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Abstract

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Keywords: Postcolonialism, White Men's Burden, Alienation, Orientalism

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Title

Echoes of Empire: Unveiling the Postcolonial Tapestry in Paul Scott's *Staying On*

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Abstract

Paul Scott's Staying On (2005) is one of the few novels that depict the lives of British leftovers who decided to stay in India even after the Independence. Unlike The Raj Quartet (1965-75), Scott's Staying On (2005), highlights the struggle of the White and Euro-Asians in independent India. This paper will investigate the White Men and Women's burden by keeping the themes of identity crisis, socio-cultural displacement, and womanhood in view. Staying On (2005) uses alienation and mimicry to display the hybrid culture of India. It connects the story of the Quartet through the characters of Tusker and Lucy Smalley and how these British remainders struggled to maintain their identity in India. This paper will also study the residual impacts of the British Raj to display the inversion of the roles between the Occident (West) and the Orient (East).

Keywords: [Postcolonialism](#), [White Men's Burden](#), [Alienation](#), [Orientalism](#)

Introduction

This study will focus on the last published novel of Paul Mark Scott, *Staying On* (Scott, 1971/ 2005) with a focus on the White and Euro-Asian characters through the post-colonial lens to highlight the burden White Men and Women held while living in India. Surprisingly, Kipling left out any reference to white women in his poem, *The White Men's Burden* (1899). He highlighted the extraordinary bravery, dedication, and efforts made by English men for the

founding and keeping of the British Empire in India. Hickman (2005) has explained the lack of women in the Empire's archives by stating that they did not participate in matters of the country, and their expertise was worthless. She also emphasizes that the history of diplomacy was very much a his-story.

Staying On (2005) is only based on the minor characters, the Smalleys, from *The Raj Quartet* (1976). The novel is set in 1972 and it frames the residual impacts of British Raj in India. *Staying On* (



2005) stages the fictional hill station of Pankot which is undergoing a change in the economic, social and political means. It engulfs the crisis that the English leftovers, the Smalleys, faced while living under the tenancy of Mrs. Bhoolabhoy. Although the British Raj played an important role in developing India's post-colonial identity, somehow it also resulted in the identity crisis for the minorities and Raj leftovers. It is a novel which is centred on the life of a White female character, named Lucy Smalley. Her nostalgia, melancholy, and wistful yearning for the past remain the main focus of the novel. The story revolves around the annex of Smith's Hotel which has been rented by Tusker and Lucy Smalley since India got its Independence. These characters reveal the burden that the white men and women held under the neo-colonial hold of an Indian entrepreneur, Mrs. Bhoolabhoy. Scott has focused on the loss that Whites suffered while civilizing India and gave voice to the hidden reality about the weight felt by White and Euro-Asian characters in *Staying On* (1977/2005). This paper will address the white men and women's burden as depicted in the novel, *Staying On* (1977/2005) from the post-colonial perspective focusing on different key terms of the oriental study. This research will attempt to view the female characters, Lucy Smalley and Susy, in the Raj narrative from a new angle because, often, white females are either absent from the story or are portrayed from a single stereotype. It discusses the burden these women carried while living an alienated life in India.

Literature Review

The success of *Staying On* (1977) brought attention to the themes and issues explored in the book and helped to pave the way for a nuanced portrayal of postcolonial India and exploring human relationships. The novel continues to be studied, celebrated, and appreciated for its insights into the complexities of a changing world and the enduring human spirit. Armstrong (1984) identifies the important components of Paul Scott's purpose of writing. He charts its development from *The Raj Quartet* (1976) to *Staying On* (1977). The analysis concentrates on the prevailing illusion and subjective truth to give an idea of the aspects in which Scott was interested as a novelist. Armstrong exposes Scott's complete narrating skill and the use of symbolism. Scott's techniques to explore his characters are interesting due to their diversity.

According to him, *Staying On* (1977) is capable of providing the necessary focus to isolate the aspects and methods which Scott adopted to distinguish his purpose of writing. Pugh's (1993) explores why and how the Indian experiences are expressed in the writings of VS Naipaul, Paul Scott and Ruth Praver Jhabvala. The psychology and individuality of the characters spontaneously change the communities. According to Pugh, the concept of 'Other' is ironic because the aspects that different people reject are often unconscious and unexpressed parts of their lives. Rajeswari (2017) indicts Scott's liberation and the sense of truth while representing women in his novels. The effect of partition can be observed in the socio-cultural attitudes and their changing relationships. She discussed how the character of Lucy is Scott's finely drawn miniature as it realizes and gives true colour to the novels. Wijesinha's study (2006), investigates the British reaction to Indian Independence. He believes that Scott's character explores the moral concepts regarding colonialism and Independence. The reaction of the human psyche towards power in an imperial situation is one of Scott's principle themes. Wijesinha suggests that the Raj failed towards their commitment in India and the change in power structures motivated the major protagonists in different ways. Haswell (2000) discusses how Peter Childs used Bakhtin's theory of language and art on Scott's style and gave a new pattern to analyze *The Raj Quartet* (1976). Childs issued a comparison of Paul Scott's writings to Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924), highlighting the common aspects between them. He offered the analysis of Scott's religious imagery to portray the fallen Raj. Liebrechts (1993) suggests that the Raj defends its rule over the world by racial superiority. The English concept of splendid isolation was the base of British Rule. Scott represented how the British treated the Indians because of their feeling of superiority. This self-assumed devoted relationship credited The Indian population to be immature, non-disciplined and egoist.

Huggan (1997) is of the view that literary texts are used by the West to promote and certify the marginal products. Scott's *Staying On* (1977) is a Booker Prize-winning novel that views post-colonial India through the British lens. It represents the coda to *The Raj Quartet* (1976) and ironically sings to the empire as an ageing servant. Swinden (1980), in his study, explores that *Staying On* (1977) is trained to

show Pankot undergoing unusual changes without the British Raj. The future of the English is bleak in India. It shows the way Smalleys altered unconsciously, in order to stabilize their diminished fortune and expectations. Ashton-Griffiths (2015) investigated the evolving genre of English fiction regarding South Asia. Even though the relationship between the ex-colonized and colonizers has been changing the early generic elements have remained unchanged up to Paul Scott's *Staying On* (1977/2005). The combination of English and South-Asian cultures has made *Staying On* (1977/2005) into a Commonwealth genre and it might be considered a pioneer writing in a new genre. Srivastava (1988) provokes the thought that Paul Scott's literary reputation is overshadowed. He is capable of projecting a complex series of images that can be helpful in viewing the pathological state of diminishing British Imperialism. Although *Staying On* (1977/2005) is an elegy in the memory of the Raj, Goonetilleke (2007) describes that Scott's aim was to convey a different philosophy of life in which man's destiny is at variance which is why *Staying On* (1977) mainly focuses on issues of individual's destiny. He valued a common man's perspective by focusing the integrity and decency. According to Goonetilleke, Scott's work has transmuted contemporary history into fiction. This rich literature provides the scope for further investigation of Paul Scott's novels, especially *Staying On* (1977). The post-colonial aspects such as hybridity and mimicry in the characters of Paul Scott's *Staying On* (1977) need to be highlighted.

Research Methodology

This work is developed by the critical textual analysis and deep study of the novel *Staying On* (1977), in order to track the role of the English ex-colonizers and the burden they shared while living in Independent India. Klages (2017, p. 132) is of the opinion that the history of imperialism is the history of discourses about colonized places, hence Post-colonial theory has been adopted as a framework for this investigation. Throughout the post-colonial studies, minor emphasis can be seen on the lives of White (men and women) leftovers in Indian society. To fill the gap, this study has considered the Post-colonial theory through a feminist perspective as well. The concept of Alienation was introduced by Fanon (1967) who describes how colonized locals are marginalized socially and economically due to

colonization which results in cultural and psychological problems (1967, p. 4-5). Seeman (1959) has stated five meanings of alienation alternatively. He identified it as self-estrangement, powerlessness, normlessness, meaninglessness and isolation. These meanings are derived from the traditional sociological analysis. (1959: p. 786). Sen (2003, p.160) observes that throughout the nineteenth century, the role of Memsahib was propagated stereotypically. He is of the opinion that the burden of these white women is not to let the colonizer become a local as they were superior in race while working in a hostile environment.

The concept of Eurocentrism given by Said (1978) is the factor on which this investigation proceeds further. This concept expresses the West as Occident and the East as Orient in order to define Europe. Occident is always portrayed as superior as compared to the Orient. Orient is exhibited as an alien constitute that has no significance to define itself. Having no opinion power, the West exploits the exhibition of the Orient as weak and primitive. Here arrives the second concept of our prime focus, 'the concept of binary opposition' by Said (2012). This concept uses cultural identity to identify the burden shared by the British leftovers living in their preoccupied social community after the British Raj had left. This paper will focus on the white men and women portrayed by Scott in *Staying On* (1977) to examine:

- (i) What loss did White bore while civilizing India?
- (ii) What was the response of White and Euro-Asian female characters towards the post-colonial society, upholding the white women's burden?
- (iii) How the role of the Occident is inverted by the Orient in Independent India?

Discussion and Analysis

This part will investigate the above questions from the text. The character of Lucy Smalley and Susy will be used to assess white women's burden while the character of Tusker Smalley is adopted as a base for the discussion of the white men's burden. Lucy and Tusker Smalley belong to the white race while Susy is a Euro-Asian whose experiences are not different from the white couple residing in the post-colonial society of Independent India. The post-colonial authors often explore the complexities and

dynamics of power, race, and gender, shedding light on the lingering effects of colonialism and its impact on various social groups. White male and female characters are depicted differently based on their roles, experiences, and relationships with other characters. The story of *Staying On* (1977) is presented in the third person narrative voice. Tusker Smalley is an old British colonel who got his retirement in 1949 from his post as India attained its Independence. Most of the story is set in the year 1972. Tusker and his wife, Lucy Smalley, have been in India for 40 years now. He is portrayed as the last surviving member of the British race in Pankot, a knowledgeable man, a good friend, a dedicated liquor consumer and a non-practising Christian. He is shown grappling with issues of identity, privilege, and nostalgia for the colonial past, while also trying to navigate the changing social landscape of the post-colonial society. The struggle to find his place and purpose in the new order of things is evident and that is how Scott has developed this novel to explore the aftermaths of British colonialism. Scott's main focus remains on this couple living near the hotel owned by Mrs. Bhoolabhoy. They rented an annexe at the Smith's Hotel on a lease after Tusker's retirement.

Starting with the loss White bore while civilizing India, the loneliness and misconnection are evident between the white couple throughout the novel. Even though the lifelong commitment to the British Empire and India does not help them to live a prosperous life. They believed themselves as the good-willing part of post-colonial Indian society in Pankot but it was the Indian locals who were against all their interests (Scott, 2005, p. 222). After the Raj left, a sort of instability entered in the writing styles of colonial writers. This is evident as the novel begins with the disposal of Tusker Smalley due to a massive coronary as he was disappointed by the unexpected letter from Mrs Bhoolabhoy to end the lease of the occupied annexe by the Smalleys (Scott, 2005, p.16). The loss of communication between Lucy and Tusker Smalley in *Staying On* is a multifaceted issue and according to Ilcheong Yi et al.(2023, p.83) Postcolonial Theory focuses on the colonial wounds, thus the silence between the husband and wife also happens to be one of the main points which reveal the price the White men/women had to pay in acting as a tool of the Empire. It can be attributed to a number of factors, including their long and difficult marriage, their

different personalities and values, and the changing social and political landscape of India in the aftermath of independence. It prevents them from having a close and loving relationship, and it also makes it difficult for them to understand and appreciate each other's perspectives. One example is Lucy and Tusker's disagreement over their future in India. Tusker is determined to stay in India, even though he is clearly unhappy and isolated. According to Tusker, they would survive longer in India with their pension as compared to England (Scott, 2005, p. 230-232). Lucy, on the other hand, wants to return to England, where she can be closer to her family and friends. She is portrayed as a woman who has spent a significant portion of her life in India. The novel involves the exploration of her feelings of belongingness, her adaptation to the evolving social norms, and her attempts to maintain connections with the local culture while the British colonial era came to an end. She tries to talk to Tusker about her concerns, but he refuses to listen. She is afraid if Tusker predeceases than her what will be her future in India (Scott, 2005, p. 220). One of the biggest losses for the White race is the loss of life (Brown, 1985). Their relationship has been marked by disappointment, frustration, and resentment. Tusker is a retired British colonel who has never been able to come to terms with his retirement or with the loss of British power in India. He is withdrawn and moody, and he often lashes out at Lucy in anger. Lucy is a kind and compassionate woman, but she is also deeply unhappy in India. She feels trapped and alone, and she longs for a more fulfilling life. The connection between the Smalleys is too little to explore as both lived in their own world dealing with their own issues.

Another loss for the White race is the loss of culture. The British adopted many Indian customs and practices, and this led to a dilution of their own culture. For example, many British people in India began to dress in Indian clothing and eat Indian food. The British lost many of their cultural values while civilizing India. Scott explores this theme through the character of Tusker Smalley who has become deeply attached to India and the culture of its people. Smalley uses slang words from Hindi to address his servant, Ibrahim. He enjoys Indian food, festivals and even music. He is the one to decide to reside in India after his retirement from the British regiment. He has completely lost empathy and contact touch with his family and friends back

home. It is because of him that Susy along with himself has to struggle to fit in with the post-colonial society maintained by the ex-colonized Indians. The dilution of his own culture in India led his servant to sympathize with the miserable condition of Tusker (Scott, 2005, p.29). Holi is a Hindu festival that celebrates the triumph of good over evil and the coming of spring. It is a joyous and colourful festival, and participants often throw coloured powder and water at each other. Tusker Smalley's celebration of Holi in Paul Scott's *Staying On* (1977) is a complex and symbolic event. On one hand, it can be seen as a sign of constructing a new postcolonial identity and his deep attachment to Indian society. On the other hand, it is a sign of his loss of touch with his own British culture. Smalley's celebration of Holi is significant because it shows that he has embraced Indian culture to the point where he is willing to participate in one of its most important festivals. He is the only British person at the Holi celebration, and he stands out conspicuously from the Indian crowd (Scott, 2005, p.176).

In post-colonial literature, women have often been marginalized or relegated to the background, their experiences overshadowed by the dominant narratives of male characters. However, Paul Scott breaks away from this tradition by placing a white woman, Lucy Smalley, at the centre of the narrative. Lucy and Susy, confront different challenges while contending with the added complexities of gender roles and expectations in the post-colonial setting. They explore the notions of independence, agency, and their own struggles with colonial legacies. Tusker Smalley is not the only British character in *Staying On* (1977) who has been culturally infused. The novel's protagonist, Lucy Smalley, also finds herself drawn to India and its people, and she begins to question her own British identity. Here it is when the white women's burden can be observed. Scott's portrayal of the white women's burden of the British in *Staying On* (1977) is complex and nuanced. He does not judge the female characters for their choices, but he does show how their assimilation into Indian culture has led to a loss of their own cultural identity. This theme is particularly relevant in the context of postcolonial studies, which often explores the ways in which colonized peoples have been forced to assimilate into the colonizer's culture. The adoption of Indian customs and practices by the British characters in *Staying On* (1977) is not one-sided. The same applies to the

Indians who adopted British concepts and way of life as Tyson. many people formerly colonized by Britain speak English, write in (p, 538)

English, use English in their schools and universities, and conduct government business in English, in addition to the local languages they may use at home, is an indication of the residual effect of colonial domination on their cultures

However, it can also be seen as a sign of their cultural diffusion. India is known for its religious diversity, and Christians make up a minority religious group. While the novel primarily focuses on the British expatriate experience, it sheds light on the changing dynamics for various communities, including Christians, in post-independence India. The departure of the British colonial rulers marked a significant shift in the social fabric of India. For Christians, who had often held positions of influence within the colonial administration and mission schools; this meant adjusting to a new reality. Despite the changing landscape, many Christians in India continued to practice their faith and were involved in religious activities. The novel portrays how the Christian communities like other religious communities, struggled to continue to worship and maintain their traditions. According to Vishwanathan (1987), the British government's decision to let missionaries into India represented a commitment to the native population's betterment and an initial move to the evangelization goal. The responsibility fell on white women, like Ms. Susy and Lucy Smalley in this case, to carry this load. Dogar et.al (2019, p.326-331) state, that since white women have traditionally played a more maternal role than white men have, the indigenous people view white women as an important component of the white man's civilizing mission. Susy provides her beneficial services bringing the non-active believers towards the Church. Her way of handling her position and influence was acknowledged by Father Sebastian (Scott, 2005, p.195). Lucy Smalley's character epitomizes the complexities faced by white women who choose to stay in post-colonial settings. Lucy is portrayed as a relic of the British Raj, struggling to maintain a sense of identity in the face of a shifting world order. Her character highlights the intersection of gender and colonialism, as she grapples with issues of power, privilege, and cultural preservation. Furthermore, the novel delves into the legacy of colonialism and its impact on white women. Lucy Smalley is not only

preserving British culture but also about confronting the injustices of the past. The novel subtly exposes the racism and inequality that were inherent in the colonial system, and Lucy becomes a witness to this harsh reality (Scott, 2005, p. 168-169). Lucy's character exemplifies the challenges faced by women in a patriarchal society where their roles are often defined by men. The fear of being left alone in a foreign land away from home (England) is seen prevailing in Lucy's character. The fear comes true when Tusker predeceases and Lucy is left alone in Pankot. It is when Susy steps forward and takes responsibility for Lucy's future shelter facilities (Scott, 2005, p. 251). In post-colonial theory, we can observe how Lucy and other white women become the 'Other' in a society that is asserting its independence and identity. The concept of the 'Other' is central to post-colonial discourse, as it examines the dynamics between the colonizers and the colonized. In this case, white women like Lucy and Susy are the "Other" in post-colonial India.

The inversion of the role of the Occident (the West) by the Orient (the East) in the context of Independent India is a complex phenomenon. India's struggle for independence from British colonial rule in 1947 marked a significant turning point in history, not only politically but also in terms of cultural, economic, and ideological dynamics. During the colonial era, India was subjected to cultural and intellectual hegemony imposed by the West. In Paul Scott's novel *Staying On*, the inversion of the roles of the British colonizers by the Indian colonized after India gained independence is a central theme. The novel is set in the post-independence period, providing a portrayal of how power dynamics shift and the former colonizers find themselves in unfamiliar roles. Said (1978, p.227) argues that it was the authority before which the nonwhites and even the whites themselves were expected to bend. British colonialism had a profound impact on Indian culture, language, and education. The British introduced English as the medium of instruction and the language of administration, which led to the Anglicization of Indian elites. However, after a long stay in India, Tusker unconsciously uses Hindi slang and words in his conversation with Ibrahim and Lucy (Scott, 2005, p.18). Moving further, in *Staying On* (1977), the British colonizers who choose to stay in India after independence experience a profound loss of power and privilege. They go from being the rulers and

decision-makers to being guests in a nation that is no longer under British control. This inversion of power dynamics is evident in the way they are treated by the Indian authorities and the local population. They are no longer the dominant class, and their influence has waned considerably. The characters face the alienating involvement of Indians in their lives, such as the letter by Mrs Bhoolabhoy to evacuate the annexe as the lease ends (Scott, 2005, p.238). Moreover, under British colonial rule, India's economy was largely structured to serve British interests, with the export of raw materials and import of finished goods. After independence, India initiated a shift towards economic self-reliance and the promotion of indigenous industries. This economic inversion aimed to reduce dependence on the West and to strengthen domestic production and self-sufficiency. The economic inversion is a key aspect of the novel. The British colonizers, like Lucy and Tusker Smalley, struggle to maintain their economic standing. They are faced with financial difficulties, and their lifestyle undergoes a significant downgrade (Scott, 2005, p.5). This stands in stark contrast to the affluence they once enjoyed as part of the colonial elite. Their economic inversion is symbolic of the broader economic changes occurring in post-independence India, as the country seeks to assert its economic sovereignty and reduce its dependence on foreign capital. It can also be observed that the British colonizers in the novel experience cultural and social alienation. They are no longer the cultural arbiters in India. While observing the British educational system in colonial India, was designed to produce a cadre of clerks and administrators to serve the colonial machinery (Macaulay, 1835). There has been a significant expansion in educational institutions and a shift towards knowledge creation. India has become a hub for information technology, scientific research, and higher education. Indian professionals, especially in the fields of science and technology, have gained recognition on the global stage. In *Staying On* (1977), one such character known as Dr. Mitra is observed who is a close friend to Tusker. He is a man with brown skin and white manners. He is the by-product of the British-based educational system. At last, a notable aspect of the inversion can be observed in the transformation of the servant-employer relationship. In the colonial era, British colonizers had a familial relationship with their

Indian servants (Scott, 2005, p.30). However, in the post-independence period, this dynamic shifted. Servants like Ibrahim have a more assertive role in their interactions with their former British employers, reflecting the broader shift in power dynamics. Thus we can conclude that the role of occident was inverted by the Orient as soon as India gained its independence. They grapple with feelings of loss, displacement, and nostalgia. The psychological inversion is reflected in their attempts to hold on to the traces of the past, even as they recognize that the world they once knew is fading away. The British colonizers in *Staying On* (1977) grapple with a sense of irrelevance. They feel like relics of a bygone era, struggling to find their place in a rapidly changing post-independence India. This feeling of being marginalized and inconsequential is a critical aspect of the role reversal.

Findings

This research answers all the speculative queries about the burden that the White couple and Euro-Asians were bearing by discussing and analyzing Paul Scott's *Staying On* (1977/2005) in the context of post-colonial theory and criticism. The fictional narrative discourse revealed Scott's hidden agenda of highlighting the higher feeling of loss bore by the whites while civilizing India. Scott has introduced some of the important characters who are devoted to living in India even after their power regimes have migrated. They practically faced the drawbacks of the Empire's mission in India. This brings us to the second part of this research which shows the role

inversion between occident and orient and its impacts.

Conclusion

White Men and Women's burden in *Staying On* (1977/2005) is multifaceted. Tusker represents the fading British elite who struggle to create a hybrid identity which might be helpful for him to reside in Independent India. Lucy's relationship with her husband Tusker seems to be another layer of complexity when observing the impacts of the depleted British Raj on the White leftovers in India. She is often caught between her loyalty to Tusker and her desire for independence. Lucy and Susy's domestic life becomes emblematic of the broader colonial power structures that are crumbling. They are not just burdened with the responsibility of preserving British culture, but they also carry the weight of their own nostalgia and the sense of loss. As stressed by Di Leo (2023), the non-Eurocentric alternatives to the histories produced by the West might be regarded as key events in the process of unlearning the inherent dominative mode of history (p. 288), therefore Lucy's interactions with the Indian characters, particularly Ibrahim, serve as a microcosm of the larger post-colonial struggle. Her inability to fully connect with the Indian culture while trying to maintain her sense of Britishness reflects the tensions of the time. The depictions of Scott's white women were traditional in how they carried out Raj obligations, but they were completely affected as soon as the Empire's mission retreated and the role of occident was inverted by the Orient.

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