

# **The construction of Anglo-Indian spaces in middlebrow works of Raj fiction, 1880-1914**

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## Abstract

Although bestsellers in their time, works of Raj fiction produced by women such as Maud Diver, Sara Jeannette Duncan, Alice Perrin, and Bithia May Croker have since fallen into obscurity with the general reading public and as a source of academic inquiry. This thesis readdresses this oversight through a reading of women-authored works of Raj fiction, a field of colonial literature that this thesis identifies as being fiction produced between 1857-1949 that in some way is related to the British Raj. The thesis suggests that in their depiction of the spaces of Anglo-Indian life these works shaped impressions of the Raj, but also contributed towards the maintenance of the Empire. Analysis of the imaginative organisation of space reveals both the limitations and nuances of Anglo-Indian women's lives and the ideological expectations of Anglo-Indian femininity which is encoded through these spaces.

Through an acknowledgement that these texts are part of the conservative middlebrow genre, the thesis argues that Raj fiction functioned as a form of anxiety management, containing and resolving anxieties around about the place of European women in the Raj and of a broader imperial decline. Each chapter of the thesis focuses on key spatial locations in this fiction. The Anglo-Indian home of the bungalow was considered as to be the responsibility for Anglo-Indian women and a space where fears of transgression may be depicted and then assuaged by the narrative. The traditionally masculine club space is decentralised from its emblematic position in Anglo-Indian life and is instead read as one that must be carefully navigated by female characters. The summer capital of Simla has similar connotations to the club social scene, but the feminine reputation of that city allows a

more stable imagined space to be constructed. The picnic emerges as a space from which anxieties of decline emerge; the temporary nature of the space allows for more permanent spaces to function as sites of resolution. The imperial centre of England is read as a space that can accommodate and possibly resolve anxieties that are disruptive in the less stable space of the Raj. An analysis of these specific, reoccurring spaces allows for both an alternate conception of the Raj to emerge as well as offering a method for analysing the anxiety-management function of the Raj fiction genre.

## **Declaration**

This submission is my own work and contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of the University or other institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text, in the United Kingdom or overseas.

SIGNATURE

DATE: 03/09/19

## Introduction

In *The Great Amulet* (1908), Maud Diver's second novel of Anglo-Indian romance, the author reintroduces Honor Desmond, the heroine of her first novel *Captain*

*Desmond V.C.* (1907):

In this era of hotels, clubs, and motors, of days spent in sowing hurry and reaping shattered nerves, the type is growing rarer, and it will be an ill day for England's husbands and sons, nay, for her supremacy among nations, if it should ever become extinct. For it is no over-statement, but simple fact, that the women who follow, soon or late, in the track of her victorious arms, women of Honor Desmond's calibre – home-loving, home-making, skilled in the lore of heart and spirit – have done fully as much to establish, strengthen, and settle her scattered Empire as shot, or steel, or the doubtful machinations of diplomacy.<sup>1</sup>

With its didactic voice extolling the virtues of European women in India the passage is emblematic of Diver's oeuvre. This tone can be found throughout her Anglo-Indian novels as well as her guidebook, *The Englishwoman in India* (1909), and her biography of Honoria Lawrence (1936). In its positioning of Anglo-Indian woman in the colonial home space, the passage also reveals the intrinsic importance of buildings and spaces to the Anglo-Indian community.

Diver's celebration of the Anglo-Indian figures who maintain the home space is articulated through the prospect that national ruin would inevitably be brought about by the memsahib's absence. Although literally translated as 'ma'am-sahib' and pertaining to the wife of the Anglo-Indian man, the term 'memsahib' is also frequently used to mean any female European resident in the Raj. Honor Desmond, for example, occupies the narrative and cultural expectations of the memsahib figure despite the fact she is not married to an Anglo-Indian man until her second

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<sup>1</sup> Maud Diver, *The Great Amulet* (New York: John Lane, 1908), p. 57.



appearance in a work of fiction. The extinction of memsahibs in the mould of Honor Desmond would not only be ‘an ill day for England’s husbands and sons’ but also for ‘her supremacy among nations’: spaces – and the maintenance of these spaces – is directly tied to the health of the Empire at large. All Anglo-Indian spaces serve to support the British Empire while at the same time they also are infused with an anxiety of imperial decline and ruination. These spaces also offer ways in which anxieties around colonial structures and processes can be explored and contained. The role of women in writing about these spaces is central to that project.

This thesis focuses on the literary depiction of Anglo-Indian spaces in works of women-authored Raj fiction produced during the final years of the nineteenth and the opening years of the twentieth. As the feminine experience of Empire was so often spatially encoded into spaces of association, responsibility, exclusion, and prohibition the depiction of spaces in these works of fiction produced by women frequently holds a great significance. The depiction of literary Anglo-Indian spaces could be used as examples of the moral well-being of the Anglo-Indian community as well as the stability of British control over India. As the middlebrow genre of Raj fiction was a conservative form of cultural production these novels also functioned as a method of managing colonial anxieties of decline. Due to the narrative arc of the middlebrow form, which requires a sense of resolution at its conclusion, Raj fiction was able to depict and then resolve examples of colonial anxieties throughout the course of the story. As these texts are often so spatially focused, the eruption and resolution of these anxieties often pertain to specific spaces which in turn reveals the values and impressions of the space in the colonial context. The intersection between the literary depiction of Anglo-Indian spaces, colonial anxieties, and the

management of these anxieties in the narratives of Raj fiction is the central research those of this thesis.

This thesis is divided into chapters each focusing on a distinct space that occurs throughout many works of Raj fiction. Depictions of the bungalow, with its associations of domesticity, interrogates the role of the memsahib as a figure who can function as an asset of empire alongside her male peers. The Anglo-Indian bungalow functions as a literary space that can challenge the literary memsahib either through the amount of duties or through a transgression into this space. Her eventual triumph (or more rarely her defeat) over the anxieties that arise from the space are a testament to her deserved place in India. Depictions of the Anglo-Indian club in works of women-authored Raj fiction are noticeably different to those produced by their male peers where the space functions as the centre of the Anglo-Indian community. In works produced by women the colonial club is frequently a space that disrupts the domesticity of the bungalow. Rather than providing a comfort as it does in works produced by men, the social currents of the club are frequently challenges that must be navigated by characters. Literary depictions of the summer capital of Simla are frequently concerned with the apparent English character of the city and the license that this apparent English climate grants to character's behaviours. Fiction set in Simla frequently depicts less potent anxieties concerning a colonial decline which in turn reflects the frivolous behaviours depicted in the narratives and the frequent use of the comic form in depictions of the city. The Anglo-Indian picnic is a contentious space in works of the Raj fiction genre. The space of the picnic itself is a contentious, temporary space that is demarcated as a temporal event for its duration as a spatial location. The Anglo-Indian picnic

presents the opportunity for Anglo-Indian women to venture outside of the tightly maintained spaces to which she was limited. Frequently these picnics are the cause of some form of narrative disruption and a font from which colonial anxieties of Anglo-Indian temptation, incompetence, or vulnerability can emerge. By being a discreet, temporary space away from the more permanent and important spaces such as the bungalow, the picnic can function as a space that can be sacrificed to these colonial anxieties while they may then be resolved in the more important spaces of Anglo-Indian life. Perhaps surprisingly, the space of the English homeland is also a reoccurring space in works of Raj fiction. England is most commonly constructed as a safe, boring space from which characters wish to escape for the excitement and romance of the Raj. Equally, England can also function as a space whereby problematic narrative developments may be resolved away from the more unstable spaces that are found in India. Although the above five spaces are all disparate and present examples of domestic, social, civic, outdoor, and national space they all appear throughout works of Raj fiction and function in a manner that directly relates to the resolution and assuaging of colonial anxieties in the context of the Raj.

This thesis explores constructions of the Anglo-Indian spaces in works of fiction produced by women between 1880-1914. It is Maud Diver, the author who celebrates the labours of Anglo-Indians in the Raj more so than her peers, who functions as the author who is at the forefront of this thesis. Diver's works of fiction are largely variations upon a theme – a young man or woman comes to India and then meets an ideal romantic partner. The pair undergo a series of trials that both test and prove their commitment to one another and they are happily married by the narratives conclusion. Diver's first novel, *Captain Desmond V.C.* (1907), is both the model of her later works and a first in a narrative sequence that Diver would revisit

throughout her career. Immediate sequels to *Captain Desmond V.C.* include *The Great Amulet* (1908) and *Candles in the Wind* (1909) and depict other romantic unions between Anglo-Indians while at the same time reaffirming the core relationship established in *Captain Desmond V.C.* One exception to Diver's model is her novel *Lilamani* (1911), which concerns the marriage of an English aristocrat to an Indian princess. In this novel India does not feature and instead the process of the romantic narrative occurs in Europe. Diver's fiction continues beyond *Lilamani*, with novels such as *Strange Roads* (1918) and *Far to Seek* (1921), although these novels maintain the same narrative structure the narrative conflicts do alter slightly to incorporate both the Great War and the rise in Indian nationalism that followed it. This thesis explores Diver's earlier novels namely *Captain Desmond V.C.*, which established the narrative structure of her work, and *Lilamani* for its depictions of England in a work of Raj fiction. The immediate sequels to *Captain Desmond V.C.*, *The Great Amulet* and *Candles in the Wind* are also analysed as they contextualise the events of *Captain Desmond V.C.* and serve as an example of Diver solidifying her generic narrative structure.

Several authors are associated with specific Anglo-Indian spaces analysed in this thesis. Alice Fleming's *A Pinchbeck Goddess* (1897) for example is a novel set during the social season of the Raj's summer capital of Simla. The city also functions as the titular 'pool' in Sara Jeanette Duncan's collection of short stories *The Pool in the Desert* (1903). Equally, the colonial centre of England features in Duncan's collection, while also appearing as a contrast to India in the gothic fiction produced by Alice Perrin such as *Star of India* (1919) and *East of Suez* (1901). Another collection produced by Perrin *Tales that are Told* (1917) also holds a

similar focus on Anglo-Indian space, as do the two short story collections *To Let* (1893) and *Odds and Ends* (1919) produced by her contemporary Bithia May Croker.

Although this thesis is focused on women-authored works, these texts do not exist in isolation from those produced by their male peers. It is Rudyard Kipling who dominates this field of fiction set in the Raj to the point that all fiction set in the Raj produced after Kipling work in dialogue with the great Bard of Empire. In the context of women-authored works, the influence of Kipling's *Plain Tales from the Hills* (1888) short story collection cannot be overstated in its establishment of generic narratives and characters. Later works of canonical Raj fiction such as E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924) and George Orwell's *Burmese Days* (1934) are discussed briefly. These texts exist not only as critiques of British imperialism in India but also as a useful counterpoint to the ideologies found in the texts produced by women that position women as key players in a glorious imperial mission. As well as writing in opposition to these women-authored works, it is also these canonical works that established modern perceptions and understandings of the spatial dynamics of the Raj and thereby must be invoked in analysis of the alternate expressions established in women-authored texts. Although the above male-authored texts are not the subject of this thesis per say, they are discussed briefly and comparatively to the texts that are central to this thesis.

In the colonial context, buildings and spaces had a political function beyond being reflections of the 'character of its inhabitants'. Alan Johnson agrees, writing that:

Interest in spatiality was especially powerful under colonialism because the tools behind Europe's global conquest beginning in the eighteenth century were precisely those geared to geographical acquisition and control – surveying, map-making, military ventures, division-and-rules policies and, perhaps most effective, the invention of the 'civilising mission'.<sup>2</sup>

The very definition of an Empire, the means by which it was governed, and how it was justified are all dependent on the configurations and understandings of certain spaces. Johnson continues: 'colonialism is predicated most obviously on the notion of physical boundaries that are the same time social boundaries'.<sup>3</sup> The role of popular women novelists, this thesis suggests, was central to that configuration of Anglo-Indian spaces and their work and in turn located the Anglo-Indian woman at the centre of the structures of Empire. In addition to this centrality of Anglo-Indian women in the colonial project, fiction produced by women also served to assuage colonial anxieties of physical, national, and moral decline. In this sense, woman-authored fiction served an ideological function in not only the justification and valorisation of British imperialism but also a method of stabilising the Empire.

Works of fiction are one way of glimpsing the values that are inscribed upon Anglo-Indian spaces. Through analysis of how these spaces are depicted Anglo-Indian fiction provides valuable insights into the self-image of the Anglo-Indians. It also shows how specific spaces were elevated into being signifiers of the wider Anglo-Indian community as well as the sense of British control over India. This also allowed these spaces to become arenas in which British control over India could be experienced, explored, and substantiated by the narrative. These spatial imaginings also present the opportunity for authors to inscribe personal, national, and imperial

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<sup>2</sup> Alan Johnson, *Out of Bounds* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2011), p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 29.

values onto specific spaces and have them function as possible metaphors for the wider imperial process.

Using middlebrow novels of Anglo-Indian life authored by women, this thesis will focus on the expression of colonial anxieties in relation to specific imagined spaces. The construction of these spaces in Raj fiction goes some way towards allaying anxieties around a sense of colonial decline, whether it be of the physical or moral condition of an individual or a wider racial or national decline. In *British Romantic Writers and the East*, Nigel Leask usefully acknowledges the ‘semantic range of definitions’ for the term ‘anxiety’. Using the *Oxford English Dictionary*, he identifies anxiety as ranging from being ‘troubled or uneasy in mind about some uncertain event’, ‘fraught with trouble or solicitude’ to being ‘full of desire and endeavour’.<sup>4</sup> This idea of the ‘semantic range’ of anxiety is important for this study as it encompasses both the pro-imperial sentiments of the works of Diver and her contemporaries as well as the constant fear of imperial decline and subversion of the gendered, sexual, racial, and cultural codes which supported the Empire.

For a community separated from the mother country and nominally governing a foreign land, Anglo-Indian literature is rife with colonial anxieties. Broadly, the concerns centre on a decline of imperial power in face of various dangers. One major threat is the potential of marital infidelity found in works such as Alice Fleming’s *A Pinchbeck Goddess*, Sara Jeannette Duncan’s ‘The Hesitation of Miss Anderson’ (1903), and Diver’s *Captain Desmond V.C.* The image of Kipling’s Mrs Hauksbee in

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<sup>4</sup> Nigel Leask, *British Romantic Writers and the East: Anxieties of Empire* (Cambridge University Press, 2004) p. 3.

his *Plain Tales from the Hills* (1888) is a potent envisaging of this deep-set fear of infidelity. This threat of adultery threatens not only the moral superiority – and thus supposed right of rule – of the Anglo-Indians, but also fundamental aspects of the Empire that, as Anne McClintock reminds us, envisaged colonial domesticity as an ‘indispensable element’ of British imperialism.<sup>5</sup>

Adultery posed a multifaceted threat to the maintenance of the Empire. Firstly there was the outward-facing threat of an Anglo-Indian moral collapse which would threaten the moral justifications for Empire. Additionally, the prospect of adultery would also threaten the integrity of the Anglo-Indian familial unit. It was the familial unit upon which the place of the Anglo-Indian woman in India was built and thus a breakdown of this marriage would problematise the position of Anglo-Indian women in the Raj. Additionally, European views upon the polygamy practiced by Indians also meant that the concept of Anglo-Indian adultery was imbued with not just a moral and sexual anxieties but also with a racial threat to the Anglo-Indians.

Encounters between the Anglo-Indians and the Indians themselves is another source of colonial anxiety in Raj fiction. An underlying threat of racial miscegenation can be read in works such as Alice Perrin’s ‘The Palace of Snakes’ (1917) and in an extremely complicated version in Diver’s *Lilamani* sequence of novels (1911- 1938). As Nancy Paxton notes, the traumatic memory of the Rebellion of 1857 brought about British anxiety centred upon Indian violence towards the Europeans especially through the frequently acknowledged image of the Indian man assaulting the

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<sup>5</sup> Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather* (Routledge: New York, 1995) p. 5.



European woman.<sup>6</sup> Perrin's 'In the Next Room', *Star of India*, as well as I.A.R Wylie's *The Daughter of Brahma* (1912) all feature murderous Indian servants who threaten the lives of their British employers. Raj fictions are saturated with anxieties concerning the physical and moral wellbeing of the Anglo-Indian community. Each of these anxieties holds the potential threat of a larger imperial decline, whether through a moral collapse of the Anglo-Indians themselves or externally from the colonised Indians.

As Leask notes, while the term 'anxiety' usually refers to a sense of unease and dread there is an alternate definition for the word that means to be 'full of desire and endeavour'.<sup>7</sup> This positive form of anxiety is often found in works of Raj fiction as a means of mitigating the negative forms of anxiety. Several Raj fiction texts extol glamour and the virtues of the Anglo-Indian community as a bulwark against anxieties of an imperial decline, Honor's decision to leave Desmond in *Captain Desmond V.C.* to avoid the temptation of adultery is one example of these heroic Anglo-Indian virtues. Works of Raj fiction set in Simla by Alice Fleming and Sara Jeannette Duncan pay attention to celebrating the opulence of Anglo-Indian life, and the possibility of viewing Anglo-Indian culture as analogous to that of the British mother country. The anxious extolling of Anglo-Indian values is a method for authors of Raj fiction negotiates the negative colonial anxieties implicit in the imperial project and is evidence of how the form functions as a method of anxiety management.

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<sup>6</sup> Nancy Paxton, *Writing Under the Raj* (Rutgers University Press, 1999).

<sup>7</sup> Nigel Leask, *British Romantic Writers and the East: Anxieties of Empire* (Cambridge University Press, 2004) p. 3.

This thesis focuses on five spaces that lie at the centre of Anglo-Indian literary representations of the Raj; the bungalow home, the European club, the summer capital of Simla, the picnic site, and the return to the English homeland following the experience of India. Although these spaces were often understood to be zones of Anglo-Indian control, the depiction of these spaces which present them as holding physical or moral threats, suggests an underlying anxiety concerning the British imperial project in India. The Raj fiction genre presented an opportunity for the political, social, sexual, and racial anxieties of the British colonizers to be depicted and when channeled through the generic narrative structure of the typical middlebrow novel – a typically conservative mode of literary production that centered on a degree of respectability and an awareness of the readership – these anxieties could be allayed through the course of the text.

The spaces in question appear in works produced by women authors of Raj fiction who have been hitherto neglected. The overlooking of these writers is unfortunate as they demonstrate a deep interest in the spatial elements of the Raj. The feminine ideal in the colonies of active participants in the imperial project along with their husbands was projected onto the Anglo-Indian domestic sphere. This meant that spaces such as the bungalow, the responsibility of the Anglo-Indian woman, became a central arena of tensions in terms of considerations of wider imperial governance. The association Anglo-Indian women held with certain spaces and their prohibition from others meant that the articulation of colonial spaces took on an increased sense of importance in works of Anglo-Indian fiction produced by women. As well as this focusing on the spatial, this fiction is also frequently positioned as works of the literary middlebrow, a form that possesses an anxiety managing function. These

narratives frequently hold a spatial fixation with particular attention paid to the domestic sphere of the bungalow, the liminal space of the picnic, or the transgressions of Simla for example. With this fixation, the deployment of various imagined spaces can be understood as being part of this method of anxiety management. Due to this increased focus on spaces and the middlebrow nature of these writings, this thesis will focus solely on the texts written by European women whose experience of the Raj was more spatially limited than those of her male contemporaries. Although Kipling's influence over the genre is so concrete that a dialogue with him is unavoidable, this thesis will not explore the works of Kipling unless they are pertinent to the novels at hand. In order to avoid a loss of nuance, this thesis will not be an exhaustive study of works of Raj fiction produced by women but will be a selection of women-authored works of markedly different forms of Raj fiction.

### 'Raj Fiction', 'Anglo-Indian' writing, and its producers

Before proceeding, it is necessary to define the term 'Raj fiction'. Raj fiction is an attempt to define the genre in which authors such as Kipling, Diver, and Perrin were writing. An initial attempt to conceptualise what this thesis considers as Raj fiction can be found in Bhupal Singh's 1934 *A Survey of Anglo-Indian Fiction*, which provides an extensive overview of the genre that contains the myriad subgenres found within Anglo-Indian fiction and offers readings of significant authors of these works. Singh's *Survey* excels in its analysis of the typical structure of the Raj fiction,

in a framework that still receives considerable academic engagement today.<sup>8</sup> Singh writes how:

A typical novel generally begins with a voyage, bringing the hero, more often the heroine to the shores of India. On her arrival in a Presidency town or a mofussil 'station' she is welcomed by a father, aunt, or some distant relation, and invariably causes a flutter in the small Anglo-Indian colony there. She becomes the belle of the season, is much sought after, and goes through the usual round of Anglo-Indian gaities. There follow accounts of burra-khana [big dinner], shooting parties (generally tiger-hunts), picnics, visits to places of historical interest, balls and dances with their kala-juggas [sheltered, private seating areas at dances], and race meetings. There are scandals and gossips at the club regarding her 'doings', interlaced with love rivalries and misunderstandings, and finally everything ends in a happy marriage.<sup>9</sup>

Although this broad definition overlooks the various oddities that can be found in the genre, it is an extremely useful model in understanding the numerous works of Raj fiction that will be explored in this thesis as well as identifying the typical generic structures of such texts. The sense that Anglo-Indian living can cause 'misunderstandings' is vital to an analysis of the depiction of India in works of Raj fiction as it is often these Anglo-Indian 'misunderstandings' of either interpersonal relationships or the conditions of life in India that drive the narrative of the genre. The acknowledgement of the frequent 'happy marriage' at the conclusion of the Raj fiction narrative is an apt reminder of the conservative form and content of the genre as a whole.

*A Survey of Anglo-Indian Fiction* also offers a near-contemporary overview of the field. Because of this, it provides useful methods for defining the genre and situating

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<sup>8</sup> See Ralph Crane's 'Introduction' to *Lilamani* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004); Máire ní Fhlathúin, *British India and Victorian Literary Culture* (Edinburgh University Press, 2015); Terri Mulholland, *British Boarding Houses in Interwar Women's Literature* (London: Routledge, 2017).

<sup>9</sup> Bhupal Singh, *A Survey of Anglo-Indian Writers* (London: Curzon Press, 1974), p. 2.

it in its contemporary context. Singh convincingly argues that Anglo-Indian fiction is ‘strictly speaking [...] fiction mainly describing the life of Englishmen in India.’<sup>10</sup> While this definition is extremely useful Singh’s use of ‘Anglo-Indian fiction’ is reductive. By invoking ‘Anglo-Indian’ in his description of the genre, Singh excludes significant authors such as the Canadian Duncan as well as I.A.R. Wylie who never travelled to India herself, but still used Anglo-Indian settings in several of her novels. This thesis will use the term Raj fiction in place of Singh’s ‘Anglo-Indian fiction’. The removal of the nationalist identifier from the genre eliminates the problems of including those authors born outside of the Anglo-India world. In addition to this, the term Raj fiction permits the inclusion of texts that concern the Raj but do not feature Anglo-Indians, such as Diver’s *Lilamani*.

Singh’s *Survey* offers a near contemporary reception and perception of the genre. However, because of this lack of distance it does raise several questions regarding Singh’s historicization of the field. Singh envisages Anglo-Indian fiction as covering ‘a period of about a century and a half’ and suggests this span can be divided into three distinct sub-periods. The first extends from Warren Hastings’s assumption of the Governor-Generalship in 1774 to the Sepoy Rebellions (commonly referred to as the ‘Mutiny’) of 1857. Novels published in this period, according to Singh are ‘mainly romances of Indian history or are descriptive sketches of English society in India’. The second extends from the defeat of the so-called Mutiny to the death of Queen Victoria and the publication of Kipling’s *Kim* in 1901 and are ‘portraits of official life of Anglo-India, mainly satirical’. The third begins with the 1905 Partition of Bengal and continues to the moment of the *Survey*’s 1934 release, this

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1.

third period ‘show a vaster range in the choice of subjects and are a true reflex of the varied life and problems of India in transition’.<sup>11</sup> Although Singh’s delineations do provide a useful model for envisioning the corpus of Anglo-Indian writing, it also diminishes the nuances of the genre.

Again, in the context of this thesis the term ‘Raj Fiction’ is preferable as it provides a specific temporality, as the Raj itself was established in 1858 a year after the Rebellion. The term, ‘Raj fiction’, would then include the texts that Singh positions as part of the second and third waves of Anglo-Indian fiction and exclude the first earlier wave which includes works such as W.B. Hockley’s *Tales of the Zenana* (1827) and Philip Meadows Taylor’s *Confessions of a Thug* (1839) and cover a wide variety of genres and forms including the romance, melodrama, Gothic, comic, and satire set in the Raj that was produced during this period. Hockley and Taylor’s novels are works of historical fiction, set before the arrival of the British in India and feature Hindu characters as protagonists and consequently sit uneasily alongside later works of Raj fiction that almost universally focus on the lives of Anglo-Indian characters. Although novels with European characters were produced in Singh’s initial period, such as Sydney Owenson’s *The Missionary: An Indian Tale* (1811) that follows the adventures of a Catholic missionary in the seventeenth century, the effects of the 1857 Rebellion – both as a traumatic cultural memory of Anglo-Indians and the movement of political control over India away from the East India Company and to the British Crown – upon the texts are absent. The now-undeniable British control over the subcontinent and the fear of a repetition of the violence against Europeans that occurred during the Rebellion are present in works covered

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1.

by the term 'Raj fiction'. One example of this change is the revisions on *The Missionary* undertaken by Owenson towards the very end of her life, which she republished under the title *Luxima, the Prophetess: A Tale of India* (1859). In his analysis of Owenson's novel Cólín Parsons argues that 'the entire impetus for the revision appears to have been the Indian rebellion of 1857-58'.<sup>12</sup> Parsons convincingly positions *Luxima* as a 'Mutiny Narrative'. These changes to the novel highlight the paradigm shifting circumstances that emerged following 1857. The Mutiny content of the revised novel, as well as the fact that it was published in 1859 then allows the novel to be positioned as a work of Raj fiction in a sense that the original *The Missionary* could not.

Recently, interventions in the study of the Anglo-Indian literature have led to revaluations of Raj literature as a genre worthy of study in and of itself, rather than as examples to be used as evidence for a larger argument. This reappraisal of Anglo-Indian literature has led to unconventional readings of the genre, such as Alan Johnson's *Out of Bounds* (2011). Johnson discusses Bart Moore-Gilbert's major work *Kipling and 'Orientalism'* (1986) which explores the Anglo-Indian community's perceived self-styled cultural differences from their mother country. Through an analysis of the 'intersection of spatiality and identity' in works of Raj fiction, Johnson analyses the community's desire to advertise what they perceived to be their English and Indian roots. Johnson then goes on to explore the impact these self-images had upon the production, both socially and in literature, of the supposed uniqueness of Anglo-Indian identity and the varying degrees of separation they

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<sup>12</sup> Cólín Parsons, 'Greatly Altered: The life of Sydney Owenson's Indian Novel', *Victorian Literature and Culture* 38:2 (2010), 373-385 (p. 373).

understood themselves to have from the homeland.<sup>13</sup> Johnson's work combines the architectural histories of the Raj such as Anthony King's *Colonial Urban Development* (1976) and Jan Morris's *The Spectacle of Empire* (1982) with a reading of the colonial novels of Rudyard Kipling and Flora Annie Steele along with novels written in the years following Indian independence by authors such as Jim Corbett and John Masters. Although valuable in its serious literary analysis of Raj literature, *Out of Bounds* has several limitations. Johnson himself admits that his book follows not 'a strict chronology of events or publications' but uses a thematic approach in order to attempt to 'illuminate their inherent ambiguities'.<sup>14</sup> The combination of the thematic approach and the analysis of authors from either the turn of the century or after Indian independence reduces the insights from an analysis of any of these texts by viewing them as isolated from the wider literary scene from which they emerged.

Another valuable and recent intervention into the field of Anglo-Indian literature is Éadaoin Agnew's *Imperial Women Writers in Victorian India* (2017). Agnew's own examination focuses almost exclusively on household guides and works of travel writing authored by Anglo-Indian women. Agnew concentrates on conservative writers of these texts that are often overshadowed by the more politically acceptable and commercially attractive 'adventurous and eccentric figures' and attempts to overturn the argument that this type of 'typically feminine writing' holds little value for 'feminist or imperial histories'.<sup>15</sup> Agnew's study reveals a liminal 'borderland' of Victorian society which requires a reorientation of the gendered oppositions

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<sup>13</sup> Johnson, *Out of Bounds*, p. 7.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, p. 35.

<sup>15</sup> Éadaoin Agnew, *Imperial Women Writers in Victorian India* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), p. 7.



considered intrinsic to society. Like Agnew in *Imperial Women Writers*, this analyses of the work of conservative Anglo-Indian writers whose work has largely been overlooked by contemporary scholarship.

Where travel writing is largely limited to, if not a complete factual accuracy, at least a semblance of believability and guidebooks function as a proscription for behaviours, Raj fiction holds the capacity to depict colonial anxieties as part of the novel's narrative conflict either in a realistic or supernatural form. Through the conceit of fiction, the authors depict – and potentially mitigate – these anxieties without condoning or endorsing them. The fictionality of the novels and the generic requirements of middlebrow literature for texts to provide a sense of narrative closure provides an allowance to depict these colonial anxieties. *Captain Desmond V.C.*, for example, is able to depict the unsuited Anglo-Indian wife and the threat of colonial adultery while at the same time containing both these threats through the turns of the narrative. Works of Raj fiction take these implicit anxieties found within the guidebook and travel writings and bring them into the foreground of the novel either as the narrative problem or as a metaphor, such as the ghosts of murdered Anglo-Indians. Through this fictional enactment the anxieties may first be depicted and then resolved wholly in the narrative. An obvious example of this is Maud Diver who as an author of both a household guide and fiction offers a comparison between the two forms. In *The Englishwoman in India*, Diver acknowledges the 'idle, frivolous, and luxury-loving' reputation held by Anglo-Indian women.<sup>16</sup> Shades of Diver's own Evelyn Desmond, Fleming's Winnie Edwards, and Perrin's Stella

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<sup>16</sup> Diver, *The Englishwoman in India* (London and Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1909) p. 5.

Cressingham can all be found in Diver's household and behavioural guidebook which advises against frivolity, while the ill-disciplined servants found in Flora Annie Steel's *Complete Indian Housekeeper and Cook* can be found in an exaggerated form in Croker and Perrin's Gothic works. Where these guidebooks can argue against certain behaviours, the works of fiction are able to depict the results of these transgressions as well as containing and resolving these anxieties in the text itself.

First and foremost among the authors studied in this thesis is Maud Diver. Born in Murree, in what is now north-eastern Pakistan, to an Anglo-Indian military family in 1867, Diver began publishing after she moved to England in 1896. Her first publications appear in popular magazines such as *Longman's* and the *Pall Mall Gazette*.<sup>17</sup> In 1907 she published her first novel, *Captain Desmond V.C.* As well as being Diver's first novel, *Captain Desmond V.C.* is also a beginning of a sequence Diver would continue for the next four decades. The novel has a narrative skeleton that Diver would return to throughout her career. The structure follows a young English person who arrives in India and holds some connection to the British military. The person then discovers another character whom Diver constructs as being an ideal romantic partner them, while at the same time encountering a narrative conceit as to why they cannot be married. Over the course of the novel, the two individuals prove themselves worthy both to each other but also to living in India. The narrative conceit preventing their marriage is circumvented and the two

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<sup>17</sup> 'Advertisements & Notices'. *The Pall Mall Gazette* (London, England), Wednesday, October 20, 1897; Issue 10162. *British Library Newspapers, Part I: 1800-1900*.

are able to become engaged at the novel's conclusion, much in the same way as described by Bhupal Singh.

As attested by her five decades as an author and the length of the fictional continuity that began with *Captain Desmond V.C.*, Diver was an extremely successful author. A year after its publication *Captain Desmond V.C.* was in its sixth edition before being published in the more commercially accessible 'shilling edition'.<sup>18</sup> In a 1915 charity gift book for wounded soldiers, Diver appeared alongside Edwardian luminaries such as John Galsworthy, Arthur Conan Doyle, J.M. Barrie, John Buchan, Joseph Conrad, Ethel M. Dell, and Arthur Rackham. Diver's verse 'He Comes' is a eulogy to Field Marshall Roberts, hero of the Second Anglo-Afghan War. Her celebration of an Indian war hero in a collection supporting British troops fighting in the Great War signifies Diver and the wider wartime propaganda's desire to emphasise the connection between imperial life and life in the imperial central of the metropole as two interconnected and interdependent entities. In 1916 a calendar was released featuring extracts from Diver's works. The re-use of quotes from her fiction was an already an established practise with shrewd aphorisms of Diver's being republished in a newspaper under the title 'Petticoat Philosophy'.<sup>19</sup> *The Aberdeen Daily Journal* also invoked Diver as a 'modern' writer alongside Kipling, Conrad, Dell, Arnold Bennett, and H.G. Wells in contrasting the popularity of Captain Desmond V.C. to that of the 'classic' works of Charles Dickens and Walter Scott.<sup>20</sup> In August 1926,

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<sup>18</sup> 'Library Gossip'. *The Western Times* (Exeter, England), Tuesday, August 18, 1908; pg. 3; Issue 18442. *British Library Newspapers, Part III: 1741-1950*.

<sup>19</sup> 'Petticoat Philosophy'. *Aberdeen Daily Journal* (Aberdeen, Scotland), Saturday, July 12, 1913; pg. 6; Issue 18256. *British Library Newspapers, Part IV: 1732-1950*.

<sup>20</sup> 'Aberdeen's Favourite Novelists'. *Aberdeen Daily Journal* (Aberdeen, Scotland), Saturday, January 01, 1921; pg. 4; Issue 20596. *British Library Newspapers, Part IV: 1732-1950*.

Diver appeared on BBC radio reading from *Captain Desmond V.C.*; that the novel was still deemed popular enough to be broadcast nineteen years after its publication is testament to its success. In addition to her numerous works of fiction, Diver also produced several works of non-fiction, all of which share the same concerns that she confronts in her fiction. *The Englishwoman in India* is a guidebook to the obstacles and the conduct expected in life in the Raj. The guidebook encourages the behaviours displayed by Diver's fictional protagonists, while also warning against those displayed by their narrative foils. *The Hero of Herat* (1912) and *The Judgement of the Sword* (1913) are two biographies of Eldred Pottinger a British agent during the era of The Great Game – the diplomatic struggle between the British and Russian Empires over central Asian supremacy during the nineteenth century – who in many ways shares numerous similarities to Diver's male heroes. Towards the end of her life, Diver published her last novel *Sylvia Lyndon* (1940), an atypical work of hers that was wholly set in England with little reference to India. This novel, which features a couple who marry and then must divorce for both their sakes, may be read as Diver coming to terms with the end of the Raj and idealising an amicable uncoupling of the two countries, despite the repression and civil unrest occurring in India. Published the same year as her death in 1945, Diver's final work *The Unsung: A Record of British Service in India*, is a celebration of lesser-known Anglo-Indians who embodied the sense of duty and self-sacrifice she proscribed and a distillation of her literary career.

Like her brother Rudyard Kipling, Alice Kipling was also an author of Raj fiction, namely a novel of Simla life entitled *A Pinchbeck Goddess* that she published under the name Alice Fleming. This novel focuses on the artifice of society life and serves

to humanise the formidable Simla woman that populate her brother's writing. Diver and Fleming shared a cabin on the voyage back to India where they developed a close relationship. Diver dedicated her second novel – *The Great Amulet* – to Trix in 'memory of Dalhousie Days'.<sup>21</sup> This relationship continued as Trix became interested in Edwardian spiritualism and automatic writing. Trevor Hamilton in his history of the phenomenon notes how Diver and Fleming retained a correspondence following her spiritual awakening.<sup>22</sup>

The works of Raj fiction produced by Sara Jeannette Duncan hold many similarities to Fleming's novel. Hailing from Canada, Duncan is evidence that the production of Raj fiction was not limited to British or Anglo-Indian authors. Born in 1861, Duncan is now most famous for her novel of small-town Canadian life *The Imperialist* (1904). Like much of Duncan's works of Raj fiction, *The Imperialist* is a novel about the relationship between the colony and the well-being but often ill-judged attitudes of the imperial Home. Duncan began her writing career as a pioneering journalist, before embarking on a world tour. While in the Raj she met Everard Cotes, whom she married and remained in India. During her time in India Duncan became a fixture of Raj literary society. In 1912 she hosted E.M. Forster who wrote to his mother that 'Mrs Coates was clever & odd – at times very nice to talk to alone, but at times the Social Manner descended like a pall'.<sup>23</sup> Like Diver's, Duncan's work is secular, preferring to focus on the relationships between Anglo-Indians rather the more dramatic or supernatural works employed by some of her contemporaries.

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<sup>21</sup> Diver, *The Great Amulet*, dedication.

<sup>22</sup> Trevor Hamilton, *Arthur Balfour's Ghosts* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2017), p. 56.

<sup>23</sup> Mary Lago & Paul Furbank, *Selected Letters of E.M. Forster* (London: Arena, 1983) p. 159.

Where Duncan differs from Diver is in her attitude towards these Anglo-Indians. Diver's novels are frequently strait-laced celebrations of the stoical, duty-bound Anglo-Indians while Duncan's fiction has an undeniably satirical edge that frequently gently mocks the community. As an individual not born in the Raj or its culture, and thus lacking their precarious social positioning in relation to both India and the metropole, Duncan has the capacity to lampoon the pretensions and prejudices of the Anglo-Indian community in her work. This narrative voice is present throughout much of Duncan's oeuvre. An early British review of *A Social Departure*, her travel memoir produced after her world tour, draws attention to the fact that Duncan 'is a Canadian, and for some inscrutable reason appears therefore to consider herself much more advanced, democratic, and self-centred than her friend [...] the pretty but commonplace and unadvanced English foil'.<sup>24</sup> Like all authors of Raj fiction, the influence of Kipling weighs heavily on Duncan's writing. Her short story collection *The Pool in the Desert* is largely made up of gentle ironic depictions of different aspects of Simla life and can in many ways be seen as a feminine response to Kipling's *Plain Tales from the Hills* collection of short stories.

Unlike the fiction produced by Diver, Fleming, and Duncan narratives composed by Bithia May Croker and Alice Perrin engage with the Gothic tradition and, in their shorter fiction, frequently feature supernatural occurrences. Perrin was born in India, commenced her education in England, and then returned to the subcontinent where she later married. Perrin began publishing upon her return to England and would continue to do so for the next thirty-eight years. Her popularity can be evidenced by

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<sup>24</sup> 'HOW TWO YOUNG LADIES WENT ROUND THE WORLD' *The Pall Mall Gazette* (London, England), Friday, July 11, 1890; Issue 7897. *British Library Newspapers, Part I: 1800-1900*.

her frequent publications and the fact that she could command publishing advances in the area of £150 in 1907, more than other popular Edwardian authors such as Arnold Bennett (who bitterly complained about this fact).<sup>25</sup> The critical response was also positive, with *Punch* magazine arguing that the short stories in Perrin's *East of Suez* collection were 'second only' to Kipling 'while two or three of them run even the best of Kipling's uncommonly close'.<sup>26</sup> The comparison to Kipling by contemporary reviews not only signals Kipling's unquestioned dominance of the genre but also the fact that the modern, male-dominated canon of Raj fiction reflects neither the critical consensus or the popularity of certain titles in the genre at the time.

Bithia May Croker was born in Ireland in 1848 before moving out to India where she would remain for fourteen years. She achieved a level of popularity after William Gladstone was spotted reading her first novel during the 'wearying hours' in Parliament.<sup>27</sup> Later her novel *The Road to Mandalay* was adapted into a Hollywood film starring Lon Chaney by MGM in 1926.<sup>28</sup> Like her friend Perrin, to whom she dedicated her 1901 novel *Angel*, Croker's had a decades-spanning publishing career and much of her short-fiction involves colonial encounters with the supernatural.

With the exception of Kipling, the other canonical works of Raj fiction throughout its publication – namely *A Passage to India* and *Burmese Days* – take a cynical

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<sup>25</sup> Melissa Makala, 'Introduction to *East of Suez* (Brighton: Victorian Secrets, 2011), 6-9 (p. 8).

<sup>26</sup> *Punch*, 23/10/1901, p. 296.

<sup>27</sup> Rosemary Cargill Raza, 'Croker [*née* Sheppard], Bithia Mary' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2008. <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/55571>> [accessed 06/04/18].

<sup>28</sup> *The Road to Mandalay*, dir. Tod Browning (Washington: The Library of Congress) <<http://memory.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/loc.mbrs.sfdb.2476/default.html>> [accessed 05/04/18].

position towards British imperialism and thus, are unlikely to have been found on the shelves of the very Anglo-Indians that the books were lambasting. Although Anglo-Indians may have read these works (Diver, for one, did read *A Passage to India* and accused Forster of being ‘unfair’<sup>29</sup>), the community at large would not have chosen to read them. As Margaret Macmillan notes, the typical club library was made up of ‘rows of Ethel M. Dell and Rider Haggard’, rather than the more challenging works of Raj fiction that were sceptical of the imperial enterprise.<sup>30</sup> The popular middlebrow fiction found in the clubs frequently details the European experience and adventures in the mysterious and exciting Orient. It is likely then that among the ‘five hundred mildewed novels’ rotting in the club of Orwell’s *Burmese Days* there would be works of Raj fiction produced by the likes of Diver, Croker, Perrin, Duncan, and Fleming.<sup>31</sup> The fiction found in the colonial clubs would be works that offered a positive impression of the Anglo-Indians, an optimistic image of the Empire, and assuaged anxieties of a moral decline.

Just as these texts were read in the colonial context, these middlebrow works of Raj fiction were bestsellers in the metropole and provided the fictional impressions of the Raj that were consumed by the readership back in the imperial homeland. An analysis of colonial spaces in these works, rather than the more famous works produced by Orwell and Forster, is an opportunity to explore representations of Anglo-Indian spaces, its relationship to imperial power, and the management of colonial anxieties. Through a focus on texts produced by neglected woman authors who are broadly supportive of the imperial mission, there is also an opportunity to

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<sup>29</sup> Maud Diver, Unpublished Correspondence, July 17<sup>th</sup> 1928.

<sup>30</sup> Margaret Macmillan, *Women of the Raj* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2018), p. 64.

<sup>31</sup> George Orwell, *Burmese Days*, p. 17.



explore these constructions in popular works that are now considered to rest outside the canon of Kipling, Forster, and Orwell. This reading of popular but now forgotten authors allows alternate impressions of the Raj and Anglo-Indian life – that run counter to those delineated in canonical works – to emerge.

One such point of departure between these neglected works and the ones that form the canon of Raj fiction is the space of the club. Although the impressions of the European club are different in the Raj fictions produced by Kipling, Forster, and Orwell the club is always positioned as the centre of Anglo-Indian life. In works of woman-authored Raj fiction the club loses its centrality to the space of the Anglo-Indian bungalow, where most of the narrative drive occur. Rather than being a space where Anglo-Indian values (whether they be a positive or negative portrayal in the novel) may be reinforced, the club becomes a space that must be negotiated by the Anglo-Indian woman. Another major difference between these neglected works and these more famous works of Raj fiction is the depiction of Indian (or in Orwell's case Burmese) people. Unlike these male-authored canonical texts, these woman-authored works do not focus on the interiority of Indians, leaving Indian characters to either be loyal but voiceless servants, or villains who meet their comeuppance in the course of the narrative. On the rare occasion when Indian characters in works by women are written with a degree of complex interiority this is usually tempered by a degree of Anglicisation as is the case with Diver's Lilamani and her descendants. A focus solely on the male-authored canonical works of the genre overlooks this vital aspect and demonstrates the importance of studying such texts in their own right.

## The Middlebrow

Writing in *Transitions*, there analysis of the emerging middlebrow literary form at the turn of the twentieth century, Kate MacDonald and Christoph Ehland explore the emergence of the middlebrow. The middlebrow, MacDonald and Ehland argue, 'was driven first by the economics of a new readership rather than a literary impulse'. This new readership emerged at the turn of the century and 'is normally categorized by its recent acquisition of literary, and its new economic power'. This readership had the literary and economic capacity to demand 'stories to enjoy, classic texts to study, poetry to respond to'.<sup>32</sup> Thus, the middlebrow was a mode of literary production that valued both an economic accessibility as well as a form of cultural respectability for this newly literate readership.

Raj fiction produced after 1883 can be considered middlebrow fiction. Margaret Steig in her 1985 article 'Indian Romances: Tracts for the Times', the first modern academic inquiry into the genre, identifies these texts as being middlebrow without explicitly using the word itself. In her study, Steig deploys Rachel Anderson's 1974 description of the romance genre as being pertinent to her examination of Raj fiction. Anderson describes the romance genre as:

The branch of fiction consisting of lightweight, but full-length, novels of not so great literary qualities, which appeal to a wide popular audience, which, though not so highbrow as the medieval scholar, is not so lowbrow as the reader of weekly love-stories.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Kate Macdonald and Christoph Singer, 'Introduction to *Transitions in Middlebrow Writing*' in *Transitions in Middlebrow Writing* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) pp.1-13, (p. 3).

<sup>33</sup> Rachel Anderson, *The Purple Heart Throbs: The sub-Literature of Love* (London: Hodder Stroughton, 1971), p. 14. Margaret Steig applies this to Anglo-Indian romances in Margaret Steig, 'Indian Romances: Tracts for the Times' *Journal of Popular Culture* 18:4 (1985) p. 2.

As Steig is writing in a period before the academic reclamation, if not the outright celebration, of the middlebrow as a mode, she does not invoke the term itself.

However, the word 'middlebrow' would be a logical choice in this instance, as Steig (and Anderson) are attempting to delineate a space between that of the 'highbrow' and that of the 'lowbrow'. In this instance, Steig is analysing solely Raj fiction romances, but by stripping away the necessity for 'full-length novels' the definition she employs may be expanded to embrace all forms of Raj fiction.

The genre of Raj fiction, then, can be understood to be fundamentally middlebrow. The major issue in identifying Raj fiction as an inherently middlebrow genre is the fact that the term 'middlebrow' often possesses differing, and contradictory, definitions in the current academic discourse. Middlebrow fiction is dependent on and often aware of the literary marketplace with ambitions of a large readership required to financially support the author. This importance of the market leads to the proliferation of novels that form a series such as Diver's *Frontier Force* sequence of which *Captain Desmond V.C.* is the first. Another aspect of the middlebrow's reliance on the market is its drive towards an artistic respectability while also eschewing a potentially alienating formal experimentation in favour of a cultural and formal respectability. The desire for this respectability led to the vast majority of works of middlebrow fiction, and almost all works of Raj fiction, as holding in some sense a politically and socially conservativeness that is complimented through the formal conservatism of the text itself. Although the middlebrow novel may take risks through moments of transgression in the narrative, the overall generic framework of the novel ensures that an 'acceptable' resolution is maintained.

One problematic aspect of positioning Raj fiction as a wholly middlebrow genre is the presence of E.M. Forster and his Raj novel *A Passage to India*. Forster's experimentations with modernism that manifest in *A Passage to India* could be argued as signifiers of a break with the middlebrow structure of the genre. However, in many respects *A Passage to India* is a novel that engages with the same generic middlebrow conventions found elsewhere in Raj fiction. In her biography of Forster, Nicola Beauman argues that the author possessed a familiarity with the 'formula Indian romances' produced by the likes of Diver and Perrin.<sup>34</sup> Towards the end of Forster's novel, Fielding, upon his return to India, tells Aziz – his now estranged Indian friend – that he has since been married in England. Aziz believes him to have married Adela Quested, this would be a typical conclusion to the standard middlebrow novel and a conclusion similar to Diver's revised version of *Captain Desmond V.C.* That Fielding has instead married a woman who had not appeared in the narrative shows Forster's acknowledgement and semi-break with the genre and reflects what Jane Eldridge Miller identifies as Forster's wish to be 'recognised as a 'modern' novelist' while at the same time longing for 'the 'healthy simplicity' and optimism of Victorian novels'.<sup>35</sup> Forster's modernism as well as his nostalgia for the Victorian novels allows for his work to be positioned in the liminal space between modernism and the Edwardian middlebrow.

Forster's work and the ambiguity of the placing of his writing also allows the relationship between Raj fiction and modernism as a movement to be explored. Miller argues for a wider definition of modernism that includes not just the high

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<sup>34</sup> Nicola Beauman, *Morgan: A Biography of E.M. Forster* (London: Sceptre, 1993) p. 260.

<sup>35</sup> Jane Eldridge Miller, *Rebel Women* (University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 46.

modernisms of Joyce and Woolf and the liminal modernists such as Forster but also the producers of ‘antecedent’ modernism found in the Edwardian novelists who ‘derived momentum from the content of their fiction’ and produced a form of ‘modernism of content’.<sup>36</sup> Though these authors held no desire to consciously ‘alter’ the form of their work, Miller argues that it was the desire of authors to produce new narrative content that forced them to ‘attend and subsequently reshape the narrative form’.<sup>37</sup> While many works of Raj fiction with their interrogations of marriage and adultery (*Captain Desmond V.C.*, *Star of India*, ‘Miss Anderson’s Hesitation’), artistic value and cultural capital (‘An Impossible Ideal’), race and nationhood (*Lilamani*), the legacy of imperial trauma (‘In the Next Room’ and ‘The Dak Bungalow of Dakar’) or the value of high living and frivolity (*A Pinchbeck Goddess*) conform to what Miller identifies as a ‘modernism of content’, this does not – unlike the Edwardian works discussed by Miller - translate into a ‘modernism of form’. Although the narrative form of Raj fiction was able to accommodate a degree of what Miller identifies as ‘modernism of content’, it remained wedded to a narrative structure whereby problematic content was resolved by the conclusion. The colonial context that was depicted by Raj fiction was too contentious a space to accommodate the anxieties that would emerge from a wholesale embrace of the ‘modernism of content’. The turn from narrative realism and an experimentation with a ‘modernism of form’ would be equally damaging in the colonial context. The rejection of the realistic form favoured by these authors in favour of a more abstract modernist form would destabilise the text itself and therefore, the depiction of the Raj itself.

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, p. 7.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, p. 7.

For several reasons, such as the conservative narrative framework, the eschewing of formal experimentation, and the appeal to the mass literary marketplace, the term ‘middlebrow’ has predominantly been understood to be derogatory. *The Oxford English Dictionary*, for one, defines the middlebrow as a work ‘regarded as intellectually unchallenging or of limited intellectual or cultural value’.<sup>38</sup> This middlebrow definition is much more damning than the *OED*’s understanding of lowbrow, which is of ‘popular culture rather than rarefied artistic or intellectual matters’.<sup>39</sup> This attitude is aptly represented by Virginia Woolf in her unsent letter to *The New Statesman* where the author declares the reader of the middlebrow to be:

The man, or woman, of middlebred intelligence who ambles and saunters now on this side of the hedge, now on that, in pursuit of no single object, neither art itself or life itself, but both mixed indistinguishably, and rather nastily, with money, fame, power, or prestige.<sup>40</sup>

Woolf’s definition demonstrates the cultural and class-based snobbery that feeds into the conception of the middlebrow. Her insertion of the term ‘woman’ is an example of the frequent sexism deployed in denigrating works considered in some sense to be ‘middlebrow’.

Along with the negative connotations of the term, one of the reasons it can be difficult to identify middlebrow works lies in a general confusion around the term itself. Although middlebrow studies have undergone an academic renaissance due to works such as Nicola Bauman’s *A Very Great Profession* (1983), Alison Light’s

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<sup>38</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary* via <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/252048?redirectedFrom=middlebrow#eid>

<sup>39</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary* via <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/252048?redirectedFrom=lowbrow#eid>

<sup>40</sup> Virginia Woolf, *The Death of the Moth and Other Essays* (London: Hogarth Press, 1942), 115.

*Forever England* (1991), Nicola Humble's *The Feminine Middlebrow Novel* (2001), Mary Hammond's *Reading, Publishing, and the Formation of Literary Taste in England* (2006), Erica Brown and Mary Grover's collection *Middlebrow Literary Cultures* (2011), Kate Macdonald's collection *The Masculine Middlebrow* (2011), Martin Hipsky's *Modernism and Women's Popular Romance in Britain* (2011), Kate Macdonald and Christoph Singer's collection *Transitions in Middlebrow Writing* (2015), and Christoph Ehland and Cornelia Wächter's collection *Middlebrow and Gender* (2016). A sense of confusion still persists around the exact definition of the term. This is hampered by fact that, as Nicola Humble acknowledges, the term 'middlebrow' is often avoided by academics who prefer to employ looser terms such as 'popular' or 'domestic' fiction.<sup>41</sup> The avoidance of the term middlebrow is a suggestion that the snobbery held by Woolf, and the anxiety around the term as a derogatory label endures to this day and that the middlebrow remains a complex and contested area.

Dating the middlebrow is equally as treacherous as defining it, with many studies positioning the middlebrow as something that only truly emerges following the First World War. Macdonald and Singer offer the most convincing argument that it is in the final years of the nineteenth and the opening years of the twentieth century, during 'the transition from the Victorian to the Edwardian period,' that the concept of the middlebrow crystallises.<sup>42</sup> One particular reason that Macdonald and Ehland's argument is so convincing as this moment is the same period when many of

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<sup>41</sup> Nicola Humble, *The Feminine Middlebrow Novel, 1920s to 1950s: Class, Domesticity and Bohemianism* (Oxford University Press, 2001) pp. 1-2.

<sup>42</sup> Kate Macdonald and Christoph Singer, 'Introduction to *Transitions in Middlebrow Writing*', pp.1-13, (p. 5).

the Raj fiction's most prolific women authors – including Croker (1888), Duncan (1893), Perrin (1894), Fleming (1987), Diver (1907), and Wylie (1910) began their involvement with the genre. The middlebrow nature of these works of Raj fiction are directly aligned with Macdonald and Singer's timeline for the emergence of middlebrow as a mode.

Like middlebrow fiction as a whole, Raj fiction is an expansive term that includes novels from various disparate genres. Nicola Humble's identification of the multitude of genres that made up the interwar middlebrow, namely 'romances and country-house sagas, detective stories, children's books, comic narratives, domestic novels, and the adolescent Bildungsroman' can be similarly applied to Raj fiction.<sup>43</sup> Diver's prolific work itself covers many of these seemingly disparate genres from the conventions of the domestic novel *Captain Desmond V.C.* to a country-house saga of *Lilamani*, her post-1914 output also includes the Bildungsroman of *Far to Seek* (1921) and the divorce narrative of *Sylvia Lyndon* (1940). Perrin's and Croker's short story collection *East of Suez* and *To Let* respectively both utilise the conventions of the supernatural, romance, and detective genres. Duncan's work frequently engages with the romance and domestic genres while also introspectively exploring concepts such as the value of art and the definition of the familial unit. This middlebrow shying away from formal experimentation provided Raj fiction not only with opportunities for commercial success but also a propaganda function through supposedly true to life representations of colonial life. Indeed, the middlebrow realism of the genre allowed several works of Raj fiction to be

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<sup>43</sup> Nicola Humble, *The Feminine Middlebrow Novel*, p. 12.



advertised as being an opportunity to get ‘inside real Anglo-Indian life’.<sup>44</sup> As well as being a commercial enterprise, Raj fiction also functions as texts that are able to purportedly educate the lay reader into the exotic world of the Raj and provide the Anglo-Indian reader with heroic versions of their own community. The combination of a literary realism and far-flung setting allowed the books to be marketed to readers as a method of gaining a unique ‘glimpse’ into the realities of living in the Raj.

The middlebrow features of Raj fiction also allowed the Anglo-Indian authors and readers of the genre access to a distinctly middle-class form of cultural capital. In *Distinction*, the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu draws a direct connection between the middle class and the middlebrow arguing, ‘what makes middle-brow culture is the middle-class relation to culture – mistaken identity, misplaced belief, allodoxia [cultural misinterpretation, misapprehension, misidentification]’.<sup>45</sup>

Although Bourdieu’s positioning of the middlebrow as a bastardised form of the ‘true art’ of the highbrow is reductive, he is correct to note that the middlebrow as a cultural field aspires and gestures towards an upwardly cultural mobility in a manner similar to how the primary consumers of middlebrow fiction – the emerging middle classes – aspired towards a sense of bourgeois respectability. The depiction of Anglo-Indians and their world in works of middlebrow fiction and the reading of such novels by Anglo-Indians would grant them access to a degree of cultural respectability. This cultural capital granted Anglo-Indians access to a respectability that they might be otherwise denied from due to their finances or own social capital.

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<sup>44</sup> Maud Diver, *Candles in the Wind* (New York: John Lane, 1911), advertised in back papers.

<sup>45</sup> Pierre Bourdieu (trans: Richard Nice), *Distinction* (London: Routledge, 2011) p. 327.

Life in the Raj allowed Anglo-Indians access to a cheaper standard of living, which allowed them to ‘emulate’ the genteel society of Britain that never truly accepted them into its ranks and which was then frequently replicated in the exclusion of Indians from their own ranks. Raj fiction is one such method for Anglo-Indians to be positioned as ‘far better than they could have back Home’ as the innate middlebrow nature of the genre allowed them to aspire towards a genteel, middle class identity.<sup>46</sup> The respectability of Raj fiction is another form of anxiety management, allowing the Anglo-Indian community a cultural respectability to match their perceived authority and class status in the Raj.

The middlebrow as a literary mode was undoubtedly subject to the demands of the literary marketplace and thus constrained by both the whims and expectations of the reading public. Whilst audiences may approve of surprising narrative moments within the novel, radical departures from either the expected narrative course or the dominant respectable morality of the day would prevent a novel from being successful, if it was even published in the first place. Although constraining, this lack of freedom in the narrative course of the novel conversely meant that the same novel was often permitted a greater license in what it depicted within the narrative. With the middlebrow, as Nicola Humble argues, the ‘uniquely designed to appeal’ to the middle-class, the field is then intrinsically connected to a middle-class, respectable, morality.<sup>47</sup> That is not to argue that the only readers of the middlebrow were the middle classes, or that all the middle classes read was the middlebrow but that the middlebrow was infused with a degree of middle class respectability. The

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<sup>46</sup> Alan Johnson, *Out of Bounds*, p. 47.

<sup>47</sup> Nicola Humble, *The Feminine Middlebrow Novel*, p. 11.

laying down of these controlled narrative structures allowed middlebrow authors a greater flexibility in what they depicted in their works. There was an assurance to the respectable reader that by the novel's conclusion moments of transgression from respectability would be resolved and subsumed by the demands of the middlebrow form. It is for this reason that authors such as Diver are able to approach the near adultery in *Captain Desmond V.C.*, the near bigamy in *The Great Amulet*, and the successful mixed-race romance in *Lilamani*. The threat of rape or murder in the post-mutiny ghost stories of Perrin and Croker is also made permissible in the literary marketplace by the assurance that the middlebrow texts will not permit the harm to undeserving characters nor allow any textual ambiguity to remain unresolved.

The capacity for the middlebrow to depict and contain societal anxieties is convincingly argued in Christoph Ehland and Cornelia Wächter's examination of middlebrow and gender. Middlebrow fiction, Ehland and Wächter argue, frequently raises 'disturbing issues concerning the crumbling Empire, collapsing class structures, and the deterioration of the Victorian family ideal'. However because of the middlebrow mode these texts can exist as 'a form of anxiety management that allows unsettling themes to be raised while maintaining at least a superficial impression of narrative stability and security'.<sup>48</sup> In middlebrow writing, the conventional narrative structures permit an exploration of often contentious issues in the text due to the fact that the anxieties that arise from these depictions can be managed by the conclusion of the narrative.

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<sup>48</sup> Christoph Ehland and Cornelia Wächter, 'Introduction to *Middlebrow and Gender*' (Leiden: Brill Rodopi, 2016) pp. 1-17 (p. 3).

In their 1970 intervention into the field of reception theory, Hans Robert Jauss and Elizabeth Benzinger argue for an ‘aesthetics of reception and impact’ as a method of conceptualising the historic continuity of literary production, in a term they christen the ‘horizon of expectation’.<sup>49</sup> Advancing Hans-Georg Gadamer’s ‘radical insistence on the historical nature of understanding’, Jauss and Benzinger use this concept of the horizon of expectation as a means of ascertaining the shifting epochs in literary history.<sup>50</sup> Jauss and Benzinger argue that an advancement in literary form is brought about by works which alter the ‘textual strategies, overt and covert signals, familiar characteristics, or implicit allusions’ found in existing works of the form.<sup>51</sup> For example, one reason Jauss and Benzinger argue for the significance of Miguel Cervantes’s *Don Quixote* comes from the fostering of ‘the expectations of the old tales of knighthood’ which are then subverted and parodied in the text itself.<sup>52</sup> This conceptualisation of literary history received criticism, not in the least from Robert Holub who critiques the concept of the horizon of expectation as a ‘mechanistic approach’ that fundamentally lacks a metric capable of measuring the way in which texts disappoint, exceed, or destroy the expectations of the readership.<sup>53</sup> In the context of Raj fiction, it is this subversion of the horizon of expectations that Forster and Kipling have retained a prominence while the more standard narratives produced by Diver, Fleming, Duncan, and their contemporaries have diminished.

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<sup>49</sup> Hans Robert Jauss & Elizabeth Benzinger, ‘History as a Challenge to Literary Theory’, *New Literary History* 2:1 (1970) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/468585> [accessed 28/08/17] 7-37 (p. 8).

<sup>50</sup> Robert C. Holub, *Reception Theory: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Methuen, 1984), p. 36.

<sup>51</sup> Jauss & Benzinger, ‘History as a Challenge to Literary Theory’, p. 12.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, p. 13.

<sup>53</sup> Holub, *Reception Theory: A Critical Introduction*, p. 62.

Although ‘the distance between horizon and work’, as Holub argues, ‘is an inadequate criterion for determining literary value’, the conception of the horizon of expectation can be repurposed to consider what was expected from works of a certain genre.<sup>54</sup> While Jauss and Benzinger use the metaphor of the ‘horizon of expectations’ as a model for envisioning a progressive broadening of the literary form the inverse of this, that is the texts that conform to the expectations of the form without a subversion of the ‘rules familiar from earlier texts’, can be useful in considering the expectations of the readership.<sup>55</sup> Holub’s problematisation of the capacity to measure the success of a text in relation to how much it deviated from the expectations of the audience, can be approached at another angle. Essentially, while the horizon of expectation may be a flawed model of envisioning a literary history, the understanding that the readership of a text expected a certain amount of generic conventions is useful when writing on the field of the middlebrow and its capacity to function as method of anxiety management.

As a form of cultural production that is most commonly understood to be one eschews formal experimentation, middlebrow fiction was in many ways a field which reproduced and relied upon ‘certain rules of the genre or type of text’.<sup>56</sup> By eschewing a sense of formal experimentation, the typical structure of a middlebrow narrative can be envisaged as being relatively standardised. This standardisation is formed through experiences of reading middlebrow fiction. The reader brings this experience to the new text which in turn is less obviously challenging as it conforms to the reader’s expectations of the field. Typically, the text would be expected to

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, p. 62.

<sup>55</sup> Jauss and Benzinger ‘History as a Challenge to Literary Theory’, p. 13.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, p. 12.

open with some form of problem. In the course of the narrative this problem is complicated somewhat, but by the conclusion it is able to be unambiguously resolved through, for example, a marriage between characters or a resolution of a central mystery. The avoidance of ambiguous conclusions is one signifier of the middlebrow and the expectation of such a conclusion evolved from the experience of reading previous works of the genre. In order to maximise readership, novels began to be released that fulfilled the expectations of the reading public, thus the expectations of the novel went on to influence the production of further texts. These further texts reinforced the readership's literary expectations, which then produced more works fulfilling these expectations in a self-propagating system. That is not to argue that middlebrow fiction is a state of stasis, but rather that as a cultural form it was intrinsically shaped by the author's understanding of the expectations of their readership. Although she does not invoke the concept of the horizon of expectation and is concerned with focusing on the middlebrow field largely after the period under discussion Humble argues something similar in *The Feminine Middlebrow Novel*, stating that the middlebrow was 'a form of fiction uniquely designed to appeal to the changing identity and tastes' of its readership and 'in a curious symbiosis, it shaped its readers as they shaped it.'<sup>57</sup> Thus, as Humble acknowledges, books deemed to be middlebrow were frequently positioned as such 'not because of any intrinsic content, but because it was widely read by the middle-class public – and particularly by the lower middle classes'.<sup>58</sup> The reading audience could approach a work of middlebrow fiction with a near assurance that the text would conform to the expectation of the rules of the genre in which it was written. While an adherence to

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<sup>57</sup> Humble, *The Feminine Middlebrow Novel*, p. 11.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

the 'rules' of the genre may be constraining in Jauss and Benzinger's conception of literary history, an alternate reading of this theory is that an observance of these formal, generic rules affords middlebrow authors a greater freedom to depict certain things in the narrative itself as discussed in detail earlier in this chapter. Although audiences did not seek out texts because they were middlebrow (although the plot structure of middlebrow texts were the reason they appealed to many readers) , the expected form of such novels provided readers with the assurance that these texts would be resolved in a manner consistent to other comparable works that remained within their horizon of expectations.

One method of defining works as being middlebrow would be of those that conformed to the expectations of a wide, respectable readership. Although at times challenging or dramatic, the narrative of these texts resolve problematic issues that arise and achieve a respectable conclusion by their conclusion. In the context of Raj fiction, this conforming to middle-class expectations not only served a purpose in depicting morally virtuous Anglo-Indians who were engaged with the colonial mission, but also allowed these Anglo-Indians an association to a level of respectability in the imperial homeland that might have otherwise been unavailable for them as a community who were seemingly disconnected from life at Home.

### Raj fiction and colonial anxiety

With the generic conventions of the field being identified while works were still being produced, Raj fiction is an example of a genre whose authors were aware of the expectations of its audience. Singh's structure of the Raj Romance novel (quoted at length earlier in this introduction) highlights the narrative beats of the novel which

must end 'in a happy marriage'.<sup>59</sup> While Singh's definition may be too specific to be accurately applied to the field as a whole, the attempt to form a narrative framework from Raj fiction suggests that the genre's readership were aware of the course of the Raj fiction narrative and the near assurance that the work would fulfil these expectations. What Singh does not acknowledge, however, is the fact that what he identifies as the 'love-rivalries and misunderstandings' (as well as the murderous servants, ghosts, and sudden deaths found elsewhere in the genre) are only able to be broached in these texts due to the assurance that the 'happy marriage' or, at least, a positive and conclusive ending would be deployed in order to contain resolve these misunderstandings. The capacity of the middlebrow that Ehland and Wächter identify to function as a form of anxiety management due to its 'superficial impression of narrative stability' is the reason that these disruptive misunderstandings can be depicted in the text.<sup>60</sup>

This contract between the middlebrow author and their reader takes on a heightened importance in a genre dealing with life in the colonies, such as Raj fiction. Unlike works of middlebrow fiction set elsewhere, the narratives of works of colonial middlebrow fiction could threaten not just the morality and the lives of the characters in the novel, but also the health of the wider Empire and even the potential for a ruination of the imperial homeland. This threat of a decline engages not just with the Anglo-Indian readership who are on the 'front line' of the Raj, but also the readership in the metropole for whom the books promised an insight into life in the Raj. In the middlebrow narrative structure, the colonial anxieties that are present in

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<sup>59</sup> Singh, *A Survey of Anglo-Indian Fiction*, p. 2.

<sup>60</sup> Christoph Ehland and Cornelia Wächter, 'Introduction to *Middlebrow and Gender*', p. 3.



the texts may be resolved by the conclusive resolutions at the end of the narrative. Novels of Raj fiction could then function as an apparatus to manage the broader anxieties of Empire, Anglo-Indians could read narratives that celebrated their heroism and disproved the disparaging stereotypes while readers in the metropole could safely experience the excitement of life in the Raj while at the same time being assured that the Anglo-Indians remained upstanding figures. It was possible to feature colonial anxieties as the central narrative conflict of the text and through the expectations of the middlebrow structure first confront and then provide a solution to it. The introduction and then the eventual resolution of colonial anxieties can be found throughout works of Raj fiction. Diver's *Captain Desmond V.C.* and *Lilamani* are explicitly concerned with the reputation of the memsahib figure and of the concept of mixed-race marriages. By channelling both these contentious issues through the middlebrow narrative structure Diver is able to not only contain the anxieties that arise from the central narrative conflict of her novels, she is also able to go some way towards ameliorating them. This is also true of works of fiction set in Simla, a subset of Raj fiction, that often depicts Anglo-Indians behaving outside of the conventions that are usually permitted. Fleming's *A Pinchbeck Goddess* concludes with Madeline Norton revealing that her Winnie Edwards persona is a fake and marrying her romantic interest. As well as containing Madeline's behaviours, the marriage at the end of *A Pinchbeck Goddess* also allows for the figure of the unwanted Anglo-Indian woman to be rescued from spinsterhood. In Duncan's short story 'An Impossible Ideal' the narrator and his female companion suddenly marry. Though there is little suggestion prior to the marriage that the two characters could become engaged, the unexpected – and ultimately unconvincing –

marriage is Duncan's attempt to restore a sense of stability in the text at its conclusion.

Although Perrin's novel *Star of India* does conform to this marital narrative, much of the short supernatural fiction produced by Perrin and Croker such as *East of Suez* and *To Let* do not. These supernatural texts still function upon a similar set of expectations, however. Frequently by the conclusion of the supernatural narrative the underlying mysteries are resolved, meaning that characters can use this knowledge to protect themselves from a similar fate. This discovery serves to protect the Anglo-Indians from future harm while at the same time providing a narrative satisfaction for the reader in which the reasons for the haunting are discerned. By uncovering the source of the haunting, the ghosts are often able to be laid to rest and, if required, their murders avenged. As a genre the Gothic holds different expectations that involve a different horizon of expectation. Readers of the Gothic approach the text with the expectations of, in the words of Gina Wisker the 'relentless questioning, [and] dis-ease and discomfort' that are signifiers of the genre.<sup>61</sup> The reader of a Gothic text is more aware of the generic conventions that rest on a sense of ambiguity and disorientation as well as the possibility of an uncertain narrative conclusion. Like the Raj romances written by authors such as Diver and Fleming, the Raj Gothic, another subset of Raj fiction, held its own set of expectations. These works frequently invoke the supernatural, with the Anglo-Indian characters having close encounters with ghosts and visions. As well as providing a source of Oriental titillation, the Gothic also provides a displacement of colonial anxieties. Rather than

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<sup>61</sup> Gina Wisker, *Contemporary Women's Gothic Fiction* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016) p. 1.

depicting, for example, an image of Indians murdering their Anglo-Indian masters, Gothic works of Raj fiction can instead re-enact this scene of violence through the literary device of the ghosts. Positioning Gothic works of Raj fiction may appear incongruous to the understanding of the middlebrow as a form of cultural production fixated on middle-class respectability. However, the use of the Gothic actually serves as a method of defamiliarization. The Gothic form and its deployment of fantastical narrative threats presents a depiction of colonial anxieties and anti-imperial violence through a more respectable remove. The fears of rape by Indian men or the death of Anglo-Indians for example can be extracted onto the more respectable literary figures of the murderous rogue or the restless ghost.

Although the structure and expectations of the middlebrow are useful in discerning both the narrative course of the texts and their ideological function in both justifying Empire and allaying imperial anxieties, some texts obviously do not wholly conform to this paradigm. Although these texts disrupt what might be expected from works of Raj fiction, the generic features of these specific texts absorb the shock of these deviations. Duncan's 'The Mother in India' is the story of Abigail an Anglo-Indian mother who sends her daughter Cecily back to England and finds herself unable to connect with her later. Duncan's short story ends not with Cecily's happy marriage but with her rejection, a fact that means Abigail and her husband are doomed to support a spinster daughter for the rest of their lives. The comic tone of Abigail's narration as well as her flippancy towards her daughter gives the short story an ironic conclusion where the outrageous mother is forced to care for her unmarriageable introverted daughter for the rest of her life. In this sense the short story carries a moral conclusion delivering a deserved ending for the self-absorbed Abigail.

It is the short story form that permits this break from the middlebrow narrative structure. As a form short stories allow for more flexibility in the plot and its conclusion. This is especially true in works of Raj fiction where the short story form grants the author more licence in subverting the expectations of the reader, which despite the overwhelmingly conservative nature of these texts, there remained the opportunity to challenge expectations in an unsettling manner. In addition to the shortened form allowing some degree of flexibility in the narrative structure, these short stories achieved widespread releases in collections, whereby the surrounding texts can control the overall effect of these unconventional narratives.

Although many short stories do differ from the typical structure that ensures Raj fiction has the capacity to contain colonial anxieties of decline, the difference is not as stark as to completely upend the capacity to assuage colonial anxieties. The satire of Duncan's 'The Mother in India' negates some of the anxieties that emerge from this straying from the typical narrative structure, with the semi-serious voice of the mother negating the seriousness of the narrative. The allowances that derive from Duncan's ironic, near-satirical tone are similar to the allowances that derive from the Gothic, where the anxieties of decline that are brought about by the narrative are absorbed by the expected conventions of the Gothic as a genre that unsettle and disturb the reader.

Evidence for the importance of reinforcing the conventional domestic romance plot of a happy marriage is evidenced by Diver's alteration of the conclusion to Captain Desmond V.C. First published in 1907, the original ending of the novel retained its

narrative focus upon Honor who remains in India while Desmond leaves the frontier station for leave in England. Over the course of the year, Honor refuses an offer of marriage from an unseen character working in the Indian Civil Service and her brother recognises she is only able to marry a soldier as it is the ‘family profession’.<sup>62</sup> Eventually Desmond returns to India, where he surprises Honor. The two finally speak their love for one another and eventually Desmond proposes marriage with the mutual understanding that the pair ‘go slow’ out of consideration for Evelyn’s memory.<sup>63</sup> Editions of *Captain Desmond V.C.* published after 1915 offer a radically alternate ending that still ultimately conforms to the middlebrow expectations of a happy marriage at its conclusion. Rather than focusing on Honor the narrative follows Desmond on his leave through Europe where he purposely avoids multiple encounters with Honor. Eventually Desmond’s friend Paul orchestrates a meeting between the pair, and they are reunited at the Royal Academy where they profess their love for one another. The novel itself draws attention to this change, with these newer editions featuring an Author’s Note from Diver reading:

In revising and partially rewriting my novel, *Captain Desmond, V.C.* I have been glad to make good the opportunity afforded me of bringing the Aftermath nearer to my original conception than it was in its first form. The three short chapters now substituted for the one final scene are therefore, in essence, no innovation. They represent more or less what I conceived at the time but suppressed through fear of making my book too long; and thereby risked upsetting the balance of sympathy, which I hope the fresh chapters may tend to restore.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Diver, *Captain Desmond V.C.* (Edinburgh & London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1909) p. 275.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, p. 381.

<sup>64</sup> Diver, *Captain Desmond V.C.* (Edinburgh & London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1922), ‘Author’s Note’.

Diver's 'Author's Notes' shows the importance of the literary marketplace for a middlebrow novel such as *Captain Desmond V.C.* Diver's understanding of 'the balance of sympathy' is interesting in this respect as it suggests that the typically conservative structure of the middlebrow narrative would prove too radical for the novel, while concurrently the novel also needs this conservative ending in order to subdue the behaviours that are depicted in the text. Instead of containing a threat of a moral decline in the novel, a happy marriage between Honor and Desmond would instead only serve to aggravate these concerns, and in a sense, seemingly reward their near adultery. As Diver advanced as an author she became known as a writer of Raj fiction who could be trusted to resolve the issues thrown up by her novels. In addition to Diver's increased fame, the fact that her work formed a narrative sequence, and feature a happily married and faultless union between Honor and Desmond in subsequent novels allows her to return to her novel and produce an ending more in fitting with the conventions of middlebrow romance even though they may disrupt the intrinsically conservative framework of the genre.

Another possible reason for this rewriting of the novel's conclusion is a more cynical reading of Diver's understanding of the literary marketplace. With the success of *Captain Desmond V.C.* and Diver's position as accomplished author of Raj fiction established, she and her publishers may have reasoned that they could re-release the novel with an alternate ending in order to re-market the book to those who had already purchased it. The argument in the 'Author's Note' that the revised ending offers 'no innovation' as it is 'nearer to [Diver's] original conception than it was in its first form' encourages the reader to recommit to purchasing the novel to read its 'true' ending. Diver's 'Author's Note' that attests to a literary genuineness finally

being achieved in this revised edition would then be a method for generating even more sales of a novel that had already had commercial success.

The alteration may also be an attempt by Diver to add patriotism to her novel during the opening years of the Great War. This addition is a shift from Diver's previous works which express some degree of cynicism towards the imperial homeland. *Candles in the Wind* (1909), for example, laments 'the guileless British public' whose opinions on the Raj may be swayed by 'the wildest fictions founded on fact' rather than the supposed 'realities' of colonial life.<sup>65</sup> Although the narrative of *Captain Desmond V.C.* occurs decades before the outbreak of the Great War, the bringing of her protagonists back to England in the revised *Captain Desmond V.C.* is an attempt to establish a reciprocal relationship between the metropole and the colony in a manner similar to Diver's contribution to *The Queen's Gift Book*. The alternate ending also shifts its focus to Desmond instead of Honor. With the final chapter focused on Desmond and his friend Paul Wyndham, Diver gives the conclusion of *Captain Desmond V.C.* a more masculine focus. In her introduction to *The Masculine Middlebrow*, Kate Macdonald acknowledges that 'the First World War clearly defined masculinity in terms of military participation'.<sup>66</sup> In *Captain Desmond V.C.* there is no better arbiter of Anglo-Indian masculinity than Captain Desmond himself. Diver's rewriting of the ending of *Captain Desmond V.C.* away from Honor towards Desmond himself demonstrates a wartime shift from the feminine domestic into the masculine military sphere.

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<sup>65</sup> Diver, *Candles in the Wind* (Edinburgh & London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1911), p. 89.

<sup>66</sup> Kate Macdonald, 'Introduction to *The Masculine Middlebrow*' (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 1-23 (p. 12).

As well as being a valuable insight into the literary marketplace, the existence of the two different editions of *Captain Desmond V.C.* raises several issues for later analyses of this novel and of a study of the genre of Raj fiction. The major issue brought about by the second version of *Captain Desmond V.C.* is the instability of the texts such as those studied in this thesis. The prospect of an author returning to a previously published novel and rewriting it means that the texts, along with the textual analysis are destabilised. No other novel studied in this thesis appears to have undergone a similar revision. This search was undertaken through a cross-analysis of different editions of the same texts as well as reissues such as Penguin's 1983 edition of Duncan's *The Pool in the Desert* and assorted anthologies such as Saros Cowasjee's collection of short Raj fiction *Stories from the Raj* (1983).

A further issue posed by the two alternate versions of *Captain Desmond V.C.* is what one will be used as the primary text in this thesis. Although it could be argued that both versions should be used in conjunction, the fact that only the ending of the novel that is different means that both versions offer, for the most part, identical depictions of pertinent spaces. As the revised edition became the authorised edition following 1915, was collected in publisher George Newnes's collections of Diver's novels *The Men of the Frontier Force* and *Four Novels* (both released in 1930), the revised edition will be quoted from throughout this study. In the final chapter of this thesis, where the space of England in *Captain Desmond V.C.* is the focus, both editions will be quoted from in an attempt to discern the importance Diver placed on this space.



## Raj fiction and denial

In *Rule of Darkness*, his examination of British colonial literature, Patrick Brantlinger writes of the ‘basic fantasy’ of the ‘Mutiny genre’ in which ‘the imperialist dominators became victims, and the dominated, villains’. These fictional accounts of 1857 ‘insistently mystify the causes of the mutiny, treating the motives of the rebels as wholly irrational, at once childish and diabolical’.<sup>67</sup> This is an identification of one of the most frequent methods of anxiety management deployed by colonial fiction, the denial of the underlying violence in colonialism which instigates resistance to Empire. Recent theorisations of the concept of denial present a useful concept for this study. A sense of denial, of both the violence inherent in imperialism and the precarious position of Anglo-Indians both in relation to India and England, is employed in Raj fiction. Catherine Hall and Daniel Pick have recently attempted to establish a critical understanding of denial, in an attempt to establish a theoretical understanding of concepts of guilt and liability.<sup>68</sup> Denial, according to Hall and Pick, functions psychologically as repression which the pair argue is best understood as a metaphor of walking ‘a pavement oblivious of the ruins of dwelling places submerged beneath our feet’.<sup>69</sup> With Hall and Pick acknowledging that denial as a concept is a method of repression, this then brings about the possibility of these anxieties emerging elsewhere. This ‘return of the repressed’ makes denial not a secure bulwark against colonial anxieties but rather an action which allows these anxieties to erupt in a different form.

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<sup>67</sup> Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism 1830-1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 222.

<sup>68</sup> Catherine Hall and Daniel Pick, ‘Denial in History’ in *History Workshop Journal* 84 (2017) < <https://doi.org/10.1093/hwj/dbx040> > [accessed 06/04/18]

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*, p. 9

In Raj fiction, this sense of denial can most noticeably be identified by the genre's handling of the anxieties that emerge during the text. In their theorisation, Hall and Pick write that denial (or disavowal) 'can be linked to the notion of a 'blind eye' or the rejection or rebuttal of something in plain sight, so carrying the implication and not knowing at once'.<sup>70</sup> As discussed above, Raj fiction as a genre maintained a resolutely imperialist ideology and it was necessary for works of Raj fiction to have the anxieties that emerge from the plot resolved and contained by the conclusion of the narrative. This diminution of colonial anxieties was most commonly enacted through a method of rejection or rebuttal. In *Captain Desmond V.C.* for example, Diver invokes anxieties of the frivolous memsahib whose incompetence endangers herself and her neighbours in the character of Evelyn Desmond. Fears of adultery in the familiar, tight-knit Anglo-Indian community are also invoked through Honor and Theo Desmond's growing love for one another, as is the threat of Indian resistance both through acts of war, which leaves Theo fighting for his life, and through acts of terrorism such as the sudden murder of Evelyn. By the conclusion of the novel all of these anxieties have been directly contained by the novel. The 'problem' of Evelyn, the frivolous memsahib character, is resolved through her murder at the hands of an Afghan tribesman. Though the violence may be shocking, it is brought about by Evelyn's incompatibility with Anglo-Indian life. The act of disavowal occurs as the act of violence against the European woman is brought about by her own actions in the novel. This function of anxiety management and denial through a rebuttal is not unique to Diver's romantic novels, it is present throughout the works of Raj fiction examined in this thesis. Croker's short story 'The Dak Bungalow of Dakar' with its

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<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*, p. 11

use of the Gothic and supernatural is markedly different to *Captain Desmond V.C.* but still has a similar function in its attempts to control colonial anxieties. This short story invokes the memory of the 1857 Rebellion and the murder of Anglo-Indians by their Indian servants, when two Anglo-Indian women stay at a Dak bungalow and observe a ghostly re-enactment of the Indian caretaker murdering the previous guests. By the conclusion of the narrative, the murderer is exposed, and justice is done. 'The Dak Bungalow of Dakar' invokes Indian violence against European women but in doing so positions such violence as individualistic and not part of a wider, organised system of ideological, anti-colonial violence.

The depiction in works of Raj fiction of supposedly quintessential Anglo-Indian spaces such as the bungalow, the club, Simla, and the picnic all claim their inherent Britishness. Hall and Pick suggest that an 'organization may evolve ways of operating that spare its members the task of seeing'.<sup>71</sup> Raj fiction holds the capacity to 'evolve' these Anglo-Indian spaces into being sites that in some way mitigate colonial anxieties of ruination.<sup>72</sup> As representatives of the imperial mission in India, Anglo-Indians who did not conform to the moral standards expected of them threatened not only their own individual place in the colonies but also the concept of the Raj as a civilising force for India. That is not to suggest that Raj fiction represses in a Freudian sense the geographical location of these spaces in India but rather that its texts emphasise the European features of these sites and reduce, if not outright deny, their Indian features to ensure that colonial anxieties can be surmounted by the Anglo-Indian characters in the novel.

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<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, p. 16.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, p. 16.

Denial also has the potential to work as a method of anxiety management. The other form of denial, what Hall and Pick acknowledge as the 'knowing sacrifice', is a trait celebrated throughout Raj fiction.<sup>73</sup> Raj fiction positions self-denying sacrifice as part of the idealised behaviour of the Anglo-Indian in the colonies which arises from the chivalric tradition and the military ethos of the Anglo-Indian community. The embracing of a sense of duty is present even in texts that ostensibly celebrate the frivolous potential of the Raj; on the surface of Fleming's *A Pinchbeck Goddess* celebrates the frivolity of the Simla social scene. At the novel's conclusion, however, Madeline Norton must dutifully return to a more ordered and restrained life away from the summer capital. Diver's entire output highlights the importance of self-sacrifice in the Raj, with narratives rewarding characters who observe the requirements for life in India and punishing those who shy away from their responsibilities. In this respect, Raj fiction mirrors the accepted conservative conduct expected by British people throughout the British Empire. This is also the case in much of Duncan's work in which members of the Anglo-Indian community either must observe some sort of sacrifice such as in 'A Mother in India' or diminish part of their haughty ego and experience a sense of hubris as in 'An Impossible Ideal', 'Miss Anderson's Hesitation', and *On the Other Side of the Latch*. Similar to the disavowal discussed by Hall and Pick, the self-denial found in Raj fictions is another method of managing anxieties of a moral transgression. Through the various narrative trials, the Indian experience is often portrayed as a proving ground for the characters, a test that can be overcome through self-sacrificing and denial of a particular desire.

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, p. 10.

This thesis will be composed of five chapters focusing on specific spaces that reappear throughout works of Raj fiction. These chapters are not an exhaustive list of the common spaces depicted in works of Raj fiction – spaces such as the boat out to India, the Indian countryside, and the mess hall also feature in many works of the genre – nor is it an exhaustive list of all the appearances of these spaces in works of the genre. Instead, this thesis will analyse the construction of these sites in relation to their importance in Anglo-Indian ideology that justified the Raj as well as the importance of the spaces in the novels in which they appear.

Chapter One of this thesis focuses on literary depictions of the Anglo-Indian bungalow. The concept of the bungalow existed as a cornerstone to Anglo-Indian conceptions of the Raj, especially in relation to memsahibs and those authors who wished to celebrate the figures as an equal to the Anglo-Indian man. In works of Raj fiction, the Anglo-Indian bungalow is often constructed as a contradictory space. It is frequently a space of which the upkeep is the responsibility of the Anglo-Indian woman, in the same sense as the maintenance of the wider Empire is the responsibility of the Anglo-Indian man. The bungalow then comes to be seen as the space that is emblematic of Anglo-Indian femininity. Concurrent with this, however, the bungalow is also frequently a space of transgression, with the ubiquitous roofed verandahs of the bungalow providing multiple entrances to the home with its lack of interior hallways. The presence of non-white Indian servants required for the day-to-day running of the bungalow also eroded this emblematic capacity of Anglo-Indian femininity. For this reason, works of Raj fiction featuring the bungalow regularly presents narratives concerning some form of transgression in the space. Works of

Raj fiction that focus on the bungalow frequently have Anglo-Indians being put in moral or mortal danger due to the presence of an Other who threatens some aspect of the colonial order. Often this transgression is through the form of mutinous servants wishing to rob or murder their Anglo-Indian masters, which also revives the memory of the 1857 Rebellion. The triumph of the Anglo-Indians – and most commonly of the Anglo-Indian women – over these transgressors is a demonstration of their value to the imperial project but also a re-enactment of 1857 and the triumph of the precariously positioned Anglo-Indian over the treacherous Indian.

In discussing the bungalow, the chapter focuses on three specific sites within the Anglo-Indian home. The verandah exists as a complex space in relation to the rest of the bungalow. Often surrounding the whole building, the verandah is the space that is most easily accessible to trespassers. In works of fiction, however, this obvious threat to the Anglo-Indian home is repurposed into a protective space. Raj fiction positions the verandah as a space where Anglo-Indians may take shelter and be protected from the singular threats that exist inside the bungalow. Frequently the verandah is the first impression of the bungalow provided in the narratives and also the space where villainous Indians wishing to harm their Anglo-Indian masters are punished. In this respect, the obvious anxieties surrounding the un-English architectural feature of the verandah are repurposed into being protective aspects of the space. The drawing room, commonly depicted as being the space of both feminine retreat and European culture, is the space that is most commonly transgressed. This invasion of the sanctity of the drawing room is not just a threat to Anglo-Indians but also an affront to the cultural resonances of the room. Triumphant over the transgressions that occur in this space – whether that is Honor restraining

her forbidden love for Desmond in Diver's *Captain Desmond V.C.* or the murderous servant in Perrin's 'In the Next Room' – is a demonstration of Anglo-Indian justification for their rule over the subcontinent. The most private space in the bungalow, the Anglo-Indian bedroom, is not only the space where the Anglo-Indian is most vulnerable to invaders in the bungalow but also the site that is most laden with the cultural memories of the rape and murder of European women that are closely tied to the legacy of the 1857 Rebellion which Éadaoin Agnew, amongst others, identifies as 'the basic narrative' of 1857 and of later invocations of Indian anti-colonial resistance.<sup>74</sup> By depicting the overcoming of threats in the bedroom of the Anglo-Indian bungalow, authors of Raj fiction not only demonstrate the capacities of Anglo-Indians to triumph over adversity but also prevent the reoccurrence of the horror and humiliation of 1857.

Chapter Two focuses on literary representations of the Anglo-Indian colonial club. The club is often considered to be the centre of Anglo-Indian life and literature. Singh acknowledges the 'hour passed under fans at the Club' as a key part of what he calls 'Anglo-Indian literature'.<sup>75</sup> In 'Reading the Club as a Colonial Island', his illuminating reading of the club in the works of Orwell and Forster through the concept of 'Island Theory', Ralph Crane also argues for a reading of the colonial club as a space 'where the Anglo-Indian community gathers in isolation, apart from the rhythm of India'.<sup>76</sup> This is certainly the case in canonical works of Raj fiction such as Kipling's *Plain Tales from the Hills*, Forster's *A Passage to India*, and

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<sup>74</sup> Éadaoin Agnew, *Imperial Women Writers in Victorian India*, p. 2.

<sup>75</sup> Singh, *A Survey of Anglo-Indian Fiction*, p. 16.

<sup>76</sup> Ralph Crane, 'Reading the Club as a Colonial Island in E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India* and George Orwell's *Burmese Days*' *Island Studies Journal* 6:1, 2011 17-28 (p. 19)

Orwell's *Burmese Days*. Charles Allen's famous oral history of the Raj, *Plain Tales from the Raj* (1975), identifies the club as 'a peculiarly 'Anglo-Indian' institution'.<sup>77</sup> Raj writing frequently highlights the club as a redoubt of Anglo-Indian values and a regulatory space in which Anglo-Indians can reprimand their peers who stray from the codes of Anglo-Indian life. These understandings of the club, however, overlook the gendered construction of the space. In women-authored works of Raj fiction the club is a far more ambiguous and exclusionary space than in the works of their male peers. Part of this reason arises from the positioning of Anglo-Indian women and the space of the colonial club. Often denied official membership and frequently relegated to annexes, it was not possible for Anglo-Indian women to view the space of the club as belonging to them in the same manner as their menfolk. In these women-authored works, the club frequently exists as a space that causes discord in the Anglo-Indian marriage, either as a social distraction for one or both members of the marriage or as a masculine space that is disrupted by the presence of a woman. This chapter argues that in women-authored works of Raj fiction the club is not the regulatory space that it is often constructed to be in masculine accounts, but rather a testing location that must be overcome for Anglo-Indian women to prove themselves worthy of responsibilities they held in ruling over India.

The third chapter of this thesis will focus on depictions of Simla, the summer capital of the Raj. The chapter explores how Simla is depicted as a city of frivolity and excess, traits that run counter to the conservative codes of behaviour observed by Anglo-Indians elsewhere in the Raj. This chapter pays particular attention to the concept of 'Simla fiction', a subsection of Raj fiction that exclusively focuses on life

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<sup>77</sup> Charles Allen, *Plain Tales from the Raj* (London: Abacus, 2013) p. 116.



in the city. By this definition, much of the work of authors such as Fleming and Duncan can be accounted as being examples of Simla fiction. These works celebrate the frivolity of the summer capital and the individuals who engage in it. Many narratives of Simla fiction are concerned with the capital's social scene that frequently involves idle flirting and dancing. The stereotype of the city embraced those who frequented it, with the concept of the 'Simla woman' - a sexually experienced, extremely competent, and ardently independent figure who is typified by Kipling's Mrs. Hauksbee in *Plain Tales from the Hills*. What is worthy of note about Simla fiction is the presentation of the social life as being a positive feature. In Fleming's *A Pinchbeck Goddess*, for example, it is only when Madeline Norton fully engages with the risqué behaviours associated with the life in Simla that she is able to finally find a husband. This chapter explores how Simla fiction is able to navigate the necessity for Raj fiction to present Anglo-Indians as upstanding figures and the also reputation of Simla as a space of frivolity and excess. This is accommodated by a number of different methods. One such method is the geography of Simla; the temperate climate accommodates several of the anxieties of the space as it was able to be read as being somewhat English in character. The capacity to clearly delineate the boundaries of the city and India means that this behaviour can be contained within the city limits and prevented from spreading elsewhere in the Raj. Not only does the purported English climate of the city permit this frivolity, it also allows Anglo-Indians who visit the city to view themselves as being members of an elite, select few, despite the fact that in England they would not be able to perform a similar role due to the class and cultural restrictions in place. The tone that is frequently employed by Simla fiction also mirrors and justifies the social currents that occur in the summer capital, this comic or ironic narrative voice grants a greater

licence in depicting these scenes of frivolity as there is an assurance the tone that the behaviours depicted will not lead to misfortune as they would in works of Raj fiction set elsewhere in India.

Chapter Four moves on to the depiction of the Anglo-Indian picnic in works of Raj fiction. Although the picnic is commonly positioned as an event rather than that of a space understood in the sense of the bungalow, club, or even Simla, the picnic is a reoccurring trope throughout Raj fiction and, from a spatial perspective, presents a unique space in women-authored works of the Raj fiction genre. This chapter acknowledges the importance of the picnic upon understandings of English culture and its debt to Romanticism as explored in Andrew Hubbell's 'How Wordsworth Invented the Picnic and Saved English Culture' and how the picnic's legacy and its replication in the Raj conferred a class-based cultural legitimacy upon an Anglo-Indian community that was riddled with class and cultural anxieties. In the same sense that, as Hubbell argues, the picnic came to define a particular form of the newly urbanised middle class in the mid-Victorian era, this chapter argues that the picnic offered a similar opportunity for the later Anglo-Indian community at the turn of the century. The picnic proliferates through depictions of the Raj, so much so that the event became part of the stereotypical Anglo-Indian courting ritual which was reflected in works such as Diver's *Captain Desmond V.C.* and Perrin's *Star of India*. The popularity of the colonial picnic and its supposed intrinsic links to English culture allow the picnic in Raj fiction to be envisaged as a metaphor of the colonising process on a smaller scale. Concurrent to this, however, is the fact that frequently in Raj fiction, the picnic is the site from which the conflict that drives the narrative emerges, as is the case in Croker's *To Let*, Perrin's *Star of India* and

Diver's *Captain Desmond V.C.* This seeming contradiction can be resolved when one explores the ideological underpinnings and function of Raj fiction, as a genre that celebrates the colonial society of the Anglo-Indians. This chapter reads the ideological stability of the picnic as the reason narrative conflicts can emerge in the space. Unlike the bungalow, for example, the picnic has a more secure nationalist pedigree allowing for upsets in the novel to emerge in this relatively secure space. By its very nature the picnic is only a temporary location thus allowing this space from which narrative conflicts frequently occur to be collapsed. The return from the picnic to the more important but unstable space of the bungalow, allows the anxieties that emerged during the social gathering to be resolved in these contentious sites. In this process the vital spaces of the Anglo-Indian life are secured at the cost of the picnic site.

The fifth chapter of this thesis focuses on the depiction of England in works of Raj fiction. Although England is a much larger space than the previous locations discussed in this work, the depictions of English spaces are so limiting that it is possible to view English spaces as being comparative to that of the bungalow or the club. This chapter explores how the space of the imperial home country has a dual purpose in Raj fiction. The first is as a space that is stifling and banal, a space to escape from in order to reach your potential in the excitement of India. Due to the relative boredom of England, however, it is also the ideal place for existential anxieties that emerge in works of Raj fiction to be resolved. Most often, these anxieties are sexual in nature, usually the threat of adultery as in the case of Diver's *Captain Desmond V.C.* or the threat of racial miscegenation as occurs in Perrin's

‘Palace of Snakes’; both of these authors resolve the respective anxieties of their narratives in the space of the imperial homeland.

As a whole, this thesis focuses on a variety of spaces and moves through them as the chapters progress. The order of chapters is roughly related to the frequency, or the perceived importance, of these spaces. The bungalow, for example, is unavoidably tied to discourses of domesticity and the role of Anglo-Indian women in the Raj. This in turn is connected to arguments made about the depictions of the club, Simla, the picnic, and even the English homeland in the genre. By analysing each space individually a clear image of the imperial fixation that Johnson acknowledges as being ‘geographical acquisition and control’ can be extrapolated from the texts.<sup>78</sup> This focus on space, an obviously important aspect of imperial control, also allows parsing of the colonial anxieties that emerge from the texts. The analysis of spaces in the middlebrow genre of Raj fiction then allows for an analysis of the methods by which the texts go about attempting to contain or disavow anxieties of a colonial decline.

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<sup>78</sup> Johnson, *Out of Bounds*, p. 29.

## **Chapter One: The Bungalow**

There stands on the isle of Seringapatam,  
By the Cauvery, eddying fast,  
A bungalow lonely,  
And tenanted only  
By memories of the past.  
It has stood, as though under curse or spell.  
Untouched since the year that Tipoo fell.

The garden about it is tangled and wild,  
Sad trees sigh close to its eaves,  
And the dark lithe shapes  
Of Chattering Apes  
Swing in and out of the leaves;  
And when night's dank vapours rise grey and foul,  
The silence is rent by the shrill screech-owl.

The windows are shuttered, the doors are shut,  
And the odour and stain of decay  
Is on plaster and beam,  
And the stone steps seem  
To be ooze-corroding away;  
And the air all around is tinged with the breath  
Of the felt, though invisible, presence of Death.<sup>79</sup>

Appearing in his collection *The Lays of Ind* (1888), Aliph Cheem's poem 'The Deserted Bungalow' depicts the site of a ruined Anglo-Indian residence that was once the happy home of an Anglo-Indian colonel who has fled the house in grief following the deaths of his wife and daughters from cholera. Cheem – the oriental pseudonym of the Anglo-Indian army officer Walter Yeldham – uses the image of the bungalow as a symbol of a wider imperial ruination. Several anxieties concerning imperial decline are present in Cheem's poem. The deaths of the colonel's wife and daughters presents an image of India as a location that breaks the familial bonds required to build the home space as well as a land that is deadly to the European

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<sup>79</sup> Aliph Cheem, 'The Deserted Bungalow', *Lays of Ind* (London: W. Thacker & Co, 1888), p. 201.

women who were understood as the maintainers of these home spaces. There is also the suggestion that the bungalow exists under a ‘curse or spell’, a supernatural threat against which British imperialism cannot stand. The acknowledgement that the bungalow is ‘tenanted only/By memories of the past’ introduces a pessimism concerning the future of the Empire with the previous owners having died or moved away, leaving no one remaining to maintain the bungalow. The vacant bungalow has fallen into a state of disrepair; the natural world of India is encroaching onto the space with the ‘tangled and wild’ garden, the ‘Chattering Apes’ near the eaves, and the stone steps that are literally being washed away by the Indian monsoons. There is a sense that India itself is slowly erasing the bungalow from the face of the Earth. This on-going erasure of the bungalow is significant as it reflects a preoccupation with the security of the imperial project. The bungalow is near the site of the British East Indian victory over Tipu Sultan at the Siege of Seringapatam in 1799, portentously the same year as the onset of the bungalow’s decline. Not only does Cheem draw a spatial connection between the pageantry of imperial power and the eventual ruination of Empire through the metaphor of the bungalow, but also between the fall of the Kingdom of Mysore and the decline of the house. The gradual reclaiming of the bungalow by India, mirrors not only the destruction of the Mysorean state but also the transitory nature of Empire itself. Cheem’s poem visits a multitude of imperial anxieties onto the domestic space of the Anglo-Indian bungalow. When ‘Cholera tapped at the door/ [...and] mother and daughter passed away’ Cheem is confronting many Anglo-Indian anxieties including the destruction of the familial unit, sickness and contagion, the supernatural, the place of women in the colonies, and encroaching Indianisation.<sup>80</sup> This chapter will explore the

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<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*, p. 204.

representation of the Anglo-Indian bungalow in works of Raj fiction. With the duties of Anglo-Indian women solely expressed through the domestic sphere, the bungalow is the most common space found in works of women-authored Raj fiction and consequently, it is frequently at the centre of narrative conflicts of the novel. Cheem's poem clearly presents a preoccupation with the decline of domestic imperial spacefixation was shared by works of Raj literature that was produced by women.

This chapter will explore middlebrow representations of the bungalow by distinguishing between the rooms in the building that recur throughout Raj fiction as spaces from which anxieties of decline emerge. The space of the verandah complicates the already contentious inside/outside dynamic of the bungalow as well as being symbolic of the European/Indian architectural inheritances of the space. The drawing room of the bungalow purportedly exists as the room featuring signifiers of European culture such as the piano as a method for both celebrating the civilising mission of the Empire as well as the cultural aspirations of the class-conscious Anglo-Indians. The drawing room is frequently depicted as a protective space for Anglo-Indians and the centre of the Raj experience for the Anglo-Indian woman. Despite this, however, the drawing room in Gothic works of Raj fiction is often the scene of attacks from either jealous servants or visitations from ghosts, often unsettling and destabilising this supposedly secure space. The bedroom is often the space where the inhabitant of the bungalow is at their most vulnerable due to being asleep or in some way incapacitated as in the case of many ghost narratives. The bedroom also suggests threats to sexual morality, making the space the most problematic in the bungalow.

The Anglo-Indian bungalow exists as a space that is less separated from the surrounding world than the domestic sphere found in the imperial homeland. In light of its permeability it is impossible to view the bungalow as some form of 'island', a space where the Anglo-Indian community could view themselves as being separate from the subcontinent as a whole, as argued by Thomas Metcalf in *Ideologies of the Raj*.<sup>81</sup> Homi Bhabha presents a far more convincing conceptualisation of the colonial domesticity found in the bungalow. Writing in *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha positions 'the recesses of the domestic space' as the 'sites for history's most intricate invasions'. In the context of invasions of the domestic sphere, Bhabha continues by acknowledging that the 'borders between home and world become confused; and, uncannily, the private and public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorientating'.<sup>82</sup> Most depictions of the Anglo-Indian bungalow in Raj fiction indirectly attempt to grapple with the uncanny collapse of the public/private diametric through an act of denial, through a neutralisation or a discounting of threats to the Anglo-Indian.

In accounts of the Anglo-Indian bungalow, the space is often depicted in a negative light. Robin D. Jones notes how Anglo-Indian bungalows were frequently constructed as spaces that were 'odd, uncomfortable, barn-like environments, furnished with a motley collection of, often, second-hand furniture and lacking the basic niceties of homes within Britain'.<sup>83</sup> By necessity the bungalow, which relied on the mitigation of the 'hot and humid climate' and the control of 'insect and reptile

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<sup>81</sup> Thomas Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 108.

<sup>82</sup> Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 13.

<sup>83</sup> Robin D. Jones, *Interiors of Empire* (Manchester University Press, 2007), p. 1.



intrusion', was architecturally different to the homes that were found in the imperial homeland.<sup>84</sup> The historian Herbert Compton on his own tour of India described the differences between the Anglo-Indian bungalow and the British bungalow as being akin to the difference between a 'temple and a church', with the Anglo-Indian variety being associated with the alien and unfamiliar oriental temple.<sup>85</sup> Two concerns dominate discourse surrounding the Anglo-Indian bungalow. The greater of these anxieties is the threat of a transgression of the boundaries of the bungalow, whether that is through the 'insect and reptile intrusion' mentioned by Jones or by the Indian servants that bestselling guidebooks such as Steele's *The Complete Indian Housekeeper and Cook* purported to be manuals for controlling. The architectural differences that separated the colonial bungalow from the British home increased the foreignness of the space. The single floor, verandah, lack of interior hallways, and the often rundown furniture of the bungalow made the space both an uncomfortable home to inhabit and a poor display of British grandeur.

Frequently the Anglo-Indian bungalow came to be envisaged as another aspect of the colonising process. E.M. Collingham acknowledges how the bungalow's upkeep 'was imposed on the memsahib [...], just as it was brought to bear on the sahib in the office' placing the domestic labour of the memsahib as being equal to the administrative colonial work performed by her husband.<sup>86</sup> This pronouncement that the maintenance of the bungalow was understood in similar terms of colonial labour as the man's work is complicated in Raj fiction produced by women, which often

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<sup>84</sup> *Ibid*, p. 47.

<sup>85</sup> Herbert Compton, *Indian Life in Town and Country* (New York and London: G.P Putman's Sons, 1904), p. 212.

<sup>86</sup> E.M. Collingham, *Imperial Bodies* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001) p. 168.

went out of its way to celebrate and justify the presence of the European wives in India. In these fictions, the bungalow exists as a space, potentially the only space, where the Anglo-Indian woman can prove herself worthy of being part of the imperial project. If she performs the complex domestic duties required of her, her place in the Empire is justified, while the abdication or neglect of this calling is an indictment to the memsahib. In order to prove the worthiness of these women, the bungalow was often depicted as a site of anxiety that often ran counter to the domestic comforts that were supposed to be maintained by the memsahib. This tension between the implicit dangers present in the colonial home and the successful memsahib role as a 'home-making' figure led to the bungalow becoming a disquieting space that was both 'a familiar and strange space to its occupants; a source of both homely comfort and disquieting anxiety'.<sup>87</sup> The 'disquieting' anxieties present in the bungalow largely relate to concerns around the concept of domesticity itself. These breakings of domesticity ranges from the mundane such as the potential for adultery as is the case of Maud Diver's *Captain Desmond V.C.* to the uncanny spirits of previous residents that are cursed to eternally repeat moments of tragedy as in Alice Perrin's 'In the Next Room' and Bithia May Croker's 'To Let'. The tension implicit in the bungalow's capacity to be both this site of both comfort and danger (whether that danger be either mundane or supernatural) is what makes the space such an anxious site.

In works of Raj fiction, the bungalow is depicted in a multitude of ways depending on the author and the specific subgenre in which they are working. In the works of Diver, the bungalow is an opportunity for the display of Anglo-Indian ingenuity in

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<sup>87</sup> William J. Glover, 'A Feeling of Absence from Old England: The Colonial Bungalow', *Home Cultures*, 1/1 (2004), 61-82 (p. 62).

homemaking. Although rundown homes do exist – such as the Kresney bungalow in *Captain Desmond V.C.* and Eldred Lenox’s in *The Great Amulet* – the most frequent bungalows that appear in Diver’s fiction are the beautifully ordered home of the novel’s heroic protagonists. Diver’s work does acknowledge the image of the uncomfortable Anglo-Indian bungalow but largely focuses on a celebration of the frontier spirit of the tenants and uses the beautification of the bungalow as a celebration of Anglo-Indian womanhood. The threat of a transgression or an invasion of the bungalow is especially prominent in Alice Perrin and Bithia May Croker’s supernatural works of Raj fiction. In addition to the obvious transgression of the domestic space enacted by ghosts that appear in their fiction, Perrin and Croker’s writing frequently features a sinister Indian servant or object as the antagonist of their short stories. The servant’s transgressions are made easier by their ease in gaining entry to any space in the colonial home. Often these short stories also detail the invasion of the bungalow by Indian animals such as a muskrat in Perrin’s ‘In the Next Room’ and a colony of bats in Croker’s ‘The Dak Bungalow of Dakar’. While Diver confronts the negative image of the bungalow as a space of discomfort by portraying the ideal of the beautifully maintained bungalow, Croker and Perrin depict the resolution of threats of transgression in the bungalow as a method of easing these fears. Transgressors are removed from the bungalow either through the domestic diligence of the tenants (in the case of animal invasion) or through exposing a crime and bringing the perpetrator to justice. As well as providing a satisfying narrative conclusion that conforms to the generic middlebrow plot structure, the triumphing over (or at least the explaining of) these transgressions in the bungalow leave Anglo-Indians in a position of mastery over the space.

Prior to engaging upon a literary analysis of the bungalow, it is important to fundamentally establish an understanding of both the history and the anxieties that emerge from the space. The very word bungalow is derived from the term ‘of Bengal’, providing an etymological link to India before the arrival of the British.<sup>88</sup> Although the exact reasoning behind the Anglo-Indian adoption of the bungalow as the default domestic house in is unknown, there have been several theories. In an article addressed to an American readership Rudyard Kipling’s father, the curator and historian John Lockwood Kipling argued that:

Our [British] early residents in India, engaged in military, administrative or trading duties, lived a nomadic life for the greater part of the year in tents, and since there was nothing in the indigenous buildings of Bengal suited to requirements, their first dwelling houses, designed by themselves and built of materials at the site, are naturally planned on the model of the Indian service tents to which they were accustomed.<sup>89</sup>

The most significant aspect of Kipling’s thumbnail history is the attempt to construct the bungalow as a structure that could have only emerged in the context of the British colonisation of India. Kipling suggests that it was the ‘military, administrative or trading duties’ from the bungalow emerged and that the layout of the bungalow is ‘naturally’ based upon ‘the model of the Indian service tents’. According to Kipling, the ubiquity of the bungalow is a consequence of the rigorous lives led by the first British colonisers in India. What is significant about Kipling’s conception of the bungalow is the lack of influence India or Indians themselves played in the development of the space. In his own later history of the space the architectural historian Anthony D. King convincingly argues that the bungalow has more in common with the house of the Bengalese peasant than that of an Indian

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<sup>88</sup> Pramod Nayar, *British Raj: Keywords* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), p. 36.

<sup>89</sup> John Lockwood Kipling, ‘The Origin of the Bungalow’ *Country Life in America* 19:8 (1911), p. 308.

service tent.<sup>90</sup> King points to several architectural features of the Anglo-Indian bungalow, most importantly the verandah, as evidence of this. When read alongside more modern works of architectural history it is possible to see the mythology that Kipling is attempting to construct. Kipling's argument, notably written for an American readership, denies the Indian influence upon the bungalow while at the same time drawing an equivalency with American myths of the frontier. The denial of the Bengalese influence upon the bungalow reveals an anxiety concerning the architectural debt of the bungalow. If the bungalow arose from the architectural traditions of Indian peasants, it is then difficult to envisage the bungalow either as a retreat for Anglo-Indians away from the rigours of Indian life or as, Pramod Nayar acknowledges, the grand 'architectural sign of imperial power'.<sup>91</sup> Kipling's history is an attempt to appropriate the architectural history of the bungalow into one that is completely dependent on the Anglo-Indian experience. This attempt, however, is not wholly successful and is a source of the anxieties of an imperial decline that emerges from the space in works of Raj fiction.

A major source of Anglo-Indian anxiety around domestic space arises from the fundamental differences between the bungalow in India and native British domestic spaces. Robin D. Jones explains the differences between conceptions of the English home and the Anglo-Indian bungalow through the distinction between the British middle-class home as 'a closed and private space, while the Anglo-Indian bungalow was open and fluid in plan. The rooms of English homes are characterized as domestic in scale, but those in Anglo-Indian dwellings as oversized'.<sup>92</sup> This sense of

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<sup>90</sup> Anthony D. King, *The Bungalow* (London: Routledge, 1984), p. 28.

<sup>91</sup> Pramod Nayar, *British Raj Keywords*, p. 37.

<sup>92</sup> Robin D. Jones, *Interiors of Empire* (Manchester University Press, 2007), p. 82.

the bungalow possessing a fluidity when compared to the homes found in Britain is central to understanding how the colonial anxieties held by the Anglo-Indian community focused upon this domestic space. The physical construction of the bungalow prevented the separations of gender, class, race, and the public/private dichotomy that the middle class home in England represented. The ‘fluidity’ and lack of distinct boundaries in the bungalow allows this space to be rife with hauntings, violence, and adultery in works of Raj fiction.

Across the Empire it was often the European woman who was, as Anne McClintock argues, charged with not only ‘the maintenance of boundaries between private and public’ but also that of ‘domesticity and Empire’.<sup>93</sup> McClintock’s oppositional structure is complicated in the Raj context where the bungalow is in no uncertain terms presented as a site of Empire. Rather than being separate from the Empire, the colonial home was a key part of the imperial process. The expectation of domestic duties was a key aspect of colonial life for women and is quantified by the glut of Anglo-Indian household manuals that were published in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries such as Flora Annie Steele’s *The Complete Indian Housekeeper and Cook*. Steel’s guidebook draws a direct connection between the upkeep of the bungalow and that of the wider Empire through the declaration that ‘an Indian household can no more be governed peacefully, without dignity and prestige, than an Indian Empire’.<sup>94</sup> This connection between the bungalow and the wider Empire appears throughout works of Raj fiction that often celebrate and focus the trials of

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<sup>93</sup> Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather* (New York & London: Routledge, 1995), p. 263.

<sup>94</sup> Flora Annie Steele, *The Complete Indian Housekeeper and Cook* (Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 18.

the 'home-making and home-loving' figure of the memsahib.<sup>95</sup> What makes the bungalow such a complex space in Raj fiction is the combination of this desire to view it as a manageable space that is intrinsic to the health of the Empire while at the same time deploying it as a setting whereby anxious narratives concerning cultural miscegenation, colonial violence, and the security of the familial unit are enacted. The association between the maintenance of the bungalow and the wider Empire in order to justify the presence of Anglo-Indian women then led to further problems. The dependence on Indian servants and the vulnerability of the home-space and of the Anglo-Indian occupants problematised the space. A failure to control the space of the bungalow would come to be associated with the potential for an imperial decline, making the maintenance of this domestic space even more important.

Raj fiction often reframes the tensions of the colonial domestic space into obstacles that the Anglo-Indian characters must surmount in order to provide a moral justification to their rule over India. As Ann Laura Stoler acknowledges, understandings of the bungalow were 'based on the notion that the domestic domain harboured potential threats both to 'defence of society' and to the future 'security' of the [Anglo-Indian] population and state [of the British Raj]'.<sup>96</sup> It is through the act of surmounting these obstacles that Anglo-Indians might prove themselves to be worthy rulers of India. In a later work, Stoler writes how in the colonies it is the domestic sphere where 'essential dispositions of manliness, bourgeois morality and racial attributes could be dangerously undone or securely made'.<sup>97</sup> In works of Raj

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<sup>95</sup> Maud Diver, *The Great Amulet* (Edinburgh & London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1916), p. 18.

<sup>96</sup> Ann Laura Stoler, 'Cultivating Bourgeois Bodies and Racial Selves' in Catherine Hall (ed.) *Culture of Empire* (Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 87-119 (p. 88.).

<sup>97</sup> Ann Laura Stoler *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's 'History of Sexuality' and the Colonial Order of Things* (Duke University Press, 1995), p. 108.

fiction, this is common in Diver's fiction which frequently details the tribulations that arise in Anglo-Indian romantic relationships. It is also present in the works of Perrin and Croker where the man often foolishly disbelieves his wife or is absent from the hauntings altogether. Robin D. Jones acknowledges the capacity of the bungalow to serve as a space in which the anxieties of the colonial home are reframed to be 'a vital location for the cultivation of specific character traits and personal attributes, such as self-control and self-discipline, which enhanced British prestige and authority in the eyes of the local population and thereby underpinned British rule in India'.<sup>98</sup> It is through an overcoming of the threats of an 'undoing' of bourgeois morality that the characters in these novels achieve the moral justification to rule over the subcontinent.

### The Verandah

T'was a pleasant abode, no doubt, in its prime;  
Two storeyed, facing the tide;  
A verandah deep,  
And a broad stone sweep  
Of steps to the riverside.<sup>99</sup>

The *Oxford English Dictionary* describes the verandah as 'an open portico or light roofed gallery extending along the front (and occasionally other sides) of a dwelling [...] erected chiefly as a protection or shelter from the sun or rain'.<sup>100</sup> The verandah serves as a delineation between the external world and the bungalow, but a protective space against the Indian weather. In Raj fiction the space also held great

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<sup>98</sup> Robin D. Jones, *Interiors of Empire*, p. 76.

<sup>99</sup> Aliph Cheem, 'The Deserted Bungalow', *Lays of Ind*, p. 202.

<sup>100</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary* via <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/222348?redirectedFrom=verandah#eid>



narrative significance. In *A Survey of Anglo-Indian Fiction* Bhupal Singh identifies the standard Raj romance narrative as beginning with a young European woman arriving in India, 'on her arrival,' Singh writes 'she is welcomed by a father, aunt, or some distant relation'.<sup>101</sup> It is on the verandah that this welcoming to India most often occurs, and thus the verandah is the first glimpse of Anglo-Indian life that is depicted in the novels. The contentious liminality of the space between the Indian exterior and the Anglo-Indian interior as well and the fact that, in some texts, the verandah is also seen as being a site of protection from the horrors that occur inside the bungalow makes the verandah a complex space that is a space of introduction, of danger, and of comfort.

As a powerful signifier that the structure of the bungalow is based not upon colonial service tents but rather the homes of the Bengali peasants, the verandah presents as one of the most contentious spaces that the typical Anglo-Indian would encounter in the Raj. Anthony King notes the space:

Frequently characterised the dwellings of people who have moved from their natural habitat of temperate zones to hotter climates where the houses which they constructed have been adapted to meet the cultural expectations established in their countries of origin [i.e. an understanding that the home must provide a place of shade].<sup>102</sup>

It is the appropriation of the Indian architectural feature of the verandah onto their bungalows that emphasises British attempts to acclimatise to India. The verandah was a method employed by the Anglo-Indians in surviving the Indian heat, the European understanding that the home space must provide shade the can only be achieved through an Indian architectural feature. The verandah is a complex space whereby a

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<sup>101</sup> Bhupal Singh, *A Survey of Anglo-Indian Fiction* (London: Curzon Press, 1975), p. 2.

<sup>102</sup> Anthony D. King, *The Bungalow* p. 265.

native architectural feature emphasises the foreignness of the Anglo-Indian community. The complication inherent in the verandah was furthered by the value bestowed upon the Anglo-Indian community by the space. King suggests that the 'essential' verandah was 'a symbol of economic and political status' as it offered a space to entertain guests and 'spend one's spare time'.<sup>103</sup> This desire for social status was vital for the Anglo-Indian community that was frequently riddled with anxieties concerning class and social standing among their peers as well as the their contemporaries who remained in Britain. Serving as both form of protection and a demarcation of foreignness, the verandah as a space of social capital also had a functional purpose. As William Glover suggests in his architectural history, verandahs often served as 'spaces for conducting a range of household labour tasks, and servants often slept there at night or took rest in their shade during the day'.<sup>104</sup> The frequent use of the verandah by Indian servants diminished its capacity to work as a site that generated Anglo-Indian social status, which was dependent upon the exclusion of Indians from Anglo-Indian spaces.

The verandah exists as a complex and contradictory space, not wholly inside the bungalow nor outside of it. The space functioned as a signifier of an Anglo-Indian prestige that was also routinely employed by Indians. Robin Jones attempts to define the complexities of the verandah through describing the space as 'a substitute intermediate zone'.<sup>105</sup> Jones positions the verandah as a space that is not wholly part of nor wholly separate from the bungalow while also acknowledging that the

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<sup>103</sup> *Ibid*, p. 265.

<sup>104</sup> William J. Glover, 'A Feeling of Absence for Old England: The Colonial Bungalow', *Home Cultures* 1:1 (2004), 61-82 (p. 76).

<sup>105</sup> Robin D. Jones, *The Bungalow*, p. 77.

verandah served a purpose as an arterial space in place of the absent interior hallways. Most commonly the verandah surrounded the entire bungalow. With the lack of interior hallways in the bungalow, the verandah served as an arterial space that allowed passage throughout the house. It generally permitted access into any room of the home meant that the ‘private, domestic sphere of the inhabitants [was] open to continual and announced intrusions by servants and occasional visitors’.<sup>106</sup> This understanding of the verandah complicates the binary conceptions of colonial domestic space envisaged by McClintock. The verandah does not exist as a separating ‘threshold’ between the home and the wider Empire but rather a bridge that permits the Empire’s colonised inhabitants quick and easy admittance into the private domestic space of the bungalow. In essence, the verandah works less as a demarcation between the Empire and the home space and more a space that facilitates the entry of the Empire into the Anglo-Indian domestic space.

An example of the permeability of the verandah in relation to its bungalow can be seen through the prepositions used by authors describing the space. Diver in *Captain Desmond V.C.* writes that Evelyn awaits Honor’s arrival ‘in the verandah’.<sup>107</sup>

Likewise, the narrator of Perrin’s ‘In The Next Room’ has Eli Bux ‘discovered dead in my verandah’.<sup>108</sup> In I.A.R Wylie’s *The Daughter of Brahma*, meanwhile, Mrs Hurst is found ‘stood motionless on the verandah’.<sup>109</sup> This distinction between being ‘in’ the verandah and ‘on’ is not prosaic but reveals the instability of the space. The verandah connected to the Desmond household and the verandah that is the site of

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<sup>106</sup> *Ibid*, p. 77.

<sup>107</sup> Maud Diver, *Captain Desmond V.C.* (London and Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1922), p. 14.

<sup>108</sup> Alice Perrin, *East of Suez*, p. 115.

<sup>109</sup> I.A.R Wylie, *The Daughter of Brahma*, (London: Mills and Boon, 1912) p. 25.

Eli Bux's demise are both described as being a space in which the individual can go 'in' and be contained or protected. The bungalow in *The Daughter of Brahma* is a space to be 'on', and in the narrative the space works almost as a stage whereby certain characters – such as Mrs Hurst – believe themselves to be occupying a private space but in actuality are being observed. Believing herself to be secure in the parameters of the bungalow on the verandah, Mrs Hurst reveals the low opinion she holds of her son with 'nothing – no instinct' warning her that he is eavesdropping just out of her sight.<sup>110</sup> Mrs Hurst appears to believe she is protected 'in' the verandah when in reality she is 'on' the verandah which serves as a stage whereby her secret disappointment with her son can be overheard. The different prepositions used to describe the individual in relation to the verandah reflects the efforts of these authors of Raj fiction in positioning the verandah as a space in their fiction. That the verandah can in some sense can be a form domestic protection while also being a space that erodes the privacy of the domestic sphere is one aspect that makes it a narratively problematic space in Raj fiction.

In works of Raj fiction, the verandah is often the site that provides an initial suggestion or foreshadowing of the narrative. In Diver's *Captain Desmond V.C.* the verandah is the location upon which Honor first receives a letter informing her of her brother's 'Peshawar fever'.<sup>111</sup> The entrance to another bungalow offers Honor her first glimpse of Evelyn who is 'awaiting her in the verandah: a mere slip of womanhood'.<sup>112</sup> The verandah at the beginning of *Captain Desmond* is the location for novel's narrative arcs – Honor's ill brother and Evelyn's unsuitability to Anglo-

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<sup>110</sup> *Ibid*, p. 25.

<sup>111</sup> Maud Diver, *Captain Desmond V.C.*, p. 7.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid*, p. 14.

Indian life – is established. Similarly, this can also be evidenced in Croker’s ‘To Let’. In the short story the narrator and her friend rent Briarwood, a bungalow in the hills that the local Anglo-Indian community shun. It is the suspiciously beautiful verandah of the ‘absurdly cheap’ bungalow that becomes an indication that everything within the house is not how it first appears.<sup>113</sup> The ‘deep, delightful, flagged, verandah’ is ‘the glory’ of the bungalow being ‘twelve feet wide, roofed with zinc’ and offering a ‘glorious view’ across the valley. Only the ‘netting for the safety of too enterprising dogs or children’ at the bottom of the precipice that the bungalow straddles gives any indication of the potential dangers and tragic history of the Briarwood bungalow.<sup>114</sup> This is later confirmed with the revelation that the house is haunted by the ghost of an officer who fell over the edge of the verandah and down the ravine to his death. The verandah serves as an early indication of the narrative course of the text, whether it be the rigours of Indian living in the case of *Captain Desmond* or the ‘too-good-to-be-true’ moral of ‘To Let’. The verandah presents an opportunity for works of Raj fiction to foreshadow the oncoming anxieties present within the text, forewarning and forearming the reader – if not the characters themselves – of the oncoming events of the narrative. This forewarning allows the reader to experience a sense of control over the text, an indication of what is to come in the novel, and an assurance that the narrative will contain them.

Although the colonial verandah is an architectural feature that inhibits Anglo-Indian attempts to separate their domestic space away from India at large, in works of Raj fiction it also serves as a space of protection for the bungalow’s tenants. ‘The Dak

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<sup>113</sup> B.M. Croker, *To Let* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1906) p. 13.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid*, p. 12.

'Bungalow of Dakor' is another story by Croker about ghosts inhabiting the Anglo-Indian bungalow. Here the verandah of the haunted bungalow serves as a site of protection for the Anglo-Indians inhabiting the house. The story begins with two memsahibs - the narrator and her friend Julia - deciding to travel away from their encampment to celebrate Christmas with their husbands in a remote outpost. En route they end up trapped in a dense jungle during a monsoon. Their journey hampered by bad weather and trapped in a jungle, the two memsahibs and their manservant travel to a nearby Dak (traveller's) bungalow to shelter. The memsahibs find the bungalow in a poor condition with the Indian caretaker refusing to open the building up for them. After an altercation with the caretaker, who flees the scene, the memsahib's servant finds the key and they proceed to renovate the neglected bungalow. During the night, the narrator wakes to see a ghostly re-enactment of a European man being murdered by his servant. Refusing to sleep in the room for another night, the narrator stays on the verandah while Julia sleeps alone in the bedroom where the same ghostly scene replays, scaring Julia who comes to believe the narrator.

The verandah has a vital role in 'The Dak Bungalow of Dakor' as it is the point of safety away from the terrors found inside the house. Approaching the bungalow, the narrator draws particular attention to the verandah acknowledging the 'white walls, red roof, and roomy verandah' of the home.<sup>115</sup> Although the dak bungalow is described as a 'damp, dark place' filled with the 'smell of earth' and a bat infestation due to the caretaker's mismanagement, the 'roomy verandah' still indicates a degree of affluence or, at the very least, a correct balance of acclimation with its

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<sup>115</sup> *Ibid* p. 125.

surroundings. While the verandah of 'To Let' is actually the nexus of the haunting, in 'The Dak Bungalow of Dakor' the verandah serves as a point of refuge for the frightened memsahibs. After seeing the ghosts, the narrator refuses to sleep in the haunted bedroom preferring to stay on the verandah. The fact that the verandah served as a complex space, envisaged as being a site both inside and outside of the bungalow, makes the narrator's decision seem unusual. Croker first removes the ambiguity from the site of the verandah by separating it from the bungalow proper through the narrator's declaration that she would sleep 'in the bungalow again – never'.<sup>116</sup> The verandah is positioned as a space separate from the bungalow as a refuge from the ghosts inside the household. Through her refusal to return to the bungalow and her separation of the verandah from the bungalow proper, the narrator is demonstrating a feeling of greater safety in the liminal space of the Indian/Anglo-Indian verandah than in the Anglo-Indian bungalow proper. In 'The Dak Bungalow of Dakor' Croker invokes the threat of an uprising like that of 1857. The concept of the untrustworthy Indian servant was an anxiety that was heavily influenced – if not wholly generated by – the memory of the 1857 Uprising. Nancy Paxton in her exploration of the literature of 'Mutiny narratives' argues that, following the revolt, there is a marked shift in Raj fiction with English women 'depicted as abducted, imprisoned, and threatened with rape and torture by violent and lawless Indian men'.<sup>117</sup> Though Paxton is referring specifically to the subgenre of Mutiny narratives, the image of the Englishwoman threatened by the lawless Indian man echoes throughout Raj fiction produced after 1857. While untrustworthy servants exist as a staple throughout literature, in the context of colonial India the pervasive

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<sup>116</sup> *Ibid*, p. 137.

<sup>117</sup> Nancy Paxton, 'Mobilizing Chivalry Rape in British Novels about the Indian Uprising of 1857' in *Victorian Studies* (1992), 5-30 (p. 7).

mythologizing of the 1857 Rebellion increased these anxieties significantly. With Julia and the narrator able to escape the bungalow to sleep in the verandah, Croker is able to contain the murder in the bungalow and to a specific individual rather than an as an organised form of violent anti-colonial resistance. For company the narrator finds an ‘old witch of a native woman’ to ‘place her mat in the same locality as my mattress’.<sup>118</sup> The presence of the ‘good’ Indians in the form of the old witch and the memsahib’s servant Abdul serve as a disavowal of the colonial violence that instigated the uprising. The calming influence of the ‘witch’ is a further example of the supposed affinity between India and Anglo-Indians, although aspects of Indian life may seem alien to the European women they serve a protective role against the individual rogues who seek to the Anglo-Indians harm. The murder that reoccurs every night is a crime of avarice by the Indian caretaker conforms to Patrick Brantlinger’s conception of Mutiny narratives which ‘insistently mystify the causes of the mutiny’ away from political grievances and onto the ‘irrational’ in order to displace the culpability for Mutiny away from the British rulers and onto the ‘childish and diabolical’ rebels.<sup>119</sup> That there are Indians who assist the Englishwomen, and in the case of Abdul actually confronting the murderous caretaker, is another method of framing the murder as one of individual greed than organised resistance. That the memsahibs are able to sleep on the verandah – typically the sleeping area of Indian servants – with an Indian as company is indicative of the act of disavowal that is occurring within the short story. Apart from the rogue murderous caretaker killing for his own gain, the remainder of India is firmly on the side of the memsahibs and thus the colonial order. The threat of

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<sup>118</sup> B.M. Croker, *To Let*, p.137.

<sup>119</sup> Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 222.



colonial violence is averted through this colonial self-assurance. This confidence in India's natural affinity with British colonial rule is expressed again at the conclusion of the short story when the fleeing caretaker is eaten alive by a tiger, a symbol of Indian natural savagery.

The starkest example of the verandah working as a site of protection for the Anglo-Indian bungalow can be found in Alice Perrin's ghost story 'In The Next Room'. Like Croker's short stories, 'In the Next Room' features a haunted Anglo-Indian bungalow. The short story opens with a newly married Anglo-Indian couple moving into an old bungalow. Over the course of several nights the memsahib believes she hears voices of an Englishwoman and a servant, but her husband refuses to believe her. One particular night the husband is called away from the bungalow and the memsahib is left alone. While she is sleeping, the couple's servant Eli Bux attempts to murder the memsahib but is disturbed by the ghosts. The memsahib faints and upon awakening finds her husband returned and the murderous servant dead from fright on the verandah. At the conclusion of the story the mystery of the ghosts is solved as the memsahib hears about the previous tenants of the bungalow who were killed in 1857 by the father of Eli Bux. 'In the Next Room' has numerous similarities to Croker's 'The Dak Bungalow of Dakor' with a spectral re-enactment of an Indian servant murdering a British master yet the ghosts ultimately assist the British in bringing justice to an old crime. While Perrin's story makes a direct reference to 1857, the motives behind the Uprising are similarly obscured allowing for a disavowal of the violence inherent in British colonialism. Although Bux's father was successful in his scheme, Bux is prevented from acquiring his master's wealth due to the legacy of his father's actions. The memory of 1857 encourages greater vigilance

from the Anglo-Indians and prevents such a rebellion from reoccurring and thus assuages anxieties of a repeated act of violence.

In these pieces of short fiction, the Anglo-Indian anxieties around Indian access to the bungalow from the verandah are reframed and go some way to protecting the Anglo-Indian protagonists. The anxiety concerning the Indian servants in the verandah is denied and repurposed as a positive, protective aspect for the Anglo-Indians in the narrative. It is on the verandah that the villainous Eli Bux dies. This verandah serves to protect the wider Empire by containing the murderous servant. The use of the verandah as a space that offers a glimpse of the forthcoming narrative is also used by Perrin. The house is described as a ‘rambling old stone building, with fairly good verandahs, but filthy dirty and very much out of repair.’<sup>120</sup> While the condition of the bungalow mirrors its tragic history, the ‘fairly good verandahs’ offer an assurance that although the house may appear threatening to the Anglo-Indian order they actually serve a narrative purpose of protecting its owners from the real threat of the story, the murderous servant seeking to repeat the violence of 1857.

‘In The Next Room’ and ‘The Dak Bungalow of Dakor’ also attempt to position the presence of Indians on the verandah as a source of comfort rather than of threat to the Anglo-Indian characters. These loyal Indians allow these works of Raj fiction to portray the presence of Indians on the verandah as a positive aspect in the narrative.<sup>121</sup> These loyal Indians on the verandah serve either protection for the haunted Anglo-Indian as in the case of ‘The Dak Bungalow’ or as a demonstration

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<sup>120</sup> *Ibid*, p. 112.

<sup>121</sup> Robin D. Jones, *Interiors of Empire*, p. 77.

that the criminality of the Indian servant class are limited to certain ruthless individuals.

### The Drawing Room

And, after, the long yet happy day  
In the cuscus-tattied gloom,  
The cheery tiffin,  
And giggling griffin  
'Sconced in the drawing-room;  
And the voice of the grand piano, half  
Hushing the man's and maiden's laugh.<sup>122</sup>

In his 1886 history of the Siege of Cawnpore the civil servant and future government minister George Otto Trevelyan wrote that in India, as in the rest of the Empire, 'the lady must have her drawing-room'.<sup>123</sup> The space recurs throughout Raj fiction as the site in the bungalow that is understood as most attuned to the Anglo-Indian woman. In Raj fiction the drawing room is positioned as being the space closest to that of the British home. The drawing room is frequently portrayed in less anxious terms than the liminal space of the verandah and the sexually threatening space of the bedroom, making it a space whereby fears of Indianisation may be assuaged. The image of the secure drawing room is partially due to its association with Anglo-Indian women and a desire to celebrate them in works of Raj fiction.

In *Our Homes and How to Beautify Them*, an early Edwardian guide to interior decorating, H. J Jennings states that the drawing room should be the woman's

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<sup>122</sup> Aliph Cheem, 'The Deserted Bungalow', *Lays of Ind*, p. 203.

<sup>123</sup> George Otto Trevelyan, *Cawnpore* (London: Macmillan, 1910), p. 8.

‘paradise’ in the home.<sup>124</sup> In her history of the drawing room in England, Jane Hamlett acknowledges that ‘the ideal middle class home contained distinctive gendered material cultures’, in these distinctive cultures the drawing room was codified in no uncertain terms as being a feminine space.<sup>125</sup> This conceptualisation of the drawing room draws upon domestic advice from writers such as Jennings who goes so far as to argue that it is ‘as sacred to their [women’s] influence as the smoking room is to the regency of men’.<sup>126</sup> Naturally lacking from Hamlett’s exploration of the drawing room in England is an examination of the rooms that were replicated in the colonies. As noted by Trevelyan, the drawing room was a necessity in the bungalow of a married Anglo-Indian couple. As a consequence of this relationship between the Anglo-Indian married couple, the drawing room frequently features in domestically focused Raj fiction.

Jones notes that the existence of the drawing room in the bungalow was extremely complex, with the designation of the ‘drawing room’ frequently falling victim to the ‘fluidity’ of the bungalow and the limited space offered by the home. Jones acknowledges how in India ‘no such guidelines existed’ in the construction and separation of certain spaces within the bungalow. Instead of having a space designated as being the drawing room the bungalow instead named its interior rooms as ‘the ‘North East Room’, ‘the Lower Hall’, or ‘the South East Room Below’’.<sup>127</sup>

This configuration of the bungalow is seemingly at odds with not only Trevelyan’s argument that the memsahib ‘must have her drawing-room’ but also the significant

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<sup>124</sup> H. J. Jennings, *Our Homes, and How to Beautify Them* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1902), p.173.

<sup>125</sup> Jane Hamlett, ‘Gender and Middle Class Domestic Space in England, 1850-1910’ in *Gender & History* 21.3, (2009) 576-591, (p. 576).

<sup>126</sup> H. J. Jennings, *Our Homes, and How to Beautify Them*, p. 173.

<sup>127</sup> Robin D. Jones, *Interiors of Empire*, 114.

amount of works of Raj fiction that focuses on the domestic sphere and which feature the drawing room as an undeniably constant feature in the bungalow. Jones's historical work on the bungalow contradicts the pieces of Raj literature – including colonial histories of the Raj such as *Cawnpore* – that feature the drawing room as an ineluctable feature of Anglo-Indian domestic life. One possible explanation for the literary proliferation of the Anglo-Indian drawing room is the cultural capital that possession of such a space provides. Alan Johnson acknowledges that India provided an opportunity for British people to engage in 'the trappings of [...] pomp' that would otherwise be unavailable to a person of their class position in England. In India these Anglo-Indians were able to both 'lord it over the Indians' and 'emulate' the genteel society from which they were excluded back Home.<sup>128</sup> Hamlett notes that in England drawing rooms were financially and practically unavailable to members of the working and 'lower middle classes' whose 'smaller homes' prohibited the construction of a drawing room.<sup>129</sup> These smaller homes would typically have an analogous room such as the parlour, but such a space did not hold the same gendered connotations. The drawing room signifies a comfortable middle or upper class background; the lack of such a room is an indication of a lower class standing. The depiction of the drawing room as central to Anglo-Indian domestic life attempts to emulate the genteel life found in the homeland.

The drawing room was a space that held both gendered and nationalist connotations. This correlation between the gendered and nationalist conceptions of the bungalow can most obviously be expressed through the bungalow of Professor Heilig and

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<sup>128</sup> Alan Johnson, *Out of Bounds* (University of Hawaii Press, 2011) p. 47.

<sup>129</sup> Jane Hamlett, 'Gender and Middle-Class Domestic Space in England', p. 582.

Father Romney – a German anthropologist and a Jesuit missionary – in I.A.R Wylie’s *The Daughter of Brahma*. In place of a drawing-room the unlikely duo possess ‘a writing-table, a few chairs, and a small upright piano [...] the whitewashed walls were unadorned save for the engravings of Bismarck and Wagner’.<sup>130</sup> The room holds aesthetic and narrative similarities to the drawing room, but is never identified in the novel as such. This signifies a hesitation to define the space as a drawing room due to the absence of Anglo-Indian women in the household as well as an acknowledgement of the absence of Anglo-Indian women in the bungalow due to this lack of a drawing room. The difficulty in giving the non-British European a drawing room in India is also present in Diver’s *The Great Amulet* where the semi-Anglicised French protagonist Quita possesses a ‘half drawing-room, half studio; furnished mainly with two large easels [and] painting stools’.<sup>131</sup> Quita’s wholesome femininity and her marriage to Eldred Lenox provides her with a partial access to an English drawing room in the novel, but this space is mixed with her French studio.

The most significant piece of furniture used to civilize and soften the Anglo-Indian drawing room is undoubtedly the piano. Compton positions the piano as an undeniable signifier of Europe, arguing that encountering the instrument in India ‘at once brings you face to face with Western civilisation’.<sup>132</sup> The instrument appears in drawing rooms throughout Raj fiction, including Diver’s *Captain Desmond V.C.*, *The Great Amulet* and Cheem’s poem ‘The Deserted Bungalow’. In Croker’s ‘To Let’ the narrator adds an instrument to the drawing room of Briarwood while in the

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<sup>130</sup> I.A.R Wylie, *The Daughter of Brahma*, p. 121.

<sup>131</sup> Maud Diver, *The Great Amulet*, p. 40.

<sup>132</sup> Herbert Compton, *Indian Life in Town and Country*, p. 216.

following story, 'The Other Miss Browne', the protagonist purchases a piano in preparation for his fiancé's arrival to India. The later story 'The Red Bungalow' also features 'the music on the piano' as part of the gaiety at the titular bungalow.<sup>133</sup> The instrument also appears in Mrs. Edwards's drawing room in Alice Fleming's *A Pinchbeck Goddess*, discussed at length in chapter three. The piano even features in the quasi-drawing room of Heilig's Germanic bungalow in Wylie's novel *The Daughter of Brahma*.

What is most unusual about the omnipresence of the piano is the impracticality of possessing this instrument in India. As Jones notes a piano was 'problematic to acquire and maintain' due to the climate and the frequent moves undertaken by Anglo-Indians.<sup>134</sup> Despite these difficulties, it is apparent that the piano is defined not just as an important piece of furniture to be owned, but also an important instrument to be depicted in literature. The cultural and financial capital granted by owning a piano serves to elevate the cultural capital and grandeur of the Anglo-Indians in the texts. The difficulty in owning a piano and the value placed upon the instrument are both parts of this sense of opulence. Owning a piano indicates not only cultural capital and an affinity with high European culture, but also the financial capacity to possess the cumbersome instrument. The presence of the piano in the drawing room of the colonial bungalow exemplifies the numerous denials of the harsh realities of Anglo-Indian life while also providing an opportunity for Anglo-Indians to reframe the British imperial project as a benign, civilizing process.

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<sup>133</sup> B.M. Croker, *Odds and Ends* (London: Hutchinson and Co, 1919), p. 156.

<sup>134</sup> Robin D. Jones, *Interiors of Empire* p. 1.

The unlikely presence of the piano is reflected in *Captain Desmond V.C.* when Desmond explains to the surprised Honor his reasoning for bringing it into his bungalow on the Afghan frontier:

‘They are hardly a legitimate item in a Frontier officer’s equipment! This one was ... my mother’s,’ he laid a hand on the instrument, as though it had been the shoulder of a friend. ‘The fellows sat upon me, I assure you, when I brought it out. Told me it was worse than a wife. But now I’ve carried my point ... wife and all.’<sup>135</sup>

The piano’s presence in the Desmond bungalow instantly communicates several aspects of the character of Theo Desmond. The fact that it belongs to him rather than his wife indicates that it is he who places worth upon Western culture and is an active part of the supposed civilizing mission of the British in India. The choice to bring his mother’s piano to the frontier is an indication of the worth placed on both European high culture but also the extended familial unit. The bringing up of the instrument over the protests of his fellow officers reveals Desmond to be one of the best, that is most cultured, that Anglo-India has to offer. The piano’s status as family heirloom reveals his respectable bourgeois background, distinguishing him from Europeans who travelled to India in order to take advantage of the low-cost of living. His bringing of the piano to the frontier is also a testament to Desmond’s own personal ingenuity and tenacity. The connection between Desmond and his piano is so strong that his first appearance in the narrative is in a photograph ‘which [stands], solitary and conspicuous, on the upright piano’.<sup>136</sup> The positioning of the full-length portrait of Desmond in officer’s uniform above the piano indicates his position in India as a guardian of European civilisation in the ‘incongruous’ atmosphere of the Indian frontier.

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<sup>135</sup> Maud Diver, *Captain Desmond V.C.* p. 28.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid*, p. 16.



The presence of the piano also reveals Honor's romantic compatibility with Theo, in that they both value European high culture and share a vision for the imperial project. After discussing the impracticalities of the piano on the frontier, Desmond asks Honor if she is capable of playing 'Real music? The big chaps?'<sup>137</sup> That Honor is able to play the works of the European masters on the piano reflects both her own class and cultural capital. Honor proceeds to play a sonata on the piano 'with her own nature – vivid, wholesome, impassioned'. She does, however, retain her stoical composure, as 'she did not find it necessary to sway her body to and fro; but sat square and upright'.<sup>138</sup> After finishing the piece, Desmond thanks Honor telling her that he 'hasn't heard it played like that ... for five years. If you can do more of this sort of thing you will find me insatiable'.<sup>139</sup> Not only does Honor's performance on the Desmond piano reveal her social class and its attendant cultural capital, it also reveals her as another example of the best England has to offer India. Her stoicism and refusal to get swept up in the music she is performing as well as her capacity to bring the European high culture to the Afghan frontier allows her to be positioned as both a paragon of Anglo-Indian womanhood but also and more dangerously as a more suited wife to the paragon of Anglo-Indian manhood found in Desmond. Most significantly, it is this lack of sensuality in Honor's performance that conversely positions her as a match more suited to Desmond than his present wife.

Ralph Crane argues that in works of Anglo-Indian literature the colonial club can be understood as a space that was conceived as an 'island' of Britishness in the 'sea' of

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<sup>137</sup> *Ibid*, p. 28.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid*, p. 28.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid*, p. 29.

India.<sup>140</sup> However, in fiction produced by women authors it is the domestic space of the colonial drawing room – rather than the club – that is their specific site of Britishness in India. ‘The metaphor of the Club as island’, Crane argues, ‘can be found in many [...] Anglo-Indian fictions’, his own definition of the island space – focused on ‘keeping out the other’ – can also be applied to literary representations of the Anglo-India drawing room.<sup>141</sup> In these women-authored works, the drawing room frequently works as a space where Anglo-Indians are able to exercise cultural values that would be unavailable to the majority of them in the British core. It is in the drawing room where this performance of an increased cultural and economic capital is focused.

If the drawing room serves as a signifier of British culture in Raj fiction, it is also an indication of the individual character of the bungalow’s tenants. These inhabitants are able to make more of a decisive impact upon the drawing room than the transitory space of the verandah. Distinctions of the drawing room are largely enacted through material goods. As Hamlett notes, the display of material items creates ‘meaning within the home’.<sup>142</sup> In Raj fiction the material decorations of the drawing room provide ‘meaning’ through their reflection of the character of the room’s owners. Such distinctions are evident in Diver’s *Captain Desmond V.C.* and *The Great Amulet*. The drawing room of the Kresneys – the villainous moneylenders of *Captain Desmond V.C.* – is a ‘stuffy, dusty’ mess.<sup>143</sup> With ‘an elaborate arrangement of cushions [and] stale sponge-cake’ the room reveals the cheap and

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<sup>140</sup> Ralph Crane, ‘Reading the Club as Colonial Island’ in *Island Studies Journal* 6:1 (2011) 17-28 (p. 17).

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid*, p. 17.

<sup>142</sup> Jane Hamlett, ‘Gender and Middle Class Domestic Space in England, 1850-1910’, p. 576.

<sup>143</sup> Maud Diver, *Captain Desmond V.C.* p. 288.

pretentious character of the Kresneys. The suggestions made in *Captain Desmond* that the Kresney siblings are mixed race is reflected in their drawing room, with the pair attempting but ultimately failing in their mimicry of the quintessential British space in the Raj.

The faults in the Kresney's drawing room contrast with the idyllic drawing room of Honor and Theo Desmond in *The Great Amulet*. Diver describes Theo and Honor's drawing room as having an:

Atmosphere of peace and refinement [...] filled with afternoon sunlight, with the faint, clean fragrance of violets, wild roses, and maiden-hair fern [...informed] by a woman's presence; a woman versed in that finest of all fine arts, the beautifying of daily life.<sup>144</sup>

The confident sense of peace and order is an obvious contrast to the chaos of the Kresney's imitation of a drawing room. With its violets and roses, the room immediately evokes England with Diver attributing its elegance to Honor who is versed in 'that finest of all fine arts', the improvement and cultivation of a British atmosphere. Diver's description of the idyllic Anglo-Indian drawing room is similar to travel writer Herbert Compton's 1902 statement:

The Anglo-Indian lady generally manages to make the drawing room in her bungalow pretty and artistic. There is great emulation in its decoration, and it surprises one to see what marvels of transformation can be affected by feminine taste and ingenuity [...] the tall ugly walls are hidden from sight with curtains, screens, fans, ornaments, and phulkarries [embroideries].<sup>145</sup>

Compton's ideal of the drawing room is similar to many authors of Raj fiction such as Diver whose work frequently extols the virtues of the British women in India.

Compton's designation of the drawing room as a specifically feminine, civilizing

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<sup>144</sup> Maud Diver, *The Great Amulet*, p. 56-57.

<sup>145</sup> Herbert Compton, *Indian Life in Town and Country* (London and New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1904) p. 216.

space suggests a wider desire to view the space as intrinsically related to both British culture and the memsahib figure.

Also appearing in Croker's *To Let* collection is the short story 'The Other Miss Browne' which draws an intrinsic connection between the British woman and the luxurious drawing room in the colonial bungalow. While preparing for his future wife to arrive from England, Tom Galway (with the assistance of Mrs. Cornwall – the wife of the regiment's colonel) proceed to fix up his bachelor bungalow. Cornwall's work is extensive and transformative with 'pretty furniture [...] picked up and covered with new cretonne, curtains were hung in doorways, new matting was laid down, pictures were disposed on the walls ...'.<sup>146</sup> Upon her arrival in India, Tom's fiancé (in reality his fiancé's fearsome aunt who misunderstood the proposal letter) is led into the drawing room. It is in this space that Tom and his accidental fiancé meet. The construction of the drawing room and bringing in of the future fiancé into the space firmly positions the intrinsic connection between colonial femininity and the drawing room. The security of the colonial drawing room permits the resolution of the comedy of errors that runs throughout this particular short story and allows for a return to normalcy.

This fundamental connection between the memsahib and the Anglo-Indian drawing room explains the conspicuous absence of the room in depictions of bungalows rented by bachelor sahibs. Trevelyan notes that the typical bachelor bungalow is 'ill-kept, comfortless [...] furniture in the last state of dilapidation'.<sup>147</sup> Compton concurs:

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<sup>146</sup> B.M. Croker, *To Let*, p. 160.

<sup>147</sup> George Otto Trevelyan, *Cawnpore*, p. 4.

the bachelor bungalow is a ‘bare and desolate space’.<sup>148</sup> Diver notes how the bungalow of Eldred Lenox – who at this point of *The Great Amulet* has separated from his wife ‘boasts little of beauty, less of luxury’.<sup>149</sup> Perrin’s conception of the bachelor bungalow is similar with the bachelor Beynon’s bungalow in ‘Beynon, of the Irrigation Department’ described as being ‘hopelessly cheerless [and] wretchedly meagre, and untidy’.<sup>150</sup> Although the sahib is understood to be the conqueror and administrator of India, it was the memsahib whose presence served to civilize her husband’s domestic space. This process was largely effected through bringing in furniture to soften the ‘bare and desolate’ space of the bachelor bungalow. Jones notes the Anglo-Indian drawing room was ‘often represented as stripped down and bare’ largely due ‘to the absence of [the] softening features’ that were often found within analogous rooms in the homeland.<sup>151</sup> The understanding that the drawing rooms were perceived by commentators to be bare is gleaned from the litany of depictions of the drawing room in works of travel, historical, or pieces of Raj fiction. This incongruity between the threadbare reality and the fictional luxury suggests an act of authorial denial occurring and a desire to view the Anglo-Indian drawing room – and thus Anglo-India as a whole – as a more affluent society.

The luxurious drawing room also appears in works of Anglo-Indian Gothic fiction, frequently as a less stable site. In Croker’s ‘To Let’ the haunted Briarwood contains a drawing room resplendent with ‘carpets, curtains, solid, very solid chairs, and Berlin wool-worked screens, a card-table...’.<sup>152</sup> A set of ‘ancient music-books’ in the

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<sup>148</sup> Herbert Compton, *Indian Life in Town and Country*, p. 216.

<sup>149</sup> Maud Diver, *The Great Amulet*, p. 23.

<sup>150</sup> Alice Perrin, *East of Suez*, p. 47.

<sup>151</sup> Robin D. Jones, *Interiors of Empire*, p. 82.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*, p. 14.

room allows Croker to evoke European culture but also the neglected and sinister atmosphere that pervades the bungalow. In Perrin's 'In the Next Room' it is in the drawing room that the ghosts manifest. Frequently while she is in bed, the narrator hears 'a low murmur of voices in the drawing room [...] a native giving in his accounts to his mistress, and [...] the woman's voice as she acknowledged each item.'<sup>153</sup> In 'In the Next Room', Perrin diminishes the supposed connection between the colonial drawing room and the imperial homeland by displaying the instability of the bungalow as a whole unit. As the narrator rushes into the room to investigate the sounds she finds the room empty and silent apart from 'the chirrup of a musk-rat as it scuttled round the walls'.<sup>154</sup> The presence of the native animals as well as Indian servants both corporeal and incorporeal in the space diminishes its connection to Britain and allows Perrin to depict the room as being the destabilising epicentre of the haunting. As the narrator discovers at the end of the story, the ghosts are re-enacting the 1857 Revolt. The ghosts in 'In the Next Room' are a manifestation of Anglo-Indian anxieties that following 1857, when Raj fiction became fixated with the potential of the murderous Indian servant. The ghosts of the drawing room prevent a repeat of the crime and in doing so evolve from representing the anxiety of racialised violence to a form of management for that same anxiety. 'In the Next Room' is both a depiction of a colonial fear of revolt and an endorsement of these anxieties as a method of ensuring the safety of the British rulers.

In a later Croker short story 'The Red Bungalow', the space of the drawing room assumes a more complicated edge that Melissa Edmundson argues is a threat to

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<sup>153</sup> Alice Perrin, *East of Suez*, p. 113.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid*, p. 113.

British ‘order and control’ and an example of ‘Indian spirits who ultimately triumph over their imperial rulers’.<sup>155</sup> In the short-story a young Anglo-Indian family move into the titular ‘Red Bungalow’, a house that is unexplainably eschewed by the other Anglo-Indians living in the station. Netta Fellowes – the new owner of the red bungalow and the narrator’s friend– ignores warnings from the locals who consider the house to hold some source of curse and have it christened ‘the devil’s house’.<sup>156</sup> The house becomes a fixture of the Anglo-Indian social scene at the station until one day when the narrator and Netta hear a cry come from the drawing room. In the room the children are found ‘huddled together [...] on the table’, the eldest ‘pointing with a trembling finger to a certain spot [of] bare matting and bare wall’.<sup>157</sup> The two women are unable to see anything, but the eldest child falls into convulsions and dies. Like Perrin’s ‘In the Next Room’, the Anglo-Indian drawing-room is the site of haunting, suggesting a fundamental instability in the space despite its centrality in the lives of Anglo-Indian women. Netta takes her youngest back to England and refuses to ever return to India, while the bungalow undergoes a process of reclamation by India similar to that described in Cheem’s ‘The Deserted Bungalow’. Now ‘the squirrels and hoo-poos share the garden, the stables are given over to scorpions, the house to white ants’.<sup>158</sup> Although ‘The Red Bungalow’ may seem to run counter to the argument that supernatural hauntings of Anglo-Indian bungalows can function as a form of anxiety management, it is actually far more nuanced. The plot – of an unsuspecting Anglo-Indian moving into a suspiciously cheap haunted bungalow – is similar to that of Croker’s earlier ‘To Let’. The actions of Netta

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<sup>155</sup> Melissa Edmundson, *Women’s Colonial Gothic Writing* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), p. 140.

<sup>156</sup> B.M. Croker, *Odds and Ends*, p. 151.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid*, p. 155.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid*, p. 157.

Fellowes differentiate the two narratives. Where the unfortunate Anglo-Indians in 'To Let' are forced into Briarwood by necessity (there are no other bungalows available to let), Netta herself is too hasty in accepting the Red Bungalow. Flattered by the Indian clerk who declares that the house has laid empty because it is 'too majestic, too gigantic for insignificant people', Netta immediately takes a lease for the bungalow and dismisses the concerns of the locals as jealousy.<sup>159</sup> Filling the house with 'pretty knick-knacks', Netta can be seen as an example of a 'bad' Anglo-Indian in the same vein as Evelyn Desmond rather than the innocent victims who appear in the likes of 'To Let', 'In the Next Room', or 'The Dak Bungalow of Dakor'. The tragic results of her tenancy in the bungalow are her punishment for rejecting the well-worn advice of her peers and thinking herself superior to them. While 'The Red Bungalow' is an opportunity for Croker to, in Edmundson's words, 'consider colonial fears about the vulnerability of children in India' it is also a demonstration of the capacity for India to serve as a proving ground for Anglo-Indians.<sup>160</sup> The best Anglo-Indians succeed and while those who are unable are removed from the colony. With Netta's declaration that following the death of her son she 'would never, never return to India' her snobbery is removed from the colony while the more grounded characters, such as the narrator, remain.<sup>161</sup> The Anglo-Indians who remain in India at the conclusion of the short story are the smart, modest ones unlike the snobbish – if well-meaning – Netta.

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<sup>159</sup> *Ibid*, p. 146.

<sup>160</sup> Melissa Edmundson, *Women's Colonial Gothic Writing*, p. 152.

<sup>161</sup> B.M. Croker, *Odds and Ends*, p. 156.



## The Bedroom

And hushed they were; for one dreadful eve  
The Cholera tapped at the door;  
Nor knocked in vain,  
For mother and twain  
Answered the summons sore.  
When dawn broke over the house next day,  
The mother and daughters had passed away.<sup>162</sup>

While the verandah occupies an ambiguous literary space and the drawing room a comforting space in the Anglo-Indian literary imagination, depictions of the Anglo-Indian bedroom are wholly negative. Designated as a space for sleeping or recovery, the bedroom is naturally the space in the bungalow where Anglo-Indians are most vulnerable to perceived threats to the imperial order. Asleep, the Anglo-Indian is defenceless to servants who might do them harm - as in 'The Dak Bungalow of Dakor' or 'In the Next Room'. It is in the bedroom that the anxieties arising from the memory of 1857 are at their most potent. The bedroom is also a space of illness, where injured or sick Anglo-Indians are taken to let them recover. In *Captain Desmond V.C.*, the wounded Desmond is confined to his bedroom, nearly loses his sight, and falls in love with another woman during his tempestuous recuperation. The colonial bedroom exists as a focal point for colonial anxieties concerning the sexual morality of the colonisers, the risk of miscegenation, the potential of disease or injury, and the threat of violence upon the body of the Anglo-Indian coloniser. This threat of violence upon the Anglo-Indian in the bedroom is so great that often Raj fiction must rely on the requirements of the middlebrow form to resolve narrative ambiguities in order to contain these anxieties in the narrative. The major source of anxiety concerning the Anglo-Indian bedroom is its accessibility. Indians

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<sup>162</sup> Aliph Cheem, *Lays of Ind*, p. 204.

and other Anglo-Indians are able to get into the space, which then poses a threat to the occupier of the room. A great source of anxiety around the invasion of the bedroom space comes specifically from the architecture of the native bungalow. The lack of internal hallways of the bungalow and the capacity to access almost any room from the surrounding verandah meant that the bedroom was not a private a space as it was in British homes and could be easily accessed by anybody.

The bedroom of the colonial bungalow has received markedly less academic attention than the verandah and the drawing room. In *Interiors of Empire*, Jones largely overlooks the space, while Alan Johnson's examination of colonial space in the works of key Anglo-Indian writers does not mention the room at all. One possible explanation for this exclusion of the bedroom is that, unlike the verandah and the drawing room, the bedroom use was largely undifferentiated in the colony. What is significant about the colonial bedroom is not the fundamental differences from the bedrooms found in Britain, but rather anxieties that are focused upon the space in a colonial context. E.M. Collingham argues that in the bungalow the gendered spatial divisions that exist in the British home did not exist in India due to the open plan layout of the bungalow making it impossible to adequately create 'any effective segregation of the sexes'.<sup>163</sup> Although this conception of the bungalow is difficult to reconcile with the sheer volume of Anglo-Indian literature that positions the drawing room as a centre of colonial femininity, Collingham is correct to suggest that the bedroom of the colonial bungalow was neither coded as feminine nor masculine. This lack of this gendered coding allows Raj fiction to depict both Anglo-

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<sup>163</sup> E.M. Collingham, *Imperial Bodies* p. 100.

Indian men and women as potential victims of the numerous anxieties that converge upon the space.

The colonial anxieties of sexual transgression and illness combine in the Desmonds's bungalow towards the conclusion of *Captain Desmond V.C.* Following a punitive raid on a nearby tribe beyond the frontier, Desmond returns to his bungalow severely injured. Under doctor's orders Desmond stays in bed and is forced to wear an eye-shade in order to prevent him from losing his sight. What follows is a procession of colonial anxieties focused on the sexual morality of the Anglo-Indians. The first moment of tension emerges from the dual use of the colonial bedroom as a place of marital sexuality but also a space of recuperation. When the weak-willed Evelyn first walks into the bedroom her wounded husband entreats her to come closer. She takes his hand but is disgusted and frightened by his wounds and forgets 'that he would expect her to stoop and kiss him'. Her hesitation leads that Desmond to ask whether he is 'so very dreadful that you can't bear to come near me?'<sup>164</sup> In the ensuing awkward conversation between Evelyn and her husband, the memsahib lets slip that after hearing Desmond was wounded she considered fleeing in order to avoid seeing his injuries. This confession shocks Desmond who declares it to be 'cowardice and desertion'.<sup>165</sup> In one of the bedrooms of Desmond bungalow the reality of the Desmonds's deteriorating marriage is laid bare. Evelyn's inability to cope with the rigours of life in India is exposed through her husband's combat wounds.

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<sup>164</sup> Maud Diver, *Captain Desmond V.C.* p. 242.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid*, p. 245.

Immediately after this episode Diver presents another colonial anxiety focused on the bedroom of the bungalow: the threat of marital infidelity. Throughout the novel, Diver demonstrates that Honor is more suited to life in India and is consequently a better matrimonial match for Desmond. Following Evelyn's disastrous foray into her injured husband's bedroom, Desmond discovers that he is in love with Honor, a character who exhibits all the idealised characteristics of an Anglo-Indian woman. Reeling from his wife's revelations that she intended to abandon him to his injuries, Desmond lies in despair feeling 'unutterably alone – alone in a dimness which might deepen to a permanent darkness'.<sup>166</sup> At that moment, in the drawing room of the Desmond bungalow, Honor begins to play the piano. To Desmond lying prostrate in the bedroom, Honor's performance on that instrument of cultural capital is akin to the 'hand of healing' being outstretched.<sup>167</sup> While Honor's skill at the piano and the healing potential it has for Desmond is a positive feature – easing Desmond's dark night of the soul – Honor's performance has serious repercussions. While listening Desmond sees:

As in a lightning flash, the hidden meaning of this girl's power to stimulate and satisfy him; saw the unnameable danger ahead; and in the same breath decided that Honor must go. There must be no risk of disloyalty to Evelyn, were it only in thought.<sup>168</sup>

In order to protect his marriage and preserve the moral authority upon that justifies his place in India, Desmond vows to send Honor away once he realises his love for her. The dramatic irony is that he is more suited to Honor and her presence in India not only saves his life, but also provides a model for an ideal form of colonial

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<sup>166</sup> *Ibid*, p. 245.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid*, p. 246.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid*, p. 247.

femininity. Honor enters Desmond's bedroom and sits next to the bed but Desmond finds the 'strength to resist' looking at her face, knowing full well that if he were to look he would be tempted towards adultery.<sup>169</sup> The requirement that Honor leaves Desmond is testament to his moral character, and her understanding and assenting to his wishes is testament to hers. Although the vow to send Honor away protects Desmond's marriage, it also damages the capacity of the Anglo-Indians as a whole by depriving them of Honor's presence. It is their proximity in the bungalow and access to each other's bedroom that raises this threat of adultery that nearly destroys Desmond and Honor.

Although working in the Gothic rather than romance genre, the short stories of Croker and Perrin feature similar concerns around the space of the bedroom. Fundamentally the anxiety concerns the 'wrong' person gaining access to the bedroom of a sleeping Anglo-Indian. In *Captain Desmond V.C.* admittance to the bedroom is related to the temptation towards adultery while Croker and Perrin's ghost stories centre on racial miscegenation, the legacy of 1857 and the threat of rape and murder by Indian servants. Perrin's 'In the Next Room' presents the bedroom as a space of potential threat from a servant. Although the focus of the story is on the bungalow's haunted drawing room, it is in the bedroom that the narrator is most at risk of losing her life. Being left alone by her husband who has business to attend elsewhere, the narrator goes to bed already nervous because of the noises she has heard on previous nights. She awakens to find Eli Bux, the household servant, 'ransacking my dress-table drawers and opening the various little boxes in which I keep pins and scraps of jewellery'. Catching sight of his mistress in the dressing

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<sup>169</sup> *Ibid*, p. 248.

table mirror Bux ‘turned slowly round, and in his hand was a long, sharp knife’, intending to kill her.<sup>170</sup> As in *Captain Desmond V.C.*, sounds from the adjoining drawing room ultimately protect the endangered Anglo-Indian in the bedroom. While Desmond comes back from the edge of despair through Honor’s music, the narrator here is saved by the sound of the ghosts in the drawing room causing Bux to flee in terror. The threat of Bux to the narrator in her bed is a powerful image as he poses a sexual and mortal threat to the memsahib. As Nancy Paxton argues, the threat of rape permeates Raj fiction following 1857 and the presence of Bux carrying a phallic knife within the narrator’s room certainly conforms to this paradigm.<sup>171</sup> The tragic history of the bungalow (that is in the process of being repeated through Bux) is facilitated by the openness of the home and the capacity of potentially violent Indian servants to enter the bedrooms of their master’s bedrooms, the space where Anglo-Indians are most vulnerable.

In Croker’s ‘The Dak Bungalow of Dakor’ the domestic space of the bedroom is complicated by the fact that this is a traveller’s bungalow, not wholly conforming to the single occupancy domestic bungalows explored elsewhere in this chapter. The room designated as the bedroom contains a table ‘neatly laid for dinner’ alongside the beds made up with Julia and Mrs Lloyd’s ‘rugs and blankets’.<sup>172</sup> As well as doubling up as a room to consume food, the bedroom in the Dak bungalow is shared between the two women travellers. In essence, the demarcations of the private space of the bedroom are broken down in the limited room available in the Dak bungalow.

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<sup>170</sup> Alice Perrin, *East of Suez*, p. 114.

<sup>171</sup> Nancy Paxton, ‘Mobilizing Chivalry Rape in British Novels about the Indian Uprising of 1857’, p. 8.

<sup>172</sup> B.M. Croker, *To Let*, p. 129.

With the arrival of the man into the bedroom not only is the private space of the bedroom eroded but so are the matrimonial associations of the space with a single man sharing a bedroom with two married women. The ghostly visions both memsahibs witness in the bedroom of the dak bungalow are In 'The Dak Bungalow of Dakar' there is a fixation with the erosion of boundaries that occur in the Anglo-Indian bungalow, the bedroom becomes the most dangerous space in the bungalow causing the women to prefer sleeping on the exposed verandah.

### Conclusion

The spaces explored in the literary depictions of the Anglo-Indian bungalow are interconnected to various anxieties of colonial decline as well as methods for assuaging these anxieties. The verandah has the capacity to disrupt the privacy of the domestic space while at the same time serving as a form of escape from the events that occur in the bungalow. The drawing room in these texts is a space that allows Anglo-Indians to display their affinity with homemaking and European culture in an attempt to prove themselves as being equal to their countrymen in the imperial homeland. The bedroom as a space is frequently a space of transgressions, whether by murderous servants or through the threat of a marital indiscretions, by triumphing over these threats in the bedroom the Anglo-Indians are able to prove themselves as being worthy to rule over India.

Rather than viewing the Anglo-Indian bungalow as a homogenous whole to be considered in opposition to the wider Indian country the bungalow is best understood as various individual spaces that exist in negotiation with India. Viewing literary

depictions of spaces in the bungalow as separate, if interconnected, aspects of the bungalow as a whole allows for a stronger analysis of the Anglo-Indian home and the methods employed by Raj fiction in controlling the anxieties that emerge from this colonial domesticity.



## Chapter Two: The Colonial Club

Bhupal Singh identifies ‘an hour passed under the fans at the club, with papers and magazines and languid conversation’ as an aspect of ‘a normal day in Anglo-India’.<sup>173</sup> Singh’s conception of the typical Anglo-Indian day is one of the many accounts that position the European colonial club as a space central to Anglo-Indian life. The centrality of the club can also be seen in canonical works of Raj fiction such as Kipling’s *Plain Tales from the Hills*, Forster’s *A Passage to India*, and Orwell’s *Burmese Days*. Personal accounts of the club also work as a testimony to the importance of the space in Anglo-Indian society; Leonard Woolf – who spent eight years as a member of the Ceylon civil service - argued that the colonial club was ‘the centre and symbol of British imperialism’.<sup>174</sup> In 1910 the British historian and ardent imperialist Valentine Chirol identified ‘the rigid exclusion of Indians from many Anglo Indian clubs’ as a primary cause behind the emerging Indian nationalist movement, revealing the importance placed on the space by some Anglo-Indians and the emphasis placed on the racial and national signifiers of the institution.<sup>175</sup> The positioning of the colonial club as the iconic space of Anglo-Indian society continued following Indian independence with fictional accounts such as Paul Scott’s epic *Raj Quartet* (1965-75), J.G. Farrell’s unfinished *The Hill Station* (1981), and the recent television series *Indian Summers* (2015) that all depict the space of the club as the centre of Anglo-Indian life. Charles Allen’s oral history *Plain Tales from the Raj* also highlights the importance of the space in British India. These works of fiction and history position the space of the club as the core of the Anglo-

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<sup>173</sup> Bhupal Singh, *A Survey of Anglo-Indian Literature* (London: Curzon Press, 1975), p. 16.

<sup>174</sup> Roland Hunt & John Harrison, *The District Officer in India* (London: Scolar Press, 1980), p. 127.

<sup>175</sup> Valetine Chirol, *Indian Unrest* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1910), p. 290.

Indian experience. Academic studies on the club also argue the centrality of the space, most noticeably Ralph Crane's attempts to position literary depictions of the club as an Anglo-Indian 'island' that is surrounded by a sea of 'India' in works of fiction set in the Raj.<sup>176</sup>

Writing after the period analysed in this thesis, George Orwell argued that the club served as 'the spiritual citadel, the real seat of British power' in India. This image of the club went on to firmly establish the club as the centre of Anglo-Indian life in the Raj. The prevalence of the club in these works of fiction reflects the privileging of the space in narratives of Anglo-Indian life.<sup>177</sup> In his oral history of the Raj, Charles Allen identifies the centrality of the club in colonial life through his positioning of the space as 'a peculiarly 'Anglo-Indian' institution'.<sup>178</sup> Margaret Macmillan, in her own history of Anglo-Indian women acknowledges the club as the 'central position' of Anglo-Indian life.<sup>179</sup> The club was, Macmillan states 'the main focus of social life' for Anglo-Indians.<sup>180</sup> E.M. Collingham in her examination of the bodily experiences of the Raj positions the club as 'the most important site which daily reinforced collective [Anglo-Indian] identity' it was a vital space where 'newcomers were initiated in the social code or those who had been observed to stray from the narrow Anglo-Indian social path were chastised'.<sup>181</sup> Collingham positions the club as possessing a regulatory function from which Anglo-Indians could enforce the behavioural standards onto errant members of the community. This conception of the

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<sup>176</sup> Ralph Crane, 'Reading the Club as a Colonial Island' *Island Studies Journal* 6:1 (2011), 17-28; Crane, 'Amid the Alien Corn: British India as a Human Island' in M. McCusker and A. Soares (eds.) *Islanded Identities* (New York: Rodopi, 2011) 127-144.

<sup>177</sup> George Orwell, *Burmese Days* (London: Penguin, 2001), p. 19.

<sup>178</sup> Charles Allen, *Plain Tales from the Raj* (London: Abacus, 2013), p. 116.

<sup>179</sup> Margaret Macmillan, *Women of the Raj* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2018), p. 73.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid*, p. 64.

<sup>181</sup> E.M. Collingham, *Imperial Bodies* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), p. 162.

club is well-reflected in the works of male-authored Raj fiction produced by the likes of Kipling and Forster.

This chapter will focus on depictions of the colonial club. As is the case throughout the genre, academic attention on this space largely focuses on the construction of it by male authors who argue for its centrality. In works produced by women, however, the club assumes a more complex depiction. The first chapter of this thesis explored how the colonial bungalow was constructed to be the centre of Anglo-Indian life in the Raj as a method for celebrating the domestic labours of Anglo-Indian women. An effect of this centralisation of the bungalow is that the space of the club was displaced from this position. The club is frequently constructed in these novels as a space that is in contention with the domestic sphere, Maud Diver constructs a dance at the club in *Captain Desmond V.C.* as an event that threatens the marriage between Evelyn and Desmond while in Alice Perrin's 'Beynon, of the Irrigation Department' the club is a space that emphasises the dysfunctional marriage of Jack and Kitty Messenger who visit it in order to escape each other's company. As these women-authored fictions use the domestic space and domesticity as a method of proving the value of Anglo-Indian women in the Raj, the Anglo-Indian social space – exemplified by the club – is a space that has a deleterious impact upon the domesticity that was the purview of Anglo-Indian women.

In female-authored works of Raj fiction, the club is not as prevalent and is noticeably decentralised in the narrative. In these works the club is not a centre of Anglo-India, as argued in male-authored works, but rather an unstable and contentious site. 'The Fancy Ball' in Maud Diver's *Captain Desmond V.C.* is one such example of this

limited literary interaction with the club, where the space is reimagined as a space of excess and danger for the memsahibs. A significant reason for the decentralisation of the club in female-authored works of Raj fiction is the complicated relationship between the privileged club space and Anglo-Indian women. Robin Jones in *Interiors of Empire* notes how Anglo-Indian women ‘only gained access to membership [of clubs] from the last decade of the nineteenth century’ and even following this admittance the club building ‘had to be modified in order to accommodate this new constituency, usually a new building entirely separate from the main body of the club’.<sup>182</sup> These buildings, as Mrinalini Sinha acknowledges, were frequently dingy and uncomfortable and came to be derogatorily known as the ‘moorghhi khanna or Hen-Houses’.<sup>183</sup> Anglo-Indian women were also prohibited from becoming official members of the club and frequently excluded from key spaces inside the building such as the bar. Such aspects of the club for Anglo-Indian women led to an ambiguous representation of the space in the works of fiction they produced.

In order to analyse fully the colonial club in works of Raj fiction authored by women, it is important to understand the club space in works of the same genre authored by men, most important of whom is Rudyard Kipling. As with every aspect of Raj fiction, the influence of Kipling cannot be understated and throughout his oeuvre the club is one of the most important and recurrent spaces. In discussing Kipling, Barbara Black argues that ‘despite the heroic bent of much of his writing and the triumphal works and cultural movements it inspired’ Kipling’s fiction

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<sup>182</sup> Robin D. Jones, *Interiors of Empire* (Manchester University Press, 2007), p. 178.

<sup>183</sup> Mrinalini Sinha, ‘Britishness, Clubbability, and the Colonial Public Sphere’ *Journal of British Studies* 40:4 (2001), 489-521 (p. 501).

frequently 'depicts men facing ordeals that threaten to 'unman' them and 'unmake' the precious and precarious order they have built'. Agreeing with Collingham, Black acknowledges that in these works of fiction it is the Anglo-Indian clubs that 'serve as a regulatory presence that brings the protagonists back to life and normative existence'.<sup>184</sup> The regulatory function of the club enabled a renewal of the masculinity of Anglo-Indian men which is required to police and control the wider Empire. One such example is the club in Kipling's short story 'Miss Youghal's Sais'. In the club the British policeman Strickland is able to quickly shed his convincing disguise as an Indian servant and resume his identity as a member of the Anglo-Indian ruling class. The club here works to not only foster the counter-insurgent methods of Strickland's profession, but is also a reaffirmation of his Anglo-Indian identity which prevents him from 'going native'. The club in Forster's *A Passage to India* is the location that the Anglo-Indian community establish as their refuge during the riots that follow Dr. Aziz's arrest. It is also the space from which they exile Fielding when he refuses to forego his friendship with Aziz. Although women feature in the club in both stories, they have little impact on the overall narrative. In these canonical works the Anglo-Indian who is re-establishing their national identity or facing judgement from the wider community is male.

As well as being an opportunity for reaffirming aspects of Anglo-Indian life, the club in Kipling's fiction also presents the opportunity for the reassurance of anxieties concerning the decline of British imperialism. In Kipling, the club is frequently the location for these anxieties to be ironically contained if not disavowed outright. 'The Conversion of Aurelian McGoggin' is one example of the comic resolution of these

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<sup>184</sup> Barbara Black, *A Room of his Own* (Ohio University Press, 2012), p. 160.

anxieties. The titular McGoggin arrives at the Anglo-Indian station and immediately makes himself ‘an unmitigated nuisance at the Club’.<sup>185</sup> The wry narration that is typical of Kipling’s narrative voice explains that McGoggin’s rantings against religion are also an implicit argument against the Raj, as every Anglo-Indian is responsible to their superiors all the way up the hierarchy to the Viceroy, then the Empress, and then God. ‘If there is no Maker’, Kipling’s narrator argues, ‘the entire system of Our administration must be wrong. Which is manifestly impossible’.<sup>186</sup> This self-consciously ironic and circular argument allows for an admittance that potentially the entire Raj project may actually be ‘wrong’ but there is such a complicated existing structure already in place it is better not to confront such a possibility.

In the short story McGoggin and his arguments are contained in, and by, the club. During one of his outbursts he suffers a stroke and is instructed to cease his tirades lest he suffer another. This is a providential turn that circumvents an erosion of the Raj’s authority. Not only does McGoggin’s apoplexy prevent any more implicit questioning of the colonial order, it also suggests an Act of God, thereby justifying the imperial-cosmic hierarchy. McGoggin’s stroke and the protection of the Anglo-Indian hierarchy is brought about in the space of the club, the one space in India that allows for the sustained pressure of the Anglo-Indian community to be focused upon McGoggin. McGoggin is the only named character in the short story which immediately isolates him in the larger Anglo-Indian society he is critiquing. Black astutely notes that in Kipling ‘the club functions as a counterforce to the dangerous

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<sup>185</sup> Rudyard Kipling, *Plain Tales from the Hills* (London: Penguin, 2011), p. 90.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid*, p. 90.

topography of colonial India, a landscape booby-trapped with spaces of un-Englishness that can snare the British civil servant'.<sup>187</sup> This is true but overlooks the fact that the club in Kipling's fiction also functions as a 'counterforce' to the internal threats towards the Empire that arise from within the Anglo-Indian community itself, McGoggin being one such example and Strickland arguably another. In Kipling, and much of the male-authored works of Raj fiction - whether celebratory or critical of the broader imperial project - that followed in his wake, the club is understood as being the centre of Anglo-Indian values.

A significant anxiety in Raj fiction around the space of the colonial club was the concept of 'clubbability' and 'unclubbability'. In her exploration of racial boundaries established by the Anglo-Indian club system, Mrinalini Sinha defines clubbability as developing 'an acceptable image of 'whiteness''. This system led to a series of 'gendered, raced, and class-specific functions' that allowed the clubs to exist 'as self-selecting institutions'.<sup>188</sup> Sinha argues that notion of 'clubbability' allowed the exclusion of Indians and undesirable Europeans, both of whom would be understood to be 'unclubbable' and therefore not welcome in the club. While Sinha is largely correct, viewing the club as a space that limited entry into its space purely by demographic criteria creates a reductive image of the term 'clubbable' especially in the context of Raj fiction. In addition to the racial, gendered, and class controls highlighted by Sinha, the club also possessed a control over the morality of its members. Raj fiction frequently depicts ideologically and morally 'unclubbable' Anglo-Indians who do manage to gain access to the club space, the aforementioned 'The Conversion of Aurelian McGoggin' being one such example. Fielding in *A*

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<sup>187</sup> Barbara Black, *A Room of His Own*, p. 160.

<sup>188</sup> Mrinalini Sinha, 'Britishness, Clubbability, and the Colonial Public Sphere', p. 505.

*Passage to India* is a rare depiction of a sympathetic unclubbable Anglo-Indian who is exiled from the club due to his faith in his friend's innocence. A large part of the role of the club in Raj fiction is to police the behaviour of these Anglo-Indians and to expel them from the protected club space if their behaviour remains unaltered.

Laurie Kaplan traces the history of the club space and the calls for membership for Indians which clashed against the club's image as a 'corner of a foreign field that was forever imperial England'.<sup>189</sup> Kaplan reads depictions of the club in Raj fiction as a space of Anglo-Indian identity that was seen to be in some sense diminished through the attempts to admit Indians in the space. Both the clubs in *A Passage to India* and *Burmese Days* feature Anglo-Indians racially guarding access to the space. The question of Indian membership dominated the final years of the Raj. As Charles Allen acknowledged it was the issue 'that almost split the Empire'.<sup>190</sup> In Forster's and Orwell's novels of Raj fiction, the issue of the Indians in the club was a method of demonstrating both the decline of the power of the Anglo-Indians as well the petty elitism and bigotry of the community. The threat of Indians gaining access to the space of the club is largely absent from works of women-authored Raj fiction, despite the fact that one of the main reasons for excluding Indians from the space was the fear they would 'consort' with Anglo-Indian women in the club.<sup>191</sup> Raj fiction produced by women places less focus on the racial barriers to entering the club, and instead focuses more on a navigation of the space and an emphasis on the

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<sup>189</sup> Laurie Kaplan, 'The Unpleasantness at the Chandrapore Club, and the Mayapore Club, and the Jummapur Club' in Aranzazu Usandizaga & Andrew Monnickendam (eds.) *Back to Peace* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), pp. 160-179 (p. 162).

<sup>190</sup> Charles Allen, *Plain Tales from the Raj* p. 119.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid*, p. 122.



dangers implicit in the Anglo-Indian social scene than to whom is allowed access to it.

That Anglo-Indian women were often excluded from both the spaces and the functions of the club derives from the colonial club's progenitor, the gentleman's club, found in the western society. For upper and upper-middle class men between the eighteenth and early twentieth centuries, the club in the metropole functioned as a 'surrogate home' and 'catered to many of the needs, both emotional and practical, embodied in the idea of home'.<sup>192</sup> The British club presented a 'multifaceted appeal' to the Victorian man fulfilling 'the male desire to escape domestic boredom and responsibilities[,] enjoy pleasures safely behind closed doors and indulge in mischief among loyal brothers', the masculine space of the club served as an escape from the feminine domestic sphere.<sup>193</sup> In many respects, literary imaginings of the colonial club served a similar domestic and homosocial function for Anglo-Indian men. For example, in 'Miss Youghal's Sais' it is to the club, rather than to his home, that the disguised Strickland returns in order bathe, cast aside his Indian disguise and reacquire his 'true' identity as a respectable Anglo-Indian. The club offers the unmarried Strickland a far greater sense of domesticity than can be found in his colonial bachelor's home. The club offers Strickland the quickest opportunity to shed his Indian disguise and return to the Anglo-Indian community. This sense of imperial protection is framed, as is often the case with Kipling, as a boyish form of 'mischief' exemplified through Strickland's dressing-up. The replacement domesticity offered by the club was more in evidence in the colonies than in Britain.

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<sup>192</sup> Amy Milne-Smith, *London Clubland* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 109-111.

<sup>193</sup> Barbara Black, *A Room of His Own*, p. 34.

As historian Robin D. Jones notes, there was ‘much correspondence between the physical appearance of the club and that of the colonial domestic interior. Often, the same suppliers who provided the domestic interior also furnished club premises’, indicating a desire to view the club and the bungalow as a connected, continuous space, if not an outright replacement.<sup>194</sup> In this respect the colonial club serves a similar set of purposes as the club in London while also allowing these functions to be modified into a signifier of Anglo-Indian identity and the communal policing that supported the structure of the colonial project.

One significant difference between the London club and the colonial club is the people who may acquire membership. As Black acknowledges, entry to and membership of the London clubs was largely limited to ‘upper-class men’ and as the nineteenth century progressed ‘increasing numbers of aspiring middle-class men’.<sup>195</sup> These men had both the financial means to pay for membership and the leisure time to make membership worthwhile. In the colonies, membership to the club for Anglo-Indian men was less restricted than it was in the imperial homeland being generally accessible to a wider variety of members. Unlike the club in Britain that was limited to metropolitan centres, the colonial club was ubiquitous throughout the Raj where a club ‘was to be found in all but the smallest stations’.<sup>196</sup> The ease of access to membership of the club for men and its ubiquity across the Raj allowed the club to become a space symbolic of the entire Anglo-Indian community in a manner that the club in Britain could not.<sup>197</sup> As well as being a space that the Anglo-Indians could

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<sup>194</sup> Robin D. Jones, *Interiors of Empire* (Manchester University Press, 2007), p. 177.

<sup>195</sup> Barbara Black, *A Room of His Own*, p. 34.

<sup>196</sup> Charles Allen, *Plain Tales from the Raj* (London: Abacus, 2013), p. 116.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid*, p. 116.

view as their own and use as a method for inducting and controlling potentially wayward members of the community, the club also offered Anglo-Indian men a further opportunity to live in a manner that would otherwise be unavailable to them in the imperial homeland. Access to the club was one of the many ways that the Anglo-Indian community 'lived far better than they could have back Home'.<sup>198</sup> In addition to the lower cost of living, the capacity to employ numerous servants, and administrative responsibility over stretches of land and people, the club allowed Anglo-Indian men to position themselves as being a part of and having the responsibilities of a social class to which they would not be able to gain access at Home. The importance of the club to the Anglo-Indian community at large can be evidenced by the fact that often upon their retirement from India and return to Britain they 'formed their own clubs in London' in an attempt to retain the social privileges enjoyed in the Raj.<sup>199</sup>

Although noticeably different in their interpretations of the club the works of woman authors discussed in this thesis are equally indebted to Kipling's configurations of the club, whether it be through the positioning of the military man in the club as in Diver's *Captain Desmond V.C.*, the doomed outsider to both the club and the Anglo-Indian community in Perrin's 'Beynon of the Irrigation Department', or Duncan's ironic narrative voice that is both reminiscent of Kipling and also evocative of his iconic characters such as Mrs Hauksbee. The concept of membership of the club is a significant reason why the space is markedly different in works of Raj fiction produced by women. Although they were permitted a limited entry to the club,

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<sup>198</sup> Alan Johnson, *Out of Bounds* (University of Hawaii Press, 2011), p. 47.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid*, p. 47.

Anglo-Indian women were frequently unable to become members on the same terms as Anglo-Indian men. A possible reason why the anxieties concerning Indians gaining access to the club is largely absent from feminine works of Anglo-Indian fiction. In these works, the club features less as a protective space than as another complex site that must be negotiated by the memsahibs.

One particular issue in the relationship between Anglo-Indian women and the club is its capacity to be viewed as the emblematic space of Anglo-India. That women were officially excluded from the club and faced limits on the areas of the space they could access proved problematic. The drive that Éadaoin Agnew identifies as fundamental to the identity of Anglo-Indian women, the desire to be ‘key players in the cohesion of the Empire and the success of the Raj’ is made difficult as these ‘key players’ would not be able to attain full access to the key space of Anglo-Indian life.<sup>200</sup> A common trait, therefore, in works of Raj literature that celebrate the figure of Anglo-Indian woman is a decentralisation of the club space. This is done through a variety of methods such as a refocusing on the importance of the domestic space of the bungalow and a complication of the space of the club into one that is more ambiguous.

A rare piece of women-authored Raj fiction that does present the space of the club in a manner similar to masculine writers of Raj fiction is Sara Jeannette Duncan’s *Set in Authority* (1906). Unlike other works of Raj fiction produced by women, *Set in Authority* focuses on a British aristocrat - Anthony Andover, the Baron of Thame -

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<sup>200</sup> Éadaoin Agnew, *Imperial Women Writers in Victorian India* (Cham: Palgrave MacMillan, 2018), p. 8.

who is elevated to Viceroy, rather than the trials and tribulations of a middle-class memsahib figure. The club in *Set in Authority*, like in male-authored works, becomes a centre of Anglo-Indian activity during a moment of crisis when a British soldier is accused of murdering an innocent Indian man. However, in describing the club, Duncan's narrator acknowledges the exclusion of certain European characters eroding the capacity for the club to become a protective space for the entire community, stating:

I am sure I have not made it plain that the Club was the nerve-centre of Pilaghur. 'Everybody' belonged to it. Not Miss Da Costa, of course, who made blouses, or Mrs Burbage, who made cakes, or the photographer, or the young man who started a bicycle agency from Cawnpore; but everyone else [...] there was no foolish exclusiveness about the Pilaghur Club.<sup>201</sup>

The irony used by Duncan relies upon the narrator insisting the lack of exclusivity in the Pilaghur Club moments after acknowledging the long list of people that do not belong to the club and are excluded due to their gender or class. Although Duncan adopts a similar wry edge to her narration as Kipling, the ironic juxtaposition between the statement that 'everybody' belongs to the club and the undermining of the point allows Duncan to construct the club as a space of a social and cultural exclusion, a space that cannot be at the centre of Anglo-Indian life. The sense that the 'everybody' who is able to join the club is actually only a limited field is emphasised again when Duncan confronts the admittance of Indian members. The narrator's claim that the 'club was very liberal' is undermined by the fact that:

It had never yet permitted a native of India to be proposed to its membership. The thing had hardly been thought of. When the fat old Maharajah of Pilaghur built them a new ball-room, leaving the old one free for billiards, in obscure gratitude for his C.I.E., somebody had suggested that the generosity should be recognised by an honorary membership, no doubt some Mr. Cox, newly arrived, with sensibilities not yet indurated by the sun. But short work

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<sup>201</sup> Sara Jeannette Duncan, *Set in Authority* (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, ND), p. 104

was made of the proposition. [...] ‘For Heaven’s sake don’t talk about letting him in’.<sup>202</sup>

As well the snobbish social exclusivity of the Pilaghur Club, Duncan also acknowledges the racist prohibitions placed on even honorary members, as well as the regulatory function of the club in policing this exclusion and ensuring that newer members observe it. With the ambiguous membership of women, lesser traders not members, and Indians forbidden from the space, it becomes difficult to envision the club as being emblematic of the Anglo-Indian experience. Duncan effectively depicts the contradictions and the instability of the club as a place that is understood to be both the central space of Anglo-India while also being strictly exclusive. Again, a similarly wry narration is employed, first arguing that the issue of Indian admittance into the club had ‘hardly been thought of’, before undercutting this with a detailed controversy that followed the suggestion an Indian be inducted. This Kiplingesque narration serves a similar function as it does in Kipling’s own *Plain Tales from the Hills*, it allows for criticisms of the Raj to surface but to then be disarmed through the use of humour.

In *Set in Authority*, Duncan uses the masculine understandings of the club as the space that is at the centre of Anglo-Indian life but depicts the space negatively, as one of exclusion and snobbery. Unlike in Forster and Orwell, however, this is not a reflection on Duncan’s anti-imperialism or her understanding of the health of the Raj. The contradictory and snobbish aspects of the club space are contained by the ironic narrative voice which frames them as winsome observances. The seemingly arbitrary exclusivity of the Pilaghur club is not an indication of a rotten centre of

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<sup>202</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 104-105.

Anglo-Indian life but rather an expression of the community's eccentricities. In this respect, the narrative voice works as a method of controlling anxieties of imperial decline by refusing to have these critiques positioned as serious issues that could undermine the institutions of the Raj or its moral authority to rule India. Although the ironic tone Duncan uses towards the club does in some way diminish the space, it also a method of controlling the anxieties about the 'unclubbable' gaining access to the space and justifying the methods of excluding them. In this respect, *Set in Authority* uses a similar method to Kipling in 'The Conversion of Aurelian McGoggin'. Through a forthright, yet ironic, description of the often-illogical norms of Anglo-Indian society both authors are able to contain grievances against these contradictory rules.

Duncan's description of the club and the novel's focus on a male character is atypical for a work of Raj fiction produced by a woman. Generally, in such works the club exists as an occasional – not a constant – location in the narrative. It is not the case that in works of Raj fiction it is Anglo-Indian men who go the club while the Anglo-Indian women remain in the bungalow, but rather that the club takes on a different formulation in works of fiction produced by women. Anglo-Indian women such as Mrs Hauksbee and Adela Quested, frequent the clubs of Kipling and Forster's respective fiction while male characters produced by women such as Captain Desmond, for example, call into the club just as infrequently as their wives do. This suggests that the impressions of the club arise not from a reflection of the club space as it was in the 'reality' of Anglo-Indian lives, but rather that the club exists as an imagined space. The decentralising of the club from the narrow reflects

not the decentralisation of the club from Anglo-Indian life, but rather the author's desire to centre women and their labours as key aspects in the Anglo-Indian order.

There are two interconnected reasons for the difference in the role of the club in male and female-authored fiction. The first, explored above, is the fact that although women were able to visit the club they often do not achieve a membership on par with Anglo-Indian men nor were they able to access the bar considered to be 'a male preserve'.<sup>203</sup> The club, then, was a space in Anglo-India where it would be impossible to view women as an equal partner to her husband in the imperial enterprise. The official exclusion of Anglo-Indian women from a space emblematic of Anglo-India would be especially aggravating to an author such as Maud Diver whose fiction extols the imperial efforts of the memsahib, presenting the labours as vital to the Empire as masculine efforts of 'shot, or steel, or the doubtful machinations of diplomacy'.<sup>204</sup> By largely excluding depictions of the club from their fiction, these authors could then avoid the depiction of a space such as the club that largely excluded Anglo-Indian women from participating fully in them. Another potential reason for the general avoidance of the club space in works of women-authored Raj fiction is the fact that they wished to depict Anglo-Indian women as being morally upstanding imperial subjects. Ronald Hyam claims that the stereotype of the memsahib as a figure who was 'usually bored, invariably gossiping viciously, prone to extra-marital affairs' with their daily activities were to lazily 'play bridge and flirt'.<sup>205</sup> The space of the club would undoubtedly be the location for these games of bridge and for the flirting and extra-marital affairs to be initiated. The

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<sup>203</sup> Charles Allen, *Plain Tales from the Hills*, p. 124.

<sup>204</sup> Maud Diver, *The Great Amulet* (New York: John Lane, 1908), p. 57.

<sup>205</sup> Ronald Hyam, *Empire and Sexuality* (Manchester University Press, 1992), p. 118.



presence of women in the masculine space of the club threatens its capacity to be envisaged as an alternate domestic space. In order to celebrate the figure of the memsahib and refocus the work of Raj fiction onto the domestic space, the space of the club must be both complicated and decentralised in the narrative.

One method whereby the club is decentralised in works of women-authored Raj fiction is through the genres that many of these authors were writing in. Such works can be positioned as either domestic novels of Anglo-Indian life such as the fiction of Diver or the Gothic works produced by Croker and Perrin. Though both genres may feature the club space in some respect, it is not the central space of the narrative. Raj domestic novels, most obviously, concern themselves with the intrigues and misunderstandings between Anglo-Indian men and women in the domestic sphere so naturally the bungalow becomes the main location of the novel. The Gothic, meanwhile, uses the domestic sphere as a space to isolate the Anglo-Indian woman from both her husband and the wider community in order to increase narrative tension and unsettle the reader. In these Gothic texts, the club may be positioned at the centre of Anglo-Indian life and the distance the Anglo-Indians are from the club can be demonstrative of their isolation in the narrative. The club serves as a method of isolating Anglo-Indian woman from both her husband and the wider community leaving her vulnerable to both physical, supernatural, and moral threats.

Two works of Gothic Anglo-Indian fiction that aptly demonstrate this decentralisation of the club in the narrative are Bithia May Croker's 'To Let' and Perrin's 'Beynon of the Irrigation Department'. In Croker's 'To Let', the haunted Briarwood bungalow is 'a mile and a half from the club', reflecting the distance

between bungalow and its inhabitants from the centre of Anglo-Indian society. Emphasising the isolation that leaves them defenceless against the ghostly visitations.<sup>206</sup> The brief reference to the distance the club is from the bungalow is a suggestion of the underlying darkness of Briarwood. The club takes a more prominent role in Perrin's 'Beynon, of the Irrigation Department'. Here it is Jack and Kitty Messenger's separate visits to the club that are signifiers of their crumbling marriage. The carefree Jack pays scant attention to his wife with his average day involving a visit to the club to play poker, and little note of anything else'.<sup>207</sup> His wife, aware of her neglect, laments that 'if I stay at home you only go off to the club and leave me by myself'.<sup>208</sup> In Perrin's 'Beynon', the club does not contain the regulatory use it has elsewhere in Raj fiction, in actuality; the space actually damages the couple's marriage as Kitty begins to take a male companion to club dances with the intention of provoking a reaction from her husband. Rather than the club serving a regulatory function it is instead the withdrawn Anglo-Indian civil servant Beynon who restores the couple's dysfunctional marriage. Perrin positions Beynon's hermit-like solitary life in the Indian swamps as the antithesis of the Anglo-Indian society found at the club. Perrin acknowledges this opposition comparing him more to holy Indian Gusseins rather than clubbable Anglo-Indians. Being a participant of the Anglo-Indian social scene, the Jack Messenger and his wife would be understood to be clubbable. It is this clubbability, especially on Jack's behalf which also manifests as an indifference to his wife, that becomes a threat to the couple's marriage and thus threatens the moral authority upon which the Raj was constructed.

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<sup>206</sup> Bithia May Croker, *To Let* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1906), p. 7.

<sup>207</sup> Alice Perrin, *East of Suez* (Brighton: Victorian Secrets, 2011), p. 58.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid*, p. 58.

The club in the works of Raj Gothic fiction discussed above is largely an external threat to a martial union that is explicitly acknowledged in the text as in the case of ‘Beyon, of the Irrigation Department’ or a signifier of isolation as in ‘To Let’, the club in works of domestic fiction is a space that must be navigated by female characters. An example of the club as both peripheral in the larger text but a significant place at one specific narrative moment is the ‘Fancy Ball’ held at the club at the conclusion of the first section of *Captain Desmond V.C.* The ‘Fancy Ball’ is the singular instance in the novel where the club is featured, but the event is significant to both the characters in the novel and the wider narrative. The celebration is an opportunity for Diver to demonstrate the Anglo-Indian capacity for an artistry and luxury that is on par with British society while also demonstrating the potential dangers that are inherent and unique to Indian life.

For the costume ball, Evelyn Desmond dresses as a butterfly with ‘two shimmering wings of gauze [...] from her shoulders; her hair, glittering with gold dust, waved to her waist; and a single row of topaz [that] gleamed on the pearl tint of her throat like drops of wine’.<sup>209</sup> The costume is beautiful, a fact confirmed by the sensible Desmond telling his wife ‘you’ll have your triumph tonight’.<sup>210</sup> Evelyn’s dress serves a dual purpose in the narrative. Firstly, it allows Diver to celebrate the ingenuity and artistry available to the Anglo-Indian community. Due to their increased social standing in India compared to Britain, Anglo-Indians were ‘compelled to negotiate Britain’s fickle public consciousness concerning class and

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<sup>209</sup> Maud Diver, *Captain Desmond V.C.* (London & Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1922), p. 156.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid*, p. 157.

up-ward mobility'.<sup>211</sup> Evelyn's capacity to dress fashionably is a testament to the equal footing with London society that Diver establishes for the Anglo-Indians. As well as being an acknowledgement of Anglo-Indian creativity and beauty, Evelyn's dress also confirms her incompatibility with Anglo-Indian life. The delicate butterfly costume and her nickname 'Ladybird' suggests a fragility that is incompatible with the daily rigours of Indian living. Evelyn's confession that she bought the dress 'in Simla, last year' and that she kept it secret from her husband in order to surprise him positions Evelyn as a figure who embodies several aspects of the stereotypically shallow memsahib, who values fashion and frivolity over a sense of duty.<sup>212</sup> While Evelyn's costume is described in detail, the costumes of the other Anglo-Indian women who are able to survive life on the colonial frontier such as Honor Desmond and Mrs Olliver are not described. That Diver takes the time to painstakingly describe Evelyn's dress while descriptions of the dresses of Honor and Mrs Olliver are omitted suggests that the pair are wearing a more sober and practical outfit that reflects their own serious personalities. Although they attend the same ball, the positive impressions of Anglo-Indian women do generate a similar spectacle of hyper-femininity as Evelyn. The masculine space of the club is able to support the restrained femininity of Honor and Mrs Olliver but not the femininity of Evelyn who makes a spectacle of herself in the club.

For his own costume, Evelyn's husband Desmond dresses as Charles Surface from Richard Sheridan's eighteenth-century play *The School for Scandal*. Like Desmond, the character of Charles Surface possesses an essential loyalty and kindness. The

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<sup>211</sup> Alan Johnson, p. 47.

<sup>212</sup> Maud Diver, *Captain Desmond V.C.*, p. 156.

only significant difference between Surface and Desmond is the former's extravagant spending, a trait that the responsible Desmond avoids but himself but still falls into debt due to Evelyn's frivolity. Diver's invocation of Charles Surface and *The School for Scandal* also has an intertextual element, with the narrative of *Captain Desmond V.C.*, the worthy/unworthy dynamic between Charles and Joseph Surface in Sheridan's play is mirrored through the characters of Honor and Evelyn. In addition to the cultural capital garnered by both Desmond and the novel through the intertextual references to *The School for Scandal*, the Fancy Ball episode displays a similar comparison of worthy and unworthy characters. In this context, both Desmond and Honor are the respectable figures and characters that can negotiate the challenging club space. Their opposites are the other guest who propositions Evelyn and Evelyn herself. These characters represent two threats to the masculine space of the club, that of the unclubbable and unscrupulous man and that of the woman who makes a spectacle of herself.

Diver's depiction of the club is not a warning to reject outright the social aspects of Anglo-Indian life. En route to the club Desmond discusses with Honor the fundamentals of the fancy ball that includes dancing with a variety of partners. Desmond encourages Honor to abandon her usual sense of sensible propriety, 'hang Mrs Grundy', and fully engage with the dance.<sup>213</sup> The degree of licence afforded to Honor (and Desmond) recall Black's conception of Kipling's club as a space of 'mischief' and 'pleasures behind closed doors'.<sup>214</sup> In masculine depictions of the club this sense of pleasure is usually reserved for the men, but Diver permits her

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<sup>213</sup> Maud Diver, *Captain Desmond V.C.*, p. 157.

<sup>214</sup> Barbara Black, *A Room of His Own*, p. 34.

sensible woman characters some licence to indulge, as evidenced through Desmond's encouraging of Honor to dance with multiple men. Importantly, Diver is not giving her characters unlimited license but rather granting some leeway in the otherwise strict social codes that are reproduced in her novels. The limits to this freedom can be seen in the respectable partners that are chosen by Desmond (Evelyn, and Mrs Olliver) and Honor (Paul Wyndham). Most significantly, the codes of the Ball allow for Honor and Desmond – the two attendees at the ball who are the 'outsiders' that 'understand one another' – to share a dance.<sup>215</sup> The Ball provides an opportunity for Honor and Desmond to dance, providing the novel with its first image of an ideal Anglo-Indian union but also with its narrative crux, as Desmond is married to another.

Although the ball is against the nature of their characters Honor and Desmond are able to negotiate the space to a greater degree than Evelyn, for whom the dance would appear to be more of a natural fit. Partway through the dance Desmond finds his wife looking 'pathetically small and unprotected in the wide emptiness of the archway' and discovers that another guest had propositioned her during their dance. The man had told Evelyn that 'the real fun [of fancy dress dances] was that every one could say and do just what they pleased, and nothing mattered at all.' The stranger goes on to tell Evelyn that his own costume – a clown - 'was specially convenient, because no one could expect a Pierrot to be responsible for his actions'. Turning to Evelyn he tells her that 'by coming as a butterfly [she] had given every man in the room the right to catch [her]'.<sup>216</sup> Again Diver places a narrative

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<sup>215</sup> Maud Diver, *Captain Desmond V.C.*, p. 157.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid*, p. 160

significance on the costumes of the attendees of the ball. The Pierrot costume suggests that a sense of the carnivalesque grants the wearer license to flaunt Anglo-Indian social conventions as he threatens to disrupt Evelyn's honour and the Desmond's marriage. Evelyn's butterfly costume comes to be read as a provocation for other men to attempt to 'catch' her. Evelyn escapes the Pierrot but is scheduled to have a further dance with him later in the night. In response to her fear, Desmond instead chooses to forego his own dance with Honor in order to stay and protect his wife. The man appears and attempts to take Evelyn away from Desmond, telling the captain 'this is my dance with Mrs Desmond, and I've missed too much of it already'.<sup>217</sup> Desmond rebukes the stranger who apologises to Desmond before leaving the couple who dance together for the rest of the ball. That the stranger apologises to Desmond, but not to Evelyn, both reaffirms the club as a masculine space and her subordination to Desmond that Evelyn herself disrupted by making such a spectacle of herself. Though the ball does allow some slight transgressions from the strict Anglo-Indian codes, Evelyn – in her costume and multiple dance partners – makes a scene, disrupting the masculine space of the club and posing a threat to the club's regulatory function as well as her own marriage.

This is not an example of the space of the club working as a method of correcting those Anglo-Indians whose behaviours are found to be unacceptable; nor it is representative of an alternate form of masculine domesticity. Desmond explains to Evelyn that 'there's always a good sprinkling of the wrong sort in a crowd of this kind, and the stewards ought to be more careful'. The fault is with Evelyn's

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<sup>217</sup> *Ibid*, p. 163.

spectacle in the space rather than that of the club itself.<sup>218</sup> Evelyn's hyper-femininity in the space means that the club is unable to accommodate both her and the Pierrot at the same time. This means that the club does not have the capacity to regulate and correct the unclubbable man as in 'The Conversion of Aurelian McGoggin'; rather it falls to a heroic individual – Desmond – not the institution to correct behaviour. The club in *Diver* demands a similar standard of behaviours as is required by any other space in the Raj in her fiction.

Where the colonial club is often a space of Anglo-Indian values in male-authored works of Raj fiction, it often exists as an ambiguous space in works authored by women. The club is often diminished in favour of the domestic sphere, a space that allowed Anglo-Indian women to be viewed as key-players in imperial life. One method by which the club is diminished is through a move from the regulatory, centralised position it holds in male-authored works to a problematic, contentious space. The capacity of the club to function as a masculine, homosocial sphere that existed as both a domestic substitute and a regulatory space is destabilised by the presence of women characters in this space. This causes a diminishment of the domestic sphere; the club space is destabilised and loses its capacity to function as a regulatory site. This is evidenced in Perrin's 'Beynon of the Irrigation Department' as the club is the place where Kitty Messenger dances to make her husband jealous and in *Captain Desmond V.C.*, where Evelyn is propositioned during the dance. In both these instances the club loses its power as an apparatus of regulation for the community due to the hyper-feminised presence of a memsahib in the space. Order must instead be restored by an Anglo-Indian man – Beynon and Desmond, men who

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<sup>218</sup> *Ibid*, p. 160-161.



sit uneasily with the Anglo-Indian society that is symbolised through the club. The club still serves a function in these works, but instead it is the negotiation of the space – and the Anglo-Indian society that is focused upon the space – that is part of the Indian crucible that must be overcome by Anglo-Indians in order to prove their worth in governing the Raj.

### **Chapter Three: Simla, the Summer Capital**

Simla is assuredly not the most innocuous place on God's Earth. Here frivolity reaches its highest height, and social pleasures are, to all appearance, the end and aim of every one's existence. Yet here, in the midst of this throng of busy idlers, the great task of governing the Empire must go forward, come what may.<sup>219</sup>

Earlier chapters of this thesis analysed literary representations of specific colonial buildings in terms of their capacity as spaces to disavow, deny, or contain certain imperial anxieties. This chapter broadens the focus from a specific building to the city of Simla, the summer capital of the Raj. Although the bungalows and colonial clubs explored in previous chapters are also present in the urban space of Simla, the city was approached by authors of Raj fiction as a space that was unique to, and separate from, the wider Raj. In Anglo-Indian writing, Simla is often understood to be a contradictory space and most of these contradictions arise from the fashionable 'Simla season' that coincided with the town's assumption to the role of capital of the Raj during the summer months. During the summer, Anglo-Indians found the heat on the plains to be intolerable. This was especially the case in the Raj's capitals of Calcutta and New Delhi. Nestled high in the foothills of the Himalayas, Simla offered a respite from the heat and, from 1864 to Indian independence in 1947, the city served as summer capital of the Raj.

The favourable climate and the decampment of governmental bureaucracy of the Raj made Simla a popular destination for others during the Indian summer months. Most noticeably the city became home to large numbers of Anglo-Indian wives. These

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<sup>219</sup> Maud Diver, *The Englishwoman in India* (Edinburgh and London: Willian Blackwood & Sons, 1909) p. 24.

women would retreat to Simla, often without their husbands, to escape the heat. While in the city they were christened ‘Grass Widows’.<sup>220</sup> These ‘Widows’ were often joined in Simla by members of the ‘Fishing Fleet’, unmarried British women who ventured to India in the hope of finding a husband and to whom Simla offered not cool weather but also the opportunity of finding a suitable match.<sup>221</sup> The arrival of these two groups of women meant that Simla became a unique space in the Raj where ‘British womenfolk [...] outnumbered the menfolk several times over’.<sup>222</sup> The influx of people led to the city becoming the centre of Anglo-Indian political and social life known as the fashionable ‘Simla Season’.

The popularity and reputation of the Simla Season led to a proliferation of works of Raj fiction set in the city, so much so that the term ‘Simla fiction’ can be convincingly argued as being a cohesive subgenre in the broader genre of Raj fiction. Simla fiction often focuses on the inherent contradictions of Simla life: the frivolity of the social scene and its status as a political centre, the ability to assume a new persona in Simla society, and the supposed natural and cultural similarities between Simla and England. The majority of the short stories collected in Kipling’s *Plain Tales from the Hills* are archetypal works of Simla fiction. *Plain Tales* offers a spectrum between the outright farces of ‘The Germ Destroyer’ and ‘Tods’ Amendment’ and tragedy as found in ‘The Other Man’ and ‘Lispeth’. Kipling’s comic sensibility reverberates throughout later works of Simla fiction such as in *A Pinchbeck Goddess*, by his sister, Alice Fleming. In *The Pool in the Desert*, a collection of Simla based short stories, Sara Jeannette Duncan explicitly

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<sup>220</sup> Charles Allen, *Kipling Sahib* (London: Abacus, 2008), p. 134.

<sup>221</sup> Anne de Courcy, *The Fishing Fleet* (London: Phoenix, 2013), p. 9.

<sup>222</sup> Charles Allen, *Kipling Sahib*, p. 134.

acknowledges the pervasive influence of the Bard of Empire, with one character quipping ‘quite half the people seem materializations of Kipling’.<sup>223</sup> Authors who produce Simla fiction following the publication of *Plain Tales from the Hills* are unavoidably writing in a dialogue with the tradition established in Kipling’s series of short stories.

Frequent accounts of the city seek to draw similarities between Simla and an image of England. This reputation partially arose from the temperate climate that made the city so appealing to the Anglo-Indians in the first place. This led to the cultivation of Simla as a specifically English site in India, with the construction of English civic features such as the Mall and the deployment of British architectural modes such as the Mock Tudor used on the Viceregal residence and the Gothic Revival style of Simla Cathedral. Contemporary accounts of Simla attest to this understanding of the inherent Englishness of the summer capital. The Victorian artist Val Prinsep acknowledged the supposed similarities between Simla and English towns positing that in Simla one could ‘fancy oneself in Margate’.<sup>224</sup> Decades later, during his stay in India that would go on to influence *A Passage to India*, E.M. Forster wrote to his mother that the houses in the city were ‘quite English’ and ‘all the time I was in Simla, I forgot I was in India’.<sup>225</sup> Modern histories of Simla also suggest towards the supposed Englishness of Simla, Anne de Courcy writes that Simla was ‘the most purely British of Indian towns, with its buildings that range from Tudorbethan to neo-Gothic’ and a climate that ‘allowed the flowers of home [...] to grow’.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> Sara Jeannette Duncan, *The Pool in the Desert* (London: Penguin, 1984), p. 105.

<sup>224</sup> Val Prinsep, *Glimpses of Imperial India* (Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1974), p. 264.

<sup>225</sup> E.M. Forster, *Selected Letters* (London: Arena, 1985), p. 159.

<sup>226</sup> Anne de Courcy, *The Fishing Fleet*, p. 185.

Pamela Kanwar argues that the city had the atmosphere of ‘an oversized English club’.<sup>227</sup> Although these historical and modern understandings of Simla would appear to be support one another, there is an inconsistency between Kanwar’s interpretation of the Englishness of Simla and the Englishness of the city expressed by historical commentators such as Prinsep and Forster. These historical experiences of Simla are keen to acknowledge capital’s similarities to a rural, non-metropolitan England. Prinsep uses the resort town of Margate to illustrate this formulation while Forster, whose celebration the English pastoral can be seen in such works as his novel *Howards End* and in his later conservationist efforts that formed ‘one of the major themes of the second half of [his] life’, held a specific vision of ‘real’ England as a rural idyll.<sup>228</sup> Works of Simla fiction that depicts the supposedly English character of the city supports these accounts of Simla. In ‘The Hesitation of Miss Anderson’ Duncan ridicules the incongruity between the ‘little white-washed’ houses of Simla named ‘Warwick Castle, Blenheim, Abbotsford’.<sup>229</sup> These grand names reveal a desire to view Simla life not the ‘oversized English club’ evoked by Kanwar, but rather as a pre-industrial, nigh-feudal conception of England.

The employment of English architectural styles, specifically the Gothic Revival and Mock Tudor that harken to an image of a pre-modern English past. The continued repetition of this capacity to view Simla life as a form of pre-industrial England is evidence that this alignment was vital for the residents of the summer capital. Dane Kennedy in his history of British hill stations highlights Simla specifically as a city that was understood to follow the ‘sinuous lines and simple organisation of

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<sup>227</sup> Pamela Kanwar, *Imperial Simla* p. 9.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 343 – 344.

<sup>229</sup> Sara Jeannette Duncan, *The Pool in the Desert*, p. 105.

[England's] rustic villages' that were 'venerated as cradles of the nation's values'.<sup>230</sup> Such values do not reflect the nineteenth-century English industrial base required for the British imperial project or the manufacturing capacities supported by the labour and resources of the colonies but rather the sense of a seemingly natural order implicit in the feudal, rustic ideal. Anglo-Indians, especially those who were able to access the exclusivity that was Simla, could position themselves as possessing an elite and ordained status as rulers over India. Kanwar acknowledges that Simla was often envisaged as a 'world of make-believe'.<sup>231</sup> In works of Simla fiction this form of 'make-believe' most commonly manifests itself as a capacity to behave as a member of the aristocracy. As discussed elsewhere in this thesis, Anglo-Indian living afforded British working and middle class people the opportunity to live in a manner that would be unavailable to them in the British homeland, whether it be through the cheaper cost of living in the colonies, the ability to command numerous household servants, or the access to the social privileges and political power that allowed them to 'lord it over' non-white Indians.<sup>232</sup> The image of Simla as akin to a non-industrial, rural England allowed those Anglo-Indians who had access to the summer capital to envisage themselves as members of an aristocratic class that would not only be beyond their material and social capabilities in Britain, but also no longer existed in that form. As well as demonstrating Simla's capacity to alter the identities of people living in the city, the supposed pre-industrial, English character that is projected onto the summer capital also works as a form of anxiety management for the Anglo-Indian community based there. Simla not only assuaged economic and class-based

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<sup>230</sup> Dane Kennedy, *The Magic Mountains* (University of California Press, 1996), p. 99.

<sup>231</sup> Pamela Kanwar, *Imperial Simla*, p. 1.

<sup>232</sup> Alan Johnson, *Out of Bounds* (Hawaii University Press, 2011), p. 47.

anxieties of individual Anglo-Indians, but also larger concerns of a moral or imperial decline.

The comic strain in Simla fiction does not extend to all impressions of the city. In a guidebook for Anglo-Indian life, Maud Diver warns that the Simla Season enables the potential for sexual and marital transgressions like nowhere else in India.

Arguing that ‘the social atmosphere [is] accountable for half the domestic tragedies in India’, Diver specifically identifies a tragic potential inherent to the city’s ‘social atmosphere’.<sup>233</sup> Although Diver’s sentiment is hyperbolic, the impetus behind her criticism of the summer capital reveals a deep-set anxiety around the city. In her history of Simla, Pamela Kanwar suggests a similar relationship between the social scene of the capital and the potential for transgression, arguing that the connection between the two led to the city acquiring the reputation of being a space of ‘picnics and adultery’.<sup>234</sup> Although the social scene may present a chance for the unwed members of the so-called ‘Fishing Fleet’ to find a husband, it also provided an opportunity for the already married ‘Grass Widows’ to conduct affairs with new men while their husbands were on duty on the plains.

A difficulty for works of Raj fiction is the ability to depict the social scene of the summer capital and its infamous reputation without serving as an indictment of the Anglo-Indian community as a group of hedonists who ignore their marital and imperial duties. Different authors of Raj fiction took different approaches to this problem. Diver, perhaps the author of Raj fiction most fixated on the Anglo-Indian requirement to duty, self-sacrifice, and stoicism, avoids Simla in her novels.

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<sup>233</sup> Maud Diver, *The Englishwoman in India*, pp. 23-4.

<sup>234</sup> Pamela Kanwar, *Imperial Simla* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 9.

References to the city in her fiction present it as an unworthy escape from the rigours of Indian life; it is the city that Evelyn Desmond, for example, wishes to abscond to when faced with the harsh realities of her life on the Afghan frontier. Evelyn's desire to go to Simla contrasts with by Honor and Desmond, heroic characters who do not 'like it much'. The sinister Mr Kresney positions Simla's infamous reputation for adultery as its primary attraction, informing Evelyn that 'Simla isn't much of a place for husbands [...] and for girls. It's the bachelors who have a good time there, - and the married women'.<sup>235</sup> Diver does not offer a depiction of the city itself in her fiction, suggesting a discomfort in portraying a society that would undermine the values upon which she argued the Raj and women's place in the Raj were constructed. Her attitude to the summer capital is made even more overt in her handbook *The Englishwoman in India*, that argues that 'it is Simla which makes – or rather mars – the women of to-day'.<sup>236</sup> As well as presenting the city as a place that can corrupt Anglo-Indian women, Diver quotes an unnamed correspondent who argues that the Simla Season exerts a negative effect upon the entire Raj. This purported correspondent writes that Simla:

Would be a far more favourable seat for Government, and the energies and faculties would find fuller development there, if the social current were less strong; and those leaders of society would be public benefactors who could find some means of stemming it.<sup>237</sup>

Diver's correspondent clearly positions the 'social current' of Simla as damaging the effective running of the Raj. Unlike her fiction, where Diver does not depict the city, her guidebook offers an image of the capital's social sphere as something deleterious to the efficient governance of Empire. In both her fiction and non-fiction, Diver

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<sup>235</sup> Maud Diver, *Captain Desmond V.C.* (London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1922), p. 200.

<sup>236</sup> Maud Diver, *The Englishwoman in India*, p. 26.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.



advocates for a complete avoidance of Simla in order to protect oneself from the city's malign influence.

Other authors of Raj fiction are less sententious than Diver in their depictions of Simla. A method frequently deployed by authors of Simla fiction to quell anxieties that arise from the reputation of the city is the deployment of a comic or an ironic authorial voice in a manner after Kipling. Kipling's *Plain Tales* often has a narrator whose voice often comments on the implausibility of the story itself. 'The Rescue of Pluffles', for example, begins with the narrator addressing the reader that they 'can believe just as much as ever you please'.<sup>238</sup> This ironical, dry narrative voice can be found elsewhere in works of Anglo-Indian writing depicting Simla. Sara Jeannette Duncan's *The Other Side of the Latch* (1901) is a short memoir of her time in Simla following a bout of tuberculosis. The memoir begins with Duncan and her husband leaving their small bungalow on the plains and moving up to the summer capital. Before she arrives at Simla Duncan muses:

What is Simla? An artificial little community which has climbed eight thousand feet to be cool. Who ever leaves Charing Cross for Simla? Who among the world's multitude ever casts an eye across the Rajputana deserts to Simla? Does Thomas Cook know where Simla is? No; Simla is a geographical expression, to be verified upon the map and never to be thought of again.<sup>239</sup>

The initial impression of Simla in Duncan's work of non-fiction subverts the infamous reputation of the city as a cultural and political centre of the Raj. Duncan highlights the general obscurity in which the summer capital is viewed outside India by acknowledging that neither the passenger at Charing Cross station nor Thomas

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<sup>238</sup> Rudyard Kipling, *Plain Tales from the Hills*, p. 47.

<sup>239</sup> Sara Jeannette Duncan, *On the Other Side of the Latch* (London: Methuen & Co, 1901), pp. 8-9.

Cook considers Simla to be anything more than a 'geographical expression'. This image of Simla as a minor settlement that is beneath not only the notice of the wider world but also those in India is at odds with Diver's febrile denouncement of the city as a space that is 'irresistibly infectious' with the 'insidious' pitfalls of 'amateur theatricals and the military men on leave'.<sup>240</sup> Unlike the works produced by authors of Simla fiction, Diver's novels and non-fiction conceives of the Raj as being a location where duty is paramount. Diver's serious impression of Anglo-Indian life leaves little room for humour both in the characters and in the narrative as a whole. Due to this seriousness concerning life in India, Diver is unable to negotiate the social anxieties that arise from Simla Society leading her to position Simla as a city to be altogether avoided.

Duncan's comic diminishment of Simla is demonstrative of the comic tone that is found throughout the fiction set in the summer capital. Here the comic is a method of controlling the anxieties that emerge from the Simla Society. Certain comic tropes recur in these texts. Perhaps the most frequent source of comedy is character's abilities to alter their identities during their time in the city. This trope can be found in Kipling's *Plain Tales* through Strickland's Indian disguises in 'Miss Youghal's Sais' as well as Mrs. Bremmil's requirements to repress the trauma of the death her child and swap her mourning clothes for a beautiful gown to keep her husband from straying in 'Three and – an Extra'. The trope is central to the plot of Alice Fleming's *A Pinchbeck Goddess*, where the novel's socially awkward protagonist disguises herself as a gregarious widow named Mrs Edwards in order to be a success during the Simla season. It also appears the Sara Jeannette Duncan short story 'The

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<sup>240</sup> Maud Diver, *The Englishwoman in India* pp. 23-4.

Hesitation of Miss Anderson' where the titular character discovers her former love-rival from America is in Simla under a false name and in a bigamous marriage. The trope is also arguably invoked partway through Duncan's 'The Impossible Ideal' when the artist Ingersoll Armour is finally accepted by Simla society and reinvents his bohemian persona to be that of a respectable gentleman. All these new identities are unstable, however, and are discarded once a character leaves the space of Simla.

Though the capacity for an individual to obscure their personal identities could be read as indicative of a greater anxiety around the breakdown of the strict codes that governed Anglo-Indian life, the comic structure of Simla narratives serve to control these threats to the imperial order. The frivolity depicted in the texts is mirrored through the comic form of the text itself. The most noticeable resolution to the destabilised identity in Simla fiction is the resumption of the 'true' identity following the character's departure from the city. Madeline Norton discards her Winnie Edwards persona at the conclusion of the season so she can marry a man who has fallen for her in *A Pinchbeck Goddess*, while Mrs Fforde leaves Simla and ends her bigamous marriage for yet another man, once she discovers her original husband had died leaving her a substantial inheritance, in 'Miss Anderson's Hesitation'.

By purportedly replicating a rural England and the limits of the city and the season, Simla was able to accommodate behaviours that would be dangerous in the more obviously Indian lands beyond the city. Events that would irreparably destabilise British control on the plains – such as the bigamy in 'Miss Anderson's Hesitation' or Ingersoll Armour's rapid rise to the respectable classes from bohemian outsider – can be performed in Simla, provided that the perpetrator amends their behaviour

before leaving the city. In many ways, the ‘English’ atmosphere of Simla actually encourages behaviour that would be considered beyond the pale elsewhere in the Raj. Alice Fleming’s *A Pinchbeck Goddess* is a stark example of this encouragement. The novel begins with the awkward Madeline Norton returning to England by steamer following an unsuccessful season in the Summer Capital. Despite being beautiful, Norton is unable to engage with the tumultuous Simla social scene and acquires a reputation as ‘peculiar’ for not taking part.<sup>241</sup> While on the ship Madeline receives news that her elderly aunt has died and decides to return to Simla the following season. Upon her return she uses her ‘talent for mimicry’ to act as a gregarious, and often outrageous, widow named Winnie Edwards.<sup>242</sup> Over the course of the Simla season Mrs Edwards’s antics scandalise and delight the Simla community in equal measure. A bachelor officer named Gilmour falls in love with Edwards but feels cautious due to her more outrageous behaviour and her circumstances as a widow with a young daughter still in England. Gilmour eventually overcomes his reservations and proposes to Edwards at the conclusion of the summer season. At his proposal, Norton is able to admit her deception and not only reveal that she is not a widow and that the daughter in England is part of the same fiction but that she loves him too. This resolution allows the couple to marry more conventionally and be prepared for life outside of Simla.

Madeline Norton’s success in altering her identity into the excessive Winnie Edwards allows Fleming to also depict another aspect of the comic form that is frequently deployed by Simla fiction that of the ‘Simla woman’. Fundamentally,

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<sup>241</sup> Alice Fleming, *A Pinchbeck Goddess* (New York: D. Appleton & Co, 1897), p. 17.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid*, p. 7.

Winnie Edwards is an archetypical ‘Simla Woman’, a common stock character in works of the genre. In this instance Winnie is a very knowing depiction of the Simla woman and thus does no harm to the reputation of Anglo-Indian women. The prevalence of the Simla Woman in the genre arises from the number of women who visited the city during the season making Simla a unique space in the Raj where the British women outnumbered the menfolk. Diver disapproves of the figure writing that the:

‘Simla woman’ (by which is meant not all women in Simla, but a typical devotee of Simla society) is frivolous, and free and easy in mind and manners, is a truth which her most ardent admirer could not deny. One plea, at least, may be put forward in her defence – namely, that if former generations of her type helped to make Simla what it is, the tables have now been turned, and it is Simla which makes – or rather mars – the women of to-day.<sup>243</sup>

Although the disapproval in Simla life is obvious, Diver maintains her ideological focus in placing Anglo-Indian woman at the very centre of life in the Raj. In this instance it is as the progenitors of the Simla social scene. Anglo-Indian women and social life in the hill stations is the major concern of Diver’s *Englishwoman in India* handbook with the author arguing that women in Simla have ‘pitfalls more definite to contend with’ than her sisters on the plains.<sup>244</sup> Diver urges her reader to be cautious while in Simla by arguing that the social currents of the summer capital not only threatens the morality of the Simla women, but also the health of the Empire. It is due to this threat to the imperial structure that Diver positions as the reason behind the negative reputation held by Anglo-Indian women. Again, quoting an unnamed correspondent, she writes:

No doubt the greater part of the pleasure-seeking and holiday-making is done by the ladies, but a large share in it is visibly taken by the men; and we are disposed to believe that the extreme backwardness of Anglo-Indian society

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<sup>243</sup> Maud Diver, *The Englishwoman in India*, p. 26.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid*, p. 23.

in recognising the modern advance in the intellectual and social position of women is due to the frivolity of the overwhelming majority of Anglo-Indian women, who are not only devotees of fashion themselves, but do their utmost to divert the energies of the men from work (which they cannot share) to pleasure and frivolity elsewhere.<sup>245</sup>

Diver's solution to the problem of the Simla woman is a rejection of temptations of the frivolous social sphere and instead to have energies devoted to supporting the menfolk who must administer the Empire from the summer capital. In Diver's model it would be by proving themselves by supporting, and not distracting, the men in Simla that the negative reputation of Anglo-Indian woman could be overcome.

The moral panic behind Diver's conceptualisation of Simla life is in many respects comically mirrored in works of fiction set in the summer capital. The Simla woman lamented by Diver in her guidebook is frequently celebrated as an engaging aspect of Simla life. In the character of Madeline Norton/Winnie Edwards in *A Pinchbeck Goddess*, the Simla woman is unusually the protagonist in the narrative. By bringing her to the forefront, Fleming is able to depict the disparity between the genuine Madeline Norton and her performance as the Winnie Edwards character. In many respects Winnie Edwards embodies what Diver would understand to be the worst aspects of the Simla woman. Edwards exploits the lax social codes governing life in Simla and is often depicted shouting 'comic songs till after midnight' and frequently attending dances.<sup>246</sup> Fleming also uses Winnie's speech to highlight her flippancy, as she produces Wildean witticisms that allow her a degree of transgression while controlling that same transgression through humour. 'I behaved disgracefully,' Winnie argues in one such moment 'but it was all his fault'.<sup>247</sup> Her frivolity is

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<sup>245</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 25-26.

<sup>246</sup> Alice Fleming, *A Pinchbeck Goddess*, p. 157.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 124-125.

established early in the novel with another character realising that Winnie ‘was obviously not a person to be taken seriously’.<sup>248</sup> While Fleming’s close friend Diver would see this lack of seriousness as a dangerous character flaw, Fleming instead repurposes it as a mode of using Edwards’s various behaviours to show how positive a model she is by not doing harm and by resolving problems. The lack of seriousness not only means that Edwards is frivolous, it also means that her eccentricities are harmless as they are not to be taken as behaviours that threaten the Empire or the place of women in it.

The Simla woman permeates Simla fiction. Undoubtedly the most infamous example is Mrs Hauksbee in Kipling’s *Plain Tales from the Hills*. Hauksbee often has an ambiguous role in Kipling’s narratives, in ‘Three and – an Extra’ she threatens the Bremmil’s marriage by attracting Mr Bremmil away from his wife who has been in a long period of mourning for the couple’s dead child. Although Hauksbee in this instance is obviously acting in a predatory fashion, her role in the narrative is eventually positive as it provokes the bereaved Mrs Bremmil to overcome her grief and re-join society. Hauksbee reappears in later *Plain Tales* as a more sympathetic character. In ‘Consequences’ Hauksbee accidentally receive a correspondence for a senior civil servant due to the orderly misreading ‘Head Clerk’ as ‘Hauksbee’, a potent metaphor of the merging of the social and the political spheres found in Simla society. The letter gives Hauksbee a glimpse into ‘the naked machinery of the Great Indian Government, stripped of its casings, and lacquer, and paint, and guard-rails’.<sup>249</sup> Hauksbee uses this information as leverage with the administration in order

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<sup>248</sup> *Ibid*, p. 145.

<sup>249</sup> Rudyard Kipling, *Plain Tales from the Hills*, p. 87.

to get Tarrion, an admirer of hers, an undemanding permanent position in the Simla government. Hauksbee protects another British soldier in the 'The Rescue of Pluffles'; here she saves a young British subaltern from her rival Mrs Reiver who is attempting to seduce and ruin him. The two compete for the officer's affections with Hauksbee eventually triumphing: she encourages the young soldier to return to England, away from the temptations of Simla society.

Anglo-Indian commentators such as Diver who reject a comedic sensibility in their writing do not echo Kipling's admiration for the figure of the Simla woman.

Although Diver's *The Englishwoman in India* guidebook expresses sympathy for the women who are - in Diver's words - 'marred' by Simla, the guidebook encourages the Englishwoman to stay away from the city and not fall victim to its social life.

Where Diver in her morality guide laments the Simla woman, Kipling in his fiction expresses an admiration for her. At the conclusion of 'Consequences', Tarrion declares 'that Mrs Hauksbee was the greatest woman on earth', a statement that Kipling's narrator believes to be 'true or nearly so'.<sup>250</sup> Tarrion laments the fact that he cannot marry Hauksbee declaring that if she 'were twenty years younger, and I her husband, I should be Viceroy of India in fifteen years'.<sup>251</sup> As a character Mrs Hauksbee is less mortal woman and more a potent force of nature. Where Diver laments the 'extreme backwardness of Anglo-Indian society in recognising the modern advance in the intellectual and social position of women', Kipling celebrates Hauksbee as an eminent social operator who is able to manipulate this

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<sup>250</sup> *Ibid*, p. 87.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid*, p. 88.



‘backwardness’. This attitude is conveyed by Hauksbee’s frequent refrain: ‘What fools men are!’<sup>252</sup>

The character of Mrs Hauksbee has undeniable influence on subsequent works of Simla fiction. The command Winnie Edwards exercises over Simla society in *A Pinchbeck Goddess* and her ambiguous widowhood is similar to that of Mrs Hauksbee, while Edwards’s own secret fears of discovery and social awkwardness emerge through an interiority and vulnerability that the inscrutable Hauksbee is never granted by Kipling. Duncan’s Simla-based story ‘The Hesitation of Miss Anderson’ mention ‘Mrs Hauksbee’ as a figurative name for Simla women as a whole: ‘tiffin with Mrs Hauksbee’ becomes an iconic aspect of Simla life along with living ‘precisely under the deodars’.<sup>253</sup> Literary constructions of Simla are replicated through their influence over further fictional depictions of the summer capital while also constructing the city’s reputation as a place of love affairs and frivolity.

Perhaps the greatest mystery of Mrs Hauksbee is the identity and fate of Mr Hauksbee. It is not revealed whether Mr Hauksbee is deceased (making Mrs Hauksbee a widow) or is remaining on the plains for the summer (which would make her a ‘Grass Widow’). Both these possibilities are destabilising, especially in the Anglo-Indian context. If Hauksbee is widowed it not only means her husband has died in India, but that she has refused to return to England and continues to live frivolously in Simla. More generally, as Emma Liggins argues, the literary figure of the widow is ‘a disruptive, contradictory presence, threateningly independent and

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<sup>252</sup> *Ibid*, p. 88.

<sup>253</sup> Sara Jeannette Duncan, *The Pool in the Desert* p. 105.

sexually experienced.<sup>254</sup> In many respects Liggins's definition of the widow squarely fits with Hauksbee's character, whether it be her 'contradictory' presence as a scandalous figure whose history is never revealed to the reader, to her independence which, in one instance, extends so far that she can hold the government of the Raj to ransom. If Mrs Hauksbee's husband is still alive, making her a 'Grass Widow', then she becomes a destabilising figure in another respect. Hauksbee's constant flirting with and control over Simla men situates her as an architect of the 'domestic tragedies' cautioned against by Diver in *The Englishwoman in India*. In Kanwar's representation of Simla as a space of 'picnics and adultery', the figure of Mrs Hauksbee can be read as bringing together the social sphere of the city with the potential for a sexual transgression.<sup>255</sup>

It is Kipling's use of the comic form that allows him to depict and defuse the potentially destabilising figure of Hauksbee as an otherwise positive aspect of life in Simla. Although frequently outrageous and scheming, Hauksbee's role is largely benign. An important piece of the comic irony that exists in Kipling's *Plain Tales* short stories is the fact that Hauksbee's actions – although often seemingly threatening to the narrow social codes that govern Anglo-Indian life – actually work to protect individuals in Simla and secure British imperial rule over the subcontinent. Her less altruistic actions, such as threatening the Bremmil marriage or blackmailing the government with state secrets are relayed with a charm that controls and defangs the explicit threat to the imperial order that these actions pose. It is through this

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<sup>254</sup> Emma Liggins, *Odd Women* (University of Manchester Press, 2011), p. 11.

<sup>255</sup> Pamela Kanwar, *Imperial Simla*, p. 9.

comic inscrutability that Kipling is able to depict such a destabilising force as Hauksbee as a positive figure in his *Plain Tales*.

Although undoubtedly indebted to Kipling's Mrs Hauksbee, women-authored Simla fiction often deviates from his methods of managing the anxieties produced by depictions of the Simla woman. In Kipling, Hauksbee exists as a force of nature and both her comic and dramatic potential arises from her inscrutability. In works produced by women, the Simla woman is granted a degree of interiority, meaning that a cultivation of a similar mystique would be unavailable to them. Although later works by women were undoubtedly engaging with the conceptualisations of the Simla women established by Kipling (and Mrs Hauksbee in particular) they also frequently subvert or deconstruct this figure by offering the character greater interior life. Winnie Edwards is the strongest deconstruction of the Hauksbee figure in Simla fiction of this period and can be read as Fleming's response to her brother's creation. As a widow, Winnie Edwards occupies a similar space as Mrs Hauksbee, a 'destabilising' figure in the narrative. Unlike Kipling's heroine, Edwards makes no attempt to obscure her history and gives several references to her deceased husband and child remaining in England, both of which are -of course - fictions. Edwards has a similar force of personality as Hauksbee, nicely demonstrated at the beginning of the novel when she arrives at the rundown bungalow that she will be staying in over the course of the summer. Janet, Edwards's companion, laments the dilapidation but the widow refuses to fall into despair and declares that:

We'll buy a carpet, several carpets, to cover this thing on the floor, which seems to have turned gray with horror at the ugliness of the wall-paper, and we'll get tins of Aspinall, and then you'll see.<sup>256</sup>

Through this action, Edwards shows commonality with the stoical, home-making memsahibs valorised by the likes of Diver. Winnie's argument that the state of the house is to be expected because 'India is not at all a ready-made country' positions the Simla woman as a figure at the centre of the imperial project, the central thesis of much of Diver's work.<sup>257</sup> Even though Diver, if her polemics in *The Englishwoman's Guide to India* are to be believed, would disapprove of Edwards's frivolous conduct during the Simla season, the emphasis that Fleming places on Edwards's feminine labour is in many respects similar to Diver's own focus in her own domestic fiction. Fleming then partially moves the Simla woman from the architect of domestic tragedies to someone who contributes to the health of the Empire in a manner similar to Diver's Honor Desmond. Fleming's depiction of the Simla woman thus rests between the extreme opposites of Diver's fears of the marring and tragedy arising from her and Kipling's apotheosis of the figure.

In the same way that Fleming highlights the capacity of Empire building that the Simla woman can possess, she also emphasises the fallible humanity of the Simla woman. Fleming's most obvious method is to focus on the performative nature of being a 'Simla woman'. Prior to the novel's denouement that Winnie Edwards is an invention of a shy and retiring woman who failed in the previous Simla season, Fleming draws attention to her artificiality. She describes Edwards as possessing a:

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<sup>256</sup> Alice Fleming, *A Pinchbeck Goddess*, p. 24.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid*, p. 25.

Face [that] had a studied perfection of tint, accompanied by an unmistakeable artificiality of surface. Her eyebrows and long lashes were black, contrasting sharply with bright hair that was too warmly tinted to be golden, russet to be ruddy, too brilliant to be brown. It decked her pretty head in well-arranged rippled and curls; and a certain quality of dainty finish hard to define, but impossible to ignore, characterized her whole appearance.<sup>258</sup>

The studied perfection of Edwards's appearance and the impossibility to adequately describe it in prose in many ways echoes Kipling's worshipful description of Mrs Hauksbee. The dramatic revelation that Edwards's appearance is part of her deception of Simla society and that in reality she is a spinster highlights the unreality of such an all-powerful figure as Mrs Hauksbee. In many respects, Norton's performance as Mrs Edwards is a studied enacting and utilisation of the fundamental traits of Simla woman. The fact that Madeline Norton assumes the majority of these traits as part of her ruse indicates them as essential to the ideal. This Simla woman imbues a potential for 'disruption' while also possessing 'experience' - both features that Liggins identifies as key aspects of the literary widow. The prospect of the widow during the Simla season also allows women to flirt and pursue loves without the threat of adultery or the assumption they should exhibit reserve. With the character of Mrs Edwards, Madeline Norton also invents a six-year-old daughter named Daisy back home in England. The presence of this child is an important factor in Norton's performance. That Edwards is a mother and a widow allows for her to be read not as a fallen woman but a figure that possesses sexual and marital experience as well as a maternal instinct that suggest good character no matter how she behaves during the season.

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<sup>258</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 22-23.

The plot of *A Pinchbeck Goddess* confirms Pamela Kanwar's declaration that Simla existed as 'world of make-believe'.<sup>259</sup> In her deconstruction of the figures of Simla women popularised by her brother's stories as well as her own experience of the Raj, Fleming draws particular attention to the artificiality of Simla. In this respect, *A Pinchbeck Goddess* has similar aims to an Englishwoman in India by working as an apologia for the figure of the Simla woman. Where Diver expresses regret at the marring of women in Simla, Fleming emphasises the frivolity and performativity of the figure. To Fleming, Simla is a space that is not serious. It is because of this lack of seriousness in Simla that the frivolous behaviours depicted in *A Pinchbeck Goddess* can be portrayed as unthreatening to the Anglo-Indian order.

Ultimately *A Pinchbeck Goddess* rewards Norton's performance as a Simla woman in that she is able to secure a marriage at the climax of the narrative, the generic successful conclusion to middlebrow Raj fiction. By beginning the novel, a year earlier with Madeline unsuccessfully leaving Simla after a failed season, Fleming is able to compare her successes as Edwards with her previous ignominies and reveal the importance of the role of the Simla woman in finding a husband. The question of marriage is the most challenging for Norton's performance as a widow. Edwards's sweetheart Major Gilmour begins to fear life being married to a widowed mother. Gilmour is most perturbed by the presence of Daisy – Edwards's child and proof of her sexual experience – and before his engagement to Edwards he ruminates over the daughter:

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<sup>259</sup> Pamela Kanwar, *Imperial Simla*, p. 1.

She was doubtless a sweet and winsome little creature, very like her mother, and when he knew her he should be very fond of her; but still – Perhaps her father's people would claim a great deal of her company; but, still –<sup>260</sup>

Neither Gilmour, nor Fleming are able to articulate why Daisy makes the Major doubt the marriage, but the evidence of Edwards's sexual experience and the anxieties related to children in India are two likely reasons. Not only is the child living proof of Winnie's previous marriage, Daisy is also unsuitable to Indian life due to the fact that 'the risk was too great' for the mother to bring out her 'one little girl'.<sup>261</sup> Despite these misgivings, Gilmour decides to marry Edwards at the close of the Simla season. Fortunately for him, Norton must reveal her invention of both Winnie Edwards and the daughter. Although Edwards's gregariousness was required for the couple to meet in the first place, the two are now able to leave Simla and live as a conventional Anglo-Indian couple without the anxieties of Edwards's widowhood, her behaviour, or the presence of previous children. This is a positive end to the novel: not only does Norton find a husband after her disastrous first year in Simla but the threat that a character such as Winnie Edwards poses to the British imperial order outside Simla is removed by her reversion to the retiring, and more socially acceptable, Madeline Norton at the novel's conclusion.

Winnie Edwards is largely a positive impression of a Simla woman in a work of Simla fiction. This positivity is not always the case, however, and the Simla woman may be portrayed as a duplicitous criminal while retaining a degree of narrative sympathy in the text. These less upstanding women emerged alongside the more positive versions. Mrs Reiver, in Kipling's 'The Rescue of Pluffles', is an example

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<sup>260</sup> Alice Fleming, *A Pinchbeck Goddess*, p. 279.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid*, p. 32.

of a Simla woman who desires to ruin a subaltern for her own amusement. Kipling constructs Reiver as the antithesis of Mrs Hauksbee, but she is a character who is always defeated by her more morally upstanding – if sometimes outrageous– nemesis.

Duncan's short story 'The Hesitation of Miss Anderson' provides a good example of this figure of the scheming Simla woman. Like *A Pinchbeck Goddess*, 'The Hesitation of Miss Anderson' has a complex narrative of fake marriages and secret identities, reflecting the often gossipy, tangled and confusing social life of Simla during the summer season. The story begins in New York with Madeline Anderson expecting to marry Frederick Prendergast. However, a young British woman, Violet Fforde, arrives on the scene and marries him instead. Shortly afterwards Prendergast is imprisoned for fraud, Fforde flees the shame while Madeline continues to care for the man who she expected to marry until he dies in prison six years later. Freed from her commitments, Anderson commences a world tour going first to Japan and then to Simla (much like Duncan herself) where most of the narrative occurs. While at Simla Anderson falls in love with a British officer called Innes and is dejected when he reveals that not only is he married, but that his wife will be shortly arriving in Simla. When the wife arrives, Anderson is shocked to discover that not only is Mrs Innes Prendergast's widow, but that she and Innes have been married for so long that it would mean they married when Prendergast was alive. In short Mrs Innes, also known as Violet Fforde, is a bigamist. Fearing a scandal Anderson does not reveal Violet's secret, leaving Simla society unaware of the crime. During the course of the season Fforde falls in love with yet another man named Valentine Drake. She also learns from Anderson that her first husband died without a will, so she is set to



inherit his entire estate. As Prendergast was still alive when Violet married Innes, Violet declares that she 'never have been Colonel Innes's wife', which leaves her free to marry Drake and leave Simla with her deceased husband's fortune.<sup>262</sup>

'The Hesitation of Miss Anderson' presents an image of the Simla woman where the insinuations and innuendos that surround the figure are proven to be correct. By abandoning her husband (albeit in a New York prison, rather than on the Indian plains) and marrying another man, Fforde is a bigamist as well as an adulterer. In many respects, Fforde as a character occupies a similar – but more extreme – space to that of the widow in fiction. While it is technically true that Fforde is a widow, she is unaware of this fact (until she meets Miss Anderson). As an unwitting widow, Violet's actions do not carry the same narrative sympathy they would if she were a genuine widow. Both 'The Hesitation of Miss Anderson' and *A Pinchbeck Goddess* address the concept of the widowed Simla woman, and both feature an unconventional interpretation. *A Pinchbeck Goddess* features an unmarried character pretending to be a widow and exploiting the disruptive potential afforded by the status while 'The Hesitation of Miss Anderson' shows a character unaware of her own widowhood who also denies that her previous marriage even occurred. Both of these texts invoke the figure of the widow as a method for depicting the license afforded to women in the summer capital. While the unconventionality of the figure reflects the frivolous atmosphere of Simla. The separation of widows from their husbands also offers a darker version of the 'Grass Widows' in the capital, who were separated from their husbands on the plains. In this respect, although it is often a disruptive presence in a narrative, the invocation of widowhood is actually a method

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<sup>262</sup> Sara Jeannette Duncan, *The Pool in the Desert*, p. 157.

of containing the threat to Anglo-Indian social mores that is posed by the liberated Simla woman, by displacing the anxieties around the Grass Widows onto that of the genuine widow.

The invocation of the widow figure is of course complicated by the fact that in both narratives the widows challenge the concept of widowhood themselves. Both these characters in some way refute their widowhood – either by admitting to not really being a widow at all, or by denying she was ever married in the first place. Although the figure of the widow in Simla fiction is destabilising, the revelations in both texts concerning character's status (or not) as widows is a far more disruptive influence in the narrative. Both 'The Hesitation of Miss Anderson' and *A Pinchbeck Goddess* use irony and the comic form in an attempt to contain this disruption and avoid the texts inadvertently arguing against the presence of women in India. Miss Fforde's manoeuvring to gain a new husband in Valentine Drake as well as her capacity to still earn her deceased first husband's estate are recounted with a sense of ironic sympathy by Duncan's authorial voice. Though her actions would be considered immoral, if not outright criminal, by the larger Anglo-Indian society, Duncan's negotiation of Violet's schemes – and the protagonist Miss Anderson's sympathy for her – manage to assuage her potential disruptiveness and portray her in a similar manner to Mrs Hauksbee when she blackmails the Indian government in 'Consequences'. Ultimately, both Winnie Edwards's and Violet Fforde's uncertain status as widows is the very thing that allows the disruption wrought by the characters to be contained and managed in the confines of Simla. At the end of the season both characters are able to marry again. The revelation that Winnie is not a widow with a child encourages Major Gilmour to put aside his hesitations in

marrying her while Fforde's discovery that she is a widow, but (significantly) was not when she was married Innes, allows her to leave Simla with a new husband. Just as Simla is a strictly demarcated location where certain behaviours are permitted, if not explicitly encouraged, the widow figures in these narratives are allowed a certain amount of transgression. But any threat in this transgression is contained by the conclusion of each narrative as the women marry and leave Simla. In the case of Edwards, she becomes as loyal an army wife as Diver could wish for. Although the more dangerous character of Fforde remains with her third (or second) husband, the couple returns to Europe and live off her inheritance from her dead first husband. Duncan takes Fforde away from the more dangerous space of the colonies and back to the more stable European imperial metropolises of London and Paris that can accommodate her still transgressive femininity.

It is unsurprising that Sara Jeannette Duncan presents a more challenging interpretation of the Simla woman than her fellow women authors, or Kipling. Arriving in Simla years after she had begun writing journalism in America and her native Canada, Duncan as an author is less preoccupied with the portrayal and reputation of Anglo-Indian women than those born into the colonial families such as Diver or Fleming (or, again, even Kipling). Duncan is the figure who most engages with the pretension of the summer capital. Her fiction often depicts residents of the summer capital in a more troublesome light. Violet Fforde's bigamy in 'Miss Anderson's Hesitation' or Ingersoll Armour's social climbing in 'An Impossible Ideal' are both indicative of her more caustic representation of the Simla season. Her negative impressions of Simla life, also produce a rich vein of comic satire. The comic aspect of Duncan's work allows her to limit the impact of the problematic

behaviours of her characters. Her use of the comic, her capacity to go further than her contemporaries in depicting shockingly unconventional behaviours, arises from her position as someone who arrived at the Raj as a Canadian, rather than an Anglo-Indian or arriving from Britain. Although Duncan did eventually spend a significant amount of time in Simla, she is able in her writing to create a distance between herself and the Anglo-Indians who she is depicting. Due to her separation from the wider Anglo-Indian community, Duncan's work is able to frequently engage with Simla tropes and lampoon them in a manner that approaches ridicule.

Duncan's satire is largely focused on lancing the pretensions of the Anglo-Indian community. This attitude is evident in her disparaging sketch of the city as minor, 'artificial little community' in *The Other Side of the Latch*.<sup>263</sup> The incongruity between the pretensions of Englishness and the reality of Simla are a recurrent theme. In 'The Hesitation of Miss Anderson', the sympathetic Madeline Anderson ridicules the pomp of Simla as 'a cult of official dignity' describing how she:

[...] saw a staff-officer in full uniform, red and white feathers and all, going to the birthday dinner at the Viceroy's the other evening in a perambulator – rickshaw [...] That is typical of the place. All the honours and dignities – and a perambulator to put them in...<sup>264</sup>

Duncan ridicules the image of Simla as the dynamic and fashionable capital of the Raj. Where the pomp and ceremony of the imperial government is infantilised through her comparison of the rickshaw to a perambulator. As well as satirising the pretension of the summer capital, Duncan also highlights the malleability of identity in the city. By invoking the image of the perambulator, Duncan positions the

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<sup>263</sup> Sara Jeannette Duncan, *The Other Side of the Latch* p. 8.

<sup>264</sup> Sara Jeannette Duncan, *The Pool in the Desert*, p. 105.

‘honours and dignities’ bestowed upon members of the Indian government as childish dressing up, emphasising the capacity for Anglo-Indians to achieve a status higher than in their British homeland while attacking the pretentiousness that comes with this rapid class malleability.

In her letter Miss Anderson continues to highlight the pretensions of Simla life, drawing attention to the:

Ridiculous little white-washed houses made of mud and tin, and calling itself Warwick Castle, Blenheim, Abbotsford! They haven’t a very good hold, these Simla residences, and sometimes they slip fifty yards or so down the mountain-side.<sup>265</sup>

Duncan shows the grandiosity of Simla’s image of itself versus the reality of the city and conforms to Kanwar’s identification of Anglo-Indian homes in Simla largely being ‘scores of cottages with evocative English, Irish, Scottish, and Welsh names’.<sup>266</sup> The names of these homes reveal the Anglo-Indian desire to view Simla as an enclave of pre-industrial England in India with themselves as the aristocratic masters of the city. Typically, Duncan identifies these pretensions and acknowledges their ridiculousness; in this instance the grandly named, but poorly constructed houses frequently slip down the mountainside. This not only reflects the pretensions of the Anglo-Indians at Simla, but also how these pretensions frequently came undone in the context of the summer capital. Although Miss Anderson acknowledge that ‘this queer little place has nobility’, this nobility is something can be looked on as a childish performance by those who do not stand to gain anything from it.<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> Sara Jeannette Duncan, *The Pool in the Desert*, p. 105.

<sup>266</sup> Kanwar, *Imperial Simla*, p. 2.

<sup>267</sup> Sara Jeannette Duncan, *The Pool in the Desert*, p. 105.

In *On the Other Side of the Latch*, Duncan spends a substantial part of the book dismissing the inherent Englishness of city's climate, the fundamental aspect of Simla that encourages the image of the city as a rural England in India. She ironically invokes the image of Simla-as-England while at the same time undermining it. On the surface, Duncan echoes her fellow commentators of Simla life, writing that 'Simla is not really India, but a little bit of England with an Adirondack climate and the 'insect belt' of Central Asia; and things are not so wonderful here as you would think to look at us on the map'.<sup>268</sup> First destabilising the image of 'a little bit of England' as a space with a North American climate and Asian insects, Duncan then delights in informing the reader of the many bugs that both infest the supposedly English homes and erode the distinctions between the private European home and natural Indian world. Duncan details how in Simla 'scorpions and centipedes do come up from the plains and live in the cracks of the walls, whence they crawl out'. The admittance that these invertebrate creatures come up from the plains is also perhaps a sly jibe at her fellow Simla residents. The Simla community are so used to these arthropod invaders that 'nobody even screams at a centipede' or the millipedes that 'often run like little express trains across your bathroom walls'. Duncan also draws particular attention to the 'very large black garden spiders' that 'get into the muslin curtain over the window and curl up and die'.<sup>269</sup> Perhaps Duncan's starkest acknowledgement of the difference of the Simla climate from the English is the presence of monkeys that frequently thwart her husband. Not only do these monkeys reveal a fundamental difficulty in seeing Simla as in any way pastorally English, they also serve as a counter to the pretensions of the summer

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<sup>268</sup> Sara Jeannette Duncan, *The Other Side of the Latch* pp. 156-157.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid*, p. 157

capital. Duncan writes how the Simla monkeys are so numerous that ‘a monkey census is obviously impossible’ but if taken ‘it would show that every resident official had at least one simian counterpart, a statement which I hope will not give offense on either side’.<sup>270</sup> Not only does Duncan highlight the childish dressing-up aspect of life in Simla, she also ridicules the work of the Simla government through the concept of a ‘monkey census’, mockingly hesitant to state the fact that there is a monkey counterpart for every official for fear of offending the apes with such a comparison. Like her invocation of the bugs that come up from the plains, Duncan again compares the Anglo-Indians of Simla to the Indian animals that are found in the city, another example of the satirical tone found throughout her work.

Appearing in the same collection as ‘The Hesitation of Miss Anderson’, ‘The Impossible Ideal’ takes the pretensions of the Simla community as its central theme. The story focuses on two Simla residents, Miss Harris and Mr Philips, who attend a Simla art show intent on ‘scoffing’ at the poor quality, but beloved, work of other Simla residents.<sup>271</sup> The pair are shocked when they discover many paintings they deem to be of superior quality, but these have been overlooked by the judges and the prize goes to one of the supposedly prosaic pieces. The couple befriend the artist – named Ingersoll Armour – and learn he is in dire financial straits as he is unable to sell any of his work. In a last ditch attempt he enters a later art show and wins. However, Harris and Philips find themselves disappointed with the new, popular, work while Armour becomes the toast of the Simla season. At the end of the story

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<sup>270</sup> *Ibid*, p. 84.

<sup>271</sup> Sara Jeannette Duncan, *The Pool in the Desert*, p. 42.

Armour accepts a prestigious position at an art school on the plains but upon leaving Simla never arrives at the school choosing to instead resume his transient lifestyle.

The strength of 'The Impossible Ideal' lies in Duncan's depiction of the pretension of the Simla community as being not just between the its identity in relation to the rest of India and the wider imperial hierarchy but also between fellow members of the community itself. Harris and Philips's despair at the popular artwork, reaffirms Pierre Bourdieu's understanding of aesthetic taste as a something 'often constituted in opposition to the choices of the groups closest in social space'.<sup>272</sup> Due to Philips narration of the short story there is little evidence given to the reader that the later paintings produced by Armour are actually weaker than his earlier works. Thus, one possible reading of the short story is that in order to position themselves as distinguished members of Simla society, Harris and Philips must reject the popular works of art and instead champion the underappreciated ones. At the same time that the pair are lamenting Armour's newfound success, the artist himself is undergoing a process of 'distinction' and takes his place 'in the stable body of society, to recognise and make demands, to become a taxpayer, a churchgoer, a householder, a husband' and entire the mundanity of conventional society.<sup>273</sup> While Simla society encourages figures such as Harris and Philips to disparage the aesthetic tastes of their neighbours, it allows a poor artist such as Armour to rise into a respectability that would be unavailable to him elsewhere in India and, thus, apparently lose his talent. This scheme of aesthetic distinction that Duncan represents in 'The Impossible Ideal' – just like the capacity to alter one's identity and the licenses afforded to the

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<sup>272</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction* (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 53.

<sup>273</sup> Sara Jeannette Duncan, *The Pool in the Desert*, p. 91.



Simla woman's behaviour –is discarded once the confines of Simla are left and the person returns to their life outside the summer capital.

In the genre of Raj fiction, works set in the summer capital of Simla have enough in common to be identified as a cohesive genre – Simla fiction. One of the most obvious features of this fiction is the humour in the depiction of the frivolity of the summer season at the capital. Works of Simla fiction often take a frivolous or comic tone in an act of mimicry of the playfulness of the season. The comic in Simla fiction manifests largely in three different, but connected, forms; the sense of the identity shifting, the figure of the Simla woman, and the pretentiousness granted by this mobility of identity. While mirroring the social current of the summer capital, this comic strain also works as a form of anxiety management. The tone of Simla fiction means that, despite the frequently outrageous and sometimes criminal behaviour featured in the narratives, nothing too serious or damaging can happen in the texts themselves. Simla fiction is also keen to acknowledge the boundaries of Simla as a city, the frivolity of the space can accommodate transgressions against the strict Anglo-Indian colonial codes of behaviour, but these behaviours must cease once the individual leaves the capital.

## Chapter Four: The Anglo-Indian Picnic

In his reading of picnics in texts at the turn of the nineteenth century, Andrew Hubbell argues that the picnic emerged as a Romantic reaction against the rise of urbanisation and industrialisation, providing a ‘moral identification with the landscape’ from which people were becoming alienated.<sup>274</sup> Significantly, the act of picnicking allowed for the formation of an identity as ‘going on a picnic made a statement about who you were and what your values and tastes were’.<sup>275</sup> The picnic was quickly subsumed into wider English culture: by the twentieth century the cultural commentator Georgia Battiscombe was declaring the picnic to be ‘the Englishman’s grand gesture, his final defiance flung in the face of fate’.<sup>276</sup> Although Battiscombe’s tone may be understood to be ironic, there remains a kernel of truth in this positioning for the irony to work. The very activity of picnicking came to be seen as a cultural identifier of a unique Englishness. Éadaoin Agnew highlights the importance of activities which brought ‘the colonial exiles together through a shared identity’.<sup>277</sup> The picnic was not only positioned as a national pastime, but the communal nature of the event allowed it to function as one of these activities that brought the ‘colonial exiles’ together. As Hubbell argues, early examples of picnicking in the early-to-mid nineteenth century was an opportunity for people ‘to perform their fitness to influence the social, political, and economic development for Britain’.<sup>278</sup> This function is similar to Raj fiction, a genre where Anglo-Indian life is

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<sup>274</sup> Andrew Hubbell, ‘How Wordsworth invented picnicking and saved British culture’, *Romanticism* 12:1 (2006), 46-51 (p.46).

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid*, p.47.

<sup>276</sup> Georgia Battiscombe, *English Picnics* (London: Harvill Press, 1949), p. 1.

<sup>277</sup> Éadaoin Agnew, *Imperial Women Writers in Victorian India* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017) p. 106.

<sup>278</sup> Andrew Hubbell, ‘How Wordsworth invented picnicking and saved British culture’, p.47.

often celebrated as a method for providing a justification for imperial rule. In the colonial context of the Raj, the picnic is one such method for forging a ‘shared’ Anglo-Indian identity, reassuming some of its Romantic functions as a method of cultural distinction and staking a claim over the landscape. The space of the picnic also permitted Anglo-Indians to symbolise a cultural separation from Indians as well an opportunity to engage in a reinforcement of a national identity. In works of women-authored Raj fiction the picnic -as a construction of an Anglo-Indian space in the Indian wilderness – frequently provided an opportunity for the women characters to be depicted beyond the confines of the areas to which they were often limited.

Picnicking proved to be an extremely popular pastime for Anglo-Indians. In her history of the courting rituals of the Anglo-Indian community, Anne de Courcy acknowledges how in the Raj ‘picnics were popular from everyone from the Viceroy down’.<sup>279</sup> Part of the induction into the Anglo-Indian community following arrival to India involved ‘an invitation to a dinner party, picnic, or tennis’, a configuration that confirms the picnic’s position in the formation of a communal and national identity in the colony.<sup>280</sup> In his history of Anglo-Indian social life, Dennis Kincaid quotes a satirical verse addressed to women who fail to find husbands in India and find their ‘Bond Street beauty sadly worn/ Through drinking cocktails night and morn/ With moonlight picnics until dawn’.<sup>281</sup> The picnic existed not only as a popular pastime and a method of identity formation, it also became to be seen as an emblematic form

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<sup>279</sup> Anne de Courcy, *The Fishing Fleet* (London: Phoenix, 2013), Plate 11 caption.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid*, p. 95.

<sup>281</sup> Quoted in Dennis Kincaid, *British Social Life in India 1608-1937* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1936), p. 153.

of Anglo-Indian entertainment. Noticeably this form of entertainment was also realised through a spatial formation, the picnic space is one that is constructed and separate from other spaces such as the home or the club space.

The Anglo-Indian picnic also provided authors of Raj fiction the opportunity to re-enact the Romantic origins of the activity, specifically its capacity to function as a signifier of bourgeois respectability and as a space of inscribing control over the landscape. Hubbell acknowledges how, with the popularity of the picnic, the meal became commodified into mainstream English culture with the 'Bank Holiday Act (1871)' which brought about 'picnic trains [...] to take the working classes to the countryside for weekend picnics'.<sup>282</sup> Though meals named 'picnics' had existed previous to this, most noticeably recounted in Jane Austen's *Emma* they cannot, in the words of Hubbell, consider these 'so-called picnics [...] fully modern' for Austen's characters 'picnics mean an aristocratic fete'. Though the Box Hill trip in *Emma* may be aligned more properly with a modern picnic the fact that 'Emma and the judgemental narrator reject it as a thoroughly improper, vulgar modern taste' reveals the 'conflicted iconography' of the picnic in the early nineteenth century.<sup>283</sup> The popularity of the picnic meant that its capacity for a cultural distinction was limited and no longer able to permit 'the emerging bourgeoisie to ritually re-affirm their community identity'.<sup>284</sup> This bourgeois identity was built on a middle-class denouncement of the 'amoral eating, use of surplus wealth, and leisure of the upper classes and lower classes', and thus establish a sense of cultural distinction for the

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<sup>282</sup> Andrew Hubbell, 'How Wordsworth invented picnicking and saved British culture', p. 46.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid*, p. 45.

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid*, p. 49.

new bourgeoisie.<sup>285</sup> In India at the end of the nineteenth and into the early twentieth century, the picnic retains this capacity for distinction due to the relatively small number of Anglo-Indians. The cheaper cost of living, the prestige arising from having servants, and the racial hierarchies of the Raj meant that the Anglo-Indian community could easily position themselves as members of a bourgeois or aristocratic class and host a picnic in its original form as a space to make ‘a statement about who you were and what your values and tastes were.’<sup>286</sup> If national identity was, as Benedict Anderson argued, a form of ‘imagined political community’, then the picnic is one such spatially focused activity that reinforces this imagined entity.<sup>287</sup> In addition to providing a national signifier, the picnic provides a class-based differentiation. Hubbell highlights that the emergence of the picnic depended upon ‘a wide variety of new technologies, inventions that the emergent middle-class claims its own, it is a meal that also symbolises progressive modernity’.<sup>288</sup> A century later, the picnic in Raj fiction is more focused on the construction of a national rather than class-based identity. In this respect, although the class aspect of the picnic is subsumed by the wider nationalistic connotations of the picnic, the space does possess an ideological function in a manner similar to its Romantic forebear. Rather than being a symbol of a ‘progressive modernity’ of the emergent middle-class, the Anglo-Indian picnic benefits from the popularity of the meal in the English homeland. In works of fiction the Raj context of the meal symbolises a process of English colonialism through the establishment of an ‘English’ space in a distinctly un- English locale as well as demonstrating the

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<sup>285</sup> *Ibid*, p. 47.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid*, p. 47.

<sup>287</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 2016), p. 6.

<sup>288</sup> Andrew Hubbell, ‘How Wordsworth invented picnicking and saved British culture’, p. 49.

physical capacity for Empire building possessed by the Anglo-Indians. The image of Anglo-Indians that Raj fiction wished to construct was intrinsically linked to a sense of bourgeois respectability as life in the colonies permitted them to live ‘far better than they could have back Home’.<sup>289</sup> In Raj fiction, the nationalist image of the Anglo-Indians is bound to a sense of middle-class respectability. The Romantic legacy of the picnic as a space for middle-class values to be displayed, is redeployed in Raj fiction a century later as part of the national identity that the picnic shored up.

With the popularity of these meals and its Romantic legacy in mind, it is unsurprising that the Anglo-Indian picnic became a popular activity for works of Raj fiction to depict. Yet a tension exists in depictions of the picnic in the genre. In the broader English literary tradition, the picnic is frequently a space that leads to narrative discord. This is present from Jane Austen’s *Emma* (1815) to more modern writing such as Ian McEwan’s *Enduring Love* (1997). A tension exists throughout English literature of the picnic as a space and temporary location selected for picturesque views and the picnic as an event which is functionally a party or festivity whereby the social codes that governing eating, drinking, and socialising could be discarded. In both understandings of the picnic it is the distance from the home space, that is the zone of moral scrutiny,

In the context of the Raj, the image of the discordant picnic is also present and this disruptive space serves a purpose in the genre’s function as a form of anxiety management. By being a discrete time and space that is both separated from normal life and indicative of a sense of English national identity, the picnic is a space that

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<sup>289</sup> Alan Johnson, *Out of Bounds* (University of Hawaii Press, 2011) p. 47.

possesses enough narrative stability for disruption to emerge. The establishment of the temporary space of the picnic is one method for the emergence of the narrative conflicts the middlebrow narrative arc mandates. Ideologically, the temporary space of the literary picnic serves as a space sacrificed to these anxieties in order to protect the more permanent, valuable – yet unstable – spaces such as the Anglo-Indian home from being the site where these anxieties may erupt. This is most obvious in the case of the infamous Malabar picnic of Forster's *A Passage to India*, a modernist reimagining of the genre. Forster's use of the picnic might be expected considering *A Passage to India*'s antipathy to British imperialism, however the Malabar excursion is an echo of the picnics that exist in works produced by Rudyard Kipling and his middlebrow successors such as Maud Diver, Bithia May Croker, and Alice Perrin that frequently become disastrous. Unlike Forster who uses the picnic as the moment that lays bare the repression and inevitable decline of the Raj, middlebrow authors of Raj fiction chose to contain the discord that emerges from the picnic and use the overcoming of the disruption to justify British rule over India. The majority of these disruptions that occur during the Anglo-Indian picnic relate to a marital or sexual confusion. Whether be an incorrect marriage proposal or the death of a spouse this is due to the fact that as a literary construction these picnics function as narrative catalysts, where the narrative course of the novel is initiated or altered. As most of these texts dealt with some form of matrimonial problem between a man and a woman, the catalysing plot function of the picnic means that the site is often one where colonial anxieties concerning the moral and sexual decline of the colonisers emerge. That is not to argue that the picnic exists in Raj fiction as a space that corrodes imperial values, rather that the picnic is a method for the displacement of

Anglo-Indian anxieties of moral collapse away from the more significant spaces of Anglo-Indian life.

Due to the picnic's reputation as being a space of Englishness, it is often used as the space where colonial anxieties and threats to the Raj can emerge. As well as being a temporary site that can be easily collapsed, the nationalist function of the picnic provides an opportunity for these anxieties to emerge away from the unstable, but more important, spaces such as the Anglo-Indian home. By having these anxieties emerge during the culturally stable, but impermanent picnic, these novels are then able to resolve them in the fluid and unstable, but more important Anglo-Indian spaces such as the bungalow. Thus, as well as being the space from which anxieties of imperial decline emerge, the picnic is also part of the anxiety management function of Raj fiction. The depiction and subsequent overcoming of colonial anxieties such as moral decline and imperial ruination in works of Raj fiction allows the genre to celebrate the moral right of the Anglo-Indians to rule over India as the Romantic picnic did for the nascent middle-classes a century prior. Depictions of the picnic in works of Raj fiction are then not only a demonstration of a gentrified form of Englishness in India and a symbolic depiction of the process of colonisation, but also a method for Raj fiction to emphasise the moral right of Anglo-Indians to rule over the subcontinent.

It is also important to acknowledge the form of Englishness conveyed by the invocation of the picnic in Raj fiction. In the previous chapter, the city of Simla was discussed as being another site that was in some sense 'English in character'. Works of Simla fiction frequently detailed the capacity for visitors to the summer capital to



construct an image of themselves as forming a pre-industrial ruling class. Akin to Simla, the picnic was also a space that was considered to be English in character. Unlike the summer capital, however, the picnic was understood to be a more middle-class, and less aristocratic pursuit. Hubbell acknowledges that the picnic ‘poached from both upper and lower class al fresco eating styles’ meaning that the picnic offered a ‘nostalgic image for the new bourgeois consumer’ and a ‘reaction against the luxurious, decadent, feminized aristocratic forms of eating’.<sup>290</sup> It is for this reason that, despite Simla’s reputation as a space of picnics and adultery, the actual act of the picnic so rarely appears in works of Raj fiction set in Simla. In this sense, the picnic is a bastion of middle-class respectability rather than a depiction of aristocratic aspirations due to its denouncement of ‘the amoral eating, use of surplus wealth, and leisure of the upper classes’.<sup>291</sup> This rejection of an aristocratic mode of eating takes on added significance in the context of the Anglo-Indian community away from Simla who prided themselves on a hardy sense of resourcefulness. Hubbell concludes his intervention with the statement that ‘picnicking enables the emerging bourgeoisie to ritually re-affirm their community identity and link to the land at a time when both were jeopardized by new social conditions.’<sup>292</sup> Although the British bourgeoisie would find themselves in a more secure position during the opening years of the twentieth century than they would have a century earlier, in the colonial context of Raj fiction the picnic’s capacity to be both an anchor around which to construct a community identity and a ‘link to the land’ – in this case a moral right over the colonised land of India – is retained.

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<sup>290</sup> Andrew Hubbell, *How Wordsworth invented picnicking and saved British culture*, p. 47.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid*, p. 47.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid*, p. 49.

Like most tropes of Raj fiction, it is Rudyard Kipling who establishes the disastrous Anglo-Indian picnic as a literary device in the genre and thus it is necessary to discuss Kipling's construction of the Anglo-Indian picnic. Appearing as one of his *Plain Tales from the Hills*, 'False Dawn' is one of the few stories in the collection that does not provide an account of life in Simla. Instead, 'False Dawn' follows Saumarez, a 'civilian' who 'was a strange man, with few merits so far as men could see, though he was popular with women'.<sup>293</sup> The narrator comes to understand that Saumarez wishes to marry Maud Copleigh, the elder of a pair of sisters who are at the station with him and the narrator. Eventually Saumarez, the narrator, and the sisters leave for a 'moonlight riding-picnic at an old tomb'. The narrator informs the reader of that the picnic 'was called the 'Great Pop Picnic', because everyone knew Saumarez would propose then to the elder Miss Copleigh.' The narrator highlights the importance of this picnic since the 'the social atmosphere was heavily charged and wanted clearing' and moonlight picnics are 'useful' as they 'lead to understandings'.<sup>294</sup> This sense of 'clearing' also points towards the literary function of the picnic as a space where discords can erupt away from the domestic sphere. Initially the picnic is idyllic, the narrator tells how 'we talked in groups or together, lying under the trees, with sun-baked roses dropping their petals on our feet, until supper was ready [...] a beautiful supper, as cold and as iced as you could wish'.<sup>295</sup> The 'Englishness' of the picnic is retained through its gestures to Romanticism such as the location, the potential for 'understandings', and the idyllic enjoyment of nature through the shade of the trees and rose petals. This scene is suddenly disrupted by 'one of the worst dust storms of the year' that upends the supper table

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<sup>293</sup> Rudyard Kipling, *Plain Tales from the Hills* (London: Penguin, 2011), p. 39.

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid*, p. 41.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid*, p. 42.

and scatters the picnickers who fear the old tomb ‘may be blown down’ onto them.<sup>296</sup> Mistaking Maud Copleigh for her younger sister, Edith, the true object of his affections, Saumarez proposes to her during the confusion of the storm. This causes a heartbroken Edith to flee the picnic despite the sandstorm. The narrator and Saumarez then attempt remedy the confusion, the narrator brings Edith back and Saumarez corrects his mistake by proposing to the correct sister and then disappointing Maud. The return of Edith and the narrator to the picnic site effectively demonstrates the destruction wrought on the space by both the dust storm and Saumarez’s actions:

When we returned to the tomb in the deep, dead stillness that followed the storm, the dawn was just breaking and nobody had gone away. They were waiting for our return. Saumarez most of all. His face was white and drawn. As Miss Copleigh and I limped up, he came forward to meet us, and, when he helped her down from her saddle, he kissed her before all the picnic. It was like a scene in a theatre, and the likeness was heightened by all the dust-white, ghostly-looking men and women under the orange-trees clapping their hands – as if they were watching a play – at Saumarez’s choice. I never knew anything so un-English in my life.<sup>297</sup>

In Kipling’s short story, the picnic is transformed from a space of ‘understandings’ to one of misinterpretations and confused identities. The picnic does fulfil its purpose as an opportunity to clear the ‘heavily charged’ social atmosphere, but not in the way that was intended. Saumarez is eventually able to propose to his beloved, but even discounting the confusion with Maud, his surprise love of Edith and their kiss ‘before all the picnic’ diminishes understanding of the space as one of distinction and refinement in India. The confusion of the picnic also damages its status as a cultural signifier of Englishness. The narrator does not only highlight this diminution of the picnic’s capacity to evoke a nationalist identity by stating that he

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<sup>296</sup> *Ibid*, p. 42.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid*, p. 46.

has not seen ‘anything so un-English in [his] life’ but also the actions of the picnickers during the storm. That guests are ‘afraid of staying anywhere near the old tomb for fear it might be blown down’ by the winds rejects the Romantic connotations of the picnic. Unlike in the more secure space of the English homeland, the Romantic fascination with ruins and tombs is problematised in the Indian context as it directly invokes anxieties of an imperial decline and fall. Although the ruins of England may suggest towards a decline, this is compounded by the ruins found in India of a civilization that has literally been conquered by another. In the context of the picnic, the tomb cannot offer shelter to the beleaguered picnickers and the potential for a both literal ‘fall’ of the tomb and a moral fall due to the mistaken proposal threatens their lives during the storm. The return of Edith and the narrator to the tomb to find the other picnickers as ‘dust-white, ghostly-looking men and women’ emphasises the anxiety produced by Romantic sites such as tombs and ruins. The tableau that greets the pair upon their return is distinctly Gothic as it appears to be a group of ghosts surrounding an old tomb. The picnic not only loses its Englishness from the dust storm, Saumarez’s confusion between the sisters, his dramatic kiss in front of the rest of the party, but also through its acknowledgement of the danger of death in India and the prospect of imperial decline. Although Kipling does engage with the Romantic legacy of the picnic, several aspects of it are problematised in the colonial context of India, most noticeably the Romantic fascination with ruins and ruination that would threaten the stability of the Raj. The picnic does lead to ‘an understanding’ and a happy marriage, but the method used to reach this conclusion is fraught with danger brought upon by such aspects as the tomb, Saumarez’s spontaneity, and the dramatic weather all of which are part of the picnics romantic legacy. Several aspects of this legacy are problematised in the

colonial context, however. The romantic fascination with ruins threatens the security of the both the picnickers and the grander imperial project, while the spontaneous displays of emotion epitomised by Saumarez's sudden proposal underscores the importance of restraint and social convention in the colonies.

Despite the confusion wrought by the picnic, Kipling can somewhat contain the anxieties that emerge during the short story. Saumarez's engagement to Edith does clear the social atmosphere of the station. The picnickers themselves resume their normal lives as they return to the station with the narrator commenting he could feel the party 'all dropping back again into ordinary men and women'.<sup>298</sup> The narrator also promises that 'the 'Great Pop Picnic' was a thing altogether apart and out of the world – never to happen again' —an assurance that the marital confusions, glimpses of imperial ruination, and threats of death will not re-emerge. The positioning of the picnic as being 'apart and out of this world' suggests the events are atypical of Anglo-Indian life and the impermanence of the picnic site means that the events can be contained in the space.<sup>299</sup> Despite the narrator's assurances however, Kipling concludes the short story on an ambiguous note, admitting that 'there is a women's version of this story, but it will never be written ... unless Maud Copleigh cares to try'.<sup>300</sup> By gesturing towards an alternate, feminine version of the same story Kipling destabilises the supposedly objective, masculine narrative that has proceeded. In respect to this ambiguous conclusion, Kipling's deployment of the literary picnic is different to the picnics that appear in novels written by the women who would follow him in producing works of Raj fiction. Kipling retains a potential for

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<sup>298</sup> *Ibid*, p. 46.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid*, p. 46.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid*, p. 46.

ambiguity to creep into the narrative while the middlebrow women authors who follow him aim for a greater sense of narrative objectivity and authority.

Maud Diver was one of the middlebrow authors who hold a great debt to Kipling's influence. This is evidenced not only due to her personal connection to the Kipling family through her close friendship with his sister, Alice Fleming, but also in her use of epigrams from Kipling in several of her novels. A less obvious debt to Kipling can be found in the two picnics of Diver's first novel, *Captain Desmond V.C.* The first picnic in the novel occurs before the narrative begins. It is on this picnic that Desmond proposes to Evelyn, a foolishly rash decision that goes on to have deadly consequences in the novel. This picnic is markedly similar to that described in Kipling's 'False Dawn'. Both 'False Dawn' and the first picnic of *Captain Desmond V.C.* pays homage to the Gothic aspects of the picnic's Romantic legacy, through its dramatic moonlit location. The image of the 'old tomb [...] in the decayed gardens'<sup>301</sup> that threatens to crush the picnickers during the storm of 'False Dawn' reappears in *Captain Desmond* with the 'garden of tombs' that Evelyn and Desmond use for the location of their own picnic.<sup>302</sup> The tombs, along with the 'witchery of the moment; the word too much; the glance that lingered to a look' leads to 'the irrevocable', a marriage proposal.<sup>303</sup> Although a proposal is often an indication of a successful resolution to a narrative of Raj fiction, in this instance it is actually the cause of the novel's narrative conflict as is also the case in 'False Dawn'. The wildly unsuited marriage between Theo Desmond, a committed soldier on the Afghan

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<sup>301</sup> *Ibid*, p. 41.

<sup>302</sup> Maud Diver, *Captain Desmond V.C.* (London and Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons 1922), p. 13.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid*, p. 13.

frontier, and Evelyn, a vain and childish woman, endangers both their lives. This mismatched marriage leads Desmond to fall in love with another woman and causes Evelyn's death. The picnic, and the marriage that comes from it, also threatens to compromise the moral authority that the novel claims justifies the Anglo-Indians in their control over India.

Desmond and Evelyn's moonlit picnic in the 'garden of tombs' affirms Romantic legacy of the picnic space. Like in Kipling, however, it is also from this Romantic setting that discord emerges into the narrative. As Ann Stoler affirms, ruins conjure up an 'enchanted' and 'melancholic' image of 'icons of a romantic loss' of a 'long decayed' past.<sup>304</sup> In this understanding of ruins, Anglo-Indians could position themselves as the inheritors of this tradition and the heirs to the departed rulers of India but also see in the ruins a premonition of the end of British rule over India. The ruins, in the colonial context, are more unstable than those found in the metropole. Stoler positions ruins as a memento-mori through which the 'traces that mark the fragility of power and the force of destruction' can be observed. The ruins are not just a symbol of the European triumph over previous imperial rulers of India, but also an indication of their own oncoming ruination. In Stoler's formulation, 'ruins draw on residual pasts to make claims on the futures.'<sup>305</sup> This is made even more potent due to the colonial context and the fact that in this instance the ruins are tombs. The tombs are physical reminders of mortality and the legacy of a previous imperial decline and fall. The marriage that is arranged in this 'garden of tombs' threatens the lives of the two soon-to-be-weds eventually leading to Desmond's

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<sup>304</sup> Ann Laura Stoler, 'Imperial Debris: Reflections of Ruins and Ruination'. *Cultural Anthropology* 23:2, (2008), 191-219 (p. 194)

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid*, p. 202.

near-blinding and Evelyn's murder. It also threatens the justification of Anglo-Indian rule over India. Daunted by life on the frontier Evelyn falls deep into debt, while Desmond begins to fall in love with Honor, an adulterous enterprise that, if realised, would irreparably damage the moral authority of the Raj. It is due to this picnic that this mismatched union emerges and sets in motion the narrative course of the novel.

The occasion of the picnic in this location sees the formation of the unsuitable marriage that is the main narrative drive of *Captain Desmond V.C.* The 'garden of tombs' cause Desmond to forget himself and rashly enter an unsuitable marriage with Evelyn. The argument of the narrator in Kipling's 'False Dawn', that moonlight picnics lead to 'understandings', is disproven again. Like Kipling's short story, the first picnic in *Captain Desmond V.C.* is indebted to the Romantic origin of the picnic identified by Hubbell. Both the picnics in 'False Dawn' and *Captain Desmond V.C.* are sites of confusion and an incorrect proposal due to the fact that the picnickers in both texts view the tombs in the same sense as those found in England. In both texts, the Anglo-Indians still make use of the Romantic inheritance of the picnic for a sense of national and class distinction. This employment of the Romantic model of the picnic, however, does not safely transpose over to this colonial context. Although the literary picnic in England may encounter discord, it is generally less of an existential threat than that in the colonies. In India, the discord arising from the picnic has much more serious consequences. Understandings of the space as being English in character, a metaphor for the colonial process, and something indebted to the legacy of Romanticism means that the discord that arises from the picnic comes to be understood as being indicative of wider imperial anxieties of moral and national decline.



As well as the ‘moonlight picnic’ that precedes the narrative, *Captain Desmond V.C.* also features a more successful event. Diver uses this second picnic to demonstrate how Anglo-Indian women could gain access to a military environment, from which they might otherwise have been excluded. Through granting women access to this environment with all its attendant rules and stipulations and having it lead to a successful picnic, Diver positions an ordered, militarised life in India as a method for controlling imperial anxieties. The militarisation of this later picnic is apparent from its outset. Diver writes:

Evelyn Desmond’s picnic was an accomplished fact. At four o’clock, in the full glare of a late March sun, a business-like detachment of twenty horses, and one disdainful camel, proceeded at a brisk trot along the lifeless desolation of the Bunnoo Road. The party kept in close formation, straggling of any kind being inadmissible when the bounds of the station have been left behind. Ten of the riders were English, and an armed escort guarded them in front and rear; the camel, in gala trappings of red and blue, being responsible for provisions, enamelled iron tea-things and the men’s guns.<sup>306</sup>

Diver’s description of this picnic party is a celebration of the hardships of Indian life and the capacity for Anglo-Indians to overcome them. This is evidenced by her use of a military register ‘detachment’, ‘formation’, ‘armed escort’ which allows Diver to position the Anglo-Indian woman as an active partner along with her husband in the process of Empire building. This militarised register, coupled with her environmental descriptions of the ‘full glare of the March sun’ and ‘the lifeless desolation’ of the road to the picnic site also allows her to celebrate what Procida identifies as the Anglo-Indian desire to view themselves as a community of ‘flexibility, lack of fastidiousness, and gumption.’<sup>307</sup> The capacity of the picnic as

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<sup>306</sup>Maud Diver, *Captain Desmond V.C.*, p. 46.

<sup>307</sup>Mary Procida, ‘Feeding the Imperial Appetite: Imperial Knowledge and Anglo-Indian discourse’ *Journal of Women’s History* 5:2, (2003), 123-149 (p. 128).

being a method for what Battiscombe argues as an English ‘defiance’ against ‘fate’ is demonstrated by the terrain the picnickers march through in order to reach the picnic site.<sup>308</sup> Diver positions this second picnic as a success by framing it not just as a leisure activity but also a demonstration of the physical and militarised strength of Anglo-Indians, both as individuals and as a group. This picnic is also not just a modified version of the English picnic but rather one that has been adapted for the colonies. As well as being militarised, the picnic features a camel – a potent symbol for the east – in patriotic ‘gala trappings of red and blue’, a clear indication of the imposing of English traditions onto the orient. The camel’s cargo of the ‘enamelled iron tea-things’ is another indication of this merging. While tea is often considered to be a ‘great signifier of Englishness’, the actual tea leaves would originate from British colonial possessions, another indication of a merging of great signifiers of Englishness and the Indian context in the novel.<sup>309</sup>

The austerity of the picnic continues once the picnickers reach the appointed site. After the ride through the emptiness of the Bunnoo road the party come to ‘a river running crystal clear over a bed of pebbles. Beside the river rose an isolated plateau – abrupt, inconsequent and, like all things else in that tawny landscape, unsoftened by a blade of living grass’.<sup>310</sup> The only respite in this desolate scene is the deep pool ‘at the foot of the cliff [that] mirrored the calm wonder of the sky’.<sup>311</sup> The scene lacks the sense of luxury conferred by the initial picnic and instead rests on a sense of sublime desolation. Although Diver does once again use the Romantic conception

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<sup>308</sup> Georgina Battiscombe, *English Picnics*, p. 1.

<sup>309</sup> David Bell and Gill Valentine, *Consuming Geographies* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 106.

<sup>310</sup> Maud Diver, *Captain Desmond V.C.* p. 46.

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid*, p. 47.

of the picnic, in this instance she does not use tombs as part of this scene. By rejecting the Gothic possibilities of the tombs for a sense of the natural sublime, Diver excludes anxieties of death and imperial ruination conferred by the tomb in the colonial context; instead she focuses on the British capacity for a mastery over nature.

Instead of being at ruined tombs, this picnic is held at a bottom of a cliff face. This 'empty' landscape is far more stable than that of the tombs that serve as reminders of India's former rulers and their own decline. At the cliff face, Diver is also able to further her use of the militarised terminology that she permeates throughout this picnic. The cliff face under which the Anglo-Indians picnic is 'riddled with rough, irregular holes, as though Titans had been using it for a target.'<sup>312</sup> The understanding of the picnic site being a target riddled with holes is also furthered by the armed Indian sentries who surround the picnic and provide 'an under-note of danger' to the 'childishly simple affair'.<sup>313</sup> Diver does not allow the militarised nature of the picnic and the presence of Indian guards to diminish the picnic's potential to be read as a site that is fundamentally a method for performing Englishness, however. In a rare instance of Diver allowing her Indian characters an opportunity to comment Anglo-Indian living, the sentries are confused by 'the white man's craze for carrying his food many miles from home, in order to eat it on the ground'. The guards christen the picnic the 'dinner of fools'.<sup>314</sup> Although Diver does include Indian guards into this supposedly English space, their confusion serves only to distance them from the meal and further the national and racial distinctions of the picnic.

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<sup>312</sup> *Ibid*, p. 46

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid*, p. 47.

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid*, p. 47.

The events of the second picnic in *Captain Desmond V.C.* sustains its military aspect. Under the cliff the guests decide that ‘pigeon-shooting was the established amusement’ following the meal. The shooting of the pigeons is a potent image of English control over the Indian wilderness. Yet again, Diver uses the picnic as a method for demonstrating the militarised competence of Anglo-Indian women, with the two memsahibs ‘Frank Olliver and Mrs Jim Conolly’ shown to be ‘handling their guns as skilfully as any man present’.<sup>315</sup> The ‘men’s guns’ that were packed on the decorated camel are now also used by the women of the party meaning that, at the picnic, the weapon is no longer a signifier of a military sphere that is exclusive to men. In this picnic women not only gain access to the Indian wilderness, but also to British weaponry. As Procida notes, the physical object of the gun ‘exemplifies literal and metaphorical potency as both the actual instrument of British conquest and dominance in India and the symbol of Western mastery over the colonised other’.<sup>316</sup> By granting women access to the object of the gun and showing them to possess as similar proficiency with the weapon as their husbands, Diver uses the picnic as a method of depicting Anglo-Indian women as equals in both the construction and the upholding of British control over India. Diver’s construction of the picnic as austere, militarised, but also populated by women that are equal to their husbands in this enterprise is a model for the Anglo-Indian living that she continually encourages throughout her work.

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<sup>315</sup> *Ibid*, p. 47.

<sup>316</sup> Mary Procida, ‘Good Sports and Right Sorts: Guns, Gender and Imperialism in British India’, *Journal of British Studies* 40:4 (2001), 454-488 (p. 454).

The primary reason for the success of a second picnic of *Captain Desmond V.C.* is its militarised nature. This extends not only to the route to the picnic, but also the location of the meal and the activities that occur there. Another factor contributing to its success is the tight control over who is granted access to the space of the picnic. Unusually for Raj fiction, this novel depicts the planning that goes into the picnic itself. After Evelyn informs Desmond about her planned picnic, the captain takes his wife's invitation list and 'at the sight of the last two names – Mr Kresney, Miss Kresney – he frowned sharply, and taking up his wife's discarded pencil ran a broad black line through both.'<sup>317</sup> Evelyn is angry at her husband but he tells her that he has 'very good reasons for not asking Kresney to an informal picnic of my particular friends. On neutral ground, such as the club or the tennis-court, I have nothing to say [...]'.<sup>318</sup> What can be inferred from Desmond's argument is that the picnic can be understood as a space reserved only for those of high moral character, in a similar manner to who is allowed into their home. Although the club is often used as an emblematic site for Anglo-Indians and the Raj as a whole, Desmond sees the space as 'neutral', in contrast to the personal, domestic space of the picnic. In this instance, Desmond's insistence upon the exclusivity of the picnic over the neutrality of the club positions the picnic as existing in a private, rather than a public, sphere. Despite being outside the boundaries of Anglo-Indian outpost, Diver constructs the picnic as a space holds more in common with private, domestic sphere making it different to that of the club.

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<sup>317</sup> Maud Diver, *Captain Desmond V.C.* pp. 35-6.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid*, p. 36.

In *Captain Desmond V.C.* the character of those excluded from the picnic is also another reason for its lack of disruption. Owen Kresney is an outsider to the rest of the characters of the novel, not only because he is the District Superintendent of Police, a civilian rather than a military man, but also because of his 'taint of mixed blood'. Diver positions Kresney's 'mixed blood' as adversely influencing his character leading him to possess 'that talent for discovering or inventing slights', his 'self-conceit was unlimited; his sense of humour nil' and the Anglo-Indian code of morals 'had apparently been left out of Kresney's desultory education'.<sup>319</sup> Kresney's lack of morality is repeatedly demonstrated throughout the novel, most noticeably as he is the villainous moneylender who eventually bankrupts Evelyn which leads to her death. Desmond's exclusion of Kresney from the picnic serves three purposes. Firstly, it solidifies the picnic in the narrative as an undeniably English event. This is significant as it demonstrates the fragility of the picnic as an event in Raj literature, it must be exclusively be kept for Anglo-Indians only for it to function as a cultural signifier of Englishness and be a space where Anglo-Indian anxieties may more safely emerge as a result of its function as a narrative catalyst. Secondly, Kresney's character means that the strictly controlled space of the picnic cannot accommodate him. That Desmond's break with him emerged following an incident when Kresney made a 'disparaging comment' about a woman indicates that Kresney is sufficiently ill-manner in being lewd towards women. Kresney's presence would then not only threaten the women present, it would also bring about threats of racial miscegenation as the literary picnic is a space from which discordant relationships frequently emerge. Thirdly it is Kresney's civilian position that keeps him forbidden from joining the picnic which Diver constructs as a militarised enterprise. The presence of

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<sup>319</sup> *Ibid*, p. 39.

Anglo-Indian women at the picnic demonstrate their own capacity for militarism on par with their husbands. The presence of a civilian would complicate this positioning of the picnic, the capacity for these women to be militarised, and threaten to disrupt security of the space as well as its success in the narrative.

It is because of the austerity and the exclusivity of the second *Captain Desmond V.C.* picnic that the event is a rare example of a non-discordant picnic in Raj literature. By enforcing a sense of militarised austerity on just who is allowed to the picnic, the journey to the picnic site, the site itself, and the activities following the meal Diver is able to accommodate the picnic into her vision of India as a space of duty and stoicism. Rather than the headiness of the moonlit picnic at the ‘garden of tombs’ during the earlier picnics or the luxuries found in the picnics composed by other authors of Raj fiction explored below, Diver’s picnic is centred on a spartan sense of duty that prevents the picnickers from losing control of the space. This militarism is both Diver’s recommendation for life in India but also an act of disavowal of colonial anxieties of decline which Diver portrays as surmountable. The celebration of strictness and self-sacrifice means that the picnic is a success unlike the earlier picnic where the rashness of Evelyn and Desmond leads to discord and eventually death.

The success of this second picnic arises from the careful control over who is allowed into the space, along with the location and events that occur during the meal. In this sense, Diver is able to militarise the picnic and use it not only as an opportunity to bring Anglo-Indian women into this sphere but also as a method for controlling the outcome of the picnic. Another Anglo-Indian picnic that also invokes a sense of

militarisation, but in the opposite respect, occurs in Bithia May Croker's short story 'To Let'. The short story, discussed earlier in this thesis, follows a pair of Anglo-Indian women who belatedly move to the hill station of Kantia once they find the heat in the city of Lucknow unbearable. Despite fears that they will not find anywhere to rent, the couple find a beautiful bungalow overlooking a ravine that is still available. Over the course of the short story, the women discover that the ghost of a previous tenant who fell down the side of the ravine during a dramatic thunderstorm haunts the bungalow.

In the short story, the picnic is the initial event that separates the two women. With the narrator away at the picnic, the other woman – Aggie – remains alone in the isolated bungalow and first encounters the ghost. Yet while Aggie is being haunted the narrator is not having a pleasant time herself, as the meal is just as traumatic for the picnickers. Whereas the second picnic in *Captain Desmond V.C.* uses a sense of militarism and strict planning to prevent anxieties from emerging from the space, the picnic in 'To Let' is one of frivolity which then in turn threatens the safety of the picnickers. Croker's narrator recounts how the picnickers:

Rode to a selected spot, five miles from Kantia, laughing and chattering, indifferent to the big blue-black clouds that came slowly, but surely up from below; it was a way they had for days, and nothing had come of it! We spread a table-cloth, boiled the kettle, unpacked the hampers, in spite of the sharp gusts of wind and warning rumbling thunder. Just as we had commenced to reap the reward of our exertions, there fell a few huge drops, followed by a vivid flash, and then a tremendous crash of thunder, like a whole pack of artillery, that seemed to shake the mountains – and after this the deluge.<sup>320</sup>

The 'laughing and chattering' indifference of these riders cannot be more different from the 'business-like detachment' of picnickers in *Captain Desmond V.C.* The

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<sup>320</sup> Bithia May Croker, *To Let* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1906) p. 23.



frivolity of the ‘To Let’ picnickers extends not just to their riding but also their overconfidence and lacking planning in respects to the weather. Like the picnic in *Captain Desmond*, the picnickers bring along tea as another form of emphasising the Englishness of the picnic space. The complacency of the party in ignoring the ‘big blue-black clouds’ that are rising up the mountain leaves them unprepared and vulnerable to the Indian weather. When the storm finally does break, Croker – like Diver – uses a sense of militarism through her description of the thunderclaps as being akin to ‘a whole pack of artillery’. In this instance, however, it is a depiction of an assault on Anglo-Indians, rather than a demonstration of Anglo-Indian military precision and might as it is in *Captain Desmond V.C.* Croker’s narrator continues the story of the picnic, detailing the chaos that unfolds after the clouds break:

In less than a minute we were soaked through; we hastily grabbed up the table-cloth by its four ends, gave it to the coolies, and fled. It was all I could do to stand against the wind; only for Captain Chalmers I believe I would have been blown away; as it was I lost my hat, it was whirled into space. Mrs Chalmers lost her boa, and Mrs Starkey, not merely her bonnet, but some portion of her hair.

Not only does the storm injure some of the picnickers, it also subverts several of the nationalist connotations that the literary picnic seeks to construct. The panicking of the picnickers and their reliance on Indian servants to save them not only disrupts the Anglo-Indian’s self-image as a hardy, flexible people, but also the nationalistic characteristics as an English ‘defiance flung in the face of fate’.<sup>321</sup> The storm also disrupts the capacities of the Anglo-Indian women present. Unlike Desmond’s picnic, where the women are shown to be the ‘equal’ of any man, the narrator in ‘To Let’ is forced to rely on an Anglo-Indian officer to protect her. The loss of the narrator’s hat and Mrs Starkey’s bonnet (and ‘some portion of her hair’ in the form

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<sup>321</sup> Georgina Battiscombe, *English Picnics*, p. 1.

of her wig) is a humiliating loss of their respectability and the capacity to position themselves as being competent members of the Anglo-Indian imperial mission as well as revealing their vulnerability to Indian nature. Not only are these women left humiliated by the storm, but Aggie is also left alone in the haunted bungalow, vulnerable to invasion by the ghost that was killed in a similar storm. In 'To Let' there is a failure not just in hosting a picnic, but also in policing and protecting the domestic sphere from incursion. The picnic 'To Let' demonstrates is the impossibility of hosting a picnic in India without planning, tight control over the behaviour of the guests, and the location. In England the picnic may be a relaxing leisure activity, something that is not possible in India. The dramatic variations in the weather along with the symbolic significance as a space that embodies a sense of Englishness, means that picnics in the Anglo-Indian context must be approached with a degree of caution, as is the case in *Captain Desmond V.C.*, rather than the flippancy and frivolity displayed by the picnickers in 'To Let'.

The haunting of the bungalow in 'To Let' while the narrator is away at the picnic is an example of the event creating discord not just in itself but also in its narrative vicinity. The coincidence of a picnic with a discordant event also occurs in Alice Perrin's novel *Star of India*. The narrative of *Star of India* follows Stella, a young woman who moves to India with her much older and unsuitable husband, Crayfield. Stella earns a temporary respite from her husband during the summer months when she is able to move to the hill station of Surima to escape the heat of the plains. While at Surima, Stella engages with the society of the hill station. She begins to flirt with the rakish Sir George. This flirtation is compounded by Stella's guilt in not only betraying her husband, but also Philip Flint, the character who Perrin positions as her

true match. Although Stella reasons that her flirtations ‘meant nothing serious’, she is in reality brought dangerously close to the ‘edge of the volcano’ of infidelity by them.<sup>322</sup> Following a picnic where Stella becomes tantalisingly close to this precipice of adultery, she receives word that her husband is dying on the plains. His death leaves Stella free to marry her true love Flint and achieve a successful conclusion to her narrative.

The picnic of Star of India has a grandiosity that outstrips those in *Captain Desmond V.C.* or ‘To Let’. Indeed, Perrin constructs the picnic as the corner stone of the entire season at the hill station:

The Swan Song of the Surima season took the form of a picnic – a truly ambitious entertainment given by a moneyed merchant from Calcutta, whose ideas of hospitality had apparently no boundaries. A banquet was prepared in the vicinity of a famous waterfall some two miles below the station champagne vied with the waterfall itself in its volume and flow; there was a band; Badminton nets had been erected on a convenient plateau, and covetable prizes had been provided for the winners of an improvised tournament of two a side; in addition every lady present was to receive a gift – chocolates, scent, pretty, expensive trifles. High spirits prevailed, and amid the gay, well-dressed assemblage of women, Mrs. Crayfield was pre-eminent.<sup>323</sup>

The luxuries of this picnic are very different from that idealised by Diver in *Captain Desmond V.C.* So expunged is the military from this picnic that even the money behind the event comes from a merchant, a character who exists outside the structured hierarchies of the military or the civil service of the Raj. The tea that the picnickers enjoy in *Captain Desmond V.C.* and ‘To Let’ is replaced with a decadent waterfall of champagne. A badminton tournament replaces the bird shoot of Diver’s novel while and the ‘gay, well-dressed assemblage of women’ escape the sudden

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<sup>322</sup> Alice Perrin, *Star of India* (London: Cassel and Company, 1919), p. 265.

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid*, p. 265.

humiliation of the weather turning and destroying their fashions as in the case of Croker's story.

Although Diver in *Captain Desmond V.C.* critiques the rashness of Desmond and Evelyn during their first picnic and Croker punishes the overconfidence of the 'To Let' picnickers, Perrin directly indicts the behaviour of those at the *Star of India* Surima picnic as a threat to the Anglo-Indian order. During the picnic, Stella finds herself alone with Sir George a man who she assures herself knows that their flirtations are 'just a game [...] a game that Sir George knew so much better than she did how to play without fear of disastrous results', despite these self-assurances, Stella finds 'he meant to kiss her' at the picnic.<sup>324</sup> Stella manages to rebuff Sir George, but the threat of adultery still lingers of the space of the picnic. Despite the ostentatious luxuries on display at the Surima picnic, Sir George's rashness places the picnic in the tradition of other Anglo-Indian meals such as the 'garden of tombs' picnic where Desmond rashly proposes to Evelyn or even Saumaraz's inopportune proposal attempt during the sandstorm in Kipling's 'False Dawn'. Unlike these other picnics, however, there is no sandstorm or 'witchery of the moment' upon which these behaviours can be blamed. It is the luxury of the picnic and nothing else from which these events emerge.

Despite their different reasons behind the discords that emerge, these picnics provide a catalyst for the narrative of the novel. The picnic, as a discrete time and space away from Anglo-Indian everyday spaces, allows for this discord and its the anxieties related to this discord to emerge in the novel without threatening the

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<sup>324</sup> *Ibid*, p. 267.

unstable but more important spaces such as that of the home. The discord that emerge from the picnics is frequently related to the unwise establishment or the breakdown of marital relationships which goes on to threaten the domestic sphere that the genre constructs as being central to Anglo-Indian life. That the catalyst for these sexual discords frequently occurs at the picnic site allows for the discord to emerge in an impermanent space that is collapsed once the event itself is over.

In Perrin's story it is on her journey back from the picnic that Stella receives word that her husband is dying. Although the picnic is not as dramatic as the washout of 'To Let', its adjacency in the narrative to the novel's denouncement unavoidably brings about an association between the picnic and the destabilisation brought about by Crayfield's death. In this instance, Perrin's formulation clearly positions the picnic as a space where problematic narrative events that are required for the successful middlebrow narrative to unfold may be enacted, in this case the poisoning of Stella's husband by his servant. In this sense, the picnic is a method of rapidly advancing the narrative of the novel even if this catalysing force does not emerge directly from the picnic itself. In the case of *Star of India*, Crayfield's death is at the same time necessary to leave Stella free to marry her true love and the completion of the novel's romantic narrative. The picnic can serve as a space whereby this necessary disruption can occur without threatening the more central but unstable spaces such as the colonial home.

There are numerous methods that the Anglo-Indian picnic serves to limit colonial anxieties that emerge from the narrative. That so much of Raj fiction engages with marital narratives means that the narrative catalyst that occurs at the picnic is often

related to some sort of marital or sexual confusion. This confusion leads to an anxiety of a moral decline. As a space that is understood to be in some way fundamentally English, the picnic may be used as a space to accommodate anxieties that would be more damaging in more important, but less stable Anglo-Indian spaces such as that of the bungalow. This distance from the other more important spaces is significant and is a reason the continued acknowledgement of the distance between the space of the home and the space of the picnic. Kipling's 'False Dawn' takes place 'six miles away' from Lahore,<sup>325</sup> Evelyn's picnic is 'three miles of riding' from the Kohat outpost<sup>326</sup>, the 'To Let' picnic is 'five miles from Kantia'<sup>327</sup>, while Star of India picnic occurs 'some two miles below the station'.<sup>328</sup> This separation from the central Anglo-Indian spaces helps preserve the home space from the discord that will emerge in the picnic. That the picnic is a temporary space that is quickly collapsed after a few hours also prevents any form of spatial legacy of these anxieties to exist in the narrative. This is important as most of these novels concern themselves with relationships between men and women. If a domestic problem such as this would emerge in the more important domestic space it would destabilise it considerably. By insulating the Anglo-Indian home space from these anxieties, authors of Raj fiction can use these domestic spaces as the location where the problems that arise from the picnics can reach their resolution. In this respect, the Anglo-Indian home – a more contentious anxiety ridden space – can be elevated to be a space where narrative problems are solved, and the colonial anxieties of ruination prevented from occurring. By resolving these anxieties in the space of their own

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<sup>325</sup> Rudyard Kipling, *Plain Tales from the Hills*, p. 41.

<sup>326</sup> Maud Diver, *Captain Desmond V.C.*, p. 46.

<sup>327</sup> Bithia May Croker, *To Let*, p. 23.

<sup>328</sup> Alice Perrin, *East of Suez*, p. 265.

homes, Anglo-Indians can be represented as upstanding individuals with the moral authority required to rule over India. In this sense, the picnic serves as an ideological function in Raj fiction as a narrative opportunity for authors to play out colonial anxieties in a chronologically and spatially discrete space away from the more central space of Anglo-Indian life.

## **Chapter Five: England in Raj Fiction**

While the vast majority of spaces discussed in this thesis are part of the ‘British Raj’, one that is firmly outside of India is that of the English homeland, subject of this final chapter. Depictions of England in the genre are frequently limited to one or two specific spaces in the imperial homeland. It is because of this limitation that depictions of the country can be explored alongside the more contained Indian spaces such as the Anglo-Indian bungalow or club. In the same sense that Raj fiction constructs specific images of India in order to contain the anxieties of and justify British rule over the subcontinent, the space of England holds a similar function in anxiety denial. England is often presented as a drab, stifling space that characters must escape in prove themselves and reach their potential. Concurrent to this, England is also a protective space which accommodates significant anxieties of colonial decline that would be impossible to resolve in the colonies. In Raj literature, England is largely focused on the specific site of the familial home, although the metropolis of London is sometimes invoked to bring about a distinction from India.

Authors of Raj fiction frequently evoke the homeland in order to draw contrasts with Indian life highlighting the differences between life in the imperial Home and the colonies. This can take the form of a celebration of the exciting life in India where one may, for example, ‘come into friendly contact with more varied types of men and women’ than one would remaining at Home.<sup>329</sup> Raj fiction frequently portrays time in the colonies as providing a more varied, exciting, and worthwhile lifestyle than the drabness found in England. At the same time, however, life in India is more

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<sup>329</sup> Maud Diver, *The Englishwoman in India* (Edinburgh & London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1909) p. 15.



dangerous and threatening than the secure space of the homeland. Although Raj fiction frequently positions England as a space where the narrative problems and colonial anxieties of the text may reach a resolution away from the instabilities of colonial life, it does not depict life in the country itself as being appealing. As Alan Johnson acknowledges, Anglo-Indians were never ‘openly accepted into the genteel society [of England] that they had emulated [in India]’ and were viewed with a ‘smug detachment’ by their countrymen who remained in the metropole. It is for this reason that Anglo-Indians exhibited a ‘deep ambivalence’ concerning the England.<sup>330</sup> In Raj fiction, this ambivalence manifests itself through a construction of England as an ossifying space that lacks the vibrancy and excitement of the Raj. England is both a protective location where serious anxieties that emerge in Raj fiction can be resolved and a dreary space that cannot compete with the excitement of life in the Raj.

As discussed elsewhere in this thesis Raj fiction, as a middlebrow form of culture, possesses the capacity to depict, contain, and neutralise colonial anxieties in its narratives. The generic narrative of the middlebrow form mean that texts are often resolved in a conclusive and controlled manner. These narrative conclusions mean that middlebrow works can frequently depict complex narrative problems because the anxieties that emerge from them can be restrained by this narrative structure. In Raj fiction, these anxieties emerge and are resolved in specific spaces that conform to Anglo-Indian ideologies of class, domesticity, and nationhood. The bungalow, for example, is frequently the space for resolution or disavowal of anxieties due to the importance placed on domesticity by these women-authored works of Raj fiction.

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<sup>330</sup> Alan Johnson, *Out of Bounds* (University of Hawaii Press, 2011) p. 47.

The picnic, meanwhile, is an impermeant space in which anxieties can emerge without damaging permanent, everyday Anglo-Indian spaces. In works of Raj fiction depictions of the English Home frequently serve as either a space to leave for the excitement and danger of India or as a final resort to return to where narrative anxieties that are too great to be surmounted in India may be resolved.

An example of this image of England is Kipling's short story 'The Rescue of Pluffles'. After surviving a war for his soul between Mrs Riever who is trying to seduce him and Mrs Hauksbee who is trying to both protect the young subaltern and thwart her rival, Pluffles leaves the excitement and risks of India to return Home. Declaring that 'India is no fit place for him', Hauksbee convinces Pluffles to return Home where he 'is now raising speckled cattle inside green-painted fences somewhere in England'.<sup>331</sup> Kipling's short story establish a diametric between a colourful, unstable life of India and a prosaic, but safe life in the English homeland and demonstrates an ideological usage of England in the genre as a space of safety but also of conventionality and boredom. The use of England as a space for anxieties to be resolved can be clearly evidenced in the Kipling's story. The hapless officer escapes the three-way pull on his affections in India to settle down to a life of simple, rural happiness in England. Raj fiction does not always return characters to England in order to navigate the narrative problems that emerge in the text as a matter of course, but rather that England exists as a secure space whereby the more serious problems that arise in the novels are resolved. The self-contained nature of Simla in works of Simla fiction, for example, permits these texts to frequently resolve anxieties emerging from narrative problems in the space of the city itself.

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<sup>331</sup> Rudyard Kipling, *Plain Tales from the Hills* (London: Penguin, 2011) p. 51.

Similarly, narrative discord that emerges from Anglo-Indian picnics are frequently resolved in the Anglo-Indian bungalow in order to shore up the unstable, yet vital, domestic space. The issues that must reach a resolution in the space of England dwarf those that can be accommodated in the space of India. One such example is the love triangle between Evelyn, Desmond, and Honor in Maud Diver's *Captain Desmond V.C.*, despite the fact that Evelyn is killed (leaving the widowed Desmond free to marry Honor) in India, Diver instead has Honor leave the outpost and return to England. The couple are only reunited when Desmond returns to England himself while on leave, long after Evelyn is buried. The narrative distance between the death of Evelyn and Desmond's remarriage means Desmond retains his honour by observing a respectful period before remarrying. By placing the reunion in England, Diver separates the couple away from India. This is significant not only because it takes Honor and Desmond away from the country where they almost committed adultery, but it also makes it possible for the couple to marry in the more secure space of England before returning to India as a married couple.

The type of English spaces portrayed in Raj fiction is also significant. Most often these spaces are ancestral, familial homes. Frequently this home space is trapped in a form of stasis or fall in its general fortunes, with the family who remained in England unable or unwilling to take action to restore it. Frequently these declining familial homes are connected to an English manor house, either through the house once belonging to the family but now lost due to financial mismanagement, such as in Alice Perrin's *Star of India*, or under threat of being lost as in the case of Diver's *Lilamani*. The presence of the manor house serves two purposes. Firstly, a manor house either in the family possession or in their recent history elevates the class

positions of its inhabitants. As these ancestral homes belong to characters in Raj fiction, they become spaces that belong to Anglo-Indians. This means that Anglo-Indians, the majority of whom in reality did not come from the upper classes, could be positioned as existing in an aristocratic lineage. As well as elevating and glamorising Anglo-Indians as a community this lineage also functions as, what Benedict Anderson identifies as, the ‘antique conceptions of power and privilege’.<sup>332</sup> In this context, the conceptions of power manifests as an ordained right to rule over India in the same manner as they rule over the metropole. The manor house also serves a purpose in managing the threats to the imperial order that must be negotiated in the space of England. As Malcolm Kelsall in his history of the literary English manor house acknowledges, such houses functioned as ‘a vestige of the old order still written on the face of the countryside [...] it embraced the whole nation [...] it has not been built so much as grown by organic process from the English soil’.<sup>333</sup> The use of the manor house in Raj fiction as a space whereby anxieties arising from the narrative can be resolved is through an invocation of a stable, ancient England where these problems can be safely resolved away from the threats of India that generated them.

This chapter will use six texts produced by three separate authors in order to analyse the representation of England in the Raj fiction genre. Due to the numerous similarities shared between these depictions of the imperial home country and the typically complex plots of middlebrow fiction, it is necessary to map out the narrative arcs of the texts prior to exploring the numerous similarities between these

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<sup>332</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 2016), p. 150.

<sup>333</sup> Malcolm Kelsall, *The Great Good Place* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), p. 3.

works of fiction. Depictions of England in Raj fiction are not limited to these six texts, for example both I.A.R Wylie's *The Daughter of Brahma* and Bithia May Croker's *The Road to Manderlay* feature England as a comparison to India. The chosen six texts demonstrate the breadth of Raj fiction – from the satire of Sara Jeannette Duncan, Alice Perrin's use of the Gothic, and Maud Diver's romantic domestic fiction – and underscore the fact that these tropes pervade throughout the genre.

Coming from Canada rather than Britain or the Raj itself, Sara Jeannette Duncan's fiction frequently holds a sympathy to Anglo-Indians, viewing them as possessing a similar national liminality as Canadian settlers. The tension between the imperial core and its peripheries that is present in her Raj fiction can also be seen in her works set in Canada such as *The Imperialist*. This tension is present in Duncan's short-story, 'A Mother in India', appearing in her *The Pool in the Desert* collection. The story concerns Helena Farnham, an Anglo-Indian woman who sends her young daughter – Cecily – back to England to be raised by her aunts in order to avoid the dangers of India that would prove lethal to the infant. These threats range from the mundane – the threat posed by the heat and from disease – to the more dramatic such as the potential of 'a scorpion [that could] drop down from the ceiling on her'.<sup>334</sup> Visiting England infrequently over the course of several years, Helena finds herself alienated from her child and unable to perform the maternal role that she expects of herself. Eventually, when Cecily comes of age, Helena brings her daughter back to India. In India, Cecily falls in love with a man but her lack of romance and sense of adventure – brought about by a staid childhood in England and which her mother

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<sup>334</sup> Sara Jeannette Duncan, *The Pool in the Desert* (London: Penguin, 1984), p. 2.

argues are fundamental to Anglo-Indian living—leave her incapable of finding a husband in the colonies.

Not only is ‘A Mother in India’ a powerful comparison of the dullness of England and the excitement found in India, it is also a depiction of Anglo-Indian parenthood that is infrequently depicted in Raj fiction. Although Maud Diver’s intergenerational frontier novels do feature children and parents in their narratives, one side of the relationship is usually side-lined away from the narrative. ‘A Mother in India’ makes the parental relationship the crux of the story. While the sending of young Anglo-Indian children ‘back Home’ to England was commonplace in the Raj – Rudyard Kipling, Alice Fleming, and Maud Diver were all sent to England by their respective parents – it is rare for the process to be presented in fiction produced by women. One of the rare mentions of this process is in Diver’s non-fiction guidebook of Anglo-Indian life *The Englishwoman in India* which states that the decision whether to ‘desert either husband or children’<sup>335</sup> is ‘the hardest of all’ for Anglo-Indian women.<sup>336</sup> That Diver, whose oeuvre contains murders, mixed-marriages, and opium addiction along with the more mundane facets of Anglo-Indian life does not feature the sending back of children to England suggests an uneasiness with depicting the process in her fiction and is not in keeping with her romantic narratives that celebrate Anglo-Indian domesticity. It is also not possible to read this literary absence arising from the commonality of the process as many works of Raj fiction focus on the other banalities of Anglo-Indian life. The absence of this sending back, and the consequences that arise from it, suggests that an underlying anxiety exists in

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<sup>335</sup> Maud Diver, *The Englishwoman in India* (London and Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1909), p. 41.

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid*, p. 34.

Anglo-Indian culture about the process which makes it difficult to depict it in works of fiction. The positioning of England as a place to send children back also erodes the capacity for Anglo-Indians to view themselves as hardy, independent rulers of Empire and instead places them as a group of people whose lives remain reliant on the supposedly soft imperial core. Duncan, as an outsider to Anglo-Indian life, is able to depict this process in a manner that other Anglo-Indian authors would find impossible to do.

Duncan's 1906 novel *Set in Authority* also draws a distinction between India and England. The novel follows the assumption of Lord Thame to the office of Viceroy of India and his handling of the fallout of the murder of an Indian by a British soldier. In between scenes of Thame attempting to manage the upheaval, the narrative occasionally features moments in England where Duncan establishes a comparison between the reaction of the murder in England and in the Raj. Thame, and others coming from the imperial core, express a desire to severely punish the soldier, while those who have experienced life in the Raj accept the moral relativity and flexibility that is required to survive in the colonies. *Set in Authority* is a novel that criticises those who come out or remain in England and pass judgement on life in the Raj while experiencing it at a remove.

The depiction of England in two pieces of fiction from Alice Perrin's long writing career also feature England as a space which is contrasted to the Raj. Perrin largely produced Gothic works of Raj fiction. These fictions sometimes invoke the supernatural as in the case of 'In the Next Room', while in other instances it is the tragic relationships and bizarre deaths of characters conjure this atmosphere such as

in 'Beynon of the Irrigation Department'. The two texts discussed in this chapter, 'The Palace of Snakes' and *Star of India* are examples of Perrin's supernatural and non-supernatural Gothic forms respectively. The first of these texts is Perrin's short-story 'The Palace of Snakes', appearing in her 1917 collection *Tales that are Told*. The short story concerns itself with Jasper Barnard, the last surviving heir of the once-illustrious Barnard family. The family's wealth has deteriorated so much that they are left with just a small house, the dining room of which features a portrait of Jasper's rakish great-uncle, also named Jasper Barnard. Family legend hold that this uncle had 'dissipated the family fortune, and to have fled the country in order to escape the consequences of some particularly nefarious act', the uncle went to India where he 'amassed a fortune' as an advisor to a native prince before becoming 'entangled with a lady of the royal household and [...] murdered.'<sup>337</sup> At the beginning of the story, the young Jasper falls in love with a vicar's daughter and attempts to elope with her only to be caught by her father. In order to avoid scandal Jasper is packed off to India. During his time in India, Jasper is sent to investigate the ruins of a palace once inhabited by the Naga Rajas, a now extinct line of mystical Indian princes. In the ruins of the palace Jasper encounters a locket that is remarkably similar to one in the portrait hanging in his dining room in England. Shortly after finding this locket he is accosted by mysterious visions. Jasper suffers a psychotic break and is taken back to England. While recuperating at home, Jasper remembers the locket and takes the back off the portrait that hangs in the dining room. In doing so he discovers the treasures of the Naga Rajas; his uncle having married into and co-opted the ancient lineage. This treasure allows the family to rise

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<sup>337</sup> Alice Perrin, *Tales That Are Told* (London: Skeffington & Son, 1917), p. 215.



back to prominence and for Jasper to acquire the respectability required for him to marry his sweetheart.

Perrin's 1919 novel *Star of India* has a distinct lack of the supernatural in the narrative. However; the abusive marriage between Stella and Crayfield, Crayfield's dramatic death at the hands of a jealous servant, and Stella's search for her true love away from her brutish husband firmly establish a Gothic sensibility in the novel.

Like 'The Palace of Snakes' the novel begins in England in a declining family home. Stella, an orphan, lives with her aunts and grandmother before she is employed as a schoolmistress. One day she is spied innocently talking to a boy and is fired from her job, at the same time her godfather arrives from India and proposes to Stella in an attempt to quell the scandal. She accepts and moves to India with him. Stella finds herself chaffing under her new-husband's tyrannical insistence that she follow his every command. Eventually her husband dies, and Stella is able to marry a more suitable match.

Maud Diver's novel's *Captain Desmond V.C.* and *Lilamani* both feature England as a place that resolved the narrative binds that emerge in Diver's romantic fiction. In *Captain Desmond V.C.* England is the location where Honor and Desmond are reunited after India. In order to avoid the temptation of adultery with Desmond, Honor decides to leave India but before she can do so Evelyn is murdered by an Indian tribesman. Desmond takes a leave of absence across Europe with his friend Paul Wyndham. After a drawn-out refusal to meet with Honor, Wyndham engineers a reunion in England and the couple are happily married at the novel's conclusion.

The later novel *Lilamani*, is a rare example of a work of Raj fiction that does not feature a scene in India. The novel concerns Nevil Sinclair, a bohemian artist and the heir to a baronetcy in England. While in France he meets the titular Lilamani, an Indian princess, with whom he immediately falls in love. Unlike other works of Raj fiction such as J.W. Sherer's *A Princess of Islam*, A.E.W. Mason's *The Broken Road*, and Diver's own short-story 'Sunia', the interracial marriage in *Lilamani* is, in a radical departure from the rest of the genre, actually successful. The drive of the narrative is the surmounting of the numerous obstacles by the couple once he brings her home to his ancestral home of Bramleigh Beeches.

One common impression given of England in these works of Raj fiction is the provinciality, banality, and boredom of life in the home country. Frequently the tediousness of England is used as a comparison with the excitement of India. The difference between life in England and life in India forms the narrative conflict of Duncan's 'A Mother in India'. Helena's narration conjures a wholesome, if unflattering, image of the 'Farnham ladies' – her husband's mother and sisters – who care for her daughter in England. The Farnham ladies are described as 'subdued, smiling, unimaginatively dressed women on a small definite income [...] a little snobbish, a little priggish, wholly conventional, but apart from these weaknesses, sound and simple and dignified'.<sup>338</sup> The combination of a wholesome but ultimately tedious homeland is a recurrent trope of the space of England in works of the genre.

'A Mother in India' is the story of a mother becoming alienated from her child due to the different cultural environments in which they inhabit. In this sense, the

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<sup>338</sup> *Ibid*, p. 3.

metaphor of the ‘mother’ of the imperial home country and the ‘child’ of the imperial core undergoes a reversal, the child returns to the imperial mother-country only to become estranged from the mother who remains in the colony. The division between the imperial home and the Raj is brought into focus during Helena’s return to India after visiting her daughter in England. Rather than feeling bereaved by the separation, Helena feels a ‘sense of relief and of solace’ that she is away from the confines of England and ‘again among my own people. They belong to Bengal and to Burma, to Madras and to the Punjab, but they were all my people’.<sup>339</sup> To Helena, England exists as a country of comfortable ‘soft, unsophisticated people, immensely occupied about very particular trifles’, unlike the ‘executive, acute, alert’ people who are moulded by the excitement of India.<sup>340</sup> England is a space for Helena to escape from for the adventure of Indian life with her husband.

When Cecily is finally old enough to return to India, her mother finds her difficult to connect with due to the provinciality and dullness resulting from her English upbringing. After declaring that she ‘wished these people [Anglo-Indians] wouldn’t talk to her’ Cecily is chastised by her mother who declares that she has been ‘brought up altogether in the society of pussies and vicars and elderly ladies’.<sup>341</sup> This attempt to draw out the intrinsic differences between English people and Anglo-Indians is not only an Anglo-Indian reaction against the snobbery of English society towards them but also an attempt to produce a separate identity as hardy, cosmopolitan frontiers-people away from the comfort and tedium found in the homeland. As Alan Johnson acknowledges, Anglo-Indian identity developed ‘a kind

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<sup>339</sup> *Ibid*, p. 9.

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid*, p. 10.

<sup>341</sup> *Ibid*, p. 10.

of double-consciousness, so that even the most imperious of their community came to see certain features of India [...] as ineluctable parts of their individual and collective identities'.<sup>342</sup> In the case of 'A Mother in India' the differences between the two groups are established through character's personalities, the Raj and the Anglo-Indians are dynamic and metropolitan while England and the English are conservative and provincial.

The sense of England as a space of tedium and decline is also present in Alice Perrin's fiction. The opening of Perrin's *Star of India* features a similar construction to that of 'A Mother in India', with a young girl being raised by her grandmother and spinster aunts in England. The presence of these widows and spinsters increases the sense of a routine and of a rut, as both the Carringtons and the Farnhams are unambitious and unadventurous people who are content to remain as they are despite their slowly declining fortunes. Unlike Cecily, whose parents are alive in the Raj, Stella is an orphan following the death of both her parents in India. Chestnut Farm, where Stella is raised, was formerly 'a farm dwelling, the last remnant of a property acquired a century ago by a Carrington ancestor with a fortune made in the East and dissipated in the West'.<sup>343</sup> The sense of England as a space of decline can also be gleaned by the fact that the Carrington wealth was made in the East before being lost back in England, leading to the family having to move to a smaller farmhouse that is all that remains of their once grand estate. It is a period of non-involvement with India that has led to the ossification of the Carrington family, the loss of their fortunes, and the tedium that entraps Stella.

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<sup>342</sup> Alan Johnson, *Out of Bounds*, p. 47.

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid*, p. 7.

Perrin devotes particular focus on not only the limited ambitions of those who remain in the imperial homeland, but also the tired, declining spaces that are inhabited by these people in England. As the widowed or spinster relatives are the most indicative of the overbearing sense of decline in England, it is logical that the personal space of their bedrooms are the greatest signifier of this sense of deterioration. Stella holds a fear of her grandmother's bedroom which holds:

Secrets, there was something mysterious and 'dead' in its atmosphere. The painted toy horse and the wooden soldier, the half-finished sampler, and the shabby doll enshrined on the chest of draws seemed to her ghostly objects, sad reminders as they were of uncles and aunts who had never grown up. When, for any reason, she was obliged to enter the room it was if these little dead uncles and aunts still hovered about the big bed with its faded chintz curtains, as if they were listening, watching, hating her for being alive.<sup>344</sup>

The description of grandmother Carrington's room is similar to descriptions of Indian ruins found elsewhere in the genre, with the unavoidable reminders of those who have gone before and died. Where Indian ruins are indicative of an anxiety of an imperial ruination, the grandmother's bedroom is a signifier of the sense of the slow and stifling stasis that is typical of depictions of England in works of Raj fiction. That Stella feels the spirits resenting her for being alive positions the room as a dead space where the vivacious young woman is a trespasser. The grandmother's bedroom establishes England as a place that rejects the life of Stella and instead favours a backwards-looking stultification.

If the grandmother's bedroom is one of a fixation on the past, then the bedroom of Aunt Augusta is one of dispassionate aloofness. Stella finds this room to be 'so cold,

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<sup>344</sup> *Ibid*, p. 13.

so polished, so neat' that it might be mistaken for 'a spare room'.<sup>345</sup> This lack of humanity in Augusta's room is indicative of the detachment that is often deployed by Anglo-Indian authors in their constructions of England. Aunt Ellen's room is markedly different but still carries the same air of decline. Ellen's room 'harboured an apologetic air of frivolity, imparted by gay little ornaments and a screen covered with Christmas cards and pictures cut from illustrated papers'.<sup>346</sup> Although Ellen's bedroom has a markedly more human aspect than that of her sister's there is still a sense of missed opportunities and a lack of courage in leaving the comforts of home that is present in other depictions of England in Raj fiction.

The sense that England is undergoing a decline is also present in Maud Diver's fiction. As the author whose output is the most invested in celebrating the imperial mission, it is not surprising that, although Diver does engage with the image of a declining England, it is markedly lighter than those found in other works of the genre. Diver's impression of England in *Captain Desmond V.C.* is constructed not to show the tediousness of the homeland, but rather to demonstrate that the natural country of the characters in her novel is India. During his stay in London at the end of his leave Desmond and Wyndham stay in a small apartment in Piccadilly. This apartment contains 'shabby carpets and furniture' which is distinct from both the austerity of the Indian frontier and the glamour of the continent where Desmond and Wyndham have been vacationing.<sup>347</sup> Time in the dilapidated lodging causes Desmond a 'fastidious distaste' and makes him realise that he misses 'the airy

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<sup>345</sup> *Ibid*, p. 13.

<sup>346</sup> *Ibid*, p. 13.

<sup>347</sup> Maud Diver, *Captain Desmond V.C.* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1922), p. 338.

ramshackle bungalows of the Frontier’, a longing that encourages his overdue return to his home of India.<sup>348</sup> Diver draws a contrast between the ‘ramshackle bungalows’ of the Anglo-Indians in India and the faded furnished London apartment that Desmond rents. This distinction, and Desmond’s desire for the ‘air’ of the frontier is a significant difference that Diver constructs between the hardy life on the Afghan frontier and the stultified life in the imperial homeland.

The cuisine of the home country is frequently employed by the novels as a signifier of the bland life found in England. In ‘A Mother in India’ one of the first suggestions that the Farnhams will raise Cecily in their own conservative mode is evidenced when Helena visits her two-year-old daughter. Aunt Emma explains to Helena that they ‘give her mutton broth very often, but seldom stock soup [...] Mamma thinks it is too stimulating’.<sup>349</sup> The Farnhams encourage a bland diet in order to avoid stimulating Cecily so that she may grow to become like them, rather than like her mother who thrives on the excitement of India. Stella in Perrin’s *Star of India* is also subjected to a similar diet. An indication of the rut that life in England has formed, Stella is confident that upon returning from church she and her guardians would ‘wait on themselves at luncheon; probably there would be boiled mutton and a milk pudding’.<sup>350</sup> Again, mutton appears as a staple of the diet of English spinsters. In *Star of India*, however, this ‘plain, wholesome, food was to Stella as the proverbial last straw’.<sup>351</sup> Stella’s outburst against the food laid out to her by her aunts and grandmother is the instigator of the novel’s plot, as afterward the young girl is sent

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<sup>348</sup> *Ibid*, p. 338.

<sup>349</sup> Sara Jeannette Duncan, *The Pool in the Desert*, p. 6.

<sup>350</sup> Alice Perrin, *Star of India*, p. 5.

<sup>351</sup> *Ibid*, p. 5.

off to teach in order to attempt to relieve her frustrations with English life. English food also makes an appearance in Desmond and Wyndham's worn-out Piccadilly apartment in *Captain Desmond V.C.* this time with choice of an unappetising 'congealed rasher or a tepid egg' being the menu.<sup>352</sup> The repeated focus on food in depictions of England in Raj fiction are a method of construction the overly safe, unthreatening, and declining image of the imperial core that reoccurs throughout the genre. Significantly, Raj fiction does not depict the food eaten by Anglo-Indians in India. Flora Annie Steel's guidebook to life in the Raj, *The Complete Indian Housekeeper and Cook* contains recipes for the same eggs, mutton, and milk pudding that Stella and Desmond endure in England.<sup>353</sup> David Burton, in his culinary history of the Raj, meanwhile acknowledges 'so ingrained was the English taste for great joints of roast beef and mutton that it followed them even to the tropical heat of India'.<sup>354</sup> The absence of Anglo-Indian food in India and the presence of certain recipes in the Raj guidebooks demonstrates that although Anglo-Indian food held little difference to that served in the imperial homeland it is still employed in literary works to signify the tedium of life in England.

Perhaps surprisingly, one institution that increases the tedium expressed through the widows, spinsters, and food of England is that of the Anglican Church. When in England, characters of Raj fiction must navigate the dour, conservative atmosphere of the imperial homeland of which the Church is an undeniable component. *Star of India* opens during an Anglican service where 'the congregation shouted the familiar

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<sup>352</sup> Maud Diver, *Captain Desmond V.C.* p. 339.

<sup>353</sup> Flora Annie Steele, *The Complete Indian Housekeeper and Cook* (London: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>354</sup> David Burton, *The Raj at the Table* (London: Faber & Faber, 1993) p. 143.



hymn [...] overpowering the more cultivated voices' presenting the dullness of the church's congregation and the community in which Stella lives.<sup>355</sup> The conservatism of the church building and the Church itself is exemplified through the fact that 'nothing so ambitious as an organ or a surplice choir had as yet been attempted'.<sup>356</sup> The rare instances of modernisation – such as the 'pitch-pine seats' that have replaced the oak pews of the 'little Norman church' and given the building the 'same effect as a garish oleograph set in an antique frame' reflects the church's lack of concern with aestheticism and romance as well as the general unartistic nature of England.<sup>357</sup> Though Stella prefers the new pews over the old with its 'smell of dust and hassocks, the feeling of captivity...', the attempted modernisation is still a substandard and misaimed attempt to rejuvenate the building. Attendance of church is the first indication in *Star of India* of the predictability of Stella's life in England. Her fantasies of whether the vicar might 'dare to change his lot' and marry a younger woman, or whether Mrs Daw 'who was so artistic, and considered her talents wasted' reveals the boredom of Stella's life in England.<sup>358</sup> Following the service, Stella observes the congregation leaving the church in the same order as ever, and knows that upon return to her home she will be faced with the same Sunday routine as ever.

In Raj fiction the Church also has an impact on controlling the romantic possibilities of those who are in England. In Perrin's 'A Palace of Snakes' Nancy's vicar father who prevents her elopement with Jasper and instigates the scandal which sees his

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<sup>355</sup> Alice Perrin, *Star of India*, p. 1.

<sup>356</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1.

<sup>357</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1.

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid*, p. 4.

daughter ‘sent away in disgrace to a dragon aunt in London’ and Jasper ‘banished’ from England.<sup>359</sup> In Diver’s *Lilamani*, the fact that Bramleigh Beeches is ‘High Church to its kid-glove finger-tips’ is an obstacle that Nevil must surmount when he brings his Hindu wife back to his familial home.<sup>360</sup> The impact on characters arising from the contact with Anglicanism is also gendered. That Cecily is raised in England by ‘excellent persons of the kind that talk about matins and vespers, and attend both’, leads to her alienation from her mother.<sup>361</sup> The narrator laments that by being raised ‘vicars and elderly ladies’ she is now lacking the charisma to find a husband in India.<sup>362</sup> The faith of Nevil’s family, meanwhile, is another opportunity for him to prove his love for Lilamani. The vicar in ‘The Palace of Snakes’ is the catalyst that causes Jasper to go off to India and discover the treasure that restores his family’s fortunes. All these instances are an interference with a character’s romantic development, but while it dooms Helena to a life with an unmarriageable, spinster daughter, it provides Jasper with the opportunity to reverse his family’s fortunes and Nevil with the means of proving his devotion to Lilamani.

Due to the supposed tedium of life in England, Raj fiction is also able to use the imperial home country as a space whereby the major anxieties that emerge from the narrative conflicts of the genre may reach a resolution away from the more unstable space of India. Not every Raj fiction narrative requires a conclusion in England. It is generally deployed in narratives that gesture towards the grave threats of adultery or of racial mixing. Both of these instances are threats to the foundation of Empire,

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<sup>359</sup> Alice Perrin, *Tales That Are Told*, p. 218.

<sup>360</sup> Maud Diver, *Lilamani* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 275.

<sup>361</sup> Sara Jeannette Duncan, *The Pool in the Desert*, p. 3.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid*, p.10.

whether it be the erosion of the racial justification for the rule over India or of the moral focus on domesticity upon which the Empire was constructed. In 'A Mother in India', the use of England as a protective space is an overt aspect of the text, it is to the imperial home country that Cecily is sent in order to protect her from the extremities of colonial life. In other works of the genre, the construction of the English homeland as a space to avoid or resolve anxieties that arise in the colonies is more structural than obviously part of the narrative.

'A Place of Snakes', an unconventional work of Raj fiction due to the ambiguous portrayal of both its 'careless' protagonist and of India, holds an aspect of conventionality through its usage of England as a location to resolve anxieties arising from the colonies.<sup>363</sup> Jasper uncovers the truth about his uncle's affair and the looted Indian treasure in his own home in England, the only space that can absorb the blow of these revelations. The Indian treasure is sourced from Jaspers uncle's position as an advisor to the Naga Rajas, an extinct Indian principedom. The movement of the treasure from the Nagas to England and the destruction of the Indian princes is undeniably a fundamental part of the wider colonial process. The treasure that restores the Barnards to respectability arises from their uncle's political, economic, and sexual subjugation of the Naga Rajas, which eventually lead to their extinction. In a work of Raj fiction, a genre that at least professes a pro-imperialist ideology, the revelation of the naked violence and greed that underpins the imperial project would be too contentious to be depicted in India, the location of these offences. The movement of the loot from India to England is not only an example of

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<sup>363</sup> Alice Perrin, *Tales that are Told*, p. 217.

the sordid economic realities of the British Empire, but also a method for containing the anxieties that emerge from this process in the more stable imperial homeland.

Maud Diver also uses England as a space by which to resolve anxieties emerging from the narratives of her novels. Diver's work valorises both the institutions of the Raj and the Anglo-Indians who live in India and so her usage of England is not as a space where the exploitation inherent in imperialism is presented and accommodated, but rather as a space that can resolve sexual anxieties that would be impossible to remedy in India. England is a key space in *Captain Desmond V.C.* as it is the location where the ideal romantic match of Desmond and Honor can be achieved without the adulterous threats that plagued the couple in India. Following a narrative that has seen Desmond suffer a 'long illness, the fear of losing his sight, the double shock of self-revelation and loss', he takes leave with his friend Paul Wyndham.<sup>364</sup> While travelling across Europe, Desmond has two opportunities to be reunited with Honor but refuses, fearing both his feelings for her and the guilt he holds over his wife's death. It is not until he and Paul are back in England that they are reunited with Honor, through Paul secretly orchestrating an encounter of the couple in an art gallery. It is only the safety of England, not the insecurity of India nor the ambiguity of the Continent where the couple can reconcile and realise the love that initially emerged when Desmond was married to another woman. The setting of their reunion, an exhibition at the Royal Academy, allows for the anxieties that might emerge from this well-matched but also near-adulterous union to be absorbed by the high English culture on display. The presence of this English culture provides a more stable arena for this denouncement to occur.

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<sup>364</sup> Maud Diver, *Captain Desmond V.C.*, p. 323.

Although encompassing merely pages of the novel, the significance of England in *Captain Desmond V.C.* is without doubt. These scenes in England only appear in versions of *Captain Desmond V.C.* published after 1915 once Diver was established as a popular author of Raj fiction. This popularity presented Diver with the opportunity to revise and partially rewrite the conclusion of the novel. Diver's note in revised editions of *Captain Desmond V.C.* states that this conclusion was 'nearer to my original conception than it was in its first form [...] they represent more or less what I conceived at the time, but suppressed through fear of making my book too long'.<sup>365</sup> This change to the 'original' ending in England is a reflection on Diver's position as a proven popular author. This popularity permits her to produce a longer book with less fear of literary marketplace rejecting it for its length. Aside from these material concerns, however, the revision of the ending to include England also reveals the importance of the space in the novel as one of anxiety resolution. In the original published version of *Captain Desmond V.C.*, the narrative remains focused on Honor who – instead of returning – remains in India while Desmond goes on his period of leave. The reunion of the lovers occurs not in England but in India, where Desmond informs Honor that 'there should be no open engagement between us for the next six months, and no question of our marriage for a year at least'.<sup>366</sup> The original conclusion of the novel does not control the anxieties produced by the Honor and Desmond's union in England, hence the requirement to postpone the wedding. Although this delay in the wedding serves to assuage the anxiety of Desmond and Honor's love for one another while he was married to Evelyn the

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<sup>365</sup> *Ibid*, 'Author's Note', no page.

<sup>366</sup> Maud Diver, *Captain Desmond V.C.* (Edinburgh & London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1919) pp. 380-381.

conditional declaration of love does not adequately satisfy the demands of the generic middlebrow narrative. A problem exists whereby the anxiety managing function of the generic narrative would itself be too radical and disruptive to be deployed by Diver. The revised version, that ends with Honor and Desmond reaching a mutual, unspoken understanding of their love for one another leaves Honor ‘crowned [...] as wedded love is rarely crowned in a world honeycombed with half-heartedness in purpose and faith and love’ is much more in keeping with the middlebrow desire for a narrative closure.<sup>367</sup> Although the wedding is not depicted in the novel, the acknowledgement of the ‘wedded love’ satisfies the generic demands of the middlebrow. This closure can only be achieved in the stable space of England that can absorb the problematic elements of their relationship.

In the same sense that England and English high culture is a method of dispersing the anxieties around Desmond and Honor’s relationship in *Captain Desmond V.C.*, the manor house of Bramleigh Beeches is a secure space in England that can withstand the marriage between Lilamani and Sinclair in Diver’s *Lilamani*. Ralph Crane and Radhika Mohanram in their evaluation of the novel acknowledge that this inter-racial marriage would have been considered ‘monstrous’ by a large proportion of the Diver’s readership.<sup>368</sup> It is only by elevating the class status of both characters and focusing the marriage onto such a narratively stable place as the aristocratic home that Diver is able to portray the union in a manner that would not alienate the reading public. The ancestral home is the only space that can work to contain these anxieties. At one moment, London is feted as a potential alternative for Nevil and his

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<sup>367</sup> Maud Diver, *Captain Desmond V.C.* (revised) p. 346.

<sup>368</sup> Ralph Crane & Radhika Mohanram, ‘Introduction to *Lilamani*’ (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. vii-xviii (p. viii).

wife as it is the place where ‘fish of every shape and colour have a chance in her seething oceans of nationalities and types’. Nevil declares the capital to be unsuitable as ‘Lilamani would die outright’ in London.<sup>369</sup> Her own experience of the capital supports this claim as the Indian princess finds London to be ‘a monstrous fog-blurred phantasmagoria of life and death’ that overwhelm her genteel sensibilities.<sup>370</sup> The English aristocratic home is the only space that can accommodate this mixed marriage as it confers upon the couple an aristocratic nobility and a licence that would be unavailable in the undistinguished metropolis of London. This impression of London is also deployed in Perrin’s *Star of India*. Philip Flint, the Anglo-Indian love interest for Stella who she eventually ends up marrying declares to his mother that ‘London is an awful place’.<sup>371</sup> While attempting to navigate the capital Flint finds ‘the blasé of light, the crow, and the scents, and the closeness of the atmosphere, despite blocks of ice and electric fans’ work live him ‘confused and depressed’.<sup>372</sup> In both Diver and Perrin there is a depiction of the characters who are most associated with India finding London to be a space that upsets and unsettles them. This rejection of the very centre of England and the Empire allows them to be positioned as figures whose place in the world is in India and away from the imperial Home.

As a manor house, Bramleigh is able to accommodate Lilamani’s influence due to it being, in Kelsall’s words, as a symbol of the ‘old order’ of England.<sup>373</sup> The historic legacy of the home permits the entrance of Lilamani more so than any other space in

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<sup>369</sup> Maud Diver, *Lilamani* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 296.

<sup>370</sup> *Ibid*, p. 276.

<sup>371</sup> Alice Perrin, *Star of India*, p. 300.

<sup>372</sup> *Ibid*, p. 301.

<sup>373</sup> Malcolm Kelsall, *The Great Good Place* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), p. 3.

England. Despite this security, however, the aristocratic home of the Sinclair's does produce its own anxieties arising from this interracial marriage. After hearing of the marriage, Nevil's sister Jane writes to him lamenting 'A native mistress at Bramleigh Beeches! Half-caste sons to carry on the name of which we are so rightly proud!'<sup>374</sup> Jane invokes the threat of a reverse colonialization that would leave Indians ruling over England in a mockery of the colonial order. By using the stable space of the aristocratic home to contain the anxieties of racial degeneration from the marriage, Diver unavoidably invokes anxieties of a fall of the very national institutions that are able to support the marriage. It is only through proving Lilamani's worth in the reviving of the family fortunes that she is able to justify her position as the lady of the manor home.

Lilamani's position in England also reveals another usage of the imperial home space in works of Raj fiction, as a space that is elevated and improved through the colonial control over India. Despite the reservations the other Sinclairs feel over Lilamani's position as the Lady of Bramleigh Beeches, her presence in their orbit actually prevents the family from losing everything. Using India to elevate England is not only Diver positioning India as an invigorator of English society but is also an attempt to diminish the anxieties from the mixed-marriage by making the union the very thing that saves the Sinclair family. Shortly before his death leaves the house in his son's hands, Nevil's father confides in his son that he is financially ruined due to a 'parcel of muddle-headed fools in South Africa' who have 'robbed [him] of the fortune' that he intended to leave Nevil. The family invested in a non-Indian colonial enterprise and are near-ruined. The instability and anti-colonial elements of South

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<sup>374</sup> Maud Diver, *Lilamani*, p. 180.



Africa are here contrasted with Lilamani's (and by extensions India's) placidity and loyalty. With little idea how to recuperate the now-depleted family finances Nevil decides to paint a series of scenes from the legendary *Ramayana*, using his wife as the model for Sita, the heroine of the epic. The success and sale of the paintings, of which Lilamani is the central figure, means that Nevil is able to reverse the family's decline, prove Lilamani's value to his sceptical family and diminish the anxieties generated by Lilamani's position as his wife.

The bringing of India over to rejuvenate the English familial home appears elsewhere in Raj fiction. Perrin's 'The Palace of Snakes' is an obvious example where the Indian loot from historic colonial misdeeds is discovered in the familial home and allows the Barnards to recapture their respectable standing in society. Although it does not provide the material wealth as the loot of the Nagas does for Jasper, the drawing room of Chestnut Farm in *Star of India* that is filled with Indian treasures. It is the only space in the decaying home that provide Stella Carrington with any sense of excitement. It is the drawing room 'that breathed of a people long connected with the East' and is laden with the riches of Empire including 'sandalwood boxes, caskets composed of porcupine quills, coloured clay models of Indian servants, brasses and embroideries'.<sup>375</sup> This Indian room is the only space in England where she might experience a sensual escape from the mundanity of her life, she finds that 'faint aromas still stored in these relics, mementoes of travel and service and adventure' can be detected upon visits to the drawing room.<sup>376</sup> Jane Hamlett in her examination of the gendered divisions of the Victorian home explores the

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<sup>375</sup> *Ibid*, p. 8.

<sup>376</sup> *Ibid*, p. 8.

reputation of the drawing room as sedate, 'feminine spaces' were women could withdraw to.<sup>377</sup> In works of women-authored Raj fiction, the colonial drawing room is often positioned as the space that has the most in common with England and the metropole. In the all-women household of the Cressingham's, however, the drawing room is repositioned to be an Indianised space where Stella can retreat to break the oppressive boredom of her life in England. Near to the drawing room there is also 'the camphor-wood chest on the landing' that contains imperial trophies. On the rare occasions that Stella is granted permission to open the chest she:

Would feel almost intoxicated with the sight and scent of fine muslin veils heavily embroidered, funny little caps, tinsel-encrusted; a packet of pictures painted on talc of Indian ladies, black-haired, almond-eyed, smiling, wonderfully robed. At the bottom of the chest were pistols and daggers, and swords, all chased and inlaid with ivory and gold; and there was a carved box full of tiger claws, and silver ornaments, bracelets, anklets, and necklaces that jingled...<sup>378</sup>

The chest contains everything that separates the life in India from that of the English homeland in works of Raj fiction. India is a much more exciting and beautiful place than England, but also contains a sense of threat and danger. The presence of 'the pistols and daggers, and swords' at the bottom of the case can be read alongside Gaston Bachelard's understanding of the chest. Bachelard argues that in chests one finds a 'a secret psychological life'.<sup>379</sup> The weapons at the bottom of the chest highlight the method by which these treasures were acquired. The violent, and in this context exciting, business of Empire is hidden beneath the loot acquired from said violence. That the Cressinghams have weapons brought back from India in the home reveals their family to be builders of Empire. Perrin positions the family's decline

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<sup>377</sup> Jane Hamlett, 'Gender and Middle-Class Domestic Space in England, 1850-1910', *Gender & History* 21: 3, (2009) 576-591 (p. 580).

<sup>378</sup> Alice Perrin, *Star of India*, p. 15.

<sup>379</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (New York: Penguin, 2014) p. 99.

from the forgers of Empire makes their current stagnation in the novel all the more tragic. The sense of danger is conveyed not only by the weapons and the tiger claws but the capacity for these treasures to ‘intoxicate’ Stella. Unlike England, India presents an opportunity for a more exciting life, but at the same time there is the ever-present anxiety of losing control and of either being seduced or harmed by aspects of Indian life. These risks must be controlled by the weapons in the box, weapons that are not required in the sedate English homeland.

Although all of these homes are undergoing a diminishment in their standing, the Cavendish Square residence of the Thame family in Sara Jeannette Duncan’s *Set in Authority* avoids the sense of decline that appears in other works of Raj fiction. This decline is avoided due to the encouragement of an Indianisation of the space. The home is the first location to be depicted in the novel when the Dowager Lady Thame is discussing her son’s promotion to be Viceroy of India. Lady Thame tells of her father who ‘spent years [in India] looking into the religions of the people – he translated some of the Vedas, and wrote a book called *The Law of God in the East*’. Thame’s deceased husband was also ‘wildly interested in Orientals’, filling the ancestral home with a ‘great collection’ of books and encouraging Indians to Oxford in order to ‘to absorb our civilisation’.<sup>380</sup> Although Viceroy Thame is shown to lack the ability to compromise that Duncan argues is vital to life in India, the England of the Thames is shown to be dynamic and exciting. The Thame’s England is one that is in a constant dialogue with the Raj. This is reflected in the previous Lord Thame’s encouragement for Indians to come to Oxford and learn British culture but also through his ambitions to become Secretary of State for India that were thwarted by

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<sup>380</sup> Sara Jeannette Duncan, *Set in Authority* (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, ND), p. 6.

illness and his turn to ‘growing trees and shrubs from that of the world’ causing the garden of the family home to be christened ‘the jungle’.<sup>381</sup> As Johnson notes, the jungle is frequently understood to be part of the ‘natural’ environment of the colonies.<sup>382</sup> The synthesis of the garden and the jungle is significant, Catherine Alexander notes, gardens ‘reorder and disorder’ the domestic space of the home.<sup>383</sup> The establishment of a ‘jungle’ in the English garden, is a bringing in of an Indian signifier into the English home space. The ‘disorder’ brought about by this Indianised garden serves to disrupt the conventionality of England. Unlike the Farnhams in Duncan’s short story, the Thames in *Set in Authority* engage with and cultivate India in England which results in a more dynamic depiction of England in the genre.

*Captain Desmond V.C.* also uses India as a method of renewing England. In this case it is not the condition of a familial home that is renewed but rather the state of England is improved by the union of two well-matched Anglo-Indians. As an unsuspecting Desmond is being taken by his friend to the Royal Academy to be reunited with Honor, Diver describes the sense of rebirth and optimism that is pervading the previously rundown England:

Overheard, scattered ranks of chimney-pots were bitten out of a sky scarily less blue and ardent than Italy’s own. In every open space young leaves flashed golden-green, on soot-blackened branches of chestnut, plane, and lime. And there were flowers everywhere – in squares and window-boxes and parks; in florists’ and milliners’ windows; in the baskets of flower-sellers and in women’s hats. The paper-boy – blackbird of the London streets – whistled a livelier stave. Girls hurried past smiling at nothing in particular. They were glad to be alive – that was all.<sup>384</sup>

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<sup>381</sup> *Ibid*, p. 6.

<sup>382</sup> Alan Johnson, p. 6.

<sup>383</sup> Catherine Alexander, ‘The Garden as Occasional Domestic Space’ *Signs* 27:3(2002) 857-871 (p. 863).

<sup>384</sup> Maud Diver, *Captain Desmond V.C.* p. 343.

This sense of rejuvenation, in this case the resolution of a love between two Anglo-Indians that began in India, is a further impression of the imperial homeland being revived and renewed through the influence of the colonies. This configuration is a method for authors of Raj fiction to privilege India and thus those that hold the subcontinent as a space that is not only a place for adventure and excitement, but also an important aspect in the national well-being of the imperial homeland.

In works of Raj fiction the space of England is one of complexity, a space of stability as opposed to the excitement found in India. It is frequently constructed as a space where anxieties that emerge from the narratives may be resolved, this is due to the stability of the space, especially when compared to the threats present in India. Not every anxiety that emerges from works of Raj fiction need to be resolved in England, it is only the extremely serious ones that directly concern an impending moral, social, or national collapse usually arising from the threat of racial miscegenation or adultery. Conversely, because of this narrative safety found in the English homeland, the space is often understood to be frustrating and stifling. Because of the lack of excitement or conflict in the English homeland it is also poorly equipped to deal with problems that emerge in the space of England. Just as fictional Anglo-Indians in Raj fiction frequently have to come to England in order to navigate between a satisfactory narrative conclusion and the significant colonial anxieties that come along with it, people from England often have to travel to India in order to avoid scandal or to halt or escape the sense of decline that permeates the homeland in works of Raj fiction.

## Conclusion

This thesis investigates gendered models of colonial space and does so through the lens of Raj fiction produced by women authors. These women-authored middlebrow fictions largely focus on the trials of Anglo-Indian women in the Raj, women whose race granted them a privilege that was then tempered by their gender. As Anglo-Indian women were both associated with and prohibited from certain spaces, a reading of these novels provides an opportunity for a new perspective on Anglo-Indian society and the organisation of spaces in this representation.

Alan Johnson argues that ‘colonialism is predicated most obviously on the notion of physical boundaries that are at the same time social boundaries’.<sup>385</sup> Johnson focuses on the starkest of these boundaries, that between the Anglo-Indian colonisers and the colonised Indians. Less pronounced, but equally significant boundaries existed between Anglo-Indian men and Anglo-Indian women, a distinction that is often overlooked in academic examinations of the Raj. Due to the ‘physical boundaries’ imposed on European women in the Raj, the women-authored works of Raj fiction analysed in this thesis demonstrate a stronger interest in spatial organisation than fiction produced by the majority of male writers. Narratives produced by these Anglo-Indian women tend to be far more spatially fixed focusing on a few specific spaces, rather than the more transitory nature found in masculine narratives of Raj fiction.

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<sup>385</sup> Alan Johnson, *Out of Bounds* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2011), p. 29.

The authors discussed in this thesis centre their narratives on specific spaces. Maud Diver's sequence of Anglo-Indian novels all constellate around the domestic space, whether that be the colonial domesticity of the bungalow or the ancestral home in the English homeland. A focus on the domestic here allows Diver to celebrate the Anglo-Indian women who maintain the home as being important figures in the survival of the Empire. The Gothic works of both Alice Perrin and Bithia May Croker are also frequently focused on the domestic sphere, with moments of transgression in Anglo-Indian spaces being a method of articulating and eventually containing anxieties around a transgression of social conventions leading to an imperial decline. Alice Fleming and Sara Jeannette Duncan's works of Raj fiction focus on the summer capital of Simla, where the city's gaiety is matched through the comic tone of the narratives. Women-authored works of Raj fiction were not limited to these spaces; several novels such as Diver's *Captain Desmond V.C.* and *Candles in the Wind*, Perrin's 'The Palace of Snakes', and Duncan's *Set in Authority* all feature episodes set outside the spatial limitations of Anglo-Indian women such as battles, the Indian wilderness, and the corridors of colonial political power. These brief glimpses into the masculine sphere of the Empire are limited in their respective novels and experienced only by male characters. As these texts largely centred on the lives of Anglo-Indian women, the majority of these novels are focused on the spaces to which Anglo-Indian women were limited. Approaches to the spatial dynamics of the Raj in works of women-authored Raj fiction are explicitly gendered, reflected not only by the access certain characters have to specific spaces, but also the importance and attitudes that are directed towards these spaces in respective texts.

This thesis suggests it is through an interest in gendered colonial spaces that these women-authored, woman-centric works of fiction become a means of examining and celebrating the figure of the Anglo-Indian woman. Although the colonial experiences of Anglo-Indian women differed greatly from the traditional, masculine experience of the Raj, there was still a desire to view themselves as being equal partners with their menfolk. Éadoain Agnew argues that Anglo-Indian women produced works of colonial non-fiction such as household manuals and travel writing, which served as a method of positioning themselves as being ‘key players in the cohesion of the Empire and the success of the Raj’.<sup>386</sup> Works of women-authored Raj fiction also facilitated the positioning of European women as ‘key players’ in the structure of the Raj. As the spaces where the Empire was forged, namely Indianised or contentious spaces such as the Indian wilderness, the Indian town, or the battlefield, were inaccessible to women it became vital to instead position the spaces which women were associated as being equally as vital to the imperial cause. The most obvious of these spaces is the colonial domestic sphere, which largely manifests in the Raj context in the form of the bungalow. The domestic sphere was seen, as Anne McClintock argues, as ‘an indispensable element’ to British imperialism.<sup>387</sup> Diver’s argument which opened this thesis – that the ‘home-loving, home-making’ Anglo-Indian memsahib did as much ‘to establish, strengthen, and settle’ the Empire as the ‘shot, steel, or the doubtful mechanisations of diplomacy’ of her husband – is the most obvious example of the domestic duties of the Anglo-Indian woman being constructed as being as important to the Raj as the activities of her husband.<sup>388</sup>

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<sup>386</sup> Éadoain Agnew, *Imperial Women Writers in Victorian India* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), p. 8.

<sup>387</sup> Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather* (Routledge: New York, 1995), p. 5.

<sup>388</sup> Maud Diver, *The Great Amulet* (New York: John Lane, 1908), p. 8.



Where Anglo-Indian men venture out to build the Empire, Anglo-Indian women, in Diver's argument, work to maintain and uphold the conquered lands. As the duty of Anglo-Indian women is naturally limited to the continued upkeep of locations already taken by their husbands, this maintenance role of the domestic sphere becomes vital part of the survival of the Empire and the primary responsibility of the Anglo-Indian woman in their function as a 'key-player' of the Empire.

Although the domestic sphere was understood to be the purview of the Anglo-Indian woman, the figure could not be limited to this space if they were also to be positioned as a 'key players' in the imperial project. They were then granted a limited access to other colonial spaces such as the club. Works of Raj fiction produced by women rarely feature spaces that are considered Indian, such as the jungle, the bazaar, or the Indian wilderness unless it is to depict a memsahib who has strayed from their duties, such as Evelyn Desmond's fatal journey along the Indian road at the climax of *Captain Desmond V.C.* Anglo-Indian women were limited to spaces that could be understood to be English or Anglo-Indian. For this reason Anglo-Indian women are given the most license in a space such as Simla that was perceived to be fundamentally English in character, or at the picnic which could be read as a temporary construction of an English space in the Indian wilderness. These spaces provided a limited opportunity for these women to venture beyond the boundaries of their primary space of the bungalow home. By containing Anglo-Indian women into spaces that can be in some sense understood to be English, Raj fiction is able to reaffirm the colonial duty of women as being centred on the maintenance of the Empire while also protecting Anglo-Indian women from the more dangerous, and unstable, Indian spaces.

Spaces, and an awareness of spatially, are extremely important in works of Raj fiction produced by women because the feminine experience of the Raj was so strictly codified in spatial terms. This was manifested not just in the zones – such as the bazaar, beyond the frontier, and even some parts of the club – that women were prohibited from, but also in the close association between women and other spaces such as the bungalow and Simla. As works of Raj fiction limited Anglo-Indian women to a small series of spaces that could be imagined to be in some way English or Anglo-Indian, it is possible to read these spaces across disparate novels in the genre: the same spaces appear in a range of texts. As discussed, the bungalow was the space most associated with Anglo-Indian women: it was a space which permitted an envelopment of their domestic responsibilities into that of imperial duties on par with the colonial obligations of Anglo-Indian men. The frequent centrality of the bungalow to narratives of Anglo-Indian women acknowledges its primacy in their lives. In Diver's fiction, for example, the condition of the bungalow becomes a testament to the moral character and worthiness to rule over India, the well-ordered bungalows of the Desmonds and Quita Lenox in *The Great Amulet* are testament to their value in India, while the tasteless and disordered bungalow of the Kresney siblings in *Captain Desmond V.C.* is an indication of their unworthiness and duplicity. The shabby bachelor bungalow belonging to Eldred Lenox – the challenging protagonist of *The Great Amulet*, who is eventually redeemed by his wife – highlights the importance of the Anglo-Indian woman by depicting the negative results brought about by her absence. Equally, in the Gothic works of Raj fiction produced by Perrin and Croker the space of the bungalow is associated with the figure of the Anglo-Indian woman. In this instance, the bungalow serves a

narrative purpose to enforce a separation between the woman and her husband, who is often away from this feminised home space.

In order to position the bungalow as the centre of Anglo-Indian life, these works of women-authored Raj fiction tend to diminish the space of the club which is positioned by male-authors in the genre as being, in the words of Orwell, ‘the spiritual citadel’ of Anglo-Indian life.<sup>389</sup> The most obvious method that the club is decentralised is through a construction of it in opposition to the bungalow. Although the colonial clubs, like their analogues in the metropole, were understood to offer men the space of a ‘surrogate home’, this form of domesticity was often unavailable to Anglo-Indian women who were both barred from full-membership of the club and associated with the domesticity found in the bungalow.<sup>390</sup> The club is so symbolic of colonial life that it cannot be wholly ignored by the narratives of texts in the genre produced by women. In these works of women-authored Raj fiction, the club is most often positioned as a part of the Anglo-Indian social sphere. It is a location that threatens to erode the domestic values found at the bungalow and which must be as carefully navigated by those visiting the space as any other in India. The club dance in Diver’s *Captain Desmond V.C.* threatens to disrupt Evelyn and Theo’s marriage through Evelyn making a spectacle of herself and attracting unwanted attention from other men. The troublesome aspects of the Anglo-Indian social sphere can also be evidenced by the club providing an opportunity for ideally-suited Honor and Desmond to dance, a demonstration of the ideal Anglo-Indian union but also a potential of a moral transgression. The social scene of the club also threatens to

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<sup>389</sup> George Orwell, *Burmese Days* (London: Penguin, 2011), p. 14.

<sup>390</sup> Amy Milne-Smith, *London Clubland* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) p. 109.

disrupt the marriage of the Messengers in Perrin's 'Beynon, of the Irrigation Department'. In this short story the club is both the space for which Jack Messenger abandons his wife every evening, and the space where Kitty Messenger goes dancing with another man in an attempt to provoke her husband. Like the club in Diver's novel, Perrin's conception of the club in 'Beynon' is one that threatens the marital union upon which the bungalow was built. It is only the intervention and eventual sacrifice of the titular Beynon, an Anglo-Indian who lives in isolation due to his discomfort with the social scene embodied by the club, that the couple are able to be reconciled and both their marital vows and the domestic space of their bungalow be renewed. Rather than having a regulatory function in keeping Anglo-Indians on the narrow social codes of colonial life, the club in works of women-authored Raj fiction is a space that threatens the boundaries of domesticity upon which the feminine experience of Empire relies and, like everywhere else in India, must be carefully negotiated by Anglo-Indian women.

Another space associated with the Anglo-Indian social sphere is that of the summer capital of Simla. Unlike the club which is often a problematic space, the city of Simla is depicted as a unique site in the Raj. Due to its cultivated reputation as being the one place in the Raj that was 'English in character', Simla tends to be shown as providing a greater degree of freedom for visiting Anglo-Indians when compared to spaces elsewhere in the Raj. Its imagined 'Englishness' allowed for the social gaiety that was frequently problematised in the space of the colonial club to instead be realigned and celebrated as an expression of the glamour of Anglo-India. Although some producers of Raj fiction, most noticeably Maud Diver, do not portray Simla, those who do use the city to emphasise the thrills found in the summer capital. Like

the image of the club, literary depictions of Simla serve as a disruption of the domesticity upon which Anglo-Indian femininity was constructed, but this disruption can be accommodated by the city's English character. Winnie Edwards in Alice Fleming's *A Pinchbeck Goddess*, for example, behaves outrageously during her time in Simla. Unlike *Captain Desmond V.C.*, however, where these actions are depicted in the colonial club and are used to problematise the space, *A Pinchbeck Goddess* has these behaviours be the very thing that allows Edwards to find a suitable husband. This is explicitly acknowledged in the novel as Edwards is actually an invention of the retiring Madeline Norton, who had a disastrous season a year earlier. Similarly, Sara Jeannette Duncan's short stories set in the summer capital detail the artistry, infidelities, and the malleable identities that can be found elsewhere in depictions of the colonial club. In both Fleming and Duncan, it is the comic tone of the narrative voice and the frequent highlighting of the absurdities of Simla society that permit a positive portrayal of these behaviours. In addition to the English character of Simla allowing and encouraging this frivolity that would be dangerous elsewhere in the Raj, the comic tone of much of Simla fiction works as a method of assuaging these fears of marital breakdown by reducing the seriousness of a character's actions.

Another space in the Raj that was considered to have a fundamentally English character is that of the Anglo-Indian picnic site. Like the reputation of Simla, the picnic was able to symbolise a fundamental aspect of English identity in the colonial context. In the colonial context of the Raj, the picnic reassumes its original trappings as an opportunity to reaffirm and perform a national identity. The English character of the picnic, like that of Simla, means the space can be constructed in relation to a colonial femininity. Unlike the club, both Simla and the picnic site became spaces in

the Anglo-Indian social sphere that were associated with women rather than men. As the picnic is also a bringing out of household items the site can also be read as being somewhat domestic in nature. This process of establishing an 'English' space in India could also be read as being symbolic of the larger imperial process. In this respect the picnic was a space that contained numerous contradictions; it was a transposing of the domestic sphere onto that of the social, as well as that of an English space onto an Indian one. This establishment of the domestic space onto the Indian wilderness can also be read as a placing of a colonial feminine sphere onto a space that is understood to be the purview of colonial masculinity. Despite, or because of, these numerous associations placed on to the picnic, the space frequently serves as a narrative catalyst; frequently the picnic itself – or the aftermath of the event – significantly disrupt the story and change its course. This can happen at the beginning of the narrative as in the case of *Captain Desmond V.C.* where the moonlight picnic between Evelyn and Desmond leads to their hasty marriage. Additionally, it can occur late into a text: it is at a picnic near the climax of Perrin's *Star of India*, for example, that Stella hears her abusive husband is dying. The picnic is frequently the location where the narrative is altered significantly. It is through the impermanence of the site and its apparent English character that allow for the management of these anxieties that emerge from these moments of narrative discord.

While a sense of an English character is encouraged by depictions of both Simla and the act of the picnic, narratives of Raj fiction sometimes deploys the space of the imperial homeland itself. Depictions of England were extremely limited, often solely focusing on the familial homes that conveyed a sense of stability and inheritance found in the metropole. England in Raj fiction is near-universally depicted as a

stultifying space that limits the ambitions of those who remain there. The boredom of the imperial metropole has a variety of functions in works of Raj fiction. In several works, such as Perrin's *Star of India* and Duncan's 'A Mother in India' England is a place to be escaped from in favour of the excitement of colonial life. Equally, it is also a space to return to and revitalise with the material gains taken from India such as in Perrin's 'The Palace of Snakes' or Diver's *Lilamani*. Equally, the stability found in England can function as a method of resolving the knotted narrative problems that arise in works of Raj fiction, Diver's *Captain Desmond V.C.* for example, brings its protagonists back to England from India in order to reach a final resolution of the love-triangle that forms its narrative, while in 'A Mother in India' England the space that can protect the infant Cecily from the dangers present in India.

In his conceptualising of Anglo-Indian space, Ralph Crane argues that the entire Anglo-Indian community can be envisioned as 'a metaphorical human island'.<sup>391</sup> Crane later applies this model specifically to the canonical works of Raj fiction produced by Forster and Orwell where he argues that the club functions as an island and 'the most anglomorphic site in India.'<sup>392</sup> In works of women-authored Raj fiction, however, this model is disrupted. Much of this fiction produced by women relates to the construction, delineation, and maintenance of the 'island' spaces by characters themselves; whether through the home-making celebrated in Diver's frontier novels, the performative Englishness found in Fleming's *A Pinchbeck*

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<sup>391</sup> Ralph Crane, 'Amid the Alien Corn: British India as Human Island', *Islanded Identities* (139, 2011) 127-144 (128).

<sup>392</sup> Ralph Crane, 'Reading the Club as Colonial Island', *Island Studies Journal* 6:1 (2011) 17-28, (19).

*Goddess*, the construction of the English space of the picnic in the likes of *Captain Desmond V.C.* and *Star of India*, or the depiction of the very space of England itself as a narrative counterbalance to India. Ironically, it is the club, the space that Crane identifies as the locus of this Anglo-Indian 'island' that is the most problematic in these novels. Both the reputation and the gender-barriers found in the club means that the Englishness found in the space is exclusionary to Anglo-Indian women. This supposedly 'anglomorphie' space cannot be accessed by these characters and its positioned at the centre of Anglo-Indian life is eroded by these texts. Thus the club is not an emblematic space of Englishness but rather a location that must be negated by these women visitors.

Works of women-authored Raj fiction not only present an alternate image of Anglo-Indian life that is centralised on the domestic sphere and the maintenance of the Empire, they also serve as a conduit from which colonial anxieties can emerge. Primarily these anxieties formulated around a sense of decline; whether it be a personal, a moral, a national, or an imperial fall. In works of fiction where characters can often be positioned as representative of their social group, the collapse of an individual's morality – for example – could disrupt the larger justifications for the Empire itself. Although this preoccupation with decline is present in works of male-authored Raj fiction, it takes on a new form in works of produced by women which positioned the upkeep of the Empire as the responsibility of the Anglo-Indian woman. The anxiety of some sort of decline often arose in these narratives from an act of transgression, the presence of a character entering a space which they should not have entered. Honor's presence in the bedroom with the wounded Desmond in *Captain Desmond V.C.* brings about the threat of a moral decline as the two fall in



love which then threatens Desmond's marriage to Evelyn. The presence of the murderous Eli Bux in the bedroom of the memsahib narrator in Perrin's 'In the Next Room' poses not just the sexual threat of a moral and racial decline but also the potential for an imperial decline through an invocation of the 1857 Rebellion. The transgressive frivolity of Winnie Edwards in *A Pinchbeck Goddess* and Miss Forde in Duncan's 'Miss Anderson's Hesitation' threatens both their own morality and that of the other Simla residents. The mismatching and confusions that frequently arise from Anglo-Indian picnics are further example of these fears of decline.

As middlebrow writing, Raj fiction has the capacity not only to depict these colonial anxieties but also to contain and control them. Cornelia Wächter argues that 'the often rigid generic frameworks' of middlebrow fiction 'not only cater to the capitalist market, they also serve as anxiety management'.<sup>393</sup> This is even more the case in Raj fiction where the anxieties that emerge from precarious colonial context threaten to undermine the entire Empire. The 'generic frameworks' allow works of Raj fiction to first evoke and then assuage these colonial anxieties. The middlebrow capacity to manage anxieties can be read as another method of its catering to the capitalist, literary marketplace. Raj fiction could be consumed not only for a tantalising glimpse into the exoticism of Anglo-Indian life, but also as a justification of Empire and the place of women as equal partners to men in the imperial mission. Raj fiction could explicitly and implicitly depict colonial anxieties of decline and then assuage these same anxieties by channelling them through the rigid narrative framework of the genre. Although the middlebrow narrative structure serves to

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<sup>393</sup> Cornelia Wächter, 'Middlebrow Negotiations of Lawrentian Sexuality in Unia Silberrad's *Desire*' in Wächter and Ehland (eds.) *Middlebrow and Gender 1890-1945* (Leiden: Brill Rodopi, 2016), (pp. 228-247) p. 228.

manage the anxieties that erupt from works of Raj fiction, the constant adherence to this plot structure throughout the genre also suggests the precarity of the Empire.

Though Raj fiction observed the middlebrow framework as a method for easing anxieties of decline, the genre itself was offered a variety of approaches. Raj fiction draws on a variety of different genres. The anxieties that emerge vary by genre as do the narrative structures that work to manage them. Although Diver's fiction focuses more on the domestic and Fleming's on the social, both authors produced what can adequately be described as romantic fiction. The Raj fiction produced by these two authors frequently feature two ideally suited Anglo-Indians who must traverse the numerous trials and mishaps that occur in the narrative for their love to be realised by the conclusion of the text. As these novels are frequently concerning characters who must prove themselves worthy of both their ideal match and of life in India, both Diver and Fleming's fiction engages with anxieties about the moral decline of an individual. The anxieties depicted largely relate to the threats arising from a personal failure such as the potential for adultery, pride, frivolity, or a lack of sympathy with their fellow Anglo-Indians. Although these novels largely depict – and contain – anxieties of an individual decline, they are often extrapolated onto the wider Empire: the unsuitable Anglo-Indian can not only ruin the lives of their fellow members of the community but questions the health of the Empire itself. The end of these narratives usually feature an affirmation of love between the two protagonists, if not an outright wedding. This union – the end result of the narrative structure – serves to contain these anxieties of moral failing by both proving the Anglo-Indians as worthy of each other as well as of ruling over India.

The Gothic fiction produced by Perrin and Croker possesses a different focus. Where the Romantic fiction produced by Diver and Fleming contain anxieties of an internal threat to the Anglo-Indian order, the majority of these texts relay an external threat, usually through a transgression or an invasion of an Anglo-Indian space. Croker's 'To Let', 'The Dak Bungalow of Dakar', and 'The Red Bungalow' as well as Perrin's 'In the Next Room' and arguably both 'Beynon, of the Irrigation Department' and *Star of India* all feature someone or something gaining access to an Anglo-Indian space that they should not. A large amount of these texts concern Anglo-Indian women facing these threats not just to the domestic sphere for which they are responsible, but also to their lives. This is not always the case however, sometimes the use of the Gothic form allows some deviation from the generic middlebrow narrative. In this respect, the Gothic form itself is a method of anxiety management. The expectation that Gothic texts would attempt to in some way unsettle the reader is in-built into the genre, this meant that the anxieties that arose in the narrative could be anticipated and thus proved less disruptive than they would if they appeared in non-Gothic works.

A similar genre-based difference can be found in Sara Jeannette Duncan's works of Raj fiction that gently satirise the Anglo-Indian community. Similar to the license to depict anxieties that was granted by the Gothic, Duncan's fiction is able to depict greater ambiguities of Anglo-Indian life as the shock of these depictions can be absorbed by the genre and the narrative voice. The flight of Miss Forde with her husband's riches in 'Miss Anderson's Hesitation' or Ingersoll Armour's refusal to enter respectable Anglo-Indian society in 'An Impossible Ideal' are testament to the narrative flexibility granted by the satirical short story. If romantic fiction largely

features internal threats of decline emerging from a failure of the morality of individual Anglo-Indians, and Gothic fiction largely depicts an external threat that must in some way be overcome, the satiric form employed by Duncan can display both. The invasion of the insects into the narrator's home in *On the Other Side of the Latch* in many senses mirrors the transgressions that appear in Gothic works of Raj fiction, while her comparison between these invading animals and her fellow Anglo-Indians mirror the anxieties found in Diver and Fleming. The personal moral quandaries that orbit romantic relationships found in the likes of 'Miss Anderson's Hesitation', 'An Impossible Ideal', and 'A Mother in India' feature Anglo-Indians disrupting the expected domestic norms.

The largely overlooked works of colonial fiction considered in this thesis provide an alternative vision of the imperial order to that constructed by more renowned, canonical works in the genre predominantly produced by men. That is not to suggest such women-authored middlebrow works offer a more accurate image of colonial life. Rather, analysis of these women-authored fictions reveals that the experience of Empire by Anglo-Indian women was imagined differently and that the spatial dynamics of their fiction, based on the environments women inhabited, becomes a central means of exploring the workings of the Raj. This thesis has argued that interest in the spatial dynamics of feminine experiences of Empire, as deployed by women writers, serves to both depict and contain colonial anxieties of decline.

Through its detailed analysis of key spaces, and the encoding of gendered values through them, the thesis has shown how Raj fiction positions Anglo-Indian women active participants in the Empire. A preoccupation with spatiality is part of the ardent imperialism of these works; movement between Anglo-Indian spaces functions as a

primary method for the articulation and management of concerns around the role of women in the Raj and around the potential decline of Empire.

While Raj fiction was constructed upon racial divisions, the gendered divisions of colonial society were also significant in experiences of Anglo-Indian life. As the thesis has shown, the conventions of middlebrow fiction, with its emphasis on the environments in which women lived their lives, facilitated the exploration of the demarcation of space. The drive of middlebrow fiction towards plot resolution also contributed to the management and containment of a range of concerns and fears produced by imperial existence. Fictional resolutions can be used to shore up more contentious sites of anxiety, assuaging both narrative anxieties while at the same time shoring up the unstable, contentious space where this management occurs. As the thesis has demonstrated, a focus on the spatiality of Raj fiction enriches understanding of the anxiety managing function of middlebrow literature at the turn of the twentieth century.

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