



A Change of Perspective in the Portrayal of Indo-British Relationships and Portrayal of Anglo-Indians in Paul Scott's *The Jewel in the Crown*

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ABSTRACT

After the independence of India from the British rule, it was presumed that with the end of the British rule Anglo-Indian fiction (now British Raj fiction) would come to a pathetic end as the impetus it required to flourish did not exist. But it did not happen so. Even after that, many British and non-British writers the world over have come forward to explore Indo-British relationships with cross-examination and in a new searching light. Paul Scott is one of them who has presented some of the British characters as self-scrutinising their presence in British India. This paper aims to explore the perspective of Paul Scott in *The Jewel in the Crown* to look at the Indo-British relationship and a kind of re-assessment of him of the British presence in India

Keywords : Indo-British relationship, Anglo-Indian, British Raj fiction

She is sweet and pretty child. Her skin is going to be pale, but not nearly pale enough for her to pass as white. I'm glad. As she grows older, she won't be driven by the temptation to wear a false face. At least that is one thing she'll be spared – the misery and humiliation experienced by so many Eurasian girls. I intend to bring her up as an Indian, which is one of the reasons I have called her Parvati (Scott 505-06).

Contrary to the assumption that the Raj fiction or Anglo-Indian fiction ended with the independence of India, it has been still explored with a new

name of British Raj fiction with new searching light and interpretation. After the independence of India, stalwart writers like John Masters, Paul Scott, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Carolyn Slaughter and many more have written fiction and portrayed Indo-British relationships with cross-examination. The British Raj fiction, set in British Raj India, in one way or another reflects mainly the British presence in India and the relationship of the British with the Indians and if not directly, then indirectly deal with the issues of the Anglo-Indians who were sired by the British during their presence in India. The British Raj fiction

manifests the features such as an irrefutable social and cultural gulf between the two people. The Anglo-Indians that appear in the British Raj fiction are often typecast but indeed there is an attempt to understand the intricacy of their situation.

The attempt to achieve a fair balance and impartiality in the delineation of Indo-British relationships was made by post-Raj writer on India - Paul Scott - in *The Jewel in the Crown*. This novel not only crushed the pre-independence myths about India but also fairly attempts to bring out the real facts lying behind the disguise built up during the Empire.

Pre-Independence writers like E.M. Forster were aware of the impossibility of personal relationships between the Indians and the British in the colonial set up but with the slackening of imperialistic outlook, the possibility of a relationship of the British with the Indians became a reality and Scott approaches this subject of Indo-British relationship as a "moral continuum of human affairs" in *The Jewel in the Crown* (Scott 1).

Edwina Crane, an economically poor and socially at the lowest strata of the British but being a British, far superior to the Indians, works as a governess in the Nesbitt-Smith family. She does not hate Indians like other British. She in-fact arranges tea parties at her house and invites Indian women. She has high esteem for the Mahatma and has the picture of the Mahatma, hung on the wall of her house. During Quit-Indian Movement the Indian women stopped visiting her house who hitherto used to visit her house regularly. As the Mahatma preferred the Japanese to the British, she becomes annoyed by him and takes his picture down from the wall. However, her searching analysis of her work shows that the people she has got on with her best of all are those of mixed

blood-the Anglo-Indians. As she is derided by the British for her love for the Indians and not wholly accepted by the Indians because she is an English lady, her situation, perhaps, seems to emphasize the fact that she is neither one thing nor the other. She is a teacher without real qualifications of being a teacher and a missionary worker who did not believe in god. In short, she considers herself an Anglo-Indian who belongs to neither of the two worlds. When she expresses her desire to Mr. Grant to teach in Mission schools, he arranges for a visit to the school. Only on reaching the school does she realize that the mission school was not the one she had in her mind. What she meant by it was the school for the Anglo-Indian children. She is taken into the school for poor Indian children. As there is no chance of going back, she continues to be associated with the mission schools. The very introduction of Miss Crane to the Anglo-Indian teacher Miss Williams, who has the complexion of an Anglo-Indian makes Crane feel a certain horror. She is exposed to the appalling attitude of the British towards the Anglo-Indians. Mr Grant says, "Miss Crane, this is Miss Williams," but not "Miss Williams, this is Miss Crane" (13). Miss Crane's direct entry into the Educational Service has a negative effect on the promotion of an Anglo-Indian teacher who has been in this service for many years. Miss Mary de Silva who expects to be promoted as Superintendent of Mission schools, will not materialise as Miss Crane is appointed as a Superintendent being a British lady. Miss de Silva painfully understands the viciousness of racial discrimination that denies her the expected promotion. She is conscious of the pride of her race and politely refuses to bow to the new superintendent. In spite of her audacity, till her death she lives in perfect harmony with Miss Crane: "With Mary de Silva's death Miss Crane had lost the last person in the world who called her Edwina" (33). However, the Anglo-Indian's

haughtiness melted before the friendliness of the Englishwoman. Mary de Silva's arrogance is borne out of "the anguish created by every abandonment, the aggression to which it gives rise and the devaluation of self that flows out of it" (Fanon 73). The British never distinguished between the Indians and the Anglo-Indians when it comes to belittling them. When Miss Crane, requests Mrs. Nesbitt-Smith to relieve her from the task of a governess so as to take up teaching assignment in the Mission school, Mrs Nesbitt-Smith looks at her as if she is mad and vents her outburst: "You'd be with blacks and half-castes, cut off from your own kind..." (Scott14).

The officers on temporary or emergency commissions are admitted into the Mayapore Club as Privileged Temporary members. They are permitted to bring at a time only one guest with the approval of the commanding officer. In truth, it is to prevent such officers from bringing either an Indian or an Anglo-Indians to the club. The reference to both the natives and the Anglo-Indians in the same breath explains the derogatory status to which the British put the Anglo-Indians. The Anglo-Indians are mocked at for their illusion of going home – England - in British Raj fiction.

Scott through the principal character Daphne scores a point that it is not the Anglo-Indians, even some of the British too do not have a home back. Daphne's initial repulsion towards Hussein for touching her blouse with his black fingers is followed by remorse. She says, "I hated myself for feeling that... I sat down and wanted to burst into tears and be rescued and taken home. I've never felt so badly the fact that I no longer have a home in England, with Mummy gone, and Daddy, and David" (108). Daphne's living with an Indian Lady Chatterjee raises certain eyebrows among the British; the inquisitive ones want to confirm

whether she really has any relationship with the past Governor, Sir Henry. So, they ask her many questions to confirm that she does not have "a touch of the tar brush" and she is "really a niece of a one-time Governor and not some by-blow of Lili Chatterjee's" (365).

In the hospital where she has taken up voluntary service Daphne gets a number of occasions to learn about the social condition of the Anglo-Indians. In one of her letters she writes about the ways of the Englishwomen in India. She records: "Neither they (British women) nor the voluntary bods are supposed to do anything menial. That's all left to the poor little Anglo-Indian (Eurasian) girls" (99). Scott considers the class-consciousness of the British and tries to neutralise with the character of Daphne.

The Jewel in the Crown does not have major Anglo-Indian characters as John Masters' Bhowani Junction has. However, the whole book is devoted to the change in perception of certain British - Indians towards the intimacy between Indians and the British. The love of Daphne Manners for Hari Kumar terrifies the Anglo-Indians in Mayapore, and from Daphne's communiqué to her aunt one realizes that is what Daphne desired "... the breaking of the most fundamental law of all – that although a white man could make love to a black girl, the black man and white girl association was still taboo" (Scott 407). It is seen elsewhere that the British Raj fiction writers followed a set pattern of doing away with the child born of such unnatural union. But Daphne decides to bring the child into the world once she is certain that it is Hari's, and talks about her nightmares of the child saying that the child may "resemble no one, black-skinned, beyond redemption, a creature of the dark, a tiny living mirror of that awful night. And

yet, even so, it will be a child. A God-given creature, if there is a god, and even if there isn't, deserving of that portion of our blessing we can spare" (365). The dark creature may mirror the happenings of that awful night, and so according to Daphne every creature born has the blessings of god and there should be no discrimination on the basis of colour, class, race or social status, and hence she has decided to give birth to the child and not to go in for the termination of pregnancy as is suggested by the people of her race. Daphne dies at childbirth and her aunt Lady Manners gives the child an Indian name, Parvati and brings her up. Lady Manners is happy that the colour of the child would not allow it to pass for pure white. In her letter to Lili, she says that Parvati is "not nearly pale enough for her to pass as white. she won't be driven by the temptation to wear a false face" (474). Even otherwise Parvati would not wear a false face as her parents belong to the upper strata of their respective races and hence, she would be a model Anglo-Indian with the best traits of the East and the West. Lady Manners requests Lili in one of her letters, "When I'm gone, will you give Parvati a roof?" (476) Scott on realizing the mental agony of this unfortunate race makes Parvati a symbol of Indo-British relationship. Though Parvati does not have her parents – her mother dead and her father no one knows where he is. Yet she is not disowned, but is being brought up by the best women from both the races. Lady Manners' request, and Lili offering not just a roof but a home to Parvati symbolizes the anxiety of the British over the future of the Anglo-Indians when they are gone, and the Indians providing a well-protected home to them. Scott concludes that the miscegenation has given birth to a superior race as he visualizes Parvati giving Indian music concerts in Western capitals and ends the Chapter in Jewel with a song set to a

morning raga predicting a new lease of life to Anglo-Indians and to Indo- British relationship.

One day, perhaps, Parvati will also sing in those western capitals, and then become a guru herself, instructing a new generation of girls in the formal complexities of the songs her English mother once described as the only music in the world she knew that sounded conscious of breaking silence and going back into it when it was finished. (Scott 517).

REFERENCES

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