensation by the shortest nerve route” (“Outworn Literary Methods” 450); they argued that while “a cabbage is a very essential vegetable . . . we do not prostrate ourselves adoringly” before it, but only before its representation as art, “where it is certainly the art we admire, not the nature” (“Bric-a-Brac” 2). “Impressions” emphasize the importance of the artist’s vision, of the perceptions of the individual human as an apprehending subject, rather than the objective characteristics of the scene; as Duncan had written in *The Week*, the age itself had “a subjective cast in its eye” (3 March, 1887). The revaluation of the individual perspective in art appealed to Duncan as a liberal and a feminist, and had also been theorised as an effect of the gradual loss of purpose evident in the decadence of the Empire.³

Shortly before she left on the trip which would result in *A Social Departure* Duncan commented on the effects of these new ideas on travel literature: "Vastly changed . . . is the literature of travel. The spirit of modern art has entered into it, and we get broad effects, strong lights, massed shadows in our foreign picture, and ready impressions from it. The process of eternal word-stippling has gone out of favour . . . [The travel writer of to-day] writes graphically instead of the humanity about him, its tricks of speech, its manner of breaking bread, its ideals, aims, superstitions" ("Outworn Literary Methods" 450). Thus the narrator of *A Social Departure* avoids the sort of facts "Baedeker or Murray will tell you"; her description of Calcutta is an "impression," a broad and generalized description of the city, emphasizing effects of light and shade on the apprehending subject, and saving the exact detail for its inhabitants:

there remains with me the picture of a great, fair city lying under a dusky yellow glory where the sun sloped to the west—lying low and level under it, piercing it with masts that seemed to rise round half her boundary, cleaving it with a shaft in the midst of a green *maidan*, reflecting it in a wide water-space darkling in her heart, breaking it softly with the broad, heavy clusters of the gold-mohur tree. . . . the throngs in the street were nearly all Mahommedans, bearded and wearing little white embroidered caps on the sides of their heads, or smooth-faced hindoos in turbans; all flapping nether draperies, all sleek of countenance and soft of eye. *Chuprassis* in long red coats that reach to the knee, and from that to their toes in their own brown skins, hurried hither and thither solemnly . . . *Baboos* in flowing white were ceaselessly in and out of the swinging doors of the great shipping and merchants' offices; and the streets swarmed with lower creatures. *Beestis* who watered them from black distended dripping goatskins, sellers of fruit, women hod-bearers, little naked children . . . (SOC 246-47)

CUSTOM MAY HAVE STALED this infinite variety, however. Ironic deprecation of the "impressions" of those new to India is the prevailing tone of Duncan's next novel set in India. *The Simple Adventures of a Memsahib* (1893) is narrated by Mrs. Perth McIntyre, the wife of the senior partner of the firm of McIntyre and McIntyre of Calcutta; her experienced eye both ridicules and regrets the young Helen Browne's "impressions" of Calcutta: "I have no doubt that the present Mrs. Browne would like me to linger over her first impressions of Calcutta. She has a habit now of stating that they were keen. That the pillared houses and the palm shaded gardens, and the multiplicity of turbaned domestics gave her special raptures, which she has since outgrown, but still likes to claim (MEM 36)." After a few years as the wife of "young Browne," Helen becomes jaded, and well enough aware of the disadvantages inherent in a life in the Orient: "She is growing dull to India, too, which is about as sad a thing as any. She sees no more the supple savagery of the Pathan in the market-place, the

bowed reverence of the Musselman praying in the sunset, the early morning mists lifting among the domes and palms of the city. She has acquired for the Aryan inhabitant a certain strong irritation, and she believes him to be nasty in all his ways. This will sum up her impressions of India as completely years hence as it does today" (MEM 310). Once a bright, observant soul, she has become "a memsahib like another" (MEM 310).

Despite the emphasis the idea of the "impression" throws on the perceiving subject, impressions in Duncan's work are nonetheless determined by the literary discourse of the Orient, and generated by the images of the Orient represented to English speaking readers and consumers of art by the conventions of Orientalism. By the 1890s India had been described and redescribed for English readers until it was "less a place than a *topos*, a set of references, a congeries of characteristics, that seems to have its origin in a quotation . . . (Said, 177). For Duncan's characters, a "choke" selling jewelry in Calcutta is a place "where, like Sinbad, one might drop a leg of mutton and pick it up again sticking with precious stones" (SOC 250). All the passengers on the P. and O. ship begin to recite the same missionary hymn, "From many an ancient river, / From many a Palmy Plain," (SOC 198) when the boat nears Ceylon; a Cingalese guide understands a line of the hymn, "spicy breezes / blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle" (SOC 216) as a request to be taken to the famous Cinnamon Garden. The Taj Mahal, seen first shining indistinctly in the moonlight, gains its meaning from the story of its genesis rather than its beauty (SOC 338-342). The legendary smells of the Orient are prominent, from the incense "weighing upon one's spirit like a strange Eastern spell" (SOC 237) to the olfactory offences created by the open "drains" of the "native quarter."

But there is also a significant dialogue between the textually produced images of "Eastern" mystery and squalor, and the discourse of realism, a self-conscious corrective to the romantic Oriental story. The mysterious splendour of the Taj Majal in the moonlight is destroyed by day, when, S.J.D. exclaims in disbelief, "the band plays there!" (SOC 348). One of the main techniques of early realism was the evocation of romance stereotypes and the subsequent assertion of their inadequacy as a description of reality; Duncan employs such techniques with skill in her "international" and Canadian novels.⁴ Deflation of reader expectations is even more obviously appropriate in the Indian novels because the imaginative space is so overdetermined by a legacy of Orientalist texts. "To write about the modern Orient is either to reveal an upsetting demystification of images culled from texts, or to confine oneself to the Orient of which Hugo spoke . . . the Orient as "image" or "pensee," symbols of "une sorte de preoccupation generale" (Said 101). As a narrative realist rejecting the mere "pensee," Duncan propels her fictions by the technique of evocation and deflation of cultural stereotypes about the Orient.

"S.J.D."s description of Orthodoxia's encounter with a mango shows the inadequacy of the stereotype of the Orient as a land of natural, sensual abundance. She evokes Eden when she calls the mango "the ineradicable legacy of Paradise," and "the first interest and soul's solace" (SOC 205) of the Orient. She goes on to describe its flavour and the techniques for eating one in terms which suggest comic disappointment.

The mango looks like a large corpulent green pocketbook, about eight inches long and four wide, and tastes like nothing else in the world, with a dash of turpentine. . . . I shall always remember Orthodoxia and her first mango with emotions that time cannot mitigate. It was a very ripe fat mango, and looked as if it ought to be peeled. Orthodoxia thought to peel it round and round with precision as if it were an apple. At the second round she began to hold it carefully over the plate; at the third she tucked her sleeve well up from the wrist; at the fourth she laid it down blushing, looked round carefully to see if anyone observed her, made several brilliant maps upon her napkin, and tackled it again. This was too much for the mango, and it bounded with precipitancy into the lap of an elderly person across the table, who restored it with frigid indignation in a table-spoon. (SOC 206)

"Indian" fiction inevitably calls up other stereotypes, many created by Rudyard Kipling's Indian stories, as well as numerous works by Meadows Taylor, Flora Annie Steel and Duncan herself; the figure of the memsahib, who flirts with young men and "perform[s] miracles of self-sacrifice" (*Set In Authority* 9); the globe-trotting, interfering M.P.; the heroic sahib, who is "father and mother" to an adoring native population. Each of these stereotypes is shown to be inadequate as a representation of reality in Duncan's later Indian novels: Mrs. Biscuit of *Set In Authority* concludes that "the novelists simply were not to be trusted" (SET 36).

DEFLATION OF SUCH stereotypes leads to the creation of an alternative reality, full of colourful details and specifics in opposition to stereotypes and myths created by previous writers. Duncan's novels often comprise an analysis of the "world" of a little-known social or cultural group — Anglo-Indians, Indians — or indeed Canadians in *The Imperialist* (1904) or Americans in *An American Girl in London* (1891). Henry James and Joseph Conrad were two contemporary writers who were thought (by Duncan, among others) to take the same approach, defining and classifying social groups through an exploration of their similarities to and differences from an implied English reader. The "cultural insecurity" of the *fin de siècle*, "when there are fears of regression and degeneration," encouraged "the longing for strict border controls around the definition of gender, as well as race, class, and nationality" (Showalter 4), and fiction became part of that defining process. Thus a second common metaphor for popular fiction

written in the late nineteenth century was that of dissection,⁵ of using the scalpel of the human sciences, (especially of sociology and psychology, both nascent and ill-defined as disciplines) to explain and catalogue human behaviour and social customs. The "novel of manners" and the "psychological novel" typical of Henry James, W. D. Howells and Joseph Conrad were often cited as typical of the movement, and Duncan makes the connection between these forms and scientific inquiry when she remarks in her review of Henry James' *The Bostonians*: "This novelist has a habit . . . of regarding humanity from a strictly anthropological standpoint and of tabulating the peculiarities of the individual specimens with rather less sympathy than is displayed by the average collector of beetles" (*Journalism* 105).

Mrs. Perth McIntyre, the narrator of *The Simple Adventures of a Memsahib* performs an anatomy of Anglo-Indian society in her account of Helen Browne's acclimatisation to her new home in Calcutta. Successive chapters are devoted to Calcutta's ideas of social precedence, to shopping in the bazaar, to domestic servants, to presentation to the Viceroy, and other representative aspects of middle class European life in the Indian capital. The "laws" that "mould" Englishmen into Anglo-Indians are analysed in the *India Daily News* article "The Flippancy of Anglo-India" and the issue of social precedence anatomised in "Social Feeling in Calcutta." In *Set in Authority* (1906) the narrator gives a similar anatomy of Pilagur, capital of the isolated province of Ghoom, describing the typical military wife in Mrs. Lemon, the "*chota-mem*" in the wife of an army subaltern, and the typical attitudes of a recently arrived junior civilian in "little [Mr.] Biscuit." The "club," the regiment, the subversive *munshi* (teacher) and the representative "educated native" are described as individuals and as representatives of types, and each given their level of precedence in the social whole. The narrator proclaims "this is not a study of an Anglo-Saxon group, isolated in a far country under tropical skies and special conditions, but only a story" (SET 205), yet the novel is, in a sense, such a study, for while "the individual human lot . . . disengages itself from the mass" (SET 197) in her descriptions of single characters, each is nevertheless representative of "the fate of anonymous thousands . . ." (SET 197).

The narrators dissect Anglo-Indian society from a complex position; they are in it and of it, yet they address an audience of outsiders. Mrs. Perth McIntyre tells the story of Helen Browne in *Simple Adventures* in order to show British preconceptions in collision with Indian realities, but she is herself wholly identified with Anglo-India; the twists of the plot in *Set in Authority* and *The Burnt Offering* prove their narrators right in deeming the "home view" in Indian matters to be "a matter of great indifference" (SET 205). Duncan takes the "colonial" position of explaining and justifying Anglo-Indian society from the point of view of one who is conversant with the values of the centre and of the margin. Yet this position is complicated, and finally inadequate, when she undertakes to dissect "native" society in India.

In anatomising Canadian, American, and Anglo-Indian culture, the narrators of Duncan's novels define themselves consciously in opposition to the definitions imposed by imperialist culture.⁶ But as the narrators of Duncan's novels name to name those supposed to be incapable of naming themselves. To create an anatomy of a culture of which one is not a member "is to dominate it, to have authority over it." (Said 32). To define "the natives" is to bring them into existence for the English reader, who has no knowledge of them outside the text, and so to deny them existence in themselves, to deny them the power to name themselves. This is the essence of Orientalism, as Said defines it: "to divide, deploy, schematize, tabulate, index, and record everything in sight (and out of sight); to make out of every detail a generalization and out of every generalization an immutable law about the Oriental nature, temperament, mentality, custom, or type; and above all, to transmute living reality into the stuff of texts, to possess (or think one possesses) actuality because nothing in the Orient seems to resist one's powers. . . ." (Said 86). Duncan creates "laws" and typical examples for all the cultures she "anatomises," whether English, American, Canadian, British or Anglo-Indian and while as a technique, the "scalpel" of a cultural anatomy is in essence no different when Duncan uses it on Indian culture, the meaning is different because the power relationship is different. The "laws" of "American" life as revealed in literary texts are less likely to eventuate in serious public policy decisions than are the "laws" of "native" life.

Duncan's narrators self-consciously resist the power to definitively catalogue, and by cataloguing define. Lucy Foley uses the language of racist science when she refers to Bepin Behari Dey (in *The Burnt Offering*) as a type and defends measuring the skulls of the people of Bengal ("Why shouldn't we measure their heads? It doesn't hurt them" (BO 121)) but the novel also includes the dissenting voice of Joan Mills: "Why place him in a type?" she comments, and in response to the head-measuring project, "It only lacked that" (BO 121). Duncan undertook one social anatomy which was avowedly scientific — her article "Eurasia," on the mixed race European and native community, was published in *Appleton's Popular Science Monthly* in 1892. The Eurasians are defined not as individuals but as a "problem" (Said 207) for they refuse menial employment, are not preferred objects of charity and do not qualify for educational subsidies available to "pure natives," and yet are clearly a European responsibility. But the article also undercuts the stereotypes even as it reproduces them. It ridicules the Eurasian reluctance to lower their social status by marrying into the "pure native" community, implying that Eurasians refuse to accept the facts of their heritage — "The claims of that cousinship must be more than ignored, they must be trampled upon" (EURASIA 3) — but uses the exact same terms to describe the "white" reluctance to marry Eurasians — "The claims of that cousinship must also be more than ignored" (EURASIA 4). From a descriptive sketch of the narrator's Eurasian neighbour, whom it cites as a "racial type," it accounts for general characteristics of the

Eurasian community (many of which fit the general stereotype of the "half-breed" as less moral and less physically perfect than the "pure-bred" representative of either "race"). The article ends, however, by suggesting that the stereotype is inadequate: "In the heart of Eurasia — a heart which has yet to be bared to us by the scalpel of modern fiction — surely may be found much that is worth adding to the grand total that make humanity interesting" (EURASIA). More surprisingly, the article suggests that the stereotype is not founded upon fact and observation: despite the veneer of science, "we can not see" into that community, it states.

The novels avoid the problem of describing a society to which the narrators have no first hand access by describing only that part of Indian society they can literally claim to know well — servants, shopkeepers, and those "westernized Indians" who have a place in Anglo-Indian society, whether by virtue of their official position, wealth, or social connections. In *A Social Departure*, the narrator is a visitor to Calcutta society, and to her such people are still 'favourable specimens of pure natives on the very crest of the wave of progress that is lifting their race to the plane where men struggle and hope and pray as we do — specimens of the class that appreciates and lives up to the advantages of British rule, and is received and liked by the sahib and the memsahib accordingly' (SOC 292). Yet the later novels refuse to create "the typical native" as simply "either a figure of fun, or an atom in a vast collectivity designated in ordinary or cultivated discourse as an undifferentiated type called Oriental, African, yellow, brown, or Muslim" (Said 252). In *The Burnt Offering* (1910) when Lucy Foley is at pains to make up a dinner party of "just people" — friends who are not primarily official — she includes Sir Kristodas Mukerji and his daughter, Janaki, who are "less alien to the occasion" than the visiting British guests. Like many of the other "native" characters in Duncan's books, Sir Kristodas and his daughter have almost wholly forsaken "native" society — or been forsaken by it, because their decision to dine with Anglo-Indians and adopt English ways has led to the breaking of many complicated rules of religious caste. Their social life is almost wholly among Anglo-Indians, and so the narrator can claim to know its limits. Similarly in *Set In Authority* Sir Ahmet Hossien's choice of preferment in the English administrative system has meant a physical, emotional and intellectual separation from his family and his wife, who is popularly known to lack the "courage to take with her husband his alarming strides of progress" (SET 73).

ALL OF THESE CHARACTERS are within the purview of a fairly liberal Anglo-Indian, and while they sometimes partake of the stereotypes of Orientalist representation, they also depart from them in significant ways. Hiria, Helen Browne's ayah in *Simple Adventures* is sly, dishonest, insubordinate, yet

she is not defined solely as the "clever servant"; Mrs. Perth McIntyre describes her significant relations with her peers, mentioning her husband and a small business she has purchased through efficient management. Sir Ahmet Hossien, the "westernized Indian" is made individual by his religious beliefs, a personalised synthesis of different Hindu and Christian ideas; the two main characters in the novel, Eliot Arden and Ruth Pearce, find his friendship and his conversation more congenial than that of many of their own "race." Yet he is also a stereotypical "native" in his misunderstanding of the principles of British law, and his fear of displeasing the Viceroy. Sir Kristodas Mukerji eventually returns to the ways of his fathers, illustrating the Orientalist dictum that India and Indians are fundamentally unchanging. But his daughter is far from the "male power-fantasy" which characterises the representation of women in English texts about the Orient. If most "native women" in fiction "express unlimited sensuality . . . are more or less stupid, and above all . . . willing" (Said 207) Rani Janaki emerges as distinctly in opposition to such stereotypes, as an intellectual interested in Indian politics, women's rights and suffrage, and clearly a more suitable love-interest for the heroic white administrator, John Game, than the English woman he chooses. Lucy Foley makes no distinction of race among those who have a commitment to good government in Calcutta — those "who have made the place, and keep it" (BO 118) — the middle and upper classes of both "native" and English communities.

The "meaning" of "native" characters in Duncan's often allegorical narratives is much more difficult to construct when the novels depict them interacting only with each other, as the diversity of critical comment on the character of Swami Yadava in *The Burnt Offering* illustrates. Thomas Tausky finds he is "forced to serve two totally incompatible functions in the novel" as both a religious authority and a spy — "The absurdity of this role needs no further explanation" (*Novelist* 256). But (in answer to Tausky) Yadava only informs in order to pursue a goal which is perfectly consistent with his religious function — to maintain public safety and public order, for violence is sure to rebound upon the Indian people (as in fact it does, later in the novel, when Dey attempts to kill the Viceroy). S. Nagarajan finds Yadava sinister because he is activated by self-interest: "Yadava . . . wants the British to stay on though he knows that . . . as champions of the *status quo*, they will help to keep the old order intact with the Brahmin at the top" (80). But Yadava does see a place for the English in governing India — which Duncan also sees — and his belief in maintaining the traditional class system is consistent with Duncan's own views as expressed in many of her novels.⁷ Yadava also represents the traditional belief that the imperial relationship is a mutually beneficial exchange between India and Europe, with "Indian culture and religion . . . defeat[ing] the materialism and mechanism (and republicanism) of Occidental culture" (Said 115) and "Europe teaching the Orient the meaning of liberty" (Said 172); to that extent, he is a "good native," parroting what his imperial masters have

taught. However, his relegating the English to the second place in the hierarchy of caste may signal the conservative reader to perceive him as threatening. The mere fact of his talking to Kristodas and Janaki without a white person being there makes the scene threatening and difficult of interpretation for the target audience. It can be read all three ways, with Yadava representing a mistake in narrative technique, an enemy of Empire and progress, or a mouthpiece for the author, and this is significant, given that Duncan's narrators usually give such obvious directions to the reader that her work has been faulted for this very characteristic.

The narrators of Sara Jeannette Duncan's Indian novels, like the nineteenth century historical and creative writers Edward Said analyses in *Orientalism*, are not neutral observers of Indian life. By 1890, the year Duncan moved to India to join her English fiancée Everard Cotes, neutral observation of India had become impossible for a British subject — all the "facts" were framed by the layers of surmise, projection, history, sympathetic identification, racism, and foreign policy that comprise "latent Orientalism" (Said 206). Similarly, the metaphors of English intellectual life of the time, those of the impressionist paintbrush and the scientific scalpel, shape Duncan's representations of India. The paintbrush suggests the broad, personalized descriptions which characterise *A Social Departure* and other of Duncan's early Indian novels, heavily mediated by Orientalist texts and emphasizing the narrator's emotional responses. Subsequent representations of India use the scalpel of anatomy to provide the necessary "realist" undercutting of the romanticised Orient; however, the discourse of realism, itself created in response to the stereotypes, does not wholly escape them.

NOTES

¹ Despite Marian Fowler's interesting speculations based on the marriages depicted in Duncan's novels, there is no evidence that Duncan did not get along with her husband.

² *The Simple Adventures of a Memsahib* (1893), *Vernon's Aunt* (1894), *The Story of Sonny Sahib* (1894), *His Honor, and a Lady* (1896), *The Path of a Star* (1899), *On the Other Side of the Latch* (1901), *The Pool in the Desert* (1903), *Set In Authority* (1906), *The Burnt Offering* (1910).

³ See Havelock Ellis, "A Note on Paul Bourget," *Views and Reviews* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1932) pp. 51-52.

⁴ See Dean, pp. 19-40, and also Carole Gerson, *A Purer Taste*, pp. 58-65.

⁵ "The standard image of the realistic novelist in fin-de-siècle France was the 'anatomist dissecting a cadaver.' A famous cartoon depicted Flaubert holding up the dripping heart he has ripped from the body of Emma Bovary. Zola, too, viewed his art in clinical terms, describing the writer as one who should "put on the white apron of the anatomist, and dissect, fiber by fiber, the human beast laid out completely naked" (Showalter p. 134).

⁶ I argue this idea in the first two chapters of *A Different Point of View*.

⁷ I give evidence for this position in Chapter Five of *A Different Point of View*.

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