Introduction
Margaret Rumer Godden was born in England in 1907, but while still a baby she was taken by her mother to rejoin her father in Assam. The Godden parents soon sent Rumer and her elder sister, Jon “home” again to boarding school, as did most of their contemporaries, but the first world war intervened and the girls happily returned to live with their parents and two younger sisters at Narayanganj, a small town on a tributary of the Brahmaputra river in East Bengal where their father was the manager of a steamship company.

Their eventful childhood in the big house on the riverbank, with its large garden, complex hierarchy of family servants, and with the town’s hectic bazaar on their doorstep, was close to idyllic for all the Godden children, and they looked back on it with yearning. But even so, Rumer sensed that she did not quite belong—that necessary credential for a writer in the making. All her life she believed Jon to be the more talented writer, and she knew that she was the plainest of the four sisters.

At Narayanganj she was an outsider to the life of India and Indians that she observed with such clear-eyed fascination, and when in her adult years she chose to live elsewhere in India she did so mostly outside the narrow boundaries observed by British residents. In England she was set apart too, as much by her exotic upbringing and her struggle to bring up her two daughters after a difficult divorce from her “boxwallah” husband (the boxwallahs were travelling pedlar merchants who carried their wares in boxes), as by her beady cleverness and intense involvement in her work. The expression of exile from physical place and from the ease of conventional society is ever present in her books.

Black Narcissus is the story of a small group of idealistic English nuns who travel to set up a convent school community at Mopu, in the mountains to the north of Darjeeling. As in her other novels, the setting is described with sensuous but precise exactitude—a neglected palace with a scandalous history in a landscape of butterflies, blossom, forests and snowy peaks. The sisters’ intentions are of the best, but, as the local agent of empire, the whisky-swilling Mr. Dean, predicts, they are as trapped in the country as they are by the sunny surfaces of the family house and gardens. The girl is caught in the sticky threads of her parents’ passionate but unhappy marriage; there is further sexual tension close at hand between a young student, an Indian vet, and the vet’s uneducated wife. Social and marital relationships are fragile, but they hold up until an incident with Emily’s pet dog triggers the cataclysm.

Louise, Emily’s mother, is imprisoned by her circumstances. She hates India—the squalor and brutality of the bazaar—but she is as trapped in the country as she is in her marriage. Her treatment of the family dog is an act of blaming revenge and repudiation of both. Godden adored her pet Pekinese, and dogs recur through the books—as does the perpetual threat in India of rabies.

As with the nuns at Mopu, Sophie at Dilkush never stops to consider what she represents to the people who live at her gate. She believes she is poor, but to these villagers she is rich and profligate, and ripe for the cheating. Sophie does everything in her power to make the venture a success, but, between the harsh weather of the mountains and the cruel poverty of the village, her peasant idyll never becomes real. Everyone cheats her except the noble Nabir Dar, the caretaker of the house, and she does not appreciate his worth until it is too late.

Discord begins between the two tribes of the village, on Sophie’s account. The family suffers, but Sophie clings on, willfully blind to the truth, until she is no longer able to discern the danger she and her children are in. From a languorous start steeped in the luminous beauty of the Kashmir scenery, the narrative gathers pace.
and pitches towards its climax: all of Sophie's illusions dissolve in a miasma of threat, sickness and confusion, while thanks to her neglect, Teresa is put in jeopardy.

**Conclusion**

At the conclusion of the article has an absence of sentimentality that is almost forensic. Rumer Godden's novels are endless in its nature, the shocking events are explained and the ending provides a full stop - though even that has its tensions. Black Narcissus achieved acclaim for its pioneering technical mastery, with the cinematographer Jack Cardiff, shooting in vibrant colour, winning an Academy Award for Best Cinematography and a Golden Globe Award for Best Cinematography, and Alfred Junge winning an Academy Award for Best Art Direction. Rumer Godden underwent the same ordeal as Sophie Barrington-Ward, but the reality of the matter was less clear-cut.

**REFERENCES**

2. Michael Powell, commentary on the Criterion Collection DVD, ch.6 Powell 1986,