The Role of the Pukka Sahib in English Fiction:
Looking at Colonial Rule During and After the Empire.

Mijn oudoom weet nog uit zijn jeugd
-hij woonde eerst bij Bandoeng, en ging later pas naar
Buitenzorg-
dat op de tafel in de hal van elk hotel
de kruik jenever stond, tot vrij gebruik door alle gasten,
als water, gratis en voor niets.
'Dat heeft bestaan. Daar hoor je zeker wel van op?' 'Ja, Oom.'
'Ach jongetje, toen was nog niets voorgoed bedorven:
Inlanders wisten hun plaats, je hoorde niet van onruststokers.
De mensen waren aardig, hadden iets over voor elkaar.
Er was nog echte hartelijkheid, en liefde.'
Gerard Reve- *Nader tot u*

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Table of Contents

Introduction

The Pukka Sahib Code

> Two hundred years of British dominance in India had profound effects on Indian society. The effects on the domiciled English community were much less. One result however- an attitude of arrogant superiority and authoritarianism- can probably be traced to the social isolation of the English in India. (Naidis, 425)

Mark Naidis wrote this in 1957. Questions about the effect of colonialism on England as a whole will be raised in later chapters, but for now the focus will be on the moral superiority the British Empire claimed over the native population in the colonies. Naidis rightfully argues that the colonial system worked through isolation of the colonial agent from the native population and produced a distinct habitus, which became linked with the idea of the Pukka Sahib. The word Pukka Sahib comes from the Punjabi language and means absolute, but was used as an honorary title for English men of higher standing in the colonies. In everyday use it meant true gentleman or excellent fellow. In itself it is just a term, but the code that supported the colonial relationship between the Pukka Sahib and his subordinates is an interesting one to investigate. The Pukka Sahib, and the underlying code he had to uphold, was the magnetic centre where all actors in the colonial system revolved around.

Gopinath argues that the idea of the Pukka Sahib was institutionalised in the English school system of the late 19th century, where young boys were trained to become proper English gentlemen, who could be used to serve in the colonial system. In the public schools the boys became ingrained with the idea of "a ruling class where meritocracy and exclusivity worked in tandem" (Gopinath, 203). They were pushed into a mould, formed by a "pattern that became the fetishized criterion of a gentleman" (Anderson, 22-23). This English code celebrated traits

such as self-restraint, chivalry, a vocation for ruling and vigour and transported these ideals overseas, to a population whose morals and way of life were seen through the lens of Orientalism and judged to be the direct opposite of the English gentleman's code:

> Orientals are shown to be gullible, 'devoid of energy and initiative', much given to 'fulsome flattery', intrigue, cunning, and unkindness to animals; Orientals cannot walk on either a road or a pavement…Orientals are inveterate liars, they are 'lethargic and suspicious', and in everything oppose the clarity, directness, and nobility of the Anglo-Saxon race. (Saïd, 46)

The general idea behind the code of the Pukka Sahib can be found

> in the old mood of the Anglo-Saxon soul, in the ideal of gentleman who was the standard type of culture and good manners. The gentleman is not only the polite and polished man, he is more, especially the man who knows how to command; the Imperial man in a certain sense, who having powers, makes it his duty and his right to use them for the common welfare. (Maunier, 30)

Around the beginning of the 19th century, the enthusiasm for uplifting the native population of the colonies soared higher than ever, as a result of Britain's own moral awakening: "social evils such as suttee, thuggee and female infanticide were rooted out" (Islam, 3). India became a site for Westerners to export Christian and Enlightened ideals to.

How the spreading of these ideals could play out in the reality of the colony and the problems this entailed is exemplified by stories of missionaries. These were among the first white men to come into contact with indigenous culture, while trying to spread Christianity.

Two examples are Thomas Lewis and George Vason, who both arrived in respectively Tahiti and Tonga around the beginning of the 19th century. They both decided to abandon their mission to live with native women. Condemnation befell these men most heavily, because missionaries "claimed moral superiority, but wilfully abandoned their white identity to sexual gratification" (Campbell, 96).

Fears of taboo breaking were most prominent regarding white women and children. William Henry was another missionary and he lived on the island of Tahiti around the start of the 19th century. His children came into contact with the Tahitian culture and language in multiple ways from a young age. They were nursed by Tahitian women, played games with the native children, ate Tahitian food and learned to speak the language. William's upbringing of his children led to consternation among the other missionaries who condemned him sharply for leaving his children in Tahitian households, leading some to suggest that the children had denied the existence of God within hearing distance of the natives. The Henry children were described as whores, drunkards, blasphemers and liars. Their family story "illustrates how island life in the Pacific world blurred boundaries not only between the European newcomers and the people of these islands but among the Europeans themselves" (Campbell, 98).

Keeping strict boundaries between Europeans and the native population was necessary in the colonial system. This is illustrated by the story of Reverend Simpson, who was a member of the London Missionary Society in Tahiti in 1842. As the caretaker of missionary daughters at the South Seas Academy, he was rumoured to have been raping, groping and inappropriately touching the girls in their bedrooms. The evidence that was gathered against him pointed towards structural abuse of young women from 1831 to 1839, eventually leading to a meeting in 1843 in which the accusations were brought against him. After two days of hearing, it was decided that he should receive a severe censure for his deeds, but he was allowed to keep practising as a missionary. He also did not lose his position in the community: "Simpson's

character, gender and position of authority destabilised the mission's ability to formally punish him" (Manktelow, 108). Simpson would go on to step over the boundaries of prescribed behaviour of white men in the colonies. The public outrage that followed was inexcusable, precisely because it was public: "while private deviance could trouble one's racial and moral identity, public deviance threatened to undermine the very notion of moral superiority that underpinned both the missionary and the colonial enterprise" (Manktelow, 108). This deviance entailed the drunkenness of Simpson, who was seen intoxicated in public on multiple occasions in the years leading up to 1850, the time of his dismissal. Even native Tahitians talked about Simpson, who was reported by a Tahitian man to be too drunk to lead the church service. He had failed to retrieve Simpson from his bedroom, where he was found slouched over in his chair.

The widespread rumours about Simpson's drunkenness, which turned into established facts, threatened to overturn colonial hierarchies. As an agent of the mission it was unacceptable that he be caught in the rhetoric of vice and debauchery that was used to categorise the native population. This proves that "regimes of gender, power and race were not disrupted by his moral failings...Simpson's drunkenness exposed him...his culture and race, to foolishness, mockery and disgust" (Manktelow, 121).

The Indian Mutiny of 1857 greatly soured the enthusiasm for uplifting the native Indian population. Democratisation and the reformation of India were no longer goals that would be realised in the foreseeable future: "from then on emphasis was placed on a permanent Raj strongly dedicated to all the myths of the Imperial idea" (Islam, 3). Naidis adds that the Mutiny introduced an element of fear into the colonial system. India was to be held by force: "this strengthened the Pukka Sahib attitude" (Naidis, 434). The suppression of the Mutiny proved the superiority of the English civilization, leading to a Darwinist inspired theory, which said that the English had struggled and proven themselves to be the best adapted species of men,

whose natural position was at the top of the pyramid. The Mutiny was “a major event in India’s colonial history, after which British policies and practices were more and more colored by the rhetoric of the racial and cultural superiority of the West” (Lothspeich, 1).

The consequences of the Mutiny played itself out in colonial club land, where the perceived racial and cultural superiority of the West became visible in concrete ways. The colonial European social clubs were transferred to “an intermediate zone between both metropolitan and indigenous public spheres. It is as such that the European social club served as the privileged vehicle for Eurocentrism” (Sinha, 492). This Eurocentrism is important in understanding the working of the European club, because it sees European power and privilege as something unique and arising out of conditions solely inherent in it. At the same time it feels that the European experience is universally valuable and can be reproduced in far-away countries. In the jargon of the club this meant that the coloniser defined himself as clubbable while recognising the possibility for natives to become clubbable, while at the same time keeping them out of the club. The Imperial force of the club was thus “neither its origin as a metropolitan extension nor its representation as an island of exclusive ‘Britishness’ ” (Shina, 493). The rise of the European clubs came at a time when the colonial state of Britain became more and more solidified; there emerged “a distinct Anglo-Indian community, sharply separated from native society. The clubs were instrumental in this transition” (Sinha, 499). The club made the desired image of Anglo-Indians visible as elitist and white: “a very specific and limited construction of whiteness in India” (Shina, 505).

Important to note, according to Jackson & Manktelow, and which is exemplified by the European club, is that Imperialism worked though this difference between coloniser and colonised. The belief in the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon population depended on the presence of a group of people who were perceived to be inferior to them. Imperialism was not only an ideological defence against the colonised however: where ideology failed force was

used to guard the borders of the colonial system: “colonialism was invested in the strategic deployment of force” (Manktelow & Jackson, 2). Jackson & Manktelow make the further addition that colonisers perceived themselves to be superior “in the form of unique access to the means of production, supposedly democratic systems of governance or those racial and cultural registers of difference that justified rule and interlaced it with high-minded ideals of Imperial benevolence” (2). This Imperial benevolence was bestowed by white men upon the native population: “colonial societies work through race” (9). Superiority also extended to English women however, who had to be defended from lurking native men and the corrupting nature of colonial life. This leads Stoler to conclude: “Imperial authority and racial distinctions were fundamentally structured in gendered terms” (42). The idea that emerges is the construction of a white male power system, which held on strongly to its own possessions, with the Pukka Sahib at its heart. This was however a fragile construct, which could be besieged from all sides. In reality it was difficult, if not impossible to live up to the English code, as exemplified by the stories of the missionaries. Therefore: “during its making, mutation, and hegemonic consolidation in both metropole and colony- it existe(d) as an ideal” (Gopinath, 204).

Historical events furthermore show the frailness of the code. Not only its strength in keeping individual white men in line was beginning to waver, but the collective belief in the superiority of the Pukka Sahib had also started to weaken in the face of the huge losses of many young men on the battlefields of World War One. The trauma that was caused by mechanised warfare led to serious qualms about the nature of the manly code that supported the colonial enterprise. During the war, women had proven themselves to be skilful and to possess individual characters, playing an important part in the war effort. They were increasingly represented as Empire builders, leading to the Sex Disqualification Removal Act in 1919,

which gave women the possibility to enter male professions. This realignment of the borders of the colonial code was a big breach in the bastion of the Pukka Sahib.

The idea of racial superiority also became increasingly difficult to uphold as time progressed. Indian unrest again arose after the participation of many Indian battalions in the war on the English side. To pacify the situation, acts like the Government of India Act of 1919 were put in place, which allowed Indians access to every branch of administration. The influx of a body of educated native men into the British ruling class was detrimental to the gentleman's code, because well-educated Indians were present in the system from then on. The native men increasingly mirrored the public school bred Englishmen in their sensibilities and education, but were treated unequally, because of their skin colour. The division between the English gentlemen and educated Indians was increasingly difficult to defend. As a result, the code receded further and further back into its core motivation: the exercise of power. There occurred an: "increasing dissonance, between the Imperial manliness of empire and gentlemanliness" (Gopinath, 205).

How did the different actors in the colonial world experience the system of Imperialism? This is an important theme in the research that will follow. It is fruitful to limit the point of view to the personal level: "by piecing together fragments of marginal lives...it becomes possible to see not only how global forces impinged on 'ordinary' lives but how 'ordinary' actors shaped...such forces" (Jackson & Manktelow, 3). The lens through which this history will be looked at is English literature about the Empire published after the First World War to the end of the 1970's. The focus on literature will make the scope wider than the history of marginalised lives but narrower than a historical overview. Islam voices justification for this choice: "history and literature interact and illuminate each other. Often literature, though less objective and more emotional, is a better guide to the spirit of the times" (14).

In what follows, the lived experience of colonial rule will be looked at, as described in E.M. Forster's book *A Passage to India* (released in 1924) and George Orwell's *Burmese Days* (1934) and *Shooting an Elephant* (1936). Followed up by Paul Scott, who arrived in India in the dying days of the Empire and wrote a book about its demise, titled *Six Days in Marapore,* which was released in 1953. Finally, the attention will shift towards literature about the Empire after it was dismantled, in the form of J.G. Farrell's *The Singapore Grip* (1978).

To bind almost half a century of English literature together, a common point of reference has to be found. This will be in the following question: how is the Pukka Sahib described in fiction when the Empire was still alive, and did the decline of the Empire lead to a reconsideration of the role of the Pukka Sahib in the colonial system in the books under discussion? In the chapter about the remembrance of the Empire thinkers like Gilroy and Schwarz will be applied to see if the writers under discussion are attracted to the idea of reviving the Raj in its sweetest form, without being critical towards its darker sides. This nostalgia is among other things filled with emotions of innocence:

> nostalgia is a particularly appropriate emotion to invoke in attempting to establish one's innocence and at the same time talk about what one has destroyed. Doesn't everyone feel nostalgic about their childhood memories? Aren't these memories genuinely innocent? Indeed, much of imperialist nostalgia's force resides in its association with (indeed, its disguise as) more genuinely innocent, tender recollections of what is at once an earlier epoch and a previous phase of life. (Rosaldo, 108)

Why even think about colonialism and Empire one could ask, seemingly only useful for history teachers to get excited about in front of a weary eyed high-school class? A possible answer could be:

although the Empire is dead and gone, it affected millions of people in an intimate way for centuries; it changed the course of present history; and the ideas which generated and later destroyed it continue to exercise their influence on our lives in ways that cannot be calculated-the whole question of East-West relationship or interpersonal and inter-racial communication, or the role of the Third World in the present scheme of things, has something to do with the imperial idea. (Islam, 14)

Chapter 1

Something is Amiss

In *A Passage to India* Forster captures the unrest in India after the First World War. Forster's book is based on his experiences while travelling through India in the years 1912-13 and 1921, placing him on the border between the "Era of Confidence" and the "Era of Doubt" (Islam, 13). Forster never makes clear what the source of this turbulence is; it seems to be just outside the grasp of the reader. At the same time there always seems to be a looming thundercloud. In every social interaction between the English and the native population it casts a long shadow over the proceedings.

The creeping unrest of the ethnic groups of India and the static nature of Imperialism meet during the picnic scene at the Marabar Caves, one of the most iconic of the novel. Despite the suggestive nature of Forster's descriptions about what happens or does not happen to Adela, nothing truly becomes clear. Silver uses the term periphrasis to capture the unspoken nature of Adela's alleged assault. The term comes from Greek and means to speak around: it both under- and over specifies the thing it is talking about. What makes the allusion to the assault on a white woman so potent is not just the infringement on an individual's integrity but the perceived overturning of colonial hierarchy. Silver builds on this:

> read it not in terms of sexual desire or repression, but in terms of a deployment of sexuality within a discourse of power that posits a complex network of sameness and difference. Within this discourse, what is at stake is both gender difference and racial difference, with manifold lines of power. (Silver, 88)

According to Lothspeich, narratives of rape were used as validation for the strong suppression of the native Indian: "British colonial fiction from about the middle of the nineteenth century

to the First World War is replete with tales of affronts to the European woman, the so-called memsahib" (1). These stories are inhabited by savage brutes that assault the bodies of white women, reiterating theories of the racial and moral superiority of the English race. White women in the colonies had to be protected from these men by the Pukka Sahib. Despite their inferior position, white women were instrumental in the racial segregation of colonialism: "the 'manly independent individual'…was always defined in relation to the dependent and the subjected-women, children, servants, employees, slaves, and the colonized" (Sinha, 497). This was especially noticeable in colonial club: "Anglo-Indian segregationists cited the presence of white women in the clubs as the grounds for their reluctance to allow native members or guests in the club" (Sinha, 502). Edwardes elaborates: "they (Indians) would not bring their wives (to the club) but hang around English ladies, for whom, it was well known, Indians held lascivious yearnings" (226). Sharpe argues that around the beginning of the 20th century the appetite for these scandalous stories was diminishing. Rape narratives changed from justification of the colonial system to articulating anxieties about British exploitation. Forster's story about Adela's imagined assault clearly falls into the latter category, by overturning the cliché: "rather than allude to outrages too unspeakable to mention, *A Passage to India* speaks… of an outrage that never really was" (Lothspeich, 9).

The suggestion of the native man stalking the white woman resonates deeply with the English population in Forster's novel, immediately conjuring up the image of the turbulent times of the Indian Mutiny: "the crime was even worse than they had supposed—the unspeakable limit of cynicism, untouched since 1857" (Forster, 175-176). Adela's case becomes a matter of national identity:

> each felt that all he loved best in the world was at stake, demanded revenge, and was filled with a not unpleasing glow, in which the chilly and half-known features of Miss

> Quested vanished and were replaced by all that is sweetest and warmest in the private life. (Forster, 172)

It is telling that the perception of Adela's features is transformed, as a result of the perceived infringement on her body, because: "Adela Quested, is the very antithesis of an ideal beauty, a woman so plain that Dr. Aziz is ashamed to be associated with her sexually, even in hearsay" (Lothspeich, 9). Adela is changed from an individual, with imperfect features, to a stereotyped woman who has to be defended from the native Dr. Aziz. What is most at stake for the English community is not the well-being of Adela per se, but the memory of 1857. Adela becomes a symbol of victimized womanhood and even more troubling, evidence for the ruler's inability to defend his own community. Ronny Heaslop, a typical Pukka Sahib, embodies the ruler and defender of his community:

> I am out here to work, mind, to hold this wretched country by force. I'm not a missionary or a Labour Member or a vague sentimental sympathetic literary man. I'm just a servant of the Government; it's the profession you wanted me to choose myself, and that's that. We're not pleasant in India, and we don't intend to be pleasant. We've something more important to do. (Forster, 45)

The subsequent court case becomes a power struggle between the native Indians and the English colonial code. Ronny's hands are bound by the workings of the law, and the law decides that Aziz is not guilty until proven otherwise. The restraint of the English code slides towards an inability to properly defend the borders of the community, legality turns into weakness. He can only enact his vengeance upon Aziz within the limits of the law by denying him bail. This inability to strike out at the suspicious native population leads the Collector to

muse on the good old days when the distinctions between the different groups in India were clear:

> the Collector sat on the edge of a table...His mind whirled with contradictory impulses. He wanted to avenge Miss Quested…while remaining scrupulously fair. He wanted to flog every native that he saw, but to do nothing that would lead to a riot or to the necessity for military intervention. There seemed nothing for it but the old weary business of compromise and moderation. He longed for the good old days when an Englishman could satisfy his own honour and no questions asked afterwards.
> (Forster, 172)

The desired effect, namely the fortification of the English community facing a common enemy, does not come to fruition as the case proceeds. Most shocking for Ronny is the fact that it is the English themselves who leave gaps in the defence. His own mother, Mrs Moore, instils doubts into Adela's mind about the guilt of Dr. Aziz, refusing to be a witness in the case: " 'why should I be in the witness-box?' ... 'I have nothing to do with your ludicrous law courts,' she said, angry. 'I will not be dragged in at all' " (Forster, 189). Eventually, her own son ships her off to England to silence her. She dies at sea during the journey however. Ronny thinks about the death of his mother and the righteousness of his actions: "how tiresome she had been with her patronage of Aziz! What a bad influence upon Adela! And now she still gave trouble with ridiculous 'tombs', mixing herself up with natives" (Forster, 242). In an ironic turn of events it is the spirit of his mother with her belief in Christian compassion that returns to undermine the colonial power of her own son. When the defence calls upon her, Ronny informs the court that his mother is long gone from India. Outraged, Aziz's advocate storms out of the court, cursing the law of the Raj, but the natives who are gathered there pick up the request for

the appearance of Mrs. Moore, turning her name into a chant and eventually into a Hindu Goddess, with the name Esmiss Esmoor. It is through this ritualized invocation of the spirit of Mrs. Moore that Adela starts to disentangle the happenings at the Marabar Hills. She comes to the conclusion that: "Dr. Aziz never followed me into the cave" (Forster, 215). The native spirit overturns the power relations.

In the clash between Fielding and Ronny the ambiguous nature of the Pukka Sahib code becomes clear. Fielding arrived in India when he was forty, as the principal of a local college in Chandrapore. The belief in the Pukka Sahib code only partly struck a chord with him. He acknowledges the values that the Victorian school teaches, but he applies these values to everyone, regardless of race. He is not caught up in the outrage of the English community, but instead believes in the gentleman-like behaviour of Aziz: "Fielding's gentlemanliness, which privileges intimacy over nation, justice and fair play over race, is seeded by the code of the gentleman...the further he stretches those abstract ideals, the further he is from being a Pukka Sahib in the empire" (Gopinath, 209). During the club scene the two gentlemen, Fielding and Ronny, meet head to head. Ronny who "was the recipient of all the evil intended against them by the country they had tried to serve; he was bearing the sahib's cross" (Forster, 174). Gopinath argues that: "Heaslop's martyrdom, attributed to him by the Anglo-Indian community, emphasises the homosocial dynamic of the English in India" (207). Despite Adela being the cause of the big stir in the English community, it is Ronny who suffers the most. Further evidence for the claim that the well-being of Adela is minor compared to the troubles Ronny has to go through to defend the English community and restore colonial boundaries. Fielding denies Ronny his cross, by not standing up when Ronny enters the room where the men reside:

> he (Ronny) seemed to appeal for their protection in the insult that had befallen him, and they, in instinctive homage, rose to their feet. But every human act in the East is tainted with officialism, and while honouring him they condemned Aziz and India. Fielding realized this, and he remained seated. It was an ungracious, a caddish thing to do, perhaps an unsound thing to do, but he felt he had been passive long enough, and that he might be drawn into the wrong current if he did not make a stand. (Forster, 176)

The remarks about Fielding having visited Aziz in jail now acquire an explicit tone. This is telling: where Fielding's compassion for his friend is only met by implicit condemnation, his attack on Ronny is a direct affront to the English gentlemen, leading to him being called a swine and a lesser man: "you have sunk to the level of your associates; you are weak, weak, that is what is wrong with you--" (Forster, 178). Fielding's stance towards Ronny provokes aggression, because he is stubbornly not toeing the line set by the others. As the scene comes to a close, the calm departure of Fielding is hindered: "there was a slight scuffle at the door, from which Fielding was propelled, a little more quickly than is natural, into the room where the ladies were playing cards" (Forster, 178). Fielding has been sided with the native; he is a swine and a weakling whose rightful place is in a room where a "feminine buzz" (Forster, 173) can be heard.

Fielding relation with Aziz is also fragile however and breaks down as Aziz suspects Fielding of talking him out of his plan to sue Adela for compensation because he wants to marry Adela. Fielding leaves for Europe. Meanwhile, in India, Aziz bitterly imagines the inevitable marriage between Fielding and Adela. The real reasons behind Fielding's actions become clear to him: he was no more than a sympathetic Englishman, who in the end also treated him as a colonised subject. Aziz is wrongful in thinking this is the case, but the conclusion he draws is right: "it was the natural conclusion of the horrible senseless picnic"

(Forster, 264). Their relationship is doomed by the system they are living in, which Aziz is tired of trying to fit into: “the greatest strain on their friendship is the strain of Imperialism” (Islam, 39).

The effect that the Marabar Caves produce is key to the inevitable separation of Aziz and Fielding. The Marabar Caves mirror the unknown nature of India, a theme that returns throughout *A Passage to India.* They are remnants of an ancient time and a place where Hinduism and Buddhism have left their traces, but never revealed the mysteries of its dark caves. Most noticeable is the great echo that turns every word into a dull senseless tone, described as sounding like ‘boum’. Mrs. Moore beliefs in Christian compassion drift into nothingness in these caves:

> the echo began in some indescribable way to undermine her hold on life...Pathos, piety, courage—they exist, but are identical, and so is filth...Religion appeared, poor little talkative Christianity, and she knew that all its divine words from ‘Let there be Light’ to ‘It is finished’ only amounted to ‘boum.’ Then she was terrified over an area larger than usual; the universe, never comprehensible to her intellect, offered no repose to her soul...She lost all interest, even in Aziz, and the affectionate and sincere words that she had spoken to him seemed no longer hers but the air’s. (Forster, 139)

Fielding has the same sort of experience when he arrives in Venice. In the orderly nature of Venice, he notices what a muddle India really was and how everyone becomes tainted in the process of being there. When Fielding arrives in Italy:

> the cup of beauty was lifted to his lips, and he drank with a sense of disloyalty. The buildings of Venice, like the mountains of Crete and the fields of Egypt, stood in the

> right place, whereas in poor India everything was placed wrong. He had forgotten the beauty of form among idol temples and lumpy hills; indeed, without form, how can there be beauty? (Forster, 265)

When Fielding decides to marry the daughter of Mrs. Moore instead of Adela, he realises that something unnameable has come between him and his old friend, despite there being no real reason for them to be cross towards each other:

> all their stupid misunderstandings had been cleared up, but socially they had no meeting-place. He had thrown in his lot with Anglo-India by marrying a country woman…and already felt surprised by his past heroism. Would he today defy all his own people for the sake of a strange Indian? Aziz was a memento, a trophy, they were proud of each other, yet they must inevitably part. (Forster, 303)

Fielding returns to India with a new idea of the Imperial system. He does not fully accept all its implications but prefers it to the chaos of native India: "however great Fielding's initial disregard of the racial discourse, he perceives his marriage as committing him to the system that defines him as English and male, and he accepts its limitations" (Silver, 99). India seems like a dream where everybody has to awake from and see the lie they have been living:

> Mrs. Moore could not accept the answering echo. Aziz cannot accept the West. The English could not accept that Miss Quested's experience could be all an illusion; if that was illusion, how much else in their whole situation might not also be illusion? (Hale, 30).

In the end the land wants to separate Aziz and Fielding. The rocks and the horses part the two men from each other, even the sky seems to tell them that there can never be a bond between the Anglo- Indians and the other people of India: “they didn't want it, they said in their hundred voices, ‘No, not yet,’ and the sky said, ‘No, not there’ ” (Forster, 306).

This open ending mirrors Forster’s own struggle with India. Forster’s rejection of Imperialism is shown through his diagnoses of the Empire in *A Passage to India*, which says that human symbioses breaks down through “human limitations (and) the atmosphere created by Imperialism” (Islam, 42). He also “debunk(s) most of the myths lying behind the Imperial idea particularly the notion of racial and cultural superiority” (Islam, 42) and lays bare that “the Raj rests on fear” (Islam, 42). He found it nevertheless difficult to completely commit in his own life to the idea of a free India: “despite his rejection of the Imperial idea, it is curious to note that Forster is not really interested in granting freedom to India” (Islam, 43). He seems to make a division between the Imperial system and the economic development of the country by the British. Travelling through India in 1946 he laments the preoccupation of India with politics. He writes in *Two Cheers for Democracy*: “their (advocates for India’s independence) attitude is ‘first we must find the correct political solution, and then we deal with other matters’, ‘I think the attitude is unsound’ ” (Forster, 324). These other matters were pressing for Forster: “I do know that people ought not be so poor and to look so ill, and that rats ought not to run about them as I saw them doing in a labour camp at Bombay” (Forster, 324). Forster, like Fielding, seems incapable of coming to a neat conclusion that encapsulates the problems of Imperial India. Mrs. Moore struggles with the great echo, Forster struggles with the reality of India in Imperial times. He writes: “to the tragic problem of India’s political future I can contribute no solution” (Forster, 331).

Concluding the question how the Pukka Sahib is positioned in Forster’s story has to be raised. The link between the element of fear in the colonial system after the Indian Mutiny, the

European club and the construction of a limited view of whiteness has been established. How limited the idea of whiteness is, can be seen in Forster's writing. It is during the club scene that Fielding is reprimanded and ostracised for extending gentlemanlike behaviour to a native he deems to be more than worthy to be his friend. The perceived assault on Adela in the Marabar Caves and its after effects show the fragile nature of their friendship however. The mere suggestion that a native man might have assaulted a white Englishwoman conjures up memories of the Mutiny. Forster shows the folly of the English community by describing the profound effects of Adela's chimera: the Collector immediately wants to flog every native he sees and Ronny's honour and tribulations as a Pukka Sahib have to be acknowledged via ritualized behaviour. Fielding does not want to be caught up in this hysteria and follows his own instinct. As a result, he is immediately expelled from the club and is therefore no longer seen as white. The accusation that he is a swine conjures up Saïd's description of how Orientals were seen by Westerners. His refusal to acknowledge that Ronny suffers in order to protect his community denies Ronny the status of a Pukka Sahib and is thus a direct attack on all the values of the English community.

The values that Ronny actually displays through his actions are questionable. Naidis description of the Pukka Sahib as representing an attitude of arrogant superiority and authoritarianism fits Ronny well. His belief that he is in India to do more important things than be pleasant makes him unreasonable and blind. He wants to exercise power and does not accept opposition. It is only through the restrictions of the law that Aziz is saved from the anger of the English community. Ronny's own mother is not protected from her own son by the law. When she opposes him and instils doubt into Adela's mind about her experiences at the caves, Ronny feels hindered in his rightful duty of defending the English community. To be allowed to act freely and to ensure he wins the court case he sends his mother away to die upon the sea. He feels no remorse however, as she had mixed herself up with the natives. His own mother

returning to him as a native spirit is therefore a major event, especially because the subjugated voice calls out to Adela to act reasonably and not give into the narrative of the native stalker or act out the role of the victimised white woman. Ronny's authority is as a result undermined in a profound way, especially when Aziz is cleared from all charges.

A Passage to India is more than just the story of a Pukka Sahib losing against the native spirit of his own mother. The echo of the Marabar Caves points towards a hollowness and senselessness in India that instils doubts into everyone who hears it. Even Fielding, the sympathetic Englishman, realises this when he leaves India for the ordered world of Europe. A great weight is lifted of his shoulders when he sees Venice, and he realises the futility of his attempts to form a lasting relationship with Aziz. He decides to marry an Englishwoman and as a result partially surrenders to the Pukka Sahib code. The creation of order in the chaos of India might be a reason for Fielding doing so. When Forster's own stance towards India is taken into consideration this idea becomes stronger, because despite his polemic against the Pukka Sahib, Forster himself felt that India could not stand on its own legs as poverty and starvation where still major problems. The idea of the Pukka Sahib as well-doer shows its face. Forster seems to reject the social isolation and superiority complex of the English code and lays bare the fear inherent in colonial rule, while at the same time feeling that the coloniser's perceived charitable work is unmissable.

If this division between the arrogance of the Pukka Sahib and well-meant charitable work of the coloniser can be made remains ambiguous in *A Passage to India*. On a more deeper level, the question if the coloniser is in India to actually do good remains unanswered. If the answer to these questions could be found it is still unclear if the Pukka Sahib should remain in India according to Forster, exemplified by the open ended conclusion to his story. Aziz and Fielding cannot be together in the place and time they are currently in, but where this meeting can take place is not told to the reader.

Chapter 2

The Self-Corrupting Pukka Sahib

During his life as a colonial agent in Burma, George Orwell saw that the colonial system is also destructive to the coloniser. In multiple writings about the Empire he thinks about the lie that was being held up. As a colonial police officer during the 1920's he often felt that his rightful place was among the people he had helped put in jail.

Assuming that Orwell rejected the Raj wholeheartedly would be a fallacy, however. There seemed to be a struggle within him about his own stance towards the system he lived in for most of his twenties: "Orwell, true to his Lord Jim syndrome, is torn between a hatred of colonialism and hatred of the colonised" (Islam, 72). His antipathy towards the Raj was double-sided; he saw "the whole process as debasing the ruler even more than the ruled" (Rossi & Rodden, 2). The Imperialist was deceiving himself when he thought of himself as the great civilizer, instead he "wears a mask and his face grows to fit it" (Orwell, 150). Orwell despised his work as a policeman, but even more what he was becoming. In *Shooting an Elephant* he writes that: "with one part of my mind I thought of the British Raj as an unbreakable tyranny … with another part I thought that the greatest joy in the world would be to drive a bayonet into a Buddhist priest's guts" (Orwell, 148).

Shooting an Elephant (1936) tells the story of how Orwell is summoned to dispose of an elephant that has gone 'musth', a wild rage induced in male elephants by a sharp rise in their testosterone levels. If the story should be considered as fiction or non-fiction is debated among scholars, making it an ambiguous one. The choice for the blurring of lines between fiction and non-ficiton might have been deliberate: "Crick (Orwell's biographer) suggest(s) that he was merely influenced by a fashionable genre that blurred the line between fiction and autobiography" (Abbott). The theme of the Pukka Sahib is nevertheless worthwhile to investigate. When Orwell follows the beast's trail of destruction he finds it beside the road:

despite killing an Indian earlier he now seems peaceful. Orwell decides to watch the elephant for a while, to see if the anger has died down. At that moment the immensity of the gathered crowd and the inevitability of what is about to happen begins to dawn on him:

> I looked at the sea of yellow faces above the garish clothes-faces all happy and excited over this bit of fun, all certain that the elephant was going to be shot...They did not like me, but with the magical rifle in my hands I was momentarily worth watching. And suddenly I realized that I should have to shoot the elephant after all... And it was at this moment, as I stood there with the rifle in my hands, that I first grasped the hollowness, the futility of the white man's dominion in the East...I was only an absurd puppet pushed to and fro by the will of those yellow faces behind. I perceived in this moment that when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom that he destroys. (Orwell, 150)

The shooting of the elephant goes horribly wrong, because Orwell does not have experience with killing large animals. After three shots in the head the elephant finally sinks to his knees but keeps on breathing for half an hour, despite having endured another volley of shots to the heart and in the throat: "he was dying, very slowly and in great agony, but in some world remote from me where not even a bullet could damage him further" (Orwell, 155). According to Islam, the story can be read as a parable of the dying Empire, in which the coloniser enjoys less freedom than the colonised: "the power of the white men is thus an illusion; the sahib loses his own freedom through the tyranny he imposes on others. The process of colonisation is thus self-destructive" (Islam, 73).

Guha sees the workings of colonial anxiety in Orwell's vision: "India, stand(s) beyond the limit, ...an empty, hence inaccessible, outside. Empty because it had nothing to be found in

it for content, and inaccessible because a void is a non-entity one can hardly get to know and relate to" (Guha, 484). This is also strongly reminiscent of the experience of Mrs. Moore in the Marabar Caves, where she begins to feel her grasp on her own life and place in India slipping away. Colonial anxiety feeds off the feeling of a void or emptiness and stands in contrast to fear, which has a direct and distinguishable cause. On top of this: "(colonial anxiety) requires the…condition of drawing close without being actually within striking distance, so that the effect it has is heightened by a degree of uncertainty on the part of the frightened" (Guha, 486).

Colonial rule did not allow the possibility of passiveness; it depicted "Empire as a sort of machine operated by a crew who know only how to decide but not to doubt, who know only action but no circumspection, and, in the event of a breakdown, only fear and no anxiety" (Guha, 488). In Orwell's writing, the unstable nature of this code, inherent in the Empire, is shown. He has to decide about his own freedom to act, under pressure of the Pukka Sahib code which has animated him up to this point: "seized by anxiety, he has to decide whether to throw off his mask or continue to wear it, to assert his own will or be guided by that of other's" (Guha, 492). As he looks into the abyss, he begins to see the possibilities of a mode of conduct that lies outside the Pukka Sahib code that has robbed him of his own free will, but shocked by the expansiveness of it all he moves away from the edge. He lets the code take precedence over his own moral compass. Orwell wants to stay hidden behind the mask and to uphold his image as a decisive man by not showing his own bafflement:

> afterwards, of course, there were endless discussions about the shooting of the elephant. The owner was furious…legally I had done the right thing, for a mad elephant has to be killed, like a mad dog, if its owner fails to control it. Among the Europeans opinion was divided. The older men said I was right, the younger men said it was a

> damn shame to shoot an elephant for killing a coolie …I often wondered whether any of the others grasped that I had done it solely to avoid looking a fool. (Orwell, 155)

By doing so he "cling(s) firmly to the homeliness of the routine and the familiar" (Guha, 492). For a moment, Orwell saw the other side, however, and knew, according to Guha: "the possibility of not being at home in Empire" (Guha, 493).

Not being at home in the Empire is more fully explored in *Burmese Days* (1934), where the inability of the protagonist John Flory to feel at home is evidence for the pressure the Pukka Sahib code puts on individuals. Flory has been living as a timber merchant in the fictive town of Kyauktada for fifteen years, growing increasingly lonely, for he is deemed a 'bolshie' by his fellow Englishman because of his ideas about universal human values, exemplified by his friendship with the native Dr. Veraswami. The birthmark on his cheek is for the others a sign of his sympathy towards Burmese culture: "he has already gone native" (Islam, 78). In turn, he characterises his own countrymen as hypocrites who still believe in the good nature of Imperialism. The system is designed as "a device for giving trade monopolies to the English" (Orwell, 38). Flory does not deny the role he plays in this system, but disapproves of moralists: "I'm here to make money, like everyone else. All I object to is the slimy white man's burden humbug. The Pukka Sahib pose. It's so boring" (Orwell, 37). The Burmese people would be better off without the English in their country, despite the occasional road or school being built: "before we've finished we'll have wrecked the whole Burmese national culture. But we're not civilizing them, we're only rubbing our dirt on to them" (Orwell, 40).

The main area where the domestic function of the Empire is visible is in the Kyauktada Club. Orwell describes the idea of the club as follows: "in any town in India the European Club is the spiritual citadel, the real seat of the British power, the Nirvana for which native officials and millionaires pine in vain" (Orwell, 14). Most of the story's proceedings revolve around the

club, it is: “an English stronghold, for the indigenous access to the club is equated with the ultimate goal of a religious pursuit” (Jayasena, 109). Orwell reverses the idea of the English club as the pinnacle of civilised life. He describes the atmosphere as dull and mouldy, even the books have started to rot. Inside, the same stories about the dying Empire and how in the old days an Englishman could suppress a native and not be dragged off to court are repeated over and over again:

> the country’s only rotten with sedition because we’ve been too soft with them. The only possible policy is to treat ‘em like the dirt they are. This is a critical moment, and we want every bit of prestige we can get. We’ve got to hang together and say, ‘WE ARE THE MASTERS, and you beggars.’ (Orwell, 29)

John Flory becomes increasingly fed up with the dullness of life inside the club and the Anglo-Indian community he describes as:

> dull boozing witless porkers! Was it possible that they could go on week after week, year after year, repeating word for word the same evil-minded drivel, like a parody of a fifth-rate story in Blackwood’s?...Oh, what a place, what people! What a civilization is this of ours — this godless civilization founded on whisky, Blackwood’s and the ‘Bonzo’ pictures! (Orwell, 31)

His friendship with Dr. Veraswami gives him a companion in a lonely world, but despite Flory’s biting words about the Empire he is never truly able to shake off its chains. He betrays his friend by signing a notice that denies the doctor admission to the club as the first native member. He does so because: “he lacked the small spark of courage that was needed to refuse”

(Orwell, 63). Kubal argues that this leads to Flory's estrangement from not only his fellow countrymen but also from Dr. Veraswami, proving that Imperialism always leads to separation. This reading is only partly true however, because later in the story Flory amends his decision and does propose his friend as a possible member at the club meeting. His decision is largely influenced by the arrival of Elizabeth, the young woman in whom he sees the possibility of a domestic life:

> it was because Elizabeth, by coming into his life, had so changed it and renewed it that all the dirty, miserable years might never have passed. Her presence had changed the whole orbit of his mind. She had brought back to him the air of England — dear England, where thought is free and one is not condemned forever to dance the danse du pukka sahib for the edification of the lower races. (Orwell, 156)

His image of Elizabeth is based on false ideas however. He sees in her a companion who could share his passion for Burma: "beauty is meaningless until it is shared. If he had one person, just one, to halve his loneliness!" (Orwell, 57). Elizabeth is far from interested in the native culture of Burma and she becomes increasingly disgusted with the things she sees, smells and tastes while Flory shows her around the bazaars and takes her to a pwe dance, a traditional Burmese art form.

They can only connect when Flory plays the part of the Pukka Sahib. It is during the hunt, in which the wild tiger is brought down by European machinery, that Elizabeth warms up to Flory: "the hunt and the smell of blood bring them together" (Islam, 80). Their bond seems to solidify, as Flory is able to prevent the attack on the club at the end of the story all by himself. The Anglo-Saxon community reinstates him as a hero. As a result he starts to imagine the life that lies in front of him with Elizabeth when they are married, a life of domestic peace:

> when they were married, when they were married! What fun they would have together in this alien yet kindly land! He saw Elizabeth in his camp, greeting him as he came home tired from work and Ko S'la hurried from the tent with a bottle of beer...He saw his house... with new furniture from Rangoon, and a bowl of pink balsams like rosebuds on the table, and books and water-colours and a black piano. Above all the piano! His mind lingered upon the piano — symbol, perhaps because he was unmusical, of civilized and settled life. He was delivered for ever from the sub-life of the past decade — the debaucheries, the lies, the pain of exile and solitude, the dealings with whores and moneylenders and pukka sahibs. (Orwell, 283)

It is at this moment that U Po Kyin, the scheming Burmese man, who is the opponent of Dr. Veraswami, springs his trap. He exposes Flory's Burmese lover to the whole community of Anglo-Indians during the church service. She plays the part of the untameable native perfectly, appearing in ripped clothing and wild make-up, screaming like a mad woman about Flory leaving her. The woman is dragged off, but the damage is already done. More than ever the birthmark on Flory's face is noticeable, his connection with a raving Burmese woman marks him out as a deviant in front of the entire community. The birthmark reminds everyone that Flory is not one of them:

> his face appalled her, it was so ghastly, rigid and old. It was like a skull. Only the birthmark seemed alive in it. She hated him now for his birthmark. She had never known till this moment how dishonouring, how unforgivable a thing it was. (Orwell, 286)

Flory's reputation has been destroyed, and Elizabeth violently rejects him because of it. She would rather become a spinster than marry a disgraceful man such as Flory. Not even Flory's plea that he cannot return to the "horrible death-in-life! The decay, the loneliness, the self-pity" (Orwell, 289) is able to persuade her. For Flory it becomes clear that a peaceful domestic life is forever impossible. Not wanting to return to the life of boozing, gossiping and shooting he decides to take his own life. Flory has realised "that the fantasy of a heteronormative, domestic space presided over by Elizabeth...which would have rejuvenated his gentlemanly ethics through a separation from its ethno-ethical articulation, is no longer feasible" (Gopinath, 220).

The great 'boum' sound in Forster's novel returns in *Shooting an Elephant* in an indirect way, the void that it represents is also experienced by Orwell when he looks into the eyes of the elephant. He feels his own human weakness as he has to admit that he does not have a clue how to handle the situation. The natives behind him seem to animate Orwell however and are forcing him to act out the role of the Pukka Sahib. The idea that not only the coloniser is oppressed but that the individual Englishman is pressured by a code and the colonised to act against its own free will is an idea that is not present in *A Passage to India*.

The despair of having to live up to the Pukka Sahib code at all times is also more strongly emphasized by Orwell. Fielding is allowed to return to India and a normal life, as a result of his partial surrender. For John Flory, there seems to be no form of relief. His hate of the code runs deep within him, shown through his description of colonial existence as death-in-life. Flory is a much more desperate character than Fielding, who seems to oppose to the Pukka Sahib code based on intellectual considerations, whereas Flory feels that the code is fuelling his utter loneliness. Orwell also does not seem to believe in the Pukka Sahib as the vanguard of economic development, the only thing that is being achieved is the destruction of native culture.

Orwell's Empire is grimmer than Forster's, as shown through his description of the Kyauktada Club as rotten and mouldy. Where Forster speaks of outrages that never were, Orwell goes into details about the horrors of the colony. The primal nature of humanity is laid bare through the hunt for the tiger, during which Flory presents himself as a decisive and powerful man who is not afraid to kill a wild beast. The smell of blood that hangs in the air after the tiger has been shot is a testimony for Elizabeth that Flory can be a proper Englishman. The fact that he can singlehandedly stop the native uprising reinforces this idea even more. It is at this highpoint, when Flory is celebrated as a Pukka Sahib, that he is brought down. Even his simple wish of having a companion in a lonely world is not granted and as a result he decides that there is no reason to go on living.

Fielding finds relative order through his marriage, but Flory is granted no form of homeliness. He descends into the void and comes out as a broken man. The birthmark on his cheek marked him out from the beginning as deviant, and in the end reminds everyone that Flory had been a weakling from the beginning, who could not ever be expected to be able to live up to the English code.

Chapter 3

Losing Power

The British presence in India came to an end in 1947, when the Mountbatten Plan was implemented on August 15th of that year. The country was divided up along religious lines: the Hindu and Sikh population were allocated to the dominion of a new India, whereas the Muslim community would find a home in the newly formed Pakistan. Against that historical background Paul Scott's *Six Days in Marapore* is set. It was published in 1953.

Paul Scott arrived in India in 1943 as an officer cadet. By the end of the war he had risen to the rank of Captain in the Indian Service Corps: during his service he had helped with the logistics support of the recapturing of Burma from Japanese occupation. "He was primarily based in Assam and did not see combat, but travelled widely in northern India and after the Japanese surrender in 1945 visited Malaya, before being demobbed and returned to the UK in 1946" (Lennard, 11-12). Travelling around northern India, the heat, the dust, the disease, the immensity of the population and the attitude of the English initially shocked him, but over time he came to appreciate and even love India.

Lennard sees the "difficulty in knowing someone, and the temptations to construct others' minds and judgments as one wishes them to be" (Lennard, 13) as an overarching theme in Scott's work. Wijesinha sees in Scott's book the beginnings of his obsession with Indian independence, with the distinction that in *Six days in Marapore* the British characters do not fully grasp what the implications of their departure from the Empire will be. This gives *Six Days in Marapore* a tension, making it an interesting work of fiction to explore.

Six Days in Marapore introduces a wide variety of characters, who react to the last days of the Empire in their own ways. The book is more a character study than a story where all the different lives come together in the conclusion. In what follows, some of the characters

that make up the English society in Marapore will be investigated to see how the Pukka Sahib is depicted.

Tom Gower is a man whose "roots are in India" (Scott, 38). As the editor of the local newspaper he writes freely about his liberal views of India. Tom condemns: "the wrong outlook, the outlook of the Burra (or Pukka) Sahib, believing in his own omnipotence; this possessiveness, this feudalism, this benevolent despotism which passed for racial understanding" (Scott, 82). It is however the article about his support for the creation of the Muslim state of Pakistan that leads to unrest in the community. It makes the young Indian athlete Vidysagar reject the Victor Ludorum awarded to him by Tom Gower. Tom is further insulted by Vidysagar when he, together with a group of young men, paints the words 'Go Home Gower' on the building of the Marapore Gazette.

Gupta, the Indian who is rumoured to be part of the R.S.S., a militant Hindu organisation, explains the reason behind the rejection of Gower's helping hand. Despite the British rule coming to an end in two months, the same old Raj relationships are being upheld in Marapore. Gupta narrates how this late into the era of the Empire the division of races is still in place at the fraternisation party, during which: "at one end...will be gathered the representatives of the Raj, and at the other those who have passed some test...the reward for which is the invitation to the party" (Scott, 57-58). Then at some point the British guests will mingle with the Indians, after which the status quo is reinstated again as everyone moves back to their own space in the room. This air of benevolence meets with resistance in Gupta. He recognizes Gower's will to help India towards independence, but reproaches him for still trying to uphold the image of the benevolent Pukka Sahib:

> Tom Gower is a name not unknown, you see. He is in India many years and takes our problems to his heart...But...they are our problems, but his heart is not our heart. A

> solution to the problems of one is not found in the heart of another but in one's own. We cannot accept his solutions to our problems. When he tells people of his own race how they should comport themselves in our country, we applaud him. But when, for some reason, he begins to tell us how we should comport ourselves, what we should do, what we should think, what solutions to our problems we should find. (Scott, 60)

Despite Tom Gower's rejection of the Pukka Sahib code there is something in him that cannot let go of it. To show this, Gupta explains that it is Mr. Nair, a wealthy Indian and owner of the newspaper, who has granted the editorial job to Gower. It is therefore also Mr. Nair who controls his future. When he decides to terminate Gower's contract, he realises that the power relations are shifting. Tom enters his office one day to find Gupta sitting behind his desk, inviting him to draw up a chair to talk about the appointment of Gupta as the new editor. When Gower sits down he knows he has made a mistake: "the chair was low. Gupta looked down on him" (Scott, 165). Looking down on Gower, Gupta also attacks him on his work at the experimental farm at Ooni. Gower replies: "what happens or doesn't happen at Ooni has nothing whatsoever to do with you" (Scott, 168). In the exchange of words that follows, the two sides Gupta and Gower represent are illustrated:

> 'to this place you bring our young peasants, you bring them and teach them methods they cannot hope to...emulate when they return to their villages.' 'You mean we teach them non-Hindu methods.' 'Hinduism is a way of life not only a religion. And there are glorious traditions...from which our young men and women...should not be wooed.' 'I see. Traditions of poverty and starvation. Traditions of wealth that can't exist without poverty and starvation.' 'Rome, Mr. Gower, was not built in a day.' 'Quite so. In India

> Mr. Gupta, the day has been a long one.' 'It is ended now for you, for the British.'...There was a sense of shame in both of them. (Scott, 168-169)

Interestingly, Gower seems to reflect Forster's ideas about India. Gower is earlier described as a man who rejects the Pukka Sahib code, but at the same time he feels that India is not ready to be freed from the support of the British, as poverty and starvation are still rampant. Gower seems to want to make the same distinction as Forster between the wrong kind of Imperialism, which supports ideas about racial and cultural superiority, and the benevolent type: a form of socialism which will lift the poor Indian population out of their downtrodden status, with the help of the British. This divide is artificial and will not help to keep the British in India according to Gupta. He also explains that his own generation has learned to accept the helping hand of the British, but especially the young Indians are rejecting it more violently than ever. The rebellion of Vidysagar is thus not aimed at Gower as an individual but at the system he represents: "Vidyasagar's protest is only symbolic. He is denouncing what Gower represents to him, the Raj, fully conscious of the man and his good deeds" (Mouli).

The Empire has become weak and cannot uphold itself any longer in Marapore, symbolised by Mrs. Harriet. She is an old woman, walking on two sticks, reliving the days when she was the teacher of a Maharaja, Jimmy Smith. He wants to form the independent princely state of Kalipur. Mrs. Harriet is unable to cope with the changes happening around her as she still lives in the old days. She is therefore also delighted when Jimmy reincarnates the romance of these times by sending a car to pick her up: the driver "saluted her and came, grinning to take her other arm. A re-union. Somewhere in the world there was gentleness" (Scott, 68). She recognizes that for herself the times are moving too fast, England is no longer her home after ten years in India. She feels however that she can help Tom to reassert himself as benefactor of the Indian people in the new state of Jimmy Smith. She immediately sets to

work to influence her protégée to offer Tom a new home, thinking that Jimmy is willing to help his old teacher. This stands as a "metaphor of the whole Imperial process in India as it worked out, admirable though some of its aims might have been, (when) difficulty occurred it was her own aspirations that took precedence" (Wijesinha, 39).

Her dreams come crashing down when she calls Jimmy up after Gower has instilled doubts about his reliability. She asks about the job but finds Jimmy to be polite but evasive, postponing a meeting with her until the next month. When she hangs up the truth begins to dawn: "the call had never been made...she had not spoken to Jimmy...She was still living in on the hope that her suspicions that the job had fallen through were groundless" (Scott, 267). The hope that she still harbours is false, and in a way she had already realised that the good old days of the Empire were long gone much earlier in the story:

> suddenly she saw herself as an old woman sitting foolishly on the verandah of an almost deserted club. She could hear its silence and across its silence the echo of someone saying: Our lives are bloody well messed up and our occupations gone...the anguish there was in being forced to hang on to what was already moving away, because there seemed to be no support. What was she becoming? An aged power behind a tottering throne? ...For the States had been deserted and left as vulnerable islands. (Scott. 47)

As the last days in Marapore are played out, Tom increasingly begins to look like a fool who has lost the ability to shape his own destiny. Faced with his own symbolic elephant, Tom discovers that he has no ammunition left in his gun: he can no longer decide for himself. His job at the Gazette has been terminated and his farm at Ooni firebombed by Vidygasar and other young men. During the attack on the Ooni farm his assistant, Steele, shoots an Indian man who is in the wrong place at the wrong time. Tom condemns him sharply by saying that Steele is

obsessed with the idea of exercising power. He does so in a "manner that establishes his own superiority. This is most obvious in his view of Steele as a man of violence, ready to assert himself by virtue of the weapons he carries" (Wijesinha, 42). Tom's insistence on calm and self-restrained rule are echoes of the old days of the British Raj, when these values still seemed to work, but in the reality of a changing world Gower is "delusional in thinking that reason and calm can prevail. It is simply too late" (Choutiner).

Tom starts to see the limits of his own persona, as more and more aspects of his life are slipping through his fingers. As retaliation for the killing of the Indian, Vidyasagar decides to shoot Steele. Tom visits him in jail, because he feels that kindness could have prevented deaths on both sides and the imprisonment of a young man. When he sees Vidyasagar in the cell his true feelings come rushing in however: "he wanted to see the boy cower. He wanted the boy to fall on his knees and cry and beg for mercy. And he wanted to beat his own hands on the bars...until...some of his own agony was released to enter the boy" (Scott, 255). When he looks into the eyes of the young athlete he recognizes the look he gave him earlier during the award ceremony: "there it was...this pure stream of hate; and Gower knew then, that the act of killing Steele was Vidyasagar's alone. … a clarity, a completeness, which made it at once a beginning and an end" (Scott, 255). The mask of the Imperialist, as described by Orwell, is becoming increasingly ill-fitting on the face of Tom. In the meeting with the boy, the Imperialistic system falls away and two people meet each other in the nakedness of their emotion. Tom then realises how his ideas about uplifting India are not aimed towards the actual population, but act as an excuse for his being in India. As the mask falls he realises how much he hates India and its inhabitants and how much they hate him. This is furthermore exemplified by Tom's meeting with the native woman, who is carrying Steele's child:

> he had only to bend down and touch her shoulder. He had only to do this simple, almost undemonstrative act, to prove his understanding and his compassion. But his arm was fixed rigidly by his side. Where there should have been compassion there was only distaste, and where there should have been understanding was only the desire to turn away. Knowledge of the child stunned him. The child was obscene, sprung from an act of lust and the urgency of the flesh's need. The child was not Steele's, nor was it the girl's. Rather it seemed a growth, a canker, from which both would have turned in disgust. (Scott, 254)

Tom imagines a new home in either England or Kalipur, but his wife will not leave India, because she has to uphold the lie that she is an Englishwoman and not mixed-raced. Moving back to England would reveal how her stories about her youth there have been fabricated in order to help her to find an Englishman: "England was not home to her. England was a lie. And she was afraid to go. Afraid of the lie, but living; having to live it" (Scott, 150). Moving to Kalipur is the only way she can imagine staying with Tom, a man she despises: "I can stay with him in Kalipur so long as he never knows about me...Exist, not live...It won't be British India. That's all in the past" (Scott, 206). As this last opportunity is closed off, she decides to pack her bags and leave. She looks at him with intense hatred when he begs her not to leave him, but she responds that she will never be able to stay with him because she finds him physically repulsive. Tom realises that the last hope of finding a domestic home has been lost. He goes into his study where he attempts to commit suicide, but his Indian servant saves him.

Despite all his liberal ideas about the creation of a free India, actually coming into contact with the realities of the country proves to be too much for Gower. As his escape route via Jimmy Smith is shut off, he feels trapped in a strange land where his life slips through his fingers like sand: "when at the end he tries to commit suicide because the job with Jimmy has

fallen through and his wife has left him, we realize how very much he needs protection in that underneath he has nothing substantial to which to hold on" (Wijesinha, 42). Harriet's inability to influence Jimmy into relocating Tom shows that there is no home for him in India anymore. Death seems the only escape. In describing these events Scott shows "the emotional and spiritual crisis of the British as the Raj begins to cumber" (Rubin, 106).

Thinking of Orwell and Forster the following can be said. Forster recognises the unknown and vast nature of India, symbolised by the great boum sound of the Marabar Caves. Tom Gower, like Orwell, sees how this void has been filled with stories and ideas about the Pukka Sahib and how they have animated him up to this point. Tom's meeting with the young athlete is reminiscent of Orwell's meeting with the elephant. He now recognises the limits of the power of the ideal of the Pukka Sahib, as he feels and recognises his own individuality and emotions in a system, which feeds of grand narratives about the nature of different races. In a time when the physical presence of the Empire was coming to an end Tom cannot return to a safe home in the colony, where the system of the Pukka Sahib is still alive to rescue him from drifting off without an anchor. In Marapore the club is hollow and echoes a voice saying that everything is crumbling down. The pinnacle of his charitable work, the experimental farm, is deserted and set on fire by the population he tries to serve. All of India seems to reject him, since he also cannot reinstate himself as the benefactor of the Indian population elsewhere in the country.

Without the presence of an actual territory or domestic home to rule over, Tom is lost. The major development that can be seen is the change in the crises of the Pukka Sahib code. Fielding's rejection is based on moral grounds. As someone who arrived in India late in his life, he does not believe in the racial separation of the colony. At the same time, he cannot completely embrace India, either because it is impossible to do so or because the social isolation of being shunned from the club proves too much for him. Either way, he partially

surrenders to the Pukka Sahib code and its moral ambiguity, embodied by Ronny Heaslop. Fielding has the luxury to make a decision about his own future in India because the Empire is still in control. Orwell seems to suggest via the life and death of Flory that despite the Empire still being alive, the individual cannot live in a system where the Pukka Sahib reigns. Flory's rebellion against his fellow Englishmen is more desperate but also moralistic. His misery is shown through the binary choice he makes: he either escapes the code via a domestic life with Elizabeth or he has to die. For Tom the choice to be or not be a Pukka Sahib lies outside of his own power. His crisis is one of a disappearing home, as the Marapore society is breaking down under his eyes. Taking Guha's argument into consideration about a Pukka Sahib only knowing fear and not anxiety in a case of a breakdown, it becomes clear that Tom is actually filled with anxiety. He does not know how to act, proving that the old values of the Pukka Sahib will not save him anymore. More importantly, the question if the Pukka Sahib code works or does not work seems to be less relevant in a crumbling Empire. The Indian population wants to remove the Empire at all costs, regardless of the good-natured ideals of some Englishman like Tom.

One could ask if an Englishman in the Empire could be anything less than a Pukka Sahib. The stories by Forster, Orwell and Scott seem to suggest that it cannot be so. In Scott's story the time to debate has come to an end however: even if the Pukka Sahib is able to surrender himself to helping India, the native population will still reject him. The possible meeting place Forster suggests at the end of his novel can no longer be reached.

Chapter 4

Coming to Terms with the Past

In 1968 Enoch Powell made his famous Rivers of Blood speech in which he declared: "in this country in 15 or 20 years' time the black man will have the whip hand over the white man" (Powell). Throughout the years of 1960 he kept a file, named 'The Thing', a document that captured all the acts of subtle subversion he encountered or heard of throughout England. In themselves these were minor incidents, but taken together they pointed at a deep and amorphous problem in England that threatened to undermine the established social hierarchies. The crisis was a paradoxical one as it operated on a grand scale but was at the same time anonymous and hard to pinpoint. What exactly then was this 'Thing'? According to Schwarz the explanation lies in the "political-cultural workings of the end of Empire 'at home' " (Schwarz, 4). The Empire was never entirely external nor was the process of decolonization. Schwarz thus understands the process of decolonisation as the closing of a very long history of Imperial relations in which all domestic Britons were situated. It is inevitable that some traces of this history would be present at a time when the Empire was walking on its very last legs, when Powell made his speech.

In 1968 few Powellites had actually encountered the Empire, most of them experienced it through memory. There occurred a paradox in which Powellites admitted that the Empire was gone, while at the same reliving its perceived values and sensibilities as a totem of a time when the order of life was not upset: "inhabiting the present as if it were the colonial past" (Schwarz, 6). The end of the Empire was mostly recognized by not talking about it and seeing it as an event best forgotten. This creates a tension in which the Empire is both present and absent. Schwarz and Bijl point out however that memory and forgetting are part of the same process. Bijl also says that forgetting implies remembering, because people cannot forget what they do not partially remember:

> in the Netherlands, commentators have claimed over and over again that the colonial past – especially its violence – has been 'forgotten' in the sense that it has vanished without a trace… there are two problems with this analysis: on the one hand it supposes a binary opposition between memory and forgetting, while on the other hand it starts from the assumption that cultural memory is a phenomenon brought about or thwarted by the intentions and actions of specific human actors. (12)

The distinction between a desire to forget and an inability to forget also has to be made. This inability is the direct result of the rapid changes that the memory of Empire underwent from the 1950's to the 1960's. The Empire had quickly become a thing of the past, not only chronologically but also politically and socially. Dix writes that changes happening in Britain hinged around the condition of England, which was changing from an Imperial power to an island nation, sped up by crises such as the Suez Canal crisis in 1956. These led to a fracture in the cultural self-image of Britain and its global standing. The sheer speed of change in the political climate led to a literary reaction defined by the following:

> far from anticipating the social and political revolutions of the 1960's, the novel in Britain in the 1950's falls back on a kind of comforting nostalgia. Time and again, the 1950's novel seeks to console its readers for the political changes that had come over the world with the end of the war. (Dix, 20)

According to Schwarz, Imperial traces transformed and appeared in the social landscape as unconscious re-enactments of Imperial times. In reliving the past, former times were always associated with order. This order was perceived to be undermined in the present, which led to

the imposition of a new and heavily accentuated form of law and order: “memories of the ordered past are thus the consequences of the experience of disorder...organised in the present” (Schwarz, 9).

These memories were strongly driven by a sense of disappearing forms of authority, shaped around the parameters of the colonial power of the Pukka Sahib, with a strong emphasis on the racial code. In the metropole, whiteness was an unmediated and implicit fact of life in England. With the coming of non-white people into the metropole, the tensions between the Self and the Other, which used to occur in the colony, now occurred at home. This made the need for a white code more urgent in the metropole, leading to a “strange brew of memories of the colonial past” (Schwarz, 9). Black immigration into the metropole spawned a wide array of new memories of Empire. As Bijl argues, such memories are not made or broken by single human actors, but they live on in collective memory where they can have a haunting presence.

This creation of a white community in the face of black immigration, with strong feelings of nostalgia for the lost days of order and civility, is known in Dutch postcolonial theory as Tempo Doeloe, which translates as the good old days. The Dutch colonies were perceived as a lost home and visualised as a place of tropical wonders, fun, games and a carefree European paradise. In the workings of Tempo Doeloe, a rift occurs between public and private scenes. European life in the colonies is seen as something different from the overarching system it operates in, which leads to warm memories of colonial life through an emphasize on private scenes, while forgetting colonial violence. Stoler comments: “political stakes (are) lodged in what is defined as public or private” (9). Gilroy also sees this longing for the colonial past in Britain. He coined the term postcolonial melancholia to describe the unwillingness of the British to work through the loss of the Empire. Instead of acknowledging the past horrors and feelings of shame, he says that melancholia is acted out in popular culture and in the debate on immigration. Nostalgia is also bound up in perceptions of the future

according to Bijl. When Powell spoke about the doomed future of Britain he was implicitly talking about a brighter past, at least in his view of the world: “the production of a new future in modernity entails the production of a new past” (Bijl, 138). The future is always moving forward and cannot ever make someone feel at ‘home’, especially if the future is painted in dark colours. A new home was sought and found in the completeness of the colonies’ history:

> spaces such as colonies which were produced as embodying the present past could serve as locations to cure people from the ailments of nostalgia: a move to the colonies was a move to the past and thus a move back home. (Bijl, 138)

It is interesting to see that not only after the Empire had disappeared some form of Tempo Doeloe is present in the books under discussion. In Forster’s story this can be clearly seen in the musings of the Collector on the old days when an Englishman could punish a native for stepping over the line without risking a rebellion or being restricted by the law. The golden days of the Empire are for the characters in Forster’s book the time before the Indian Mutiny, when the limits of cynicism had not been tested yet. The present state of British authority is seen as fractured, as native Indians can also make use of the law of the Raj to demand a fair trial. Even Ronny’s scheme to undermine fair proceedings cannot change this. The same principle extends to the men inside the club of Orwell’s world, They too muse on the bygone days of the Empire when the native Burmese were treated as dirt and not as equals. In order to escape the fracture of the present time and the gloomy future, the men feel they have to stick together to remain in power. The future is looked upon with anxiety, it is therefore also shocking to them that Flory does not share their views on the past, present and future state of the colony. Their authority as a Pukka Sahib is on the line. Flory is however also victim of Tempo Doeloe, as he tries to make a division between his public and private life. He longs for

a carefree home in the colony, away from the Pukka Sahib code. Critics have noticed that in remembering the Empire, this distinction between private and public life is fuelled by political goals and is also dangerous to make. Flory's inability to marry Elizabeth shows that this distinction is impossible to make when living in the colony, even when the Empire was still alive. His downfall is the direct result of his private life in the form of his Burmese lover, coming into contact with his public life during the church service.

The fracture of colonial power is also explored in *Six Days in Marapore*, with the difference that the uncertain future in earlier books has become the present. The characters are forced to face the current state of their situation in India. Mrs. Harriet is still attracted to the gentleness of the earlier Empire, but comes to the realisation that living in the past is no longer an option. In the books by Forster and Orwell the club is a place of memory, even though it can be mouldy and rotten. In Scott's book the club becomes a reminder of the present, quite literally through the voice that tells Mrs. Harriet that her old life is coming to an end.

The stories by Forster and Orwell point towards a longing for the past that is inherent in the Pukka Sahib code. This does not entail that the authors of these books are glorifying the Empire. It does mean that there is something in thinking about the past that is closely linked with the Pukka Sahib. The answer comes in the form of a home. The past can be seen as a complete story, where actors, action and outcome are in symbioses and tell a coherent tale. The actions of the Pukka Sahib in the past provide a grand narrative about men who knew no anxiety and who could control their subordinates and their own destiny. If all individuals were actually able to do so in their own time is forgotten, because thinking about the past is inspired by a longing for unity. The memory of the Pukka Sahib is spun in such a way that it proves that the code is not just an ideal, but also a way of life that can be actually achieved. Escaping into the memory of the Pukka Sahib exposes the current times as weak and incompetent but also promises that there was a time when things were better, implicitly reminding the Englishmen

that there is a possibility that these times can return if they are able to take back what was once lost. In theory, this idea makes the Pukka Sahib feel at home again in the Empire, while at the same time deferring it, because the future is endlessly moving away. The luxury to live in this dream and muse on the bygone days of the Pukka Sahib is a something that is not reserved for Tom Gower anymore. The reality of a changing society as a result of decolonisation violently wakes him up.

Undermining the grand narrative of the past is more fully developed by J.G. Farrell in *The Singapore Grip*. In what follows his book will be critically examined.

Chapter 5

Nostalgia and Cynicism

J.G. Farrell's book *The Singapore Grip* is the final edition in the 'Empire Trilogy'; the two earlier books in this series were *Troubles*, a book about the Irish War of Independence, and *The Siege of Krishnapur*, about the Indian Mutiny. The trilogy "chronicles the spectacle of British colonialism over the course of two centuries, from Ireland to India to Southeast Asia" (Calvert). In *The Singapore Grip,* the economic rise of Singapore during the colonial period and its fall after the Japanese invasion during World War Two is described. As well as the reality of living in a crumbling society in Imperial times, experienced through the eyes of English merchants.

In the work of J.G. Farrell a literary reaction to Imperial nostalgia can be found. *The Singapore Grip* was published in 1978, by that time the memory of the colonial past was undergoing changes, along with the emergence of a new style of writing, under the influence of cultural, political and economic shifts:

> in terms of culture, politics, world affairs, identity politics and creativity the 1970's represent both a watershed and period of fundamental change for Britain, one that in retrospect, can be seen to rival and not be simply an extension of the changes brought about by the end of the Second World War. (Tew, 16)

From the 1970's onwards writers like Farrell were approaching the imagined political strength and unity of the Empire with scepticism and cynicism: "Farrell wishes readers to see that an earlier, exaggerated self-confidence in British society was predicated on the imposition of colonial injustices overseas" (Dix, 22). A distinct lack of nostalgia is noticeable in Farrell's work: "Farrell's intent is part of a wider contemporary attempt to critically explore the reasons

behind British decline and not to mourn the Empire's passing" (Goodman). This cynicism is not only a lack of cultural confidence but also a way to "addres(s) the cultural and political changes that came over Britain during the drift from empire to small island, without becoming caught up in nostalgia or defensive obfuscation" (Dix, 25). It offered "a means of coming to terms with the excesses of an Imperial past, while also gesturing towards a non-Imperial present and future" (Dix, 25).

In Farrell's writing, Singapore comes under siege by the Japanese, and as the siege tightens the internal dynamics and contradictions of the Imperial society are laid bare. What finally leads to the downfall of Singapore is external pressure combined with internal conflict. Farrell describes the fate of his different characters as both "terrifying and farcical" (Dix, 29). The use of farcical elements in the face of peril "prevents melodramatic sympathy from lodging too strongly with the colonizers...and...deflects the historic imagination onto bigger questions of Imperialism and democracy" (Dix, 29). The thematic problems in the *Singapore Grip* are thus detached from history and taken into the modern society of Britain.

In *The Singapore Grip* Farrell sees the historical changes in Singapore as beginnings of the end of the Empire. This is based on hindsight knowledge, but Farrell is aware of his position in the timeline of the Empire and makes use of this fact. He does so to show that colonialism is still relevant in modern times: "Farrell...understand(s) the history of the Empire from the perspective of a single historical trajectory. The capacity of this trajectory is to then tell us something about contemporary Britain" (Dix, 26). This is especially noticeable at the end of *The Singapore Grip*, which is not really an ending in the strict sense, because Farrell reminds his readers of their own place in the history of colonialism: "and so, if you have been reading in a deck chair on the lawn, it is time to go inside and make the tea. And if you have been reading in bed, why, it is time to put out the light now and go to sleep. Tomorrow is

another day" (Farrell, 553). But also the lives of his own characters seem to continue after the book has been closed:

> but more years pass and yet more. Let us suppose that Kate Blackett, now a woman with grown-up children of her own, is sitting at her breakfasttable in a quiet street in Bayswater...Opposite Kate at the table is a man reading The Times for 10 December 1976. (Farrell, 552)

Farrell goes even further with this strategy by describing his own reaction and viewpoint as a person in a post-colonial society, when he writes about the faith of the homeless urchins of the war period:

> their place has been taken by prosperous-looking workers from the electronic factories out for an evening stroll with their children, by a party of polite Japanese tourists with cameras who have strayed here by mistake, and by the author of this book writing busily in a small red notebook and scratching his knuckles where some lonely, last-remaining mosquito...has not hesitated to bite him as he scribbles. (Farrell, 488)

Imperial decline is captured, according to Goodman, in a small dog that is left behind on the doorstep of Walter Blackett during the siege of Singapore, which is given the name 'the Human Condition' by the Frenchman Francois. Prusse, arguing that migration is an important theme in *The Singapore Grip,* says the following: "it is the... figure of the migrant who has evolved into a symbol for the human condition in recent critical theory" (2). The connection between the name of the dog, the representative of decline and immigration will be argued here. The dog is described as follows:

> it was an elderly and decrepit King Charles spaniel: its coat, which had plainly come under attack from some worm, was in some patches bald, in others matted and filthy; its tail hung out at a drunken angle and was liberally coated in some dark and viscous substance resembling axle-grease. (Farrell, 242)

The choice of a King Charles Spaniel is deliberate. It is the opposite of the better-known bulldog that was often used in connection to Churchill and the slogan of holding the line. Farrell writes that instead 'the Human Condition' has the tendency to follow an: "instinct which drew him magnetically to pay homage to the most powerful source of authority within range" (Farrell, 404). The Spaniel also recalls earlier times: "calling to mind parliamentary democracy, the power of the monarchy, and the early era of Imperial expansion" (Goodman). Farrell describes all these values as rotten and infested with worms. The society of Singapore is rapidly degenerating and so is the myth of British unity under colonial rule. As law and order are increasingly becoming hollow terms, the British population is thrown further back on basic emotions, resulting in a ruthless struggle for survival in reaction to the Japanese invasion. When the last ship out of Singapore is leaving, this instinct reaches feverish heights.

The little dog is seen walking down the road at night when the last boat is leaving. The Major tries to put him down but his will to survive is overpowering and he escapes into the night. As the gangplank to the ship is lifted up and the English community, still on land, sees the door to a free life close, it is the dog that becomes the last refugee out of Singapore:

> something darted between his legs and towards the gang-plank. It was an elderly King Charles spaniel…vanished from sight just as the order was given to raise the gang plank (thereafter, some instinct directed the Human Condition unerringly towards the bridge,

> where the captain…happened to be contemplating with regret and longing his own little dog which, by a fortunate coincidence had died…a few days earlier).
>
> (Farrell, 478)

The feeling of bleakness and despair is intensified by Farrell as he goes on to narrate how the remaining English community in Singapore is sent to prison by the Japanese, where they live in horrid circumstances for the remainder of the war.

The authority that drives the Spaniel has becomes self-preservation. The Pukka Sahib code, which is so entangled with the British Empire, is proven to be a hollow one when the power structure it is built on deteriorates. There is no longer a "unity of Britain and the Empire and (Farrell) emphasise(s) instead the power of self-interest and self-preservation at work" (Goodman).

The Pukka Sahib can only exist in an orderly and well-demarcated environment, mirroring his own outlook on society. Walter Blackett increasingly displays erratic behaviour to conjure up order in a world that is on the verge of destruction. The beginning of the war coincides with the planned celebrations of a century of the Blackett and Webb Company in Singapore. For the occasion a great number of floats have to be constructed to display the friendly bond between the company and the city, which it has helped to develop economically. As the Japanese bombs start to fall, Walter is unwilling to give up the project. Farrell describes the senselessness of it all:

> would it not have been better…if both vans and workers of all races had been employed on the more urgent task…of preventing Singapore from burning to the ground, repairing the bomb damage or unloading the ships which lay in the docks with cargoes of urgently needed ammunition and supplies. It was absurd that soldiers who were

> needed to man the defences should have to unload these ships because the labour force had decamped to build Blackett and Webb's floats. (Farrell, 351)

The project is eventually abandoned when even Walter has to admit that there can never be a parade if Singapore is no longer in existence. He decides to transform his trucks into fire wagons. The nonsense of Walter's insistence on building the floats becomes plainly clear as the sacrifices made to build them come undone. The floats are torn apart when the vans have to rush out for the first time.

Walter's blindness to the changing reality does not stop there. He devises another plan, involving the storage of large amount of much needed rubber, in order to drive up the price and make great profits when he decides to sell. His greediness makes him wait too long before selling the rubber to the Americans. By the time he decides to do so, the war has effectively crippled the export overseas, leaving Walter with a worthless stockpile of valuable materials. A Japanese bomb ends his dream of preserving the rubber in order to make a new deal when the war is over. As he sits among his lifework a fire is spreading. Walter is overcome by madness:

> 'I suppose you want to destroy all this rubber, do you?'... 'I don't know what your father would have thought of all this madness that's got hold of everyone'… 'I suppose like everybody else you want to get me out so you can burn the place', said Walter grimly. 'Don't be absurd. It's going to burn down without our help'…He paused, noticing for the first time Walter's dishevelled appearance. (Farrell, 524-525)

The impersonal nature of Walter's doom is distinct from Gower's: Walter's downfall seems even more outside of his own power than that of Gower's. The latter's demise is a set of

miscalculations on the part of Tom himself, whereas Walter's is more abrupt and impersonal. As argued before, the existence of the Pukka Sahib hinges around the existence of a 'home'. In the works of Forster, Orwell and Scott, the English gentleman finds India to be unhomely in varying degrees: from Fielding's sense of the muddle of India, Flory's loss of a domestic space to Gower's inability to relocate himself. All these men struggle to find a new home and sometimes fail, but their failure is always a personal one. Walter Blackett's seems the opposite. His own greed makes his downfall deeper, but the cause is outside of his grasp. Walter Blackett's survival and success depend on a wide variety of circumstances, which determine that a bomb should start a fire that will destroy his supplies. As Rovit argues, when the Empire declined so did the grand narratives about Imperial history. Imperial history is built on the experiences of individuals. Farrell seems to speak to the reader through the mouth of Walter Blackett when he thinks:

> if you took a knife and chopped cleanly through a moment of history what would it look like in cross-section? Would it be like chopping through a leg of lamb where you see the ends of the muscles, nerves, sinews, and bone of one piece matching a similar arrangement in the other? A moment of history would be composed of countless millions of events of varying degrees of importance, some of them independent, others associated with each other. And since all of these events would have both causes and consequences they would certainly match each other where they were divided, just like a leg of lamb. But did all these events collectively have a meaning? (Farrell, 423)

Farrell seems to be aware of the fact that history is happening through the experiences of human actors and that all events do not have a collective meaning, leading Rovit to call him a "sardonic but compassionate vivisectionist" (632). Human beings who are also bound by the time and

place of the system they live in: a system of which they are sometimes only dimly aware. Farrell understands that they are struggling and that they are "unknowingly impotent in the prescribed roles which both History and Farrell have given them to play" (Rovit, 632). By describing the impersonal doom of Walter Blackett as a Pukka Sahib, the grand narrative surrounding him and the myth of a self-shaped future is undermined. Rolls of the dice determine the lines between who is the dominator and who is the dominated:

> there is one way in which the novel is timeless: it reveals the arbitrary nature of our identities, affections, and convictions. It does not propose a solution to the injustice inherent in colonial (or postcolonial) economies; it does not offer an uplifting message of liberty or solidarity. It merely invites readers to consider the fact that the world is full of people we might have been. (Calvert)

The bombs that destroy Walter Blackett's dreams are the same as those that end the life of an anonymous native; the wave of destruction spares no one:

> in one cubicle…an elderly Chinese wharf-coolie lies awake…he slips out of his cubicle and down the stairs…to visit the privy outside…As he returns…there is a white flash and the darkness drains like a liquid out of everything he can see… Later, when official estimates are made of this first raid on Singapore (sixty-one killed, one hundred and thirty-three injured), there will be no mention of this old man for the simple reason that he, in common with many others, has left no trace of ever having existed in this part of the world or in any other. (Farrell, 212)

The daughter of Walter Blackett thinks about all the changes that have happened in her life and the end of the Empire. With the passing of time many things did not remain as they were. The Empire was not as static as thought: “things that once seemed immutable have turned out to be remarkably vulnerable to change” (Farrell, 553).

What has changed is that by 1978 the Empire had become history. A history that still influences modern society, as pointed out by Islam earlier. Farrell understood the lasting influence of the Empire on the Western world and tries to make the reader aware of his or her own place in this timeline. This is part of a larger strategy of not wanting to represent history as a finished book but as a story with multiple open endings and different meanings for different people.

The actors in the Empire were only dimly aware of their own role in a bigger system. The belief in grand narratives robs people of their individuality and casts them into moulds: the white woman, the native population and the Pukka Sahib. Thinking about the Empire in these terms also deflects responsibility for engaging with the history of colonialism in the present by making it impersonal. This does not mean that the idea of the Pukka Sahib is not potent, but Farrell makes the reader aware of the individual behind the mask of the colonizer. As Singapore falls the individuality of the English community becomes clear through their struggle for survival. Focusing on the personal doom of the English community could lead to lamentations about the individual colonizer while forgetting that the colonial system was built on inequality in terms of access to the means of production and racial privileges. By using farcical elements, like Walter Blackett insistence on building the floats while Singapore is burning, Farrell prevents this from happening.

The individual Pukka Sahib was not the creator of colonial violence and racism but operated in a system that created the circumstances for the kind of behaviour that he displayed. Farrell examines this bigger system and by doing so, he reminds the reader of the fact that the

removal of the Pukka Sahib out of the colony does not mean that underlying structure of colonialism was dismantled. The Empire remains relevant in modern times and acknowledging this will keep the inequality on which the colonial system was built in the minds of society.

Conclusion

The Pukka Sahib Code: Unity & Fractures

> It is a stifling, stultifying world in which to live. It is a world in which every word and every thought is censored. In England it is hard even to imagine such an atmosphere…even friendship can hardly exist when every white man is a cog in the wheels of despotism. Free speech is unthinkable...Your opinion on every subject of any conceivable importance is dictated for you by the Pukka Sahibs' code. Your whole life is a life of lies… And in this there is nothing honourable, hardly even any sincerity. For, au fond, what do you care if the Indian Empire is a despotism, if Indians are bullied and exploited?...You are a creature of the despotism, a pukka sahib, tied tighter than a monk or a savage by an unbreakable system of tabus…Time passed and each year Flory found himself less at home in the world of the sahibs. (Orwell, 69)

The exact beginnings of the Pukka Sahib code have not been pinpointed, but it can be said it took centre stage in the colonies after the Indian Mutiny of 1857 and was further consolidated in the English school system at the turn of the 19th century. The development of the European social club in the colonies mirrored this solidifying of a secluded manner of living for white English men of higher standing.

The prescribed behaviour of being a Pukka Sahib is painted in dark colours by Orwell in the citation above. The horrific element lies in the denial of human weakness and fractures. If men like Fielding, Flory and Gower have to be placed under one banner this would be fractured. This is not an absolute judgement; it is a result of a comparison to a code that promises completeness through clarity of judgement in the fields of race, mode of conduct and culture, where there can be none. The white race is spoken off as superior in all aspects: it is the story of a cultured and mannered civilization coming into contact with one that is seen as

deviant, lethargic and suspicious, as argued by Saïd. Out of this basic premise grows a system that created the code of the Pukka Sahib in all its facets.

The Pukka Sahib was created in the metropole and exported to far-away countries. The mutual code of conduct and the prescribed meeting places in the colonies created in theory a new home abroad for the agents of the Empire. Homes, which had to be defended from bad influences like the perceived debauchery of native men and women, but which were also used to keep white women and children away from the corrupting nature of the colony. The unity that was promised by the Pukka Sahib code is proven to be a myth by the stories under discussion and the historical examples. Instead of allowing doubt or individuality in the colony, the English code and community drives deviant men either back into the ranks or expels them violently. The Pukka Sahib had to be a cog in a machine of the Empire or he would be replaced. The ritualistic behaviour to honour Ronny is a testimony of this.

The deviance of Fielding and Flory would be hardly seen as rebellious under normal circumstances: Fielding siding with his friend and Flory's search for a partner in a lonely world are in themselves things that will not be looked upon with raised eyebrows by readers. Their behaviour is deviant however in the stifling world of the Empire where the small colonial English community is constantly keeping an eye on each other to pass judgment. The power of gossip cannot be underestimated, as proven by the story of Reverend Simpson. Public life was determined by the Pukka Sahib code, but did not allow men to have their own space in their private life. Everything is bound up by the colonial system; there needs to be unity in all aspects of the life of the Pukka Sahib.

Forster's story proves however that the idea of a unity in India is a farce. India is a void, an expansive country where there is no order and things that are taken for granted can drift into nothingness. All the attempts by Ronny to impose unity on India via the condemnation of Aziz, which will reiterate stories of lurking native men, is a doomed undertaking from the beginning.

Not all natives are without morals, just like not all Anglo-Saxons believe in the underlying code of the Pukka Sahib. Ronny's own mother is a prime example, but as a woman in the colony she is perceived to be weak and unfit to judge the situation. Her attempts to influence Adela cannot be accepted by Ronny as a result. He displays his power by sending her away. The fact that his mother's voice comes back in the form of the most subjugated position in the colony, namely native and woman, to overthrow the Pukka Sahib is therefore also such a great shock. The English community is shown that the things they hold for granted like Ronny being the best judge, could be built on loose sand. If their outrage might be built on illusions, what else can be a trick of the mind then? Could it be that the home in the colony they made for themselves, with the club at its heart, could be swept away as well? The loss of a home is a potent threat for keeping unity. It is no wonder that Fielding is literally ejected out of the club after he refuses going through the correct motions in order to pay his respects to Ronny.

The same feeling of a void dawns on Orwell as he is faced with the elephant: he sees how the Pukka Sahib code animates individuals to act against their own will and that there is a place beyond the gentlemen's code. Showing bafflement or anxiety in the face of this void cannot be allowed however. Keeping up appearances in the colony seems more important than actually being a good person according to Orwell. Despite the club in *Burmese Days* being mouldy, rotten and inhabited by racist drunkards, it is still seen as the citadel of civilization by both the English and the native population. The only thing the Pukka Sahib does however is perpetuating a lie, which both harms the native population by lying to them about the economic gains their country is making, and the colonial agents, by catching them in a nightmare where things cannot be named for what they are. Relief comes in the form of Elizabeth. For both Fielding and Flory it is a woman who will restore peace to their mind by providing a domestic home, were things make sense and everything has a correct place, which works as an antidote to the great boum sound of India. Finding a home does however mean partially surrendering to

the Pukka Sahib code for Fielding, who despite his earlier rejection, now goes along with the race division in India. He gives up a part of his individuality to be allowed to come back home again in India. The same principle extends to Orwell when he shoots the elephant, to be seen as a Pukka Sahib he has to silence his own mind to avoid losing face in public. Flory descends from a Pukka Sahib to an outcast during the church service as he becomes exposed as a sexual deviant through his connection to a raving Burmese woman. He cannot surrender himself to the regulations of the English community anymore because his disgrace is too big to ever be allowed back.

The Pukka Sahib myth became increasingly difficult to defend as history progressed. As a result, the picture emerges in Orwell and Foster that even when the Empire was still alive there was a longing for an earlier Empire. Not only individual men are seen as weak, but also the whole era is incompetent. Multiple characters muse on the bygone days of the Empire, during which the native knew his place and Englishmen were able to defend their honour as they saw fit, not bound by the law. This memory of the 'perfect' English gentlemen is potent, also because the past conjures up feelings of a home, as argued by Bijl. In 1968, Powell was lured in to glorifying the Empire, through the perceived completeness of history and the stories of the Pukka Sahibs. In their own time they were fractured human beings however, who were pushed into a pattern, telling them theories of their superiority, which were exposed as an unattainable ideal to live by. By the time Scott's book was released the gloomy future as imagined by the men inside the clubs of Orwell and Forster has become reality: the home of the English community is sinking away, but even in this late stage the English community seems blind to reality as they try to find a new home in a disappearing world.

The unity promised by the Pukka Sahib code also has a grip on Tom Gower, the man who wants to help India towards independence. Unknowingly, he is reiterating the benevolent attitude of the Pukka Sahib of earlier times. The English community is still separated from the

native Indians during the party at the club. The helping hand Tom extends is from an aloof position: he feels he can decide what is best for the future of India. The young Indians are tired of the system of Imperialism and the Anglo-Saxon community however. They are no longer willing to accept any form of help.

There is an underlying debate in the attitude of Tom that can be traced back to Forster's own stance towards India and which is summarized in the discussion between Gupta and Tom about the future of India. Is India able to stands on it owns legs and to lift up the poor and malnourished part of the population out of their position? Gower believes that the English play an important role in the economic development of the country, but Scott shows how difficult it is to disentangle the Pukka Sahib attitude from well-meant help from an Englishman. When the future of Tom becomes dire, this ambiguity is brought to light. As the population increasingly and more violently starts to hinder and undermine Gower, he starts to lash out in order to restore his power. He only seems to be able to be kind and lent a helping hand when he can control his own future. As his world starts to crumble the Pukka Sahib code becomes a mirror. He feels cornered between land that he used to view as his home and the ideal of the Pukka Sahib. As a result, his mask falls off and he realizes the anger and hate he harbours against the native population.

Both Fielding, Flory and Gower are not the typical Pukka Sahibs, but the existence of the code has a strong effect on their life. It is for Fielding the way into seeing the good in Dr. Aziz by applying the gentleman's code regardless of race, but also the burden stone around his neck that leads to his dismissal out of the club. When he leaves India he realizes the futility of fighting against his own community and its underlying code and putting his own place in it at risk. Despite not completely adhering to it, he rather goes along with the Pukka Sahib code than to fight for equal treatment of an ultimately strange man in an even stranger land. Flory imagines a separation of the public and private life in the colony. As argued before however,

the separation of the individual's life in the colony from the overarching system it operates in tends to overlook important elements of colonialism. Flory's dream of starting a life with Elizabeth away from the Pukka Sahib code, while remaining in the colony is an unattainable ideal. Elizabeth asks of Flory to play the part of the Pukka Sahib, a thing he despises and ultimately fails to do. His own humanity, which drove him to find an Oriental woman as a lover to expel his loneliness becomes his downfall. It is this weakness that exposes him publicly as deviant and far removed from the English community, which makes Elizabeth turn away from him in disgust.

Gower starts to notice that the Indian community is judging him sharply. The Anglo-Saxons are no longer the tastemakers but the subordinate Indians take the stage as the new leaders. In their new India there is no place for men like Gower anymore, who unknowingly still acts out the role of the Pukka Sahib. Tom Gower is made to look like a weakling, not through the judgement by his fellow Englishman, because there is no English society anymore in the fractured state of Marapore. He becomes his own judge, but the results are no less severe than in the other stories, as Tom also tries to commit suicide.

Despite the time difference between Forster, Orwell and Scott, the current experience of the Pukka Sahib inside the colony is defined by a feeling of alienation. The wanderings for a home are fuelled by the Pukka Sahib code, which despite the disgust some characters express for it, still has a strong grip on the men in the novels. In normal circumstances their actions can hardly be seen as particularly deviant but in the colony there is little room for the individual to be a unique person.

What is striking is that the experience of the colony in Forster's and Orwell's books is a feeling of a fracture in the present, while at the same time there is a perceived unity in the past. In Scott's book, the present echoes in the club, reminding the hearer that everything is coming to an end. Farrell explores the idea if history does present a coherent story. By the time

his book was released, the present in Forster's, Orwell's and Scott's books had become a thing of the past. Instead of falling into the trap of presenting a nostalgic story about the lost times of the Empire, he emphasises its fractured nature by showing the arbitrary nature of the roles being played and by exposing the fallacy of seeing history as something complete. He furthermore describes how in the end, humanity and emotions in the face of a greater enemy overturn the system of the Pukka Sahib. The imagined unity under rule of the Englishmen, which is such a strong idea especially in Orwell's and Forster's books, is shown to be a farce. For Farrell, history tells not one story but a multitude of open-ended narratives. Just like there was never a perfect Pukka Sahib there is not one history. Life was just as complex in earlier times as it is now.

The relative uniformity of the narrative by Forster, Orwell and Scott shows that even in Forster's time the internal dilemma of the English gentleman's code was recognized. What changes over time is the fact that the colonized increasingly refuse to participate in the dance of the Pukka Sahib and actively start to disrupt it. Farrell takes this further, by saying that there never was a shared experience between the Pukka Sahibs. This does not mean that the code was ineffective, but he stresses the reactions of individuals to a system. Farrell seems to suggest that there never was a dancehall were all the Pukka Sahibs made their rounds on the floor, and thus the psychical removal of the Pukka Sahib did not touch upon the deeper problems of colonialism. The Pukka Sahib is the child of the Empire, not the creator. Precisely by doing so, he suggests that the end of the Empire was not a definitive end like a book ending. The experience of the Empire is a continuous and fractured multitude of short open-ended stories, which are still relevant today.

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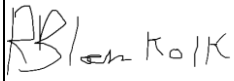
Datum en handtekening:    28-06-2017

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