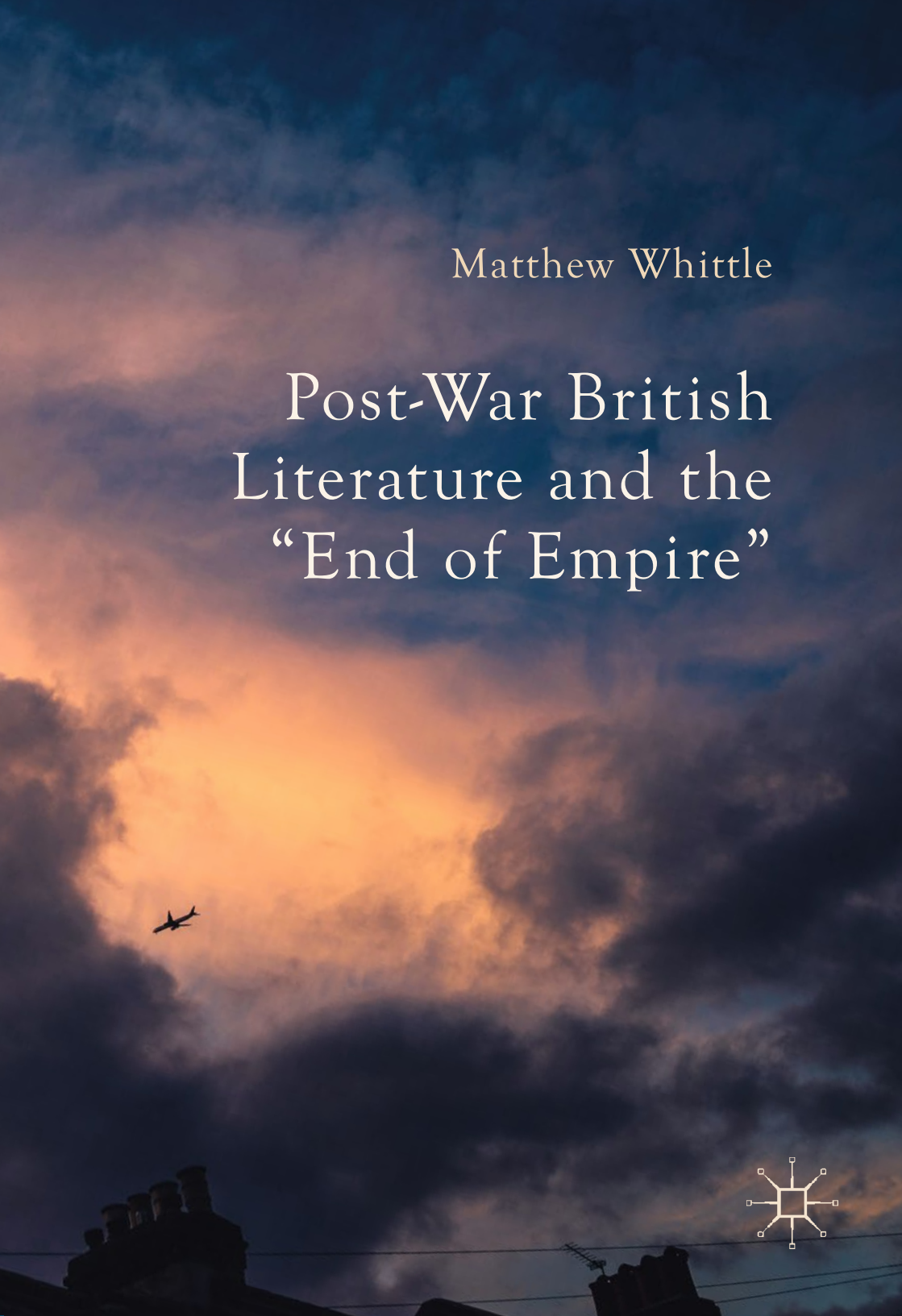

Matthew Whittle

Post-War British Literature and the "End of Empire"

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List of Abbreviations

AB	Colin MacInnes, *Absolute Beginners*
AF	Joseph Conrad, *Almayer's Folly*
AFP	David Caute, *At Fever Pitch*
AY	DJ Enright, *Academic Year*
BE	Anthony Burgess, *Beds in the East*
BH	William Trevor, *The Boarding-House*
CI	RM Ballantyne, *The Coral Island*
CO	Anthony Burgess, *A Clockwork Orange*
CoS	Colin MacInnes, *City of Spades*
CS	Gerald Hanley, *The Consul at Sunset*
EB	Anthony Burgess, *Enemy in the Blanket*
FF	William Golding, *Free Fall*
KD	Alan Sillitoe, *Key to the Door*
LBA	John Osbourne, *Look Back in Anger*
LF	William Golding, *Lord of the Flies*
OHC	Anthony Burgess, *One Hand Clapping*
QA	Graham Greene, *The Quiet American*
RA	Anthony Burgess, *Right to an Answer*
SI	Andrea Levy, *Small Island*
SNSM	Alan Sillitoe, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*
TH	Shelagh Delaney, *A Taste of Honey*
TT	Anthony Burgess, *Time for a Tiger*

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

It was labelled 'the bonfire of papers at the end of Empire' (Cobain 2013a, n.p.) when the full extent of Operation Legacy was revealed. As the British Colonial Service and MI5 oversaw the process of decolonization between the late 1940s and early 1960s, Operation Legacy—a codename freighted with anxiety about how Britain's colonial history would be perceived by future generations—ordered the systematic purging of documents 'that might embarrass Her Majesty's government' (n.p.). Large bonfires were constructed throughout the Empire with instructions that documents be 'reduced to ash and the ashes broken up' (n.p.) prior to the transfer of power. 'While thousands of files were returned to London during the process of decolonization', the report continued, 'it is now clear that countless numbers of documents were destroyed' (n.p.). In Malaysia (formerly Malaya), which gained independence in 1957, this involved the 'wholesale destruction' of Colonial Office files, while in Belize officials were assisted in the destruction of 'sensitive files' by 'the Royal Navy and several gallons of petrol' (n.p.). The involvement of the Navy points to the use of a second practice that was considered less conspicuous than the building of bonfires, namely the mass dumping of documents at sea. Instructions were given that files be 'packed in weighted crates and dumped in very deep and current-free water at maximum practicable distance from the coast' (n.p.). For the Colonial Office, it seems, Operation Legacy amounted to the erasure of much of Britain's colonial history.

The papers that survived the purge were stored behind barbed wire fences in a secret archive in Buckinghamshire, hidden from inquisitive

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historians or journalists. The Foreign Office was only forced to declare their existence in 2013 during a court case brought against the UK Government by more than five thousand Kenyan survivors of torture during the so-called Mau Mau insurgency of the 1950s.[1] The revelations surrounding Operation Legacy encapsulate one of the two positions that have come to characterize British responses to colonial history, namely a muted sense of shame and embarrassment—the second position being a kind of triumphalism regarding the railways and the rule of law. Neither of these two extremes serves to progress debates very far. Instead, they have helped entrench the view that those from the erstwhile imperial centre have been conspicuously silent on the history of colonial expansion, or else have looked back with a nostalgic sigh. A sustained reading of texts produced at the moment of extensive post-war decolonization reveals a much more complex, contradictory, and intriguing response. A range of novels by writers with direct experience of the colonies through colonial service or settlement, such as Anthony Burgess, Alan Sillitoe, Graham Greene, Gerald Hanley, David Caute, and Colin MacInnes, do not articulate an inability to comprehend the consequences of decolonization, or a resignation to national decline. Rather, these writers invest in a revised post-colonial national solidarity, committing to a new conception of Britishness that does not rely on static ideas about national or racial superiority. As such, British literature of the 1950s and early 1960s is in many ways a literature of self-conscious transition, where writers sought to address the political and racial tensions that would eventually give rise to British multiculturalism and fully articulated postcolonial perspectives on the Empire. The uneven and dynamic process of decolonization informs an early rejection of Britain's imperial identity and an awareness of the shift in Britain's role throughout the globe alongside America and formerly colonized nation-states.

While literature cannot be read in the same way as the documents destroyed during Operation Legacy, novels that respond to decolonization offer an ambivalent engagement with the ideological underpinnings of colonialism. Works by Burgess, Sillitoe, and Hanley for instance provide an 'unofficial', subjective, and often critical perspective from those who witnessed the process of decolonization first-hand. Colonial officers and Army personnel began to produce fiction based on their own colonial encounters at a time when innumerable official documents relating to British colonial rule were being transported to a covert archive, sunk to the bottom of the ocean, or providing fuel for bonfires. Some, such as

Sillitoe and Hanley, published their reflections on the 'end of Empire' in Asia and Africa respectively after leaving the Army, and so were beyond the reach of those responsible for managing Britain's colonial legacy. In other cases, the practice of writing novels of decolonization was looked on unfavourably within the Colonial Service. John Burgess Wilson, an aspiring writer and composer from Manchester, was ordered by his superiors to use a pseudonym under which to publish novels based on his time as an Education Officer. Of the list of possibilities sent to his editor at Heinemann, 'Anthony Burgess' was chosen as the most preferable, and *The Malayan Trilogy* (1956–1959) would launch the career of one of Britain's most prolific twentieth-century writers.[2]

Due to the fact that direct experience of decolonization was afforded to many Britons through either National Service or employment in the Colonial Service, the demographic of writers who emerged on the post-war literary scene with responses to imperial decline was predominantly male. This is not to infer that female writers of the period did not concern themselves with imperial matters. Phyllis Lassner's *Colonial Strangers: Women Writing the End of the British Empire* makes the case for authors such as Elspeth Huxley, Muriel Spark, and Olivia Manning, amongst others, 'unsettl[ing] the imaginative and political power that is still awarded to colonialism today' (2004, p. 2). More recently, John McLeod has explored the 'critical vista of empire' (2016, p. 87) that is opened up in Manning's *Levant Trilogy* (1977–1980). McLeod maintains that, while it is 'marred by the disingenuous representation of colonized peoples that […] marks a wholesale failure to understand or admit native cultural particularities' (p. 89), *The Levant Trilogy* nevertheless offers an important example of 'the limited yet vital ways in which a critical representation of empire was furthered—despite mid-century forgetfulness concerning empire's centrality to British history—primarily through the unflattering characterization of the British overseas' (p. 90). The literature of Manning, Huxley, and Spark can thus be read as contributing to a broader understanding of mid-century British culture that is all too often branded as parochial and detached from the realities of imperial decline.

The key concerns of this study however—namely the relationship between the Second World War and decolonization, anxieties regarding Americanization, and the impact of mass immigration—are articulated most urgently by writers whose experience of the Empire was through professional positions in the Army and Colonial Service during the 1950s and early 1960s, or who returned to Britain to settle precisely at this moment of

historical transition. The literature of Burgess, whose early work addresses decolonization, Americanization, and mass immigration, is influenced by both these positions. Burgess's output between his debut novel—the first instalment of *The Malayan Trilogy* in 1956—and *A Clockwork Orange* in 1962 thus offers a productive means of orientation around which to situate a diverse range of contemporaneous texts. Burgess's sensibilities during this short period of time, as well as those of Sillitoe, MacInnes, and Caute, are shaped by movement between Britain and the colonies during the break-up of the Empire. This sense of movement heightens an appreciation of the myths and assumptions lying beneath established notions of British superiority, as well as an investment in rethinking the conditions upon which post-war British society should rest.

Reading the literature of writers who were colonial servants, Army personnel, and settlers broadens our understanding of the impact of colonialism on British culture and society. Typically, the immediate post-war decades have been defined by literary groupings, the most prominent being the Angry Young Men, the Movement and the Windrush generation. This book involves an examination of writers not commonly read together, many of whom are regarded as marginal to literary studies of the 1950s and early 1960s because of their place outside of these established literary groups. This body of literature, however, is not peripheral to the trajectory of twentieth-century culture but instead disconcerts existing narratives, forcing us to think differently about the relationship between post-war British literature and the fields of postcolonial, modernist, and postmodernist literary studies.

Between the Cracks: Postcolonialism, Modernism, Postmodernism

The period of British literary history that I concentrate on in this book has often been oversimplified, in part because of the categorization of cultural creativity in relation to expedient paradigms. As Peter J. Kalliney has recently acknowledged, literature of the mid-century and immediate post-war decades 'has proved awkward for literary historians' because it falls 'between the cracks of modernist studies, postcolonial theory and even postmodernism' (2013, p. 117). These paradigms offer a highly productive means of understanding the fissures and broad cultural movements of literary and historical eras. At the same time, however, they can

prompt the use of generalizations that rely on Manichean definitions. In terms of the period explored here, the prevailing impression is that British literature of the immediate post-war decades was antithetical to the internationalist and radical challenges of anti-colonial thought and was biased towards anti-modernism and parochialism. Positioning my analysis of post-war British literature in relation to the literary-critical discourses of postcolonialism, modernism, and postmodernism, I maintain that a number of white British writers not only saw decolonization within its global context, but proposed a solution to Britain's imperial decline through cultural renewal.

My evaluation of texts that respond to decolonization intervenes into postcolonial debates that tend to erase the subjectivity of the colonizer. As far back as 1990, in an issue of *Critical Quarterly*, both David Trotter and Laura Chrisman recognized the problems of this erasure within postcolonial debates. Trotter remarks that colonialism has predominantly been understood as 'an encounter between a colonizing machine or system, on one hand, and a colonized subject, on the other. The *colonizing* subject has been elided, his or her subjectivity wished away' (1990, p. 3). This elision has, as Chrisman maintains, resulted in the imperial power remaining, 'paradoxically, frozen in power and repressed, an absent "centre", a hidden referent' (1990, p. 38). One method of disrupting these binaries, and attending further to what Edward Said termed the 'overlapping territories' and 'intertwined histories' of the colonizer and the colonized (1993, p. 72), is to examine the impact of colonialism on literature produced by those from within the imperial centre. Where an engagement with the tangled histories of the colonizer and the colonized exists, it has tended to concentrate on the period of high imperialism during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, with Charlotte Brontë, Charles Dickens, Rudyard Kipling, and (perhaps above all) Joseph Conrad being the most prominent.[3] Yet, it is necessary to extend this focus to the moment of imperial decline and to examine how British literature responded to the post-war era of extensive decolonization, which saw an irrevocable and dramatic change to Britain's place within the global order.

This is not to somehow 'restore the balance' and undermine postcolonial analyses of non-European writers. Critics working in the field of postcolonial studies have rightly challenged the notion that a canon of writers who are white, European, and male can set the mould of a universal subjectivity, against which all other perspectives must be valued as

the 'Other'. Anti- and postcolonial perspectives, moreover, have done much to foreground the formative role of imperialism in the development of European culture and society and the impact of imperialism upon colonized cultures and societies. As both Trotter and Chrisman suggest, however, focusing solely on textual responses to the history of colonialism produced by writers and critics from formerly colonized regions risks reinforcing the cultural, national, and racial binaries that imperialism inaugurated.

My reappraisal of responses to decolonization also undermines narratives of the twentieth century that see the 1950s as a 'blank space' between modernism and postmodernism. Rather than evincing what is regarded as the anti-modernist aesthetics of writers such as Philip Larkin and Kingsley Amis, the texts under consideration here extend the self-reflexive representation of colonialism found in many modernist works. Acknowledging the ambivalent relationship between Anglophone modernist literature and colonialism, Howard J. Booth and Nigel Rigby have persuasively maintained that 'colonialist tropes co-existed with the ideas and narratives that questioned, and in time helped to end, formal British imperialism' (2000b, p. 2). More recently, the collection *Modernism and Race* (2011) offers a range of revisionist readings of key modernist writers. The influence of postcolonial discourses on the study of these writers allows for contemporary modernist studies, as Len Platt argues, to 'engage with the historical conditions that produced, in very specific terms, the complex and often contradictory state of race politics as they were played out by modernist writers' (2011, p. 12). Such conditions include 'late Victorian and Edwardian race science and technology', which relied on the new and popular discipline of anthropology, 'historical linguistics, imperialist politics and gender politics, as well as 1920s internationalism and early twentieth-century historiography' (Platt, p. 1). In their responses to the realities of decolonization, post-war writers such as Sillitoe, Hanley, Burgess, and Golding extend this modernist concern with the political, scientific, and historical assumptions underpinning the accounts of the Empire. Across a number of their works, these writers self-consciously depict the act of representation—be it cultural, historical, or scientific—as complicit in the propagation of colonialist ideas about racial difference.

Attending to the self-reflexive nature of these novels of decolonization is a productive way to read them as contributing to what Brian McHale has outlined as the movement from modernist to postmodernist fiction.

According to McHale, this movement is best understood as involving a 'shift from problems of *knowing* to problems of *modes of being*—from an epistemological dominant to an *ontological one*' (1987, p. 10). In this formulation, modernist literature foregrounds 'epistemological themes' such as 'the accessibility and circulation of knowledge, the different structuring imposed on the "same" knowledge by different minds, and the problem of "unknowability" or the limits of knowledge' (p. 9). Postmodernist literature questions 'the ontology of the literary text itself' asking, 'what is the mode of existence of a text, and what is the mode of existence of the world (or worlds) it projects?' (p. 10). Burgess's *The Malayan Trilogy*, in particular, questions the validity of purportedly objective and epistemological truths. At the same time, Burgess adopts metafictional narrative strategies that foreground the text's own place within a tradition of literature that has ascribed to those truths. Drawing on Patricia Waugh's assertion that 'the lowest common denominator of metafiction is simultaneously to create a fiction and to make a statement about the creation of that fiction' (2001, p. 6), it is possible to read *The Malayan Trilogy* as challenging the role of literature in upholding conceptions of British cultural and racial superiority.

In the sections that follow I will assess the prevailing approaches to the impact of decolonization upon British literature, which fit broadly into the categories described as the 'minimal impact' and 'shrinking island' theses. It will then be possible to discuss how the period of extensive decolonization between 1947 and 1965 was not necessarily one of inevitable decline but of uncertainty, involving attempts both to strengthen British influence throughout the colonies and to manage decolonization through the establishment of the Commonwealth. An appropriate approach to assessing how the novels under examination respond to the complexity and unevenness of decolonization is offered by a combination of postcolonial and cultural materialist methodologies. In doing so, this study will draw on Raymond Williams's notion of aspects of culture that represent a process of 'pre-emergence' (1977, p. 126). Finally, I will outline how an understanding of literature from the period of extensive decolonization as dynamic is enhanced by the thematic structure of the book, which concentrates on the relationship between the Second World War and decolonization, anxieties about the rise of America in the colonies and in Britain, and the impact of mass immigration on British society.

The 'Minimal Impact' and 'Shrinking Island' Theses

Despite the huge impact that decolonization has had upon ideas about a unitary Britishness in the second half of the twentieth century and beyond, analysis of the effect upon British literature is lacking. Much has been written on the economic consequences of decolonization. Yet, as Bill Schwarz has argued in his introduction to the 2011 collection *End of Empire and the Novel since 1945*, 'there is still relatively little discussion about the impact of the end of empire on the metropole, and even less on the cultural and political […] connections' (2011, p. 7). To this I would add that the response of writers who emerged during the period of post-war decolonization, many of whom went on to become prominent literary figures of the late-twentieth century, has been especially overlooked. Examinations of the connections between decolonization and British literary culture have tended to concentrate more firmly on the field of contemporary literature, the threshold of which is generally taken as being no earlier than the 1970s. Significant work has been done in this area, with critics such as John McLeod and Michael Perfect offering illuminating analyses of the fraught engagement of migrant writers and their descendants with their former imperial 'motherland'.[4] By contrast, the literature of post-war white British writers has traditionally been characterized as either uninterested in the impact of decolonization and mass immigration on the erstwhile imperial centre, or as responding by eulogizing the expansive vision offered by the Empire.

These two prevailing approaches to the period can be identified respectively as the 'minimal impact' and 'shrinking island' theses. Although they approach the immediate post-war decades in different ways, both view literature of the fifties as evincing a conscious break from modernism by narrowing its horizons and renouncing the global in favour of the localized concerns of an embattled nation. In the seminal collection *British Culture and the End of Empire* (2001a), the cultural historian Stuart Ward coined the term 'minimal impact thesis' to describe the view that the effects of decolonization were largely confined to the colonies while the British public were apathetic towards the realities of imperial decline. Exemplifying this outlook, David Cannadine has argued that the Empire 'was given away in a fit of collective indifference' (1997, p. 262). Criticising the notion that the Empire may have had a large, but previously unseen, effect on British culture and society, Bernard Porter has maintained that, 'people who look for things sometimes find them when

they are not there; especially—in this case—if they are looking through distorting lenses' (2004, p. 13). Although there is evidence of a pervasive lack of public awareness regarding Britain's colonial expansion and the exact make-up of the Empire, the knowledge that the Empire existed, 'out there', informed Britain's self-image as being much more than an island-nation. As Ward persuasively contends, 'An apparently thriving empire promoted the idea of a world-wide British identity—the myth of a greater Britain—that resonated at all levels of metropolitan culture' (2001b, p. 4). While this construction of 'Britishness' was not necessarily consciously felt or debated, a unifying notion of national identity was not only cemented through a sense of comradeship at home but also through opposition to other nations abroad.[5]

Addressing the centrality of colonial history for Britain's self-image, and undermining popular accounts of a widespread apathy towards the waning of the Empire, allows us to explore the continuing importance of colonialism in contemporary ideas about British national identity. As Paul Gilroy maintains in *Postcolonial Melancholia*, 'The imperial and colonial past continues to shape political life in the over-developed-but-no-longer--imperial countries' (2005, p. 2). Revisionist accounts of colonialism may

> salve the national conscience, but they compound the marginality of colonial history, spurn its substantive lessons, and obstruct the development of multiculturalism by making the formative experience of empire less profound and less potent in shaping the life of colonizing powers than it actually was. (p. 2)[6]

According to Gilroy, Britain's history of colonial expansion and its subjugation of weaker nations has not only derailed a doctrine of multiculturalism but has contributed to the success of an American-led 'unipolar global order' (p. 3), which sustains the global structure of imperialism.

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, there has been a gradual shift away from the core assumptions of the 'minimal impact' thesis towards what Patrick Parrinder has termed the 'shrinking island thesis' (2011, p. 39), in reference to Jed Esty's 2004 work *A Shrinking Island: Modernism and National Culture in England*. In his concluding discussion of mid-century and post-war British literature, Esty updates the view that the 1950s and early 1960s saw an outright rejection of the expansive, Anglophone perspective of literary modernism in favour of the narrow confines of the campus and the kitchen sink.[7] Since Rubin Rabinovitz's

influential 1967 work *The Reaction against Experiment in the English Novel, 1950–1960*, critics have been quick to ascribe to this characterization of the immediate post-war decades: the fifties in particular is a decade largely seen as a sort of interregnum between the innovations of modernism and postmodernism. In *After the War*, D.J. Taylor maintained that, '[N]early every critic who approaches the modern [i.e. post-1945] British novel does so in the consciousness of debasement and decadence, narrowed horizons and limited aims' (1993, p. xiii). In his survey *Wartime and Aftermath*, Bernard Bergonzi argues for a more positive view of post-war fiction, but still one that sees 1950s literature as 'insular and formally conservative' (1993, p. 207). Randall Stevenson's 2004 volume for the *Oxford English Literary History* series, entitled *The Last of England?*, provides a productive re-examination of post-war British literature as narrowed in both scope and form. He asserts that

> neither mid-century renunciation of empire […] nor the loosening of class hierarchies and social exclusions in the years that followed, need be understood only—or primarily—in terms of loss. Each marked the last of a certain kind of England, but one which was in many senses a world well lost. As it declined, another England gradually emerged: less enthralled by tradition, freer and more open, as a result, in outlook, lifestyle, and culture. (2004, p. 4)

Stevenson neglects the 1950s, however, contending that 'this new society developed strongly in the 1960s' and 'extended long afterwards' (p. 4). In *A Shrinking Island*, Esty examines the shift from late modernism to mid-century literature, maintaining that the 'cultural claustrophobia of narrowed horizons' (2004, p. 85) can be ascribed to the realities of decolonization.

This new perspective productively places decolonization at the centre of an understanding of developments of twentieth- and twenty-first-century British culture. Yet, at the same time, it problematically contends that British literature of the immediate post-war era viewed imperial decline as a *fait accompli* and responded by turning inwards and becoming parochial. For Esty, it is no coincidence that the shift from an Anglophone, modernist culture to a broadly anti-modernist post-war literature occurred during the break-up of the Empire: decolonization revealed 'the inner logic and stylistic contours of a major literary culture caught in the act of becoming minor' (p. 3). Esty's analysis makes a distinction between late-modernist

literature of the 1930s and 1940s and the 'next generation' of writers (such as Auden, Greene, Orwell and Larkin) who are 'conventionally taken to represent English literature in the midcentury' (p. 9). The former 'translated the end of empire into a resurgent concept of national culture' (2004, p. 2). The latter, by contrast, are 'increasingly bereft of any hope for moral, political, or artistic renewal' (p. 116) following the end of the Empire and take 'imperial decline to imply national decline' (p. 215). Esty's category of 'next generation' writers, however, not only includes a mixture of novelists and poets whose output spanned the thirties, forties and fifties but relies on a narrow canon that neglects writers such as Burgess, Sillitoe, and Golding, who do not fit the 'shrinking island' narrative.

An attempt to acknowledge a more complex and heterogeneous narrative of post-war British literature and decolonization has been set out by both Bill Schwarz and Graham MacPhee. For Schwarz, notions of post-war 'English parochialism and insularity have, historically, functioned as screens which have obscured an entire stratum of colonial realities' (2011, p. 5). Arguing for an understanding of the immediate post-war years as a period when the trajectories of late colonialism and decolonization were entwined, MacPhee maintains that 'it is not true […] that post-war British culture can be neatly choreographed as a renunciation of the global and the consequent withdrawal into the national. What emerges […] is a much messier, more complicated and more contradictory picture' (2011, p. 65). What both Schwarz and MacPhee neglect, however, is the significant contribution of white British writers to the call for a post-imperial national identity that no longer centres on colonial assumptions about ethnicity or race. By contrast, in this book I assess how a number of post-war texts view decolonization as offering a key moment in Britain's history to renew a national culture that abandons the harmful racial, national, and cultural hierarchies of colonialism.

The approach deployed by both the 'minimal impact' and 'shrinking island' theses can be likened to a vulgar Marxist model, whereby the base (economic and thus imperial contraction) is reflected in the superstructure (the perceived parochialism and 'narrowed horizons' of post-war literature). Despite there being a period of extensive and relatively rapid decolonization between 1947 and 1965, however, it did not involve a systematic or dramatic conclusion to imperialism. Instead, as the social historian John M. MacKenzie notes, 'in the 1940s and 1950s, Britons were still convinced that the British Empire in the Dominions and in Africa

would endure. […] For many observers […] decolonization in South and South-East Asia could seem like an exception rather than the norm' (2001, pp. 26–27). The quotation marks adopted in the title to this book, *Post-War British Literature and the 'End of Empire'*, are thus indicative of this more nuanced understanding of the period. Rather than figuring 1950s literature as depicting a clearly defined end of the Empire, it is more productive to examine texts as responding to the uneven decline of British colonialism, the renewed commitment to strengthen Britain's influence throughout the globe, and the shift in imperial power blocs around America.

'Implosions, Explosions and Small Sputterings': Rethinking the 'End of Empire'

The focus on fiction from the late 1950s and early 1960s develops an understanding of decolonization as a dynamic process in two key ways. Firstly, I draw on discussions of the end of the Empire which acknowledge a longer-term history than existing narrativizations of post-war literature allow. Secondly, I build upon work by revisionist historians which has characterized the immediate post-war decades as involving a contradictory commitment to and dismantling of the colonial project. This mapping of decolonization as a longer period of unevenness and uncertainty, and not a systematic withdrawal of colonial power, enables an extension of reading strategies used to assess the self-reflexive response to colonialism in prominent modernist texts. The approach of this study allows for an understanding of post-war literature as intervening in often fraught and conflicting ideas about the relationship between Britishness and Empire, arguing that, in different ways, writers from Britain reject past conceptions of an imperial identity in favour of a unified post-imperial conception of Britishness.

The term 'end of Empire' is predominantly used to refer to the immediate post-war decades which, following the end of the Second World War, saw the increased success of nationalist calls for independence throughout the colonies. Yet decolonization, as MacKenzie notes, 'took place in stages from the inter-war years right down to the 1990s [with the independence of Hong Kong]' (2001, p. 21) and proved to be a 'complicated mix of implosions, explosions, and small sputterings' (p. 23). MacKenzie productively outlines three distinct stages of the decolonizing process within the most extensive period of 1947–1965. The first, 1947–1948, saw the

independence of India, followed by Pakistan, Myanmar (formerly Burma), and Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon), the departure of Ireland from the Commonwealth, and the 'scuttle, implosion and explosion all at once in Palestine leading to the dramatic formation of the state of Israel' (p. 22). After almost a decade, the second stage, 1956–1957, is heralded by the Suez crisis and the withdrawal from Ghana, Malaya, and Singapore. The third significant stage occurred between 1961–1965, when the 'colonies of West and East Africa were cut adrift and the Central African Federation was broken up' (p. 22). While anxieties about imperial decline existed in tandem with colonial expansion, it is only during the second stage of decolonization—1956–1957—that the idea of the 'end of Empire' began to sink into the national consciousness. We cannot, therefore, read British literature of the immediate post-war decades as unitarily depicting the end of the Empire, and by extension national decline, as a *fait accompli*.

The prevailing characterization of post-war British fiction as renouncing the global and becoming parochial due to the impact of decolonization is not only complicated by the unevenness of the decolonizing process but also by an opposing commitment to strengthen what remained of the Empire. The period between what MacKenzie outlines as the first and second phases of decolonization involved a move to reinforce Britain's role throughout south-east Asia, the Middle East and Africa. As Anne Orde has maintained, 'The [Second World] war if anything strengthened the British will to retain power over the Middle East' (1996, p. 162), while P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins have shown that the 1950s saw a 'second colonial occupation': 'Far from being in decline, imperialism and empire were revitalised during the [Second World] war and in the period of reconstruction that followed' (2002, p. 639). Commenting on Britain's post-war commitment to the Empire, Dominic Sandbrook has recently noted that, 'by the middle of the fifties, there were even grounds for quiet confidence' due to successful campaigns to contain the international threat of Communism and pioneer an 'empire of partnership' (2011, p. 281) in the Gold Coast and West Africa.[8]

If the period of extensive post-war decolonization is best understood as dynamic and uneven, and as part of a longer-term historical development, then a combination of cultural materialist and postcolonial reading practices provides a productive vocabulary for examining responses to it. Combining cultural materialist and postcolonial methodologies, I propose a method of analysis labelled 'multi-cultural materialism', which enables me to disrupt the monolithic categories of 'post-war British literature'

and 'postcolonial literature' and examine the shared thematic and stylistic preoccupations that occur in both. It is a methodology that makes developments in postcolonial studies integral to analyses of British literature of the fifties and early sixties. It also provides a productive framework for analysing the social, cultural, and political contexts of the post-war period that influenced British literature of decolonization, the works of migrant and diaspora writers from the former colonies and the theorists that have become central to the development of both cultural materialism and postcolonial studies.

Multi-cultural Materialism

Adopting a cultural materialist methodology allows for an understanding of British 'end of Empire' fiction as seeking to move beyond an increasingly unsustainable imperial identity and establish the basis of a new postcolonial and 'multi-cultural' identity, one that is not reliant on static and conservative ideas about racial and cultural superiority. At the same time, the literature of colonial servant and settler writers produced at the moment of decolonization recirculates an imperial discourse of centre and periphery, 'primitivism', and narratives of progress. It is for this reason that the cultural materialist formulation proposed by Raymond Williams of 'dominant', 'residual', and 'emergent' aspects of culture allow us to determine the manner in which post-war British literature is both constrained by and moving away from the nation's colonial past.

The period of post-war decolonization in historical and literary studies has come to be regarded in epochal terms, whereby colonialism was systematically dismantled to be replaced in the 1960s by a more permissive and liberated world-view. In *Marxism and Literature*, Williams counters 'epochal' cultural analyses, which often occlude 'a sense of movement within what is ordinarily abstracted as a system', by distinguishing between the 'dominant', 'residual', and 'emergent': the 'dominant' is that which usually defines a particular cultural epoch; 'residual' refers to elements of culture which are in the process of being consigned to the past; and 'emergent' denotes aspects of culture that are new and may supplant the dominant (1977, pp. 121–123). It is a formulation that both revaluates the Marxist categorization of culture as 'superstructural' and, as John Higgins maintains, recognizes culture 'as a primary force in the reproduction of, and therefore all challenges to, any existing social order' (1999, p. 125). For Williams, this framework identifies 'the internal dynamic relations of

any actual process' and is crucial if analysis 'is to connect with the future as well as the past' (1977, p. 121). In these terms, post-war British literature dealing with decolonization has often been broadly characterized as either 'dominant' (as the culture of the colonizer which colonial writers set out to resist) or 'residual' (as looking to the past and articulating nostalgia for Britain's imperial dominance).

There are certainly both dominant and residual characteristics of the novels of decolonization under consideration, and it would be incorrect to claim that they offer an unproblematic prototype for postcolonial aesthetics. Yet, they also mount a challenge to dominant ideas about British imperial identity based on racial and cultural superiority, and make efforts to establish the grounds for a unified conception of identity that can avoid Americanization and include non-white new arrivals. These works are therefore more productively read as representing a subphase that Williams terms 'pre-emergence', denoting cultural conditions that are 'active and pressing but not yet fully articulated, rather than the evident emergence which could be more confidently named' (p. 126). This approach allows for a reading of post-war British literature as prefiguring later developments in postmodernism and postcolonialism by adopting the novel form to self-reflexively articulate a critique of colonialist conceptions of British national identity.

The division of the book into two distinct parts—'The British Abroad' and 'Returning Home'—allows me to examine texts set in the colonies during decolonization and texts set in Britain respectively. The chapters address three key aspects of the era known as the 'end of Empire': the process of decolonization itself, the supplanting of British colonial power with that of American geopolitical dominance, and the arrival of non-white migrants to Britain. The trajectory of Burgess's early career is especially productive in providing a thread through the study that binds these specific aspects of decolonization together. During the era of extensive decolonization, Burgess moved between a Britain that was losing its imperial status and colonial societies achieving independence. Whilst working as an Education Officer in Malaya between 1954 and 1957, he published his first novels, collected together as *The Malayan Trilogy*, out of direct experience of Malayan independence. After returning to England for a short period, where he began work on *The Right to an Answer* (1960) about race relations in a suburban Midlands town, Burgess again went to work for the Colonial Service in 1958, this time in Brunei, an experience that influenced his satirical portrayal of colonial nationalism, *Devil of a*

State (1961).[9] Experiencing a bout of ill health whilst teaching in Brunei, he returned home in 1958 and committed himself to writing fiction and journalism full-time. This decision led to the most prolific period of Burgess's career, including the publication of his tale of American cultural dominance in Britain, *One Hand Clapping* (1961), and his well-known dystopian novel *A Clockwork Orange* (1962).[10] It is for this reason that Burgess's early output is examined in each of the four chapters alongside his contemporaries.

In Chap. 2, 'Decolonization and the Second World War', I identify a denunciation of the racial hierarchies and imperial confidence of nineteenth-century 'adventure tales' in Gerald Hanley's *The Consul at Sunset* (1951) and William Golding's novels *Lord of the Flies* (1955) and *Free Fall* (1959). Utilizing Michael Rothberg's formulation of 'multidirectional memory', I examine how these works use the presence of Holocaust consciousness as a platform to reject notions of British racial and cultural superiority as ideologically constructed to serve the aims of British colonial conquest. The end of the Second World War, moreover, precipitated an attempt to strengthen Britain's hold over those colonies threatened by the rise of Communism. As a source of trade in tin and rubber, Malaysia became an especially important region. Burgess's *Malayan Trilogy* and Sillitoe's *Key to the Door* (1961) offer two distinct responses to independence in Malaysia, depicting the success of anti-colonial nationalism and the rising influence of Communism. As with Hanley's and Golding's novels, both texts actively oppose established depictions of the colonies as exotic, romanticized spaces and reject the aloofness and racism of the colonial service. At the same time, however, Burgess asserts an ideology of paternalism, committing to a British presence to assist in the establishment of a unified Malayan culture. Sillitoe, on the other hand, invests in an international, Socialist vision that is able to transcend patriotic allegiances.

Chapter 3, 'America Moves In: Neo-colonialism and America's "Entertainment Empire"', places mid-century British anxieties about the supplanting of British colonialism by America in dialogue with the influential anti-colonial theorists Frantz Fanon and Kwame Nkrumah. As formative works on the emerging legacy of colonialism within postcolonial studies, Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) and Nkrumah's *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (1965) provide accounts of the economic and political shifts during decolonization that remain influential today. Also responding to a shift in, rather than an end to, Western imperial power, Burgess's *Malayan Trilogy*, D. J. Enright's *Academic Year*

(1955), Graham Greene's *The Quiet American* (1955), and David Caute's *At Fever Pitch* (1959) address the important role that popular culture plays in the move from formal colonialism to new forms of imperialism that do not rely on conquest. The work of Frankfurt School Marxist theorists Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer on the 'culture industry' is applied here to examine how these texts depict post-war decolonization as involving the restructuring of imperial blocs around America alongside formal independence. Assessing how both Enright and Burgess—who experienced colonial life as teachers—draw on an English critical tradition associated with Matthew Arnold and F. R. Leavis, I analyse a commitment in *Academic Year* and *The Malayan Trilogy* to the possibilities for the British to import 'high' culture to the colonies and oppose the rise of American imperialism and global consumer capitalism. Caute's and Greene's works also address the relationship between trade, mass culture, and American 'neo-colonialism'. They do so, however, without an investment in the revitalising energies of 'high' culture and in a manner that points to the *complicity* of British trade interests in the continued subjugation of formerly colonized nations.

In Chap. 4, 'Englishness in Transition: Moving from the Imperial to the National', I assess the move from an imperial British identity, defined by the notion of a 'greater Britain' of nations connected by colonialism, to a localized British identity at the Empire's former 'centre'. Building on the analysis of British anxieties about American global dominance in Chap. 3, this chapter examines how British writers perceived post-war 'Americanization' as a threat to a unitary national identity at home. Establishing the critical tradition into which these texts intervene, I examine the varying approaches to Englishness offered by George Orwell, T. S. Eliot and F. R. and Q. D. Leavis in the 1930s and 1940s, and the development of such debates during the post-war period in the work of 'Left Leavisite' cultural theorists Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams. In doing so, I foreground the shared preoccupations with the novels of Burgess and Colin MacInnes. These writers broaden the scope of 'Leavisite' cultural debates by situating their reassessments of 'Englishness' in relation to British imperial decline and American dominance. An analysis of these novelists, moreover, allows us to move away from an understanding of 1950s literature as restrained by parochialism and narrowed horizons. The grouping of post-war writers in the 'Angry Young Men' and the 'Movement' has marginalized both Burgess and McInnes, and

yet their work invests in a renewed national culture able to protect against Americanization.

The commitment to a 'post-imperial' national identity examined in Chap. 4 is evaluated further in Chap. 5—'Post-War Immigration and Multicultural Britain'—in relation to the arrival into Britain of non-white colonial and ex-colonial migrants. In this chapter, I analyse the literature of white British-born writers alongside their non-white migrant contemporaries, principally the so-called Windrush generation that includes Sam Selvon, George Lamming, Andrew Salkey, and V. S. Naipaul. Here I challenge the view, put forth by Caryl Phillips, that post-war white British writers disregarded the realities of mass immigration and the burgeoning of racist anti-immigration campaigns. MacInnes's novels *City of Spades* (1957) and *Absolute Beginners* (1959), Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1958), and Burgess's *The Right to an Answer* (1960) challenge the marginalization of non-white migrants from mainstream British society. Whilst being compromised in many ways by colonialist ideas about racial and cultural difference, including the notion of the 'noble savage', these texts make connections between Britain's history of colonialism and mass immigration in a manner that does not take a superior and racially exclusive national identity for granted. Instead, I evaluate the ways in which they engage in debates about an inclusive ideology of 'multiculturalism' and gesture towards the critically aware developments of postcolonial literature. MacInnes's works, moreover, engage in post-war anxieties about 'miscegenation', where an inclusive conception of British society is forestalled by white intolerance of the nation's non-white citizens.

The coda to the book—'Beyond Satire and Celebration'—examines the reasons why British literature dealing with decolonization has been either overlooked within academic study or has been characterized as eulogizing colonialism. I look at the treatment of the history of British colonialism across a range of media during the post-war period, principally film and television, in which the Empire was often satirized or celebrated. Focusing on the 'satire boom' of the 1960s, colonial adventure films such as *Zulu* (1964) and 'Raj nostalgia' films, I maintain that the figure of the colonial servant and settler is regarded as embodying a quintessential Englishness that is bound up with the racial and moral assumptions of imperialism. Texts by writers with direct experience of decolonization, however, invite the reader to understand how ideas about Britishness and colonialism are

interlinked, and to formulate ways of thinking beyond a reactionary return to the myths and hierarchies of the past.

Notes

1. See Cobain (2013b). For two distinct literary accounts of the nationalist movement in Kenya see Elspeth Huxley's *A Thing to Love* (1954) and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat* (1967).
2. For an account of Burgess's life and work, including his period of service in Malaya at the beginning of his writing career, see Burgess (2002a and 2002b) and Biswell (2006).
3. The relationship between colonialism and British literature of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is explored in a number of key works of postcolonial criticism, for example Said (1993), Spivak (1999) and Parry (1983, 2005).
4. See McLeod (2004) and Perfect (2014).
5. For a revisionist history which argues for the importance of external influences alongside national traditions in the construction of a British national identity see Colley (1992). Baucom (1999) explores the relationship between 'Englishness' and the Empire, maintaining that colonial expansion relied on the relocation of characteristically English landscapes (such as the cricket field) able to connect an imperial identity with a localized, national one. Counteracting Baucom's analysis of the relocation of 'Englishness' in the form of architectural markers, Kumar (2003) argues that a specifically English identity was forged during the early twentieth century as a means of managing the prospect of imperial decline.
6. Gilroy cites a famous example of the significance of Britain's history of empire-building in Margaret Thatcher's 1982 victory speech following the end of the Falklands War. In the speech Thatcher derides 'the waverers and the fainthearts' who 'believed that our decline was irreversible' and who 'had their secret fears that it was true: that Britain was no longer the nation that had built an Empire and ruled a quarter of the world', before exclaiming: 'Well they were wrong. The lesson of the Falklands is that Britain has not changed and that this nation still has those sterling qualities which shine through our history' (Thatcher 1982, np). For more on the relationship between colonialism and conceptions of

'Englishness' and 'Britishness' see Gilroy (2004), English and Kenny (2000), and MacPhee and Poddar (2007).

7. The title of Esty's book is an allusion to Hugh Kenner's *A Sinking Island* (1988), which Esty reads as neglecting imperial decline and instead viewing the influence of mass culture and the subsequent 'fragmentation of reading publics as the decisive factor in the demise of great modernist literature' (2004, p. 8).
8. For more on calls to retain Britain's world role as the centre of a unified Commonwealth, see May (2001).
9. Despite being set in Africa, *Devil of a State* (which is dedicated to Graham Greene) is in fact based on Burgess's experience teaching English in Brunei. Fearing the level of libel action that had led to the withdrawal of his novel *The Worm and the Ring* (1961), his publishers requested that the location be changed (see Burgess, 2002a, p. 431).
10. Burgess stayed in England as a professional writer and journalist for the duration of the 1960s before leaving again in 1968 (predominantly for tax purposes) and living intermittently in Europe, America, and North Africa. He died in London in 1993 and his ashes were inurned at a cemetery in Monaco where he had eventually settled with his second wife, Liana.

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PART I

The British Abroad

CHAPTER 2

Decolonization and the Second World War

Many of the first novels to fictionalize the break-up of the British Empire responded to a historical moment dominated by the aftermath of the Second World War, the uneven and ongoing process of decolonization, *and* Britain's renewed commitment to strengthen its imperial networks. Writers who narrated British imperial decline, including Gerald Hanley, William Golding, Anthony Burgess, and Alan Sillitoe, provide a self-aware commentary on how decolonization and the Second World War disrupted established colonial hierarchies surrounding class and race. Situating their texts against a tradition of writing that had historically helped to construct a white, British, upper-class imperial identity, these writers adopt narrative strategies that foreground the complicity between literary representation and the ideology of imperialism. In challenging the class and racial hierarchies propagated in much of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century popular fiction concerning the Empire, Hanley, Burgess, Sillitoe, and Golding do not simply articulate a loss of faith in colonialism or an acquiescence to national decline. Instead, they mount a critical response to the relationship between cultural production and colonialism, and offer an early cognizance of the origin of ideas about racial and cultural difference.

In this chapter I extend forward existing modernist and postcolonial analyses of the relationship between early twentieth-century British literature and the Empire. In doing so, it is possible to explore an awareness of the harmful nature of colonialist representations during the immediate post-war decades. This analysis, furthermore, invites us to consider an

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alternative genealogy for the appearance of literatures that offer a critical perspective on the cultural reproduction of colonial identities. The idea that colonialism functioned not only through military and economic means, but also through cultural discourses has informed postcolonial analyses of 'the ways that *representations* and *modes of perception* are used as fundamental weapons of colonial power to keep colonized peoples subservient to colonial rule' (McLeod, 2000, p. 17). By examining works of white, British writers closely associated with colonial power, it is possible to reveal an awareness of the role of cultural representation in aiding the construction of Britain's imperial identity.

As well as being used as a means of representing and dominating colonized subjects, colonial discourse in turn legitimates colonialism by defining the *colonizing* subject in terms of moral purpose and civility. Late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century works depicting the non-European world can be read as contributing to what Benita Parry terms an 'imperial imaginary' (2005, p. 107), which upheld notions of a superior British identity and the idea of a 'greater Britain' beyond the nation's borders. Such works

> invariably foregrounded the excellence of colonial rule and especially its agents, and revealed the wicked ways of their charges. […] This body of writing in large commended colonial policies and ambitions, by this contributing to the making of colonialist ideology and abetting the construction of a national imperial identity. (p. 113)

Works of fiction and travel writing produced by those who travelled to the colonies were, according to Parry, 'overwhelmingly received in the imperial homeland as authentic renderings of both distant geographical locations and social forms, and of the colonizer's deportment' (p. 107). It is against this diverse and 'ideologically saturated' (p. 113) body of literature that the novels of Hanley, Golding, Burgess, and Sillitoe can be situated. In a variety of ways these writers self-consciously interrogate established imperial narrative practices which are based on colonialist notions of the non-European world as simultaneously exotic and savage.

The reappraisal of an 'imperial imaginary' in the novels of Hanley, Golding, Burgess, and Sillitoe involves a self-conscious method of intertextual allusion to high and low literary forms and to anthropological studies. The self-conscious intertextuality of these works can be regarded as a marker of what Brian McHale has identified as the 'epistemologi-

cal doubt' (1987, p. 18) common in modernist literature: the scientific, cultural, and historiographic certainties that underpinned colonial expansion are alluded to as a means of displaying their unreliability to the reader. In particular, this aspect of post-war novels of decolonization suggests the influence of writers such as T. S. Eliot and James Joyce throughout the 1950s, both of whom, as Pericles Lewis notes, 'made extensive use of quotation from other genres, such as popular songs, advertising, or major works of English or European literature' (2007, p. 245). Much important work has been done to examine the often ambivalent relationship between literary modernism and European imperialism.[1] Building on this work, I support the central claim of the 2012 collection *The Legacies of Modernism* that 'we can legitimately read the modernist period itself via models of continuity and adaptation (rather than demise), so as to enrich the way we construct the story of fiction's post-war development' (James, 2012, p. 1). The collection represents a shift towards scholarly interest in modernism's relationship in the post-1945 world 'both with the histories of decolonization and with the contemporary geopolitical challenges of globalization' (p. 2). Emerging at a time when the legacies of modernism were uncertain, British writers with experience of decolonization adopted and adapted modernist narrative strategies that evince a complex engagement with the epistemological certainties of colonialism. This engagement merged with debates surrounding the post-war consensus and the increased revaluation of long-established class divisions in Britain. The novels of Hanley, Golding, Burgess, and Sillitoe thus mount a critical assessment of depictions of the colonial encounter that propagated a specifically British upper-class imperial identity.

The 'Imperial Imaginary'

Addressing the relationship between cultural production, colonialism, and the aftermath of the Second World War in disparate regions throughout the globe, a rejection of the imperial imaginary in each of the works examined here is tied up with issues of class. Informed by the increasing awareness of internal economic and societal divisions in post-war Britain, colonialism is presented by these writers as a project built upon the world view of an elite and supercilious officer class that does not correspond with that of the lower-middle-class colonial servants and army officers.

A reading of the critical responses to the imperial imaginary in post-war British fiction foregrounds how a complex and contradictory inter-

play between the specific discourses of exoticism and savagery contributed to the formation of an upper-class British imperial identity. This interplay is rooted in literary forms—and in particular, the popular Victorian adventure tale—that presented colonial societies in terms of an attractive exoticism and a threatening savagery. Set largely in the world beyond that of the intended reader in Britain, popular adventure tales propagated a racial and cultural hierarchy that, as Peter Childs maintains, 'fuse[d] a Victorian manly ideal with post-Enlightenment scientific claims to discover and cover the world' (2007, p. 6).[2] The literature of writers such as R. M. Ballantyne, G. A. Henty and H. Ryder Haggard helped establish enduring images and tropes that inscribed a moral and racial dimension to Britain's colonial expansion in the latter half of the nineteenth century. They form part of a body of literature that Frantz Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks* reads as serving as a 'release for collective aggression' (1967, p. 146). For Fanon, the 'illustrated magazines for children' including 'Tarzan stories' and 'the sagas of twelve-year-old explorers' adopt racialized tropes whereby 'the Wolf, the Devil, the Evil Spirit, the Bad Man, the Savage are always symbolized by Negroes or Indians' (p. 146). Such depictions of non-European peoples were informed by dominant nineteenth-century scientific thinking, including a post-Darwinian conception of biological, historical, and cultural evolution. Coupled with the claim to truthful representation found in colonial literature of the period, nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scientific and anthropological study informed the construction of a British imperial identity in contrast to other cultures from the vantage point of supposedly objective and reasoned investigation.[3]

The point in Britain's history when colonial dominance was at its height also saw a much more self-reflective response to the colonial encounter. *Fin de siècle* and early twentieth-century writers, such as Joseph Conrad, H. G. Wells, E. M. Forster, and Sylvia Townsend Warner, grapple with the complexities of a colonial system that encompassed missionary work alongside economic and political coercion. Works such as Conrad's *An Outpost of Progress* (1897) and *Heart of Darkness* (1899), Wells's *Tono-Bungay* (1909), and Townsend Warner's *Mr Fortune's Maggot* (1927) contest the interconnected discourses of exoticism and savagery that had served to interpret European superiority over supposedly inferior races and translate the idea of the pioneering, industrious, and innately moral English character back to those in Britain. Victorian narratives of imperial superiority and progress are revisited *and revised* in post-war British fiction

to reflect upon literature's complicity in propagating harmful racial and cultural hierarchies. As the following sections of this chapter will show, a critique of the ideological assumptions of the Empire is expanded upon in the 1950s as a means of interpreting the atrocities of the Second World War and the realities of decolonization.

For Hanley and Golding, the colonial discourse of savagery is appropriated in *The Consul at Sunset* (1951), *Lord of the Flies* (1954), and *Free Fall* (1959) as a means of responding to the brutality and systematic violence generated from within Europe during the Second World War. At the same time, an awareness of the Holocaust provides a platform for addressing the racial chauvinism of British imperialism. Following Michael Rothberg's assertion that 'early Holocaust memory emerged in dialogue with the dynamic transformations and multifaceted struggles that define the era of decolonization' (2009, p. 7), it is possible to read Hanley's *The Consul at Sunset* and Golding's early novels as operating in two inter-related ways. Firstly, they utilize a widespread understanding of the discourse of savagery as a means of registering the ruthlessness of the Second World War, and in particular the Holocaust. Secondly, a burgeoning awareness throughout post-war Europe of the atrocities associated with Nazism provides a position from which to critically assess the violence of colonialism.

The notion of a superior imperial identity remained an influential marker of Britishness throughout the 1950s and, by the middle of the decade, Britain was undergoing a process of renewal throughout its remaining colonies. As the revisionist historians P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins have shown, the renewed commitment to strengthening the Empire in Africa and South-east Asia 'was as much a matter of calculation as it was of sentiment' as 'the imperial option appeared to be far more promising than the alternatives [Communism and Fascism]' (1993, p. 276). It is this repositioning of colonial policy in the second half of the 1950s that drew attention to colonized regions under threat from the rise of Communism, such as Malaya, that Britain relied upon as sources of raw materials for its post-war recovery. Burgess's and Sillitoe's novels—*The Malayan Trilogy* (1956–1959) and *Key to the Door* (1961)—respond to Britain's intervention in the region. In so doing, they offer a self-conscious disavowal of traditional representations of the Far East that rely upon an imperial discourse of 'exoticism'. Both texts undermine mythologized depictions of a strange and exotic East that supported notions of British imperial superiority. At the same time, Burgess and Sillitoe provide two distinct responses to the country's state of emergency, with the former investing

in a renewed British paternalism to engender national unity and the latter voicing support for the ideals of Communism.

A 'Terrible Sunset': Savagery and the Second World War

The challenge to the discourse of savagery by some of the first novelists to respond to decolonization can be situated within the broader post-war context of European disunity and an awareness of the atrocities committed by members of a modern European nation. Following studies such as Bernard Bergonzi's *Wartime and Aftermath* (1993) and D. J. Taylor's *After the War* (1993), it has become commonplace to read British literature of the immediate post-war decades as responding to the trauma of war and reconstruction. Situating post-war texts within the twin trajectories of decolonization *and* the aftermath of the Second World War, however, opposes an understanding of the immediate post-war decades in which these two significant historical developments are regarded in isolation. Doing so contributes to an exploration of what Rothberg calls 'the presence of widespread Holocaust consciousness' (2009, p. 3) that offered a platform to challenge ideas about the racial and cultural superiority of the British. A reading of both Golding's and Hanley's texts in this way foregrounds the 'rhetorical and cultural *intimacy*' (2009, p. 7) that Rothberg's work persuasively attributes to the treatment of both decolonization and the Holocaust during the post-war period.

Throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s, Hanley produced a number of novels that are informed by his experience of working and travelling throughout the Empire from a young age.[4] In 1934, at the age of eighteen, he moved to Kenya where he worked on a farm prior to the outbreak of the Second World War. During the war he served in Somalia and Burma, before travelling to India and Pakistan between 1950 and 1954.[5] Hanley's second novel, *The Consul at Sunset*, draws on his first-hand experience of National Service in Somalia, a region which, prior to independence in 1960, had been divided into the colony of Italian Somaliland and the protectorate of British Somaliland following the late nineteenth-century 'Scramble for Africa'. As part of Britain's East African campaign between 1940 and 1941, Italian Somaliland was occupied by British and African colonial troops with the assistance of Somali forces. The occupation represents an often overlooked aspect of the Second World War in Italian colonies, as well as marking a period that foregrounds the intertwined his-

tories of Europe and Africa. *The Consul at Sunset* is a fictionalized account of Hanley's part in the campaign as a British soldier and represents one of the earliest critical depictions of the tangled histories of the Second World War and British decolonization.[6]

Focusing on a conflict over the control of water wells between two opposing tribes, the Yonis Barra and the Omar Bilash, the narrative of *The Consul at Sunset* builds gradually towards the disastrous intervention of an indecisive and corrupt British regiment. Throughout the text, the Victorian adventure tale is presented by Hanley as working alongside official accounts of history as a means of translating the colonial encounter for Britain's Army personnel. Yet, such allusions are set up to be undermined as espousing romanticized and outmoded ideas about Britain's world role that, by the early 1950s, had become unsustainable.

The young and inexperienced Lieutenant Cuddy represents the idealism of Army personnel who travelled to the colonies with a belief in 'British justice, fair play, [and] help for the underdog' (*CS*, p. 142). Cuddy acknowledges that such ideals were 'all tied up with the history books at school and the bright sunlit adventures lived by the troops of Kitchener' (p. 142) as well as 'the adventure books he had read in his boyhood' (p. 145). The description of Lord Kitchener's notorious imperial campaigns throughout Africa as 'adventures' establishes a direct correlation between accounts of military history and the popular literary representations of colonial life in works by Ballantyne, Henty, John Buchan and others. For Cuddy, historical document and fiction are entwined, establishing an imperial imaginary whereby the British are pioneering heroes whose job it is to protect those in need and export the values of law and order throughout the globe.

This world view is soon scrutinized, however, when Cuddy discovers that the ideals he had learnt from history books and children's literature did not relate to his own experience as a servant of the Empire. Where the protagonists of adventure tales and history books had been chivalrous heroes, Cuddy felt 'gloriously alone and borne up as some lone knight of a decayed chivalry' (p. 143). Articulating a self-reflexive account of the colonial mission, the third-person narrator states that Cuddy felt he was merely 'an ant on an endless plain, bored and in some fear for his life, for perhaps he did not really believe as his fathers had believed. They had *known*; *he* was not sure if it was all worth it' (p. 143). Far from upholding a representation of the pioneering English gentlemen who is confident and fearless in his role, Cuddy comes to see himself from the outside as an insignificant

'ant' on a mission that has no clear end in sight. When faced with the need to administer a supposedly superior 'British justice' following the outbreak of tribal conflict in the region, Cuddy becomes lost in the desert 'never to be heard of again' (p. 147). It is a bathetic conclusion to his adventure that undermines his initial romanticized sense of purpose.

While Cuddy is a relatively minor character in the text, his disillusionment with the ideology of imperialism is indicative of the novel's self-conscious questioning of the moral principles that colonialism was meant to represent. In describing Cuddy's conception of Kitchener's campaigns as 'bright' and 'sunlit', the novel recalls the hubristic Victorian adage, 'The sun never sets on the British Empire'. *The Consul at Sunset* both appropriates and destabilizes the confidence associated with this well-known adage, however, by situating a depiction of colonialism at a historical moment when traditional ideas about Britain's imperial superiority were being challenged by the success of nationalist campaigns. As is signalled by the book's title, the setting of the sun becomes a motif that works to foreground the imminent passing of Britain's era of global dominance. This is evident during Cuddy's excursion into the desert with his troops, before he loses his way and finds himself alone:

> As the sun reached to four o'clock and the burning heat of the sand diminished, the column moved out, winding slowly across the ridge, until Cuddy could see the plains stretching into the mists of blue and grey haze where the world's edges mingled with the sky, lost in the sun's approaching struggle with darkness. (p. 144)

Where the rhetoric of colonial savagery relied on the imagery of a moral darkness existing beyond the borders that demarcate European civilization, Hanley's text reverses this gaze and suggests that the darkness is approaching from outside of the Somali region. Cuddy's perspective indicates that the darkness now threatening to cover the world is emanating from a Europe that is in the midst of war, meaning that any claims to an advanced European civility are inherently flawed.

Cuddy's loss of faith in colonialism represents an ambivalent and uncertain perspective on the future of the Empire and can be situated in the middle ground between the extreme positions offered by two more prominent characters: the veteran Colonel Casey and the younger Captain Sole. Where the plot of *The Consul at Sunset* revolves around the battle between the Yonis Barra and the Omar Bilash tribes, Hanley makes central a con-

flict within the British colonial regiment who have been sent to provide peace and order to the region. This conflict, largely between Casey and Sole, stages debates taking place during the immediate post-war years over whether Britain's colonial history represents a civilizing mission or if it in fact amounts to the exploitation and genocide of weaker and unindustrialized parts of the globe.

Casey expresses disquiet about the interpretation of the Empire as anything other than a moral mission, and it is his view of Britain's place in the post-war world that frames the narrative. *The Consul at Sunset* opens with Casey's remark that 'a job like this, it really requires gentlemen. It takes gentlemen to deal with savages, or natives anywhere for that matter. And a gentlemen is becoming a rare thing' (p. 7). From the outset, it is clear that the discourse of savagery, involving a dichotomy between the civilized English gentlemen and the barbaric colonial 'Other', is central to Casey's world view. At the same time, Casey laments that the characteristics of the pioneering and beneficent colonialist are fast becoming a thing of the past. It is a reflection to which he returns in the final image of the novel, after the British regiment have acted shambolically and violently to end tribal conflict in the region:

> [H]e went out into the sandy courtyard and looked across the low wall at the flag, beyond which the sun was sinking. It fluttered slowly down as the bugle notes resounded on the bitter desert. The sun was never allowed to set on the Union Jack, and the Colonel stood to attention, bareheaded, pride and loneliness stirring in him. The sun did not set on the flag, he reflected sadly. But it had begun to set in the hearts of those who saluted it and the Empire it had represented, and he could not understand that terrible sunset. (p. 254)

Rather than articulating nostalgia for the era of high imperialism and the dominance of the British colonial official, *The Consul at Sunset* presents Casey's world view with a level of ironic distance. Hanley's text does not so much endorse Casey's lamentation as foreground his inability to comprehend the 'terrible sunset': Casey simply cannot understand *why* the next generation of Britons feel unable to devote themselves to the ideals of the colonial mission. Ultimately, the problem is not that the Empire is coming to an end, but that those in control—namely, the British officer class of Casey—are unable to recognize the impetus behind calls for decolonization, or imagine their place in the emerging post-imperial world.

In place of the view that Casey represents, which is informed by his aloof and insulated sense of racial superiority and moral purpose, *The Consul at Sunset* calls for greater understanding about the colonial societies that Britain has ruled. It is Sole who acts as the novel's counterpoint to Casey, representing the generation of colonial servants and army personnel taking up their role within the Empire during an era dominated by the Second World War and the rise of nationalist campaigns for independence. For Sole, the Empire is a 'mess' and the only logical course of action is 'evacuation […] so that the people can rule themselves' (p. 223). Sole feels no emotional or patriotic connection to the British Empire and attempts to distance himself from a system that 'belonged to people like the Colonel […] who had begun to destroy it by staying as they had always been, by being unable to change' (p. 225). Where the inhabitants of colonized nations are no more than savages or 'wogs' (p. 9) to Casey, Sole regards them as the 'ghosts of resentment […] who were now screaming on the horizon' (p. 225). It is a metaphor that pre-empts Harold Macmillan's 1960 'Winds of Change' speech, suggesting a pointedly less harmonious and uplifting view of nationalist campaigns in Africa. Where Macmillan's speech would later interpret African nationalism as being rooted in the democratic traditions of Europe, Hanley's imagery of 'ghosts of resentment' acknowledges the anger that was giving force to the spread of anti-colonial politics throughout the Empire.

The homophonic quality of Sole's surname with the word 'soul' points to his position in the narrative as voicing the suppressed conscience of the British colonial mission. Sole's rejection of the kind of imperial confidence embodied by Casey, and his disavowal of the Victorian connection between Christianity and colonialism, is made evident when he remarks to Casey that he cannot relate to 'the Christian messages and the light for the heathen stuff' (p. 238). Drawing a connection between his rejection of the supposed moral superiority of the British and the devastation of the Second World War, Sole goes on to comment: 'I can't believe in my job any more, I mean as an official. […] When I consider how we are beginning to appear now to the people we've always treated as stupid children, I just can't do it anymore. Look at Europe today!' (p. 238). It is a response that suggests the unsustainability of a world view whereby citizens from a continent in turmoil are expected to train the rest of the world in the ways of civilization.

Sole's emotional disavowal of colonial policy is coupled with a conviction that the Empire could have unified disparate cultures and societies

throughout the globe, instead of being 'something stupid and untrue' (p. 241) and exacerbating conflict and division. When asked by Casey what the Empire *should* represent, Sole replies that it should be '[s]omething useful, if we really want to use it, as a means of uniting Europeans, Africans, Indians, and all the others' (p. 241). Acknowledging the inherent contradiction at the heart of colonial policy, Sole goes on to maintain that the Empire

> tells the natives with one voice that we are all the same, and with another that all the rooms are engaged, all the tables full. […] To really rule the Africans, the Indians and the others, you have to despise them, or if they get too clever you have to try and make them think that they can be just like Englishmen, the finest thing there is as far as the English in Africa are concerned. It is people like you, sir, sincere and sure of yourselves, who have destroyed the Empire you built, because you never tried to identify yourselves with the people. (p. 241)

Sole's voice thus provides an alternative narrative that challenges that of Casey. It is not the lack of 'gentlemen' who are born with the superior and fearless qualities needed to administer law and order throughout Africa and India that has caused the sun to set on Britain's imperial rule. Instead, it is the belief of Casey, and by extension the officer class that he represents, that the world is divided into 'gentlemen' and 'natives' that has helped fuel both the loss of faith of younger colonial personnel and the campaigns for self-determination. Pointedly, Sole's loss of belief in the ideology of imperialism is coupled with an investment in the need to understand and identify with the people over which the British have ruled. Through the character of Sole, *The Consul at Sunset* promotes a world view based on a shared humanity, directed by a humanistic impulse that transcends reductive and harmful notions of racial, national, and cultural difference.

The Consul at Sunset articulates an ambivalent response to the parallel trajectories of the Second World War and the end of Empire. On the one hand, the novel displays a post-war disavowal of the ideas of racial superiority that had underpinned European conquest throughout the globe; yet the atrocities of the war have also revealed that colonialist notions of savagery are not so much unfounded as they are universal, regardless of race. As Sole states, 'There were three kind of savages in the world. These natives, the peoples of Europe and the Americans. It was only a question of how you savaged your neighbour' (p. 10). It is a sentiment that was to

be taken up in a much more sustained and allegorical manner by Golding in *Lord of the Flies*, which sees a group of young English boys colonize an uninhabited island in the name of their country before descending into a murderous barbarism.

William Golding and the Savage Within

Unlike Hanley, Golding did not experience colonial life directly through National Service or settlement. Instead, he remained in Europe during the Second World War as part of the Royal Navy, where he was involved in the sinking of the *Bismarck* and the D-Day landings in Normandy.[7] In his essay 'Fable', which was published in the collection *The Hot Gates* and was originally written for a 1962 lecture tour of American universities, Golding attests to the impact of the war on his view of humanity, stating,

> Before the second world war [sic] I believed in the perfectability of social man; that a correct structure of society would produce goodwill […]. It is possible that today I believe something of the same again; but after the war I did not because I was unable to. I had discovered what one man could do to another. (1974, p. 86)

Golding clarifies his sense of disillusionment by explaining that he does not mean 'one man killing another with a gun, or dropping a bomb on him or blowing him up' (p. 86); he is thinking instead 'of the vileness beyond all words that went on, year after year, in the totalitarian states' (p. 87). As a means of gauging the extent of this 'vileness', he draws on the colonialist discourse of savagery, maintaining that the atrocities of the Holocaust 'were not done by the headhunters of New Guinea, or by some primitive tribe in the Amazon. They were done, skilfully, coldly, by educated men, doctors, lawyers, by men with a tradition of civilization behind them, to beings of their own kind' (p. 87). The unprecedented scale of atrocity is committed, in other words, not by 'savages' but by 'civilized' Europeans.

Here, Golding offers an example of the way in which colonial discourse provided a vocabulary for articulating the extreme violence perpetrated during the war. It would be understandable, he suggests, if such violence were committed by non-European, 'primitive' tribes, but what exaggerates the atrocities of the Second World War is the use of the tools of European progress—of science and education—by civilized societies to enact genocide against 'their own kind' (p. 87). Yet, as we will see,

throughout 'Fable' and his 1950s novels, Golding's position is paradoxical and 'multidirectional'. Whilst appropriating the dichotomy of civilization and savagery to register the extremes of European violence, Golding also uses an awareness of the Holocaust to undermine the perceived moral and cultural superiority of white, imperial nations.

Foregrounding the way in which the Second World War provided a platform for Golding's critique of British colonialism, he discusses in 'Fable' the 'wholly evil' nature of prejudice in its various mid-century manifestations: 'Jew and Arab in the name of religion, Jew and Nordic in the name of race, Negro and white in the name of God knows what' (p. 92). Golding conveys a view of the Holocaust not as a unique and isolated event in world history, but as one example of humankind's predisposition towards prejudice that can also be seen as characterizing the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East and European colonial expansion. It is telling, moreover, that Golding refuses to recognize the common justifications of British colonial expansion based on moral, religious or racial grounds, and instead suggests their spuriousness with his statement that the conflict between 'Negro and white' is founded on 'God knows what'. As he remarks elsewhere in the essay,

> I condemn and detest my country's faults precisely because I am proud of her many virtues. One of our faults is to believe that evil is somewhere else and inherent in another nation. My book [*Lord of the Flies*] was to say: you think that now the war is over and an evil thing destroyed, you are safe because you are naturally kind and decent. But I know why the thing rose in Germany. I know it could happen in any country. (p. 89)

For Golding, the atrocities of the Holocaust may have been unprecedented, but they cannot be regarded as isolated from human history, or attributed to one nationality.

It has become commonplace to interpret Golding's early novels as articulating a form of post-war disconsolation. Paul Crawford has labelled *Lord of the Flies* and Golding's depiction of the conflict between Neanderthals and *Homo sapiens* in *The Inheritors* (1955) as a 'literature of atrocity', maintaining that Golding 'map[s] out the violent superstition behind the exclusion and attempted extermination of the Jewish race that has been viewed historically as an outsider race' (2002, pp. 50–51). Whilst acknowledging Golding's subversion of European *imperialist* 'notions of racial and cultural superiority' (p. 55) and as offering a critique of a 'British

imperial, protofascist history' (p. 56), Crawford's analysis focuses on the emerging realities of the Holocaust. More recently, Rachael Gilmour has concentrated on Golding's ambivalent response to British colonialism in the aftermath of the war. Addressing the way in which 'Golding's early novels offer an atomization of the imperialist psyche rooted in cruelty, fear and the urge to dominate', Gilmour maintains that they invoke 'an English literary tradition interwoven with the history of empire' (2011, p. 99). Gilmour's is an important intervention, in which Golding's challenge to the triumphalism of colonialism is made central and where a 'post-imperial Englishness' (p. 100) is read as a key aspect of his later novels *A Darkness Visible* (1979) and the trilogy *To the Ends of the Earth* (1980–1989). Rather than viewing the Holocaust and decolonization in isolation, however, Golding's early novels are best understood as responding to the aftermath of the Second World War and the ongoing process of decolonization. The publication of *Lord of the Flies* and *Free Fall* in 1954 and 1959 respectively invites an examination of their 'multidirectionality'. These works interrogate the notion of a superior imperial identity, which was not only a key aspect of Britain's past, but remained an influential marker of Britishness throughout the 1950s and beyond.

Expressing a similar stance to Hanley's *The Consul at Sunset*, Golding's novels do not regret the loss of an expansive vision of the Empire or mourn the waning of Britain's central role in world events. Instead, Golding commits to a humanist, transnational world view that is able to transcend patriotic ties to individual nations. The manifestation of prejudice that he acknowledges as having dominated the 1940s in the form of Nazism represents an 'ugly nationalism' (1974, p. 93), constituting 'a failure of human sympathy, ignorance of facts, the objectivizing of our own inadequacies so as to make a scapegoat' (p. 94). Counteracting this self-aware pessimism, Golding maintains that, '[I]f humanity has a future on this planet of a hundred million years, it is unthinkable that it should spend those aeons in a ferment of national self-satisfaction and chauvinistic idiocies' (p. 94). As with Sole's call for the British to 'identify […] with the people' (*CS*, p. 241) in *The Consul and Sunset*, here Golding commits to a world view that does not rely on the segregation of humanity into categories based on religion, race, or nationality.

In *Free Fall*, Golding situates his critique of a harmful nationalism within the context of the Second World War. The atrocities of the war are not presented as stand-alone aberrations, but are associated with a longer history of colonial chauvinism. The novel is a *Bildungsroman* nar-

rated by Sammy Mountjoy, an artist reflecting upon his life from a Nazi prisoner-of-war camp and returning repeatedly to the question, 'When did I lose my freedom?' (*FF*, p. 5). In contrast to the developmental scale offered by the *Bildungsroman* form, however, Mountjoy's life story is fragmented and is recounted in a series of flashbacks from his cell. The fragmentation of Mountjoy's narrative foregrounds his refusal to 'aspire to complete coherence' (p. 9) as his experiences cause him to become increasingly disillusioned. The traditional *Bildungsroman* form would suggest that it is possible to ascribe a rational pattern to his life. In place of this, Golding offers a literary form, as Patricia Waugh argues, 'more attuned in his time to irony, anti-heroism, relativism, and liberal rational scepticism' (1995, p. 98). The anti-heroism and scepticism of the text are expressed specifically through a rejection of the tropes of colonial literature and through reference to the nineteenth-century imperial notion of a superior European morality.

Free Fall comments on literature's role in promoting a British colonial identity in Mountjoy's intertextual reference to the turn-of-the-century tales of John Buchan. Recalling his interrogation by the Gestapo, Mountjoy describes how he accepted the offer of a seat by his interrogator, Dr. Halde. Realizing that such an act is not in keeping with the adventure tales of his boyhood, however, he states, 'Suddenly I remembered that I should have refused the chair. Thank you, I prefer to stand. That was what a Buchan hero would do. […] All at once I was vulnerable, a man trapped in a mountain of flesh' (p. 136). It is thus made clear that Mountjoy's conception of 'right behaviour' has been influenced more by the heroics of colonial adventure fiction than any other source.

The moral certainty embodied by a British imperial 'Buchan hero' is linked to broader systems of science and religion that Mountjoy abandons by the close of the novel. In the text's denouement, he declares:

> There are no morals that can be defined from natural science, there are only immorals. The supply of nineteenth-century optimism and goodness had run out before it reached me. […] Mine was an amoral, a savage place, in which man was trapped without hope, to enjoy what he could while it was going. (p. 226)

Here Mountjoy challenges nineteenth-century Enlightenment ideas about the relationship between scientific progress, morality and the development of civilization as naïve. Underscoring this rejection, Mountjoy appropri-

ates a key term of colonial discourse—'savage'—which is freighted with meaning for Europe's self-image as 'civilized' in opposition to colonial societies. Locating savagery in Europe, rather than in the colonies, however, the narrative undermines this civilized-savage binary. For Mountjoy, the atrocities committed during the Second World War have exposed the falsity of an imperial ideology used to justify European colonial expansion.

An engagement with the colonial discourse of savagery is also prevalent throughout Golding's earlier text *Lord of the Flies*. As with *Free Fall*, the novel offers a self-consciously pessimistic vision of humanity's predetermination towards prejudice, intolerance, and the scapegoating of others. The narrative tropes of shipwreck and tribal warfare in the novel are adapted directly from popular Victorian adventure tales. Indeed, the shipwrecked boys interpret their situation at first as being 'like in a book' (*LF*, p. 33), before referencing two of the most well-known works of boyhood adventure, Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* (1857) and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1883). In particular, *Lord of the Flies* reinterprets the former, which Golding saw as 'the great original of boys on an island' that was produced 'at the height of Victorian smugness, ignorance and prosperity' (1974, p. 88).[8] *The Coral Island* propagates a view of non-European nations as peopled by fearsome cannibalistic savages who 'hold human life in so very slight esteem' (*CI*, p. 192). Recounting his tale of shipwreck with his two English shipmates Jack and Peterkin, the young narrator of *The Coral Island*, Ralph Rover, exclaims that '[T]his is no fiction' (p. 196), and implores the intended reader to accept his story as a truthful description of life throughout the South Sea Islands. The claim to truth is reinforced prior to the final quest of the text, in which the boys set out on a daring mission to save the Christian convert Avatea from the heathen chief of the Mango tribe Tararo. Assisting them in their plan is a 'native missionary', who appeals to the boys to tell their 'Christian friends' in England 'that the horrors that they hear of in regards to these islands are *literally true*' (p. 235). Rather than offering a truthful picture of a faraway land, however, Ballantyne's investment in non-European savagery is linked to the tale's promotion of Christian missionary work throughout the globe.

Where Ballantyne's 'was a nineteenth-century island inhabited by English boys', Golding's 'was to be a twentieth-century island inhabited by English boys', whose attempt to build a civilization 'breaks down in blood and terror because the boys are suffering from the terrible disease of being human' (1974, p. 89). Thus, rather than recirculating a narrative

in which civilized English gentlemen-to-be confront a savage 'Other', the intertextual allusions to *The Coral Island* in *Lord of the Flies* opposes the former's commitment to colonialist notions of racial superiority, presenting the young English, Ballantyne-esque heroes as *transforming into*—and not encountering—two opposing bands of warring tribes. The conflict that ensues on the island mirrors the global conflict that is alluded to by the 'lights in the sky, that moved fast, winked or went out' (*LF*, p. 103) prior to the arrival by parachute of the dead airman who becomes known by the boys as 'the Beast'. It is this intimacy in the novel between the ideas that underpinned colonialism and an awareness of European atrocity that foregrounds the multidirectionality of Golding's response to both the Holocaust and the era of extensive decolonization.

Initially, the English boys of Golding's tale exemplify a common perspective of both adventure tales and colonial travel writing, whereby the geography of the colony is at one and the same time exotic, impenetrable, threatening and yet familiar. The opening scene depicts a 'boy with fair hair'—not yet introduced as Ralph (a name that recalls Ballantyne's Ralph Rover)—who 'was clambering heavily among the creepers and broken trunks when a bird, a vision of red and yellow, flashed upwards with a witch-like cry' (p. 1). Immediately, the assumed Western reader is to understand the European and non-European markers: the boy's 'fair hair' establishes him as out-of-place when surrounded by the dense jungle and exotic wildlife. The specifically British perspective of the 'fair boy' is confirmed when he stops to pull up his socks—a motion symbolizing English pluck and courage—'with an automatic gesture that made the jungle seem for a moment like the Home Counties' (p. 1). In this introduction to the island, the narrative presents it as one of the far-flung places of the globe that bares the markers of 'otherness' in contrast to European modernity. Yet, it is also a geographical space that is not so strange that it cannot be domesticated; its fleeting resemblance to the Home Counties for Ralph suggests the island's promise as a place where the familiar foundations of civilization can be established.

The notion that civilization can be transported throughout the globe, as though non-European regions exist as a *terra nullius* awaiting colonial intervention, is depicted in the text with a level of ironic distance. In a scene that mimics the way in which Ballantyne's young heroes 'take possession' of the Coral Island 'in the name of the King' (*CI*, p. 16), Ralph decides by the close of the first chapter of *Lord of the Flies* that they are alone on the island and exclaims, 'This belongs to us' (*LF*,

p. 26). With '[e]yes shining, [and] mouths open', the rest of the boys stand 'triumphant' while 'they savoured the right of domination' (*LF*, pp. 26–27). The triumphalist tone of the novel's opening chapter, which self-consciously mimics that of *The Coral Island*, is not sustained. In its place Golding introduces an ironic challenge to the boy's innate sense of superiority. This challenge begins in the chapter 'Fire on the Mountain', which depicts the destructive results of the boys' attempt to bring civilization to the island.

'Fire on the Mountain' signals a shift in the narrative in its opening description of the afternoon meeting, which had been called in order to establish the rules upon which the boys' island community would be based. Marking a distinction between the boys' enthusiastic claim to ownership of the land and the ensuing conflict that will eventually engulf them, it is affirmed that, 'There were differences between this meeting and the one held in the morning. The afternoon sun slanted in from the other side of the platform' (p. 30). This subtle change in sunlight is followed by Ralph's uncertainty over 'whether to stand up or remain sitting [on the platform]. […] Piggy was sitting near but giving no help' (p. 30). It is the first indication in the text that Ralph's initial confidence in his ability to lead the group is belied by the naivety of his age and his reliance on others. Instead of embodying the 'courage and wisdom' of Ballantyne's young leader Jack in *The Coral Island*, who is described as 'lion-like' (*CI*, p. 46) and 'superior to any Englishman' (p. 30), Golding's Ralph is revealed as being somewhat burdened with the responsibility and as self-conscious in performing the role of a leader.

Through the characterization of Ralph, the opening to 'Fire on the Mountain' establishes an ironic challenge to the notion of an innate superiority and wisdom found in the English race. The chapter proceeds to adopt the symbol of fire, which is freighted with ideas surrounding the beginning of human civilization and the light of European progress, to undermine the boys' colonialist triumphalism. Indeed, the starting of a fire is the boys' first opportunity to act out a supposedly superior English intelligence and to mark the exportation of civilization to the previously uninhabited island. The preparation of materials needed for the fire—the gathering of logs and dried leaves—is performed with 'triumphant pleasure' (*LF*, p. 39) by the boys. Yet, the overriding triumphant spirit surrounding the building of the fire is revealed as hollow when the two leaders are looked upon to complete the task:

> Ralph and Jack looked at each other while society paused around them. The shameful knowledge grew in them and they did not know how to begin confession. […] [Jack] glanced at Ralph, who blurted out the last confession of incompetence. (*LF*, p. 39)

Lacking the necessary knowledge to start the fire, the new 'society' surrounds Piggy with 'officious cries', steals his glasses and uses them to make a flame, thus robbing him in the process of his ability to see. Rather than representing the first act of a united, civilized society, the making of the fire thus signals the disunity that will come to envelop the group. The use of Piggy's glasses, moreover, intensifies the symbolic importance of the fire: the glasses are a specialized tool designed for the sake of clarity, and yet they have been appropriated—and in turn destroyed—in the name of progress.

The boys' steady march towards 'savagery' and violence is emphasized by their inability to control the fire: at first a symbol of civilization and progress, the fire comes to represent the awakening of the savage within. This awakening is alluded to when the boys begin 'dancing' to celebrate the fire, their 'limbs yield[ing] passionately to the yellow flames that poured upwards' (pp. 40–41). It is an image that replays the connection made in colonial literature between dancing and a wild and untamed savagery. In *The Coral Island*, for example, Ralph describes witnessing a human sacrifice ceremony involving a 'procession of natives' who 'were dancing and gesticulating in the most frantic manner. They had an exceedingly hideous aspect, owing to the black, red and yellow paints with which their faces and naked bodies were bedaubed' (*CI*, p. 241). Whilst dancing in order to celebrate their achievement, Golding's boys lose control of the fire, resulting in the destruction of 'a quarter of a mile square of forest' (p. 44). The description of the noises of the fire as a 'drum-roll that seemed to shake the mountain' (p. 44) appropriates the language of drum-beating tribes as a means to further exaggerate the stirring savagery lying just beneath the boys' civilized exterior. Indeed, it is the 'power [of the fire] set free below them' that awakens a sense of 'awe' (p. 44) in their own ability to destroy rather than create. It is 'the knowledge and the awe' that 'made [Ralph] savage', thus marking the boys' descent into chaos, warfare and the eventual murder of Simon and Piggy. The destruction of the forest by the fire encompasses in one image the novel's depiction of what Golding termed the 'Victorian smugness [and] ignorance' that underpinned colonialism.

At the same time, it is Golding's adoption of the rhetoric of savagery as a means of articulating his vision of humankind's predisposition towards destruction that marks the central problem at the heart of the text. *Lord of the Flies* is not necessarily a novel concerned with challenging representations of colonial societies as savage, but of European societies as innately civilized. In depicting civilization as a construct that *masks* savagery rather than displacing it, Golding presents the boys as discovering their inner savage, which is imagined by adopting the popular colonial markers of a non-white, non-European identity. Indeed, in the book's denouement, when the majority of the group have embraced this aspect of their character, Jack is presented as having transformed into a ruthless, spear-wielding, half-naked tribal chief, while Piggy pleads with Jack's tribe prior to his death to be 'sensible' and not act like 'a pack of painted niggers' (p. 200). The suggested relationship between being black and being closer to animals—signalled by Piggy's view of the boys as a 'pack'—is rooted in nineteenth-century evolutionary theories of race, whereby colonial societies were considered to be representative of an earlier, atavistic stage of human development. This Eurocentric perception of non-European identity retains its currency in Golding's text, and is in fact integral to the central premise of the narrative.

Hanley's and Golding's texts examined here point to the platform that the rhetoric of colonialism provided for British writers to articulate their own experiences of the horrors of the Second World War at a time when the extent of European atrocity was still emerging into the public consciousness. The widely-known vocabulary relating to the colonialist discourse of savagery offered a productive literary resource for these writers to register the extent of this violence *and* to place it alongside a history of extermination and exploitation that had taken place under the banner of European progress. Other writers who began to emerge in the latter half of the 1950s and who responded to the realities of decolonization can be read as concentrating not on representations of colonial savagery but on exoticism. For Burgess and Sillitoe, both of whom had experience of life in colonial Malaya in the build-up to the country's independence from Britain, conceptions of an exotic East reinforced damaging stereotypes of colonial subservience and upheld an increasingly unsustainable dichotomy between ideas of Western superiority and Eastern backwardness. In *The Malayan Trilogy* and *Key to the Door*, exoticism is rejected as representing the superciliousness of an imperial elite that is detached from the political and cultural turmoil of the region.

'The Beds i' the East Were No Longer Soft': Contesting Exoticism in *The Malayan Trilogy*

The Malayan Trilogy is made up of the interconnected novels *Time for a Tiger* (1956), *The Enemy in the Blanket* (1958) and *Beds in the East* (1959), and is written out of Burgess's direct experience of decolonization in Malaya whilst working as an Education Officer between 1954 and 1957. During this time the Federated Malay States was considered the 'greatest material prize in South East Asia' due to the fact that the region's rubber and tin mining industries were the British Commonwealth's 'biggest dollar earners' (Curtis, 2003, p. 335). In 1948, Britain had declared the country in a state of emergency in response to the guerrilla war waged by the Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA), made up largely of Chinese-born Communists operating in the jungle. The Malayan Emergency of 1948–1960 was presented to the British as a battle between the Western values of democracy and the evils of Communism; yet it unfolded, as T. N. Harper notes, 'in large part to make Southeast Asia safe for British business' (1999, p. 200). Malaya achieved independence from Britain in 1957, but the notion that the region was a 'prize' to be won was bound up with an influential discourse of exoticism.

The discourse of exoticism depicts colonial societies as ahistorical, aestheticized and attractive because of their distance from the modernized imperial 'centre'. As Graham Huggan contends, the word 'exotic' does not refer to an 'inherent *quality* found "in" certain people, objects and places' (2001, p. 13). Instead, he argues:

> The exoticist production of otherness is dialectical and contingent; at various times and in different places, it may serve conflicting ideological interests, providing the rationale for projects of *rapprochement* and reconciliation, but legitimizing just as easily the need for plunder and violent conquest. (p. 13)

Central to the exoticization of colonial societies is the perception that they are spaces that exist outside of modern time. The view of the colonies as exotic and ahistorical spaces thus corresponded with the characterization of European societies as Enlightened in opposition, and justified colonial expansion as the exportation of Enlightenment values and modernity throughout the globe. Instead of recirculating depictions of the East as an exotic space, *The Malayan Trilogy* undermines a tradition of literature and anthropology that has propagated the discourse of exoticism. This aspect

of the text is exemplified by Burgess's Introduction to the 1972 edition of the trilogy, which calls for a rejection of literary modes that 'view those far regions as material for mere fairy tales' before concluding: 'To many, the Far East hardly exists, except as televisual diversion. It is hoped that this novel, which has its own elements of diversion, may, through tears and laughter, educate' (2000, p. x).

The central thread that runs through *The Malayan Trilogy* is provided by the story of Victor Crabbe, a history teacher who moves from a prominent school to a provincial area as the nation works through the process of establishing independence from British rule. Crabbe's colonial encounter ends with an undramatic and lonesome death from a scorpion bite in the jungle. In his autobiography, Burgess acknowledges that the name Victor Crabbe 'has its own irony, suggesting the past imperial triumphs of the British and, at the same time, a backward scuttling into the sand of failure and eventual death' (2002a, p. 400). The trilogy is open to being considered as a straightforward depiction of imperial decline due to the gradual marginalization and eventual death of a once-influential British history teacher. The American edition of the trilogy, moreover, was published under the title *The Long Day Wanes*, which is taken from Tennyson's 'Ulysses' (1833) but also alludes (in a similar manner to Hanley's *The Consul at Sunset*) to the hubristic adage, 'The sun never sets on the British Empire'. Yet, Crabbe arguably acts as more than a two-dimensional signifier of the waning of British dominance. Instead he also comes to represent the text's investment in the need to 'kill the past' in order to move beyond a nostalgic vision of the history of colonialism.

Prior to his death in *Beds in the East*, Crabbe exclaims: 'History. […] The best thing to do is to put all that in books and forget about it. A book is a kind of lavatory. We've got to throw up the past, otherwise we can't live in the present. The past has got to be killed' (*BE*, p. 190). This violent, cathartic imagery of purging oneself of the past to make way for present circumstance makes literal the trilogy's call to move beyond mythologized or romanticized narratives of Britain's colonial intervention throughout the Far East. This is achieved through the trilogy's formal experimentation with intertextuality, through references and allusions to works as diverse as Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, the poetry of Rudyard Kipling, James Frazer's anthropological study *The Golden Bough* (published in volumes between 1890 and 1915) and the Malayan stories of Conrad and W. Somerset Maugham.

The trilogy's fragmented and intertextual layering of different authorial voices from the worlds of literature and science points to the influence of literary modernism on Burgess's work. Throughout his career Burgess would commit to the post-1945 dominance of modernism, stating in his two-volume history of English Literature, *They Wrote in English*, for example, that, 'Modernism is supposed to belong to the past (which is absurd) and post-Joycean developments in the novel claim a new beginning, a new philosophy, thus earning some such title as post-modernist' (1979, p. 79).[9] Joyce was for Burgess the arch modernist: he would declare *Ulysses* to be 'the greatest novel of the [twentieth] century' (1986, p. 429) and 'the work I have to measure myself hopelessly against each time I sit down to write fiction' (p. 431).[10] In *The Malayan Trilogy*, however, it is the influence of Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922), with its own allusions to *The Golden Bough* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, which is most prominent.[11] Burgess draws on the influence of modernist formal experimentation to self-consciously situate *The Malayan Trilogy* as a textual response to literary constructions of a British imperial identity. The result is that the trilogy acts as a palimpsest: Burgess positions the text as an important revision to a long tradition of literature that has established the tropes through which Eastern societies are interpreted by the West.

Existing criticism of *The Malayan Trilogy* has tended to interpret it as either a successful documentation of the loss of the Empire in Malaya or as a continuation of an inherited colonial ideology. Robert K. Morris, for example, contends that the trilogy is 'an anatomy of the heart of Malaya' and that it successfully depicts the 'nitty-gritty of the political, religious, and cultural mess in the Far East' (1986, p. 69). More recently, the Malaysian scholar Zawiah Yahya has concluded that

> [*The Malayan Trilogy*] may have all the appearances of being a liberal text, of representing a radical departure from the colonial ideology of its predecessors, but if we care to look closer and see things against the grains [*sic*], we may discover that […] the old ideology of Empire, the same colonialist assumptions and the old literary conventions are still in operation at the heart of the project. (2003, p. 189)

Both Yahya's assertion that *The Malayan Trilogy* is coterminous with 'old literary conventions', and Morris's claim that Burgess presents a productive account of the 'real' Malaya, neglect the ambivalence of the trilogy. The trilogy certainly counters mythologized representations of Malaya,

and is not wholly free of a Eurocentric view of the region. Yet, it also attempts to present the view that Eastern societies are intrinsically backwards, timeless, and deferential as being part of a Western construction, aided by cultural production and anthropological study.

The tradition of 'writing Malaysia' that the trilogy is situated against is that of Maugham's Malaysian short stories and the Malay fiction of Conrad, who was described in a review of his first novel, *Almayer's Folly* (1895), as having the potential to become the 'Kipling of the Malay Archipelago' (Sherry, 1997, p. 61). Arguing for his superiority in documenting the 'real' Malaya, Burgess holds that both Conrad and Maugham 'knew little of the country outside the very bourgeois lives of the planters and the administrators', and that they 'certainly knew none of the languages' (2002a, p. 402). This is not to suggest that Burgess was not influenced by both writers. In *They Wrote in English*, Burgess refers to Conrad as 'a master, and a very individual one' (1979, p. 64). Moreover, in his obituary for Maugham, written for *The Listener*, Burgess praises Maugham's prose as 'a very considerable art, starting as a reaction against Victorian opulence, refined—in the time of his maturity—till it became a supple and economical instrument' (1965b, p. 1033). Yet, considering himself intricately absorbed into Malaya due to the fact that he had learnt to speak Malay and would eat and drink with the locals, Burgess believed that he was in a superior position to his literary predecessors.

Burgess felt strongly that he was able to move beyond the insular world of British expatriates to discover a much more interesting society. Indeed, during his stay, he adopted a position similar to that of Fielding in E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924), setting himself apart from what he calls the 'aloof club-frequenting whites' (2002a, p. 389) who made up the colonial service. In his biography of Burgess, Biswell comments that, while he felt uncomfortable attending functions hosted by the Malay aristocracy, Burgess

> reserved his deepest resentment for the European clubs, and he suggested [in a 1966 *World of Books* interview] that the expatriates who hid themselves away in such places […] "didn't want to get to know the people, and I felt very bitter about that because the people were worth knowing, and of course one was there to know the people and [for] nothing else, I felt"'. (2006, p. 180)

It is a stance which is reflected in the character of Nabby Adams in *Time for a Tiger*, who complains about the upkeep of the officer's mess with the

lament that, 'Nobody cared because nobody wanted to think of the place as home' (*TT*, p. 12). This dismissive and aloof attitude is also embodied later in the text in Burgess's portrayal of the colonial club as dominated by openly racist and 'arrogant' (p. 72) colonial servants.

It is the lives of this detached and supercilious 'club-frequenting' class that Burgess views as being largely represented by Maugham's Malay fiction.[12] Speaking in the BBC documentary *A Kind of Failure*, he maintains that, although the country was the 'most remarkable multicultural society in the world', Maugham's was an 'outsider's Malaya' (1981). And again, in his 1982 article 'Something about Malaysia', he contends that, in Maugham's tales, '[O]nly the rather dull white people are real, while the brown and yellow Orientals are mere padding bare feet on the veranda' (1998, p. 35). The non-white male characters of Maugham's Malaysian stories are indeed often simply depicted as coolies who perform menial tasks, while women are often characterized as being 'so small and so gentle and they made no noise' (1986, p. 121). In his own Malayan stories Burgess professes the view that the silent and deferential Malayan subject is a construct of Western literature; as the narrator of *Enemy in the Blanket* states, the 'vague smoky image of the true Malay […] did not exist' (*EB*, p. 49). Burgess thus hoped to move beyond the stock character types evident in Maugham's tales in order to 'restore the balance', admitting to having 'found the Malays and Chinese and Indians much more rewarding' (1998, p. 35).

The first book of *The Malayan Trilogy*, *Time for a Tiger*, opens with a statement that instantly complicates British preconceptions of the East as a geographical space that can be homogenized and stereotyped: 'East? They wouldn't know the bloody East if they saw it. Not if you was to hand it to them on a plate would they know it was the East. That's where the East is, there. […] Out there, west' (*TT*, p. 1). The initial ambiguity of who is speaking and to whom creates the effect of the speaker directly addressing the reader, thus making the reader complicit in a re-evaluation of what has historically constituted the East. *Time for a Tiger* begins with a discomforting and disorientating statement, and not with a comforting claim that the reader will be guided into the world of this faraway colony. It is a statement, moreover, that signals a challenge to European discourses that attribute simplified and oppositional characteristics to the East and the West.

Having established a reappraisal of the concept of 'the East' as a fixed geographical space, the trilogy goes on to address the way in which literary and scientific discourses have aided the construction of an exotic

East that have in turn informed ideas about Britain's superior imperial identity. Literature and anthropological study are presented as displaying a form of exoticism defined by Huggan as 'a particular mode of aesthetic *perception*—one which renders people, objects and places strange even as it domesticates them, and which effectively manufactures otherness even as it claims to surrender to its imminent mystery' (2001, p. 13). The two characters who most strongly represent the stripping away of exoticism are Victor Crabbe's wife, Fenella, and his old school friend, Rupert Hardman. Both characters continually interpret their environment through anthropological and literary allusions, but by the end of their respective colonial encounters experience a gradual sense of disillusionment, and find that Malaya has not lived up to their preconceptions.

From the outset of the trilogy Fenella expresses disappointment about her experience of the East. For her, Malaya is 'a horrible sweating travesty of Europe' (*TT*, p. 35) and a 'sheer, damned, uncultured emptiness' (p. 59). Exasperated with the '[s]cabby children, spitting pot-bellied shopkeepers, terrorists, burglars, scorpions', Fenella asks Crabbe, 'Where is this glamorous East they talk about?' (pp. 34–35). Fenella's superficial attitude towards her colonial home is problematically characteristic of the stock 'wife' character in much colonial fiction. As Burgess asserts, Fenella was intended to be 'not untypical of the British *memsahib* [European woman], who considered herself superior to the "natives"' (2000, p. ix). Fenella thus embodies the condescension of Malaya's British colonial community, whereby the 'natives' are only considered worthy of attention provided they live up to the notions of Eastern 'glamour' evidenced in anthropology and fiction.

Specifically, it is the popular early twentieth-century anthropology work by James Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, that has influenced Fenella's preconceptions regarding the 'glamour' of the East. When Fenella is taken to a party by Alladad Khan she witnesses Tamils who 'walked in their bare feet on broken glass and others stuck knives into their cheeks and one man swallowed a sword' (*TT*, p. 93). Suitably delighted that the locals have performed in the strange and mysterious way she expected of them, she enthusiastically reflects upon her experience as being '[l]ike something out of *The Golden Bough*' (p. 94). The allusion to Frazer's scientific study is juxtaposed with Fenella's reference to popular fiction set in the colonies when she comments that, 'This is like something in a novel, isn't it? […] Like one of those cheap novels about Cairo and what-not' (p. 94). The twinned allusions to 'cheap' adventure fiction and *The Golden Bough*

undermines the objective and authorial discourse of anthropology and presents both forms of representation as upholding manufactured ideas about the exoticism of the East.

Fenella's anthropological gaze, through which her experience of Malaya is filtered, becomes more apparent when on a trip to the small town of Gila she asks Crabbe, 'Are the people really different up there?' (p. 137). The narrative voice reveals that:

> Cool libraries with anthropology sections were in her head. She automatically saw form in her mind the exordium of a stock monograph: "The aborigines of the Upper Lanchap present, ethnologically and culturally, a very different picture from the inhabitants of coastal areas …". (p. 137)

In Gila the group are invited to a party in the jungle and are told that they will have to continue on foot, leading 'Fenella's first flush of *Golden Bough* enthusiasm' to be 'mitigated somewhat' (p. 152). Her desire to witness the supposed glamour of 'native culture', however, overrides her initial hesitation:

> But, still, aboriginal dancing. […] The monograph droned on: "The culture pattern of the *orang darat* is necessarily limited. […] In dance, however, the *orang darat* has achieved a considerable standard of rhythmic complexity and a high order of agility". (p. 152)

The supposed objective authority of the anthropological language is undermined by the narrator's reference to a 'stock monograph' which 'droned on' and could be located in 'cool libraries' (presumably in Britain and so far away from Malaya). Ultimately, despite Fenella's '*Golden Bough* enthusiasm' for 'native culture' she is unable to live happily in Malaya, continually reverting back to a sense of frustration and a desire to return home, which she does in *The Enemy in the Blanket*.

Where it is the language and imagery of anthropology and popular fiction that informs Fenella's view of Malaya, Rupert Hardman references a longer tradition of canonical texts. Hardman's experience in Malaya is informed by a discourse of exoticism evident in *The Arabian Nights* and Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, in which the East is described in aestheticized terms. Hardman's name is suggestive of the kind of masculine dominance associated with the traditional pioneering imperial hero. Yet, Hardman's development over the course of the trilogy's second book,

The Enemy in the Blanket, involves the dismantling of his preconceptions about an exotic East and, in turn, the stripping away of his sense of superiority as a Western male.

Contrary to Fenella's sense of disappointment regarding the 'uncultured emptiness' of Malaya, Hardman initially views his surroundings as favourably exotic. Indeed, when the reader is first introduced to Hardman his chance meeting with Crabbe reminds him of his past in Britain and he begins to see himself from outside, as if viewing the now-familiar Malayan environment from the perspective of an Englishman at home: 'The palm trees and the brown bodies and the China Sea became, despite the years of familiarity, suddenly strange, genuinely exotic' (*EB*, p. 21). Where Fenella's glimpses of the exotic are articulated mainly through the rhetoric of anthropology, Hardman interprets Malaya through the myths and images propagated in literature. Hardman at first views his marriage to the Malayan widow 'Che Normah 'as an adventure […] a line from *Antony and Cleopatra* ringing clear: "The beds i' the East are soft"' (p. 68). Following the consummation of his marriage, he

> lay back in cigarette-smoking languor, with the silks and perfumes of the *Arabian Nights* all about him. Soon a girl would bring coffee. Minarets rose in frail spires of smoke, and the camel-bells of the robed traders thinned into the distance as the caravan passed through the gateway. It was an acceptable world. (p. 69)

As well as directly referencing Shakespeare and *The Arabian Nights*, Hardman's languid and aestheticized view of Malaya echoes the language of Kipling's poem 'Mandalay' (1890), which, as Biswell notes, Burgess 'knew by heart' reciting it 'during the outward voyage to Malaya' (2006, p. 154). The speaker of 'Mandalay' creates an image of Burma characterized by 'spicy garlic smells/An' the sunshine an' the palm-trees an' the tinkly temple bells' before contrasting the 'gritty pavin'-stones' and 'blasted Henglish drizzle' with the 'cleaner, greener land' (1899, pp. 52–53) of the far-off colony. The contrasting imagery of Kipling's poem imagines an emotive distinction between the drabness of life in England and the excitement and intrigue of the Far East.

Instead of upholding such a romanticized image of the Far East, however, *Enemy in the Blanket* foregrounds Hardman's preconceptions as a means of dismantling them. Hardman's marriage requires him to convert to Islam and gradually his mythologized view of Malaya is stripped

away by the reality of his experience of living as a Muslim in a country governed by strict religious tenets: 'The silk girls bringing sherbet had gone, the beds i' the East were no longer soft. The khaki police scoured the town in the name of the Prophet and found easy prey in Hardman' (*EB*, p. 152).[13] Ultimately, Hardman is forced to come to the conclusion that '*The Arabian Nights* is essentially a book for boys' (p. 154). It is a statement that recognizes the passing of his initial child-like naivety about life in Malaya, as well as its thematic connections with nineteenth-century tales of adventure, commonly referred to as 'books for boys'.

While Crabbe becomes the trilogy's signifier for the waning significance of the British Empire and the desire to construct a new strategy to avoid complete marginalization, Hardman comes to represent the European desire to reject the advanced modernity of the West and become completely absorbed into the East. Such a desire is presented as absurd and hopeless, however, and despite adopting the clothes and traditions of the colonized culture and isolating himself from his fellow Western expats, Hardman is unable to become completely assimilated into his Malayan environment. It is a predicament which is emphasized by his burnt white skin which, following a plane crash in the Second World War, is deficient in pigment, making him 'very much a white man' (*EB*, p. 19) unable to tan.[14] It is through Hardman's predicament as a white European trying desperately to assimilate into Malayan society that Burgess seems to emulate Conrad, an author who, as Burgess contends, 'emphasized the loneliness of man battling with […] the problems of right behaviour' (1998, p. 192).

Although Burgess criticized Conrad for not truly 'knowing' Malaya, Hardman's failure to realize his *Arabian Nights* fantasy demonstrates parallels with Conrad's *Almayer's Folly***.** Conrad's work has been read by Andrea White as 'demythologiz[ing] the basic assumptions of the very genre ['adventure fiction'] it appeared to derive from' (2003, p. 6). Discussing the way in which Conrad's fiction foregrounds 'writing, reading and the production of narrative', Robert Hampson argues that texts such as *Almayer's Folly* acknowledge the 'problem of representation' (2000, p. 1) in which colonial societies are depicted from a Eurocentric viewpoint. *Almayer's Folly* questions the construction of the pioneering male hero central to 'tales of adventure' and suggests that the ideology of imperialism is founded on avarice and individual ambition.

Both Hardman in *The Malayan Trilogy* and Almayer in Conrad's tale are motivated by greed, entering into loveless marriages in the hope of

acquiring the inherited fortunes of their respective Malay brides. Almayer accepts Lingard's proposal that he marry his adopted Malay daughter only after he imagined 'great piles of shining guilders, and realized all the possibilities of an opulent existence' where he is 'made king amongst men by old Lingard's money—he would pass the evening of his days in inexpressible splendour' (*AF*, p. 10). Similarly, Hardman, having become swamped with debt, is enticed by Haji Zainal Abidin's description of 'Che Normah which plays on the Western notion of the deferential Eastern bride: 'If you are a good husband to her, there is nothing she will not do for you. Nothing. […] She has money' (*EB*, p. 32). It is the potential riches that are paramount in both Hardman's and Almayer's decisions to marry, and both characters initially adopt patronizing attitudes toward their intended brides, considering them secondary to their vast wealth; they are an afterthought to be 'dealt with' and ultimately sidelined. Following his opulent fantasy, Almayer spares a brief thought for Lingard's ward, certain in his dominant position as a white European man: 'He had a vague idea of shutting her up somewhere, anywhere, out of his gorgeous future. Easy enough to dispose of a Malay woman, a slave after all' (*AF*, p. 10). Likewise, Hardman defends his marriage to 'Che Normah, and his subsequent conversion to Islam, when discussing the matter with his friend and priest Father Laforgue: 'You know I had to get money. […] No other way suggested itself. But, you see, it can't mean anything' (*EB*, p. 60).

Neither Hardman's nor Almayer's plans work out as they anticipate and their Malay wives contradict their Western preconceptions of subservience. Lingard's promise of great wealth does not transpire due to a vague and unfortunate business venture, forcing Almayer to live in his decaying bungalow (the folly of the tale's title) with his Malay bride. Subsequently, we discover that instead of becoming a paragon of Far Eastern deference Almayer's wife is a 'domestic tempest' who would 'face him across the table […] in a passion of anger and contempt', heaping a 'rapid rush of scathing remarks and bitter cursings […] on the head of the man unworthy to associate with brave Malay chiefs' (*AF*, p. 32). Hardman's marriage proves to be similarly tempestuous. The reader is informed that 'Che Normah's first two husbands, 'the first Dutch and the second English—had wilted under her blasts of unpredictable passion and her robust sexual demands' (*EB*, p. 51).[15] Soon after his marriage to 'Che Normah he becomes a 'kept man' (p. 154). Despite being adamant that he was 'a barrister, a scholar, a cosmopolitan. […] He enclosed these people here, he was bigger than they' (p. 154) Hardman is made a slave to 'Che Normah's desires:

> He sat on the floor […] aware that she was appraising him as though he were a choice exhibit at the slave-market. […] He was led off, white nakedness, tottering, thin with bird's bones, the cosmopolitan, the scholar, the man who enclosed these people. […] The beds i' the East were no longer soft. (p. 157)

Hardman's assumed superiority as a British male is thus not upheld by Burgess's narrative and the colonial master-slave roles are reversed. One of the central preoccupations of *Almayer's Folly*, as Rod Edmond notes, is not the 'idea that civilization dissolves in the heat, but that it is a sham' (2000, p. 46). Similarly, Burgess challenges the assumed superiority of the white, British hero inscribed in colonial adventure tales and presents a British imperial identity as being founded on ideologically constructed myths about the East.

Although Burgess's method of intertextuality situates *The Malayan Trilogy* as a reaction against a textual tradition of 'writing Malaysia', the difficulty in moving beyond established literary tropes is also self-consciously acknowledged. In this sense, the trilogy prefigures metafictional narrative strategies as a means of foregrounding the difficulty of a Western writer to achieve a true, realistic portrayal of Malaya that is not in some way reliant upon old literary conventions. Addressing the difference between realistic and metafictional literary forms, Patricia Waugh asserts that *all* novels assimilate 'a variety of discourses', but that

> the conflict of languages and voices is apparently resolved in realistic fiction through their subordination to the dominant "voice" of the omniscient, godlike author […] Metafiction *displays* and *rejoices in* the impossibility of such a resolution and thus clearly reveals the basic identity of the novel as genre. (2001, p. 6)

The Malayan Trilogy displays such metafictional qualities when Crabbe and Fenella meet the State Education Officer Talbot and his wife Anne at the beginning of *Enemy in the Blanket*, The scene is reminiscent of a typical Maugham tale, something that is recognized in Crabbe's reflection that 'All this had been set out years ago in the stories of a man still well remembered in the East. Willie Maugham, damn fine bridge-player, real asset to the club, remembered me, put me in a book' (*EB*, pp. 38–39). Crabbe's statement highlights for the reader the textual echoes that the scene contains in relation to Maugham's fiction, pointing to the fabrica-

tion of the setting, the characters and, by extension, the trilogy as a whole, by a Western writer.

A sense of self-consciousness regarding the construction of the trilogy as a text is more clearly evinced in the trilogy's final book, *Beds in the East*. In the scene in which Crabbe and his Anglicized Chinese friend Lim Cheng Po discuss the possible future of an independent Malaya, the narrative becomes a parody of a typical 'Eastern tale' reliant on an aestheticized and Eurocentric view of the Far East:

> Both men, in whites and wicker chairs on the veranda, facing the bougainvillea and the papaya tree, felt themselves begin to enter a novel about the East. It would soon be time for gin and bitters. A soft-footed servant would bring the silver tray, and then blue would begin to soak everything, the frogs would croak and the coppersmith bird make a noise like a plumber. Oriental night. *As I sit here now, with the London fog swirling about my diggings, the gas fire popping and my landlady preparing the evening rissoles, those incredible nights come back to me, in all their mystery and perfume* …. (*BE*, p. 47)

Here, the style of writing takes the form of parody, adopting the imagery and language of a Maugham-esque Malayan short story centred around men in 'whites' sitting in 'wicker chairs' drinking 'gin and bitters' and surveying a landscape that is characterized by sights and sounds commonly associated with a strange and 'exotic' East. The Maugham-esque aspect of the scene is enhanced by the arrival of a 'soft-footed servant', recalling Burgess's criticism of Maugham's depiction of Malayan characters as 'mere padding bare feet on the veranda' (1998, p. 35). The shift from third- to first-person narration signals the beginning of 'a novel about the East', yet pointedly the narrator is situated in London, suggesting that the perspective of the European writer is informed by a romanticized memory of the East more so than by real, direct experience.

While inviting the reader to view colonialist ideas about British racial and cultural superiority as constructed, *The Malayan Trilogy* also problematically articulates a colonial discourse of 'paternalism'. The text's rejection of a superior British imperial identity is expressed alongside a contradictory commitment to the continued importance of Western culture in Malaya as a means of unifying the nation and preventing deep-rooted internal conflict. At the time of independence, the population of Malaya was mostly made up of Malay, Chinese, and Indian citizens, leading to the emergence of competing forms of nationalism between differ-

ent racial groups.[16] Significantly, Victor Crabbe is placed at the centre of the turmoil as he attempts to assert his increasingly marginalized position and become a kind of cultural referee by holding parties and meetings to mediate between the conflicting ethnic groups. Yet, his various attempts to act as mediator and 'cultivate better inter-racial understanding' (*BE*, p. 57) continually end in chaos and fighting. Ultimately, Crabbe becomes a lone patriarchal figure made comical and ridiculous due to the racial allegiances of Malaya's indigenous citizens. I will return to this dimension of the text in Chap. 3 as a means of examining Burgess's paternalism as being bound up with anxieties about the rise of American dominance. What is important to note here, however, is how this aspect of the narrative negates the role of British economic interests in importing labour forces from different countries into Malaya—principally to work in tin mines and on rubber plantations—and categorizing the region's population in terms of race. In contrast to the paternalism of *The Malayan Trilogy*, Sillitoe's *Key to the Door* presents Communism as a legitimate response in the fight against European subjugation.

It is telling that Burgess was highly critical of *Key to the Door*. In a review for the *Yorkshire Post*, he declares that he is 'appalled morally' by the work due to the fact that Brian Seaton, the novel's protagonist, 'cannot see the Chinese Communists as enemies. His failure to kill off a terrorist who eventually snipes at his own mate meets no condemnation. The political naiveté of the book is incredible' (quoted in Biswell, 2006, p. 153). In his survey *The Novel Now* (1967), Burgess praises Sillitoe's earlier works *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1958) and *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (1959) but returns to this criticism of *Key to the Door*, commenting that,

> it is the Communists in the jungle who have the monopoly of right, and it is assumed that the people of Malaya, who have allegedly smarted under British exploitation, would welcome a Communist regime. Anyone who knows Malaya must marvel at both the wilful ignorance and the incredible political innocence. (1967, p. 148)

Opposing the political allegiance evident in Sillitoe's portrayal of post-war Malaya, Burgess reveals his own ideological investment in an adapted form of British intervention. For Burgess, the failures of the nationalist movement in Malaya and the rise of Communism are largely the fault of pre-existing racial conflicts that could be overcome through the pres-

ence of a British colonial administration that actively promoted cultural cohesion. What Burgess fails to account for, however, is the negative impact that British colonial and economic policies had in influencing such turmoil.

Contesting the 'Imperial Imaginary' in *Key to the Door*

Sillitoe's 1961 novel stays within the Seaton family of *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, following Arthur Seaton's older brother Brian, who describes himself as a 'socialist' (*KD*, p. 229) with no patriotic sentiment. Brian's life is recounted from his childhood in 1930s' Nottingham through to his life as a factory worker in the 1940s and concluding when he is 21 and working as a wireless operator for the Army in Malaya.[17] The plot is influenced by Sillitoe's own experience in the late 1940s as a wireless operator in the Royal Air Force in Singapore and then Malaya. As he explains in his Preface to the text, 'the first dozen pages of *Key to the Door*' were written in a 'rain-and-soil stained diary of the jungle climb [up Gunong Jerai in Kedah State]' (*KD*, p. 8) whilst Sillitoe was being treated in hospital for tuberculosis.

Due in large part to the success of *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, which was made into a film starring Albert Finney in 1960, Sillitoe's early output has been characterized by the renewed empiricism and parochialism attributed to his 'Angry Young Men' contemporaries. As Nick Bentley has noted, however, reading Sillitoe's work 'as continuing in a tradition of working-class realism' is ultimately 'reductive' (2007, p. 193) and neglects Sillitoe's 'radical, marginalized discourse of a sub-cultural identity' (p. 194). Building on Bentley's analysis, it is possible to examine the internationalist and humanist qualities of *Key to the Door*, in which the assumed moral and racial superiority of British colonialism are attacked as being fallacious and divisive constructions that serve the interests of Britain's political elite, rather than the wider populations of either the colonizing or colonized nations.

As with the novels by Burgess, Hanley, and Golding discussed in this chapter, *Key to the Door* articulates a self-aware commentary on the manner in which colonialist conceptions of racial and cultural difference had been translated to the British public through cultural production. Seaton recalls how his English teacher at school would often 'read *Coral Island*

or *Ungava*', the latter being Ballantyne's 1857 'tale of Eskimo land' (*KD*, p. 134), as well as *Treasure Island*, described as 'a cinematic hit-and-run battle among blue waves and palm trees taking place a million miles away' (p. 136). Brian's enjoyment of such tales of adventure in the far-flung corners of the world extends into his free time, where he visits the cinema to watch Jungle Jim and Tarzan films. These popular adventure tales would offer an imaginative dimension to Brian's geography classes, where 'the teacher pressed a roller [on the blank pages of his notebook] that left an outline map when he lifted it off, and set strange names on the blackboard that you copied against the map' (p. 134). These prominent features of Seaton's childhood in Nottingham point to the significance of cultural production and education in shaping his view of the world beyond Britain's borders. Through literature and film, non-European nations are presented as being part of another world 'a million miles away' that contains the possibility of excitement and visual splendour. At the same time, this world can be named and claimed through the categorization of different nations during geography lessons.

The cultural representations that frame Seaton's understanding of the world beyond the narrow confines of his classroom are not upheld within the text but are instead revealed to the reader as fictional constructions. When Seaton becomes engrossed in 'the latest machinations of Chang the Hatchet Man' in a *Joker* comic book, for example, the third-person narrator reflects on his childish naivety, imploring the reader to appreciate that the comic's 'strange landscape' and caricatured Chinese villain were 'no more than a few pen marks on paper, lit into something bigger than real by the escape lanes of imagination' (pp. 167–168). Seaton's reading of the comic, moreover, suggests his own early awareness of a universal humanity that is not served by allegiance to national stereotypes. As he reads about the villainous Chang loading a junk with dynamite before crashing it into a dam, he knows from reading *The Coral Island* that 'three young English youths standing hopelessly by the riverbank would have saved the dam if they could' (p. 168). Yet, he is also aware of a level of sympathy for Chang, 'almost as if he were some long-lost great-uncle a few times removed, roaming the wastes of China' (p. 168). This sense of a distant familial connection signals the novel's challenge to colonial assumptions about British racial superiority, and foreshadows Seaton's later attempts to forge some kind of connection with the Malay soldiers beside whom he fights. Indeed, whilst walking through a Malay village in the dark during his National Service, Seaton passes '[a] Malay in white shorts and

pith-helmet' who 'came by like a phantom' (p. 246). Rather than remain aloof, 'Brian said good night in the man's own language, a reassurance to both that they were passing human beings and not ghosts' (p. 246). The adoption of the Malay language signifies Brian's refusal to ascribe to the colonialist view of English superiority. Brian's is a small but significant gesture that is generated from a desire to challenge the inequities and dehumanizing impulse of colonial segregation and affirm a human bond between the two men.

Key to the Door is split into four parts, with equal attention given to Seaton's early life in Nottingham and his service in Malaya. When Part Three, 'The Ropewalk', announces that the action has moved to the British colony it is not with the language of exotic landscapes, customs, and peoples that defy belief and contrast starkly with the drabness of life in Britain. Instead, Brian's new home during his period of National Service is introduced with the prosaic sentence: 'Malaya soaked under rain' (p. 227). It is a statement that is short and stark, lacking in the kind of grandiloquent description characteristic of Ballantyne or Kipling. Yet, this brevity is indicative of the text's departure from the aestheticized descriptions of Seaton's childhood reading: gone are the 'blue waves and palm trees', and in their place is the mundaneness of serving an Empire to which Seaton feels no patriotic connection under an unrelenting rain.

The novel's conscious disavowal of the discourse of exoticism is made explicit when Seaton recounts his first impressions of the Malay jungle. Upon encountering a colonial environment he had seen depicted as a tropical paradise in films and literature, Seaton remarks: 'So that's the jungle […]. Where's all them tropical flowers and Technicolor parrots flitting from tree to tree? What about Tarzan and Martin Rattler, Allan Quatermain and Jungle Jim? […] It was dark green and dull, full of gloom and the uninviting pillars of stark trees' (pp. 355–356). Pointedly, Seaton articulates his disappointment through reference to the tales of his childhood that follow the adventures of brave English heroes, such as Ballantyne's *Martin Rattler* (1858) and H. Ryder Haggard's Quatermain series (1885–1912). Far from eulogizing the passing of an English national identity that could be represented in the form of the adventure tale, however, *Key to the Door* refuses to take a superior and racially exclusive conception of identity for granted. Instead, Sillitoe's protagonist represents an impulse to understand Britain's role in influencing Malaya's state of emergency and to overcome the divisiveness of British colonial policy.

Conclusion

The reappraisals of an 'imperial imaginary' evident in *The Consul at Sunset*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Free Fall*, *The Malayan Trilogy*, and *Key to the Door* disrupt the prevailing characterization of literature of decolonization as articulating a single-voiced eulogy for the Empire. The varying political allegiances and preoccupations regarding the future of the Empire, moreover, reveal a literature that is restless, diverse, and uncertain of Britain's new role in the emerging postcolonial world. What binds these texts together, however, is an early cognizance of the harmful nature of cultural representation in propagating a colonial discourse that is reliant on racial chauvinism and segregation.

A preoccupation with cultural representations of a supposedly superior British colonial identity in post-war novels explored here prefigures later novels by British writers that deal with Britain's history of colonialism. The intertextual and self-reflexive depiction of the colonial enterprise evident in the fiction of Hanley, Golding, Burgess, and Sillitoe can be read as foreshadowing J. G. Farrell's Booker Prize-winning novel *The Siege of Krishnapur* (1973), which, as John McLeod contends, interrogates and subverts the fictional 'production of colonial identities' and 'is deeply parodic' (1994, p. 120) of the conventional Mutiny novel. As well as parodying Mutiny novels, Farrell's text can be read as a critical response to George Orwell's conflicted views on the British Empire. One of the novel's central characters is the hapless romantic poet George Fleury, whose name suggests both Orwell and the protagonist of his 1934 novel *Burmese Days*, John Flory, and whose love affair with Louise Dunstable is comparable to that of Flory and Elizabeth. Throughout the novel, Fleury attempts to promote a form of colonial intervention based not on materialism and exploitation but on a shared sense of humanism able to raise all of mankind to the same spiritual level. This stance is undermined, however, by Fleury's self-conscious performance of how he believes both a poet and a colonial hero should act.

Rather than simply viewing imperial decline in terms of national decline, this broad range of British writers acknowledge that the period of decolonization requires the rejection of colonial discourses that propagate moral certainties regarding Europe's role in the world and orders the globe in terms of racial and cultural hierarchies. At the same time, white British writers with direct experience of colonial life during decolonization were acutely aware of the growing influence of an informal American

'neo-imperialism', evident not only in terms of geopolitical power but also in the form of consumer capitalism. In Chap. 3 I will explore how Burgess, Graham Greene, D. J. Enright, and David Caute respond to the emergence of a new form of Western hegemony, one that involves the transference of political, economic and cultural power from Britain to America.

Notes

1. The relationship between modernist literature and colonialism is discussed in Booth and Rigby (2000a), Boehmer (2005), Parry (2005), and Childs (2007).
2. For more on the implications regarding gender roles and the ideological intent of 'tales of adventure' see Street (1985), Bristow (1991), Green (1992), Edmond (1997), and Agruss (2013). Conrad's oeuvre is assessed in depth in Parry (1983), Said (1993), Hampson (2000), and White (2003).
3. For more on the connection between late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century scientific theories and European colonialism see Pick (1989), Greenslade (1994), and Edmond (2000).
4. Hanley's debut novel *Monsoon Victory* (1946) draws on his time in Burma while *The Year of the Lion* (1953) and *Drinkers of Darkness* (1955) extend his interest in the decline of Empire in Africa.
5. For a short biography of Hanley see O'Connell and Warnock (2000).
6. Hanley offers an autobiographical account of this experience in *Warriors: Life and Death among the Somalis* (1971).
7. For a biography of Golding see Carey (2009).
8. For an examination of *The Coral Island*, *Lord of the Flies* and their status as 'children's literature', see Singh (1997).
9. The two volumes of *They Wrote in English* were published only in Italy and, as Andrew Biswell reports, are 'now out of print and long-forgotten' (2006, p.196). The 1000-page typescript is held in the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas. See 'Anthony Burgess: An inventory of his papers at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center', http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/uthrc/00143/hrc-00143.html, accessed 25 November 2015. Burgess's personal copies are held at the International Anthony Burgess Foundation (IABF) collections in Manchester.

10. Burgess's collected journalism, *Homage to Qwert Yuiop*, also includes reflections on Joyce in the articles 'Joyce as Centenarian' (pp. 431–437), 'Joyce and Trieste' (pp. 437–440), 'A Truer Joyce' (pp. 440–442), 'The Muse and Me' (pp. 443–445) and 'Irish Facts' (pp. 445–447). For Burgess's analysis of Joycean technique and language see Burgess's *Re: Joyce* (1968). For a sustained examination of the influence of Joyce on Burgess's oeuvre see Farkas (2002).
11. In his 'Notes on *The Waste Land*, Eliot declares his indebtedness to *The Golden Bough*, which 'has influenced our generation greatly' (2004, p. 76), and refers to his allusions to *Antony and Cleopatra*. Signalling his fascination with Eliot's poem whilst writing the trilogy, Burgess had attempted unsuccessfully to translate *The Waste Land* into Malay during his time in the country (see Biswell, 2006, p. 163).
12. The chapter in T.N. Harper's *The End of Empire and the Making of Malaya* (1999) that documents the rise of Malayan nationalism during the inter-war years is titled 'The passing of the Somerset Maugham era', suggesting the significance of Maugham's fiction in defining the era of British colonialism in the country.
13. The recasting of the line from *Antony and Cleopatra* also provides the title of the trilogy's third book *Beds in the East*, which concludes with Crabbe's death by the river in the jungle, thus ending his colonial experience on a bed which is the symbolic opposite of Hardman's aestheticized Eastern bed—a riverbed.
14. Burgess returns to this theme in an undated and unpublished treatment for a film (which was never made) entitled *Up like Thunder*, the title of which is taken from Kipling's 'Mandalay'. The treatment describes how the American protagonist, Jack Pretty, moves to Malaysia and marries a wealthy Muslim woman called 'Che Isa, thinking that converting to Islam is 'mere fancy dress'. Pretty soon realizes that this is not the case, however, when he is forced to go to the Mosque, and give up smoking and drinking. As a means of escape, he agrees to travel to Mecca and become a Haji but (in a similar move to Hardman) instead boards a plane to Europe. Pretty's tale ends in Harlem where he lives with a black girl ('the nearest thing he can find to Isa') and is surrounded by a black community which despises him. When trying to intervene in a fight between two black men, Pretty is stabbed and dies (see Anthony

Burgess, *Up like Thunder* film treatment, International Anthony Burgess Foundation (IABF) Archive, uncatalogued. At the time of writing, the archive at the IABF has not been formally catalogued. Throughout this study I will therefore refer to documents stored at the IABF which have not yet been labelled with catalogue details).

15. The reference to an unnamed Dutch husband who had preceded Hardman can be read as a direct allusion to Conrad's tale of the Dutch Almayer 'wilting' under the contempt of his Malay bride.
16. Recounting his visit to Singapore in 1969, Burgess reflects that *The Malayan Trilogy* 'prophesied racial tension and even race-war in an independent Malaysia, and the prophecy was being fulfilled north of the Johore Straits' (2002b, p. 212). Burgess's reference is to the race riots in Kuala Lumpur on 13 May 1969, the result, according to T.N. Harper, of a post-independence bargain 'which had seemed to leave the field of politics and administration to the Malays and the world of commerce to the Chinese, whilst guaranteeing political rights to the Chinese and economic assistance to the Malays [but which] no longer reflected, if indeed it ever had, the aspirations of key groups in society' (1999, p. 367).
17. At the time the novel was written, 21 was considered the age when a child becomes an adult and, to mark this transition, would be given their own 'key to the door' of the family home.

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CHAPTER 3

America Moves In: Neo-colonialism and America's 'Entertainment Empire'

Decolonization is depicted by a number of 1950s British writers as involving a shift in, rather than a systematic end to, Western imperialism. In Anthony Burgess's *The Malayan Trilogy* (1956–1959) and D. J. Enright's *Academic Year* (1955), British rule is depicted as being superseded in Malaya and Egypt respectively by the rise of an American-led consumer capitalism. Alternatively, Graham Greene's *The Quiet American* (1955) and David Caute's *At Fever Pitch* (1959) suggest that the cultural influence of America in Vietnam and Ghana cannot be divorced from foreign policy and economic trade. Whilst addressing the corresponding trajectories of Britain's diminishing world role and the rise of American power, these texts do not simply articulate a resignation to national decline, or envy at American dominance during the early Cold War period. Instead they launch a critique of the durability of imperialism *alongside* decolonization based on what Timothy Brennan has outlined as 'a comprehensive interconnected economic system, as well as an accompanying cultural penetration and unification rather than simply a conquest as in the ancient empires' (2004, p. 135). Where Burgess and Enright commit to a belief in the ability of the British to assist in establishing a common culture able to protect against 'Americanization' and unite a fragmented nation, both Greene and Enright allude to Britain's complicity as a subordinated partner of American power.

An examination of how Burgess, Enright, Greene, and Caute portrayed the rise of America in Europe's former colonies intervenes in postcolonial debates regarding the restructuring of imperial blocs along-

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side formal decolonization. Each text depicts freedom from European domination as the freedom to be dominated by America. Following the influence of anti-colonial activists, such as the pro-Algerian revolutionary and former pupil of Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, and the Ghanaian leader Kwame Nkrumah, postcolonial analysis of what is termed 'neo-colonialism' has a tendency to concentrate on economic power.[1] In this chapter, I draw on the work of the Frankfurt School on the 'culture industry' as a means of examining the cultural dimension of American imperialism.[2]

A preoccupation with the influence of American mass culture on conceptions of Britishness in novels of decolonization situates the response of colonial servant writers within the 'culture debates' occurring in late-1950s Britain in the work of Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams. Jed Esty has argued for a clear distinction between mid-century literary figures, who took 'imperial decline to imply national decline' (2004, p. 215), and Hoggart and Williams, who 'translated the end of empire into a resurgent concept of national culture' (p. 2). Countering this view, I maintain that both Burgess and Enright draw on the same English critical heritage as Hoggart and Williams. Like Burgess, Enright had experience of colonial life by working as a teacher: between 1947 and 1950, he worked at what is now Alexandria University in Egypt.[3] Burgess's and Enright's experiences of teaching in the colonies influence a commitment in their novels to the possibility of education to assist in the move towards independence. In their novels, both writers can be orientated within the tradition of Matthew Arnold and F. R. Leavis as they promote a conception of disinterested critical evaluation able to oppose American commercialism and assist in the revitalization of Britain's world role.[4]

By contrast, *The Quiet American* and *At Fever Pitch* critique the emergence of a new, indirect form of Western imperialism occurring during decolonization but acknowledge Britain's complicity as a colonial nation that has enabled the rise of a new post-war hegemony. Whilst analysing the difference in approach between these novels, this study foregrounds an awareness of decolonization as involving a restructuring of imperial relations. These texts offer a global perspective largely absent from the late-1950s 'culture debates' of Hoggart and Williams and dramatize the impact of American geopolitical dominance upon British identity.

'An Empire Without Colonies': Anti-colonialism and the Rise of America

The global viewpoint offered by *The Malayan Trilogy* and *The Quiet American*, as well as *Academic Year* and *At Fever Pitch*, opens up a space in which to examine decolonization as a dynamic and unfinished process. Analysis of how this development is depicted in the literature of colonial servants requires a distinction between 'colonialism' and 'imperialism'. The two terms are often used either interchangeably or to map a transition from one era to the other. Brennan, for example, maintains that 'colonialism' denotes an 'unsystematic' form of Western dominance and can be defined as 'the period before imperialism' (2004, p. 136). This definition sees imperialism as 'grow[ing] out of colonialism, both by extending its logic but also by responding more subtly to the demands for political independence launched by freedom movements within the colonies during the twentieth century' (p. 136). Although Brennan fruitfully points to the restructuring of imperial blocs alongside formal independence, his distinction between the two divides them too clearly in terms of a linear chronology. More recently, Neil Lazarus has argued for an understanding of late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century American imperialism as part of 'the long and as yet unbroken history […] of capitalist imperialism' (2011, p. 15). Following Lazarus, in this chapter I adopt the term 'colonialism' to refer to the period of British colonial expansion predicated principally on an interconnected military and economic domination that required conquest.[5] Although formal colonialism through conquest and settlement may have ended in many countries during the immediate postwar decades, the economic, political, and cultural structures it established allowed imperialism to continue.

British literary responses to the durability of imperialist relations have been widely overlooked in postcolonial criticism. Peter Childs and Patrick Williams have outlined, for example, how,

> in the period after decolonization, it rapidly became apparent (to the newly-independent nations, at least) that although colonial armies and bureaucracies might have withdrawn, Western powers were still intent on maintaining maximum indirect control over erstwhile colonies, via political, cultural and above all economic channels, a phenomenon which became known as neo-colonialism. (1997, p. 5)

An awareness of the durability of imperialism *at the moment of decolonization* is evident in the work of prominent anti-colonial activists, such as Fanon in Algeria and Nkrumah in Ghana, who offer significant analyses of the economic basis of restructured imperial relations in nations achieving formal independence.[6]

Credited with coining the term 'neo-colonialism', Nkrumah insists that 'the essence of neo-colonialism is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside' (1965, p. ix). Where Fanon argues, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, (1965), that the central pitfall of achieving true independence from imperial rule will be the rise to power of a self-interested 'national bourgeoisie', who will do no more than 'take on the role of manager for Western enterprise' (1965, p. 123), Nkrumah concentrates on America's consolidation of global power since the Second World War. As he contends:

> Foremost among the neo-colonialists is the United States, which has long exercised its power in Latin America. Fumblingly at first she turned towards Europe, and then with more certainty after world war two [sic] when most countries of that continent were indebted to her. Since then, with methodical thoroughness and touching attention to detail, the Pentagon set about consolidating its ascendancy, evidence of which can be seen all around the world. (1965, p. 239)

As the prefix 'neo' in 'neo-colonialism' suggests, for Nkrumah this consolidation of American dominance could be distinguished from earlier, European forms. Acknowledging this distinction, Robert J. C. Young notes that, 'given its primacy in international finance capital, and therefore effective global political autonomy, Nkrumah argued that neo-colonialism represented the American stage of colonialism; that is an empire without colonies' (2001, p. 46). Nkrumah concludes his analysis optimistically, maintaining that 'neo-colonialism is *not* a sign of imperialism's strength but rather of its last hideous gasp', believing that 'neo-colonialism *can* and *will* be defeated' (1965, p. 253). It is a belief which is evident in the book's subtitle, 'The Last Stage of Imperialism', and one that has proven to be premature.[7]

Whilst recognizing the shift from direct colonial intervention to a new American-led form of imperialism, Nkrumah's analysis eschews a discussion

of the role of culture in the consolidation of 'neo-colonial' power structures and instead commits to the severing of economic dependence on the West. In the contemporaneous literary depictions of the Americanization of African and Asian colonies offered by British writers of decolonization, there is no such unitary commitment to 'pushing back' against Western economic intervention in favour of colonial self-determination. Yet, the novels of Burgess, Enright, Greene, and Caute open up an examination of the significance of popular culture in enabling the consolidation of an American 'empire without colonies' alongside formal decolonization. In *The Malayan Trilogy*, for instance, Burgess dramatizes the power of music and cinema to promote consumer capitalism and influence the speech, fashion, and attitudes of the citizens of Malaya. Concentrating on the way in which mass culture both informs and promotes America's self-image as a 'charmed' (*QA*, p. 202) nation, *The Quiet American* depicts Hollywood cinema as fuelling the naïve *idealism* of young men such as Alden Pyle to perform disastrous political acts.

Burgess and Greene's novels thus foreground the power of seemingly innocuous forms of popular culture to aid the continuation of Western imperialism at the moment of extensive decolonization. As a means of assessing this concern, I draw on the work of Frankfurt School theorists Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer and their critique of what is termed the 'culture industry'. Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944), and a number of Adorno's essays on the 'culture industry', examine the production of culture as having been mechanized, where 'any doubt about the social utility of the finished products [has been] removed' (Adorno and Horkheimer, 2010, p. 121). Analysis of the commodification of culture within a capitalist economic system draws on the Marxist theory of 'commodity fetishism' which, according to David Alderson, posits that '[t]he capitalist commodity may be real enough, but it is also an abstraction, since its *use value*—that quality for which we buy it in the first place—has been transformed into *exchange value*' (2004, p. 12). In the production of culture, writes Adorno, 'exchange value exerts its power in a special way' due to the fact that cultural goods appear 'to be exempted from the power of exchange' (2010, p. 38). One account of this can be seen in the production of music, which appears to establish an immediate relationship between the performer and the listener, thus retaining its use value. For Adorno, however, this is an illusion that cultural goods 'must preserve in a completely capitalist society' (p. 39) to

disguise the reality that the exchange value of cultural goods substitutes the use value through the commodification of products.

Adorno's work is not directly concerned with colonial societies and has been labelled by some as Eurocentric. In *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward W. Said criticizes Frankfurt School critical theory, maintaining that, 'despite its seminal insights into the relationships between domination, modern society, and the opportunities for redemption through art as critique, [it] is stunningly silent on racist theory, anti-imperialist resistance, oppositional practice in the empire' (1993, p. 336). Despite Adorno's silence on issues of Western imperialism, however, his insights can be productively applied to an examination of how British writers depict the shift from formal European colonialism to a new American-led imperialism, in which seemingly harmless mass cultural forms are key. This approach draws on the call by the postcolonial literary critic Robert Spencer for an 'Adornian postcolonial criticism', which is 'as concerned with the gratuitous longevity of capitalism and imperialism as it is inspired by the prospect of erecting a more just and egalitarian social order' (2010, p. 210). Adorno's emphasis on the subordination of culture to a global system of capitalist production offers a means of understanding the importance of mass culture in *The Malayan Trilogy*, *Academic Year*, *The Quiet American*, and *At Fever Pitch.* In Burgess's *Beds in the East*, for example, culture is viewed as having the potential to unite a fragmented Malayan society, a potential which is derailed by a devotion to 'feeding' money into a jukebox and mimicking the rebelliousness of Hollywood heroes. Similarly, a connection is drawn by Greene between America's intervention throughout the globe and the selfless chivalry of lone heroes depicted in Hollywood cinema.

The emphasis on mass culture as propagating imperialist ideals places the British novels under consideration within a longer-term concern that the rise of America represented a threat to Britain's global influence. As Genevieve Abravanel argues, American dominance carried with it 'a new style of world power; one predicated more obviously on global commercialism and standardization than on occupation and colonial rule' (2012, p. 7). In the following sections I will examine how the opposition of British novelists to Americanization can be framed by the interwar concerns of Leavis and by the 'culture debates' emerging in 1950s Britain through the work of 'Left Leavisites' Hoggart and Williams. Colonial servants and Army personnel provide a necessary global perspective largely missing from the sociological studies of Hoggart and Williams, which

focus on localized conceptions of culture in England. Rather than being solely preoccupied with British imperial decline, these texts dramatize the rise of America as a more indirect form of imperial power, not restricted by the need for a military presence. Burgess and Enright set up a problematic opposition between a Leavisite investment in Britain's cultural heritage, on the one hand, and the levelling down of American mass culture on the other. By contrast, Greene and Caute address the reliance of American political and economic power upon the production and consumption of mass culture, but acknowledge a level of complicity between British and American trade interests.

America's 'Entertainment Empire': Americanization and Britain's Culture Debates

The concern articulated in British literature of decolonization with Americanization as a process of cultural domination, achieved throughout the globe without the need for formal conquest, was not new. Instead, there exist affinities across a range of early to mid-century texts by British writers and intellectuals dealing with the relationship between the rise of American global dominance, the success of consumer capitalism, and the perceived erosion of a British national identity. Although the 1950s novels of Burgess, Greene, Enright, and Caute were produced at a moment of heightened attention to the dominance of America due to the Cold War and the Suez crisis, they extend a preoccupation with Americanization evident in the work of a number of late-modernist and Cambridge School *Scrutiny* writers.

British literature of decolonization depicts the consolidation of a new era of Western imperialism which was already beginning to be noticed in the 1920s and 1930s. Prior to the First World War, America's global influence was viewed as a possible expansion of European, or more specifically Anglo-Saxon, imperial power. An articulation of this view can be found in Rudyard Kipling's poem *The White Man's Burden* (1899), in which the speaker implores the United States to 'Take up the White Man's burden/ Have done with childish days' (1903, p. 81). The poem, as Judith Plotz maintains, expresses Kipling's call for 'Anglo-Saxon solidarity between the great English speaking nations' (2011, p. 37). Yet by the interwar period, and with the growing popularity of Hollywood cinema and jazz, the burgeoning influence of America was seen not as 'childish' but as a threat to British imperial dominance.

Central to British literary concerns with American global power was not necessarily America's economic influence—which was a vital component in the post-war period of American intervention in the Suez crisis—but cultural influence. As Abravanel comments, 'Unlike the British Empire, which had historically expanded through occupation, the American Entertainment Empire seemed capable of spreading its influence far beyond its territorial borders and encroaching on Britain and its colonies' (2012, p. 8) through mass media. Britain and America's shared language made the colonies 'particularly vulnerable markets for American music and film', giving rise to anxieties that Britain might 'lose its colonizing hold on English itself' (p. 15). Within the context of shifting cultural dominance from Europe to America, modernist experimentation with the literary form and the preoccupation with aesthetic autonomy in art can be read as expressing more than a concern with the popularity of 'lowbrow' culture. In a much broader sense, formal experimentation and aesthetic autonomy can be seen as central to Britain's global concerns regarding the future of cultural production and consumption within an increasingly Americanized and industrialized world.[8]

Alongside the desire of modernist writers, particularly in Britain, to articulate their differences to the growing proliferation of mass culture, debates about Americanization and the blurring of cultural divides were gaining prominence at the level of pedagogy. A key figure here is Leavis who, Abravanel argues, 'aimed to help his students connect through language to their English heritage in part to protect them from the influences of American culture' (p. 20). Michael Bell notes that for Leavis, 'Works of culture either enhance or corrupt the quality of life' (1988, p. 18). The response to American mass culture articulated by Leavis and the *Scrutiny* group thus calls for the need for an educated 'minority' schooled in the 'great tradition' and able to raise the standards of the society as a whole in opposition to the debasements of popular fiction and Hollywood cinema.[9] As Leavis argues in his 1930 pamphlet *Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture*, 'Upon this minority depends our power of profiting by the finest human experience of the past; they keep alive the subtlest and most perishable parts of tradition. Upon them depend the implicit standards that order the finer living of an age' (1969, p. 5). Leavis's emphasis on a minority points to his belief in the importance of pedagogy and the need for the study of English literature to be a central aspect of university teaching.

The concentration in Leavis's work on the significance of an educated minority keeping the 'finest human experience' alive expands upon a view espoused by the nineteenth-century critic Matthew Arnold. In his influential work *Culture and Anarchy* (1867–1869) Arnold maintained that 'culture' represents the 'study of perfection' (2002, p. 59), a pursuit which 'is not possible while the individual remains isolated. The individual is required, under pain of being stunted and enfeebled in his own development if he disobeys, to carry others along with him in his march towards perfection' (p. 62). Arnold's essay establishes an important role for culture as promoting a disinterested and reasoned view of society. Culture is able to transcend individual interests and a 'blind faith in machinery', looking instead 'to the end for which machinery is valuable' (p. 84). Ultimately, for Arnold, unity between the nation's different classes could not be maintained by the machinery of the state and the manipulation of the 'masses', but through a disinterested appreciation of culture.[10] Where Arnold problematically avoids a definition of what 'culture' entails, for Leavis the value of culture was embodied by prominent literary works of the 'great tradition'.

Leavis, as Abravanel asserts, 'was prophetic in his anticipation of English reactions to American culture that would become full-blown by the Cold War' (2012, p. 128). Indeed, the broader cultural analyses of the 'left Leavisite' writers Hoggart and Williams, which were taking shape in late-1950s Britain, took on and modified this critical tradition, turning culture itself into the subject of study. In discussing the approach of his seminal work *The Uses of Literacy* (1957), Hoggart acknowledges a debt to Leavis, stating:

> What I was trying to do was to say that the methods of literary criticism, very often Leavisite methods, close analysis, listening to a text, feeling a text and its texture, that they were translatable into the study of popular culture; and not just the words but the images too. (Corner, 1991, pp. 145–146)[11]

In *Culture and Society, 1790–1950* (1958), Williams states, 'I agree with Leavis […] that a society is poor indeed if it has nothing to live by but its own immediate and contemporary experience', but deviates in his belief that 'the ways in which we can draw on other experience are more various than literature alone' (1971, p. 248). The concern of Hoggart and Williams with the value of culture in an age of increasingly mass-produced cultural products, as well as the power that such products have over the

subjectivity of individuals, situate them in the English critical tradition of Arnold and Leavis. Whilst being influenced by an Arnoldian-Leavisite commitment to the societal importance of culture, however, it is a concentration on an elite 'minority' which is rejected by the central figures of Britain's 'culture debates' during the late-1950s.

In *The Uses of Literacy*, Hoggart contends that the development of a literate working class has supported the prevalence of a 'lowbrow' commercial culture which was destroying an urban 'popular' culture (popular in the sense that it is created 'by the people'). As he states:

> This regular, increasing and almost entirely unvaried diet of sensation without commitment is surely likely to help render its consumers less capable of responding openly and responsibly to life, is likely to induce an underlying sense of purposelessness in existence outside the limited range of a few immediate appetites. Souls which may have had little opportunity to open will be hard-gripped, turned in on themselves, looking out "with odd dark eyes like windows" upon a world which is largely a phantasmagoria of passing shows and vicarious stimulations. (1971, p. 246)

Although Hoggart, as Stefan Collini holds, 'shares some of Leavis's deep belief in the power of literature' to combat 'the morally damaging effects of a commercially driven "mass" culture' (1999, p. 226), *The Uses of Literacy* calls for what Hoggart terms the 'earnest minority' 'who seek culture and intellectual background […] to reassess their position' (1971, p. 322). Hoggart's is a warning to the 'minority' 'to realise that the ideas for which their predecessors worked are in danger of being lost' and '[i]f the active minority continue to allow themselves too exclusively to think of immediate political and economic objectives, the pass will be sold, culturally, behind their backs' (p. 323). It is a call ultimately for the educated minority to evolve and, rather than distance themselves from 'lowbrow' culture in favour of a Leavisite 'great tradition', to engage with it if the 'material conditions' (p. 323) of the working class are to be improved.

In his 1958 essay 'Culture is Ordinary', Williams dismisses Hoggart's central premise in *The Uses of Literacy* that the Education Act of 1870 'produced, as its children grew up, a cheap and nasty press' as a 'myth' (1989, p. 11). He argues instead that

> there is more, much more bad culture about; it is easier now to distribute it and there is more leisure to receive it. But test this in any field you like and see if this has been accompanied by a shrinking consumption of things we

> can all agree on to be good. The editions of good literature are much larger than they were; the listeners to good music are much more numerous than they were; the number of people who look at good visual art is larger than it has ever been. (p. 13)

Here, Williams seeks to reject an elitist view of culture into which the majority must be educated, as is signalled by the repetition of the phrase, 'culture is ordinary'. Attempting to move beyond what he saw as Leavis's mythologized ideal of an 'old England' which excludes 'the penury, the petty tyranny, the disease and mortality' (1971, p. 253), Williams does not offer a complete denunciation of modernity, maintaining that, 'any account of our culture which explicitly or implicitly denies the value of an industrial society is really irrelevant' (1989, p. 10).

Although the Arnoldian-Leavisite tradition briefly outlined here is most commonly associated with the cultural analyses of Hoggart and Williams from the late-1950s and beyond, it is also articulated by a number of writers from Britain and its colonial territories. Peter J. Kalliney's recent work, *Commonwealth of Letters* (2013), has examined the surprising entanglements between Leavis's thought and the literature of Kamau Brathwaite and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. Here Kalliney argues against the common conception of Leavisian close reading as inherently antithetical to postcolonial aesthetics and signalling 'political complicity with the established order' (2013, p. 75). Drawing on the unpublished correspondence of Brathwaite and Ngũgĩ, it is argued that while both writers 'dispute the relevance of the great tradition' and 'do not endorse the Leavisite position wholesale', they nevertheless draw on their encounters with Leavis's work whilst studying at the University of Cambridge to articulate a commitment to 'an authentic, oppositional folk culture' that could be 'constituted in Barbados or Kenya' (p. 80). At the same time, both Burgess and Enright who experienced colonial life as English teachers, seek to adopt and adapt a Leavisite faith in the unifying capabilities of a cultural tradition. Their investment in a 'common culture', able to protect against the levelling down of American consumerism, is not without its problems, especially due to their presence in Malaya and Egypt as representatives of the Empire. Yet, it must also be regarded as part of a broader, internationalist revaluation of the Arnoldian-Leavisite tradition at mid-century.

Significantly, as with Brathwaite and Ngũgĩ, the work of Leavis and the *Scrutiny* group informed both Burgess's and Enright's conception of culture at an early stage. Discussing his time as an undergraduate at the

University of Manchester in the 1930s, Burgess attests to having been formed in the approach to literature promoted by one of his seminar tutors L. C. Knights, a prominent Leavis collaborator and one of the editors of *Scrutiny*. Christopher Hilliard posits that Knights had adopted the reading methods of Leavis at 'a time when Leavis's position was still shaky and when Leavis's broadsides and *Fiction and the Reading Public* were exciting opposition elsewhere in Cambridge' (2012, p. 93). It was through Knights that Burgess was able to access the new developments in literary criticism still being contested, studying writers such as James Joyce and D. H. Lawrence and benefitting from what he terms the 'Leavisian revaluation and the success of I. A. Richards's practical criticism' (2002a, p. 173).[12]

Burgess's commitment in *The Malayan Trilogy* to the elevating potential of art to create a common culture in Malaya evinces the influence of this Arnoldian-Leavisite critical heritage. In *They Wrote in English*, Burgess professes to being a 'convert' of Matthew Arnold, stating that Arnold 'punched away at the deficiencies of British politics, culture and social life' and 'contrived memorable definitions *which still apply*: "The great aim of culture is the aim of setting ourselves to ascertain what perfection is and to make it prevail" and "The men of culture are the true apostles of equality"' (1979, p. 133, emphasis added). Adopting Arnold's religious rhetoric Burgess maintains that he 'preached, as prophets usually do, to the already converted. But he gave the converted a systematic vocabulary and the benefit of great clarity of vision' (p. 134). It is a statement which suggests that Burgess saw himself in the mould of one of Arnold's 'men of culture' and, through his fiction and his teaching roles throughout his career, it was his responsibility to ensure that Arnold's vision be passed on.[13]

Burgess adopts the energies of the critical tradition which influenced Hoggart and Williams to comment instead on the shift in imperial power relations from British colonialism to the commercialism of American dominance. This stance is articulated most explicitly in the epilogue to the collection of essays *Urgent Copy: Literary Studies* (1968d), where he commits to the possibility of what he calls 'gentle colonialism' to achieve 'the resolution of cultural, religious, [and] racial conflict' (1968d, p. 270) throughout the globe. Burgess fails to adequately define the term 'gentle colonialism' but in support he cites his time spent in Gibraltar where architectural styles, such as 'Catholic baroque, the onion domes and the barley-sugar columns of the Moors' mixed with the soft and fictile humanism of

the British' and 'contrived a harmony' (pp. 268–269). In *The Malayan Trilogy*, however, it is education (signified by the History teacher Crabbe) which offers the potential for harmony in a fragmented Malaya. As we saw in Chap. 2, Burgess problematically detaches the lasting impact of British intervention from Malaya's state of emergency, negating the role that Britain's colonial policy and trade interests played in exacerbating the nation's cultural, racial, and religious conflict.

'A Portent and a God': The Commodification of Culture in *The Malayan Trilogy*

In *The Malayan Trilogy*, Americans are notable by their absence. Apart from the presence of a small group of anthropologists, who appear briefly in the final book *Beds in the East*, the Americanization of Malaya is achieved through the growing popularity of American music and cinema. Throughout the trilogy, American influence becomes more and more prominent, moving from being on the horizon but resisted (in *Time for a Tiger*) through to being romanticized by a Malayan elite (in *Enemy in the Blanket*) and finally appropriated by the first generation of Malays living under independence, who copy the fashions seen in Hollywood films and adopt slang terms associated with jazz music (in *Beds in the East*). Ultimately, the Americanization of Malaya is portrayed as promoting consumerism over the development of a communal, national culture.

The emerging influence of America is presented as being unavoidable in *Time for a Tiger* when the narrator states that the appointment of an American headmaster at Crabbe's school 'would be a complete betrayal of the ideals on which the Mansor School was based' and would symbolize 'surrender to a culture which, however inevitable its global spread, must for as long as possible meet a show of resistance' (*TT*, p. 30). Significantly, Burgess's own experience of teaching in Malaya involved an acceptance of this inevitability, as he concedes, 'We all had to yield to American culture, and my lessons would sometimes consist of a close examination of an item in *Time* magazine, briskly dealing with the new phenomenon of Elvis Presley or the Suez crisis as seen from an American angle' (2002a, p. 406). It is a statement that reveals Burgess's continued awareness throughout his career that the popularity of American pop culture, and a specifically American perspective on world events, was bound up with Britain's imperial decline. The specific reference to Suez situates this awareness as a consequence of the loss of British imperial dominance. As

the historian Dominic Sandbrook notes, 'It was American economic pressure, not military defeat, that stopped the operation [to regain control of the Suez canal] in its tracks' (2011, p. 22). America's intervention in the crisis 'demonstrated [the decline of British colonialism], powerfully and incontrovertibly, to the entire world' (p. 27). Where historical accounts of the Suez crisis, such as Sandbrook's, concentrate on the significant political and economic dimensions, in *The Malayan Trilogy* Burgess articulates disquiet at a global dependence on American cultural forms.

In *Enemy in the Blanket*, American influence moves from the colonial education system and becomes accepted by the elite, as is evinced in the Abang's desire to move West with 'visions of new kinds of power, perhaps being lifted […] to heights of Occidental myth through marriage with Hollywood film-stars' (*EB*, p. 106). Pointedly, American culture for the Abang represents a type of glamorous lifestyle that he has witnessed in cinematic representation. As such, he believes that living in the West would allow him to achieve new kinds of success and power not in the world of politics but by living a particular *lifestyle*. It is an attitude that can be compared to Adorno and Horkheimer's critique of mass culture whereby 'the promise, which is actually all the spectacle consists of, is illusory: all it actually confirms is that the real point will never be reached, that the diner must be satisfied with the menu' (2010, p. 139). The Abang is convinced by his own view of Western life, and his belief that he will marry a Hollywood film star; yet in the use of the word 'myth' the narration counters the Abang's ambitions with the suggestion that they are in fact based in fantasy.

In the final book of the trilogy, *Beds in the East*, the influence of American culture has reached all aspects of Malay society and is depicted as promoting a culture of consumer capitalism where money and mass appeal are more important than individual creative expression or a national, communal culture. The contested space in *Beds in the East* where 'serious art' and individual creativity is confronted by mass culture and consumerism is Robert Loo's father's shop, where a new jukebox prevents Robert from completing a violin concerto. On the one hand, Robert, one of Crabbe's young Chinese students, signifies the potential for a future Malaya to become united by a common culture, as is suggested by Crabbe's hope that Robert will become 'the first real composer that Malaya's produced' (*BE*, p. 29). On the other hand, the jukebox represents the disruption to this possible future by the influence of American popular culture which only functions to generate profit for Robert's father. Significantly, Crabbe

adopts the role of Robert's tutor in orchestration, a role that points to the trilogy's investment in British intervention as aiding the transition from colonialism to the formation of a newly-realised, independent Malayan national identity.[14]

The central scene that stages the conflict between a genuine communal culture and a commercial American culture depicts the arrival of the jukebox to Robert's father's shop and the first playing of a piece of jazz music. Prior to its arrival, Robert is shown to be working in his father's shop whilst attempting to write a violin concerto in deep concentration:

> Outside were all the colours of the East and all the languages. But Robert Loo gazed on a world more real and shot with sounds and colours more intense than any the shop or the street could allow. Two flutes in counterpoint, the sudden citrous [*sic*] tang of the oboe—the auditory images were so vivid, the thrill of creating them so deliriously pungent, that the outside world was burned up. (*BE*, p. 60)[15]

Robert's vision of a violin soloist, 'terrifyingly vivid, as in a dream of fever' (p. 60), is abruptly interrupted when his father enters the shop with the portentous statement: 'It comes now' (p. 61). Subsequently, the jukebox is received as though it were an ancient and divine artefact. On describing its delivery the narrator does not reveal what it is, only that when opening the box 'a wrenching and screaming of twisted nails fanfared the discovery of the treasure beneath. […] Soon it stood naked and shining in sunlight, stripped of its crude cerements, a portent and a god. "Ah," breathed the crowd' (p. 62). The use of language and imagery that deifies the jukebox enacts the supplanting of any kind of transcendental or spiritual comradeship traditionally offered by either religion or musical performance by the cultural *commodity*. It is not the actual music that inspires the awed response of the locals, but the romanticized product associated with the lure of America.

The new jukebox—the medium of popular music and embodiment of a culture which values style over substance—is not only given godlike status in the eyes of the locals but is christened with the name of the Greek god of music and poetry: 'The workers stood back to survey with awe the glass and metal music-god, whose name indeed, sprawled on its belly in flowing chrome, was APOLLO' (pp. 62–63). Burgess's ironic choice of name juxtaposes the uplifting possibilities of the musical form alongside

its trivialization and commodification. The religious imagery develops further in the narrator's description of the first use of the machine:

> The god had begun to breathe, to glower with a glowing blue eye. This was the moment. Loo Kam Fatt, like a priest with a host, reverently put into the creature's tiny mouth a ten-cent piece. […] This was ceremony. This was religion. (pp. 62–63)[16]

Following the reverent unveiling of the jukebox 'god', the shop is filled with the sound of jazz music that prevents Robert from working anymore on his concerto: 'Drums and red-hot brass, a wedge of saxophones burst from the god. […] The solo violinist waited, her bow at the ready, smiling patiently but clearly puzzled at the delay' (p. 63). At the heart of Burgess's portrayal of the Americanization of Malaya, then, is the issue of distraction and the mechanization of cultural production; the completion of Robert's composition is left in stasis while the music from the jukebox contrasts with his imagined future performer awaiting instruction.

The deification of the jukebox, and the reference to it 'eating' money, points to Burgess's concern beyond a purely aesthetic judgement of the popularity of 'lowbrow' culture. Instead, this scene foregrounds the preoccupation in the trilogy with the value of any form of cultural production which is commodified. In place of a national culture, which Burgess believes has the ability to unify post-independence Malaya, Robert's father is only concerned with bringing people together to spend money. Indeed, when he joyously states, 'People here all the time. Come to hear music. Music very good thing', the narrative voice counters his enthusiasm for the communal possibilities of music with the ironic statement: 'Ten-cent pieces shone everywhere in eager waiting fingers' (p. 63). This critique of popular culture as promoting false unity through consumerism is comparable with that of Adorno. In his essay on jazz music, Adorno reads jazz as an example of 'perennial fashion'—it is a musical form masquerading as rebellion that in fact promotes conformity:

> [E]verything unruly in it was from the very beginning integrated into a strict scheme, [so that] its rebellious gestures are accompanied by the tendency to blind obeisance. […] This propensity accelerates the standardization, commercialization and rigidification of the medium. (1967, p. 122).

In the portrayal of the locals' reverent reception of the jukebox, and the jazz music it plays, *The Malayan Trilogy* offers a critique not of popular

culture as merely aesthetically inferior to Robert's orchestral composition, but as foreclosing a critical awareness of the new cultural imperialism replacing Britain in Malaya.

The trilogy extends this evaluation of pop culture as promoting the 'gestures' of rebellion whilst disguising obeisance to a new form of imperialism in the characterization of the teenager Syed Hassan and his gang of friends. The following section will examine how the appropriation of American speech and fashion by Hassan's gang further emphasizes the way in which conformity to a system of global capitalism masquerades as defiance. In depicting this appropriation, the trilogy strives to reveal the manner in which mass cultural forms assist in the derailing of Malaya's nationalist struggle for independence, as the country's young reject the active, politicized rebellion of their elders in favour of the American-endorsed and superficial markers of an apolitical rebelliousness.

The text places the unconscious appropriation of American slang at the fore, signalling the way in which the young embody a shift in cultural dominance without being fully aware of it. It is thus necessary to first address how *Beds in the East* presents language as being able to capture the influence of American culture on individual expression. It will then be possible to examine the text's depiction of the gang's outward, and much more self-conscious, expression of their adopted identity through their choice of fashion.

'The Voice of Prophecy': The Language and Fashion of Americanization in *The Malayan Trilogy*

Beds in the East begins with the character of Syed Omar waking in the morning to hear his eldest son, Syed Hassan, talking in his sleep: 'Hassan called from his unconscious, in a loud adolescent voice: "Dig that cat." Syed Omar stared, wondering what this could mean, frightened, as hearing the voice of prophecy' (*BE*, p. 3). Later, Omar confronts his son's gang and declares, 'You're not the men your fathers were, nor never will be. All this Coca-Cola and jazzing about. Where are the principles your fathers fought for?' (p. 73). This conflict between the two generations establishes a gap between the nationalist commitment to a home-grown culture voiced by those who fought for independence and Malaya's children who are uninterested in forging a new Malayan society. Hassan's unconscious exclamation—'Dig that cat'—

suggests that a new Malaya, that can claim to be truly independent of the West, is already being prevented from flourishing as the 'beds in the East' have been infiltrated by America without the East fully realizing it: Hassan is asleep and blissfully unaware of the extent to which he has appropriated the vocabulary of an American jazz subculture. As with Burgess's assessment of pop music, this concern with language is not simply a value judgement regarding American slang. Instead, language for Burgess carries with it a Leavisite connection to a particular tradition and moral outlook that American consumer capitalism was supplanting.

The image of Hassan using American slang in his sleep at the beginning of *Beds in the East* prefigures the later depiction of him and his friends speaking 'vivid back-street Malay […] with odd splashes of film American to raise their fantasies to a more heroic level' (p. 39). Whilst strutting down the street with a flip-knife drawn, the boys' '[m]enacing, caressing tones' are accompanied by 'singing in authentic American' (p. 40). The references throughout the text to American slang point to the significance of language for Burgess as encapsulating a disconnection with the traditional values offered by the past due to the popularity of 'mass culture'. In an essay entitled 'Teenspeech', Burgess laments this development, stating that the 'vocabulary [of the young] is not fed by the past, which has no meaning for them; traditional graces of communication—the exact word, the well-formed phrase—are despised as a property of the old' (1986, p. 180).[17] Viewing this shift as being tied up with the 'rejection of literature' (p. 180), Burgess ultimately commits to an Eliotic belief in the power of literature to 'purify the language of the tribe' (Eliot, 2004, p. 194) and imbue the national language with traditional values. Through the speech of his young Malay characters, Burgess conveys how the cultural and the political are inseparable: both inform the construction of language and individual expression.

The way in which Syed Omar reads a prophetic truth in his son's sleep-talk not only dramatizes the success of America's influence, regarded as 'inevitable' in *Time for a Tiger*, but also expresses a critique of the perceived inherent emptiness of that culture and what Adorno and Horkheimer refer to as 'the violence done to words' (2010, p. 166). According to Adorno and Horkheimer, the repetition of slogans and brand names through the techniques of advertising links the promotional methods of the 'culture industry' with the methods used in totalitarian propaganda campaigns. In both cases,

> innumerable people use words and expressions which they have either ceased to understand or employ only because they trigger off conditioned reflexes; in this sense words are trade-marks which are finally all the more firmly linked to the things they denote, the less their linguistic sense is grasped. (p. 166)

For Adorno and Horkheimer, slogans and brand names are devoid of any inherent meaning but, in a broader sense, signify the particular way in which language is used by the producers of the 'culture industry' and appropriated by consumers. Similarly, Hassan's jazz slang lacks any linguistic sense when it is detached from the subculture that surrounds jazz music, hence Syed Omar's inability to understand his son's exclamation 'dig that cat'. Through Syed Omar's response, Burgess highlights the inherent incomprehensibility of jazz slang alongside its ability to signify a wider cultural trend. For Omar, the phrase 'dig that cat' is both poignant and meaningless in equal measure.

As well as concentrating on the way in which language is able to capture broader shifts in politics and culture, *The Malayan Trilogy* depicts the seemingly innocuous appropriation of fashion as playing a similar role. Where Robert Loo seeks to learn the art of musical composition, many of his contemporaries style their hair in Teddy Boy fashion, identifying them 'as one tight cell of an international movement' (*BE*, p. 38). They also invest in the Teddy Boy 'uniform' of 'drainpipe trousers, the serge jacket with the velvet collar, the string tie', regarded by the boys as 'romantic garments, the armour of a new chivalry' and worn as a means of showing 'a greater solidarity with their brothers of the West' (p. 38). The narrative presents this form of appropriation and sense of 'solidarity' as absurd, however, due to the statement that the boys had to 'sweat and stifle' in the tropical heat. Although they had 'bought these cheap from a hard-up private of the Special Air Service' (p. 38), moreover, the gang are forced to take turns wearing the outfit because they could only afford one set.

The de-politicization of Malaya's young in *The Malayan Trilogy* dramatizes a critical view of American popular which is similar to that provided by Hoggart's depiction of English suburban 'juke-box boys' in *The Uses of Literacy*.[18] The 'juke-box boys' referred to by Hoggart are young men aged between 15 and 20 'who spend their evening listening in harshly-lighted milk-bars to the "nickelodeons"' (1971, p. 247) and who wear 'drape-suits, picture ties, and an American slouch' (p. 248). It is American popular culture which forms a key characteristic of Hoggart's depiction of

a typical suburban milk bar scene: of the records played on the jukeboxes, 'almost all are American' and '[m]any of the customers—their clothes, their hair-styles, their facial expressions all indicate—are living to a large extent in a myth-world compounded of a few simple elements which they take to be those of American life' (p. 248). For Hoggart, this appropriation of American fashion, which impacts on the very physicality of the young men, as is evident in their 'American slouch' and 'facial expressions', does not represent a harmless cultural development. Rather, it points to the degeneration of a sense of community: the 'juke-box boys' have 'no belief' and 'little sense of responsibilities, to themselves or others' (p. 249). Where Hoggart's analysis is concerned only with suburban England, *The Malayan Trilogy* presents the adoption of American culture as impacting upon Malayan nationalism. The rebellious gestures of Hassan and his friends are devoid of any actual purpose, unlike the political activism of their fathers.

The novel parodies the romanticized heroics of Hollywood cinema when the gang, convinced by their own heroism and rebelliousness, decide to raid Dr. Sundaralingam's house as a means of scaring Hassan's father's boss Maniam. On reaching the house, however, their confidence, borne out of emulating American films, begins to wane and when Hamzah asks, 'But what are we going to *do*?' the reader is informed that, 'nobody answered, for nobody really knew. Each carried in his mind a confused image of violence' (*BE*, p. 90). It is a scene which exposes the gang's attitudes as a form of play-acting: they are able to adopt the language and styles gleaned from popular American films of the fifties such as *The Wild One* (1953) and *Rebel without a Cause* (1955), but fail to translate it into action. Pointedly, where *The Malayan Trilogy* depicts juvenile delinquency as inherently absurd and comedic, the failed house raid anticipates the more graphic acts of violence performed by Alex and his 'droogs' in *A Clockwork Orange* (1962). The gang's 'confused image of violence' and 'desire to do some harmless harm' (p. 90) foreshadow Alex's more extreme thirst for 'lashings of the ultra-violent' (1972a, p. 19). The stark difference between the two treatments of juvenile delinquency suggests a more immediate concern following Burgess's return to England with the 'moral panic' surrounding youth violence and the proposed 'conditioning' of morality.[19]

Hassan and his gang are last seen in the trilogy joining forces with a group of British teddy boys (or 'Edwardian strutters'), 'soldiers of the Royal Barsets' who wore the 'identical uniform of drainpipe trousers and

serge waisted jacket and boot-lace tie' and were thus recognizable as being part of the same 'international movement' (*BE*, p. 226). The group are quickly joined by 'a Tamil youth in Edwardian costume' and two Chinese boys, one of whom becomes the gang's leader. It is a transition about which the British are 'good-humoured' due to the fact that 'the days of British rule were over' (p. 227–228). This new inter-racial group, comprised of Malay, Chinese, Indian, and British citizens, represents 'a solidarity that was to prove more fruitful in promoting inter-racial harmony than any of Crabbe's vague dreams' (p. 227). Yet, at the same time, the novel suggests a level of scepticism that such harmony is not founded on a coherent and stable communal culture, but on a form of 'perennial' fashion characterized by its transience.

The critique of consumerism in *The Malayan Trilogy* is more forcefully articulated in Burgess's later career, where he registers his sense of disappointment at the extent to which consumerism and 'low' culture have thrived. Recounting his experience of returning to Malaysia in 1980 for an episode of the BBC documentary series *Writers and Places*, which he titles 'A Kind of Failure', Burgess states: 'I had tried to bring Western culture to Malaysia, but technology, which is not culture, had laid the way open only to the grossest consumerism' (2002b, p. 363).[20] Here, Burgess establishes a conflict between, on the one hand, his Arnoldian notion of 'culture' as representing the height of human achievement and, on the other, technological advancements as opening the door to the commodification of cultural forms, a conflict that is played out in the jukebox scene in *Beds in the East*. It is a statement, however, that also encapsulates Burgess's problematic self-image as the importer of a particular brand of Western 'civilization' to the colonies, albeit one that values the communal possibilities of music and literature over commercialism.

The depiction of Americanization that Burgess offers involves British colonialism as having been usurped by the mass appeal and capitalist forces of American cultural imperialism. This vision occludes Britain's own exploitative commercial interests in a region rich in rubber and tin. Negating this aspect of British intervention, the growth of consumerism and the subsequent popularity of 'low' cultural forms in Malaya was, for Burgess, considered a personal defeat to his own attempt (mirroring that of Victor Crabbe's) to tutor the nation in what he saw as the best of Western culture.

The commitment to a supposedly disinterested form of education in newly independent colonies experiencing internal conflict is also evident in

Enright's 1955 novel *Academic Year*. Based on his experience of teaching in Egypt between 1947 and 1950, Enright's novel is set during the country's move to independence and, like *The Malayan Trilogy*, is informed by the influence of Leavis. This influence, however, was much more direct due to the fact that Enright was a student of Leavis as an undergraduate at Cambridge. As Enright's biographer William Walsh notes, 'Leavis impressed Enright as one of the very few teachers he had ever come across who actively and deeply wanted his pupils to follow what he was saying and who treated them as something approaching equals without a hint of condescension' (1974, p. 2). As with *The Malayan Trilogy*, the lasting impact of Leavis can be read in *Academic Year* in the novel's response to the devaluing of education by American commercial interests.

The influence of American commercialism in Egypt is especially evinced in the references to Coca-Cola, which becomes a signifier for Egypt's nationalist movement of Western imperialism. During a riot scene, amidst the looting and shooting of civilians by the military, the newly arrived teacher Packet is 'alarmed to hear diabolic yells of joy close at hand, the voice of the Maenads. But it was only some very young children, some of them carrying younger children on their backs, who were savagely smashing Coca-Cola bottles in a little riot of their own' (*AY*, p. 167). The inclusion of this brief image alongside other fleeting scenes of chaos, such as 'ragamuffins clubbing each other, a lake of splintered glass, an overturned car, a woman with a bleeding face huddled in the gutter' (p. 153), juxtaposes the violence surrounding the anti-British protests with the growing influence of American business interests. For the children smashing bottles, the Coca-Cola logo is a symbol of a monolithic Western dominance that cannot be distinguished from a direct British presence in the country.

The narrative establishes an opposition between the value of education (of the kind offered by the British) and the perceived baseness of a purely commercial American intervention in the statement that the 'more articulate [students] admitted […] that they would probably end up as teachers—except for a few prize students who had their eyes on much better paid jobs in Coca-Cola publicity' (p. 234). On the one hand, this could be read as suggesting envy at the post-war affluence of the United States in comparison to Britain's post-war 'era of austerity'. Yet, it is a form of economic prosperity which is coupled with the selling of a now ubiquitous global product with no inherent value, unlike the undervalued role of Enright's—and Burgess's—own 'trade': education. The contrast set up between education and consumer capitalism thus points to a concern with

the replacement of what is perceived of as the educational advantages of British colonialism by corporate wealth.

The investment in an Arnoldian-Leavisite conception of a common culture in the depictions of decolonization in both Malaya and Egypt is not without its problems. In his 1995 work *Colonial Desire*, Robert J. C. Young demonstrates how Arnold's distinction between Hellenism and Hebraism in *Culture and Anarchy* is grounded in nineteenth-century ideas about racial difference. At its heart is a distinction between the two 'master races', Aryan Indo-Europeans and the Semites, which was a 'racial dialectic that dominated the thinking of the last third of the nineteenth-century and the twentieth until 1945' (1995, p. 141). Bart Moore-Gilbert has noted that the

> quasi-Arnoldian belief [in *Academic Year*] that English literature can provide a substitute cultural tradition and set of consensual values for a dislocated modern Egypt […] reinforce[s] the claim to moral superiority of the former imperial power, a superiority reflected above all in the humane values of its literary tradition. (1997, p. 6)

For both Burgess and Enright, the profession of teaching could be identified with the project of exporting Western Enlightenment throughout the globe, a seemingly benign pursuit which is regarded as being disconnected from the violence and self-interested commercialism of British colonialism. The critique of American commercialism in these texts is thus problematized by the corresponding commitment to the possibilities of a seemingly selfless British presence throughout the colonies.

Novels by writers without experience of teaching English in the colonies, are much more critical of the continuation of a British colonial ideology in newly independent nations. Rather than setting up an opposition between the influence of British culture and American commercialism, Greene's *The Quiet American* and Caute's *At Fever Pitch* suggest a level of complicity between American and British business interests.[21]

'A Charmed Life': Hollywood and American Heroism in *The Quiet American*

Dramatizing a tension between British and American political ideologies during the First Indochina War in the former French colony of Vietnam, *The Quiet American* addresses the intertwined interests of both Britain

and the United States. Although Fowler's criticism of Pyle articulates a view of American intervention in Vietnam as more instantly disastrous than is evident in Burgess's novels, Fowler's assumed position as a neutral outsider is undermined by his own personal motives for assisting in Pyle's assassination. Pyle's idealism is not placed in direct *opposition* to a benign view of British colonialism; instead Fowler is continually shown to be compromised by his own self-interested ambitions. As Graham MacPhee argues:

> [W]hat makes Greene so interesting […] is that his writing through the 1940s and 1950s does not simply pursue the parallel spirals of national decline and individualized existential crisis, but reflexively locates them within the double predicament of national retrenchment and participation in US global hegemony. (2011, p. 27)

While Fowler chastises Pyle for not understanding that the Vietnamese 'don't want our white skins around telling them what they want' (*QA*, p. 101), Fowler's Vietnamese mistress Phuong is largely absent from such debates. Instead, her central role is that of a prize to be won following the battle between the 'old' and 'new' colonialists.

The Quiet American depicts the conflict between the 'old' European colonialists and America's intervention in Vietnam's war with France, which pre-empted America's own disastrous war between 1955 and 1975. Where Burgess and Enright are principally preoccupied with a form of American cultural imperialism achieved without the need for formal intervention, *The Quiet American* addresses the impact of what is seen as America's disastrous and naïve foreign policy throughout Europe's former colonies. There is, therefore, more of a focus on direct American intervention than in *The Malayan Trilogy* and *Academic Year*. Yet, *The Quiet American* comments on the relationship between culture and politics by depicting Hollywood cinema as propagating America's self-image as a 'charmed' (p. 202) nation. In its depiction of the shift from European to American imperialism, moreover, the novel questions Fowler's, and by extension Britain's, supposed detachment from American dominance, drawing parallels between America's role in Vietnam and Britain's history of colonialism.

The novel's narrator, the English journalist Thomas Fowler, stands in allegorically for Britain's, or more broadly Europe's, waning influence on the world stage. Acting as a spokesman for the 'old' colonialists, Fowler

is acutely aware of being at a transitional point in his life, in a kind of limbo between youth and old age. As he reflects, he had 'reached the age when sex isn't the problem so much as old age and death' (p. 113) and 'to lose [his Vietnamese mistress Phuong] will be, for me, the beginning of death' (pp. 84–85). Existing analyses of *The Quiet American* have concentrated on the political conflict that is staged in the personal battle between Fowler and the 'quiet American' Alden Pyle (as representatives of the 'old' and 'new' colonialists respectively) over the love of Phuong, who signifies Vietnam. According to Robert Pendleton, *The Quiet American* can be compared with Joseph Conrad's *Under Western Eyes* (1911) in that both Fowler and Razumov, the orphaned Russian protagonist of Conrad's novel, 'confuse personal and public motives, only to find that they cannot help becoming involved in their political surroundings' (1996, p. 119). Focusing on Fowler and Phuong's relationship, Charles Dodd White holds that 'Greene's real power comes from his ability to translate external political conflicts into internal character struggles' and that it is Fowler's affection for Phuong, as opposed to his fundamental disagreement with Pyle's idealism, which is central to the novel: 'Simply put, people choose their ideology based on whom they love' (2008, p. 33). In both Pendleton's and Dodd White's readings, Fowler is driven from his detached, journalistic position and feels compelled to intervene because of his love for Phuong. Fowler's self-image throughout the novel, as a powerless observer of America's intervention in Vietnam, suggests that the novel can be read as an example of mid-century British literature which, as Jed Esty maintains, responds to decolonization by mourning the 'dwindling significance' of 'Englishness' (2004, p. 215). Fowler's self-image, however, becomes increasingly fraught due to his own vested interests in the region, leading him to question, 'Was I so different from Pyle?' (*QA*, p. 207). The intertwined histories of Britain and America, which are symbolized by Fowler's personal motives for assisting with Pyle's death, have been overlooked.

While it is Fowler's affection for Phuong that stages the conflict between the 'old' and 'new' colonialists, Fowler's motivation in abandoning his stance of detachment is not necessarily his affection for Phuong. His growing sense of moral superiority following Pyle's involvement in the 'bicycle bomb', which detonates in a busy public square killing innocent civilians, prompts Fowler's decision to assist in Pyle's assassination. Fowler's love of Phuong does not provide a literal motive for his political intervention, but instead symbolizes Britain's desire to reassert its position on the world

stage. *The Quiet American* thus attempts to handle the twin trajectories of Britain's diminished status as an imperial power and the post-war attempt to consolidate control of what remained of the Empire, a position that is supported by historical examinations of a 'second colonial occupation' throughout the 1950s.[22]

As well as commenting on the political dimension of American ascendancy, what has been overlooked in the novel is the significance of popular culture as promoting an ideology of American interventionism. *The Quiet American* was published following the early-1950s popularity of Government-sponsored, Hollywood films depicting America's role in both the Second World War and the Korean War (1950–1953). As Peter Lev notes, it would have been 'difficult or even impossible to produce' many of the war films at this time 'without Department of Defense resources' (2003, p. 47). Financial assistance was offered, however, only on the condition that films were not 'detrimental to Department of Defense policy regarding operations, morale, or discipline', and that they benefitted the 'public good' (p. 47). The result was that many of the American-produced 'war-films' of the early-1950s could be characterized by a simplified, 'gung-ho' interpretation of recent history in which American ideals prevailed.

The Quiet American alludes to the power of such films to influence what is depicted as the naivety of an American foreign policy that 'gets hold of an idea and then alters every situation to fit the idea' (*QA*, p. 186). When Pyle saves Fowler from being shot by Vietnamese soldiers, for instance, Fowler chastises him by stating: 'Who the hell asked you to save my life? I came east to be killed. It's like your damned impertinence. […] You've been seeing war-films. We aren't a couple of marines and you can't win a war-medal' (p. 120). The reference to 'a couple of marines' who 'win a war medal' suggests the formulaic quality of many of the films being produced. In an ironic turn of events, Greene's depiction of an unworkable American foreign policy was itself adapted into a 1958 film by Joseph Mankiewicz. According to William S. Bushnell, the film version 'transposes what [Mankiewicz] called a "cheap melodrama in which the American was the most idiotic kind of villain" into an anti-Communist dramatization of America's fledgling foreign policy in Indochina' (2006, p. 38). It is quite possible that it is this film version that prompted George W. Bush's allusion to *The Quite American* in his 2007 speech supporting the 'war on terror' in Iraq. Holding Pyle up as a 'symbol of American purpose and patriotism—and dangerous naïveté', the then US President quoted the novel's narrator Fowler and his reflection that 'I never knew

a man who had better motives for all the trouble he caused' (see Buckley, 2007). Here, Bush seemingly misreads Greene's novel as championing foreign policy that has good intentions but harmful results. Despite the novel's efforts to critique the power of Hollywood cinema in promoting American interests, the story of Fowler and Pyle's relationship has been adapted to suit America's disastrous campaign in Vietnam after the French moved out, as well as the nation's twenty-first-century interventions in the Middle East.

The novel's depiction of the way in which Hollywood cinema is able to inform America's self-image also looks beyond the war film genre. Highlighting how a mythologized heroism is manifested in films not immediately associated with America's world role, Fowler recounts his visit to the cinema towards the end of the novel to see a film in which:

> Errol Flynn, or it may have been Tyrone Power (I don't know how to distinguish them in tights), swung on ropes and leapt from balconies and rode bareback into Technicolor dawns. He rescued a girl and killed his enemy and led a charmed life. It was what they called a film for boys, but the sight of Œdipus emerging with his bleeding eyeballs from the palace of Thebes would surely give a better training for life today. No life is charmed. (*QA*, p. 202)

It is a statement that follows Fowler's own decision to intervene in the war in Vietnam by assisting with Pyle's assassination. The novel's juxtaposition of Pyle's impending demise with the imagery of a mythologized heroism thus comments on the disparity between Hollywood heroics and the real-life results of an American foreign policy based on the notion of a 'charmed greatness'.

In *At Fever Pitch*, Caute also links the economic with the cultural when, in a club, the third-person narrator describes how 'against the background of an oversized dollar sign painted on the wall, a slender youth wearing a white dinner-jacket to below his knees was crooning into the midst' (*AFP*, p. 22). It is a pointedly caricatured image that juxtaposes an absurd appropriation of popular American music and fashion associated with the 'Rat Pack' with the ultimate symbol of American global dominance: the dollar sign. It is this juxtaposition that foregrounds the relationship between seemingly harmless cultural forms and the ideology of consumer capitalism, whereby wealth is viewed as valuable in and of itself.

The power of American culture to assist in establishing a form of imperial dominance without the need for conquest or settlement is also evinced in the prevalence of American cars:

> Certain elements had repeatedly urged the Paramount Chief [of the Manhene tribe] to fall in love with the new fashions and a large American combine had offered him their most expensive model gratis, aware of the meteoric effect this would have on sales in the region. (p. 112)

The Chief rejects the offer on the grounds that the car 'resembled a beetle on wheels and lacked both tradition and sensibility' (p. 112), yet the Secretary of Defence for the *de facto* government, the People's Progressive Party, is earlier depicted driving 'an enormous American car' (p. 73). It is a contrast between the traditional tribal rejection of American commodities and their appropriation by the country's elite which suggests that those with centralized political and economic power had already succumbed to the influence of American business.

In a similar move to *The Quiet American*, *At Fever Pitch* suggests the complicity between equally self-interested American and British trade interests in newly independent African nations. This level of partnership is alluded to when it is explained that

> the ancient sacrificial grove of Fanlanga […], which had deeply shocked Willy Dickinson and the white missionaries, was now the site of the United Africa Company where the ladies of Fanlanga could use the wealth of the tin mines to choose any one of Heinz's fifty-seven varieties. (p. 112)

Caute's reference to the 'fifty-seven varieties' of Heinz products co-opts the language of a well-known Heinz advertising slogan as a means of providing an ironic comment on the *lack* of any real choice on offer. Significantly, however, the United Africa Company and the tin mines are examples of British trade. The historian of colonialism in Africa, H. S. Wilson, has discussed how the United Africa Company, whose workers 'often got as little as 4 pence for an 11–14 hour day' (1994, p. 35), was 'part of the Anglo-Dutch Unilever and the biggest trading company in West Africa' (p. 138). The scene in *At Fever Pitch* thus establishes a circulatory system whereby the wealth generated by Western industry is then used to buy Western consumer products. Caute's portrayal of the durability of Western influence in Africa following decolonization thus goes

beyond a blanket condemnation of American dominance and reveals an appreciation of the relationship between British and American economic interests within a global marketplace.

Conclusion

In depicting a shift towards American dominance throughout the globe, the novels of Burgess, Enright, Greene, and Caute dramatize a restructuring of imperial relations that is able to take place alongside the success of nationalist movements. Contemporaneous anti-colonial activists, such as Fanon and Nkrumah, respond principally to the economic dimension of this process. British writers, on the other hand, foreground the role of culture in promoting consumer capitalism. The way in which this issue is addressed by different writers points to the heterogeneity of novels of decolonization from the late-1950s. For Burgess, the popularity of Hollywood cinema and jazz music in Malaya superficially allowed for the breaking down of social barriers set by ethnicity; yet the overall effect is the commodification and standardization of culture, causing the veneration of the new and fashionable over a communal investment in the unifying possibilities of culture. For Greene, the pervasiveness of American films that portrayed the individual hero vanquishing his enemies and winning the girl helped endorse an ideology of American particularity and an idealistic foreign policy that was ultimately destructive.

A comparative analysis foregrounds how the difference between Burgess's concern with the Americanization of Malaya and Greene's with America's own imperial identity is not only evident thematically but also stylistically. The sparser, more allegorical form of *The Quiet American* allows for the dramatization of a geopolitical conflict of interests between the 'old' colonialists and America over the future of Vietnam, staged at a private level in the battle between Fowler and Pyle over Phuong. Henry J. Donaghy concludes that *The Quiet American* ultimately fails due to the fact that 'the love story is so much weaker than its political counterpart' (1986, p. 69). This criticism of the text points to an issue with the characterization of Vietnam as feminine and passive and highlights the text's broadly Eurocentric depiction of the region.

Where *The Quiet American* portrays a direct American intervention in the First Indochina War through Pyle's involvement in the bombing which kills a number of innocent citizens, *The Malayan Trilogy* depicts a more informal manifestation of American imperialism

achieved through the popularity of Hollywood cinema and jazz music. The broader scope of *The Malayan Trilogy*, which includes a larger cast of characters and takes place over a number of years, dramatizes a shift in imperial relations that involves cultural contestation. The adoption of the form of the trilogy allows Burgess to portray the slow and almost imperceptible appropriation of American popular culture by Malaya as essential if the illusion of independence from Western imperialism is to be upheld.

The response to Americanization expressed in Burgess's and Greene's novels (and to a lesser extent the novels of Enright and Caute) represents opposition to a much more comprehensive and interconnected economic, political, and cultural system than that which faced earlier critics. Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* was a response to mid-nineteenth-century industrialism and set out a political and social vision that sought to prevent the mechanization of society. As Raymond Williams notes, Leavis's 1930s work, 'faced not only [industrialism] but certain ways of thinking and feeling embodied in immensely powerful institutions which threatened to overwhelm the ways that he and others valued' (1971, p. 250). The novels of white British writers with experience of colonial life during decolonization address the success of a globally connected form of capitalist imperialism that could be achieved at the same time as formal independence. Situating *The Malayan Trilogy* and *The Quiet American*, along with *Academic Year* and *At Fever Pitch*, within this longer-term critical tradition shows how a number of post-war British writers made efforts to contest Americanization at a time when it is assumed that the Suez crisis and the Cold War marked a widespread sense of resignation to Britain's imperial decline.

This same Arnoldian-Leavisite tradition influences the novels of colonial servants and settlers who returned to England from the colonies during the period of extensive decolonization. Throughout his career, Greene remained in self-exile from Britain and set his novels from the late-1950s and early-1960s—*Our Man in Havana* (1958) and *A Burnt out Case* (1960)—in Cuba and the Belgian Congo.[23] Burgess, on the other hand, returned to England and, although he was to leave again in 1968, produced a number of novels that responded to the immediate impact of decolonization on British culture and society.

Turning from the colonies to concerns about Americanization at home in Britain, Part II—'Returning Home'—will examine how British writers attempted to negotiate the transition from a British imperial iden-

tity to a distinctively national one. In Chap. 4 I will assess how works by Burgess and Colin MacInnes dramatize the threat to a singular conception of British national identity by Americanization and mass culture. At the same time, however, the post-war response to Americanization cannot be regarded as a purely conservative concern with protecting a narrowly defined conception of Englishness. Instead, as I will show in Chap. 5, it is bound up in the work of Burgess, MacInnes, and Alan Sillitoe with a revaluation of racial markers of national identity. Reading these writers alongside the 'Windrush generation' of post-war migrant novelists from the Caribbean, reveals a broad challenge across the literature of Britain's white and non-white citizens to ideas about national identity based on colonial myths regarding 'race'.

Notes

1. See Fanon (1965; repr. 2001) and Nkrumah (1965).
2. See Adorno and Horkheimer (1944; repr. 2010) and Adorno (2010).
3. For a biography of Enright see Walsh (1974).
4. See Arnold (1867–1869; repr. 2002) and Leavis (1930; repr. 1969).
5. For more on colonialism as a specific stage of capitalist imperialism, see Childs and Williams (1997) and Parry (2005).
6. Both Fanon and Nkrumah were active participants in African struggles for independence. Fanon fought for the Algerian movement Front de Liberation Nationale (FLN) and actively encouraged other African nations to revolt and begin armed struggle. Working closely with Amilcar Cabral, Fanon supported the PAIGC, a guerrilla movement which fought for independence in both Portuguese Guinea and Cape Verde. For more on anti-colonial independence movements throughout Africa, see Davidson (1994). Nkrumah became president of Ghana when the country gained independence in 1957 and published his influential work *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* in 1965.
7. The continuing impact of European and American capitalist enterprise upon formerly colonial nations throughout the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century has been addressed by a wide range of international critics. See, for example, Rodney (1972), Hardt and Negri (2000), and Klein (2007).

8. For more on the engagement of modernism with mass culture, see Huyssen (1986) and Pease (2011).
9. The 'great tradition' of English literature is exemplified by the work of Jane Austen, George Eliot, Henry James, Joseph Conrad, and D. H. Lawrence. Although initially excluded on the grounds of lacking seriousness, Charles Dickens was later added on the first centenary of his death. See Leavis (1960) and F. R. Leavis and Q. D. Leavis (1970).
10. A discussion of Arnold's view of the 'masses' as inherently unruly and in need of the guiding principles of 'culture' is offered in Williams (2005, pp. 3–8).
11. In the same interview, Hoggart goes on to describe himself as 'an Arnoldian' in his belief in 'culture' as 'the best that has been thought and said' (1990, p. 134). Hoggart expands on the influence of Arnold during his years teaching as an extramural lecturer, explaining that he would think of Arnold 'also trying to write creatively in similarly difficult circumstances' (p. 134).
12. For more on the influence of Knights on Burgess's reading of both Joyce and Lawrence, see Burgess (1985, pp. 1–11).
13. Prior to working as an Education Officer in Malaya and Brunei in the late-1950s Burgess had been employed by the Central Council for Adult Education, teaching members of the Royal Army Education Corps, and a lecturer in Speech and Drama at Bamber Bridge Emergency Training College near Preston in Lancashire. In the early-1970s, Burgess took up the position of Visiting Professor of English Literature and Creative Writing at City College in New York. In an open letter to his New York students, printed in the *New York Times*, Burgess criticises them for being interested only in post-war American writers such as Kurt Vonnegut and Ken Kesey and dismissing the past as irrelevant, stating: 'I believed the past had something to teach me; you tend to abominate the past as the source of all hypocrisy, humbug and evil' (1972b, n. p.). According to Andrew Biswell, Burgess's New York students had never heard of him before 'and they saw no particular reason to treat him with the respect and deference that he'd been expecting. To them he represented little more than a middle-aged authority-figure with a funny foreign accent' (2006, p. 348).
14. Given Burgess's ambitions to become a composer it is not surprising that it is music that takes prominence in portraying this conflict. Burgess recounts in his autobiography that the symphony that

Robert attempts to write in *Beds in the East* was based on his own composition, which he wrote to celebrate Malayan independence and represent the possible hybridity of Eastern and Western cultures (see Burgess 2002a, p. 416). Burgess laments the fact that modern society does not show an interest in the composition of classical music in his interview with Charles T. Bunting entitled 'Dressing for Dinner in the Jungle' (see Bunting, 2008).

15. This descriptive mixture of auditory sensations with those of taste and smell can be attributed to what Burgess terms his 'synaesthetic faculty' (2002a, p. 42). From a young age he discovered that he 'responded to a colour as if it were something to taste: this colour, which might not be that of a lemon, stung the tongue like a lemon; what might be black or deep purple nauseated like undercooked liver. When my father took me to a Hallé concert, I heard what I was told was an oboe as silver-green lemon juice; the flute was light brown and cold veal gravy' (p. 42).
16. Burgess returns to the modern alignment of pop music and religion in a 1968 interview in which he criticises the shift away from an aesthetic appreciation of music and towards the elevation of musicians, such as The Beatles, to a godlike status. As he argues, 'When we start thinking that pop music is close to God then we'll think pop music is aesthetically better than it is. And it is only the aesthetic value of pop music that really concerns me. I mean, the only way we can judge Wagner or Beethoven or any other composer is aesthetically. We don't regard Wagner or Beethoven or Shakespeare or Milton as great teachers. When we start claiming for Lennon or McCartney or Maharishi or any other of these "pop prophets" the ability to transport us to a region where God becomes manifest then I see red' (see Palmer, 1968).
17. It was through an acknowledgement of the transience of teenage language, and its rejection of traditional forms, that Burgess discarded the glossary of real-life slang he had amassed for the teenage characters of *A Clockwork Orange* and chose instead to invent the language of Nadsat. Although Nadsat is primarily derived from English and Russian, it is worth noting that Burgess's early formulations also contained American slang, as he writes in a letter to his friends Diana and Meir Gillon, 'I'm in the early stages of a novel about juvenile delinquents in the future (I'm fabricating with difficulty a teenage dialect compounded equally of American and Russian roots)' (quoted in Biswell, 2006, p. 256). This initial

fusion seemingly recognizes the geopolitical conflict between American and Russian ideologies during the Cold War period and its possible future impact on language and culture. In 'Teenspecch', Burgess recounts that ironically 'in the United States, a number of teenagers appropriated items from this lexis—words like *droog* and *groodies* and *nadsat*—and thus shoved my future into the discardable past' (1986, p. 180).

18. There are two copies of *The Uses of Literacy* in Burgess's personal library. The section that is held at Le Centre Anthony Burgess (Angers, France), includes a 1960 edition. A 1968 edition is held in Burgess's library at the International Anthony Burgess Foundation (IABF) in Manchester, suggesting its continued significance for Burgess's thought throughout the 1960s. Although both editions were published after *The Malayan Trilogy*, the influence of Hoggart's examination of teenage behaviour can certainly be read as influencing the characterization of Alex and his 'droogs' in *A Clockwork Orange*. For more on *A Clockwork Orange*, *The Uses of Literacy* and broader post-war debates about 'youth culture', see Hughes Jachimiak (2008).
19. In a 1973 article originally written for *The New Yorker*, and reprinted in 2012, Burgess recalls that *A Clockwork Orange* was influenced by his 'appalled' response to suggestions in the early-1960s that 'it would be a good idea to liquidate the criminal class through aversion therapy' (Burgess, 2012, p. 69).
20. For more on Burgess's return to Malaysia see Burgess (1981).
21. I have written elsewhere about how *At Fever Pitch* depicts Western models of economic development and nationhood as derailing the emancipatory possibilities of colonial self-determination (see Whittle, 2015).
22. See Cain and Hopkins (1993 and 2002).
23. See Greene (1999).

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PART II

Returning Home

CHAPTER 4

Englishness in Transition: Moving from the Imperial to the National

The English-set novels of Anthony Burgess and Colin MacInnes commit to the revitalization of a localized English culture in response to decolonization and 'Americanization'. Drawing on Krishan Kumar's assertion that to investigate 'the wider world within which "England" and "Englishness" find their meaning […] [w]e have to work from the outside in' (2003, pp. 16–17), this chapter investigates how Burgess and MacInnes offer the perspective of 'native-outsiders'—or 'inside-outsiders', as MacInnes referred to himself (Fieger and MacInnes 1962, p. xiii). Other prominent examinations of mid-twentieth-century English culture, such as those of Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams, neglect the role of decolonization in calling into question established conceptions of 'Englishness'. From their outsider perspectives, Burgess's *The Right to an Answer* (1960) and *One Hand Clapping* (1961), and MacInnes's *Absolute Beginners* (1959), situate a commitment to a communal culture within the corresponding trajectories of Britain's imperial decline and America's emerging global dominance.

The English-set novels of Burgess and MacInnes respond to the moment when the Suez crisis and the Cold War were undermining notions of a universal British civilization and the impact of decolonization for British national identity was entering into the public consciousness.[1] Both writers had experience of either colonial service or settlement and, upon their return, view the changes occurring in their homeland from within this wider imperial context. Analysis of Burgess's and MacInnes's

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novels extends my examination, begun in Part I, of texts by colonial servant and settler writers which question the bases of a British imperial identity abroad. In this chapter and Chap. 5 respectively, I focus on how 'Americanization' and mass immigration were addressed as two of the immediate consequences of decolonization for British identity at home.

In *The Right to an Answer* and *One Hand Clapping*, Burgess's suburban English landscapes contain the potential for the rejuvenation of a national literary tradition able to transcend the perceived vulgarity of an American popular culture. Concentrating on London, *Absolute Beginners* depicts the promise of a new English culture as presiding, at least in part, in the newly formed subculture of teenagers and their appropriation of pop cultural forms. Whilst committing to different cultural forms as the basis of a distinctive English culture, both writers position 'Englishness' in opposition to the standardizing influence of the new imperial power, America. At the same time, a comparative analysis captures the problems with redefining a unified conception of Englishness that had previously been taken for granted.

Existing examinations of how decolonization impacted upon post-war conceptions of Englishness have discussed the rise of America as a central factor. In *Postcolonial Melancholia*, for example, Paul Gilroy refers to Americanization as one of the key anxieties at the heart of 'the great transformation that quickly reduced the world's preeminent power to a political and economic operation of more modest dimensions' (2005, p. 12), the others being mass immigration (which I will return to in Chap. 5) and the formation of the European Economic Community.[2] Patrick Parrinder has assessed how mid-century novels, including George Orwell's *1984* (1949) and John Wyndham's *Day of the Triffids* (1951), explore an 'English provincial identity in relation to the cultural pressure of the United States, now acknowledged as Britain's imperial successor' (2011, p. 42). What these previous analyses have neglected, however, is the reverse anthropological gaze of returning colonial servant and settler writers who do not simply depict Americanization as a threat, but make efforts to suggest an alternative to cultural subordination.

In expressing a preoccupation with the revitalization of a national culture, *The Right to an Answer* and *Absolute Beginners* in particular adopt and transform a common characteristic of Victorian Condition-of-England novels whereby, as Robin B. Colby states:

> [T]he plot is developed around a sensitive protagonist, usually male, whose moral, intellectual, or emotional development spans the course of the novel

> and whose romantic attachments are troubled and conflicted. The protagonist is typically searching for a way to express or mitigate the dissatisfaction of the working class as he takes his role as their spokesman. (1995, p. 18)[3]

In each text, this role is taken by a first-person narrator: the ex-pat J. W. Denham, recently returned from Singapore, in *The Right to an Answer*, and the unnamed teenage narrator of *Absolute Beginners*. Burgess stretches the social realism of traditional Condition-of-England novels in a manner which suggests the influence of modernism, in particular T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922). For Denham, the societal deterioration he witnesses is symbolic of a much broader cultural, spiritual, and moral decay that an English literary tradition has the potential to forestall.[4] In *Absolute Beginners*, MacInnes blends the perspective of a Condition-of-England protagonist with that of a picaresque hero in the novel's teenage narrator, who is able to infiltrate all aspects of London life. This narrator articulates a view of teenagers also expressed in MacInnes's journalism of the period, in which the young represent the potential for English culture to reject the hierarchies of the past and adopt popular cultural forms in a manner that attends to the realities of life in post-war Britain.

In the sections that follow I will position an evaluation of *The Right to an Answer*, *One Hand Clapping*, and *Absolute Beginners* within broader mid-century debates about English national identity articulated by F. R. Leavis, George Orwell, and Eliot. Leavis's work emphasizes the importance of a traditional, home-grown Englishness able to oppose the standardization of 'mass culture'. In Orwell's essay 'The Lion and the Unicorn' (1941) and Eliot's lecture 'The Unity of European Culture' (1946), an evaluation of culture involves not just material cultural products, such as literature, but what Eliot calls 'the way of life of a particular people living together in one place' (1948, p. 120). Such discourses about Englishness developed at the moment of extensive decolonization in relation to an increased concern with Americanization and consumerism, and informed the sociological analyses of British culture and society by Hoggart and Williams, as outlined in Chap. 3. In this chapter I will examine how Burgess's and MacInnes's English-set novels of the late-1950s and early-1960s look both inwards and outwards, situating a preoccupation with Englishness at home within the global context of decolonization. Finally, I will broaden my discussion of their works as a means of gauging the disparate forms of cultural rejuvenation, and conceptions of Englishness, to which these texts commit.

'How Can One Make a Pattern Out of This Muddle?': Decolonization and the Problem of Englishness

The novels of Burgess and MacInnes examined in this chapter provide an important imperial dimension largely absent from mid-century debates about English national identity. Situating the problem of defining Englishness as an immediate consequence of decolonization, analysis of these texts foregrounds how established conceptions of national identity involved the construction of a contradictory imperial identity. During the height of colonial dominance, as Graham MacPhee maintains:

> Britain could enjoy the comforts of *particularity*—of being a distinct, unique and densely idiosyncratic culture peculiar to itself—while claiming that these very idiosyncrasies were *universal*, since the attributes of British civilisation were presented as the attributes of civilisation *per se*. (2011, p. 30)

During the post-war period of extensive decolonization and the 'collapse in faith in the immediate universality of British civilisation', Britain faced the dilemma of defining an identity alongside newly independent nations and the new post-war hegemony, America, whilst 'continuing to hold that *this* particular temperament, tradition and outlook somehow approximated more closely to the universal than almost all others' (p. 30). Although a range of mid-century intellectuals address this dilemma, they do so without a direct acknowledgement of decolonization as a determining factor. In Burgess's and MacInnes's novels, the preoccupation with defining Englishness, and establishing a national culture that could protect against Americanization, represents a literary intervention that looks outwards to the global impact of decolonization as well as inwards to the former imperial 'centre'.

Part of the problem with defining Englishness in a manner that acknowledged the global context of decolonization was that the images and rhetoric associated with national identity were often bound up with the Empire. As Ian Baucom argues in *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire and the Locations of Identity* (1999), conceptions of a British imperial identity in the colonies often relied on the relocation of characteristically *English* locations, such as the country house and the cricket field, from the imperial 'centre' to the 'periphery'.[5] Baucom's analysis, as MacPhee and Prem Poddar maintain, foregrounds how imperialism merged with nationalism

'in a deeply paradoxical way, so that imperialism becomes *both* an alternative to *and* a statement of nationalism, while nationalism becomes *both* an alternative to *and* a statement of imperialism' (2007, p. 7). The conception of a universal British imperial identity was thus often staged abroad in ways that relied on imagery associated with a narrow, Anglo-Saxon idea of England, one which eschewed the cultural markers of Britain's Celtic regions.

The relationship between British imperialism and English nationalism is considered by some to be less entangled than this, with imperialism establishing the idea of a 'greater Britain' which could transcend a narrow and insular form of national identity. As Kumar argues, the *absence* of a clearly defined English nationalism during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when nationalism was flourishing throughout Europe, can be attributed to the view that the Empire 'offered an identity that lifted [the English] above "mere" nationalist self-glorification. […] Only when this sense failed them […] did they turn inwards towards themselves, and begin to ask themselves who they were' (2003, p. 193, p. 196). Here, Kumar emphasizes the significance of imperial decline at the beginning of the twentieth century as instigating attempts to define a quintessential Englishness; yet, as Baucom's work shows, Kumar's notion of a singular 'moment of Englishness' (p. 176) is problematic. The onset of imperial decline may have prompted a range of efforts to define English national identity during the early twentieth century, but such debates often draw on and renegotiate characteristics of Englishness which already existed.

Positioning their commitment to a national, communal culture within the context of decolonization, Burgess's and MacInnes's English-set novels provide a necessary imperial dimension to prominent early twentieth-century debates about national identity espoused by the Cambridge School. For Leavis, it is modernity and the standardizing influence of 'mass culture' which threaten a quintessentially English identity. Writing with Denys Thompson in *Culture and Environment: The Training of Critical Awareness*, Leavis maintains that a traditional English cultural heritage, embodied in the 'folk-songs, folk-dances, Cotswold cottages and handicraft products' which signify an 'organic community' (1933, p. 1), had been lost due to the influence of a commercial, capitalist culture. As Christopher Hilliard notes, the term 'Environment' in the book's title 'referred to the press, advertising, commercialized leisure, and other things that people using the term culture in a more-or-less value-neutral way would describe as cultural conditions' (2012, p. 47). The book was

intended for use in schools and represents 'a terminus or interchange for *Scrutiny* arguments about modern life' (p. 48), pointing to what Leavis viewed as the important role of education in English literature in resisting a value-free understanding of culture.

The excesses of a supposedly value-free, mechanized society, dominated by the corrupting influence of a commercialized mass culture, could be witnessed, Leavis believed, in America. Although, as Genevieve Abravanel maintains, 'critics have largely overlooked [Leavis's] abundant references to America', it is the new global superpower emerging during the inter-war years that informs his 'invention of Englishness and his attempts to teach it to the nation' (2012, p. 111). It is important to acknowledge that, in this sense, Leavis's work is not 'anti-American': 'American periodicals', as Hilliard points out, 'provided models for *Scrutiny*, quotations from American works of social criticism studded the pages of *Scrutiny* and *Culture and Environment*, and reviewers went out of their way to draw attention to novels not heavily publicized in Britain' (2012, p. 56). Early twentieth-century America, however, provides an example of a society where, as the nineteenth-century critic Matthew Arnold had previously warned in *Culture and Anarchy*, 'machinery' is valued 'as an end in itself, without looking beyond it to the end for which alone, in truth, it is valuable' (2002, p. 83). For both Leavis and Thompson, their conception of a genuine and home-grown Englishness can only survive through a critical awareness of the negative example of mass culture, particularly in the form of advertising copy and popular fiction.

The burgeoning influence of Americanization, in the form of popular culture, advertising and consumer capitalism, is supplanted in Orwell's wartime essay, 'The Lion and the Unicorn: Socialism and the English Genius' (1941), by the threat of fascism. In the essay, Orwell articulates the belief also put forth in Leavis's writings that 'as western peoples go, the English are very highly differentiated' (2000, p. 138) and maintains that 'there *is* something distinctive and recognisable in English civilisation' (p. 139).[6] In outlining prominent examples of Englishness, the oft-quoted 'characteristic fragments' of the 'English scene', according to Orwell, can be found in:

> The clatter of clogs in the Lancashire mill towns, the to-and-fro of the lorries on the Great North Road, the queues outside the Labour Exchanges, the rattle of pin-tables in the Soho pubs, the old maids biking to Holy Communion through the mists of the autumn mornings. (p. 139)[7]

Such scenes make up an 'individual' culture, 'bound up with solid breakfasts and gloomy Sundays, smoky towns and winding roads, green fields and red pillar-boxes. It has a flavour of its own' (p. 139). Yet, rather than offering such scenes up as the basis of a 'comforting vision of Englishness' (MacPhee 2011, p. 35), Orwell uses them as examples of the fragmentary chaos of mid-century English life, asking, 'How can one make a pattern out of this muddle?' (2000, p. 139). Orwell's adoption of the word 'muddle' transposes ideas about disorder in the colonies to the metropole. In particular the word recalls E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924), in which Indian society is repeatedly referred to as a 'muddle' (1967, p. 68). It is a word which has endured as a description of the structure of the British colonial mission as a whole, with the post-war historian Dominic Sandbrook labelling the Empire 'more of a muddle than a monolith' (2011, p. 280).

Ultimately, Orwell's essay calls for the establishment of socialism to provide order to the chaos of mid-century English life and set 'the native genius of the English people' (2000, p. 166) free. As MacPhee notes, this position is 'fraught and contradictory', exhibiting as it does Orwell's 'oscillation between an ordinary and highly localized Englishness and his continuing attempts to sustain a geopolitical vision in which the nation-state would not be the determining category' (2011, p. 35). Indeed, Orwell adheres to the centre-periphery relations established by colonialism, calling for Britain to sit at the heart of a 'specifically *English* Socialist movement' (2000, p. 181) that 'will aim not at disintegrating the Empire but at turning it into a federation of Socialist states, freed not so much from the British flag as from the money-lender, the dividend-drawer and the wooden-headed British official' (p. 182).[8] As with the view expressed by Burgess in *The Malayan Trilogy* discussed in Part I, for Orwell the British should remain in the colonies to train colonial societies 'in all the arts which, so far, they have been systematically prevented from learning' (p. 179). As such, despite the localized Englishness described in the essay's opening section, Orwell's conception of an English national identity is unable to be separated from a view of the nation as the paternal provider of both culture and political ideals.

Offering a model of a unitary English identity that focuses on the production of culture, but which in turn excises the history of colonialism, Eliot's essay 'The Unity of European Culture' maintains that

> for the health of the culture of Europe two conditions are required: that the culture of each country should be unique, and that the different coun-

> tries should recognise their relationship to each other, so that each should be susceptible of influence from the others. And this is possible because there is a common element in European culture, an interrelated history of thought and feeling and behaviour, an interchange of arts and of ideas. (1948, p. 119)

In setting out his vision of a post-war unified Europe, Eliot maintains that all European nations share an ancient heritage: Europe is a 'spiritual organism' (p. 119) which is discernible in its unique development into individual national cultures, each of which must not be autonomous of each other. Eliot's position, for MacPhee, allows for the alignment of 'English culture with a quasi-universal value [i.e. 'European-ness'], but without having to claim their absolute or necessary identity, as the older discourse of British Civilisation had' (2011, pp. 38–39). In discussing more broadly the shared heritage of European nations during the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, Eliot's lecture avoids any revolutionary political concerns, holding instead that culture has the ability to transcend 'diverse political, social and religious views' (1948, p. 117) and provide a 'tissue of influences woven to and fro' (p. 112).

Despite his overall focus on cultural production in the form of literature and music, Eliot draws upon the discourse of anthropology in expanding what is meant by the term 'culture', stating that it is 'made visible in [a nation's] arts, in their social system, in their habits and customs, in their religion' (p. 120). At the same time, however, Eliot does not offer an outline of the specific characterizations of any one nation, as is attempted by Orwell. Instead, he sees Christianity as the root of all Western cultures and justifies hierarchical class distinctions, where the elite are a necessary subsection of society as the primary consumers of art. This position would become increasingly fraught throughout the 1950s with the challenge to class divisions and the expanded categorization of British citizenship to include nations outside of Europe, bound together by the Commonwealth.

The critical tradition outlined here, in which 'culture' emerges as a subject of study and is freighted with the power for national unity, informs the novels of Burgess and MacInnes from the late-1950s and early-1960s. Commonly, it has been seen as offering the foundations for the work of Hoggart and Williams and the subsequent development of the discipline of Cultural Studies.[9] Leavis's work informed the critical approach to culture of both Hoggart and Williams but, as Richard Storer argues, '"Cultural

Studies" evolved from attempts to challenge this earlier [Leavisite] tradition' (2009, p. 44). Eliot's use of anthropological discourse in defining 'culture', moreover, can be read as preceding attempts to critically assess popular cultural forms, such as the cinema and television. As Dennis Dworkin notes, Eliot's 'expansion of the meaning of culture to include practices outside literature and the arts was a major step toward the study of popular culture' and transformed 'the profession of criticism […] beyond literary studies' (1997, p. 82). What has often been neglected, however, is the influence of this critical tradition on post-war British literature which deals with the impact of decolonization on established conceptions of a British imperial identity, both at home and in the colonies.

The novels of Burgess and MacInnes examined in the following sections offer a direct response to imperial decline which is absent from Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* and Williams's *Culture and Society*. The 'domesticated anthropology' of Hoggart and Williams, as Jed Esty has shown, can be productively positioned within the 'dialectical transition from universalist to particularist concepts of culture' (2004, p. 183). Yet, as I outlined in Chap. 3, Esty's model sees Hoggart and Williams as being alone in attending to this transition in a manner that envisions a united national culture. By contrast, British authors from the same period are read as documenting the disappointments of imperial contraction without attempting to work through a solution. Counteracting this view, an examination of Burgess's *The Right to an Answer* and *One Hand Clapping*, and MacInnes's *Absolute Beginners*, reveals a concern with rejuvenating an organic culture that is able to move beyond the cultural and racial hierarchies of Britain's imperial identity whilst also protecting against Americanization. For both Burgess and MacInnes, the Americanization of England does not denote the harmless popularity of American mass culture over traditional or national forms of cultural production. Instead, both writers express the view that Americanization has the potential to *foreclose* a genuine national culture. In response, they promote the modification and development of new forms of Englishness that are connected to the past, but are also relevant to the circumstances of post-war life.

In analysing *The Right to an Answer*, I draw on Esty's notion of what he calls the 'anthropological turn', which 'names the discursive process by which English intellectuals translated the end of empire into a resurgent concept of national culture' (p. 2). Where Esty maintains that this process is evident only in literature of late-modernist writers and the cultural analyses of Hoggart and Williams, I argue that *The Right to an Answer* also

offers a reverse anthropological gaze from the viewpoint of the novel's expat narrator Denham. Rather than exhibiting a return to social realism, however, the 'anthropological turn' in *The Right to an Answer* allows for an ironic appropriation of the discourse of anthropology as a means of undermining the post-war faith in technological progress.

Burgess builds on this critique of Americanization in *One Hand Clapping*, which establishes a more deliberate conflict between the degenerative aspects of mass culture and what is seen as the cultural value of Britain's literary past. The novel is, as Andrew Biswell states, 'One of [Burgess's] bitterest statements about secular consumerism and the approaching collapse of English high culture' (2006, p. 224). Like Denham, the character Howard Shirley articulates dismay at what is perceived of as the cultural paucity of post-war England. Howard's participation in a TV game show, which reduces the status of literary figures to answers in the pursuit of money, is revealed in the novel's conclusion to be motivated by a plan to expose the ideology of consumerism as a sham. Yet, in *The Right to an Answer* and *One Hand Clapping*, cultural degeneration is not presented as a *fait accompli*. Instead, the presence of the poets Everett in the former and Redvers Glass in the latter suggests that a sense of cultural worth and genuine solidarity lies in a revision of the nation's literary tradition.

A 'Post-war English Mess': The Reverse Anthropological Gaze of *The Right to an Answer*

Suggesting a deliberate intention to depict what Eliot calls 'the way of life of a particular people living together in one place' (1948, p. 120), Burgess remarked in a 1964 interview in *The Times* that the device of the outsider-narrator provides a productive viewpoint from which 'to look at England as an unusually knowledgeable foreigner might, to study its scene, its people, its way of life from the outside, at a certain ironic distance' (Anon., 1964, p. 13). In *The Right to an Answer*, it is this sense of an 'ironic distance' that is provided by the first-person narration of Denham and his appropriation of anthropological discourse. In adopting the discourse of a discipline that, throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, voiced ideas about Western progress, *The Right to an Answer* invites the reader to question the prevalent devotion to what Harold Wilson would later call the 'white heat' of an emerging technological 'revolution' in post-war Britain.[10]

The central plot of the novel concerns the parallel experiences of alienation and disillusionment of Denham and the Sri Lankan sociology student Mr. Raj (a name that alludes to the British rule in India) who is in England conducting research on English society's 'views on problems of racial relationships' (*RA*, p. 110). In an interview with Patricia Brent in 1959, Burgess explains that the novel was

> meant to bridge the gap between the novels about the East and the novels about England I intend to write, because it has as its main character a man who's lived in the East [Denham], and who sees what's happening in post-war England through the eyes of a man who's really an exile [Mr. Raj]. (Quoted in Biswell, 2006, p. 200)

The status of both the characters as outsiders within the 'suburbs of a rather large smug Midlands city' (*RA*, p. 4) affords them their anthropological gaze through which they observe and catalogue the habits of the 'natives': Raj's formal sociological research is mirrored by Denham's observations that take the form of the novel. It is Denham's relationship with Raj, which moves from convivial to hostile, that stages the impact of mass immigration from the former colonies upon British society.

The reverse anthropology of Burgess's English-set novels written upon his return from Malaya has led to some critics discussing them in terms of social realism, which characterized a number of works by contemporaneous Angry Young Men writers. Bernard Bergonzi, for instance, has maintained that *The Right to an Answer* depicts 'modern England' as 'a flat and dismal place, of petty lusts and feeble adulteries' (1979, p. 181). Upholding this view, Biswell views the provincial, working-class settings of *The Right to an Answer* and *One Hand Clapping* as marking Burgess's 'firm decision in favour of domestic social realism' (2006, p. 224). It is certainly the case that Burgess, writing in a 1963 article for *The Listener*, states a commitment to 'write about here and now' (1963, p. 466), as opposed to 'the exotic scenario' (p. 465) favoured in *The Malayan Trilogy*. Yet, in the same article he distances himself from what he calls the 'modern provincial novel which, sadly, is developing its own set of conventions and stock responses indicative of a morbid concern with content more than form' (p. 467). It is this emphasis on form that points to the continued influence of modernist modes of writing on Burgess's English-set novels, where societal deterioration is symbolic of a much broader concern with the loss of a cultural or spiritual centre.

Upon his arrival back in England, Denham describes his suburban surroundings as a 'mess' in which there is 'no hierarchy, no scale of values, everything's as good—and therefore as bad—as everything else' (*RA*, p. 3). Throughout the opening chapter, Denham repeatedly describes his surroundings using the term 'mess': from his estranged position he can 'smell the putridity of the mess more than those who have never really been expatriated from it—the good little people who, with their television, strikes, football pools and *Daily Mirror*, have everything they want except death' (p. 1). Like food, which when taken 'out of the deep-freeze […] soon goes bad' (p. 3), Denham senses that he will soon lose his status as an outsider and settle back into life in the Midlands where 'the corruption creeps up, like fog round the boat-train' causing him to become 'a citizen of the mess' (p. 1).

The repeated use of the word 'mess' to describe post-war England has resonances with the work of Samuel Beckett. Beckett's most famous invocation of 'the mess' appears in an interview with Tom Driver from 1961, in which he states: 'To find a form that accommodates the mess, that is the task of the artist now' (Graver and Federman, 1979, p. 219). Despite the fact that Beckett's use of the term 'mess' to address the problem facing artists in the post-war era came one year after the publication of *The Right to an Answer*, Burgess had followed Beckett's career closely.[11] In his essay 'Enduring Saturday', Burgess contends that 'Beckett's control of language is as great as Joyce's' before concluding that 'artists have had to revise their views about art since this artist appeared' (1968d, p. 87). It is therefore conceivable that, in broad terms, Burgess's articulation of the degeneration at the heart of post-war England was influenced by his reading of Beckett. Yet, where Beckett offers an existential analysis of the human condition through his use of the absurd, the character of Denham is revealed as being preoccupied with systems of hierarchical order able to enforce a pattern upon the 'mess', most notably in terms of culture.

Although he voices a number of Burgess's own views about a 'hideous, corrupt, [and] TV-haunted' (*RA*, p. 150) post-war British society, which lacks an appreciation of value, Denham represents such views *in extremis*.[12] The hyperbolic tone that characterizes Denham's initial description of his hometown, including his patronising opinion of the 'good little people', establishes him as a caricatured, Colonel Blimp-like narrator, who sees England as 'going to the dogs'.[13] Yet, Denham's narration throughout the text is also self-reflexive and, remembering his own indulgence in 'Tokyo nude-shows', his 'negligible income tax' and time spent in 'the bars of all

the airports of Africa and the East', he asks, 'Who was I to talk about the irresponsibility of modern England?' (*RA*, p. 35). Comparing the lives of his suburban neighbours to his own life in Britain's former colonies, Denham concludes towards the end of the novel:

> [S]urely that sneered at suburban life was more stable than this shadow life of buying and selling in a country where no involvement was possible, the television evening, with the family round, better than the sordid dalliance that soothed me after work? (p. 253)

It is a final reflection that challenges the critical view of English culture by those who are not 'in the position even to begin to commit' (p. 252) and so, do not make efforts to offer a solution.

Situating the consumerism of post-war England as one part of a global network of trade that was filling the vacuum left by formal colonialism, the opening chapter extends the preoccupation evident in *The Malayan Trilogy* with the restructuring of Western imperial relations. As Denham acknowledges:

> The colonial civil servants are moving out everywhere, but the trading companies are still anxious to recruit bright young men (a good school not obligatory, but the right sort of accent wanted and, preferably, fair hair) to sell brilliantine, cigarettes, Lambrettas, cement, sewing-machines, outboard motors, air-conditioning plants and W.C.'s in those sunny lands which have just achieved independence. (p. 2)

The tone provided by the extended list of functional products, including cement and toilets, indicates a concern with the prevalence of consumer products supplanting the 'high' Western culture that Burgess saw himself as representing in Malaya. It is a description that suggests Burgess's view of the baseness of the 'neo-colonial' relations, devoid of a level of education that Burgess saw himself as being able to provide in Malaya. The list of consumer goods, moreover, suggests an ironic tone in the reference to 'sunny lands' achieving independence. Here, the novel articulates the view that is prevalent throughout *Beds in the East* that a genuine form of 'independence' was being derailed by the spread of a global system of consumer capitalism.

As the novel progresses, the 'post-war English mess' is further characterized in terms of decay and stagnation: Denham describes how

'[c]igarette packets, football fixtures, bus-tickets sailed by in the dust' (p. 34); whilst travelling on the bus 'grey villages limp by, the wind tearing at torn posters of long-done events' (p. 35); and the skyline is made up of 'bare branches, coil after coil of dirty clouds, washing on neighbour lines, forlorn pecking birds, a distant brace of gasometers' (p. 141). At the same time, however, the language of decay, which permeates everything in the physical world from the clouds right down to the dusty streets, becomes symbolic of a broader decay at the level of culture. It is a narrative device that reveals the influence of Eliot's *The Waste Land*, as John J. Stinson notes: 'The spectre-like figures that populate the London of *The Waste Land*, Burgess finds in great abundance in post-World War II England' (1991, p. 65). In both cases physical deterioration stands in as an extension of spiritual atrophy, evident not only in the cultural paucity depicted in *The Right to an Answer*, but also the superficial sexual relationships of the suburb's inhabitants, where extra-marital affairs are commonplace.[14]

The relationship between the physical decay of the novel's setting and cultural degeneration is extended in the ironic appropriation of the discourse of anthropology, where the idea of technological progress is turned on its head. Denham's use of the language of anthropology to describe his hometown is most evident in the depiction of the village surrounding his local pub, as well as the habits and physiology of its inhabitants:

> The Black Swan stood in a pocket of decaying village, the dirty speck around which the pearly suburb had woven itself. The village had shrunk to less than an acre. It was like a tiny reservation for aborigines. From the filthy windows imbeciles leered down at the weed-patches; cocks crowed all day; little girls in pinafores of an earlier age shnockled over stained half-eaten apples; all the boys seemed to have cleft palates. (*RA*, p. 7)

The comparison between the small 'reservation', peopled by 'aborigines' 'of an earlier age', and the development of the 'pearly suburb' recalls anthropological notions of the 'backwardness' of colonial societies when compared with European civilization. Yet, this imagery of backwardness is used to express a broader concern with the impact of modernity and consumer capitalism as Burgess juxtaposes the physical grotesquery of the villagers with the urban homogeneity of the suburb. Rather than concluding that the 'reservation' must be modernized to meet the standards of the nearby suburb, Denham maintains that the villagers 'seemed to me far healthier than the surrounding suburb' (p. 7) with 'the pebble-dash all

over the blind-end walls, […] the god-wottery in the toy gardens' and 'the alphabet pasta of the television aerials—X, Y, H, T' (p. 8). It is a conclusion which points to the novel's preoccupation with the decline of culture and the dull predictability of modern suburban living, where individual and creative expression is replaced by a standardized facileness and what he refers to in his autobiography as the 'banal urgencies' (2002a, p. 418) which dominate commercial television.[15]

Throughout the novel it is the television set which acts as the primary signifier of false unity and cultural decay, screening only advertisements or violent American films. In the same way that the jukebox in *Beds in the East* has the effect of distracting Robert Loo from his impulse to write music, the effect of the television in the homes of suburban England is one of distraction; it is 'the siren voice of the modern world' which lures Denham to 'submit to the blue hypnotic eye and *the absence of the need for thought or solidarity*' (p. 68, emphasis added). As with Burgess's critique of popular culture in *Beds in the East* (represented primarily by the reverence for the arrival of the jukebox), the rhetoric is again similar to that of the Frankfurt School. In *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944), Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer maintain that the 'culture industry' 'robs the individual of his function' (2010, p. 124) and that 'no independent thinking must be expected from the audience. […] Any logical connection calling for mental effort is painstakingly avoided' (p. 137). Popular culture, rather than being an innocuous form of entertainment, has an anaesthetising effect on society, satisfying the consumer with delusory images of fulfilment.

Where Adorno and Horkheimer's primary concern is with the subordination of culture to the market forces of late capitalism, *The Right to an Answer* reveals a preoccupation with the supplanting of a distinct English national identity by an artificial American one. Pointedly, Denham describes an evening in front of the television with his father where they watched 'some American glorification of police violence on the commercial channel' (*RA*, p. 8). He recounts that

> the film of police violence ended with an epilogue spoken by the tough police chief in a trilby hat. He told us that State Troopers were our friends and it was our duty as good American citizens to help them in their arduous efforts to wipe out the traffic in cocaine. (p. 8)

The serious message is immediately undercut by the bathetic statement 'Then some monkeys advertised tea' (p. 8), but Burgess's point, that a

unitary Englishness is being replaced by citizenship in the new global American hegemony, is made.

The depiction in *The Right to an Answer* of post-war England as stagnant, with a coherent notion of Englishness being eroded along with the decline of the nation's global dominance, is tempered both by a rejection of nostalgia for a lost culture and by the sense of optimism offered by a revitalized literary tradition. This aspect of the novel complicates Esty's claim that mid-century British writers 'did not vest English culture itself with the kind of recuperative possibilities that one can see in the late-modernist works [of Eliot and Woolf]' (2004, p. 9). As Bernard Begonzi maintains, 'There is more [to *The Right to an Answer*] than a nostalgic preference for the decaying remains of rural or feudal England to the affluent small-hell of suburbia' (1979, p. 181). Rather, through Denham's increasingly self-reflexive narrative, the novel questions the nostalgic construction of a lost Englishness and commits to the importance of a revitalized culture to develop society as a whole.

Denham articulates the notion that nostalgic investments in quintessential markers of Englishness are based in myth when enduring the 'ritual sweat and discomfort of Saturday night pub-life' at the Black Swan: 'I sipped at my half of bitter dutifully, trying to convince myself that I really liked it, the warm beer of old England. The exile's dream of frothy tankards was a convention' (*RA*, p. 11). As with Burgess's attempt to move beyond mythologized depictions of an exotic East, which could be contrasted with British imperial superiority in *The Malayan Trilogy*, in *The Right to an Answer* it is the romanticization of an idyllic homeland that is questioned. It is not a mythologized notion of the nation's past to which *The Right to an Answer* commits. Instead, the novel strives to suggest that an archetypal Englishness found in warm beer, and perhaps even 'old maids biking to Holy Communion through the mists of the autumn mornings', never existed.

In place of nostalgia for an irretrievable idea of the past, *The Right to an Answer* suggests that it is a literary tradition that must be drawn on and transformed as a means of attending to the realities of post-war English society. This tradition is principally represented by the character of Everett, a locally renowned poet who runs a small literary magazine entitled *Hermes*, to which Denham donates some of his fortune generated from working as a businessman in Singapore and from paying 'negligible income tax' (p. 35). The name 'Hermes' is a reference to the Greek messenger of the gods and inventor of speech and, as with the name of the

'Apollo' jukebox in *Beds in the East*, Burgess's allusion to Greek mythology is symbolic. Where the name of the jukebox, which alludes to the god of music and poetry, carries with it an ironic statement on the commodification of music, the magazine's title suggests that the poet, like Hermes, is a privileged and gifted manipulator of language, able to use that gift to express complex or transcendent ideas.

When introduced to Denham by his friend Henry, the reader is informed that Everett's was 'a name you'd find in the Georgian anthologies, a very minor name, it is true, but still representing a more honest tradition of art than the radio show that Henry now switched off' (p. 37). The Arnoldian and Leavisite influence upon the tradition that Everett represents is revealed when he asks Denham about poetry, stating: 'I suppose that's one thing one would miss out in your outlandish places—the kindred spirits united by a love of the arts, I mean, reading verse together, keeping, however feebly, the torch alight. Culture, I mean' (p. 37).[16] Ultimately, Everett articulates the belief that 'one writes in the tradition, but always aware of the need to modify the tradition' (p. 38). It is a statement that recalls Eliot's essay, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' (1919), which argues that 'the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past. And the poet who is aware of this will be aware of great difficulties and responsibilities' (1972, p. 15). Everett's emphasis on modification, as opposed to a nostalgic invocation of the past or a reliance on returning to traditional literary forms, acts as the counterpoint to the novel's portrayal of the 'post-war English mess'. The novel commits to a belief in an evolving sense of 'culture' that is able to transcend the banality and standardization of consumer capitalism as long as there are those who can alter it and pass it on.

An opposition between the degenerative impact of Americanization upon England and the rejuvenating possibilities of the nation's literary heritage is extended in *One Hand Clapping*. Both *The Right to an Answer* and *One Hand Clapping* express the ideals that Esty attributes to late-modernist texts (such as Eliot's *Four Quartets* and Woolf's *Between the Acts*) whereby 'an inherited cultural legacy [is] the agent required to mediate between totality and particularity, between unity and fragmentation, or between the collective and the individual' (2004, p. 13). In *One Hand Clapping*, it is the young poet Redvers Glass who takes the role—represented by Everett in *The Right to an Answer* and Robert Loo in *Beds in the East*—of the solitary artist surrounded by the corrupting influence of mass culture.

'A Feeble-lighted Moon of America': National Culture and Americanization in *One Hand Clapping*

Where *The Right to an Answer* portrays the post-war 'mess' from the viewpoint of an outsider, *One Hand Clapping* offers one of Burgess's only attempts in his oeuvre to adopt a female narrative voice, that of Janet Shirley, a working-class supermarket worker with a council house in 'Bradcaster' and a product of the post-war democratization of education. Although, as Roger Lewis states in his Foreword, the novel is 'unique in [Burgess's] vast output in being almost subdued', it cannot be characterized simply in the terms offered by Lewis as expressing 'a post-war late-fifties mood where damp washing is hung up in the kitchen, kippers are forked out gracelessly onto plates, and there is never any sunshine' (2010, p. 3). As with *The Right to an Answer*, there are elements of social realism but they are in play alongside an attempt to reveal the delusional spectacle provided by mass culture in contrast to a genuine sense of national solidarity, seen to be offered by a shared, but increasingly devalued, literary heritage.

The plot primarily concerns the dismay of Janet's husband Howard at an American-led consumerist ideology, which promotes the individual pursuit of money over any sense of communal solidarity. It is through Howard that *One Hand Clapping* extends the critique found in *The Right to an Answer* of Britain's post-war culture of consumerism. As Stinson comments, *One Hand Clapping* 'humorously presents the predicament facing the individual aware that he is one of a legion of parched souls in a cultural desert', while it is the television which is the window 'into the modern soullessness that Burgess provides' (1991, p. 72). Howard plays out the post-war consumerist dream, winning the jackpot on a game show called *Over and Over*, a title that emphasizes the depiction of such TV shows as repetitive and ultimately embodying the *absence* of progress supposedly offered by technology and mass cultural commodities. Howard chooses to spend his winnings on a luxury trip to America with Janet. In the novel's denouement, however, he reveals that his motive for entering the game show was to expose the ideology of consumerism as an empty sham and decides that he and Janet will commit suicide as a protest against the 'cheapness and the vulgarity and silliness and the brutishness and nastiness of everything and everybody' (*OHC*, p. 204). As a gesture of optimism in the rejuvenating possibilities of literature, Howard bequeaths what is left of the money to a local poet, Redvers Glass. In the end, Janet resists

Howard's plan and, in self-defence, kills him with a hammer before fleeing the country with Redvers. Much like the development of Denham's self-reflexive viewpoint in *The Right to an Answer*, it is a conclusion (albeit a more absurd one) that foregrounds Burgess's critical awareness of his own views on the condition of post-war England. Howard's role is that of a literary device for voicing, but also critiquing, the exile's disappointments of returning to a dramatically changed homeland.

It is principally through the set piece game show scenes that the novel stages the perceived incongruousness between the cultural significance of the nation's literary heritage and the inherent emptiness of consumer capitalism. Answering questions on the topic of English literature, from medieval literature and Elizabethan drama through to 'the modern novel' (p. 85), the nation's literary heritage is depicted as being reduced to facts recited as a means of winning money. Although Janet does not share Howard's dismay at the vulgarity of modern culture, she reflects upon a question about the English poets John Gower, Robert Henryson and William Langland that

> [i]t was cheap and dirty to applaud something that nobody had any idea of, that nobody cared a bit about these three men, whoever they were, and that these three men […] were all dead and dignified and quiet and sort of despising everybody here in this studio. (p. 84)

Howard correctly answers his final questions on Ford Maddox Ford, a significant choice, given Burgess's view that Ford's tetralogy *Parade's End* (1924–1928) 'presented the need for a new kind of courage facing a world falling into barbarism' (1998, p. 192). In place of Ford's depiction of a nation moving towards war, however, the 'barbarism' of *One Hand Clapping* is what Hoggart called the 'shiny barbarism' of mass culture, which draws on 'a growing minor mythology imported from America, but modified for British tastes' (1971, p. 193).

Howard explicitly articulates a concern with Americanization as having the potential to foreclose a unique and distinctive English identity. Following the end of his experiment, involving his and Janet's luxury trip to America, Howard declares that 'I've nothing against Americans, and we've seen them first-hand for ourselves, but I don't want to see English people turned into second-hand Americans' (*OHC*, p. 204). The popularity of American mass culture is thus not seen as a new and harmless form of entertainment but as involving the effacement of an 'old England'

which resides in the nation's literary tradition. As Howard states through reference to one of the key figures of both modernism and Leavis's 'great tradition' of English literature:

> It's this spitting in the eye of everything we stand for. There was this writer, you see, D. H. Lawrence, and he said that there was this terrible Old England, like an old lion that kids keep poking sticks at through the bars and the lion's roaring away and is all scabby and old. (p. 204)

Howard, like J. W. Denham, is thus presented as a lone Englishman who is uncorrupted by American mass culture and committed to a conception of a unitary national culture as being able to provide a sense of unity to a fragmented society.

The novel's title refers to the name of the fictional play in the text, 'One Hand Clapping', that deals 'with the decay and decadence in the world about us' (p. 147). When Janet states that the title is 'a silly sort of name', and asks, 'How can you have just one hand clapping?', Howard replies that its origins are in Zen Buddhism: 'It's something you have to try and imagine. […] It's a way of getting in touch with Reality, you see, by proceeding by way of the absurd' (pp. 147–148). Howard's interest in the absurdist element of the play's title alludes to the Theatre of the Absurd movement of the late-1950s, suggesting the continued influence of Beckett on Burgess's work.[17] Throughout *One Hand Clapping* the reader is confronted with the absurdity of life in post-war England, where real life experience is continually filtered through reference to television dramas, as when Janet's sister Myrtle attempts suicide at Janet's home before being taken to hospital. 'The people in the street didn't come out to see what was going on, as they would have done in the old nosy days before TV', reflects Janet, '[the drama] Emergency Ward Ten would be far more real to them than any real emergency like this one' (p. 47). The narrative conforms to stricter realist conventions than both the Theatre of the Absurd and later postmodernist modes of writing preoccupied with spectacle. Yet, the novel also suggests that traditional narrative forms are increasingly unable to represent real life adequately as 'mass culture' has become the dominant point of reference for society as a whole.

Although the fictional play's title suggests the Theatre of the Absurd, its content parodies John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* (1956), as is clear from Janet's description:

> When the curtain went up, what should it be but some young people in a very dirty-looking flat, with washing hanging up, and a girl ironing in her underclothes. And that scene didn't change once […]. What the play was about was about everybody being very unhappy because they'd got their education paid for by the government, or something, and there was no war on for anybody to fight in. (p. 149)

As with Burgess's novel, *Look Back in Anger* 'offers a clear example of [the] tendency to look back to a vanished era' (Bergonzi, 1979, p. 151). Yet, where Burgess concentrates on the relationship between cultural production and moral and spiritual development, Osborne's hero Jimmy has renounced the world of political causes, professing as he does that '[p]eople of our generation aren't able to die for good causes any longer. […] There aren't any good, brave causes left' (1960, p. 84). Where Burgess had direct experience of life in the colonies during the period of extensive decolonization, Osborne's protagonist articulates a sense of resentment that he has been raised on the notion that the Empire represented a 'good, brave cause' which is no longer available to his generation.

In Osborne's play, the decline of any 'good causes' for which to sacrifice oneself is thus bound up with Britain's imperial decline and the growing global influence of America, as Jimmy suggests when expressing regret over the death of the 'romantic picture' (p. 17) of the Empire. Although he never served as a colonial officer he states:

> If you've no world of your own, it's rather pleasant to regret the passing of someone else's. I must be getting sentimental. But I must say it's pretty dreary living in the American Age—unless you're American of course. Perhaps all our children will be American. (p. 17)

The language of having 'no world of your own' due to the fact that contemporary society is living through an 'American Age' expresses the prevalent concern in 1950s England that the nation was lacking a clear and coherent sense of national and cultural unity.

Osborne's play heightens this sense of disillusionment through the character of Alison's father, Colonel Redfern, the returned colonial officer who served in India. When we meet Redfern, the stage directions describe him as 'slightly withdrawn and uneasy now that he finds himself in a world where his authority has lately become less and less unquestionable', and he is characterized by Jimmy as 'one of those sturdy old plants left over from

the Edwardian Wilderness that can't understand why the sun isn't shining anymore' (pp. 66–67). The imagery here alludes to the turn from grandeur to pathos regarding the Victorian saying that 'the sun never sets on the British Empire'. The degeneration of post-war English society, which is perceived to have taken place between the beginning of the First World War in 1914 and the onset of increased decolonization in the 1950s, is articulated through Redfern's reflection that

> people told you all the time the way it was going—going to the dogs, as the Blimps are supposed to say. But it all seemed very unreal to me, out there. The England I remembered was the one I left in 1914, and I was happy to go on remembering it that way. (p. 68)

It is a comment that foregrounds the belief that an idealized 'Old England' has been consigned to the past, but that it still remains in the imagination as an attractive alternative to the realities of life in post-war England.

As with Denham's support of the poetry of Everett in *The Right to an Answer*, Howard in *One Hand Clapping* opts to become the benefactor of the young poet Redvers Glass, commissioning a poem to act as a suicide note, a fragment of which is read out by Redvers:

> […] We started off with those certain loves
> Or desires for love which men have, such as,
> Being English, a desire to love England.
> But we saw England delivered over to the hands of
> The sneerers and sniggerers, the thugs and grinners,
> England become a feeble-lighted
> Moon of America, our very language defiled
> And become slick and gum-chewing.
> Oh, and the great unearthed and their heads
> Kicked about for footballs.
> […] Alas
> For England. England is not an England
> We would wish to stand and see defiled further—(*OHC*, pp. 187–188)

The tone and language of the poem is similar to that of Philip Larkin's 'Going, Going' (1974) in which the speaker invests in an idealized notion of rural England that offers an 'escape' from a contemporary society characterized by 'split-level shopping' and 'bleak high-risers' (2003, p. 133). Just as Redvers's poem sees consumerism as all encompassing, meaning

that 'choice seems no longer there' (*OHC*, p. 188), Larkin's speaker gives in to the thought that the expansion of urbanization is indomitable and that 'Despite all the land left free / For the first time I feel somehow / That it isn't going to last' (2003, p. 134). Yet, where Larkin evokes a rural England as the antithesis of a modern, urbanized England, Burgess commits to the nation's literary heritage, which is being 'unearthed' and 'kicked about' by television quiz shows as though it were a sport. Furthermore, Larkin's 'Going, Going' offers a lament that the ability to invest in a rural England 'isn't going to last'. Alternatively, the fragment of Redver's poem ends on a much more positive note, suggesting the beginning of a battle cry to end the 'defilement' of England. The fact that the poem is cut short, however, also suggests that the novel strives to make this stance, but is unable to articulate exactly how a clearly defined rear guard action against Americanization will look.

In both *One Hand Clapping* and *The Right to an Answer*, Burgess expresses a response to what is perceived to be the cultural paucity of post-war England, and to what he considered the false unity offered by mass culture and television. The role of the poet in each novel, however, points to an investment in the revitalization of a national literary culture able to protect against Americanization. As Biswell observes, 'If [Burgess's] fictional England is still capable of producing poets—and, presumably, novelists and musicians—then its indigenous culture cannot yet be said to have been completely suppressed, absorbed or Americanized' (2006, p. 229). In the same way that Crabbe invests his time in tutoring Robert Loo in *Beds in the East*, Burgess's English-set novels include a level of optimism that the nation is still able to give something of cultural worth to the world, rather than simply consuming ideas and products.

Burgess's protagonists in *The Right to an Answer* and *One Hand Clapping* embody a rear guard defence of a traditional literary Englishness. Alternatively, the unnamed teenage narrator of *Absolute Beginners* embodies the possibility of a revitalized communal culture through the adoption by the nation's young of 'low' cultural forms, particularly jazz music. The unnamed teenage narrator of *Absolute Beginners* represents the possibility of a return to spirituality and English particularity *through* his rejection of the values and traditions of the older generation, or 'conscripts' (*AB*, p. 12). In doing so, the novel strives to suggest an alternative to the false unity of consumerism and what the narrator's friend, the Wizard, calls the '[e]xploitation of the kiddos by the conscripts' (*AB*, p. 12). At the same time, however, the novel, as well as a number of MacInnes's articles

about teenagers from the late-1950s, offers a contradictory vision of the young.[18] On the one hand, teenagers are seen as being able to redefine a new, quintessentially English culture, similar to the Victorian Music Hall tradition, whilst on the other they represent an internationalist movement which transcends national boundaries.

A 'Half English' Nation in *Absolute Beginners*

In *Absolute Beginners* the setting is invested with degenerative qualities, as seen from the perspective of the teenage hero, who moves between the respectable suburbs and the run-down streets of his home in 'Napoli'. Where the post-war England of Burgess's texts is one that requires a sense of cultural cohesion, achievable through the revival of a literary culture, for MacInnes the promise of a revised Englishness presides, at least in part, over the newly formed subculture of teenagers. The young, for MacInnes, are open to exploitation by the purveyors of popular culture, yet they also have the potential to establish a new liberal 'classless class' (1986, p. 47), which appropriates 'low' cultural forms, such as pop music, to create a new and specifically English culture.

For MacInnes, writing in a 1957 article entitled 'Young England, Half English', teenagers could be identified as signifiers of a nation split between two worlds: Britain and America. The prevalence of teenage pop singers mimicking the accents and styles of America, writes MacInnes, 'may be a sign that [the English are] ceasing to be a people in any real sense at all' (p. 15). The influence that pop cultural icons were having upon their teenage fans was creating a 'half English' generation, increasingly disconnected from traditional cultural forms of the past, such as the Music Hall, which could 'tell us of our own world' (p. 15).[19] Rather than articulating a commitment to a 'high' literary culture, as in Burgess's texts, it is jazz music that 'represents the potential revolutionary spirit that idealistically removes all prejudices of class, age, ethnicity, gender and sexuality' (2007b, p. 249). For MacInnes, it is jazz—one of key markers of an Americanized pop culture—that has the potential to rejuvenate a sense of communal and national cultural unity.

MacInnes's reference to a specifically Edwardian cultural practice—the Music Hall—may suggest a backward-looking gaze to an irretrievable past. According to the historian Dominic Sandbrook, MacInnes presents Americanization as having become 'deeply entrenched' (2011, p. 476). Yet, rather than voicing a sense of pessimism, MacInnes's article 'Young

England, Half English' remains optimistic about the English writing 'songs in an English idiom, about English life' (1986, p. 15). MacInnes's writing invests in the positivity of other cultures influencing Britain but without complete appropriation, stating: 'It's a question of measure […]: of an influence not becoming, as it has done in the pop world, an eclipse' (p. 15). Hence, when MacInnes's unnamed teenage narrator in *Absolute Beginners* is asked by the US cultural attaché Mickey Pondoroso about 'Britain and her position' he replies: '[H]er position is that she hasn't found her position' (*AB*, pp. 25–26). A national and communal conception of Englishness has thus not been foreclosed by decolonization and the influence of America; it is instead in a process of change.[20]

MacInnes extends his call for musicians to 'tell us of our own world' in his lamentation of the absence of any portrayals of mid-century England in British literature, newspapers, films, and television. As he states in his enthusiastic review of Shelagh Delaney's play *A Taste of Honey* (1959):

> The play gives a great thirst for more authentic portraits of the mid-twentieth-century. As one skips through contemporary novels, or scans the acreage of fish-and-chip dailies and the very square footage of the very predictable weeklies, as one blinks unbelievably at "British" films and stares boss-eyed at the frantic race against time that constitutes the telly, it is amazing—it really is—how very little one can learn about life in England here and now. (p. 206)

MacInnes's 'London trilogy', comprising of *City of Spades* (1957), *Absolute Beginners* and *Mr. Love and Justice* (1960), attempts to document life in the late-1950s London, focusing primarily on a marginalized world of non-white migrants, teenagers, and prostitutes respectively. It is a London that has been dramatically changed in terms of its landscape by post-war reconstruction and in terms of culture by the decline of the Empire. In *City of Spades*, MacInnes addresses British attitudes towards non-white migrants from the colonies (discussed in Chap. 5) whilst in *Absolute Beginners*, it is the burgeoning impact of Americanization and mass culture upon the former imperial centre that is of key concern.

Where Burgess's protagonists in *The Right to an Answer* and *One Hand Clapping* are depicted as 'citizens of the mess', the unnamed teenaged narrator of *Absolute Beginners* is presented as a figure of hope surrounded not only by cultural and social deterioration, but also a global political establishment which is out of touch, preoccupied with the arms

race of the Cold War. As Keith Waterhouse states in his review of the book, '[*Absolute Beginners*] sings with the vitality and restlessness that is seeping out of the glass skyscrapers and the crowded streets', a vitality which is embodied in 'the Roman-suited, Spartan-shorn "cats" who roam the jazz cellars and the Soho coffee bars, consuming gherkin-and-cream cheese sandwiches and making derisive observations upon the world around them' (1959, p. 234). Instead of being a disillusioned expat returning to an England which is damned, MacInnes's narrator is an apolitical, jazz-loving teenager who transcends any fixed social group and moves freely between classes, much like the hero of *Kim* (1901) by MacInnes's second cousin Rudyard Kipling.[21] Like Kim, MacInnes's protagonist is a picaresque hero who acts as the reader's guide through the different 'worlds' that collectively make up England's capital. Rather than presenting the existence of such diverse cultural and class-based groups as examples of disorder, the depiction of London from the viewpoint of MacInnes's narrator offers a sense of coherence, only fully appreciated by the outsider looking in.

The same sense of indomitable urban decay that pervades *The Right to an Answer* also characterizes *Absolute Beginners*. Napoli, the area of London in which MacInnes's narrator lives is 'nothing more than a stagnating slum' which is 'dying' and is bordered by a canal that 'nothing floats on except cats and contraceptives' (*AB*, pp. 45–46). Moreover, just as Burgess portrays late-1950s suburban England as a wasteland of torn posters, empty cigarette packets and decaying villages, MacInnes's London is one where the late-modern era has transformed the landscape viewed from the Thames into one of 'big new high blocks of glass-built flats' (p. 41) but where, 'out in Pimlico, the old, old city raised her bashed grey head again, like she was ashamed of her modern daughter down by the river' (p. 44). It is a stagnant landscape which forces the narrator to reflect on 'how horrible this country is, how dreary, how lifeless, how blind and busy over trifles!' (p. 44).

MacInnes's degenerated setting is not only representative of post-war London but is symbolic of what is seen as the degeneration at the heart of English society. MacInnes's London lacks a sense of communal solidarity. It is an environment beset by the inequities of class, where there exists an identifiable division between 'the glamorous people' in 'mohair and linen suits' and 'the peasant masses of the bus terminal shuffling along in their front-parlour-curtain dresses and cut-price tweeds and plastic mackintoshes, all flat feet and fair shares and you-in-your-small-corner-and-I-in-mine'

(p. 44). It is a specifically English subculture of teenagers that is able to forge a new liberal society, opposing the deep-rooted hierarchies of class, the racial prejudices of the Far Right and the political power struggles of the Cold War, and rejecting the exploitation of genuine subcultures and individual expression by mass media. As Nick Bentley maintains, the novel's closing image foregrounds an investment in England's young to 'fight for an emergent, vibrant, multicultural Englishness' (2007, p. 253) when he greets a party of African migrants at the airport by exclaiming: 'Welcome to London! Greetings from England! Meet your first teenager! We're all going up to Napoli to have a ball!' (*AB*, p. 203). In gesturing towards the recuperative possibilities of both teenagers and non-white migrants, the novel problematically invests in two newly formed subcultures that exclude MacInnes.

MacInnes's optimistic championing of the revitalizing qualities of the young is countered with an acknowledgement that teenagers are prone to exploitation by the purveyors of mass culture. A critique of this exploitation is expressed by the character Dean Swift (a reference to Jonathan Swift) when he observes younger teenagers in a record shop and complains that '[t]eenagers are ceasing to be rational, thinking human beings and turning into mindless butterflies […] all of the same size and colour, that have to flutter around exactly the same flowers' (p. 66). MacInnes goes further with this criticism in 'Pop Songs and Teenagers' and balances his overall enthusiasm with an acceptance that 'it would be equally possible to see, in the teenage neutralism and indifference to politics, and self-sufficiency, and instinct for enjoyment—in short, in their kind of happy mindlessness—the raw material for crypto-fascisms-of the worst kind' (1986, p. 59). It is to this kind of fascism that MacInnes dedicates the final chapter of *Absolute Beginners*, set in the midst of a violent 'race riot'. While the teenage narrator decries the ignorance and prejudice of those calling for non-white migrants to leave the country, a number of his teenage associates have joined the White Protection League.

The depiction in *Absolute Beginners* of the political neutrality of the 'teenage scene' contains within it a challenge to his vision of the democratization of English society, where class distinctions are broken down by a new, 'classless class' embodied by the nation's young. As Richard Wollheim comments in his essay on the modern city entitled 'Babylon, *Babylone*' (1962), which in part provides a critique of *Absolute Beginners*:

> [T]he Teenager has rejected the conception of the city as a solid three-dimensional environment that shapes and enfolds his life, and instead regards it as a kind of highly coloured backcloth against which he acts out, and upon which he projects his fantasies. (Quoted in Gould, 1993, p. 142)

A conflict exists, however, between MacInnes's commitment to the formation of a new, classless and international movement, and his localized Englishness, evident in the articles 'Young England, Half English' and 'Pop Songs and Teenagers' as well as *Absolute Beginners*.

Despite articulating a commitment to the revitalization of a specifically English popular culture through the nation's teenage music scene, in 'Pop Songs and Teenagers' MacInnes goes on to argue for the young as being

> more internationally-minded than we [the 'older generation'] were; and not, as we were, self-consciously […] but intuitively. […] Teenage songs, and even styles of clothing, are carried across Europe, it would seem, by a sort of international adolescent *maquis*. (1986, p. 57)

As such, instead of envisioning a unified Europe in which each country is distinct but also able to influence each other, as Eliot does, MacInnes views the internationalism of the young as the beginning of kind of pan-European movement, which regards national allegiance as 'deadly infantile bluster' (p. 57) and a thing of the past. London's teenagers are, for MacInnes, part of an 'international movement […] that blithely penetrates the political curtains draped by senile seniors, as yet unconscious of the rising might of this new classless class' (p. 47). In *Absolute Beginners*, the conflict between these two positions—localism and internationalism—becomes the novel's central unresolved complication in MacInnes's view of a post-imperial Englishness.

The perceived internationalism of the young suggests for some critics the *absence* of a sense of solidarity to the people who make up the communities in which MacInnes's teenagers live. For Wollheim, the teenagers depicted by MacInnes form a new 'aristocracy', which values 'indifference to general moral considerations and the substitution for them of a complex, labyrinthine, and ultimately arbitrary code of correctness', as well as 'the detached contemptuous attitude towards anything in society or the environment which thwarts or frustrates one' (quoted in Gould, 1993,

p. 143). It is this perceived negation of moral and spiritual commitment which is of central concern to Burgess's portrayal of what he calls the post-war 'cult of youth' (2002a, p. 418) in *A Clockwork Orange* (1962).

Although set in an unnamed location, *A Clockwork Orange* is inspired by what Burgess termed the 'new British phenomenon—the violence of teenage gangs', which he interprets as expressing a 'brutal disappointment with Britain's post-war decline as a world power' (2002b, p. 26). At the level of form, Burgess's sparse, experimental dystopia contrasts starkly with MacInnes's picaresque depiction of the 'youth scene' in 1950s London. Regarding their choice of protagonists, moreover, Alex's hedonism and obsession with 'ultra-violence' (1972a, p. 34) is diametrically opposed to the narrator of MacInnes's novel. MacInnes's protagonist provides a sympathetic view of an alienated and disenfranchized youth subculture finding the means to rebel against their elders and establish a new liberal, 'classless' class through music and a sense of community.

The world of Alex and his 'droogs' in *A Clockwork Orange* is one which subtly exhibits traces of post-war American cultural dominance: the pub that the gang use to establish their alibi in the opening scenes is called 'The Duke of New York'—a pointedly American variation on a traditional English pub name. Moreover, Burgess suggests the way in which the state embraces the influence of Hollywood cinema when Alex describes a poster outside the Filmdrome, from where the gang steals a car, as advertising 'the usual cowboy riot, with the archangels on the side of the US marshal six-shooting at the rustlers out of hell's fighting legions, the kind of hound-and-horny veshch put out by Statefilm in those days' (p. 18). Despite the nightmarish vision of a future, Americanized society, however, Burgess would later claim that he imagined a fictional life for Alex after the conclusion to the novel, as he states in a Parisian interview: '[Alex] grows up, he understands that violence is an aspect of youth. He has energy. He'll be able to use it to create. He will become a great musician' (quoted in Biswell, 2006, p. 262). Thus, like MacInnes, Burgess—albeit with a fair amount of retrospect—envisions the young as having the potential to progress to new forms of cultural production. Ultimately, however, MacInnes's investment in a teenage subculture, able to offer the blueprint for the transition from a universal Britishness bound up with imperialism to a localized, national identity, is undermined by the rejection of national allegiance as belonging to the sphere of Cold War geopolitics and Britain's already outmoded imperial past.

Conclusion

The novels of Burgess and MacInnes disrupt the prevalent view of post-war British literature of the 1950s and early 1960s as being solely concerned with national decline. Although both writers situate their novels within a post-war landscape which is largely characterized by stagnation and deterioration, such external characteristics symbolize the absence of a unified national culture, and thus depict England as requiring regeneration. Rather than articulating resignation to national decline, however, both writers present post-war England as containing the seeds of its own rejuvenation through cultural production, which is able to express a distinct sense of Englishness. At the same time, both Burgess and MacInnes highlight the problems facing the formation of a renewed English culture, unrestrained by the myths that underpinned the construction of a British imperial identity.

In offering an inside-outsider's perspective of English society, both novelists invite their readers to acknowledge, in particular, the divisive and harmful ideologies of 'race' that are neglected in the 1950s work of Hoggart and Williams. In Chap. 5, I will investigate the ways in which Burgess and MacInnes (as well as their contemporary Alan Sillitoe) respond to the period of mass immigration to Britain during the late-1950s. In doing so, they present conceptions of national identity based on 'race' as unsustainable and make efforts to include non-white migrants from Africa, the Caribbean, and Asia in their visions of a renewed English culture.

Notes

1. For an historical account of this shift in global politics, see Sandbrook (2011).
2. At the time of writing, anxieties about mass immigration and Britain's place in the European Union have become interconnected issues. Opposition to both form the core policies of the UK Independence Party (UKIP), which saw unprecedented rise in popularity in the build-up to the 2015 UK General Election. Pressure from UKIP forced the Conservative Party to announce the 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of Europe.
3. For more on the form and thematic preoccupations of traditional Condition-of-England novels, see Moran (2006).

4. Burgess's choice of name for the novel's narrator also alludes to Joseph Conrad's Singapore-set novel *The End of the Tether* (1902), which includes the character Mr. Denham, who is, much like Burgess's narrator of the same name, an enterprising bachelor.
5. For more on the discourse of Englishness as central to the subordination of colonized cultures, see Gikandi (1996).
6. Regarding Nazism, Orwell asserts that 'the goose-step […] is one of the most horrible sights in the world, far more terrifying than a dive-bomber. It is simply an affirmation of naked power; contained it in, quite consciously and intentionally, is a vision of a boot crashing down on a face'. This image, which would later become the 'vision of the future' offered in *1984*, is undermined however when Orwell queries, 'Why is the goose-step not used in England? There are, heaven knows, plenty of army officers who would only be too glad to introduce some such thing. It is not used because the people in the street would laugh' (p. 143).
7. John Major famously invoked this imagery in a 1993 speech to the Conservative Group for Europe, stating: 'Fifty years from now Britain will still be the country of long shadows on county grounds, warm beer, invincible green suburbs, dog lovers and pools fillers and—as George Orwell said, "old maids bicycling to Holy Communion through the morning mist"' (1993, n. p.). As Kumar notes, 'Commentators, satirical or serious, were quick to pounce on a number of things about [the speech]', including the fact that 'its references all seemed quintessentially English', were 'predominantly masculine', and 'ignored the lives of many people outside the middle-class "Middle England" that they evidently celebrated' (2003, p. 227).
8. For more on mid-century Leftist thought regarding decolonization, see Howe (1993).
9. As Chair of English at Birmingham University, Hoggart established the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in 1964. David Alderson notes that the CCCS was 'the first of its kind, though subsequently there were to be numerous university centres in related fields' (2002, p. 713). The CCCS was closed in 2002 following a restructuring of departments at Birmingham University (see Curtis, 2002).
10. See Sandbrook (2009).

11. Burgess's writings on Beckett appeared in *The Guardian* ('The Universal Mess', a review of *The Novels of Samuel Beckett* by John Fletcher, 24 July 1964), the *Spectator* ('Master Beckett', a review of Beckett's *No's Knife: Collected Shorter Prose 1945–1966* and John Calder's *Beckett at Sixty*, 21 July 1967) and in the two collections of his journalism, *Urgent Copy* ('Enduring Saturday', pp. 85–87) and *Homage to Qwert Yuiop* ('Murmurous Mud', a review of *Samuel Beckett: A Biography* by Deirdre Bair, pp. 427–428). He also wrote the programme notes for the National Theatre's London production of *Waiting for Godot* in 1987.
12. In the Foreword to his novel *The Wanting Seed* (1962), Burgess states that, on his return to England from the East he felt 'very much a stranger in a land that now seemed affluent, telly-haunted, and burgeoning with a cult of youth' (1985, p. 1).
13. The cover design of the 1960 edition of *The Right to an Answer* features a giant question mark where the period mark has been replaced by the cartoon face of typical Colonel Blimp-like character, complete with a handlebar moustache and bald head.
14. The novel's epigraph is a line from Blake's *An Island in the Moon*: '"Go and be hanged!", said Scopprell. "How can you have the face to make game of matrimony?"'.
15. Burgess also laments that, upon his return to England from Malaya, 'Everybody had a television set, and a constant question in pubs, when Lynne [Burgess's first wife] and I apologised for our ignorance of the new world and explained our tropical truculence, was, "What kind of television do you have out there?" Damn it, there was not even a Malay word for television' (2002a, p. 418).
16. Burgess recounts in his autobiography that he got to know the pubs of Chiswick via his friendship with the poet Martin Bell. He remarks that 'with him it was a great joy to spout words as the alcohol warmed. The digging out from memory of lines from *Volpone* or *The Vanity of Human Wishes* with the twelfth glass [of double gin] is the true literary experience. Verse is for learning by heart, and that is what a literary education should mostly consist of' (2002b, p. 97).
17. For more on how Beckett's work relates to the broader Theatre of the Absurd movement, see Bennett (2011).
18. See MacInnes's articles 'Young England, Half English' (1957) and 'Pop Songs and Teenagers' in MacInnes (1986).

19. In *Sweet Saturday Night: Pop Song 1840–1920* (1967), MacInnes again expresses enthusiasm for the ability of the Music Halls to respond to the preoccupations of the working class in London in a manner not found in Victorian literature, including (as denoted by the titles of the five chapters) 'Love', 'London Life', 'Work and Holidays', 'Soldiers and Sailors' and 'Friendship'.
20. MacInnes's writing has influenced two prominent English musicians, Billy Bragg and Paul Weller, who have adopted the form of the pop song throughout their careers as a means of renewing an English folk tradition to 'tell us of our world'. Weller wrote the 1986 Foreword to MacInnes's *England, Half English*, stating that it is a collection 'for posterity'. Bragg named a 2002 album (as well as a song from that album) *England, Half English*. Adopting an anti-racist stance and dealing directly with the influence that immigration has had upon England's history (from its patron saint through to its cuisine), the song's speaker declares that he is a 'great big bundle of culture, tied up in the red, white and blue'. See Billy Bragg and the Blokes, *England, Half English* (Elektra Records, 2002). Evincing the continued influence of MacInnes's fiction on his music, Bragg named his 2008 album *Mr Love & Justice*, which also includes a song of the same name, taking the title from the last of MacInnes's 'London novels'.
21. For an account of the MacInnes family genealogy, which, besides Kipling, includes the painter Edward Burne-Jones and MacInnes's mother, the novelist Angela Thirkell, see Gould (1993, p. 3).

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CHAPTER 5

Post-War Immigration and Multicultural Britain

The investment in a post-war cultural consensus in the novels of Anthony Burgess, Colin MacInnes, and Alan Sillitoe involves efforts to include non-white colonial and ex-colonial migrants new to Britain. Mass immigration during the 1950s, as Sarah Lawson Welsh maintains, 'precipitate[d] the most seismic shift in the former imperial centre's sense of itself', leading 'to a newly inflected sense of "Britishness", one which was both more complex and more ambivalent' (1997, p. 44). White British writers from the period have previously been characterized as either unwilling or unable to comprehend this shift, with MacInnes being discussed by some as the sole exception.[1] A comparative analysis of MacInnes's *City of Spades* (1957), Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1958), and Burgess's *The Right to an Answer* (1960) allows for a space in which to assess MacInnes's focus on institutional racism in London alongside a preoccupation with racism at an individual level in suburban England in Burgess's and Sillitoe's texts.[2] The novels examined here challenge ideas about national identity based on colonial myths regarding 'race', prefiguring contemporary debates about multiculturalism in Britain. At the same time, MacInnes, Sillitoe, and Burgess offer a compromised position that is characterized by doubt about whether Britain's white and non-white citizens are able to establish a sense of national unity.

Situating these writers alongside, rather than in opposition to, contemporaneous texts by non-white migrants, this chapter disrupts the prevalent division between new arrivals and British-born writers. Existing analysis

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has tended to view white British writers of the 1950s as neglecting issues of race in favour of contesting the inequities of class. In turn, their non-white contemporaries have been read as challenging racial categories that framed British society, but as disregarding issues of class. Novels by influential migrant writers of the 'Windrush generation', such as Sam Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners* (1956) and V. S. Naipaul's *The Mimic Men* (1967), are thus examined as offering the kind of critique of British reactions to immigration that is absent from the work of white British writers.[3] Jed Esty argues that 'the colonial writers of the 1950s represent a distinct phase in the remaking of English culture insofar as their work participates in the transformation of centre-periphery relations at the end of Empire' (2004, p. 200).[4] For Esty, migrant writers are able to appropriate and transform the Condition-of-England novel genre 'through the lens of an alien knowability', generating a tension between 'a recuperative romance of Englishness and a disillusioned critique of Englishness' (pp. 200–201). As I argued in Chap. 4, however, Burgess and MacInnes can also be read as appropriating the Condition-of-England genre as a means of depicting the impact of 'Americanization' on established conceptions of Englishness. This chapter extends this analysis to examine how Burgess, MacInnes, and Sillitoe depict mass immigration as a potentially positive consequence of decolonization.

Many of the novels written by first-generation migrant writers, who travelled to Britain during the period of extensive decolonization, defamiliarize post-war British culture and society for British readers. Both *City of Spades* and *The Right to an Answer* set up a similar anthropological gaze from the viewpoint of their outsider-narrators—a role shared by the Englishman Montgomery Pew and Nigerian Johnny Fortune in the former and taken solely by J. W. Denham in the latter. It is a formal device that suggests the influence of E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924). In Forster's novel, Dr. Aziz acts as Fielding's guide to the colony's foreign landscape, exposing in the process the hypocrisies of the colonial 'civilizing mission' in India. In the novels of MacInnes and Burgess, the white outsider-narrator views the changing landscape and prejudices of his own homeland through the eyes of a marginalized colonial migrant (Johnny Fortune and the Sri Lankan Mr. Raj). As with *A Passage to India*, both texts express a sense of ambivalence regarding whether a long-lasting connection between the nation's white and non-white citizens can realistically be achieved.

In the sections that follow I maintain that *City of Spades* seeks to confront the two primary myths regarding non-white male migrants in the fifties and beyond, namely their supposedly dangerous criminal and sexual natures. Nick Bentley has outlined how the 'connection of ethnicity and nation was specifically articulated in the fifties through […] discourses of criminality and sexuality' (2007, p. 258). Where previous criticism has tended to focus on the text's interest in the transformative influence of migrants forced to live on the periphery of London society, this chapter will examine the novel's challenge to the racist attitudes of those at the centre of power.[5] Firstly, I will attend to MacInnes's early contestation of the myth of criminality and what would later be labelled 'institutional racism'.[6]

Myths regarding the sexuality of black males informed anxieties about 'miscegenation' in fifties Britain. In *City of Spades*, it is the treatment of 'miscegenation' that captures the novel's ambivalence regarding the establishment of a British national identity that is not reliant on colonialist ideas about racial difference.[7] On the one hand, the relationship between Johnny Fortune and his white girlfriend Muriel points to a possible future society unconstrained by static conceptions of racial difference. Their relationship is threatened, however, not only by the prevailing racism of British society, but also by Muriel's own problematic view of Johnny as 'Other'. The depiction of a society which views Johnny and Muriel's relationship as aberrant points to the influence in the 1950s Britain of a racial discourse that, since the eighteenth century, has viewed 'the sexuality of the black, both male and female' as 'an icon for deviant sexuality in general' (Gilman 1985, p. 209). In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Frantz Fanon examines this sexualization of black skin in European culture, maintaining that

> the white man is convinced that the Negro is a beast; if it is not the length of his penis, then it is the sexual potency that impresses him. Face to face with this man who is "different from himself", he needs to defend himself. In other words, to personify The Other. (1967, p. 170)

Although pushing against this view, Muriel and the novel's other major female character Theodora Pace, articulate a form of 'exoticism' that I examined in Chap. 2, which 'renders people, objects, and places strange even as it domesticates them, and which effectively manufactures otherness even as it claims to surrender to its imminent mystery' (Huggan, 2001, p. 13). Their attraction to Johnny is viewed principally through the

prism of 'race', and he appeals to them as an 'exotic' outsider. Although pointing up this 'Othering' of Johnny as it manifests in both hostility and attraction, it is a position in which the novel colludes. In articulating enthusiasm for the cultural contribution of non-white migrants, the text itself presents black characters (not only Johnny but also the dancers of the Isabel Cornwallis ballet company) as exuberant and prelapsarian, and thus collapses back into a discourse of exoticism.

In contrast to MacInnes's focus on 'institutional racism', sexuality, and the transformation of London's urban spaces by mass immigration, Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and Burgess's *The Right to an Answer* are primarily concerned with the impact of immigration on suburban and domestic spaces. Sara Upstone has identified the 'subversion of colonial order' (2009, p. 115) staged by the use of domestic space in many postcolonial texts. This is evident, for instance, in both *The Lonely Londoners* and *The Mimic Men*. Allowing for the marginalization of Britain's non-white citizens within the nation's borders, the space of the home in Selvon's and Naipaul's novels acts as a symbolic barrier preventing unconditional acceptance. Similarly, in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and *The Right to an Answer*, the domestic space of the home acts as a politicized site of racial tension that allows for the durability of colonialist centre-periphery relations at local levels through the informal segregation of the colonizer and the colonized.[8] *The Right to an Answer* concentrates on Denham's hostility towards the 'reverse colonization' of his family home by Mr Raj, who becomes a lodger whilst Denham is away on business. *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* depicts the treatment of the black African character Sam by the Seaton family, with whom he stays during Christmas. In doing so, these novels intervene in long-running debates regarding mass immigration and point to what Jacques Derrida, in *Of Hospitality* (2000), has outlined as the power relationship inherent to the conditional nature of hospitality in the nation-state.[9]

The final section of this chapter argues that, in *The Right to an Answer*, Mr. Raj's split status as an Anglicized citizen of the Commonwealth, who is viewed as an unwelcome outsider by the novel's English characters, offers a literary depiction of what Homi K. Bhabha has called 'a flawed colonial mimesis, in which to be Anglicized is *emphatically* not to be English' (2004, p. 87). The character of Raj thus exposes the contradictions of Britain's Anglicizing mission in the colonies, a mission that Burgess experienced first-hand as an Education Officer in Malaya. Ultimately, Raj's presence in the novel invites the reader to question static ideas about

national identity based on 'race' and view mass immigration as a direct consequence of Britain's colonial interventions throughout the globe.

In examining responses to the impact of mass immigration on post-war conceptions of British identity, it is necessary first to interrogate unitary narratives of decolonization and the novel, where it is assumed that white British writers disregarded, or even resisted, the impact of immigration on British culture and society. It will then be possible to explore how the texts considered here counteract this position. MacInnes's, Sillitoe's, and Burgess's novels, moreover, are placed alongside other works by white writers that question British attitudes towards the nation's non-white citizens. In her 1959 play, *A Taste of Honey*, Shelagh Delaney challenges anxieties about inter-racial relationships, while *The Boarding-House* (1965) by the Anglo-Irish writer William Trevor, depicts the prominence of ideas about racial difference as being formed by colonial myths regarding colonized subjects. From this, it is possible to identify an early attempt by white writers to depict racism as a legacy of colonialism and commit to the establishment of a 'post-colonial' society that is not reliant on the construction of an outmoded imperial British identity.

The Windrush Generation and Britain's 'Enigmatic Silences'

During the period of extensive decolonization in the 1950s and early 1960s, mass immigration to Britain from the colonies and ex-colonies meant that ethnicity, for many, became a key defining marker of British national identity. Through a discussion of what Paul Gilroy has termed the 'enigmatic silences' of the founding texts of Cultural Studies regarding the subject of 'mass black settlement' (1996, p. 235), I will show that a similar discourse has developed in analyses of British literature. Examinations of the literature of migrant writers encountering racial prejudice in post-war Britain have tended to uphold the view that mass immigration is an issue almost exclusively dealt with by non-white writers. It is certainly true that many prominent white writers of Britain's post-war literary establishment evaded the issue of mass immigration, and the novels produced by Britain's new arrivals during the fifties and sixties offer an important response to the overt and covert racism they and many others faced. Characterizing all literature produced by white British writers in the fifties and sixties as somehow 'wishing away' the issue of mass immigration, however, not only

neglects the novels discussed in this chapter, but also views the literature of migrant writers solely through the prism of 'race', overlooking their diverse preoccupations with issues of class and sexuality.

Prior to the Second World War, Britain was already a multiracial nation, with links to the transatlantic slave trade and a long history of immigration.[10] The scale of immigration during the immediate post-war decades, however, was unprecedented.[11] 1948 is considered a watershed year in conceptions of Britishness based on 'race', principally for two reasons. Firstly, the British Nationality Act was passed, which as Kathleen Paul notes, established 'equality of status and rights throughout the empire' and entitlement of all subjects of the British crown 'to live and work in Britain' (1997, p. 16). Following the passing of the Act, the SS *Empire Windrush* carrying mainly non-white Caribbean migrants arrived in Britain, an event that, according to Ruvani Ranasinha, has 'become both *the* story of post-war immigration and the point at which Britain became a multi-cultural society' (2010, p. 177).[12] The continued significance of the arrival of the *Windrush* from the Caribbean can be seen in the fact that migrant writers operating in Britain throughout the 1950s and 1960s have since been labelled the 'Windrush generation'. Matthew Mead has noted the 50th anniversary of the *Windrush* in 1998, moreover, was marked by 'a number of explicitly memorializing acts', that included the renaming of the area in front of the Tate Library in Brixton as 'Windrush Square', the unveiling by Bernie Grant MP of a stone and rose garden in West Green, and the introduction of 'Windrush Sunday' (2009, p. 140).

In the decade that followed the British Nationality Act and the arrival of the *Windrush*, the immigration of non-white migrants came to be referred to as Britain's 'colour problem'. Despite the legal enshrinement of equality to include Commonwealth nations, many in Britain resisted the presence of non-white migrants, a response that reached a crisis point with the 1958 'race riots' in Nottingham and Notting Hill. Anti-immigration campaigns adopted the colonialist rhetoric of racial hierarchies to uphold a notion of white British superiority. As Alan Sinfield comments, 'British prejudice was the continuation of the imperial assumption that it was right to exploit Africans and Asians because they were inferior' (2004, p. 144).[13] By the late-1950s and 1960s, Britain could no longer be said to be the 'heart of the world', but ideas about the superiority of Britain's white population sustained a centre-periphery dynamic within the nation's borders, marginalizing non-white migrants from the colonies and ex-colonies into subcultural communities. Responding to the race riots

and anti-immigration campaigns, the Macmillan government passed the Commonwealth Immigrants Act in 1962, introducing strict immigration controls.

It is to this social and political milieu that Burgess returned after working throughout the fifties as an Education Officer in Malaya and Brunei.[14] *The Right to an Answer* was the first of his many novels to be written and published following this return and contributes to the widespread debate about what constituted British citizenship, how immigration could be controlled, and what rights members of the Commonwealth should or should not be granted. MacInnes, on the other hand, had returned home after the Second World War and lived in England during the unfolding of Britain's so-called colour problem. From the late-1940s onwards, as his biographer Tony Gould notes, 'MacInnes's discovery of blacks, his drinking, and his homosexuality developed simultaneously', taking him 'to the heart of African and Caribbean London—the Soho clubs, the Tottenham Court Road pubs and dance-halls' (1993, p. 94).[15] This experience of London's migrant communities influenced *City of Spades* and informed the novel's critique of ideas about British superiority based on the supposed fairness and equality of British justice, which had been promoted throughout the colonies as the justification for British rule.

A prevalent view surrounding this period of dramatic social change in Britain has maintained that migrant writers were largely alone in attending to the relationship between Britain's history of colonialism and the intensification of conceptions of Britishness based on 'race'. In discussing Selvon and George Lamming, Graham MacPhee maintains that the literature of post-war migrant writers exposes the reality that the 'restructuring of community' around the welfare state 'was shaped by an increasingly ethnically and racially based conception of nation, one which paradoxically tended to erase the history of imperialism that had engendered it' (2011, p. 56). Yet, what MacPhee's analysis fails to address is how *The Right to an Answer*, *City of Spades*, and *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* present racism towards Britain's non-white citizens as an extension of myths first formulated as a means of translating the ideology of imperialism back to those in the 'centre'.

It is certainly the case that a number of first-generation migrant writers wrote significant literary accounts of their sense of dislocation and estrangement when confronted with racial prejudice in a nation that they had been encouraged, through the history of colonialism, to view as their 'motherland'. Texts such as *The Lonely Londoners* and *The Mimic Men*, as

well as George Lamming's *The Emigrants* (1954), and Andrew Salkey's *Escape to an Autumn Pavement* (1960), are key within a body of literature produced by migrant writers in the immediate post-war decades, originally termed 'New' or 'Commonwealth Literature'.[16] Whilst recognizing that they offer very different accounts of migration, and adopt disparate formal techniques, C. L. Innes comments that such works articulate 'an affinity in their sense of transience' as well as in their 'discovery that the myth of finding a home and motherland, a tradition to which they could lay claim, was a barren one' (2007, p. 185). This shared experience led to the establishment of the Caribbean Artists Movement (CAM) by Lamming, Salkey, and others (such as Kamau Brathwaite and the poet and publisher John LaRose) where readings of Caribbean, African, and African-American literature was performed as a means of 'reinforc[ing] a sense of communal identity' and establishing a 'hybrid oral/literary tradition different from but affiliated to the pre-existing English literary tradition' (Innes 2007, p. 184).[17]

The move towards the creation of a communal migrant identity within post-war Britain responded to the broad marginalization of migrant voices. The experiences of hostility and racism faced by Britain's new arrivals in the 1950s and 1960s, as Paul Gilroy notes, is absent from the 'culture debates' of Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams who, as I argued in Chap. 4, provide analyses of Britain's changing landscape due to 'Americanization' and the prevalence of mass culture. For Gilroy, however, their examinations fail to convey 'a sense of Britain and British identity being formed by forces […] that overflowed from the imperial crucible of the nation-state' (1996, p. 234). Gilroy's analysis of Hoggart's 'enigmatic silence' (p. 235) on the issue of immigration in *The Uses of Literacy* (1957) in particular posits that it can be explained by his overall enthusiasm for what he saw as the tolerant and internationalist world view of Britain's working-class communities. Only with the later work of Stuart Hall (originally from Jamaica) from the 1970s onwards, was there 'a solid bridge […] toward a more open, global understanding of where Britain might be located in a decolonized and postimperial world order defined by the Cold War' (p. 237). Gilroy is right that Hoggart's seminal work does not address the issue of mass immigration into working-class communities. Yet, his contention that Hoggart's belief in the tolerance of England's working-class sounds 'hollow' (p. 235) when anti-immigration campaigns are taken into consideration, suggests Gilroy's own homogenization of post-war, working-class communities as inherently racist.[18]

Extending Gilroy's analysis of the 'enigmatic silences' of the 1950s and 1960s Cultural Studies writers, British literature from the same period has been characterized as neglecting the presence of non-white migrants in favour of contesting the inequities of class. Elizabeth Maslen, for example, reads the fifties novels of Sillitoe and Selvon as challenging '[t]he assumption of class and racial superiority' (2004, p. 46) respectively, before concluding that 'non-white communities must find their own voices in a country which continues throughout the [post-war] period to see them as either exotic or unwelcome—certainly as having no impact on Englishness' (p. 47). Caryl Phillips has similarly argued that throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, 'black writers [have] addressed British life, and naturally enough these writers included black characters in their work. […] The lack of any reciprocal imagining on the part of white British writers is puzzling' (2004, n. p.). This prevalent view is largely true of the metropolitan literary establishment, but it all too often flattens British responses to new arrivals throughout the 1950s and 1960s, overlooking a range of texts.

The oft-cited exception to the 'silence' of white writers on immigration is MacInnes's *City of Spades*. According to Onyekachi Wambu, MacInnes is the only white writer 'who eagerly embraced the world of the new migrants and understood that they were the harbingers of a social revolution' (2000, p. 29). Phillips supports this, citing MacInnes as 'the great exception', as '[o]nly he, among British writers, seemed to want to see what was happening on the streets of Britain and only he seemed prepared to imagine himself into the world and lives of these "dark strangers" who were both of, and not of, the country' (2004, n. p.). MacInnes undoubtedly offers one of the earliest and most in-depth literary representations of a London peopled by African, Asian, and Caribbean minorities operating, as Phillips states, 'behind the façade of post-Edwardian respectability that '50s Britain tried desperately to affect' (n. p.). Phillips concludes, however, that 'the more one reads of MacInnes […] the clearer it becomes that it is the sexual frisson of the black newcomer that must initially have attracted him to the subject' (n. p.). Based on *City of Spades*, Delaney's *A Taste of Honey*, and Alan Hollinghurst's 1988 novel *The Swimming-Pool Library*, Phillips maintains that white writers have consistently failed to tackle the issue of race due to the fact that 'it is somehow difficult for a white English writer imaginatively to engage with a black character, particularly a male, without thinking sexually' (n. p.). While there is an element of truth to this claim, it is a generalization that cannot be attributed

to *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, *The Right to an Answer*, and *The Boarding-House*.

A close reading of these works together reveals a range of conscious attempts on the part of a number of white writers to move beyond a notion of Englishness that is dependent upon colonialist myths regarding 'race'. In different ways, literature from the late-1950s and 1960s dramatizes the predicament of non-white arrivals in a nation largely reluctant to view mass immigration as a legacy of Britain's 'civilizing mission' around the globe. An acknowledgement of this broader range of texts to include *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and *The Right to an Answer*, both of which is set in the Midlands, and *A Taste of Honey*, set in Salford, extends the regional focus of existing approaches which concentrate on London as the central site of cultural and social change.

It is certainly the case that a large proportion of migrants from the colonies settled in the capital, meaning that, as John Clement Ball asserts, '[T]he metropolis that once possessed a large proportion of the world now contains a transnational "world" that is increasingly taking possession of it' (2004, p. 4). What this has meant, however, is that the transformation of London's metropolitan, urban setting is often either made to stand in as a synecdoche of the nation or cited as evidence that communities outside London were unremittingly hostile to non-white migrants. The latter view has been upheld by the above analyses, which posit that *City of Spades* is the exception to a British literary establishment largely silent on the issue of immigration.

What Phillips and others have concentrated on, however, is the broad absence of black characters in metropolitan literature. Sillitoe, Burgess, and Delaney were northern writers, from Nottingham, Manchester, and Salford respectively, and, with their early works written in the late-1950s, they operated outside of the metropolitan establishment. *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, *The Right to an Answer*, and *A Taste of Honey* thus explore the impact of immigration on non-metropolitan locales often considered peripheral within England's borders. This perspective responds to the movement of migrants beyond the nation's capital, as the historian Dominic Sandbrook writes, 'During the 1950s the focus of migrant settlement began to shift northwards and inland, to the great old industrial powerhouses of Lancashire and the West Midlands' (2011, p. 317), largely due to the availability of unskilled and semi-skilled jobs. The suburban Midlands setting of *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and *The Right to an Answer*, and the northern setting of *A Taste of Honey*, disrupt

the slippage between London and England, situating debates about the relationship between Britishness and 'race' in the nation's provincial, and often overlooked regions.[19]

Institutional Racism and the 'Noble Savage' in *City of Spades*

City of Spades has been praised since its publication for providing an insight into what was for many a previously unknown subculture of African and West Indian migrants living in London in the 1950s. In depicting the treatment of non-white migrants by Britain's police and law courts, the novel reveals a preoccupation not only with London's emerging 'internal worlds', but also with the attitudes and assumptions which were influenced by colonialism and informed judicial policy. It is the multiple police arrests experienced by Johnny Fortune that forces his final rejection of Britain in the novel's conclusion, pointing to a distinction between overt racism, articulated in anti-immigration campaigns, violence, and intimidation, and covert forms of racism manifested at an institutional level. It is the latter that *City of Spades* dramatizes as a means of questioning British conceptions of superiority based on the democratic ideals of law and order.

The differentiation between 'individual racism' and 'institutional racism' made by the American activists Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton offers a productive vocabulary for examining the depiction of London's police and judicial services in *City of Spades*. In *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* Carmichael and Hamilton contend that

> the first ['individual racism'] consists of overt acts by individuals, which cause death, injury or the violent destruction of property. This type can be recorded by television cameras; it can frequently be observed in the process of commission. The second type ['institutional racism'] is less overt, far more subtle, less identifiable in terms of *specific* individuals committing the acts. But it is no less destructive of human life. The second type originates in the operation of established and respected forces in the society, and thus receives far less public condemnation than the first type. (1967, p. 2)

The primary signifier of a covertly racist system of justice in *City of Spades* is the ironically named police inspector Mr. Purity. Through Purity, *City of Spades* dramatizes how the relationship between 'whiteness' and ideas about British superiority can be promoted at the level of respected

social institutions, and so often go ignored. MacInnes makes the conflict between Johnny Fortune and Mr. Purity central, and emphasizes the way in which the overt 'individual racism' of British society is upheld by a form of covert, systematic racism, in which all non-white citizens are considered criminal by the police and law courts.

Setting up the novel's intervention into debates about institutional racism, the narrative begins with Montgomery Pew's first day as a Welfare Officer for the Colonial Department. Pew's unnamed predecessor (who 'eyed [Pew] with aloof imperial calm') states that migrants from Africa and the Caribbean have given Britain 'what we never had before—a colour problem' (*CoS*, pp. 9–10). Pew, introduced as a 'liberal', responds with the query: 'Could it not be […] that we have given them just that in their own countries?' (p. 10). It is a statement early in the narrative that frames the novel's intervention in terms of colonialism: Pew articulates the view that the arrival of non-white migrants is a direct consequence of centuries of British colonial expansion and exploitation.

Pew's induction at the Colonial Department is only the first of the novel's examples of institutional racism, with the central thread of the text focusing on the prejudices informing Britain's police service, and what Pew views as the evil which is licensed to discover evil: upon being approached by a policeman, Pew describes him as 'fixing me with that *double* look that sits in coppers' eyes ("I say this, but I don't mean it, and you know I don't, and I know you know …". Or, "Yes, I'm evil too, but, you see, my evil's licensed to discover yours")' (*CoS*, p. 57).[20] When Johnny, Pew's first client at the Colonial Department, is arrested and charged with living off the earnings of Dorothy, the sister of his girlfriend Muriel (making him a 'ponce', a charge of which he is innocent), the action focuses on the widespread racism that informs British policing. At a time when racial hierarchies at the former imperial 'centre' had become intensified as a response to mass immigration, MacInnes attacks the very heart of conceptions of British superiority by expressing an understanding that, beneath the veneer of law and order, lay corruption, hypocrisy, and racism.

The disparity between the attitude and actions of the police and the idealized notion of English law and order promoted in the colonies is foregrounded by Johnny's reaction to his arrest: 'In English law […] do you not make a charge? Do you not caution a prisoner before he speaks? This is the story that they tell us in our lessons we have back home on British justice' (p. 184). In response to Johnny's assertion that he is innocent of the charge of being a 'ponce', the Detective-Constable (who also

beats Johnny whilst he is in custody) remarks: 'Nigger or ponce, it's all the same' (p. 185). Although Johnny is later found to be 'not guilty' in a third-person narrated court scene, the 'Interlude' entitled 'Let Justice be done (and be seen to be)!', the scene does not end with the affirmation of what is fair and right over that which is corrupt and dishonest. Instead, the seemingly positive verdict is undermined by the interlude's conclusion, which notes that '[a] week later, Johnny was re-arrested on the charge of being in possession of Indian hemp' (p. 229) leading him to be imprisoned for a month. The novel's critique of notions of a superior British civilization, which could be embodied in the nation's system of law and order, is voiced by Johnny's solicitor, Zuss-Amor: 'It's one pack of lies fighting another, and the thing is to think up the best ones, and have the best man there to tell them for you so that justice is done' (p. 203). Here, a British system of justice does not stand for an objective sense of 'right behaviour'; instead, it is compromised by corruption and a view of black males as immoral by their very nature.

Although the concern with institutional racism in *City of Spades* is in many ways pervasive, the novel allows much to the ability of culture to challenge the power of the state. As John McLeod maintains in his examination of the shared vision of a multiracial Britain expressed both in *City of Spades* and *The Lonely Londoners*:

> The utopian visions of a hybridized and multicultural London to be found in the fiction of Sam Selvon and Colin MacInnes draw upon singing and dancing, which were bringing old and new Londoners together in the 1950s influenced by Caribbean calypso, American pop, African music and jazz. In the energies, encounters and social relations […], each writer found the inspiration for daring, hopeful projections of London where the city's divisive architecture of power was effectively contested. (2004, p. 26)

The contestation of London's 'architecture of power' through social interaction, the production of music and, by extension, *the text itself*, promotes the power of individual subjects to challenge institutional forms of racism that oppress the marginalized members of society.

In contrast to the novel's presentation of a ruthless and unscrupulous police force, the *joie de vivre* of London's burgeoning black population is often romanticized by MacInnes in a manner that replays the colonialist myths of African atavism and the 'noble savage'. The figure of the 'noble savage' is a recurring manifestation of 'primitivism', whereby

non-European subjects are glorified as representing an attractive and natural nobility in contrast to European society. As Marianna Torgovnick has shown, 'primitivism' merges a Western fear of African 'savagery' with 'admiration for their communal life and idyllic closeness to nature' (1997, p. 13). Non-European societies are viewed as existing in a 'lost' world, diametrically opposed to European civilization, and thus freighted with rejuvenating and 'natural' qualities. As Ter Ellingson notes, in mythologized constructions of the 'noble savage', a natural wildness is praised as contrasting the 'baseness that must be implicitly attributed to civilization' (2001, p. 8). The oxymoronic quality of the label 'noble savage', however, points to the manner in which it is informed by a discourse of racial and cultural 'otherness' that can be figured in direct opposition to conceptions of a homogeneous and industrialized West.[21]

In *City of Spades*, this primitivist viewpoint is evident in Pew's first meeting with Johnny Fortune, in which he focuses on Johnny's physical 'otherness' and describes him in animalistic terms:

> I beheld a handsomely ugly face, animal and engaging, with beetling brow, squashed nose and full and generous lips, surmounted by a thatch of thick curly hair cut to a high rising peak in front: a face wearing (it seemed to me) a sly, morose, secretive look, until suddenly its mouth split open into a candid ivory and coral smile. (*CoS*, p. 16)

From Pew's perspective, Johnny also possesses a primitive musical rhythm in his gait: '[H]is long legs […] were supported by two very effective splayed-out feet; on which […] he was executing a tracery of tentative dance steps to some inaudible music' (p. 20).[22] It is Johnny's physicality, rather than any specific cultural, social, or political contribution, which at first establishes him as counteracting the reactionary views about 'race' of the Colonial Department. Johnny's role as Pew's guide through the dance halls and bars not usually frequented by London's white population suggest the possibilities of conviviality between the city's white and non-white inhabitants. Yet, it is the notion of Britain's non-white citizens exhibiting a kind of prelapsarian nobility that, throughout *City of Spades*, seems to indicate their connection to a sense of spirituality very much missing from the dominant culture of post-war London society.

The epitome of this evocation of primitivism is not found in the novel's characterization of Johnny but in the description of the Isabel Cornwallis ballet company from America.[23] Although Pew confesses that he has

'never been able to take seriously this sad, prancing art' (*CoS*, p. 131), upon watching the ballet company perform he reflects that

> as they danced, they were clothed in what seemed the antique innocence and wisdom of humanity before the Fall—the ancient, simple splendour of the millennially distant days before thought began, and civilizations…before the glories of conscious creation, and the horrors of conscious debasement came into the world! In the theatre they were *savages* again: but the savage is no barbarian—he is an entire man of a complete, forgotten world, intense and mindless, for which we, with all our conquests, must feel a disturbing, deep nostalgia. (p. 177)[24]

The passage goes on to describe the ballet dancers as 'adult children' who could 'throw off their twentieth-century garments, and all their ruthlessness and avarice and spleen, and radiate, on the stage, an atmosphere of goodness! of happiness! of love!' (*CoS*, p. 177). Pew concludes with the revelation that he at last saw 'what was the mystery of the deep attraction to us of the Spades—the fact that they were still a mystery to themselves' (p. 177). The valorization of the ballet troupe as embodying a sense of 'goodness' and 'love' perceived to be largely missing from a morally-corrupt post-war British society is articulated using a colonial discourse, which portrays non-white peoples as ahistorical and able to transcend the corruption of Western civilization.

City of Spades offers a radical critique of British law and order and, in doing so, contests one of the central pillars of Britain's 'civilizing mission' through colonial expansion. Asserting that British society can only be revitalized by the arrival of non-white migrants, the novel also commits to the potentially positive impact of mass immigration on what is depicted as a degenerative post-war culture. Paradoxically, however, the language and imagery used to depict this revitalization collapses back into colonialist tropes that uphold ideas about differences based on 'race'.

'A Gloriously Mongrel Breed': Miscegenation and Exoticism in *City of Spades*

As well as using the novel form to contest myths that perpetuated the view of ex-colonial migrant communities living in London as inherently criminal, MacInnes sets out to challenge the other main fear at the heart of national decline due to immigration, namely inter-racial relationships

and the subsequent genetic weakening of a 'pure' English race. In contrast to MacInnes's focus on Johnny Fortune's attitude regarding the son he has with Muriel, Shelagh Delaney's *A Taste of Honey* responds to anxieties about inter-racial relationships in a manner that concentrates on the experience of the mother, the central character Jo. In both cases, as with MacInnes's depiction of a prelapsarian vitality provided by new arrivals in post-war London, the portrayal of African sexuality is problematic and leads to an ambivalent conclusion regarding whether a lasting connection between England's white and non-white populations can be achieved.

Throughout both his fiction and journalism, MacInnes counteracts the myth of a 'pure' English race and celebrates English national identity as having been shaped by a history of invasion and immigration. In *London, City of Any Dream*, for example, he writes about how:

> immigrants from Commonwealth countries […] have settled in our midst—to the infinite pleasure of those of us who love the life and variety they have added to the capital, and the sour disdain of those who have forgotten that the very essence of the English nation […] is that we are a gloriously mongrel breed. (Fieger and MacInnes 1962, p. 23)

And again, in his essay 'The New British', published in *The Spectator* in 1963, he writes of Rudyard Kipling's *Puck of Pook's Hill* (1906) that

> Puck's message to the young is that England's essential nature, throughout its history, is to be constantly invaded by new races […]. Puck's lesson is that hostility to the invading race is natural, but equally so the wholehearted acceptance of its presence once it has lost its alien nature and is contributing to the mongrel glory of the English people. (1979, p. 89)

MacInnes's essay criticizes Kipling for having 'less to say of the peaceful invasions' of his time, 'such as the Irish or, more notably, the Jewish', and for being a 'backward-looking prophet' in his 'love of Empire, and especially its white Dominions' (p. 89). Yet, Kipling's allegory allows MacInnes to dispel one of the 'chief illusions' (p. 89) about the impermanency of immigrants. Given the fact that 'these immigrant populations have fathered in vast numbers entirely new kinds of native-born English sons and daughters' (p. 89), MacInnes points to miscegenation as changing England's landscape permanently: a development that can be read as just one change within a longer term history of immigration to the British Isles.

The development of a new native-born British race in *City of Spades* is dramatized in the relationship between Johnny Fortune and Muriel. Pointedly, the two meet following Johnny's visit to Muriel's mother's home. Having been sent to the address by his father to track down 'Mrs Hancock', Johnny discovers that Mrs Hancock (now Mrs Macpherson) not only had a relationship with his father during his own visit to England, but also left her to raise a son, Johnny's elder half-brother Arthur, described by Mrs Macpherson as a 'bastard nigger child' (*CoS*, p. 24). Due to Johnny's father's abandonment of her, Mrs Macpherson exclaims that Johnny's race have 'brought nothing ever to me but misery and disgrace' (p. 21). History is forced to repeat itself in the novel, however, when Muriel becomes pregnant with Johnny's baby, and Johnny decides to return to Nigeria leaving Muriel to look after the child on her own.

The novel's first 'Interlude', 'Idyll of miscegenation on the river', in which Johnny and Muriel take a trip on a pleasure steamer and are depicted holding hands, their 'white and brown fingers interlocking' (p. 99), reveals MacInnes's idealized vision of a multiracial and inclusive London society. As McLeod argues, for MacInnes, 'the Thames is at the heart of his transformative vision of London as a site of potential cosmopolitan subversiveness which deeply values vernacular London life' (2007, n. p.). The scene on the Thames also offers a balanced appreciation, however, that such a future is likely to be derailed by dominant anxieties regarding nationality and race. The symbolic importance of the Thames as an idyllic setting recalls turn-of-the-century texts such as Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat* (1889) and particularly William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1890), in which, as R. Jayne Hildebrand comments, 'the Thames is the scene of a significant change of attitude' (2001, p. 14) and offers the glimpse of a utopian world. The role that the Thames plays as both a synecdoche of London and the means by which London is connected to the wider world, moreover, suggests the opening of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, in which 'the old river' is described as being 'spread out in the tranquil dignity of a waterway leading to the uttermost ends of the earth' (2007, p. 4). In Conrad's tale, the Thames represents 'the seed of commonwealths, the germs of empires' (p. 5); for MacInnes, it is the idyllic site for the arrival of those from the 'ends of the earth' to English shores where the seeds of a new stage in the racial narrative of British national identity will take root.

Before suggesting the possibilities of a new, multiracial London society through miscegenation, Johnny and Muriel's trip on the Thames acknowl-

edges that London has a long and influential history of immigration. This history is alluded to through reference to the various tourist sites that have transformed the geography and culture of the city since the sixteenth century. During the tour, for example, the conductor points out

> the district known previously as the "Stews"—with its bear-gardens, and colony of Dutch and Flemish women of easy virtue, as they were called (now all cleaned up of course)—the site of the old Globe theatre, erected by the brothers Burbage in 1598 for the smash-hits of their mate Bill Shakespeare. (*CoS*, p. 100)

The conductor also remarks that beneath the river 'is the oldest of the numerous Thames tunnels, now disused, constructed between 1825 and 1843 by Sir Marc Isambard Brunel, the Frenchman' (p. 101). It is a statement which, although not wholly accurate, acknowledges the celebrated English civil engineer's mixed parentage due to his father's nationality.

As the boat sails further down the river, moving away from London's metropolitan centre, a transformation takes place and Muriel perceives her once-familiar surroundings as strange and threatening, devoid of the markers of civilization:

> The boat passed underneath the bridge, and faces suddenly grew darker. Muriel watched her native city as the boat chugged on between Venetian facades of eyeless warehouses, dropping into ancient Roman mud, where barges lay scattered derelicts under lattices of insect cranes. […] Missing familiar pavements and shop windows, Muriel saw her city as a place quite unfamiliar, and wondered what it might do to her, and Johnny Fortune. (p. 102)

The imagery offers a glimpse into a primitive past, evoking Marlow's pronouncement in *Heart of Darkness* that the Thames has also 'been one of the dark places of the earth' (2007, p. 5). As with Conrad's tale, Muriel appears anxious that being cut adrift from a recognizable and ordered society will have an effect on her and Johnny's psychological stability.

The scene's imagery, evoking England's history of immigration and the country's 'primitive' past, provides the backdrop to Johnny and Muriel's conversation regarding myths about African promiscuity. Acknowledging reports in the 'white newspapers' and 'their Sunday editions' that 'all [black men] want is rape some innocent white lady [*sic*]', Johnny derides Britain's white population for being 'conceited', arguing that relation-

ships between black men and white women are inevitable: 'There's so few of our own girls here, it has to be a white chick or else nothing' (*CoS*, pp. 100–101). Revealing her own generalizations about black men, Muriel states that she has learned from her brother Arthur and his friends 'about how to treat you boys', to which Johnny replies, 'You speak as if we were some cattle or baboons. Respect us, that is all' (p. 103). After professing their love for one another, Muriel articulates the idealized vision of inter-racial harmony: 'Once we get into each other's blood, your race and mine, we never can cut free' (p. 106), and she pictures their life together in a little house by the river at Greenwich Palace, far from the prejudice and hostility of inner-city London.

Muriel's utopian dream is immediately undercut, however, by the boat's retreat: 'They stood hand in hand by the railings to be called first off at the pier, as the boat swung round the river in a circle. No one else followed them; and when the boat headed back up the river, they saw it wasn't stopping at the palaces' (p. 106). As Bentley remarks:

> The escape from central London […] represents an escape from the dominant social and cultural mores that would make such marriage difficult. This escape, however, is only temporary as it becomes clear that the pleasure steamer is on a non-stop round trip jettisoning the couple back into the very social and cultural environment that would oppose their relationship. […] The journey represents a tantalising glimpse of the possibility of a non-racist future that is, nevertheless, prohibited for the two lovers in the present. (2007, pp. 258–259)

The scene's conclusion, then, not only points to the breakdown of Johnny and Muriel's relationship at the end of the novel, but also suggests MacInnes's ambivalence regarding the ability of inter-racial relationships to offer a stable solution to racial prejudice in Britain. Indeed, the belief expressed by the character Alfy Bongo prior to Johnny's departure that the 'race crap's changing fast […]. In ten year's time, or so, they'll wonder what it was all about' (*CoS*, p. 239) is countered by Theodora Pace's assertion (following an affair with Johnny) that

> love, or even friendship, for those people [blacks] is *impossible*—I mean as we understand it. It's not either party's fault; it's just that in the nature of things we can never really understand each other because we see the whole world utterly differently. (p. 235)

MacInnes voices a similar view in his essay 'The New British' where he states:

> The white man's—and woman's—myth that every mortal of darker skin is panting to enter his or her bed is immensely arrogant, fails to correspond to reality, and probably arises from a profound sense of sexual insecurity and self-dissatisfaction. Left to themselves, in conditions socially and economically harmonious, the races will mingle marginally, never absolutely. (1979, p. 98)

While MacInnes promotes the abandonment of racist attitudes, holding that in 'cling[ing] to safe hatreds' society will destroy itself 'as no bomb ever will' (p. 100), his fiction and journalism also upholds a contradictory reaffirmation of racial difference and an acknowledgement of the problems facing the establishment of a multiracial English identity.

As with MacInnes's depiction of a failed inter-racial relationship in which the mother is left literally holding the baby, Delaney's play *A Taste of Honey* focuses on the experiences of the young character Jo and her relationship with a black man. Analysis of *A Taste of Honey* emphasizes the differing female and male perspectives offered by Delaney and MacInnes respectively. *City of Spades* presents a specifically masculine perspective, in which the character of Muriel is somewhat secondary. In *A Taste of Honey*, however, Delaney's emphasis is on the role of the mother and it is Jo who is the play's protagonist. It is on the image of her alone that the play ends, as her labour pains begin after informing her mother that her baby might be black.

Highlighting Delaney's depiction of marginalized members of British society, MacInnes's review from 1959 states that

> *A Taste of Honey* is the first English play I've seen in which a coloured man [Jo's boyfriend Jimmie], and a queer boy [Jo's friend Geof], are presented as natural characters, factually, without a nudge or shudder […] and however tart and ludicrous, it gives a final overwhelming impression of good health—of a feeling for life that is positive, sensible, and generous. (1986, p. 205)

Indeed, for MacInnes, the play represents a significant cultural departure from what he perceived as a blinkered attitude amongst writers of the 1950s regarding both migrant and teenage subcultures. In relation to this he states: 'Around them seethes a great flux of bizarre new social

groupings through which they proceed, like tourists traversing the casbah, unseeing and unaware' (p. 207).

Delaney's play does not engage directly with a commitment, evident in MacInnes's work, to the abolition of racial prejudice and to highlighting how new arrivals from the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia are not only a result of colonialism, but also the latest in a long history of immigration and invasion to Britain. The play does, however, represent what MacInnes calls 'the new race of English-born coloured boys' (p. 206). Adopting the form of the play over that of the novel, Delaney sets out to counter popular drawing-room comedies of the late-1950s, in particular those of Terrance Rattigan. Upon seeing Rattigan's *Variations on a Theme* (1958), Delaney lamented that popular comedy dramas of the late-1950s were unrealistic and depicted

> safe, sheltered, cultured lives in charming surroundings—not life as the majority of ordinary people know it. […] I see the theatre as a place where you should go not only to be entertained but where the audience has contact with *real* people, people who are *alive*. (*TH*, p. xx)[25]

Counter to MacInnes's interest in the 'seething' transformation of urban England, *A Taste of Honey* depicts an insular and domestic life, where the action rarely ventures outside of the four walls of Jo and her mother Helen's flat. The only scene that takes place outside of the domestic setting is the meeting between Jo and Jimmie (who does not appear again) in which they agree to marry.

Jimmie is never permitted into the private sphere of the flat and so the sense of separation provided by the inside/outside dynamic of the central domestic space represents his marginal status within post-war English society, as well as the controversial nature of his engagement to Jo. Indeed, Jo does not reveal to her mother that she is engaged, nor does she mention the colour of her boyfriend's skin, despite asserting that 'whatever else she might be, she isn't prejudiced against colour' (*TH*, p. 23). In the final scene, Jo informs Helen that her 'baby will be black' because 'he [Jimmie] was black', causing Helen to respond with revulsion and hatred, exclaiming that Jo's only options are to '[d]rown it', give it to the black midwife, or '[p]ut it on the stage and call it blackbird' (pp. 86–87) before leaving for the pub. Like Muriel in *City of Spades*, Jo is left on her own in the play's conclusion, yet the fact that she is 'smiling a little to herself' suggests a degree of optimism for her future.

Although he appears only once and returns to the Navy before the baby is born, Jimmie's presence contests conceptions of Britishness based on race: when asked by Jo if his 'ancestors come from Africa', Jimmie responds, 'No. Cardiff' (p. 25). Despite Jimmie's status as a British-born citizen, however, Jo articulates a similar level of interest in him as an exoticized 'Other' as Muriel towards Johnny, stating: 'I don't care where you were born. There's still a bit of jungle in you somewhere' (p. 25). It is a comment which highlights that, although Jo is clearly not prejudiced against non-white British citizens, her love of Jimmie is a form of valorization based on the colour of his skin as a marker of difference.

In both *City of Spades* and *A Taste of Honey*, the potential of miscegenation for pointing the way towards an inclusive, multiracial society is depicted as being beset by the regressive prejudices of Britain's white population. Importantly, in both cases, the prevention of a forward-looking conception of the nation is shown to be the fault of white intolerance of blacks, while the perceived misogyny and promiscuity of black males is countered by the (equally problematic) portrayal of white women as fetishizing black skin as exotic.

The sexualization of black skin is an issue which is also attended to in William Trevor's *The Boarding-House* through Major Eele's repeated visits to the Ti-Ti club to watch black dancers. The Colonel Blimp-like character Major Eele, having recently returned from service in Africa, voices the racist myth regarding the criminality of non-white migrants, maintaining that 'the whole thriving business [of prostitution] is in the hands of our coloured friends' (*BH*, p. 66). This stance is at odds, however, with his frequent attendance at the Ti-Ti Club, a strip club Eele visits specifically to watch black dancers who, to his dismay, dance to jazz music instead of the 'beat of toms-toms or the recorded sounds of jungle birds and mosquitoes' (p. 27). Rather than upholding a sexualized depiction of non-white migrants, Eele's casual racism and secret obsession with black women effectively suggests the inter-relation between colonialist tropes of African savagery and inferiority and the fetishization of black migrants by those from Britain. The character of Major Eele represents the returned colonial officer who articulates colonialist ideas about British superiority and African inferiority that the narrative reveals to be founded on hypocrisy.

In *The Right to an Answer*, Burgess offers a more self-reflexive portrayal of the returned colonial servant than is provided in *The Boarding-House*. As I argued in Chap. 4, the character of Denham returns from Singapore to what he terms the 'post-war English mess' (*RA*, p. 3), in which a sense

of national unity is being derailed by the influence of mass cultural forms from America. As well as depicting anxieties regarding the subordination of Britain to America in the aftermath of the Suez crisis, the novel intervenes in debates about the impact of mass immigration on conceptions of British identity and dramatizes the predicament of what Burgess would later call, 'The oppressed of the new Britain', who were 'trying to adjust to an alien climate and culture and meeting prejudice and even hostility' (1979, p. 58). In the relationship between Denham and the Sri Lankan migrant Mr. Raj, the novel portrays the period of mass immigration as involving a power struggle between those in Britain wishing to uphold hierarchical ideas about 'race' and the new arrivals, now able under British law to assert their equality. This conflict is staged following the 'reverse colonization' of Denham's father's home by Mr. Raj, a development in the novel's denouement that metonymically figures the suburban home as the embattled nation.

The domestic space of the home, viewed as establishing the fixed boundaries between acceptance and marginalization is also disrupted by the arrival of the African character Sam in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*. It is precisely the diversity of approaches across a range of texts by both white and non-white writers that reveals the number of ambivalent and at times problematic depictions of the impact of mass immigration on British society. In analysing Sillitoe's and Burgess's responses to the arrival of non-white, Commonwealth citizens to Britain, it is possible to examine what Derrida has outlined as the power relationship inherent in the conditional hospitality of the nation-state.

Crossing the Threshold: The Power of Hospitality in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and *The Right to an Answer*

The symbolic use of the home in Sillitoe's and Burgess's novels prefigures what Upstone has called the 'disruption of colonial ideas of space' (2009, p. 11) evident in later texts by postcolonial writers. According to Upstone, the supposedly 'natural' order of British colonial homes—involving a racial and gendered hierarchy of master, colonial wife, servant, and colonized outsider—is politicized in postcolonial literature and revealed as an ideological construct, able to uphold ideas about segregation and the assumed superiority of British civilization. While this trope is

more sustained in works by writers from nations with a history of colonial subjugation, Sillitoe's and Burgess's novels reveal a shared concern with the way in which political debates regarding immigration are played out at a domestic level in post-war England. Examining their engagement with debates about the 'colour problem' reveals their novels to be much more progressive on the issue of 'race' than previous readings suggest.

In *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and *The Right to an Answer*, the symbolic importance of domestic space offers both the promise of belonging and a barrier to unconditional acceptance within Britain's borders. In his lecture *Of Hospitality*, Derrida provides a productive means of articulating this dilemma. Addressing the paradox at the heart of the concept of hospitality, which is simultaneously unconditional and conditional, Derrida discusses what he sees as the

> insoluble antinomy […] between, on the one hand, *The* law of unlimited hospitality (to give the new arrival all of one's home and oneself, to give him or her one's own, our own, without asking a name or compensation, or the fulfilment of even the smallest condition), and on the other hand, the law*s* (in the plural), those rights and duties that are always conditioned and conditional. (2000, p. 77)

What Derrida's conceptualization acknowledges is the importance of power, for the 'law of hospitality' *requires* the host to have fixed boundaries that establish the home as a space 'that makes possible one's own hospitality' and in turn one's status as host (p. 53). When an encroachment upon the home is felt to threaten the 'sovereignty' of the host, not only is the outsider regarded as 'an undesirable foreigner, and virtually, as an enemy', but '[t]his other becomes a hostile subject, and I [the host] risk becoming their hostage' (p. 55). Ultimately, absolute and unconditional hospitality is impossible as it would in turn destroy the distinction between 'host' and 'guest' and thus the bases upon which hospitality is granted. Following Derrida, we can conceptualize the interior/exterior boundaries of the home in Sillitoe's and Burgess's texts as establishing the power relationship between host-nation and migrant and as sustaining a centre-periphery paradigm at a local level.

The plot of *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* revolves around the 21-year-old working-class protagonist Arthur Seaton. Through Seaton the novel illuminates what Sinfield calls 'the sex, violence and humanity of an unregarded (non-metropolitan) lower-class, youthful, urban

scene', expressing an 'anarchic contempt for the state, the ruling classes, empire and political parties' (2004, p. xxiii). This articulation of contempt for metropolitan establishments, and the novel's use of a specifically Nottinghamshire vernacular, has placed it as a prominent work of the Angry Young Men.[26] A previously unexamined aspect of the text is Sillitoe's use of the confines of the home to challenge the view of black African migrants as unwelcome in predominantly white working-class communities.

In Part Two, entitled 'Sunday Morning', Sillitoe addresses the treatment of Britain's non-white citizens within Nottingham's working-class community through the minor character of Sam, a 'coloured soldier from the Gold Coast' and 'a friend of Johnny's who was with the REs [the Royal Engineers] in West Africa' (*SNSM*, p. 191). The reference to Sam's status as an African member of the British Army points to his paradoxical position as a citizen of the Commonwealth and yet considered an 'outsider' to the British nation-state. Having been told to visit Johnny's family whilst in England to train as a mechanic, Sam enters the family home as an unknown outsider and a guest. By the end of his short stay, however, Sam is treated more like a member of the closely knit family unit.

Pointedly, Sam's visit occurs in the build-up to Christmas, a period characterized by goodwill and universal hospitality. In this spirit, Sam's arrival prompts a friendly reaction and he is given a place to stay, is invited to share meals with the family and is introduced to the community as a whole through visits to the local pubs. Rather than evincing what Moses in *The Lonely Londoners* ironically refers to as the 'old English diplomacy' (2006, p. 20)—referring to the *show* of hospitality masking the reality of inhospitality—*Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* depicts an environment of 'universal sympathy' (*SNSM*, p. 196) that surrounds Sam. This environment is one where Ada—Johnny's wife—considers him to be 'like my own son' (p. 200). Undermining the view of white British working-class communities as insular and overwhelmingly hostile to immigration, the novel—which was published in the year of Nottingham's 'race riot'—challenges the marginalization of non-white migrants and invites the reader to envisage a society that is accepting of racial and cultural difference.

This is not to suggest that Sillitoe's text provides an unproblematic portrayal of the treatment of colonial and ex-colonial migrants in the 1950s. Articulating the view of black Africans as 'backwards', Ada's youngest son Bert twice refers to Sam as a 'Zulu' (p. 191, p. 197), comments that he

'thinks all telegrams are sent by tom-tom' (p. 191), and suggests that his darts ability is 'a legacy left over from throwing assegais' (p. 193). Bert's comments, however, represent a broader British view that is either ignored by the rest of the family or chastised, as when he states that Sam can only pay for things 'in beads' and Ada tells him to 'shut up […] or Johnny'll gi' yer a good thump when 'e comes 'ome from Africa' (p. 193). While Sillitoe presents the kind of view held by Bert to be out of place in the novel's setting, the novel is also arguably complicit in recirculating colonialist notions of the 'noble savage' in the narrator's descriptions of Sam as having a 'calm intelligent face' and as 'simple and unselfconscious' (p. 192). Such language can be seen as replaying a form of colonialist praise for what Torgovnick has discussed as the perceived 'idyllic closeness to nature' (1997, p. 13) of black African societies.

Sam's status in the text as a minor character, appearing in only one chapter, moreover, can be read as representative of the widely held assumption in 1950s Britain that the vast majority of migrants would not settle permanently. Behind the novel's depiction of good-natured and convivial relations between Britain's white and non-white citizens lies Sam's status as a 'guest' (p. 193), with all of the conditions that such a status implies: he is warmly welcomed into the household, but there always remains the assumption that he will ultimately leave both the family home and the nation-state to return back to Africa. This condition is evident in the chapter's conclusion when Bertha asks Sam 'if he would write to her from Africa' (p. 200). Sam may have traversed the threshold of the home but within the family unit, and the novel as a whole, he remains in many ways a peripheral figure.

The symbolic importance of the home in *The Right to an Answer* establishes Denham as a member of the 'host' nation, whose hospitality of the 'outsider'—Mr. Raj—is conditional and can be retracted at any time. The novel's treatment of the issue of mass immigration comments on British ideas about the sovereignty of the nation's native, white inhabitants and the provisional status of the non-white new arrivals. Migrants from colonial and ex-colonial nations could be granted entry to Britain under the notion of equality and a supranational conception of Britishness, but the former imperial 'centre' remains in a dominant position and able to enforce an exclusionary discourse of national identity. The novel stages the consequences of when a non-white migrant from a former British colony, who has been raised to see himself as a British citizen, chooses not to rec-

ognize the dominance of native-born, white British citizens and crosses the real and imagined boundaries established as a means of keeping former colonial subjects marginalized.

The paradoxical nature of Britain's treatment of migrants, which is both unconditional following the British Nationality Act of 1948 and shown to be conditional following violent opposition to non-white new arrivals, is presented in the development of Denham's attitude towards Mr. Raj. *The Right to an Answer* began, Burgess writes in his autobiography, as a 'highly moral story' (2002a, p. 439) about the breakdown of marital bonds and the prevalence of adultery in a post-war suburban town. Yet, Burgess admits that the character of Mr. Raj 'emerged from my unconscious fully armed and, against my will, he took over the novel' (p. 438). Burgess's use of language in describing the writing process, whereby the creator of the world in which the story takes place is rendered submissive *against his will* to the demands of a previously marginal and 'fully armed' character, points to what is arguably a more central theme than adultery: the perceived colonization of British society by those who had remained for centuries 'out there' on the imperial margins.

Despite the prominence of Mr. Raj's attempt throughout the novel to find a connection between the East and the West through sociological research, the issue of immigration has largely been overlooked, with critics focusing instead on the novel's moral preoccupations. As John J. Stinson notes, the relationship in the text between the moral redundancy of extra-marital affairs and the fragmentary impact of mass culture (particularly the television) upon working-class communities suggests 'that an equation exists between moral neutrality and cultural and spiritual atrophy' (1991, p. 65). Where the character of Mr. Raj is mentioned, it is often only as a device through which Denham's status as an expat outsider, able to view post-war England from a detached position, is paralleled and exaggerated.

The novel was written at a time when the debate about the impact of mass immigration upon notions of national identity had taken on a new dimension following the 1958 'race riots'. A decision to pass the Commonwealth Immigrants Act (1962), as Sandbrook notes, 'introduced strict controls' (2011, p. 314) on immigration from Commonwealth nations. Prior to the curtailing of immigration, 'there was a great rush to arrive in Britain' and '[i]n the eighteen months before the passage of the Act, more immigrants poured into Britain than had arrived in the whole of

the previous five years' (p. 314). Through Denham's convivial treatment of Raj, which turns to hostility when he feels that his sovereignty as 'host' in his own home is threatened, Burgess's novel deals with Britain's move away from a more open conception of national identity to one which reasserts an imperial structure of centre and periphery.

The way in which *The Right to an Answer* establishes the fixed boundaries of the home as symbolic of a restricted and unwelcoming conception of Britishness at both a local and national level is comparable with the use of domestic space in many prominent texts by migrant writers. As Andrew Teverson and Sara Upstone maintain, much postcolonial criticism is concerned with 'how postcolonial identities are played out at more "local" levels: in cities, in rural communities, in homes, in schools, and in other private and public spaces' (2011, p. 2). This concern is evident in the conclusion to *The Lonely Londoners*, when Moses laments that

> this is a lonely, miserable city […]. [A]fter a while you want to get in company, you want to go to somebody house and eat a meal […]. Nobody in London does really accept you. They tolerate you, yes, but you can't go in their house and eat or sit down and talk. (2006, p. 126)

The interior space of Moses's basement accommodation, where many of the Caribbean migrant characters meet, is significant in enabling, as James Proctor notes, 'a group consciousness' where 'the boys elaborate on and establish a communal memory' (2003, p. 46). Yet, as McLeod comments, even here Moses does not find a true sense of belonging, frequently brooding on his loneliness and 'return[ing] imaginatively to an idealized past in Trinidad' (2004, p. 35), meaning that Moses's London home is 'more crypt than room' (p. 36). The isolated interior of the flat thus becomes a potent symbol in contrast to the visions of London as a globally connected and welcoming geographical space that could be described as the 'heart of the world'.

For Ralph Singh, the narrator of Naipaul's *The Mimic Men*, London fails to offer even the possibility of a 'group consciousness' or 'communal memory' and is instead characterized by 'mean rooms' and 'the shut door' (1969, p. 58). Whilst in London Singh resides in a hostel, a living space defined by its lack of roots and transience. It is a living arrangement that he prefers, however, stating: 'I could not, like so many of my fellow exiles, live in a suburban semi-detached house; I could not pretend even to myself to be part of a community or to be putting down roots',

before confessing, 'I like the feeling of impermanence' (p. 9). In contrast to Selvon's text, in which the dilemma of non-white migrants is evinced in Moses's state of limbo between his two homes, Naipaul's narrator views the settlement of Caribbean migrants in Britain as a pretence, ultimately depicting, as Veena Singh states, the attitude of those who 'look down on their own community, and also, try to achieve the glory of the colonial culture' (2005, p. 156). Where the protagonists of Selvon's and Naipaul's texts are unable to cross the final threshold that distinguishes the indigenous from the migrant citizen, Mr. Raj in *The Right to an Answer* traverses this boundary and ultimately makes Denham's father's home his own. As such, in Burgess's novel, the home takes on a different symbolic meaning and, whilst still representing the final barrier to colonial migrants, blurs the distinction between resistance and acceptance, staging the racial confrontation between Britain's new arrivals and the nation's existing white communities.

The unstated conditions of Denham's hospitality are evinced by his view of Raj as non-British, a view for which Raj reproaches Denham. Although Denham develops a convivial relationship with Raj, acting as his sole confidant in an otherwise hostile environment where he is attacked by Teddy Boys (who have not heard of the British Commonwealth) and derided for dating a white woman (Alice Winterbottom), their friendship is still framed by Denham's attempt to sustain a level of separateness. Reluctant to take responsibility as Raj's guide, Denham reassures him that he will 'be alright […]. Your own people will look after you' (*RA*, p. 82). Raj is unable to comprehend this articulation of their racial difference and replies 'reproachfully', 'My own people? […] I am a citizen of the British Commonwealth. You too are my people' (p. 82). Such slippages in Denham's perception of Raj establishes the conditions of his hospitality and signals the later racial conflict into which the friendship descends.

Despite articulating such notions of racial difference, Denham is accepting of immigration as an inevitable consequence of decolonization. Indeed, it is Denham who suggests that Raj stay in his father's spare room while he is away in Singapore on business. When his father initially rejects the suggestion, stating: 'I couldn't have him staying here, even though he is a friend of yours. […] I'm a bit […] old-fashioned about having blackies in the house', Denham replies: 'They'll be in all our homes, […] blackies of all colours, before the century's over. The new world belongs to Asia' (p. 113). It is an exchange that not only voices Denham's father's rapidly outmoded view, but also sets up the home as a microcosm of the nation,

where previously fixed boundaries and thresholds are being opened up and transformed by an era of post-war migration.

Denham's progressive acceptance of immigration as a condition of twentieth-century life collapses in the text's denouement when his own 'sovereignty' as host—and therefore his position of power—is perceived to be under threat. The cracks in Denham's hospitality towards Raj begin to show when he returns home early from Singapore after hearing of his father's death to discover that the house has been decorated with objects belonging to Raj. As he observes:

> I looked round the room, which seemed different. Had death made it seem different? No, it wasn't death, it was Mr Raj. The room seemed to smell of Ceylon—rancid, aromatic. On the table was a table-runner, I now noticed, of Ceylonese design. And with a real shock, I saw that the Rosa Bonheur [painting] was gone. In its place was a Ceylonese moonlight scene, hideously vulgar. I smelled for traces of my father, but nothing seemed left. […] But it wasn't just a matter of possessions; it was as though the house bore no real stamp of his having lived there—there was no after-flavour of my father, no echo. (p. 214)

Raj has not simply moved into the spare room, where his presence could be managed and contained, but has taken over the whole house, thus supplanting any trace of Denham's father. The combination of sensory imagery, including what Denham can see and smell as well as the metaphorical use of 'after-flavour', points to the way in which Denham perceives Raj's presence to be all encompassing.

When Raj returns to the house Denham instinctively adopts the role of the host, before acknowledging that a shift in power has occurred. He tells Raj: 'Take your coat off. Sit down. Make yourself at home. Although, perhaps it ought to be you telling me to make myself at home' (p. 217). Denham's new status as hostage rather than host is further underlined by the fact that Raj is pointing a gun at him (initially bought for self-defence) having suspected Denham to be an intruder. The two argue, with Denham accusing Raj of being responsible for the death of his father through negligence. When Raj threatens Denham with his gun and blocks him from leaving the house, Denham reveals the unspoken racism that has informed his view of Raj as 'Other' throughout the novel, shouting: 'How dare you do this to me in my own home. […] You bloody stupid black bastard' (p. 223). Pointedly, Denham reaffirms his ownership of the home

and thus his power as host to dictate Raj's actions. Denham's regression into racism and his reduction of Raj to no more than a 'black bastard' is all the more shocking because he has avoided such language throughout, and has in fact been Raj's closest friend during his stay in England. Denham's adoption of racist language reveals the limits of Britain's immigration policy whereby, as David Farrier argues in his discussion of Derrida, 'hospitality is an increasingly conditional provision, the retraction of which equates to the retraction of the *recognition of the humanity of the new arrival*' (2008, p. 122). In perceiving Raj as a threat to his power of hospitality, Denham not only retracts that hospitality, but also denies Raj's humanity in regressive terms, objectifying him in terms of his skin colour.

Having established the home as the symbolic site of the migrant's 'reverse colonization', and suggested the disruption to the relations of power which Denham has in many ways attempted to sustain throughout the text, it is the living room—the domestic space which traditionally stages the host's hospitality—which becomes the politicized site of racial conflict, where the hidden animosity between Raj and Denham is finally revealed. After being accused by Denham of being responsible for the death of his father due in part to negligence and to the strength of his Ceylonese curries, Raj retaliates with a declaration of his own history of mistreatment at the hands of the British:

> Your father lacked nothing. I treated him better than my own father was ever treated. If my father could have eaten the food your father ate he would be alive today. Your father was very well looked after; perhaps, when one considers so many weighty historical factors, better than he deserved. (p. 218)

When Denham presses Raj on what his father had done wrong, Raj argues that '[i]t is not a question of what he personally had done wrong, […] but of what people of his generation had done wrong by their ignorance or tyranny' (p. 218). Despite admitting that he saw Denham's father as a 'good old man', 'when he slept and snored in his ignorance of me and my people and so many other peoples, sometimes my love could've meant my putting hands round his throat and seeing him dead there' (p. 219). The statement offers one of the novel's few direct references to Britain's history of colonialism and alludes to Sri Lanka's status as a former British colony, having gained independence in 1948. Rather than articulating a nostalgic evocation of the expansive vision provided by the British Empire, Raj voices a criticism of the benefits reaped by *all* Britons through the

'tyrannous' system of colonialism. Raj's allusion to Sri Lanka's history of colonial subjugation under the British turns the 'colour problem' on its head: rather than mass immigration being presented as a threat to British society—as many anti-immigration campaigns of the period maintained—it is shown to be a consequence of centuries of tyrannical colonial rule from which all Britons have benefitted.

Although *The Right to an Answer* seemingly ends with the reaffirmation of racial conflict that has the potential to disrupt a forward-looking doctrine of multiculturalism in post-war Britain, Burgess's novel in fact concludes with a call for understanding and acceptance on the part of Britain's indigenous white population. Despite the fact that Denham is the sole narrator, the last word is given to Raj by way of an extract of his study into race relationships that Denham discovers. In the short extract Raj emphasizes the need for love in its various forms to counter what he refers to as the astonishing 'capacity of people for hatred' (*RA*, p. 254) as a means of establishing a more inclusive, multiracial conception of community. As he states:

> It is easily understandable, of course, that love within and for one group must, of biological necessity, imply quite contrary emotions to those elements outside the group which seem likely to threaten (even when this appearance has no basis in fact) the well-being and security, nay the very existence, of the group. […] But what cannot be understood is why man, in being forced by economic necessity, as well as being gently persuaded by the increasing shrinking of the globe through aeronautical advances, to think in terms of larger and larger groups to which he must give allegiance, or, in a word, love, is increasing his capacity for hate. (p. 254)

The fragment of Raj's sociological study calls for a supranational allegiance that recognizes the folly of restricting ideas about community to an insular world view, a position that is unsustainable in a world increasingly characterized by the ease of migration and a globally connected economic system. Despite Raj's call for a more cosmopolitan world view, however, the extract of his study that Denham discovers is left unfinished, leaving the novel to close with the pointedly inconclusive sentence: 'Love seems inevitable, necessary, as normal and as easy a process as respiration, but unfortunately' (p. 255). The open-ended tone of pessimism in this final line undercuts the idealism of Raj's commitment to 'love', providing an ambivalent non-conclusion to Burgess's portrayal of racial conflict and an

appreciation of the problems ahead for a British society coming to terms with the legacy of colonialism.

'Part-familiar, Part-threatening Caricatures': Mimicry and the Contradictions of Anglicization in *The Right to an Answer*

The concluding commitment to multiracial equality in *The Right to an Answer* is preceded throughout the text by a depiction of established notions of British national identity previously defined by 'race' as being disrupted by the dilemma of Anglicized non-white migrants from the colonies. The 1948 British Nationality Act, as Graham MacPhee notes, 'sought to continue the extensive category of imperial British subject that had existed at the height of imperial rule where, in theory at least, all people under the British monarch's rule were British subjects' (2011, p. 41). Having been provided the status of British citizenship following the British Nationality Act, however, migrants were still widely viewed as outsiders by many in Britain's white population, a view upheld by the restrictions of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962.

As Mr. Raj adopts the English language and develops an accent described by Denham as 'the song of Anglo-Ceylonese speech' (*RA*, p. 74), he repeatedly identifies himself as a 'citizen of the British Commonwealth' (p. 82). Ultimately searching for a connection between East and West, and convinced by the 'beauties […] of the post-war opening-up of the great world to humble men like himself' (p. 80), Raj assumes that decolonization has drawn a close to the oppressive inequalities inherent to imperialism and that he would be received as an equal. Instead his idealized notion of the 'motherland', in which London is conceived of as the 'hub of the universe' (p. 77), is destroyed when he discovers a nation that is largely hostile towards immigrants from the former colonies. Despite his Anglicization, Raj is continually viewed as 'Other', experiencing verbal abuse, physical assault, and criticism for his relationship with Alice Winterbottom. The reality of life in Britain hardens his final resolution that formerly colonized subjects are owed the 'right to an answer' for their history of subjugation and that they 'do not have to *ask* any more, […] now we *take*' (p. 223).

Raj's dual status as both British and Sri Lankan, and his marginalization by many of the novel's white, native characters, exposes the inherent

ambivalence of Britain's 'civilizing mission' throughout the colonies. This ambivalence has been recognized by Homi K. Bhabha as

> [t]he desire for a reformed, recognisable Other, *as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite*. Which is to say that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an *ambivalence*: in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference. (2004, p. 86)

For Bhabha, colonial discourse is inherently ambivalent because it attempts two opposing positions. Firstly, it depicts colonial subjects as distinct from the colonizing power and previously untouched by the ideals of Western civilization, thus justifying colonial intervention. Secondly, however, it seeks to 'civilize' colonial subjects to fit a Western ideal. The result is that 'mimicry is at once resemblance and menace' (p. 86). In *The Right to an Answer*, the juxtaposition of Raj's self-image (as a British citizen of the Commonwealth) alongside how he is seen by others (as an unwelcome outsider) exposes the conflict between these two aspects of the colonial discourse.

This preoccupation places Burgess's text within a tradition of colonial literature that deals with the problematic nature of mimicry. Peter Childs has acknowledged that the colonial 'mimic man', characterized in British literature in the forms of Joyce Cary's Mister Johnson (in the eponymous novel of 1939), E. M. Forster's Dr. Aziz in *A Passage to India*, and George Orwell's Dr. Veraswami in *Burmese Days* (1934), is 'part of the embarrassment of Empire as a discredited Englishness is projected onto the Anglicized colonized and an authentic English identity is located primarily in England, away from these part-familiar, part-threatening caricatures' (2007, p. 126). The journey Mr. Raj undertakes represents the arrival of the 'part-familiar, part-threatening caricature' of the Anglicized colonial subject to English shores and the subsequent questioning of the conception of an 'authentic English identity' at the former imperial 'centre'.[27]

Despite Denham's role as Raj's confidant, and his sense of affinity as an outsider in a society grown unfamiliar, their friendship is depicted as convivial but still in many ways framed by the roles of colonizer and colonized. This affirmation of difference between the two men, and the conflict between Denham's self-identification as white-British and Raj's as a member of the Commonwealth, is confirmed when Denham is reluctant to take responsibility as Raj's guide. Moreover, following his arrival in England, Raj meets Denham at the train station and offers to carry his

bags. The gesture reveals Raj's view that the racial hierarchies that sustained colonialism are a thing of the past, as Denham remarks: 'He felt himself free enough with me to parody the old-time native bearer' (*RA*, p. 105). Yet, the very fact that Denham himself interprets this gesture as a 'parody' of colonial subjugation, rather than simply a kind act on the part of a new acquaintance, suggests the continuation of such racial distinctions.

Although Denham refrains from overt racism prior to his outburst at the end of the novel, his inability to transcend a view of Raj as 'other' is suggested further in his descriptions that focus on Raj's physicality. Replaying colonialist tropes, Denham repeatedly refers to Raj's 'fine teeth' and 'milk chocolate' skin, depicting him at their first meeting as 'a tall man, with very handsome classical features—Apollo in frozen milk chocolate, though the eyes melted and burned, playing like twin radios broadcasting a romantic concerto' (pp. 74–75).[28] Raj's body is described as 'scooped and passionate, and his hands talked, juggled, took flight, returned', re-articulating the 'loose-limbed' portrayal of African and Asian colonial subjects in colonial literature. It is a similar trope of the 'noble savage' evident in the depiction of Johnny Fortune and the ballet dancers in *City of Spades*. Yet, where MacInnes adopts a belief in the rejuvenating energy of cultures from the imperial 'peripheries', Burgess presents Denham's view of Raj as 'Other' as a means of portraying his covert colonialist attitude, which only becomes apparent to Raj in their final confrontation.

Conclusion

Although written during a period of intensified hostility towards non-white migrants and a broad commitment to a British national identity that could be defined by 'race', the novels of MacInnes, Sillitoe, and Burgess reject narrow and backward-looking ideas about Britishness. Addressing both overt and covert manifestations of racism, *City of Spades*, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, and *The Right to an Answer* invite the reader to see ideas about white, British superiority as rooted in a harmful and unsustainable ideology of imperialism, an ideology that is shown to be contradictory and hypocritical. Articulating concerns with 'the conditions for a good society' (2010, p. 35), that Patricia Waugh argues lie 'at the intellectual heart of the post-war period', these texts suggest that extensive decolonization need not signal an irreversible national decline. Rather, the twin trajectories of decolonization and mass immigration mark a key

moment in Britain's history to renew a national culture that abandons the harmful racial hierarchies of colonialism.

At the same time, MacInnes, Sillitoe, and Burgess do not 'wish away' the difficulties of overcoming the legacy of a British imperial identity. Instead, their works echo the final image of Forster's *A Passage to India*, in which Fielding asks that he and Dr. Aziz become friends. In response to Fielding, the Indian landscape and the architecture of power which had been built upon it—represented by 'the temples, the tank, the jail, the palace'—answer, 'No, not yet' (1967, p. 317). MacInnes's article 'A Short Guide for Jumbles' (1956) poses the question, 'But is it really possible for a white man, and a coloured, to be friends?' to which he replies:

> One hastens to say "Yes"; but then, remembering the *distant* look that sometimes comes into the opaque brown eyes—that moment when they suddenly depart irrevocably within themselves far off towards a hidden, alien, secretive, quite untouchable horizon—one must ultimately, however reluctantly, answer, "No". (1986, p. 29)

This definitive sense of irreconcilable difference is qualified, however, in the friendship established between Pew and Johnny in *City of Spades*, as well as the conclusion to the later novel *Absolute Beginners*, in which the teenage narrator greets a party of migrants from Africa and invites them to his home 'to have a ball!' (*AB*, p. 203). As Bentley points out, both *City of Spades* and *Absolute Beginners* 'exceed the portrayal of individual characters', representing instead 'collective subcultural identities' in a manner that 'articulate[s] a discourse of empowerment for particular marginalized groups in fifties society' (2007, p. 240). In each text, it is the acts of cultural and biological mixing that offer effective challenges to the various manifestations of a British imperial identity based on 'race'.

In the conclusion to *The Right to an Answer*, Denham decides that Raj had 'come too soon for the blending' but that Raj's reflections on the future of race relations in Britain were 'just a beginning' (*RA*, p. 253). Burgess would later attest to the fruits of that 'beginning', writing in the epilogue to his non-fiction work *Urgent Copy: Literary Studies* (1968d):

> The British withdrew from their colonies, but new colonies follow them home. We old colonial servants retire, but we find that we no longer have to yearn for the richness of a multi-coloured, multi-cultural society: it's growing here all around us. (1968d, p. 272)

Where *The Malayan Trilogy* articulates the sentiment that 'the past has got to be killed' (*BE*, p. 190), but is uncertain of what will take the place of British colonialism, *The Right to an Answer* evinces Burgess's belief in the hybridity of cultural forms to respond to a dramatically changing world, where trenchant racial allegiances ignore the burgeoning economic system of globalization and the subsequent need for a broader, more cosmopolitan world view.

The investment of MacInnes, Sillitoe, and Burgess in a transformed British society able to successfully accommodate colonial and ex-colonial new arrivals expresses an effort on the part of white British writers to establish the bases of a 'post-colonial' consensual society. Yet, it is necessary to note that they also represent very different and internally contradictory positions. Just as new arrivals to Britain were confronted with what Maslen refers to as the 'insubstantial vagueness' (2004, p. 40) of Englishness, white British writers can be read as grappling with a national identity too often defined by either opposition to the colonies or exclusive, middle-class markers. In the English-set novels of MacInnes, Sillitoe, and Burgess, a 'transnational' or 'multi-cultural' vision of post-war Britain often conflicts with the re-inscription of 'race' as a marker of cultural difference. In striving to depict mass immigration as a consequence of post-war globalization, and as offering the potential to establish a more globally minded sense of unity, these texts are restricted by an emphasis on the cultural renewal of a specifically *English* identity, which often involves a slippage between England and Britain. What is glimpsed in these novels is an effort to expose the instability of a superior British imperial identity at the moment of decolonization. It is an effort, however, that relies on an investment in identity at a predominantly national level (trumping race, gender, and sexuality) that would become increasingly fraught throughout the 1960s and beyond.

Notes

1. MacInnes is discussed as the only white, British writer of the fifties to address mass immigration in Wambu (2000) and Phillips (2004).
2. For an examination of 'racism' as a 'combination of practices, discourses and representations' and a consideration of a shift in racism at the end of the twentieth century towards cultural (as opposed to biological) difference, see Balibar (1998, p. 18). Recognizing that ideas about racial difference are constructed, I will refer to 'race' in

conceptual—as opposed to biological—terms throughout this chapter.

3. For a discussion of how *The Lonely Londoners* explores how language opposes the assumed racial superiority of the dominant culture while *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* is preoccupied with challenging class inequities in post-war Britain, see Maslen (2004) and Bentley (2005).
4. For more on the impact of first-generation migrant writers on ideas about the canon of post-war English Literature, see Nasta (2000), and Ranasinha (2010).
5. For analysis of the depiction of marginalized migrant communities in *City of Spades*, see Blodgett (1976), Sinfield (2004), and Sandbrook (2011). For a comparative analysis of the utopian possibilities of song and dance in *The Lonely Londoners* and MacInnes's *City of Spades* and *Absolute Beginners*, see McLeod (2004, pp. 24–58).
6. The term 'institutional racism' has been widely used in Britain following the outcome of the 1999 Macpherson Inquiry into the Metropolitan Police Service's handling of the murder of Stephen Lawrence. For the 'The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry', undertaken by Sir William Macpherson see http://www.archive.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm42/4262/4262.htm (accessed 06 June 2016).
7. The term 'miscegenation' occurs in *City of Spades* and was widely used in 1950s debates to refer to the mixing of racial groups through sexual intercourse and procreation. The term is no longer widely used or considered acceptable in Britain. My use of it in this chapter is, therefore, contextualized as a reference to its use both by MacInnes and in 1950s debates into which *City of Spades* intervenes.
8. For more on the symbolic importance of space in postcolonial literature, see Teverson and Upstone (2011); for an examination of the home as providing a level of 'intimacy' between the colonizer and colonial subjects, see Stoler (2002).
9. I offer a comparative analysis of the issue of hospitality in works by Selvon, Naipaul, Burgess, and Sillitoe in Whittle (2014).
10. For more on the history of Britain's hostility and acceptance of immigration, see Winder (2004).

11. For an historical account of post-war immigration throughout the late-1940s and 1950s, see Sandbrook (2011, pp. 308–311).
12. Mead (2009) provides a productive appraisal of the disparity between the cultural memory that has arisen around the arrival of the *Windrush* and evidence provided by historical record.
13. For more on reactionary British responses to mass immigration, see Gilroy (1987) and Schwarz (1996, 2003).
14. Burgess returned to England from Malaya in 1957, when he began work on *The Right to an Answer*. This was interrupted when he took up another teaching job with the Colonial Service in Brunei in 1958. Burgess's post in Brunei ended that same year, however, when he fell ill and was brought back to England (see Burgess, 2002a, pp. 377–448).
15. Gould also describes how, in 1966, MacInnes joined the Racial Adjustment Action Society (RAAS), led by the Trinidadian civil rights activist Michael X (real name Michael de Freitas), as the group's only white member. De Freitas, however, had hidden his acts of fraud, larceny, and aggressive behaviour from MacInnes. After fleeing Britain, de Freitas established a commune in Trinidad, but was convicted of murder when police raided the commune grounds and discovered the mutilated remains of de Freitas's mistress, Gale Benson. In 1975 he was executed in Port of Spain. For an account of de Frietas's time in London, and his arrest and execution in Trinidad, see Gould (1993, pp. 190–198).
16. The labels of 'New' and 'Commonwealth literature' were often used to categorize writing from outside the imperial 'centre' following decolonization, prefiguring terms such as 'postcolonial' or 'world literatures' more commonly used today. As Susheila Nasta states, however, such terms that 'define and name a vastly different and multi-layered range of writing stemming from a variety of different cultural contexts and geographical locations—can both liberate and confine' (2000, p. 2). Acknowledging the complexity for the individual writer of using such labels based upon nationality, Salman Rushdie writes: 'I have constantly been asked whether I am British, or Indian. The formulation "Indian-born British writer" has been invented to explain me. But my new book deals with Pakistan. So what now? "British-resident Indo-Pakistan writer"? You see the folly of trying to contain writers within passports' (Rushdie 2009, p. 454).

17. From this movement arose the publishers New Beacon Books and the George Padmore Institute, both founded by John LaRose. The aim of the publishers and the institute is to promote the social, political, and cultural influence that diasporic communities from the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia have had upon Britain. See The George Padmore Institute website: http://www.georgepadmore-institute.org/, accessed 6 June 2016. For a volume of talks given at the George Padmore Institute by leading figures of the Caribbean diasporic community, including Dennis Bovell, Althea McNish, and Aggrey Burke, see Harris and White (1999).
18. More recently, Owen Jones argues that this common characterization is simplistic and ultimately overlooks the mixing of migrant and 'native' white communities in deprived, working-class areas of Britain (see Jones, 2011, pp. 221–246).
19. For a sustained analysis of the 'pattern of unequal relationships between the northern periphery and the metropolitan core' see Russell (2004, p. 1).
20. The scene in which Pew and Johnny are arrested is almost certainly based on MacInnes's experience of being arrested on a drugs charge, alongside his black friends, at an East End gambling house in 1955. In a 1965 article for *New Society* magazine entitled 'Nicked', MacInnes describes being beaten by police after refusing to be fingerprinted (see MacInnes, 1979, pp. 150–153). He was later acquitted but the experience left him with a lasting enmity for the police and scepticism for the justice system, stating in an interview: 'In a way I'm glad of the experience—I learned that the law is a game of chess, nothing to do with right and wrong. But it is impossible to come out of it unmuddied' (quoted in Gould, 1993, pp. 107–108). MacInnes returns to a critique of Britain's system of law in the final book of the 'London Trilogy', *Mr Love and Justice*, an allegorical tale that parallels the experience of Frankie Love, a merchant seaman turned 'ponce' who lacks the ability to love but understands the justice system, and Edward Justice, a police officer who in loving his girlfriend ultimately compromises his sense of what is right and wrong. The theme of Love's 'innocent corruption', described by Gould as 'semi-criminality as the creative and daring alternative to a life of mindless drudgery' (1993, p. 114), mirrors Johnny Fortune's abandonment of his studies in England in favour of London's criminal underworld.

21. For more on the discourse of 'primitivism', see Gikandi (2005) and Bell (2010).
22. In attributing to Johnny the characteristics of the quintessential 'noble savage', MacInnes draws on his own fascination with his Nigerian friend Ricky Hawton (to whom *City of Spades* is dedicated). Recounting his time spent with Hawton in the 1950s in the essay 'Welcome, Beauty Walk' (1960), MacInnes describes Hawton as 'brave, intelligent, generous, selfish and slothful save in emergencies. […] With him as guide and guarantor, I learned the bush paths of Afro-London, and how to address its denizens appropriately on strange occasions' (1986, pp. 81–82).
23. The ballet company is based upon the Katherine Dunham Dance Company who visited London from America in 1952, during what Gould describes as MacInnes's 'honeymoon period with the "Spades"'. According to Gould, MacInnes's 'enthusiasm for the Dunham company was first and foremost an enthusiasm for its individual dancers', referring to them as 'dark angels' and writing of the company in his 'Thoughts' book: 'Such animal beauty makes the streets and the days unbearable! What is there to compare with animal beauty, grace and intelligence? Nothing' (1993, pp. 94–96).
24. The description recalls Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899), in which Marlow describes seeing black Africans: 'They shouted, sang; their bodies streamed with perspiration; they had faces like grotesque masks—these chaps; but they had bone, muscle, a wild vitality, an intense energy of movement, that was as natural and true as the surf along their coast. They wanted no excuse for being there. They were a great comfort to look at' (2007, p. 16).
25. The plays of Rattigan were criticized by young playwrights associated with the Angry Young Men, most notably Joe Orton. Inspired by Rattigan's statement that his plays were written to please 'Aunt Edna', an imagined figure who represents Rattigan's idea of a typical theatre-goer, Orton invented the satirical, caricatured alter ego Edna Welthorpe who was a 'guardian of public morals' and whose frequent letters were used to 'goad authority into revealing their own innate idiocy and priggishness'. See 'The Edna Welthorpe Letters', http://www.joeorton.org/Pages/Joe_Orton_Life9.html, accessed 6 June 2016.
26. See Wilson (2007).

27. Burgess's knowledge and experience as an Education Officer for the Colonial Service in Malaya prior to its independence would of course have given him an insight into such a policy of Anglicization, albeit one which was committed to training young Malay boys to take over the British as the country's elite.
28. The description is reminiscent of that of the title character of Aphra Behn's 1688 novella *Oroonoko*: 'His face was not of that brown, rusty Black which most of that nation are, but a perfect ebony, or polish'd Jett. His eyes were the most awful that cou'd be seen, and very piercing; the white of 'em being like snow, as were his teeth. His nose was rising and *Roman*, instead of *African* and flat. His mouth, the finest shap'd that cou'd be seen; far from those great turn'd lips, which are so natural to the rest of the *Negroes*. The whole proportion and air of his face was so nobel, and exactly form'd, that, bating his colour, there cou'd be nothing in nature more beautiful, agreeable and handsome' (1997, p. 13).

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CHAPTER 6

Coda: Beyond Satire and Celebration: Representing Empire in Post-War British Culture

It is the purpose of this book to suggest an alternative narrative to that which has commonly framed readings of post-war British literature, one which makes central the experience of decolonization and its influence upon anxieties about Americanization and mass immigration. Many prominent writers of the immediate post-war decades, especially those who sought to reject Anglo-American modernist aesthetics, can be regarded as narrowing the horizons of literature as a means of responding to the trauma of the Second World War and the uncertain developments of decolonization. To take this as the only interpretation of post-war British literature, however, is to disregard other genealogies that allow us to consider the complexity of axiomatic categories such as 'British', 'Black British' and 'postcolonial' writing, as well as the cultural groupings of the Angry Young Men, the Movement and the Windrush generation that dominated the period. The novels of decolonization analysed here invite the reader to formulate ways of thinking beyond a reactionary return to the myths and hierarchies of the past.

Additionally, it is possible to reflect upon how a reading of this particular corpus of texts influences our appreciation of what was to follow the immediate post-war era of extensive decolonization. It is, as we have seen, possible to view these texts as colluding in part in established notions of a British imperial identity whilst also maintaining that many of their

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preoccupations and formal devices should be identified as representing a process of what Raymond Williams terms 'pre-emergence' (1977, p. 126). In studies of literature following the end of the Second World War, the British Empire was broadly elided from debates. As Howard J. Booth and Nigel Rigby state in relation to some of the earliest critical approaches to modernism:

> After the Second World War […] available literary-critical positions, for all the debate between them, colluded in excluding references to colonialism. […] Among liberal critics the "Winds of Change" in Africa and wider decolonisation made imperialism seem something from a guilty past. (2000b, p. 3)[1]

Rather than being understood as informing conceptions of national identity, as well as anxieties about Americanization and immigration, Britain's colonial history could be 'located firmly in certain minor authors and the adventure tale in the late Victorian period' (p. 3). As a means of accounting for the way in which the novels examined here were received during the era of decolonization and beyond, I seek to address the broader cultural milieu of post-war Britain that followed their publication. In doing so, I maintain that, in the decades that followed the era of extensive decolonization, colonialism was largely either satirized or celebrated. In both cases, responses were characterized by caricatured portrayals of Britain's colonial past. In mapping this trajectory, it will then be possible to consider how the exploration of the 1950s texts offered here can inform our reading of literature that has sought to historicize the complicated and dynamic period known widely as the 'end of Empire'. To do this, we can take as a case study Andrea Levy's hugely successful *Small Island* (2004), which offers the most prominent depiction of a post-war British society experiencing the aftermath of the Second World War and the impact of decolonization and mass immigration.

Caricaturing Colonialism

The 'satire boom' of the early 1960s depicted the figure of the colonial officer as a comedic embodiment of conservatism, while popular historical films drew on colonial settings for celebratory stories of Britishness. In both cases, an examination of the ideology underpinning a British imperial identity is occluded, as is the important challenge to an imperial identity

by mass immigration from the colonies. For the satirists of the 1960s, the figure of the colonial officer was seen as personifying increasingly outmoded notions of British identity. As Stuart Ward comments in relation to the stage revue *Beyond the Fringe* (which premiered in 1960), the television series *That Was the Week That Was* (1962–1963), and the magazine *Private Eye* (1961–present):

> The ever-widening gap between the global reach of British national aspirations and the encroaching external realities of the post-war world provided new avenues for comic exploration of the imperial ethos and the myth of Britain's "world role". […] The end of Empire provided fertile ground for new innovations in British comedy, as well-worn ideas about loyalty, service, character, authority and the civilizing mission of the British race were subjected to relentless parody and ridicule. (2001c, p. 91, p. 92)

The subject matter of the 'satire boom' identified by Ward was also a prominent feature of the later television series *Ripping Yarns* (1976–1979), featuring Michael Palin and Terry Jones (originally of *Monty Python*). Taking its inspiration from the *Boy's Own Paper* (1879–1967)—alluded to by the show's title—the series parodied stories in which Britishness was bound up with 'gung-ho' empire-building.

Having previously been understood as developing out of the rise of Britain's post-war 'permissive society', which was rejecting a deference to tradition and relaxing censorship laws following the Obscene Publications Act of 1959, Ward persuasively argues that a 'closer examination [of the satire boom] reveals an underlying resentment towards those who had promised a more grandiose role for Britain in the post-war world' (p. 92). The prominent writers within Britain's new, irreverent comedy scene, such as the *Monty Python* collective, Peter Cook and Alan Bennett amongst others, may have been critical of the British establishment. Unlike novelists with direct experience of colonialism, however, they are unable to offer a critical account of either the workings of the Empire or the gap between the myth and the reality.

In the world of cinema, British and Hollywood films depicted colonial officers as embodying a quintessential 'civilized' Britishness, but without mounting an examination of the colonial project. Rather than seeking to question the ideological assumptions of an imperial identity, such films portrayed Britishness as embattled, but able to survive against the odds. Possibly the most well-known film of its kind was *Zulu* (1964), which

would be followed by other popular historical films of colonialism including *The Man Who Would be King* (1975), a dramatization of Rudyard Kipling's 1888 story of the same name, and the sequel *Zulu Dawn* (1979). Directed by the American Cy Endfield and starring Michael Caine and Stanley Baker, *Zulu* dramatizes the 1879 Battle of Rorke's Drift, depicting it as the defence of a missionary station by a small band of heroic young British officers against a fierce army of Zulu warriors. As Michael Lieven remarks, the battle itself was mythologized when it was initially reported and has become 'a centre piece in "Our Empire Story"' (1998, p. 435), largely erasing the reality. Since it was first reported on, Lieven maintains:

> [T]he story tellers and historians have, in general, been content simply to amplify the earlier myths. Rorke's Drift has become a national legend, repeated in a range of popular cultural productions. The panicky attempt at flight, the actions of a mere commissary, the dogged courage of two not very impressive officers, none of these fitted the heroic myth of young, inexperienced subalterns just emerged from public school, in whom the qualities of their race and caste were enough to see them through their unique moment of trial. (p. 430)[2]

The 1964 film version reinforces the theme of British heroism in the face of adversity found in turn-of-the-century 'tales of adventure'. Arguably the tropes of the imperial adventure tale have been recirculated by the James Bond franchise. In 1970, the film critic Raymond Durgnat adopted a suitably English cricket metaphor to describe Bond as 'the last man in of the British Empire Superman's XI' (2011, p. 151). The lasting popularity of *Zulu* and Bond, as well as the 'Raj nostalgia' films of the eighties, suggests the continuing significance of a British national identity that can be founded on ideas of courage and the protection of the 'British way of life' throughout the globe.[3]

At the same time that cinema was producing nostalgic representations of an embattled imperial identity, the story of emigration to the 'white Dominions' was being celebrated in terms of exploration. In part, this was a response to the large-scale emigration from Britain to the colonies and former colonies throughout the 1950s. As well as being a period of unprecedented migration from the colonies to Britain, Dominic Sandbrook comments that 'the simple and indisputable fact is that in the twentieth century Britain was more accurately a nation of *emigrants*', and many of those who left Britain did so 'to build a better, more prosperous

life in North America, southern Africa, Australia or New Zealand' (2011, pp. 308–309). As with historical films set in the colonies, films of emigration also drew on the themes of 'tales of adventure'. As Jeffrey Richards notes, such films often appropriated the style of the American Western and 'highlight[ed] the romance and adventure associated with white settlement' (2001, p. 131), thus sustaining the idea of a 'greater Britain' far beyond the nation's borders.[4]

This is not to suggest that since the 1960s the entanglements between culture and colonialism in Britain have always been simplified or erased. The inheritors of Richard Hoggart's developments in Cultural Studies, most notably Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy, have offered significant examinations of the mutability of racial identities and the lasting impact of Britain's colonial past upon societal discourses regarding ethnicity. Moreover, novelists who fall within the interlinked categories of 'Black British' and 'British Asian' literature—categories that include the perspectives of Levy, Salman Rushdie, Hanif Kureishi, Monica Ali, Caryl Phillips, and Zadie Smith—have been read as 'assess[ing] the racial discourse of their given historical moment' and postulating 'alternate subjectivities, envisioning the potential originality of positions of critique of existing conceptions of race' (Gunning, 2010, p. 9). A fuller understanding of the place of post-war white British novelists within the trajectory of twentieth- and twenty-first-century literature can not only generate a more heterogeneous reading of post-war literature; it can invigorate an exploration of contemporary responses to Britain's colonial history that go beyond either satire or celebration.

Historicizing the 'End of Empire' in *Small Island*

The present study has adopted as its framework the transition from early accounts of the end of the Second World War and decolonization, through to the rise of American global dominance and finally to the arrival and settlement in Britain of non-white migrants from formerly colonized nations. Each of these aspects of a post-war Britain undergoing societal and cultural change is rendered in the hugely popular and award-winning *Small Island*, which historicizes the 'end of Empire' era from an early twenty-first-century perspective. Levy's realistic, polyvocal novel, which is narrated by the white British characters of Queenie and Bernard Bligh and the Jamaican immigrants Hortense and Gilbert Joseph, was awarded the Orange Prize for Fiction (2004), the Whitbread Book of the Year (2004)

and the Commonwealth Writers' Prize (2005). In 2007, the 'Small Island Read' project commemorated the 200th anniversary of the passing of the Slave Trade Abolition Bill by distributing 50,000 copies of *Small Island* across the UK. The novel, as Anouk Lang notes, was accompanied by

> eighty thousand readers' guides which provided information about Levy and on the topics of slavery and migration. Over a hundred events—talks, discussions, exhibitions, competitions and workshops—took place in association with Small Island Read, and at least a hundred stories about the project appeared in the local, regional and national press. (2009, p. 124)

Analysing the reader responses to the novel, Lang identifies a number of recurring themes. Many who took part in the Small Island Read project expressed 'surprise and embarrassment at imperial propaganda as seen in the falsely glowing portrayal of England disseminated to those from British colonies' (p. 128). Other readers were compelled to comment on the way in which *Small Island* depicted an 'inversion of the usual hierarchy between metropolis and colony, something which emerged repeatedly from both the discussions and the survey responses' (p. 129). Considering the text's engagement both with racism in America and a cognizance of the treatment of Jews by the Third Reich, reader surveys also reported 'a consideration of atrocities perpetrated by the British towards those they conquered' (p. 130). Following the success of this project, the novel was dramatized in a 2009 miniseries by the BBC. As such, *Small Island* can arguably be considered as *the* contemporary portrayal of the impact of decolonization upon the former imperial centre, one that is recognized not simply as an historical novel of mid-century Britain but as encouraging public debate on the complexities and legacies within Britain of colonial expansion.

The novel, as Michael Perfect has noted, 'engages with a supposedly familiar historical moment and yet, in doing so from the perspective of a number of different protagonists, explores aspects of that moment about which many have been similarly disinclined to talk' (2010, p. 32). Such overlooked aspects of the immediate post-war decades—thought of in the popular imagination as being characterized by the radical establishment of the welfare state and a return to 'family values'—include the manifestations of overt and covert racism that are challenged in Colin MacInnes's *City of Spades* and *Absolute Beginners*, Anthony Burgess's *The Right to an Answer*, and Alan Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*. The manner in which Levy's novel can be read as 'confronting the silences of nations as well as those of individuals' (Perfect, 2010, p. 40) points to the

absence of wider public debate about Britain's complex colonial history since the publication of these 1950s and early 1960s texts.

The chapters of *Small Island* fall under the two broad headings of 'Before' and 'After', with a narrative structure that, although building to the climax of the birth of Queenie's black son, is non-linear. The chapters that constitute the 'After' section of *Small Island* are structured around the transformation of Queenie's home into a guest house that welcomes non-white migrants, including Hortense and Gilbert Joseph who arrive in England having travelled on the SS *Empire Windrush*. Disrupting linear conceptions of the 1950s as 'post-World War Two', the novel 'explicitly takes the arrival of the *Windrush* immigrants in Britain, rather than the end of the war, as its narrative watershed', a move that 'is indicative of an attempt to confront established historiographies' (Perfect, 2010, p. 37). In placing Queenie's guest house at the heart of the four disparate and often conflicting first-person narratives, Levy adopts a symbolic strategy that had been productive not only for 'Windrush' writers such as Sam Selvon and V. S. Naipaul but also for Burgess and Sillitoe. As we saw in Chap. 5, for each of these writers the private and delimited space of the home provides a structural focal point that stages the fraught and exclusionary assumptions that belie the ostensibly convivial gesture of hospitality.

We are invited to consider the symbolic importance of the bounded space of Queenie's guest house as a microcosm of post-war Britain. The domesticity of Queenie's home, moreover, contrasts starkly with the public space of the 1924 Empire Exhibition, which represented the colonial hubris of the early twentieth century. In the Prologue to *Small Island*, Queenie recalls being taken by her parents to the exhibition in Wembley, which King George V had described as 'the whole Empire in little' (*SI*, p. 2). There she saw 'building after building that housed every country we British owned' (p. 3), including a replication of 'Africa' that was staged to resemble 'the jungle' with '[h]uts made out of mud' (p. 5) and '[a] black man who looked to be carved from melting chocolate' (p. 6). The Empire Exhibition is thus presented as a public space displaying colonial subjects as specimens to be stared at in awe and fascination due to their supposed backwardness and detachment from modernity. There is a clear divide being articulated and reinforced between the 'civilized' Britons and those that they rule. Over the course of the novel, however, this division based on colonial hierarchies of race is unsettled by the mixing of those from the imperial centre and peripheries within a new post-Empire in little: the private space of the home.

The contentiousness of the guest house is signalled early in the novel in an exchange between Queenie and her neighbour Mr. Todd following the arrival of Hortense. Todd expresses his concern about her 'paying guests' (p. 112) in a manner that echoes the sentiments voiced by Denham's father in *The Right to an Answer*. Beneath the 'polished' (p. 112) vocabulary, Queenie discerns the exclusionary attitudes informed by a colonial hierarchy of racial difference: 'Darkies! I'd taken in darkies next door to him. But not just me. There were others living around the square. A few more up the road a bit. His concern, he said, was they would turn the area into a jungle' (p. 113). The atavistic jungle setting that could be regarded from a safe distance in the Empire Exhibition is thus feared by Todd to be running rampant in his own street. While the depiction of immigration in Burgess's, Sillitoe's, and MacInnes's novels undermine the kind of regressive world view espoused by Mr. Todd, they nevertheless conclude on a note of ambivalence and uncertainty about the possible future relationship between Britain's white and non-white citizens. Levy's twenty-first-century perspective, on the other hand, confidently presents Todd's reaction as outmoded and rooted in a reactionary past. The regressive nature of Todd's remarks is signalled by the close of the novel by the further blurring of societal roles when the character of Winston moves from being one of Queenie's tenants to establishing himself as a landlord. Much like the fate of Selvon's most enduring protagonist Moses Aloetta, the move towards permanent non-white settlement in England is evinced in Winston's plan to purchase his own property and only give 'board to people from home. Not Englishwoman rent. Honest rent you can collect up' (p. 499). It is a decision that marks a desire to take control over the conditions of hospitality in the 'mother country', one which sees the racial divisions between 'host' and 'guest' irrevocably overturned.

Levy ironizes the concept of hospitality throughout the novel by placing the overt segregation of American society alongside the racism of Britain's native inhabitants. When Gilbert arrives in Virginia as an airman in the RAF, he quickly decides that 'America is Paradise' (p. 126). After being introduced to the policy of racial segregation, however, he is forced to accept the reality that the white community 'would have swung us [West Indians] from the nearest tree for merely passing the time of day with them. […] The word Paradise had long since stopped popping from my lips' (p. 132). Gilbert comes to refer to the treatment of blacks in America as 'the legendary Yank hospitality' (p. 149). Where segregation was enshrined in America in the Jim Crow

laws, Britain was publicly accepting of non-white subjects of the British Empire, especially those who had been enlisted to fight on behalf of the interests of their colonial 'motherland'. When Gilbert reaches England, however, he discovers the informal but widely held conditions of British hospitality:

> I had been in England long enough to know my complexion at a door can cause—what shall I say?—tension. When I was new to England all the doors looked the same to me. I make a mistake, I knock at the wrong one. Man, this woman come to the door brandishing a hot poker in my face yelling that she wanted no devil in her house. (p. 168)

Upon arriving at the Bligh's farmhouse in Lincolnshire—a region whose name recalls Abraham Lincoln and the abolition of slavery in the USA—Queenie offers to show Gilbert 'some local hospitality' (p. 171) by visiting a tea shop and the cinema.

Despite Queenie's genuine expression of conviviality, her use of phrasing sets up the link between the 'Yank hospitality' of racial segregation in America and the informal limits to hospitality in Britain. In the genteel countryside setting of the tea shop Gilbert senses the 'cocky hatred' of three white American GIs 'that was charging across the room to yell in the face of a coloured man whose audacity was to sit with a white woman' (p. 177). When Gilbert and Queenie move to the local cinema, the seething racism of the GIs is juxtaposed with the '[g]lamour' of Hollywood films starring the likes of Clark Gable: 'Foolish young English girls', Gilbert reflects, 'would see a movie star in every GI with the same Yankee-doodle voice. […] Thanks to Mr Gable's silver tongue, this bunch of ruffians [in the tea shop] mistakenly became the men of Englishwomen's dreams' (p. 182). After taking their seats, Gilbert is asked to move to the back row with the other 'coloureds' (p. 184), to which he responds: 'This is England. […] This is not America. We do not do this in England. I will sit anywhere I please. […] [T]here is no segregation in this country' (pp. 184–185). He is asked, in the polite register of the cinema employee who is only following 'the rules', to not make 'such as fuss' (p. 185), forcing Gilbert to reflect solemnly, 'We fighting the persecution of the Jew, yet even in my RAF blue my coloured skin can permit anyone to treat me as less than a man' (p. 186).

Levy's depiction of an unofficial segregation in the tea shop and cinema based upon markers of race is situated within a geopolitical matrix that

links the parochial setting of rural England with the three core dimensions of decolonization explored in this study, namely the relationship between the Holocaust and colonialism, the influence of popular culture, and policies of immigration. Gilbert's narration is privileged over that of the native Briton Queenie, who is not shown to be in any way aware of the wider political and cultural contexts that inform the two scenes. Instead, the narrative provides an 'outsider's' perspective, firstly, on the way in which cinema can promote a romanticized notion of America that erases the nefarious reality of racial segregation, evinced in the attitudes of the GIs in the tea shop. Secondly, the vocabulary of government-sponsored segregation is then appropriated as a means of criticizing the largely unspoken, but broadly accepted, discrimination of Britain's new non-white citizens. Gilbert's choice of language in response to the cinema usherette's attempts to move him underscores the inherent paradox of Britain's domestic policies of immigration: adopting the pronoun 'we' in his exclamation that '*We* do not do this in England', he asserts his status as a member of the British Empire who has fought on the side of the Allied Forces. The scene is set before the passing of the 1948 British Nationality Act, but it pre-empts the call for the official expansion of British citizenship to include non-white members of the Commonwealth. Finally, Gilbert's assertion of his role in the RAF does more than articulate his place within the British Army. Placing his evocation of Jewish persecution alongside the usherette's disclaimer that 'I don't make the rules' (p. 185), and ahead of shouts from other cinema-goers of 'Nigger, move' and 'Jigaboo' (p. 186), Levy gestures towards a correlation between the ideology of racial cleansing underpinning the Holocaust and the forms of racism in Britain that are rooted in the history of colonialism.

A core preoccupation of *Small Island* is the disillusionment experienced by non-white migrants upon encountering both the racism and austerity of Britain, an issue articulated in Hortense's repetition of 'Just this?' (p. 21) when she discovers the claustrophobic and threadbare room that will be her new home. This aspect of the novel is enhanced by placing it in dialogue with the post-war literature of the Windrush generation; yet, similarly, another reading of Levy's historicized account of the 'end of Empire' is brought to the fore by situating it alongside the works of British colonial servants, Army personnel and settler writers. It is the chapters narrated by Bernard that dramatize the twin trajectories of decolonization and the Second World War. At the same time the novel largely replays a caricatured depiction of the aloof colonial servant refusing to

accept that the sun was setting on the British Empire. Bernard is presented as being partly out of touch with a younger generation of Britons who are sceptical of the narrow nationalism of the Empire. An appreciation of this dimension of Levy's text is enriched by the wider range of perspectives in circulation in the literature of decolonization produced by members of that generation.

Levy's rendering of white British Army personnel serving in colonial regions in the midst of nationalist uprisings is principally one of bemused detachment. In a similar manner to Colonel Casey in Gerald Hanley's *The Consul at Sunset* or Colonel Redfern in John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*, Bernard expresses a defence of the colonial enterprise, asserting that 'Britain required a new backbone. Men to reconstruct the ravaged land back into something worthy of the British Empire' (p. 365). In Bernard's account of his service in Calcutta, Levy gives voice to the stereotype of the British colonial servant: he holds an unswerving belief in his 'civilising influence' (p. 376) and is 'proud to represent decency' (p. 379). Much like a number of characters across *The Consul at Sunset*, *Lord of the Flies*, *The Malayan Trilogy*, and *Key to the Door*, Bernard sees himself in the mould of the fictionalized colonial adventurer having been raised on the '*Boys Own Annuals*' and the 'stor[ies] of derring-do (*Saber & Spurs* or *The Sheik's White Slave*)' (p. 403). In performing this idealized role, Bernard envisions his transformation from a 'pallid bank clerk, fretting when the tube got too crowded' to an explorer who is as '[i]ntrepid as Livingstone' (p. 353). As in the 1950s novels of colonial servants and Army personnel, however, the reader is invited to appreciate the disparity between Bernard's romanticized vision of imperial adventure and the reality: upon hearing 'foreign' voices whilst lost, he drops onto his belly and begins to 'feel the urine warming my pants before seeping into the ground. Powerless to stop it' (p. 361).

Bernard's aloof perplexity at the decline of the Empire is exemplified in his reflection on calls for Indian self-determination when he exclaims: 'I've no idea what started it. But nothing to do with us, we all silently agreed. […] The British out of India? Only British troops could keep those coolies under control. A job well-jobbed—all agreed' (p. 369, p. 375). It is a statement that points to Bernard's detachment from the impetus behind nationalist campaigns throughout the Empire. More than this, however, Bernard's ardent belief in an all-round agreement emphasizes his lack of understanding regarding the views of some of his fellow countrymen who regard military service as no more than 'being used' to '[p]rop up the

British Empire' (p. 378). This view is derided by Bernard as being that of 'Uncle Joe Stalin's friends' (p. 379), an allusion to Communism that acknowledges a rejection by many Britons of the 'Red Scare' replacing the threat of fascism (a stance also evident in Sillitoe's *Key to the Door*).

The scenes in Calcutta are attentive to the fissures occurring in Britain's imperial confidence during the process of decolonization, and thus Levy does not reduce British responses to the period to a single-voiced nostalgia. For the most part, Bernard's voice within the four main narratives of the novel is revealed as a lone one. His statements on the need to revitalize the Empire whilst in India, and his racist attitude of 'England for the English' (p. 469) when he returns home, is presented by Levy as overwhelmingly out of place in the new world order emerging in the years that followed the end of the Second World War. Yet, *Small Island* presents Bernard's returning colonial servant character as the prominent embodiment of pride in the Empire, whereby his movement between Britain and India inspires his derision of the inexperienced Mr. Todd who had 'never been out east. Never seen how cunning these colonial types could be' (p. 469). This was certainly a common view held by many in the Colonial Service, and the narrative structure of Levy's historical novel of the 'end of Empire' is well served by voicing Bernard's stance, and by placing it in dialogue with the much more progressive perspectives of Queenie, Hortense, and Gilbert. Yet, in Levy's successful historical novel of the 'end of Empire', the public debate about decolonization and immigration is largely polarized, with Bernard's colonial servant character representing a rearguard resistance to change. The literature of writers who moved between the colonies and Britain intervenes in this polarization and reveals a much more heterogeneous—and at times conflicting—range of responses. A reading of such works has been enriched by the developments in postcolonial theory and by the broader cultural concern with Britain's colonial history that Levy's novel, along with other texts by writers in the canon of Black British and British Asian literature, has enabled. At the same time, the writing of Levy and her contemporaries who have offered sustained engagements with the entanglements of colonialism, racism, multiculturalism, and immigration is enhanced by the depictions of decolonization provided in the novels of white British writers who depicted the impact of decolonization at the moment it was unfolding.

It is their paradoxical attachment to, and distance from, the imperial 'centre' that makes the novels of colonial servants and settlers particularly productive in understanding the impact of decolonization for British identity. It would be incorrect to conclude that the literature of decolonization

produced by white British writers offers an early prototype for the anti-colonial politics of texts produced by colonial and ex-colonial subjects. The colonial servant and white settler writers examined in this study largely benefitted from being born into a society with such a long history of power and influence over other nations. A number of them, moreover, participated in colonialism throughout the globe. Yet, it is equally unproductive to view their texts as having little to say about Britain's history of colonialism or the impact of decolonization upon British society beyond nostalgia. While the colonizer's culture has been challenged and adapted by writers originally from colonized nations, this book has established the ways in which those originally from the imperial metropole mounted a critique of the myths and assumptions that had sustained the colonial project. British colonial servant and settler writers offer a view of Britain from a position of both familiarity *and* estrangement. In many ways their fictional responses to decolonization are informed by the ideology of imperialism. Yet they also make efforts to move towards the formation of a national, communal culture that rejects harmful colonial myths regarding racial and cultural difference.

Notes

1. The reference to the 'Winds of Change' is to Harold Macmillan's 1960 speech of the same name, initially given in the Gold Coast (Ghana) and repeated more famously to the Parliament of South Africa. The speech has come to exemplify the acceptance within British government that African self-determination was a necessary policy.
2. For a discussion of *Zulu*'s historical inaccuracies see Hamilton and Modisane (2007, pp. 97–119).
3. For more on 'Raj nostalgia' see Salman Rushdie's 1984 article 'Outside the whale' in Rushdie (1992). For a discussion of the relationship between Raj nostalgia and the representation of women in colonial hierarchies of race, see Sharpe (1993).
4. For more on the relationship between cinema and twentieth-century conceptions of 'Britishness', see Richards (1997).

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