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DOI: 10.60018/Hemi.VWRS7171

2449-8645

HEMISPHERES

No. 38, 2023

## Colonial Encounter and Imperial Legacy in Paul Scott's *The Jewel in the Crown*

### Abstract

The article explores the issues of colonial encounter as well as imperial legacy on the basis of Paul Scott's *The Jewel in the Crown* novel from 1966. The imperial project was heavily promoted by the authorities in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but the dissolution of the Empire between the 1940s and the 1960s led to the emergence of a critical type of historical fiction crafted by British writers who experienced the imperial system at first hand. *The Jewel in the Crown* exemplifies complex attitudes as well as archetypal patterns among the colonisers and the natives in British India. The analysis shows that the coloniser is a failed figure who is unable to understand and co-exist with the colonised.

**Keywords:** Paul Scott, archetypes, colonialism, India, imperial legacy, the coloniser.

### Introduction: Reassessing Colonial India

According to Edward Said, the West's condescending attitude towards the East is reflected in the shipment of oriental goods and putting them on display in Western museums (Said, 2003, p. 7). In this manner, the artefacts would undergo objectification; they would be labelled as mere souvenirs from the Far East. However, an attempt at putting the whole Empire on display should not go unnoticed either. Some people may long for, or hate, the British Empire today, but the Empire itself is no longer present in the public spotlight. On the other hand, the situation was different at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The colonial endeavour was an integral part of daily existence of not only officials and administrators, but also of ordinary citizens. As John M. Mackenzie puts it: "Thousands of British families had friends or relatives [...] who had served [...] as civil servants, teachers, missionaries, engineers, [...], and of course as soldiers in the British army" (Mackenzie, 1999, p. 212). The number of people immediately involved in the process of acquiring and managing colonies may have been relatively small, but many Britons were affected indirectly. In order to keep the public engaged, the government used various means at hand in order to make "the Empire become an integral aspect of British culture and imagination" (Mackenzie, 1999, p. 213). From popular literature through

consumer marketing to cinema newsreels, the colonial struggle was advertised for the citizens at home and, most importantly, for their children who were to carry on the imperial duties in the future.

Indeed, the 19<sup>th</sup> century marked fervent promotion of the imperial project, whereas the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw a renewed interest in British colonial history. India achieved its independence in 1947, whereas colonial outposts in Africa were being gradually transferred to the natives in the 1960s. Conscious promotion of the Empire at the stage of its dissolution made no sense, yet the realm of culture focused on the subject of distant territories that (not so long ago) used to belong to the Crown. Fervent critics of these works may categorise them under an umbrella term “Raj revival genre” (Roy, 2013, p. 257), yet one has to be careful when differentiating between these cultural representations so as not to fall into the trap of generalisation. Rampant release of a great number of publications, movies, and radio dramas in now de-imperialised Britain cannot be equalled to such promotional projects of the past as imperial exhibitions and advertisements. We have to take into account that Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre’s *Freedom at Midnight* (1975) or Christopher Hibbert’s *The Great Mutiny* (1975) are non-fictional accounts, the purpose of which is to shed light on the most important moments of Indian history. The same applies to a 1974 BBC programme *Plain Tales from the Raj* and *Echoes of the Raj* (2000), which aimed at documenting the testimonies of men and women who lived in British-ruled India and presenting them for a generation of viewers unfamiliar with the Empire (Roy, 2013, p. 258). Such presentations were not simply meant to evoke longing and nostalgia for the colonial glory days, but to record history for posterity.<sup>1</sup>

In terms of fiction, however, we can notice a variety of different utterances ranging from radio dramas (*Shadow of the Moon*) through stage plays (*Phaedra Britannica*) to literature (*The Raj Quartet*, *The Siege of Krishnapur*, and *The Far Pavilions*). Preoccupation with colonial themes within the British film industry reached its peak in the 1980s when such popular adaptations premiered as *Staying On* (1980), *A Passage to India* (1984), *Kim* (1984), or *The Jewel in the Crown* miniseries (1984). Indeed, the abundance of works of fiction in the 1970s and 80s shows a considerable degree of interest in colonial themes, from the side of animators of British culture. Interest in colonial themes did not amount, however, to a conscious agenda that “sought to introduce the seemingly forgotten heroism of imperial Britain to contemporary youth” (Roy, 2013, p. 259). One may arrive at such a presupposition upon superficial inspection of these popular adaptations, yet a closer analysis contradicts this notion.

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<sup>1</sup> Similar activities are carried out by The British Library in London which has a substantial audio/visual catalogue (*The British Library* 2021).

In *Delusions and Discoveries: Studies on India in the British Imagination 1880–1930* (1972), Benita Parry writes that “There were thoughtful and humane men in the Anglo-Indian community as well as mindless authoritarians, and generalisations must inevitably shrink the range of experiences which they knew as individuals” (Parry, 1972, pp. 1–2). According to the researcher, postcolonial interpretations of the British presence in India should not look upon them as overconfident tyrants but victims; in other words, “displaced persons in India” (Parry, 1972, p. 2). She explains further that the colonial encounter can be best understood in terms of a psychological crisis. Indeed, the British arrivals were perplexed by the radically different lifestyle, philosophy, religion, and ethical conduct of the indigenous people (Parry, 1972, p. 4). At times, they tried to resist and fight the undesirable elements, such as the abuse of women; yet, the spiritual allure of the other-worldly frontier crept into their minds and led to either disenchantment or appreciation of India.

It is very easy to regard literary works written after the dissolution of the Empire, and composed by writers who experienced the imperial system at first hand, as merely nostalgic hagiographies of the saintly lives of the colonial officers. In any case, they shed light on the complicated Anglo-Indian relationship with the benefit of hindsight. This article explores an attempt to understand the British post-imperial experience of India and the ways in which the colonisers perceived their legacy through the analysis of Paul Scott's *The Jewel in the Crown* (1966). The reason as to why this particular novel was chosen as subject for analysis stems from its relevance in the world of today. Many British publications before the 1940s and 50s constitute mainly memoirs and travel accounts, whereas postcolonial novels after the year 2000 focus mainly on the theme of diasporic lifestyle in First World countries.

As it was already outlined, the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century marks a resurgence of British interest in former colonies and indigenous cultures; however, this period is also the beginning of postcolonial literature as we know it today. The decade of the 1970s in particular is the crucial moment of shifting the narrative voice from the centre (Europe) to peripheries (the colonies). This is also the case with India. The early literary works were originally written and published in English, which means that they solidify the durability of colonial legacy in India in the form of language. That is not to say, however, that the writers consciously fight the figure of the coloniser within the linguistic field. More likely, they counteract the coloniser's phantom, which is reflected through the English language. What is more, postcolonial literature presents specific perspectives on the British coloniser and Indian colonialism. Given the fact that *The Jewel in the Crown* was published in the 1960s (at a period in-between appraisal and evaluation of the Empire), it is worth exploring the

attitude of the author (positive or negative) towards the coloniser, where exactly he localises the character (stereotypical white outsider, symbolic embodiment in the form of a land, a native, or a female), and how he evaluates the coloniser's tenure at the exotic frontier.

### ***The Jewel in the Crown* (1966) by Paul Scott**

The origins of *The Jewel in the Crown* and the entirety of *The Raj Quartet*<sup>2</sup> go back to the early 1940s when Paul Scott, a member of the Intelligence Corps, was reassigned to Indian Army Service Corps, which was gradually reclaiming the Burmese territories from the Japanese occupation. The young officer was initially surprised at the sight of the colony he had never seen before. To him, India was indeed a land of extreme differences posited alongside each other: the rich and the poor, the Civil Lines and crowded streets, private schools and children of beggars. Nevertheless, the subcontinent greatly enchanted Scott with its plurality of customs, colours, and deities. Upon his return to Britain after the end of World War II, his admiration for India found an outlet in a literary form. Although working primarily as a literary agent for other authors (including M. M. Kaye), Scott managed to write and publish such novels as *Johnny Sahib* (1952), *Six Days in Marapore* (1953), *A Male Child* (1956), and *The Chinese Love Pavilion* (1960). In addition, he penned the following radio plays: *Lines of Communication* (1952) as well as *Sahibs and Mem-Sahibs* (1958). Scott's literary pieces frequently featured such themes as interracial love and family drama set amidst the turmoil of imperial servitude. Having relied on personal experiences from army excursions, he tried to map out the uneasy moment of colonial encounter and its implications; however, his novels did not gain wide acclaim in the United Kingdom.

Even though Scott initially attempted to distance himself from using India as the main framework for his stories throughout the early 1960s, he eventually returned to his creative *modus operandi* in 1965. The writer started visiting old friends, both Indian and English, and interviewing them. These conversations eventually inspired him to take a trip to the Republic of India and see how the country changed after 20 years. His personal analysis of the relations between the coloniser and the colonised resulted in the novel *The Jewel in the Crown* (1966).

As it is stated at the beginning of the novel, *The Jewel in the Crown* revolves primarily around the event of rape. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of August, 1942, a certain Daphne Manners was brutally violated by a gang of thugs in the

<sup>2</sup> The series consists of the following four novels: *The Jewel in the Crown* (1966), *The Day of the Scorpion* (1968), *The Towers of Silence* (1971), and *A Division of the Spoils* (1975).

Bibighar Gardens, Mayapore.<sup>3</sup> Through multiple perspectives<sup>4</sup> and different narrative forms (interviews, letters, diary entries or conversation reports), we follow the unnamed British narrator who investigates the case of Miss Manners and gathers all testimonies together. On the basis of this research, it appears that Daphne Manners was involved in a secret relationship with Hari Kumar, an Indian educated in England who was forced to return to the colony due to his father's suicide. The superintendent of the local police unit, Ronald Merrick, by complete coincidence targets Hari Kumar as the primary suspect. Being personally prejudiced against India, the police officer imprisons the man and subjects him to humiliating tortures in order to elicit a confession. Nevertheless, Hari remains silent. The truth is that he was with Daphne in the Bibighar Gardens, making love to her, until both of them were suddenly attacked by unidentified assailants. Daphne, in order to protect their relationship, makes Hari promise that he will never reveal the fact that he was present at the scene. Even though the most likely participants of the rape are later rounded up, Daphne is unwilling to confirm their involvement so as not to incriminate Hari as well.

Evidently, the main plot line of the novel functions as an intertextual response of Paul Scott to E. M. Forster's critically-revered *A Passage to India* (1924): "This is the story of a rape, of the events that led up to it and followed it and of the place in which it happened." The author also adds that "There are the action, the people, and the place; all of which are interrelated but in their totality incommunicable in isolation from the moral continuum of human affairs" (Scott, 1998, p. 10). For the characters in the novel, this horrible act of violence has not only the literal but also the symbolic meaning.

The story begins with a historical context rather than the suffering of Daphne Manners. The readers are told that the events are set in the year 1942, just as the Japanese took over Burma and Mahatma Gandhi's movement of civil disobedience started gaining wider recognition. The socio-political situation in British India became so tense that the colonists as well as the natives realised the status quo initiated by Queen Victoria in 1858 could not last indefinitely.

The heroine of the first chapter is Miss Edwina Crane, a missionary teacher who, albeit being English, vehemently supports the struggles of Gandhi. Her

<sup>3</sup> This is actually a fictional city created by Paul Scott for the purpose of the story. From its description, it can be inferred that Mayapore is located somewhere in the North of India, either in Punjab or United Provinces (Scott, 1998, pp. 58, 104).

<sup>4</sup> In order to ensure clarification within the analysis, I enumerate the primary characters of the novel: Daphne Manners, a woman raped in the Bibighar Gardens, Edwina Crane, a teacher who is attacked by rioters while travelling; Hari Kumar, Miss Manners' love interest; Lady Chatterjee, the influential owner of the McGregor's House; and Ronald Merrick, the Superintendent of Mayapore.

admiration for Indian independence movement shows in the poster presenting Gandhi, which she hangs in her classroom. However, her idealism is soon put to the test. While travelling from Dibrapur to Mayapore, she and a fellow teacher, Mr Chaudhuri, are stopped by rioters championing the Quit India campaign. The conflict gets out of hand and, in an attempt to save Miss Crane, Mr Chaudhuri opposes the men, but they drag him out and beat him to death. Miss Crane is also abused and thrown into a ditch. After regaining consciousness, she approaches the dead body of her colleague: “‘Oh God, forgive us all.’ [...] ‘There’s nothing I can do, nothing, nothing,’ [she] turned away and began to walk with long unsteady strides through the rain, past the blazing car, towards Mayapore” (Scott, 1998, p. 68).

By describing this incident, Paul Scott actually criticises “the coloniser who refuses.” Albert Memmi rightfully observed that such a figure is an idealist (Memmi, 2003, p. 67), and Scott also adds that this type of a person may have pure intentions, yet he or she should also be aware of the fact that the Other may not always recognise and appreciate the upright values: “For her the only hope for the country she loved lay in the coming together at last of its population and its rulers as equal partners in a war to the death against totalitarianism” (Scott, 1998, p. 46). Miss Crane initially champions the quest of Mahatma Gandhi, but she learns the hard way that the respected leader has no control over the masses lost in nationalist frenzy. In a utopia that Miss Crane envisages, the rioters would recognise that she poses no threat to them, but this is not the case in the real world. To them every white individual is a target, and Miss Crane escapes alive from the showcase of racist brutality only due to Mr Chaudhuri’s sacrifice.

After this ordeal, Miss Crane replaces a portrait of Gandhi with a painting simply called “The Jewel in Her Crown,” which presents Queen Victoria on the imperial throne, receiving tributes from Indian noblemen. She utilises the painting as an educational resource to teach children English in her classroom. Undeniably, the jewel which is given to the Queen is a symbolic representation of India, the greatest colony of the Empire. Edwina Crane’s act of switching the paintings marks her disenchantment with Mahatma Gandhi and his philosophy of nonviolent disobedience. The truth is that the public never fully listens to its leader. As a result, the prospect of peaceful co-existence between the British and the Indians on equal terms definitely seems more unattainable than ever before. Miss Crane’s presuppositions were too idealistic and could not withstand the brutal confrontation with reality. She decides to switch sides due to her disappointment, which denotes that the British think they know India, but this is not the case at all.

Nevertheless, there is still hope for a cross-cultural encounter or even a relationship, as it is visible in the case of Daphne Manners. She used to work as an ambulance driver during the bombing of the United Kingdom. Having been diagnosed with a heart condition, she had to refrain from her activity in emergency services; and after losing her family in the course of the war, she went to India to live with her only living relative, Aunt Ethel Manners. The woman criticises English sentiments toward the war in the following fashion: "I can't, as most of the English here do, blame the Indians for resisting the idea of war, a war they have no proper say in." She continues that "After all I've seen the real thing [...] but most of the people who lay down the law here about beating the Jap and the Hun [...] haven't even heard a rifle fired in anger. British India is still living in the nineteenth century. To them Hitler is only a joke" (Scott, 1998, p. 107).

During Daphne's sojourn in Rawalpindi (a real city located in Punjab Province, currently in Pakistan), Aunt Ethel quickly realises that the girl has a hard time getting into the social life of local community, especially due to her boyish demeanour and unattractive appearance. Therefore, Daphne is sent to Mayapore to live with a certain Lady Chatterjee. Miss Crane personally regarded the Indian noblewoman as an "overwesternized" kind of person (Scott, 1998, p. 42); however, the missionary teacher had never visited her mansion known as "the Macgregor House,"<sup>5</sup> located at the edge of the Civil Lines, which was allegedly the place where "English and Indians came together as equals" (Scott, 1998, p. 42). Without a doubt, Lady Chatterjee, nicknamed by Daphne as Auntie Lili, has strong ties to the British administration because her late husband, Sir Nello Chatterjee, established the Mayapore Technical College. This does not mean, however, that the woman is a privileged elitist at the service of the colonial power.<sup>6</sup> It is quite the contrary; as later actions and remarks of Lady Chatterjee show, she bridges the gap between high-class colonisers and nationalist natives.

Ironically, it is at the McGregor's House that Daphne encounters Hari Kumar. Similarly to Lady Chatterjee, Kumar is also well versed in British

<sup>5</sup> The narrator details the origins of the household in the second part of the novel. Originally, it was built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by an Indian prince as a gift to a classical singer he fell in love with. After the singer's death, the prince passed away out of grief and his son took over the princely kingdom. Due to exploiting his subjects and poisoning an Englishman, the son was dethroned and his state taken over by the East India Company. The house was uninhabited for decades until a certain Scotsman by the name of McGregor rebuilt the premises. In addition, he burnt down the son's stand-alone house which he perceived as an atrocity. Unfortunately, the Scotsman was killed together with his wife during the Sepoy Rebellion.

<sup>6</sup> Such an attitude goes against Partha Chatterjee's conviction that reaching an understanding between the coloniser and the colonised is simply impossible. The natives are only bought with privileges but they are never allowed into the ruling class (Chatterjee, 2012, pp. 188, 271).

culture. This is primarily due to the fact that Hari spent his youth in Britain. His father was a prosperous businessman in Didbury, whereas Hari attended a public school in Chillingborough. Young Hari was not treated with hatred and disdain by his fellow students, but he was fully accepted as a member of the school community. What is more, Hari made friends as well. In particular, he stayed in close contact with Colin Lindsey, who never judged young Hari on the basis of his skin colour. The two supported each other and frequently exchanged letters. When Hari was forced to go back to India due to his father's untimely death,<sup>7</sup> Colin stayed in contact, even though the friends were no longer able to see each other. Hari is brought back to his native homeland by his father's relatives and stays together with Mrs Gupta Sen, a widow and a sister of Duleep Kumar, who always wanted to raise a child. Because of her motherly attitude, she becomes Aunt Shalini to Hari: "In her self-effacement he saw evidence of a concern for his welfare [...]. He could not help knowing that in her odd, retiring way his Aunt Shalini was fond of him" (Scott, 1998, p. 260).

Due to his upbringing and education in England, Hari considers himself to be an Englishman. He is not Hari Kumar, but Harry Coomer, born and bred in the United Kingdom. His father actually came up with the corrected spelling and Aunt Shalini embraced it. Like the colonial administrators from Carl Jung's memoirs, Hari/Harry cannot help but dream about his European homeland: "Home. It still slips out. But this is home, isn't it, Colin? I mean I shan't wake up tomorrow at Chillingborough or Sidcot, or in what we always called 'my' room at Didbury?" (Scott, 1998, p. 242). In view of research by a social psychologist Richard Nisbett on the difference between the mentalities of people from the West and the East, we could say that Hari Kumar's mindset is driven by rationality and belief in personal agency. He rejects to embrace the reality in a holistic manner, which is visible when he expresses distaste towards less-than-civilised conditions in his supposedly "native" homeland:

I detest the others. From their point of view I'm unclean. They want me to drink cow-piss to purify myself of the stain of living abroad, crossing the forbidden water. Purify! I have seen men and women defecate in the open, in some wasteland near the river. At night the smell of the river comes into my bedroom. In my bathroom, in one corner, there is a hole in the floor and two sole-shaped ledges to put your feet on before you squat. There are always flies in the bathroom. And cockroaches. You get used to them, but only by debasing your own civilized instincts. At first they fill you with horror. Even terror. It is purgatory, at first, to empty the bowels. (Scott, 1998, p. 241)

<sup>7</sup> Mr Duleep Kumar committed suicide because his business venture went bankrupt.

In consequence, Hari refuses to accept the *harmony* of India which mixes ancient customs with dubious superstitions in a setting that suffers from poor sanitary standards. Kumar is unwilling to perform his role of a benevolent, effeminate, god-obeying Hindu within the grid of person-to-person dependency<sup>8</sup> because he had experienced a completely different world where there is no place for magic, spirituality, and disregard for hygiene. Therefore, Hari's stay in India invokes a playful spin on Abdul R. JanMohamed's "The Manichean Allegory." The researcher claimed that the colonial environment frightens the colonists, which in turn, makes them fall back on racial prejudices in order to avoid experiencing a personality crisis. Ironically, Hari Kumar is, in biological terms, a native of India, yet he acts not like the oppressed Other but the stereotypical representation of the "coloniser who refuses." Consequently, Paul Scott's novel eludes JanMohamed's accusation that European writers primarily demonise indigenous people in literature. Hari is actually a hybrid torn between two radically disparate dimensions, but by no means is he a symbolic "mediator" who provides a remedy for "the Manichean opposition" (JanMohamed, 1985, p. 66). In fact, the situation is much more complex than that. Hari may indeed look up to the imperial *modus operandi*, yet he experiences a great deal of prejudice as well.

Halfway through the novel, it is revealed that Colin arrived in India due to his army service. Hari is exhilarated and worried at the same time. He is afraid that his best friend will feel deep repulsion upon witnessing the dirty and overcrowded hustle and bustle of Mayapore. Nevertheless, Hari is also convinced that Colin will see and accept "the real India" (Scott, 1998, p. 277); that is to say, all the luxuries of the Civil Lines, such as the recreational clubs, administrative facilities, lavish bungalows, and railway stations. While eagerly awaiting a letter from his English friend, settling the details of their meeting, Hari accidentally encounters Colin Lindsey, now a captain in the ranks of India Command, at a cricket pitch. Colin consciously averts his eyes and does not recognise a childhood friend. Devastated Hari rushes back home and attempts to convince himself that that man he saw definitely was not Colin at all, for the real Colin would have surely written to him if he happened to be near Mayapore.

This sad situation serves as an exemplary instance of Edward Said's division between the ruler and the Other. Hari is not at fault during this unexpected encounter on a colonial ground. It is the imperial environment which used and subsequently transformed Colin Lindsey into a hegemonic figure of the

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<sup>8</sup> As Richard Nisbett explains, there is no single, non-Western concept of "I" (Nisbett, 2004, pp. 49). A resident of Southeast Asia functions in relation to other people, performing specific social functions. Being independent of the social web of connections is impossible.

oppressor. People who were or seemed to be equals about 10 years before in England assumed and performed the polar opposites of power relations in the colonies. Sister Ludmila, a missionary running a free clinic for the poor, tries to explain this incident by attributing the tense situation in British India to the impending invasion of the Japanese soldiers in the East. Nevertheless, nothing at all can excuse Colin's shameful behaviour. The man has evidently adopted racist and contempt of his military superiors and fellow officers. In his eyes, Hari ceased to be a friend and instead became a dehumanised object (part of Indian setting) unworthy of any attention whatsoever.<sup>9</sup>

Incidentally, the encounter with Colin happens on the same day as the tragic event at the Bibighar Gardens. In consequence, Hari drinks during the night together with the colleagues from the *Mayapore Gazette*, his place of employment. The next day, he is spotted by Sister Ludmila patrolling a wasteland near the river where Hari slept. She informs Superintendent Ronald Merrick about this unusual encounter, and the police officer immediately targets Hari as the prime suspect in the case of assault on Daphne Manners.

Ronald Merrick, the representative of law enforcement in Mayapore, is shown as a vile and petty human being. His social background is that of a lower-class commoner; thus, a colonial post in India allows Merrick to alleviate his personal insecurities. Among Indian natives, the police officer feels the need to exercise his power and demonstrate that white people are, without a shadow of a doubt, bound to rule over the inferior races of this world: "[T]here was nothing straightforward about Mr. Merrick. He worked the wrong way, like a watch that wound up backwards" (Scott, 1998, p. 139).

What is more, Merrick actively seeks to improve his position within the British social strata. Frequently, he stylises himself to be, in his own words, "only a grammar school boy" whose family is composed of "pretty humble sort of people" (Scott, 1998, p. 111), but the officer secretly envies those who are better off and have higher education. The desire to be recognised by the elite makes him strive for Daphne Manner's favours. Nevertheless, the woman finds the officer repulsive and rejects his advances. This in turn only fuels Merrick's hatred towards dark-skinned people and the whites who associate with them.

It is revealed in the second volume of *The Raj Quartet*, *The Day of the Scorpion* (1968), that Hari Kumar was sexually molested and subjected to torture by Ronald Merrick. The researcher Steven Earnshaw claims that: "When Merrick tortures Kumar to extract a confession, he self-consciously re-enacts his view of the relationship between England (Britain) and India as

<sup>9</sup> At least, this is what Hari and the readers infer on the basis of this situation because the narrator does not grant us access into Colin's mindset.

one of master-servant imbued with sado-masochism” (Earnshaw, 2013, p. 61). It can be inferred that apart from displaying a racist attitude towards the Other, Ronald Merrick is, in fact, also a latent homosexual. Back in Britain, in the world of Victorian virtues and public order, the officer was forced to suppress his desires, but in India he could indulge in the forbidden behaviour because the colony itself was the dark territory of the strange and the unexplained. If he regarded himself as an individual placed within the Jungian realm of the unknown, the Superintendent felt psychological permission to release his inhibitions and engage in devious activities. In this manner, Merrick re-enacts the archetype of the Outlaw. Paradoxically, although his social role is to protect and serve, Merrick’s true nature is that of a vengeful misfit with a destructive, near borderline psychotic frame of mind, who strives to be at the top of the dominance hierarchy<sup>10</sup> and rule over others.

That being said, Paul Scott still manages to introduce some ambiguity around the character of the Superintendent. In subsequent parts of *The Raj Quartet*, more (mis)adventures of Ronald Merrick are revealed. For instance, in *The Day of the Scorpion* (1968), he is promoted to the post in military intelligence and spends a lot of time in the company of the Laytons. What is more, he tries to save his friend, Teddie Layton, from an ambush set up by the Indian National Army.<sup>11</sup> The attempt is unfortunately futile and leaves Merrick permanently disfigured. In *The Towers of Silence* (1971), he is given Miss Crane’s painting of “The Jewel in Her Crown,” which makes him ponder on the relationship between the British and the Indians. To the officer, Queen Victoria depicted in the painting appears to be a motherly figure looking after her innocent and uneducated Indian children.

Ultimately, Merrick marries the widow of his friend, Susan Layton, but happiness is short-lived as the woman loses her sanity due to personal trauma. In *A Division of the Spoils* (1975), the Superintendent himself is ruthlessly killed by unknown attackers (presumably Indian nationalists) while engaging in a homosexual act with a native adolescent. His corpse is found in a bathroom with a word “BIBIGHAR”<sup>12</sup> written on a mirror.

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<sup>10</sup> The dominance hierarchy stands for a social order with a linear or non-linear ranking in which dominant units control those below them. The term is often applied in biology, but also has its use in psychology (*Britannica.com* 2021).

<sup>11</sup> A military organisation led by Subhas Chandra Bose, and supported by the Empire of Japan, which sought to liberate India from British rule during World War II (*Britannica.com* 2021).

<sup>12</sup> The word not only refers to the Bibighar Gardens, the place where Daphne Manners was raped but also functions as an intertextual reference to the Siege of Cawnpore in 1857 when British women and children were rounded up and executed by the Sepoys. The word itself literally means in Hindi “the House of the Ladies” (Matthews, 2015, <https://www.mimimattthews.com>).

The character of Ronald Merrick represents the duality of human nature. The readers can notice that the officer commits bad deeds, but he is also capable of carrying out heroic acts as well. However, the coloniser is blinded by a false set of presuppositions towards the Other, which ultimately lead to the man's damnation. In other words, it is up to an individual to work against wrongdoing and change his or her fate for the better. Ronald Merrick ultimately fails to work against wrongdoing and change his or her fate for the better; yet, in contrast to wishful thinking of Bruce Gilley<sup>13</sup>, it is impossible to frame this colonial figure as an all-positive or all-negative character. Some researchers claim that the colonial officer functions as "a viciously unflattering self-portrait" of Paul Scott, who was struggling with his own bisexuality and never dared to reveal this secret to his wife (Paterson, 1993, p. 115).

Still, the original novel provides us with a standpoint of righteous characters, such as Lady Chatterjee. This noblewoman treats her houseguest, Daphne Manners, with extreme courtesy, and does everything in her power to release Hari Kumar from his confinement. That is not to say that she approves of the relationship between Daphne and Hari. Lady Chatterjee perceives Hari with a sort of disdain in view of the fact that he considers himself to be a member of the British elite. Paradoxically, Lady Chatterjee oscillates between the same social spheres as well, but has never given up her Indian identity:

Westernised though she was, Lady Chatterjee was of Rajput stock, a Hindu of the old ruling-warrior caste. Short, thin, with greying hair cut in European style, seated upright on the edge of a sofa, with the free end of her saree tight-wound around her shoulders, and her remarkably dark eyes glittering at you, her beaky Rajput nose and pale skin proclaiming both authority and breeding, she looked every inch a woman whom only the course of history had denied the opportunity of fully exercising the power she was born to (Scott, 1998, p. 42).

Indeed, Lady Chatterjee is proud of her Indian heritage and gives the allure of being a skilled woman of politics, similar to Indira Gandhi. Incidentally, she likens herself to Indira's father, Jawaharlal Nehru, whom she considers to be the representative of traditional, *non-westernised* India. She reflects on the post-partitioned Republic in the following fashion:

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<sup>13</sup> Bruce Gilley is a political science expert and an author of a controversial article from 2017 called "The Case for Colonialism" which presents an unpopular opinion about the legacy of colonialism and the effectiveness of postcolonial reworkings. The article was originally published in the *Third World Quarterly* journal, but it was taken down due to the fact that the editor started receiving death threats. The text was later republished on the main site of the National Association of Scholars.

I am not a Hindu but I am an Indian. I don't like violence but I believe in its inevitability. [...] [I]t doesn't worry me in the least that in the new India I seem already to be an anachronism [...]. You could say that the same thing has happened to Mr. Nehru for whom I have always had a fondness because he has omitted to be a saint. I still have a fondness for him because the only thing about him currently discussed with any sort of lively passion is the question of who is to succeed him. I suppose we are still waiting for the Mahatma because the previous one disappointed and surprised us by becoming a saint and martyr in the western sense when that silly boy shot him.<sup>14</sup> I'm sure there's a lesson in that for us. If the old man were alive today I believe he'd dot us all one on the head with his spinning wheel and point out that if we go on as we are we shall end up believing in saints the way you English do and so lose the chance of ever having one again in our public life. I have a feeling that when it was written into our constitution that we should be a secular state we finally put the lid on our Indianness, and admitted the legality of our long years of living in sin with the English. Our so-called independence was rather like a shotgun wedding (Scott, 1998, pp. 79–80).

In consequence, Lady Chatterjee<sup>15</sup> implies that perhaps the British were never meant to be in India. Due to their very presence, they had irreversibly changed this land. With the moment of embracing the state of being independent from the colonisers, the country is bound to follow, at least on the level of politics and economics, the principles of rationality and European secularity in order to survive in the post-World War II reality. The realm of spirituality, the one that frightens the Western newcomers so much, is meant to be rejected. Indeed, Lady Chatterjee is quite right that new generations of independent Indians are keen on adopting the trend of Americanisation, as described by social psychologist Richard Nisbett; nevertheless, this does not mean that communicating in English, wearing baseball caps, or driving automobiles made in Europe automatically represses traditional modes of indigenous lifestyle (Nisbett, 2004, p. 221). The history of India since 1947 has shown that there is still a space for the spiritual realm in the public sphere. From ritual bathing in

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<sup>14</sup> Lady Chatterjee refers to the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi which took place on January 30, 1948 in New Delhi. A Hindu fundamentalist, Nathuram Godse, fired three bullets at point-blank range. The assassin was sentenced to death in 1949.

<sup>15</sup> It can be inferred that the characters' names in Paul Scott's novel are highly emblematic. Lady Chatterjee may serve as a reference to D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley*. Daphne Manners goes against the social *manners* of the British community by displaying her devotion to Hari, whereas Ronald Merrick desires power, as implied by his surname.

the Ganges to the *Durga Puja*<sup>16</sup> festivities, Indian people continue to underline their peculiar position at the threshold of the modern and the traditional.

Daphne Manners herself exemplifies the colonial encounter that can result in an unexpected, yet positive outcome. It turns out that the woman is actually pregnant. In view of the gruesome gang rape, the fatherhood of the baby is very much unknown; however, Daphne believes that the father must be Hari Kumar. She wishes to be with her loved one and create a family, but in view of the controversial court trial in the course of which she does not identify any assaulter, the British community excludes Daphne from their sphere. Ultimately, she gives birth to a child but dies in the process because of a pre-existing heart condition, which she developed during the war. The child called Parvati is taken care of by Ethel Manners and Lady Chatterjee, who conclude together that Hari, indeed, must have been the natal father. Aunt Manners explains as follows:

She is a sweet and pretty child. Her skin is going to be pale, but not nearly pale enough for her to pass as white. I'm glad. As she grows older she won't be driven by the temptation to wear a false face. At least that is one thing she'll be spared — the misery and humiliation experienced by so many Eurasian girls. I intend to bring her up as an Indian, which is one of the reasons I have called her Parvati. (Scott, 1998, p. 469)

Yet, the birth of Parvati also has its counterbalance in the form of Miss Crane's death. After her ordeal, she gradually loses touch with reality, mumbling nonsensical things, and constantly repeating "I'm sorry it's too late. [...] There's nothing I can do" (Scott, 1998, p. 428). Edwina Crane eventually commits suicide in a manner resembling the barbarous ritual of *suttee*. That is to say, similarly to oppressed Hindu widows, she immolates herself. Miss Crane's tragic fate is a grim foreshadowing of what is going to happen to other white *memsahibs*<sup>17</sup> in subsequent novels. The heroines suffer from insanity, abortion, and betrayal; however, in spite of various forms of maltreatment experienced in the Raj, they come to realise that the imperial colony is not granted to the British for all eternity. It is only a matter of time for the indigenous people to come and take back what once was rightfully theirs. Nevertheless, we may ask: at what cost? Daphne Manners was brutally raped, Hari Kumar wrongfully accused, and Edwina Crane lost her faith in the Anglo-Indian symbiosis.

<sup>16</sup> An annual Hindu festival serving as a tribute to the goddess Durga. Indian women paint on their foreheads the *sindoor* sign (mark of a married female) with vermilion powder (Suhasini, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com>).

<sup>17</sup> *Memsahib*: a Hindu term used to describe a white, foreign woman (*Merriam-Webster.com* 2020).

Ethel Manners in one of her letters to Lady Chatterjee admits the moral responsibility of the colonisers in setting in motion the Partition when, in fact, the very opposite was needed. The East and the West clashed together on this desolate land with a harsh climate, and the British should have done everything in their power to prevent nationalist violence, to undo “little pockets of dogma and mutual resistance” (Scott, 1998, p. 474). The reality turned out to be otherwise, but there is still hope for future reconciliation between the two cultures, as Lady Chatterjee takes it upon herself to raise a representative of a new postcolonial generation, untainted by historical shortcomings:

Dinner is the only meal Parvati has with the family, such as the family is: that is to say Lili Chatterjee and young Parvati, the two of them. When there are no guests there is this picture to be had of them sharing one end of the long polished dining room table [...] the old woman and the young girl, talking in English because even now that is the language of Indian society, in the way that half a century ago French was the language of polite Russians (Scott, 1998, p. 94).

## Conclusions

Paradoxically, Paul Scott's instance of historical fiction is extremely critical and reproachful of the coloniser and the colonial endeavour. In *The Jewel in the Crown* (1966), readers are presented with the image of India as a territory in deep political turmoil plagued by World War II and the unrest propelled by the civil disobedience movement. The colonisers themselves appear to be oblivious to these factors; that is, until a disaster strikes. Miss Crane witnesses the death of her Indian friend, whereas Miss Manners is brutally raped by a gang of assailants. Hari Kumar is targeted as the prime suspect in the case of Daphne Manners, and he is tortured by the vicious Superintendent Ronald Merrick. In the end, Daphne's child, the fruit of an interracial affair raised by the noble Lady Chatterjee, serves as a promise of hope and change for the better in a land consumed by racial prejudice and violence. The coloniser is not an archetypal representative of “the Hero” or “the Sage” who has a remedy for all the topical problems. In fact, the imperial representative, according to Paul Scott, is directly responsible for crippling the Indian subcontinent by setting in motion the process of the Partition. As exemplified by the character of Merrick, the coloniser can be a lower-class individual suffering from envy and prejudice towards the native. There is no place for mutual understanding between the Westerner and the Other, and it is up to Manners' daughter (and her generation) to usher in a new era of respect and rapprochement in the postcolonial reality.

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