Tigers in Fiction: An Aspect of the Colonial Encounter

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Abstract
Those of us who are old enough to have seen that Stewart Granger film entitled Harry Black and the Tiger were treated to all the essential ingredients of a typical tiger-shoot in Anglo-India — blazing sun and tall grass, sunburned Englishman and his trusty rifle, a beautiful but unsatisfied woman somewhere in the background, the 'native' tracker and his mysterious intention (a role played to perfection by I.S. Johar), finally the great black-and-yellow beast leaping. That film was based on the novel Harry Black (1956) by David Walker who served in the British Army in India from 1932 to 1936. The story is set in post-independence India, but the novel is closely related to an ambiguous aspect of Anglo-Indian fiction which originated in a fact of British life in India.
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Looking back from the wild-life conservation climate of today, it may not be easy to understand how or why, not so many years ago, the British in India had turned tiger shooting (not just casual hunting) into an organised sport. Loyal Indian subjects readily developed a liking for this sport — as they had with games like cricket or soccer — and joined their rulers in decimating the tiger population of India. As if the sport were not crime enough, it was later turned into a highly profitable business by Indians, and the Indian government has had to add the ban on the export of tigerskins to the legislation which requires a permit to kill big game. We may have honoured Edward James Corbett by naming a large games sanctuary (in the Kumaon region of Uttar Pradesh) after him in 1957 and by issuing a postage stamp on the centenary of his birth in 1976. But in his apprentice days even he must have killed tigers that intended no harm to him or to fellow human beings or even to other animals that sustain mankind. Anyone who has stalked him through *Jim Corbett's India* (1978) will find on page 27 the luckless leopard who had to die because schoolboy Jim had stumbled upon it and could not resist trying out his first gun. Were there others he never wrote about — or, if he did, perhaps his wise publisher never put them into print.
The tiger has sometimes been such a compelling character of Anglo-Indian fiction that he deserves special attention whenever he lurks in the high grass of novels. Even an otherwise marvellously resourceful and innovative fiction-maker like John Masters cannot do without him. The last Rodney Savage is introduced in *Bhowani Junction* as a man ‘as sure of himself as a tiger’. Nearly three hundred pages later Colonel Savage sets off on a tiger-shoot riding a bicycle with Victoria Jones on the cross-bar. The fleshly charms of the girl could not have weighed much because he pedals ‘two miles of level road, and then about ten miles uphill’ (p. 330). The bicycle ride is give more space than the shooting itself. That is over in a few sentences:

The leopard bunched together, all four feet close set under the middle of its belly. Its tail rose slowly. I fired.

The leopard’s tail sank down ... Victoria sat up with a gasp of excitement, I sat back and roared with laughter. (p. 337)

Rodney Savage may have found it as easy to shoot a leopard as to seduce an Eurasian girl in *Bhowani Junction*, but his namesake of nearly a hundred years ago in *Nightrunners of Bengal* (first published 1951) had to risk firing practically into the teeth of a wounded tigress (see chapter seven) before he can impress an Indian princess. Not for nothing did Masters entitle an autobiographical volume *Bugles and a Tiger* (1962), thus bracketing his experience of India between sound and fury.

The tiger has been a native of India from pre-historic times, but did not gain much respectability until after the Mughals came to India, and it really earned renown only after the advent of the British. The epic imagination in India was very little impressed by the beast. Only two Vyaghra-dattas fought, one on either side, at Kurukshetra; the *Mahabharata* yields not more than three other persons with *vyaghra* in their names. Neither divine nor human chieftains of *itihasa* and *purana* seem to favour the tiger. Even Shiva’s being traditionally clad in tiger-skin (or is it leopard-skin?) or sitting or lying on one did not raise the tiger’s caste. Apart from the Buddhist *Vyaghra-jataka* text and the six gold coins of Emperor Samudragupta (A.D. 335-80) showing him hunting the tiger and naming him ‘Vyaghra-parakrama’, ancient India did not attach much importance to the slaying of tigers, hence the animal is hardly mentioned with any awe or reverence. When Indian kings and princes of those days set out on *mrigaya*, presumably they did not particularly look out for tigers to kill. Hoary custom sanctioned the killing of animals for meat, but the tiger did not cater to the gourmet’s palate, hence was rela-
tively safe from hunters and traders. Barring a verse-metre of Sanskrit named *sardula-vikridila* (like a tiger bounding), hoary Indian poets found little use in the animal. Not many conventional similes of classical poetry in Sanskrit or Tamil drew comparisons with tigerly attributes, nor is there much conspicuous emblematic use that would attach noble or heroic aspects to the creature. A southern classic like *Silappadikaram* contains a prayer which begins:

> May the tiger, emblem of our king,  
> carved on the Himalaya's golden peak,  
> forever stamp that king-of-mountain's brow. (p. 5)

But in recounting the feats of this king, the poet tells us that when no opponent was able to arrest King Tirumalavan's northward march until he reached the Himalayas, 'There he carved on the face of the king of mountains his own emblem, the lion' (p. 20). By the time the *Suka-saptasati* tales came to be collected (perhaps prior to the 6th century A.D.), the tiger had been reduced to a comic creature.

Kailash Sankhala, the first director of India's tiger-preservation project, has suggested that 'After about 1500 B.C. the tiger seems to have lost its supremacy in India for a time. The lion takes over.... Only in 1972 was the tiger declared India's national animal, at last replacing the lion that has ruled so meaninglessly for more than 2000 years.' Between those two dates, it was not until the Mughals settled down in India that we have evidence that tigers had attracted the attention of royalty. From miniature paintings we know that by the early 16th century tigers had attained the status of being worthy hunting objects of kings and princes. Medieval Indian royalty hunted not with guns nor killed from relatively safe gunshot range but engaged the prey at close quarters with sword or spear. Matching the Mughal in skill at arms or on horseback, Rajpur chieftains took to this sport from at least the 18th century — though, as Sankhala has pointed out (op. cit., p. 113), Colonel James Todd makes no mention of princely tiger hunts in his celebrated *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (1832).

As for the tiger achieving the dignity of literature, this was provided by snake- and tiger-infested lower Bengal in eastern India which cultivated, in addition to the snake goddess Manasa, a number of tiger deities, chief among which was Dakshin Raye. Worshipped even now in the Sunderbans region, this neighbourhood deity was eulogised in numerous folk verses and one famous long poem, the *Rayemangal* of Krishnaram Das, a Bengali work composed in about 1786. The poem in fact 'celebrates the
supremacy of two local deities of the area, Daksin Ray (Lord of the South) and Bada-khan Ghazi (Big Khan the Ghazi) of the Muslims', thereby also signifying that the awe and dread of the lord of the Sunderban jungle was shared by both communities. When the British first awarded the title ‘Royal Bengal Tiger’, it must have been intended as adding their own tribute to the undisputed jungle overlord of eastern India. Yet the same region has fostered, especially in Bengali, any number of fables in which the strong but stupid tiger is outwitted by the clever jackal, thus demonstrating that familiarity had bred a certain measure of contempt. No factual study or fictional work by an Englishman or woman has ever reflected this attitude, perhaps because the British in India never lived close enough to the tiger.

Before the fiction, as always, came the fact. In the early 19th century, tigers and other wild animals of India were still part of the strange countryside, fit subjects for British fascination and worthy means of passing time in observation. The epitome of such study would perhaps be Captain Thomas Williamson’s two-volume work, Orienta Field Sports (1808; second edition, with drawings by Samuel Howitt, 1819), which is described on the title-page as

a complete, detailed, and accurate description of the wild sports of the East; and exhibiting, in a novel and interesting manner, the natural history of the elephant, the rhinoceros, the tiger, the leopard, the bear ... as likewise the different species of feathered game, fishes and serpents. The whole interspersed with a variety of original, authentic, and curious anecdotes, taken from the manuscript of Captain Thomas Williamson, who served upwards of twenty years in Bengal.7

Already, however, there are signs that field sports such as these are beginning to cease to be sporting. Whereas ‘At one time in parts of India at the beginning of the last century, they [tigers] were so numerous it seemed to be a question as to whether man or tiger would survive’,8 a god-fearing traveller through North India only twenty years later foretold that the tiger would soon become a rarity, considering ‘how soon, and how easily, in a settled country, the most formidable wild animals become extinct before the power of man’.9 This was not the inevitable collision between nature and culture which has ended most often in a victory for the latter, but a deliberate and sustained effort to kill off or frighten away wild life from the wayward paths of men exploring a strange country. Captain A. Mundy, commenting as early as 1833 on a particular hunt in which three tigers were located and killed within the space of two hours, recorded it as ‘a piece of good fortune rarely to be met with in these modern times, when the spread of cultivation and the zeal of
English sportsmen have almost exterminated the breed of these animals'. From her examination of British journals and memoirs in India of the period 1765-1856, Ketaki Kushari Dyson has concluded that while the native human inhabitants of India chose to co-exist with animals wild as well as tame, human as well as otherwise, the alien British conquerors killed game apparently for pleasure: ‘Shikar emerges as a dominant theme in several journals, and there is clear indication of the role played by the British in the extermination of wild life.’

That the tiger was an exclusively non-European creature may have been the original reason why it so fascinated the British when they came to India. For some other reasons thereafter, ‘To Europeans, tiger hunting became an obsession’. Possibly the early encounters were not as one-sided as they would become in due course because of improved fire-arms and greater experience of out-manoeuvring the beast. Courtenay has concluded:

The stories that filtered back to nineteenth century England were exciting and uniformly anti-tiger...

From now on the tiger was almost universally loathed as the embodiment of the devil and the epitome of evil.

With almost Christian indignation, it seems, the European set about his humanitarian task in India of exterminating a wicked and dangerous animal. Even Rudyard Kipling, who did not always subscribe to attitudes harbourred by the British in India, isolated Sher Khan as the only untrustworthy creature among all those that befriended Mowgli in *The Jungle Book* (1899).

Before it reacted to the tiger and other wild animals, the British eye as well as imagination encountered the jungle. Whether in factual accounts or in short stories or novels, the British recorded the Indian countryside on a scale and in detail that nobody of Indian writing has ever matched. This is not just a matter of the foreigner seeing objective realities in a more clear-eyed view than the native inhabitant can because the latter is subjectively involved with his surroundings. The difference has something to do with the way the Englishman reacted to his environment in India — wanting to grasp it (by counting or measuring, by writing or sketching), remember it (by meticulous naming of each item), then control it (by imposing his will, whether in the form of collecting land revenue or in terms of constructing railroads) — whereas the Indian was quite content, as he had been for generations and centuries, to let the surroundings surround him. The presence of the countryside is conspicu-
ous in Anglo-Indian novels because, even till the mid-20th century, the stories are set in rural India or at least away from cities and towns.

And beyond the countryside was the jungle, which captivated so many Englishmen because the Indian was absent from it and here the Englishman could literally come into his own. Possibly the experience of India became so overwhelming at times that he had to get away and be by himself. His search for privacy had compelled him to devise barriers — racial, against Indians; social, against the other British — as deliberately as the Englishwoman hung curtains in doors and windows to exclude the rest of the world. The jungle was privacy itself and did not have to be devised; it was always there, not too far from where one lived — just a horseride away. Justification for jungle-haunting could be devised, in due course, by calling it outdoor exercise or looking for game or getting to know the 'real India', but in effect it was nothing more than a periodic escape from the duties and obligations of being an Englishman of the Raj. It would not perhaps be possible to establish accurately how often in real life the British sought refuge in the Indian jungle, but Allen J. Greenberger has noted that this tendency increased in novels dealing with the concluding years of British rule: 'Although the Indian jungle had long been central in the British image of India, in this period it, too, takes on a new, more important role. Only in the jungles can these last British writers find an India in which they still have a place.' Here, as in so much else, British practice ran counter to Indian precept. The latter required all men, on reaching the age of fifty, to retire to the forest (vanavas) and prepare to renounce worldly life altogether (sanyas); whereas the Englishman retreated into the jungle periodically mainly to recover his sense of selfhood, also to renew himself for tackling worldly life with greater vigour and attachment. As punishment for such violation of sanatan dharma, the jungle took its final toll and the British finally left India, but not before they had themselves slaughtered, and encouraged Indians to slaughter, every form of Indian wild life almost to the point of extinction.

Most forms of British Indian sport were adapted and assiduously practised by the British army officer, and there cannot be much doubt that it was he who cultivated shikar into an honourable pursuit. He had the means (namely, horse and gun), the leisure (after 1857, not many campaigns remained to be fought or battles to be won), and the opportunity to range freely over the countryside without being questioned. Greenberger may have exaggerated when he commented about a later generation of army officers, 'To these military men killing Indians was a big game' (p. 91), but once the major military conflicts were over the
guns had to be trained on some other target. At some stage of the British experience of India, however, awareness must have dawned that indiscriminate slaughter of wild life could not continue without some new justification being found for it. From that point evolved the British mystique, almost a philosophy, of tiger hunting in India that endured till they left the country and left behind a code of the jungle that Indians subscribe to more in theory than in practice. Whenever this code is enacted in Anglo-Indian fiction, there are intimations that something deeper underlies this aspect of British behaviour in India.

Charles Allen has recorded in his *Plain Tales From the Raj*: 'By the early thirties [meaning the nineteen- not the eighteen-thirties] shooting tiger «for the hell of it» had largely disappeared: «you shot tiger because he was being a nuisance or because he was a man-eater».' The latter offered a practical and most beneficial justification. A man-eating tiger was an enemy of the people, hence it had to be eliminated, and who should do this job better than the nearest British magistrate or police superintendent or army officer or tea planter? This role fitted the character of the Englishman in India as protector — he was, after all, the agent of the Queen-Empress among whose self-selected obligations was the welfare of her Indian subjects — and from all accounts he discharged this obligation fully and unhesitatingly. The last in the line of these 'protectors' was Jim Corbett, whose lack of official standing in the Kumaon region never stood in the way of his being turned practically into a local deity of the region. Over-riding the practical exigencies, however, was what Charles Allen has termed 'a more natural philosophy': 'It was in stalking and in hunting that you had your fun. The actual shooting meant nothing really' (p. 116). This is the area of abstraction, it is in the nature of this 'fun', where we might probe further into what the resident Indian tiger really meant to the ruling British migrant.

On the other hand, a tiger-shoot could be turned into one of the greatest shows on earth. Judging from Mughal miniatures, the imperial style from Akbar downwards was emulated by the British as well as by their contemporary Indian high-born in the way nearly a whole battalion of rifle-toters on elephant-back would close in upon a tiger driven in a particular direction by hired 'beaters'. John Zoffany's painting 'The Death of the Royal Tiger' (*circa* 1795) portrays the same hunting tactics — minimum danger to the hunter, maximum danger to the hunted — as are to be seen in a sketch like 'Tiger Shooting in India' made during Prince Albert Victor's trip to this country in 1890.' By the 1930s, Rolls Royce or other imported chariots have replaced the elephants for princely shoots as the means of entering the forest, though not for providing points
of vantage for shooting as the elephants did. By the 1950s, hunters being transported by Land Rovers, as described by Suresh Vaidy what must be one of the earliest books on shikar in English by an Indian book which deserves to be better known than it has been. In it the the lively account of a hunt arranged by the Maharaja of Mysore who counted with obvious relish the tiger shoot he threw for Lord Linlithg the British Viceroy, during the early years of the war' (pp. 38-39). Viceroy and his wife came with their three grown-up daughters, and Maharaja had to provide as many as five tigers on the same day so none of his guests was disappointed.

That the mystique of tiger-hunting was very much part of mythology of the Raj can be seen in how this is no longer so evident more recent Anglo-Indian fiction. Long before this, however Hemingway has happened and Americans, with bigger and better rifles have appeared on the scene. 'The Short Unhappy Life of Fran Macomber' may well have generated several stories about Americans safari in India. A large and sprawling novel like William Manchester Shadow of the Monsoon (1956) professes to depict 'new' India but turns to be a string of tiger-shoot episodes involving the American couple Peter and Katie Becker. Daughter of a rich man and unsatisfied married to a man who has failed as an oil executive, Katie Becker violates a cardinal principle of shikar by wounding a tiger without killing it. The wounded animal avenges itself by killing, 'in turn, the Beckers’ host (bravely named and absurdly titled Sir Rajani Ram Govindaswami, the District Collector or Commissioner of Chaknagar), Katie’s husband (who, having already lost her, has nothing more to live for), and Krisl (the forest officer who is Sir Rajani’s son). Ultimately it is another American who comes to the rescue — former commando Spike Willis currently public health expert on loan to the Indian government — who kills the tiger and also wins the woman. The novel could have carried the sub-title ‘What Katie Did’ and traced its ancestry back to The Razi Edge where another American found a solution to his own problems whilst he visited India.

It is an American again who hogs the limelight in Jack Denton Scott Elephant Grass (1969), centring as it does on the boorish millionaire Titi who has killed wild animals all over the world apparently in order to satisfy some innate blood-lust. He engages a private company, Shikars and Shooting Enterprise, to find him tigers to kill. This company has been floated by Raja Abhaya Charan Jathar, an impoverish former prince, in order to make a living in free India; the leading shik of the outfit is Ram Kumar, an ex-Indian Army captain. Tain has a hea
condition, hence is accompanied by a physician named Dr Arnold Tillou, and his medical secretary, an attractively dark and young Jewish woman named Elissa Sergel. The party is joined by the blonde and beautiful Marthe Layton, a restless young woman who came to India as a Peace Corps volunteer and whose father is known to Tain back home.

The American bigshot misbehaves from the first day, upsets all camp routine by his wilfulness, ignores hunting advice, thereby causing two unnecessary deaths. Marthe is bored with the jungle and seduces both Tain and Tillou — though not on the same night — but finds no satisfaction in such easy game. Dr Tillou secretly desires not Marthe but Elissa, who meanwhile has fallen in love with Ram Kumar though he has not encouraged her in any way. He achieves the major objective of the safari by setting up a tiger which Tain duly kills. Tain is spurred on by such success to fresh indiscretions and gets seriously mauled by another tiger. The accident terminates the safari and the American contingent prepares to return home — except for Elissa Sergel, who plans to stay on in India and do medical relief work. The novel is full of vivid descriptions of the forest and the characters are strongly drawn, but the novelist seems wholly unaware of the whole drama of tigers and men enacted in India during the Raj.

For the most ambitious attempt to create a myth that will underpin the drama, we have to turn to Norah Burke's *Tiger Country* (1965). Early in the novel we are told: 'Among the Danish, Dutch, French, Portuguese volunteers entering India from the West, came the English family of the Hume-Stricklands; and among the conquerors from the North came the tigers' (p. 9). And the novel concludes thus:

For the whole race of tigers is withdrawing from the land they conquered, and pulling back into the north...

Tommy too turned and retraced his steps.

Tigers and Stricklands parted after two hundred years. The tigers went back into the north, and the Stricklands into the west, where they came from, in the beginning. (p. 223)

In between stretch five generations of the Hume-Strickland family which has been associated with India from about 1740, but their story is presented only in two sections — the period 1905 to 1912, and the year 1950. Ever since Captain Thomas Hume-Strickland shot the first albino tiger of Sonabagh, it became a tradition that the Stricklands must shoot tigers in India, especially the white tiger. The tradition is so compelling that a later young Tom Strickland has to shoot a tiger practically on the first day of his arrival at the station in 1905, although he had had no
previous experience of hunting big game. Several tigers later, the girl he loves, Dolly, who has resisted him so far, at last agrees to marry him — but not before she remonstrates:

Oh I know there’s been war between men and tigers since we lived in the caves. War between these men and these tigers. An ancient war, my darling, which, for the moment, you have won.... But things are changing. Our son won’t shoot tigers. He’ll go after them in a much more difficult way, with one of those cinematograph cameras. (p. 192)

That son, another Tom, is still in India in 1950 and hopes to marry Indira, an Indian girl he loves and who loves him. But she refuses to marry him because, she insists, they are racially different and their heritages contradict one another. There is a long debate on their last picnic (on the beach of a South Indian city); he tries to defend his ancestors, especially his father:

‘I was told he was a very great forester ... he was one of those who saved a great forest estate, now worth millions, for your nation. Remember that, when you’re running us down!’

‘He got paid for it,’ she pointed out coolly.

‘Precious little, and those who had to enforce the law weren’t popular, but his men loved him. I went the other day to find a bearer who used to — man named Karim, very very ancient, who’d given him lifelong devotion, and wept when he died, and who —’

‘Old family retainer?’ she sneered. ‘Spare me the details, Tommy. You’ll be preaching conservation at me, next, as well.’ (p. 200)

When it is quite clear she will not have him, he decides to quit his oil executive’s job and leave India altogether. He travels up to Sonabagh for a farewell shoot, catches a glimpse of an off-white tiger, but gets no opportunity to kill it.

Tommy wiped the sweat out of his eyes and turned to Betchu with a chagrined smile. Betchu smiled back. They knew they were defeated. The sahib unloaded his rifle.

‘Perhaps he will come south again, sahib, and then —’

But the tiger did not turn south....

He went up into the high Himalayas, where rainbow glints in the air are not flies but snowflakes. (p. 222)

Normally a myth, however unfamiliar or unknown until its first statement, can be made to support a work of fiction. Here the reverse has been attempted — a novel has been written to create a myth, which will also explain, perhaps even justify, the end of the Raj. Unfortunately, the work fails in its basic business as a novel and the myth has no chance to
get established. It is reduced to shooting-the-tiger-and-winning-the-girl, even if it means that an earlier Tom Strickland (circa 1912), not yet fully recovered from injuries sustained while hunting, has to travel from 'Runital' to Delhi and barge into a Durbar-occasioned social gathering to claim his beloved. As for the last Tom (in 1950), it would seem that he cannot shoot his final tiger because he has finally been rejected by the girl he wants to marry.

Even the four or five tiger-shoots that are depicted in some detail — and such episodes, after all, provide the basic substance of these novels — cannot make up for the hollowness of the rest of this work. Nowhere does the author succeed in integrating people to events, events to life, and she has to resort to devices like recapitulation — either in the author's own voice or through a character's reflections. These reflections sometimes reveal wholly unwarranted foresight. As early as 1912, amid the Delhi Durbar celebrations, Tom Strickland can visualize the ultimate political independence of India, although at no point until then does he betray any awareness of Indian politics. From this vision he derives his mission in life, namely, saving the forests of India for the Indians — another bit of looking forward that is done without any cause or preparation.

Alternately, there is the extended exchange between Tommy and Indira in the epilogue, where they go through their speaking roles as if in a set debate. Melodrama intrudes into this debate when Gopal, the man Indira intends to marry, turns up on the same beach where the other two have gone for their last picnic, and the two males engage in some fisticuffs. This bit of he-manly activity is wholly pointless because nothing attaches to the outcome of the fight. Nothing can ever restore those idyllic circumstances which had made India tolerable to the British — or so it would seem when we read this description of 'Runital': 'The hill station was a scatter of European bungalows and a bazaar. It was civilization at its best: amenities and security set down in a lovely place without ruining it' (p. 70; my emphasis). This, of course, was how the earlier generations of Stricklands may have viewed India. Let it be said in favour of the last Tommy Strickland that he did not long in 1950 for that idyllic past.

Though the myth sought to be created by Norah Burke fails to establish itself, it contains interesting possibilities. The whiteness of the tiger that she pits against the British is clearly reminiscent of the fair-complexioned Indo-Aryan or Caucasian tribes who are believed to have entered from the north and conquered India several thousand years before the British did. In zoological fact, the white tiger remains a rare creature but the tiger as a species has never gone away from the continent — and this plainly falsifies what the novel wanted to suggest as an
inevitability. But by presenting the tiger-Strickland encounter as some kind of perpetual struggle, the novel has suggested an explanation of why the British were so preoccupied with shooting tigers while they occupied India. Particularly when we recall the nature and range of human qualities attributed to the tiger by Anglo-Indian writers of fact as well as of fiction — memory, cunning, vengefulness, to mention only three — we shall realize that the tiger represented some enduring spirit of India that the British felt they had failed to subjugate. No matter how many successful campaigns the British had waged, how many decisive battles they had won, how many cantonments they had founded to guard settlements, some basic fear of India continued to haunt British Indian life and imagination. Therefore the tiger had to be shot again and again.

The future of the tiger of fact has probably been secured in India. Correspondingly, the tiger of fiction must recede into the past, but not before we have underlined its role as yet another aspect of the British-Indian encounter.

NOTES

2. Our own Manohar Malgonkar, another army colonel (honorary?) in the same war who must have taken many a cue from John Masters in peace-time activities like writing fiction or hunting big game, uses a tiger-shoot almost as an initiation rite for a princeling in *The Princes* (1963). The preceding work, *Combat of Shadows* (1962), also uses a tiger-shoot most crucially and brings together snarling beast and slinky female but at some cost to the protagonist.
3. *Vyaghra* and *sardula* are Sanskrit words for tiger.
4. See Alain Danielou’s translation from the ancient Tamil, published as a New Directions paperback in 1965.
The first texts produced in a post-colonial society, that is in a society which has undergone the experience of colonisation in one of its numerous forms (settlement, intervention etc.), are those produced by the representatives of the viewpoint of the colonising centre: e.g. gentrified settlers, administrators, box-wallahs and missionaries; or those ‘birds of passage’ such as travellers, sightseers etc., who seem to have been born hand in hand with the Imperial enterprise and the opportunities it offered for adventurous voyeurism. Writers as diverse as Froude, Mary Kingsley and Charles Wentworth fall into this category.

The second stage of production within this evolving discourse is the literature produced by ‘natives’ or ‘outcasts’, e.g. African ‘missionary literature’ (Thomas Mofolo’s *Chaka*); any of the many nineteenth-