A Therapeutic Mangle of History: Towards a Politics of Reconciliation in Arjun Raj Gaind's *Empire of Blood*

Kurian Therakath Peter
(University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada)

Abstract:
This essay examines representations of India and colonialism in steampunk fiction. Foregrounding India's suspicion of colonial history, I argue that steampunk's uchronias can serve as the alternatives *to* history advocated by postcolonial scholars like Ashis Nandy. Examining representations of India by Western-authored steampunk novels like S.M.Stirling's *The Peshawar Lancers* (2002) and Gail Carriger's *Prudence* (2015), I demonstrate that despite their progressive politics, these texts are steeped in colonial nostalgia. Their elision of historical realities and roseate representations of the colonial encounter ultimately end up glamorizing colonialism. In contrast, Arjun Raj Gaind's steampunk graphic novel *Empire of Blood* (2015) is more alive to history and manifests an understanding of the physical and epistemic violence of colonialism. Gaind's text nevertheless embodies a politics of reconciliation and offers new possibilities for neo-Victorian alternate histories, a genre whose fictive transformations of the colonial past have often entailed an amnesia towards the traumas of history.

Keywords: alternate history, *Empire of Blood*, Arjun Raj Gaind, India, *Prudence*, postcolonialism, race, steampunk, *The Peshawar Lancers*, trauma.

*****

Until a few years ago, it was a curious paradox that steampunk fiction, a genre often charged with being a vehicle for the resurrection and continuation of empire[1], rarely featured the colonies in its stories. India, ripe for the kind of exoticisation and colonial nostalgia favoured by steampunk in its laziest avatars, as too for the trenchant historical critiques undertaken by the genre at its most insightful, remained oddly absent from steampunk fiction. Given steampunk's investment in the Victorian era, it was baffling that its fictions seemed to have imprudently mislaid an entire empire so integral to that age. Science fiction author China Miéville voices his frustration with the genre's maddening historical amnesia in inimitable fashion: "There is no such thing as Victorian Britain without the fucking Raj

Neo-Victorian Studies
11:2 (2019)
pp. 153-176
DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2628500

for example, this is obvious. But in steampunk you don't have that, it is just not there" (Carrott and Johnson 2013:186).

Therefore, postcolonial scholarship on neo-Victorian literature, finding an absence of empire in steampunk texts, would have had to replicate the interpretative strategy Edward Said employed in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), reading "contrapuntally" (Said 1994: 78) to detect the tell-tale signs of colonialism in the world of these texts despite their lack of overt mention of the colonies. Indeed, the efforts of leading steampunk blogs with a postcolonial thrust (such as *BeyondVictoriana*)[2] went towards critiquing these bewildering absences in steampunk fiction. A recent steady trickle of steampunk that engages more substantially with empire has put paid to some of these critiques, while also allowing for further directions of critical enquiry. The past half-decade has witnessed a raft of steampunk fiction with a much keener engagement with Victorian Britain's colonial enterprise. Steampunk fiction has also begun to feature colonial India and the British Raj.

In this essay, I examine representations of India in steampunk fiction, paying particular attention to the effects of steampunk's historical revisionism. Analysing S.M. Stirling's *The Peshawar Lancers* (2002) and Gail Carriger's *Prudence* (2015), I argue that despite the admittedly progressive politics sometimes evident in these books, their depictions of the Raj also betray an uncritical nostalgia for empire. On the other hand, Arjun Raj Gaind's *Empire of Blood* (2015) represents an alternate history that poignantly captures the physical and epistemic violence of colonialism. Troublingly however, it also elides Indian agency in Indian independence and attempts a partial exoneration of the British for their role in colonialism. Nonetheless, I argue that these very narrative decisions, in addition to making *Empire of Blood* a welcome respite from the barrage of texts that peddle what Leela Gandhi calls "a mantric reiteration of the embattled past" (Gandhi 1998:128), also clear a space for a therapeutic reimagining of India's relationship with the traumas of colonialism, thus edging towards a politics of reconciliation with the country's former coloniser.

1. You Can't Make a History without Breaking a Few Facts

Like much neo-Victorian fiction with a focus on particular sites of historical victimisation, steampunk that represents the colonial encounter, is, in Marie-Luise Kohlke and Christian Gutleben's eloquent phrase, "bearing after-

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2628500

witness" (Kohlke and Gutleben 2010: 7). Kohlke and Gutleben define the term as "the fictional re-creation of trauma that both testifies to and stands in for inadequate, missing, or impossible acts of primary witness-bearing to historical trauma" (Kohlke and Gutleben 2010: 7). Postcolonial 'after-witnessings' are as much invested in the palliation of trauma as in the contest over history. The importance of history to the postcolonial project in India cannot be overstated. Seven decades after Indian independence, the trauma of colonialism is far enough away that there are few people alive today who lived through it. And while lived experience in formerly colonised nations continues to be shaped by the legacy of colonialism, some postcolonial traumas are experienced only by accessing, knowing and being informed by history.

Underlying some of India's frenetic attempts at historical revisionism – both in its manifestation as the rehabilitation of forgotten elided histories and as fabrication of a vaunted past – there seems to be the unarticulated hope that if only history could be altered, massaged and corrected just so, the traumas of the past would themselves vanish. While one solution to the traumas induced by a coloniser's history is postcolonial historiography that does not deny the place of the colonised people in its own past, the response to the brute fact of being colonised is often a willed historical forgetfulness.

The intentional mangling of the past is a common phenomenon in India, where fabricated histories are often leveraged for political ends, frequently to comic effect. For instance, in October of 2014, the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi made the startling claim that ancient Indians must surely have practised plastic surgery. Lord Ganesha – the elephant-headed Hindu god with the body of a man – was, he argued, proof of India's superior medical capabilities even in antiquity (Rahman 2014: n.p.). Modi had earlier adduced the fact that the mythical character Rama is portrayed as having a flying chariot in the *Ramayana*, the fifth century epic Sanksrit poem, as proof that the ancient Indians had aeroplanes (Tharoor 2015: n.p.). Such fabricated histories, which assert myth as fact and lay claim to some vaunted monolithic Hindu past, are useful in conscripting factions of Indian citizenry to subscribe to an identity politics of 'us versus them'. Among the tumultuous medley of religions and peoples that constitute post-independence India, history is increasingly leveraged to reify internal divisions among groups in order to instigate voting along communal, racial

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2628500

and religious lines. It is easy to dismiss Modi's risible statements as the comments of an uneducated or superstitious man, but the Prime Minister's 'Modi-fied' histories also speak to the nation's constant refashioning of its history for contemporary expediency.

While the reclamation of lost colonial histories has always been of central importance to the postcolonial project, the historian Dipesh Chakrabarty argues in his seminal text *Provincializing Europe* (2000) that it is also important to destabilise the centrality of place held by Europe in the historical narrative. Europe looms large in the global cultural imagination because of the hegemony of European history. Therefore, the postcolonial project, Chakrabarty argues, must concern itself with excavating forgotten subaltern histories and populating the historical discourse with them so as to dilute the overwhelming importance attributed to coloniser histories. Indian history, he argues, is often read "in terms of a lack, an absence, or an incompleteness that translates into 'inadequacy'" (Chakrabarty 2009: 32). This lack, assigned according to the colonisers' yardsticks, produces a sense of innate cultural inferiority in the colonised, which subaltern histories can help eliminate by decentring the hegemonic European narrative.

The treatment of history in neo-Victorian texts is useful to the postcolonial project in providing just these kinds of alternate histories which show just how much our contemporary circumstances are predicated on a particular set of historical events, thus vitiating the notion that European historical pre-eminence is based on inherent ethnic or national superiority. To imagine alternate worlds that upend the extant power dynamic between nations is to imagine also that our present and future are not contingent on history, that the material consequences and psychic traumas of centuries of colonialism are not insuperable. While Chakrabarty's project is contingent on geographical decentring, alternate histories seem to participate in a temporal decentring. If "provincializing Europe" (Chakrabarty 2009:4) encourages us think of Europe as just one of several equally important geographical entities, temporal decentring allows for a recognition of our present as just one of various equally possible temporal realities. It can often prove difficult to view the period of colonialism as non-determining. As William Faulkner reminds us "[t]he past is never dead. It's not even past" (Faulkner 1951: 73). By offering a vision of colonialism's traumas as just one of several phases in a nation's life-cycle, no more important than any other, alternate histories sap the colonial encounter of the almost

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2628500

deterministic power attributed to it; they allow the notion that 'History is *not* destiny' and so ameliorate the traumas that arise from viewing the effects of history as totalising and ineluctable. As Kohlke and Gutleben write, neo-Victorian trauma narratives "effectuate a return to history in which history is acknowledged as a narrative and linguistic construct" (Kohlke and Gutleben 2010: 27).

In recent years, we have witnessed spirited debates about the role of people of colour in the steampunk community, as well as reflections on the uncritical rehabilitation of empire that suffuses the steampunk genre. Clearly, as Elizabeth Ho ably demonstrates in her critical study *Neo-Victorianism and the Memory of Empire*, "the stubborn memories and physical and political remnants of empire(s) continue to exist often in debilitating ways in the quotidian, supposedly decolonised present" (Ho 2012: 11). While historical fiction continues to both nostalgise and interrogate these contemporary mutated remnants of colonialism, not all its manifestations are effective in dealing with its traumas. Facile reiterations of the enmity of yore and accompanying barbarity continuously prod at colonialism's scars, excavating buried hatchets and revivifying traumas. For previously colonised nations, revenge narratives that play up the barbarity and injustice of colonialism are an integral part of national self-fashioning. Such accounts might even help assuage the pain of remembered defeat by replaying the encounter in fiction and reversing the direction of injustice, but they do little to facilitate a transcendence of the hatred between coloniser and colonised. Meanwhile, neo-Victorian alternate histories that do not address the original trauma at all, indulging instead in a wishful historical amnesia, are similarly ineffective, if not deleterious. Such fiction often leaves postcolonial readers aggrieved; they feel robbed of the traumas of a colonial past that, though painful, are nevertheless an important national inheritance. Therefore, the success of a trauma narrative lies in its ability to therapeutically reimagine the past while also staying respectfully moored to history. This literary tightrope act requires no little dexterity. The novels discussed in this paper do not always manage to stay on the tightrope, but Gaind's text, *Empire of Blood*, achieves this balance.

Though Indian history is often used (and abused) to rive and sunder the nation, it is simultaneously often required as an aid to unify a motley people by giving them a sense of shared purpose, often in opposition to a common enemy. And as a native Other seldom suffices for the purposes of

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2628500

stoking patriotic sentiment, it is often Britain, India's erstwhile colonial ruler, or Pakistan, its sibling rival with which it shares a history of fratricidal wars and continuing tensions, that are pressed into service. The British are an easy and popular choice of villain in India's cultural imagination and continue to symbolise injustice and nefariousness in literature and film. Because of the nation's history of colonial rule, Victorian Britain's pith-helmeted functionaries represent convenient bogeymen, foreign and distant Others that have come to embody villainy. Popular Indian representations of colonial history tend to pathologise the British and reify a notion of implacable enmity between British coloniser and Indian colonised. These narratives are often characterised by hyperbolised British barbarity, so that the cruel colonisers' final comeuppance seems richly deserved. The steampunk novels I analyse in the next section also modify the past, but with opposite effect, eliding British cruelty and portraying the colonisers as a benign bunch, more bungling and valiant than brutal.

2. The Nostalgised India of Steampunk

Considering the centrality of empire to Victorian England and steampunk's putative investment in reproducing Victorian themes, the paucity of steampunk fiction that features the colonies is perplexing. Victorian London, the Platonic ideal from which many steampunk cities take inspiration, is the likeliest setting for much of the genre's fiction. Sometimes mentioned, seldom visited, rarely do Britain's colonies serve as the scene of the action; steampunk set in India is a rare phenomenon. Michael Moorcock's *The Warlord of the Air* (1971), a seminal work of steampunk, begins its narrative in India, but the plot largely unfolds on an airship. Alan Moore's graphic novel series *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* (1999) features Captain Nemo, an Indian seafarer with an implacable hatred for the British plucked from the pages of Jules Verne's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* (1870), but India itself makes no appearance. Until quite recently, S.M. Stirling's *The Peshawar Lancers* (2002) remained the curiously lone steampunk novel in which the British Raj and colonial India featured prominently. That Britain's largest overseas territory should get short shrift in fiction that represents Victorian England at a time when empire was an integral part of its political preoccupations is proof of steampunk's selective appropriation of Victoriana. The dearth of empire-centric steampunk also bolsters the charge that steampunk is a genre that

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2628500

uses the Victorian era as façade and ornament, with very little mooring in the actual history of the period (see Charles Stross 2010: n.p.).

Steampunk fiction displays a tendency to reject the revolutionary potential implied by its 'punk' suffix and devolve into mere aesthetic, as is evident in much steampunk fiction that references India. Such steampunk represents the Orient as ornament and India as exotic 'Other' and object of voyeurism: the India of levitating fakirs and strange beasts, alluring foreign tongues and desirable foreign bodies. These fictions require but the most cursory flirtation with Indian history. Susan Kaye Quinn's *The Royals of Dharia* (2013-2014) series of novels best exemplifies this strain of ornamental steampunk. Marketed as Bollypunk (as it mimics the aesthetic of Bollywood, India's Hindi-language film industry), Quinn's books feature characters and places with Indian names, but shorn of these surface similarities, they are unrecognisable as Indian. This cosmetic engagement with India manifests even in the typesetting of the book. Each chapter features the ancient Indian symbol for 'Om' written in the Devanagari script. Just below the chapter numbers written in English, the chapters also feature what appears to be a word written in Hindi – the equivalent, most readers would assume, of the chapter number in Hindi. But though this 'word' employs the Devanagari syllabary of Hindi, the letters seem to have been chosen at random with no orthographical logic, so that in their entirety, the set of letters signify nothing and serve only to signal the exotic nature of the text. This is typical of a strand of steampunk that employs the colony purely as adornment, tirelessly reproducing a trope distilled in the old cliché of India being 'the jewel in the crown of the British empire'.

When steampunk does undertake a substantial engagement with India, it is often with a profound and unmistakable nostalgia for empire, even while the progressive politics in these books simultaneously signal an overt criticism of British colonialism. For example, Gail Carriger's *Prudence,* while more attentive both to the history of the Raj and the specifics of Indian culture and mythology than most steampunk fiction, nevertheless obscures the harsh realities of colonial oppression with its light-hearted treatment of colonialism. Even as its plucky protagonist, the eponymous Prudence Alessandra Maccon Akeldama, does much to upend conventional stereotypes of Victorian femininity, *Prudence'*s blithe representation of the British administration as a jolly old bunch of tea-sipping diplomats and soldiers conveniently ignores the brutality and

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2628500

violence that attended the colonial enterprise. The book's central crisis is not the colossal fact of colonialism and Indian opposition to it, but rather the British Raj's extrication from a predicament it has landed itself in due to its unequal treatment of two indigenous factions, to wit, the Rakshasas and the Vanaras – repurposed demons and demigods from Indian mythology that supply the native Indian supernatural quotient in Carriger's chimeric universe.

Prudence is set in a world populated by vampires, werewolves and all kinds of other superhuman creatures. The young British noblewoman Prudence, demonstrating a recklessness that belies her name, leaves Victorian England for India on a secret mission for her uncle that involves the reacquisition of some missing tea. Accompanied by her friend Primrose, Prudence (who goes by the twee hypocorism Rue) steams into India on her dirigible The Spotted Custard, and upon landing, finds herself unwittingly embroiled in a centuries-old conflict between the Rakshasas – local Indian vampires who have signed a treaty with the Queen and now collect taxes for the British Crown – and the hitherto undiscovered Vanaras – Indian weremonkeys who are incensed that the British Crown seems to favour the Rakshasas.

Rue, an unskilled if enthusiastic negotiator, takes off into the jungles of India, where she has to defuse a standoff between the vexed Vanaras and the British army, led by the gentleman-soldier Brigadier Featherstonehaugh, whose belligerent incompetence is compounded by the fact that the Vanaras seem to have kidnapped his wife. Rue prevents this contretemps from escalating into full-blown fighting by capturing both the Vanaran king and Brigadier Featherstonehaugh, bringing them aboard her dirigible and brokering a détente. Rue's uncle's precious strain of tea is given over to the Vanaras as part of the deal. Mrs Featherstonehaugh, who, it later transpires, voluntarily approached the Vanaras rather than being kidnapped by them as her husband believed, explains that "[t]he Vanaras like nothing better than tea – it's the perfect bribe" (Carriger 2015: 360).

Though the stakes are ostensibly high, and Rue's failure could mean war between the British empire and the Vanaras, the nonchalant tone of the book suggests there is no real danger. While such a war would very likely wipe out the Vanaras – who, strong superhuman monkeys though they be, are no match for the military might of the British empire – this concern is never voiced in the book. Instead we see Rue placate offended sensibilities

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2628500

by plying the opposing principals with liberal quantities of tea, muffins and jam. Carriger's playful writing here conveys a good sense of the general tone of the novel:

> Muffins and jam seemed to sooth [sic] everyone's temper, particularly the Alpha Vanara's whose delight in the jam was that of a child discovering blancmange for the first time. Rue could sympathise. She often felt that way about really good jam, not to mention blancmange. And this was, after all, gooseberry. (Carriger 2015: 362)

Sufficiently lulled by these blandishments, the head of the Vanaras is induced to parley with Rue, empire's unlikely agent. By the end of negotiations, "[n]othing was left of the muffins but crumbs, and the gooseberry jam jar had actually been licked clean by a Vanaran warrior, for which Primrose rapped his knuckles in rebuke. However, it did look as if hostilities had abated" (Carriger 2015: 363). Carriger, fully aware of the playfulness of her premise, and exulting in the ludic nature of the plot, titles this final chapter "In Which Tea Solves Everything" (Carriger 2015: 357). Of all the puckish ways in which peace has been brokered in fiction, Prudence's 'muffin diplomacy', to coin a phrase, certainly takes the cake.

Prudence does reveal Carriger's overt allegiance to an anti-colonial politics that pervades much neo-Victorian fiction. The ludicrousness of Carriger's plot and the bumbling manner in which the functionaries of empire comport themselves are clearly intended to deflate the enterprise of colonialism, robbing it of seriousness and dignity. However - and quite possibly despite Carriger's intentions - *Prudence*'s make-believe world of impeccable manners and polite colonisers is also steeped in what Renato Rosaldo calls "imperialist nostalgia" (Rosaldo, 1989: 107). Works that peddle imperialist nostalgia dull the realities of colonialism and racial domination, making imperialism seem a harmless enterprise through "elegance of manners" (Rosaldo 1989: 107).In Carriger's portrait of the Raj, an abundance of British politesse makes colonialism seem a benign affair, with treaties with the natives easily finagled with the application of good old-fashioned etiquette and British charm, and aided by liberal servings of tea.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2628500

Prudence paints an anodyne imagined history in which coloniser and colonised can co-exist without the acrimony and bitterness that attended colonialism; in which native unrest can be calmed without resorting to violence; in which no blood is shed and no lives lost on either side. But such narratives can help justify, even glamorise the colonial enterprise by substituting an unpalatably violent historic past with appetisingly idealised fiction. As Rosaldo reminds us:

> The relatively benign character of most nostalgia facilitates imperialist nostalgia's capacity to transform the colonial agent into an innocent bystander. If most such recollections were not fairly harmless, the imperialist variety would not be nearly as effective as it is". (Rosaldo 1993: 70)

It is precisely because most nostalgia seems an innocuous indulgence that imperialist nostalgia's resurrection of empire is so insidious. Carriger's plot, revolving as it does around the claims of different Indian groups to the spoils of empire, does not even suggest the possibility that these Indians might chafe against the chains of empire itself. While internecine war is averted, a nostalgised colonialism continues to flourish, without interrogation or challenge.

If nostalgia for empire suffuses *Prudence*, it is even more evident in S. M. Stirling's *The Peshawar Lancers*. Stirling's novel is set in the "Year of Grace 2025" (Stirling 2003: 32). A meteor shower hits the world in 1878, making large sections of the globe uninhabitable and turning Europe into a dead zone. Benjamin Disraeli, realizing that a mass exodus represents the only chance for the continued survival of the British empire, ships out most of Britain's residents to India, Australia and New Zealand. The British empire has transmuted into the 'Angrezi Raj', a heterogeneous multicultural India in which Indians and Britons live in harmony, although the inequities of colonialism still remain. Delhi becomes the capital of this new empire. "It was still the British Raj," Stirling writes, "although usually you simply said the Empire; that was like referring to the Club in Peshawar, with no need for further qualification" (Stirling 2003: 44).

The novel follows Athelstane King and his right-hand man Narayan Singh as they attempt to thwart the evil plans of the Russian Count Ignatieff and his cult of cannibalistic minions, who intend to kill the King family and

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2628500

destroy the world. The seeress Yasmini, part of a stable of priestesses bred by the zealot Ignatieff, foresees that as long the Kings are alive, the destruction of the world will be forestalled. Despite the flimsiness of this conceit, Stirling manages to create a gripping uchronia.

The Raj of *The Peshawar Lancers*, though peopled with a large number of British characters, is unquestionably Indian. After generations in India, the British have adopted Indian customs, traditions and religions. Their oaths invoke Indian deities such as Krishna and Shiva (and an apotheosised Benjamin Disraeli), as in "Merciful Krishna", "Disraeli's eyes", or "Shiva's dong" (Stirling, 2003: 4, 51, 195). The inhabitants of Stirling's India, both British and native, are comfortable speaking both Hindi and English, as well as a credible pidgin of Anglo-Indian English.

While British functionaries affect the ways of the old country during formal occasions, they lapse into the customary comforts of Indian mores in informal milieus. As the French ambassador to the British court at Delhi notes, "[a]s one penetrates the public veneer, the less English these Angrezi seem" (Stirling 2003: 157). British corporations seem to have similarly transmuted. A particularly fine lock is revealed to be a "Govind and Chubb" (Stirling 2003: 244). The Scottish, Irish and Welsh aspects of the British empire seem to have been folded into British identity, which in turn appears in danger of being subsumed by Indianness. Acknowledging the dilution of Englishness in the British Empire, Sir Manfred says, "We're scarcely English. British, of course, by descent" (Stirling 2003: 43). Cultural blending is also observed in naming conventions – the British King Charles III has a daughter named Sita – and culinary matters – with a typical English meal comprising "garlic nan, vindaloo, stuffed eggplant, cauliflower and okra cooked in aromatic yogurt with chilies, cinnamon, peppercorns, and cumin" (Stirling 2003: 43). Finally, in a move that seems to suggest an epistemological shift from coloniser to colonised, Oxford, we are told, has moved to Delhi. All this seems to suggest a British culture whose assimilation by India is complete.

Stirling's British empire seems so totally swallowed up by India that it is tempting to assume that these cultural inroads are indicative of a reverse colonialism. However, cultural adaptation in *The Peshawar Lancers* proves to be a two-way process. If British identity has become liminal, Indian identity has similarly transmuted. To observe these osmotic tendencies, we need look no further than Narayan Singh's indulgence in the predilections of

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2628500

his British liege lord, though Singh's own Sikh religion forbids them: "Drink in moderation was different—or at least he thought of it so, nor did he deny himself meat or lying with loose women" (Stirling 2003: 53). But if the homeostasis achieved in this relationship appears equally transformative for both cultures, an examination of power dynamics in the novel refutes any such notions of equality. This is still the British Raj, and the empire is still ruled by a British king. Despite Queen Victoria's 1858 promise that "all positions would be open to every qualified subject, without consideration of religion or origin" (Stirling 2003, 49), the political machinery of the Raj is still largely operated by the British.

Many of the British characters in *The Peshawar Lancers* remain deeply mired in Victorian notions of British racial superiority, notwithstanding the lip service to equality. The old guard are particularly reactionary. Cassandra King voices the thoughts of the aged Earl of Cherwell when he discovers that both the Indian physicist Chullunder Ghose and Cassandra herself work at the university: "Damned old fool. I know what you're thinking. First natives, then women, what's the university coming to?" (Stirling 2003: 34). When Athelstane King hands over the British traitor Allenby to his Indian manservant Narayan Singh to mete out justice as he pleases, Allenby protests: "No—you can't do that, King! For God's sake man, I'm sahib-log, too; you can't let a native—" (Stirling 2003: 374). This distinction between the 'sahib-log' (the British ruling class) and the governed Indians is ever present in *The Peshawar Lancers*. Though Stirling locates these deplorably benighted ideas about race in characters the audience is intended to dislike, the book's palpable nostalgia for empire ensures that even its protagonists enact familiar colonial tropes, playing out the timeworn roles of brave colonial adventurer and loyal native sidekick. For all the camaraderie that exists between Narayan Singh and Athelstane King, we are never allowed to forget that they are liege and lord. And while Oxford might have shifted geographically and now boasts a smattering of Indian students, the academy's luminaries continue to be British: a Gujarati student works in "Babbage engineering", and a Parsi girl from Bombay is a specialist in "Darwinian Geological Catastrophes" (Stirling 2003: 35). British colonial monopoly on knowledge production seems uninterrupted by the hiccup of having to transplant Oxford to Delhi.

In Stirling's empire, the British conquest of India is so absolute that there are not even murmurs of nationalist rebellion, no stirrings of Indian

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2628500

revolution. The only challenges to British supremacy in this universe come from outside the empire; the Indians themselves have accepted their subjugation with good grace. For all his virtues, Narayan Singh, the novel's central Indian character, is but a glorified butler. Even as he is represented as a paragon of strapping masculinity, a proud and honourable Sikh, a man of tremendous power and skill, capable even of besting Athelstane King at wrestling, he is ultimately only Athelstane's Man Friday. Narayan himself feels a warm glow about his subservience: "Had he not followed the young sahib from infancy as playmate, sparring partner, soldier-servant, shield-on-shoulder, and right- hand man?" (Stirling 2003: 3). *The Peshawar Lancers* offers a universe where colonialism's end is not even desired by its Indian subjects; this is a duskless British empire with Indians delighted with their own perpetual enslavement. "Had not his father been the like to the sahib's father before him?" (Stirling 2003: 3), Narayan Singh ponders devotedly. Narayan's son too, we must imagine, will follow Narayan into servitude and fondly reminisce about his father's father being a gentleman's gentleman.

These analyses offer a good sense of the imagined geography that constitutes the India of Western-authored steampunk.[3] Considering steampunk's potential to traffic in alternate history as well as India's predilection for transforming history, it is unsurprising that most homegrown Indian steampunk displays a sustained engagement with history and empire. To the popular epigram 'Those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat it' we may add the following corollary: Those who do not like their history are likely to rewrite it.

3. *Empire of Blood*'s Mangle of History

The graphic novel *Empire of Blood* offers one such creative rewriting of history, providing an alternate account of British colonialism in India. Written by Indian author Arjun Raj Gaind and illustrated by Argentine artist Enrique Alcatena, *Empire of Blood* is published by Graphic India, one of many new Indian publishing firms jockeying for a share of the burgeoning Indian comic book industry. *Empire of Blood*'s publication only in Indian markets suggests the book's target audience is primarily Indian, but its novel treatment of British colonialism makes it deserving of a wider global readership. At first glance, *Empire of Blood* appears to be just one more Indian work that flogs the hackneyed story of noble native revolting against sadistic coloniser. However, a closer reading also reveals the graphic

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2628500

novel's impassioned engagement with colonial history as well as its nuanced view of the British coloniser, even as it condemns colonialism itself. Gaind certainly exaggerates colonial villainy, depicting an India in which the British rule is considerably crueller and more draconian than is historically accepted. Yet historical revisionism in *Empire of Blood* does more than just excoriate the British; it also simultaneously exculpates them. With these contradictory choices, the graphic novel offers up a space for a politics of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Empire of Blood is set in an imagined India where the British empire is an ongoing enterprise. The British in India live within the confines of a dome protected by giant steam-powered automatons. British colonial power in Gaind's book derives in part from the strength conferred on British officials by their regular consumption of *aqua vitae*, described as "the greatest alchemical innovation known to mankind" (Gaind 2015: 14), an elixir of unknown provenance. The graphic novel's protagonist, Thomas Lawrence (Tom), the son of a British official, has his first brush with the dark underbelly of colonialism as a schoolchild when he follows his Indian friend, Leela, out beyond the dome. When they are stopped and questioned by guards, Leela has to offer some of her blood to the British officers as a bribe to let them go. Tom is shocked and confused, as are the readers: Why do these British functionaries want blood? Tom's continuing dalliance with Leela and his increased exposure to the injustices of colonialism cause him to sympathise with the native Indians. Eventually, he joins the nascent Indian struggle for independence and is recruited by Leela's brother Azad into a plot that will eventually lead to the destruction of the British empire and consequently, Indian independence.

As with many works of alternate history, *Empire of Blood* plays fast and loose with chronology, mingling events from various times in Indian and English history in its confusing timeline. The book's temporal setting remains purposely ambiguous, but historical references allow for profitable speculation. *Empire of Blood* informs its readers that a 'Queen Elizabeth' sits on England's throne and her diamond jubilee approaches. When Elizabeth recounts the story of her life in the book's final pages, she speaks of being in England "even as that fat oaf Bismarck began to rattle his sabers in Germany" (Gaind 2015: 99). This would seem to place her firmly in the Victorian period, for Otto von Bismarck died in 1898. Furthermore, she mentions that she met "Georgie", the Prince of Wales, at a ball and usurped

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2628500

his attentions from "sour-faced Mary" (Gaind 2015: 99) before taking over the throne herself. This "Georgie" is quite possibly George V, who married Mary of Teck and acceded to the British throne in 1910. But when Gaind reveals that Indian servitude to the British has existed in this India for "six hundred years" (Gaind 2015: 99), our calculations cease to align with historical events and we abandon hope of pinning down the book's setting. Even as the book's steam-powered technology and the dirigibles above India evoke the Victorian age, a British regent named Elizabeth is instantly suggestive of the contemporary British monarch. Gaind's conflation of British colonialism in the Victorian era with his imagined contemporary British Raj is probably meant to suggest the abiding persistence of the legacies of colonialism in our own time.

Empire of Blood's chronology is nebulously constructed, but the book's representation of British cruelty, which similarly takes liberties with history, is notable for its precision and detail. The graphic novel's images help convey the enormities of colonialism in ways that text itself seldom can.[4] The cover page of the second chapter features a full-page image of a giant jackboot crushing a bare-chested, turbaned Indian against the backdrop of a massive blood-spattered Union Jack (Gaind 2015: 32). The graphic novel uses only a few colours: hues of black, brown, grey, white and red. Perhaps the austere colour palette resulted from an attempt to keep publishing costs low, but the graphic novel's artist, Enrique Alcatena, also uses these colours to great symbolic effect. Alcatena's images portray a sombre Indian dystopia, painted in the subdued dark colours that match the grim tone of Gaind's story. The greys, browns and blacks of the images are only interrupted by a bright scarlet red. Red features in the Union Jack of course, as well as in the red coats of the British soldiers. The mechanical eyes of the Eyemen and the Ripperjacks, the automatons who guard the dome of the British, are also red. Red is the colour of Queen Victoria's robe and her eyes, and for reasons that soon become obvious, of the *aqua vitae*. Lastly, red is quite appositely the colour of blood, a substance so central to this graphic novel. The colour is never observed on any Indian character, except when they are shot or killed, and they bleed red. Alcatena's careful and deliberate use of colour tells illuminates Britain's relationship with its Indian subjects. The obvious connotations of his visual symbolism are not lost on the reader: in this empire of blood, it is Queen Victoria and the

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2628500

British colonialists that are 'bloody', bloody with predation and parasitism, drenched in the blood of their non-white subjects.

If Alcatena's visuals effectively convey the atrocities of colonialism, it is because Gaind's story leaves his reader in no doubt about the inhumanity and injustice of the British colonial enterprise. The reader feels Tom's palpable horror at discovering that the primary ingredient in *aqua vitae*, the source of British colonial power, is literally the blood of Indian subjects, who are regularly bled by giant mechanised leeches to provide an unending supply of the substance. This 'blood tax' explains why Leela had to offer up her blood as a bribe. Gaind's characterization of the British as bloodsuckers is admittedly blunt. His message requires little exegesis: Britain's self-aggrandisement comes at the expense of its colonial subjects. Such damning characterisations of the British certainly play into what Leela Gandhi calls "oppositional" postcolonial theory, which "scavenges the colonial past for what Benita Parry describes as an 'implacable enmity between native and invader'" (Gandhi 1998: 11, 30). In a genre replete with texts that hide the barbarities of colonialism under a facade of imagined colonial civility, however, the strength of Gaind's book lies precisely in its decision to depict colonialism's bloody savagery, even if in gratuitously hyperbolised fashion.

Empire of Blood truly emerges as a superior alternative to typical representations of the colonial encounter in its understanding of the colonial enterprise not merely as a geographical annexation, but also as a conquest of the mind. As Ashis Nandy diagnoses in his polemic *The Intimate Enemy* (2010), British colonialism's most distressing legacy was its heavy toll on the Indian psyche. Integral to pretensions of British civilisational superiority was a view of India as intellectually backward. Thus, the colonial project had to proceed hand in hand with a creation of an account of Indian insufficiency and then ensure that the Indians themselves also adopted this fabulation.

Empire of Blood illustrates how this epistemic violence is accomplished. In an early scene in the graphic novel, we witness Tom's father, pointing to a chart from the 'British Museum' with pictures of two skeletons, marshalling 'science' to explain the Indian's inherent inferiority:

> One only has to examine the physiognomy of the Indian to see that he is inferior in every way to the Englishman. Note the low

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2628500

> forehead and pronounced brow ridge of the Indian specimen. It clearly demonstrates that he is a lower species, incapable of thinking for himself and designed solely to follow orders. (Gaind 2015: 13)

A full page is devoted to "An excerpt from the Systema Naturae of Human Variety, as devised by the Right Honorable Sir Linnaeus Cuvier, OBE" (Gaind 2015: 85). The page features pictures of "The Caucasian", "The Negroid", "The Oriental" and "The Asiatic" (Gaind 2015: 85). The descriptions appended under each picture are reminiscent of those found in much Victorian racial science. The Asiatic's description reads: "Brown of skin, choleric, self-righteous; oily, straight, thick hair; stubborn, zealous, dogmatic; mired in superstition and regulated by laziness" (Gaind 2015: 85). The descriptions of "The Negroid" and "The Oriental" are similarly uncharitable, while that of "The Caucasian" betrays an inherent sense of racial superiority: "White of flesh, sanguine, with abundant, long hair; blue eyes; gentle, acute, inventive; covered with close vestments; and regulated by morality" (Gaind 2015: 85).

It is a testament to the immense success of this historical conquest of the Indian mind that, by the time of Indian independence, the pernicious idea of cultural lack had lodged itself in the Indian psyche, concomitant with a belief in the accuracy of the coloniser's metric that assigned such lack. These ideas have proven resilient decades after the end of colonialism, and arguably, postcolonial historiography's mandate is partly their extirpation. Recognizing the importance of this enterprise, Gaind champions a historiography that corrects the falsehoods of colonial history. Leela explains to Tom:

> They want us only to believe the official propaganda, the histories they have rewritten to favor the empire. Defeating the empire is only half the fight. The real battle will be to vanquish generations of ignorance and disinformation. (Gaind 2015: 71)

As Gaind himself said in an interview, in writing *Empire of Blood*, he wanted to "talk about how it would take not just a political revolution to change things palpably, but an intellectual one" (Gaind 2015: n.p.).

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2628500

Though *Empire of Blood* denounces British violence against Indians and soundly condemns colonialism, it is not completely unsympathetic to the British themselves. As Tom approaches adulthood, he witnesses the shooting of peaceful Indian dissenters by British officers. Tom is aghast and incensed enough to punch a British soldier. This incident fuels his growing sympathy for the oppressed Indians. Here, Gaind is most likely referencing the infamous Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919,[5] an incident also featured in other works of steampunk fiction. In his steampunk novel *Jani and the Greater Game* (2014), for instance, the British author Eric Brown likewise alludes to this poignant historical moment, when he has one of his characters, the British soldier Alfie, explain why he ran away from his platoon's encounter with Indian protesters:

> There we were, a platoon of heavily armed infantry up against, what? Fifty Nationalists armed with a few old Enfields, the odd revolver and a few scythes? It was a slaughter. We should never have confronted the protest in the first place. It was sheer provocation. (Brown 2014: 65)

By deploying this historical incident, both texts give voice to empathetic Englishmen decrying the brutality of colonialism. In *Jani and the Greater Game*, however, Alfie's condemnation of the coloniser's brutality can be read as an instance of what Gomathi Narayanan calls "the British novelist[…]purging himself of the taint of colonialism" (Gomathi Narayanan. 1986: 29). Examining many neo-Victorian Mutiny novels and finding numerous such instances of British trauma and its self-expiation, Kohlke enquires, "[w]here, one might ask, is the Indian trauma in all this?" (Kohlke 2010: 378). *Empire of Blood* represents a welcome departure from such British narratives of auto-exculpation, instead presenting the Indian trauma of a painful national past, with the historical origins of this trauma depicted in graphic detail. Yet here too the reader can perceive an attempt at ventriloquising British rather than indigene trauma.

Needless to say, this raises questions surrounding representations of postcolonial trauma. If British auto-exculpation from colonialism's trauma in fiction is a form of appropriation that ill serves the erstwhile colonised, are not Indian attempts to narrate British trauma similarly compromised? They well might be, but such fictional acknowledgements of colonialism's

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2628500

injustices and apologies for these iniquities also contribute to a much-needed politics of reconciliation integral to salving the psychic pain of historical abuses of empire. This is especially important because such contrition is rarely forthcoming in real life, as David Cameron demonstrated when, on his visit to Amritsar in 2013, he refused to apologise for the Jallianwala Bagh massacre on behalf of the British government, saying it would be wrong to "reach back into history" (Watt 2013: n.p.). By representing a British character who condemns colonialism and plangently decries its excesses, Gaind allows for a posthumous British *mea culpa*. Gaind's ostensible appropriation of British trauma does not deprive the coloniser of their right to offer their own contrition; Tom's guilt for British colonialism in *Empire of Blood* is indicative rather of Indian receptiveness to British apology and amends. Gaind charitably grants that the coloniser is racked with guilt, even if David Cameron might have trouble mouthing the words.

Despite stressing the importance of an intellectual revolution, Gaind ultimately offers his readers a violent one. Tom poisons and kills Queen Elizabeth with castor oil seeds. Then, in a suicide mission, he steals the empire's most powerful dirigible Albion and pilots it into the giant dome that serves as the British Raj's Indian headquarters. Tom's willingness to sacrifice his life for the Indian cause is a moment of deep empathy; it shows the strength of his own character, but also that of Gaind, who allows that a British subject could so keenly feel the inherent rightness of the fight for Indian independence and the injustice of the Raj that he would be willing to sacrifice his life to destroy the empire.

Two final revelations remain. First, we discover that Queen Elizabeth is the alchemist responsible for concocting the *aqua vitae* so integral to British superiority, infusing the drink with a tiny portion of her own powerful blood. This proxy Victoria, heralded as the 'Empress of Blood', is integral to British global dominion. This makes *Empire of Blood* of a piece with that breed of neo-Victorian novels that "feature Queen Victoria as arch-manipulator of her country's intelligence networks and imperial expansion" (Kohlke 2010a: 245). But the book's most startling revelation is that Queen Elizabeth is actually a two thousand year old monster, "a misshapen freak that drained her mother dry even before taking a breath" (Gaind 2015: 96). Through long decades of plotting, she has inveigled, murdered and finessed her way to the British throne and steered

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2628500

Britain on its path to global domination. By attributing responsibility for colonialism and its excesses primarily to the Queen and then revealing her to be a demonic foreign interloper, however, Gaind, to some degree, denies British agency in colonialism. In *Empire of Blood*'s alternate history, the British are useful pawns for a cruel monster's nefarious plans. By making an Englishman responsible for India's liberation, the book also denies the primacy of Indian agency in the struggle for Indian independence. However, as I discuss in my final section, these narrative choices offer therapeutic interpretive possibilities and opens up an imaginative space for working through trauma in ways that are empathetic to both colonised and coloniser.

4. Towards a Politics of Reconciliation

Empire of Blood's alternate history depicts troubling realities of British colonialism that are given short shrift in much neo-Victorian steampunk, but its reimagination of history both absolves the British of responsibility and removes Indian agency from the process of Independence. But these are also the very characteristics that separate it from the glut of colonialism-centred steampunk and are ultimately *Empire of Blood*'s greatest strengths. Through these acts of historical reimagining, Gaind's novel sidesteps the "rhetoric of blame" which Edward Said insists postcolonial analyses should eschew (Said 1994: 18).

In stark opposition to most colonial narratives that demonise the British for colonialism, Gaind's text suggests that the British were victims too, under the spell of a rapacious regent. By painting the British as unwitting dupes of an evil vampire, Gaind robs Indian subjects of some of the moral high ground that, in similar narratives, is often used to justify violence against the coloniser. Gaind's Indian readers might feel affronted by this, but what he carves out for them with this historical sleight of hand is infinitely greater and more therapeutic: the ability to cede partial custody of the moral high ground to a former coloniser is the sign of a mature nation beginning to come to grips with its colonial trauma.

While the effects of centuries of colonial rule are not easily overcome, Gaind's text allows us to imagine an India that has sufficiently transcended its colonial trauma to the point where it is not affronted even when fictional texts' mutilations of the past seem to deprive the nation's history of the causal events of national trauma. The appearance of a work like *Empire of Blood* might indicate India's arrival at a cultural moment

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2628500

where Indian-authored neo-Victorian narratives need not function merely, or primarily, as trauma texts. No longer in thrall to the sensitivity about colonial history symptomatic of a society still in the grips of colonial trauma, these fictions can even exist as entertainment or fulfil some other function.

The continuous mining of history for a diorama of horrors is antithetical to the palliation of national trauma. While alternate histories can offer a reprieve from the narratives of colonial cruelty that have become hegemonic in representations of British colonialism in India, the best examples of the genre act as emollients, not forgetfulness potions. Alternate histories that traffic in historical amnesia in the manner of *The Peshawar Lancers* and *Prudence* are insufficiently respectful of the historical atrocities of colonialism to be truly ameliorative. In contrast, the imaginative desecrations visited upon history by *Empire of Blood* do not completely imagine away the unpalatable past.

Most Indian representations of the colonial encounter seem to represent a strain of what Roger Luckhurst calls "identitarian trauma politics" (Luckhurst, 2013: 88). Kohlke argues that when such politics figure in Mutiny fictions written from a "white subject position by descendants of imperialists" (Kohlke 2010b: 377), they are often characterised by an anti-identitarian bent that attempts to distance their writers and readers from the colonial violence that has today become recognised as non-progressive and politically incorrect. Indian accounts of colonialism, whether real or imagined, face no such strictures; erstwhile colonisers continue to seem as apposite and deserving a target for fictive violence in Indian texts today as Russian spies in Hollywood films during the Cold War. This provides an opportunity for a narrative magnanimity in Indian-authored steampunk texts, as Indian bonhomie and sympathy towards their British colonisers (at least in the realm of fiction) are not prescribed by populist Indian cultural mandate.

Empire of Blood's characterization of Britain itself as the victim of a vampiric monster invites sympathy for a coloniser otherwise much-maligned in India's cultural imagination. Demonstrating an empathy that seldom tinges fictional Indian postcolonial narratives, Gaind's book asks us to imagine the British as victims, hoodwinked by a 'foreigner' into committing unspeakable monstrosities against other foreigners. Gaind's outsourcing of monstrosity does not wholly exculpate the British, but rather

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2628500

suggests that colonialism itself (like the 'Empress of Blood') is a force with its own internal monstrous logic, and driven by a desire to glut its maw, will manipulate human actors to sate its rapacious desires. When Tom finally realises the enormity of British colonialism and decides to help Azad with his plot to overthrow the British, he laments, "Oh God, I'm a monster. We are all monsters" (Gaind 2015: 56). Azad's reply is illuminative. "No, Tom," he says, "you aren't a monster. You are a victim, just like the rest of us" (Gaind 2015: 56). It might be impossible to completely jettison the postcolonial calculus of blame, but neo-Victorian studies is better served by postcolonial analyses that temper the rhetoric of culpability with a politics of reparative possibility. Understanding colonialism as a pernicious *pas de deux* that bequeaths both coloniser and colonised with the shared victimhood of a mutually traumatic past, alternate histories like *Empire of Blood* attempt to allay the traumas of the past, while remaining entirely cognisant of historical atrocities.

Notes

1. See Charlie Stross's screed critiquing certain elements of steampunk: http://www.antipope.org/charlie/blog-static/2010/10/the-hard-edge-of-empire.html.
2. See https://beyondvictoriana.com.
3. Indian steampunk is a nascent phenomenon whose best examples include the Steampunk India blog (https://steampunkindia.wordpress.com) and Shweta Narayan's superlative short story "The Mechanical Aviary of Emperor Jalal-ud-din Muhammad Akbar" (2010).
4. An excerpt from the graphic novel can be found here: https://www.firstpost.com/living/excerpt-from-graphic-novel-empire-of-blood-what-if-the-sun-had-not-set-on-the-british-empire-2304274.html
5. The Jallianwala Bagh massacre is a key event in Indian colonial history, often mentioned as one of the most horrific incidents in the British rule of India. On April 13,1919, British troops led by General Dyer blocked the exits of the *Bagh* (garden) where Indians had gathered to protest the arrest of their leaders, and fired indiscriminately into the peaceful crowds, killing hundreds of Indians.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2628500

Bibliography

Brown, Eric. 2014. *Jani and the Greater Game*. Oxford: Solaris.

Carriger, Gail. 2015. *Prudence*. New York: Orbit.

Carrott, James H., and Brian David Johnson. 2013. *Vintage Tomorrows: A Historian and a Futurist Journey Through Steampunk into the Future of Technology*, 1st ed. Beijing: Maker Media, Inc.

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. 2009. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Charles Stross. October 272010. 'The Hard Edge of Empire - Charlie's Diary', *Charlie's Diary*, http://www.antipope.org/charlie/blog-static/2010/10/the-hard-edge-of-empire.html (accessed August 25, 2018).

Eliot, T. S. 1963. *Collected Poems, 1909-1962*. 1st ed. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Faulkner, William. 1951. *Requiem for a Nun*. New York: Random House.

Gaind, Arjun Raj. 2015. *Empire of Blood*. Chennai: Graphic India.

——. June 25, 2015. 'Excerpt from Graphic Novel Empire of Blood: What If the Sun Had Not Set on the British Empire?', *Firstpost*, 25 June, http://www.firstpost.com/living/excerpt-from-graphic-novel-empire-of-blood-what-if-the-sun-had-not-set-on-the-british-empire-2304274.html (accessed August 25, 2018).

Gandhi, Leela. 1998. *Postcolonial Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Gomathi Narayanan. 1986. *The Sahibs and the Natives: A Study of Guilt & Pride in Anglo-Indian & Indo-Anglian Novels*. Delhi: Chanakya Publications.

Ho, Elizabeth. 2012. *Neo-Victorianism and the Memory of Empire*. New York: Continuum International Pub.

Kohlke, Marie-Luise. 2010a. 'Steampunk Show Time: Review of Robert Rankin's The Japanese Devil Fish Girl and Other Unnatural Attractions: A Novel.' *Neo-Victorian Studies* 3:1, 244–51.

——. 2010b. 'Tipoo's Tiger on the Loose: Neo-Victorian Witness-Bearing and the Trauma of the Indian Mutiny'. In Kohlke and Gutleben (2010a): 367-397.

Kohlke, Marie-Luise, and Christian Gutleben, eds. 2010. *Neo-Victorian Tropes of Trauma: The Politics of Bearing after-Witness to Nineteenth-Century Suffering*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi.

Luckhurst, Roger. 2013. *The Trauma Question*. London and New York: Routledge.

Nevins, Jess. 2011. 'Prescriptivists vs. Descriptivists: Defining Steampunk', *Science Fiction Studies*, 38:3, 513-518.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2628500

Rahman, Maseeh. October 28, 2014. 'Indian Prime Minister Claims Genetic Science Existed in Ancient Times', *The Guardian* 28 October, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/oct/28/indian-prime-minister-genetic-science-existed-ancient-times (accessed August 25, 2018).

Rosaldo, Renato. 1989. 'Imperialist Nostalgia'. *Representations*, no.26, 107–22.

——. 1993. *Culture & Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis: With a New Introduction*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Said, Edward W. 1994. *Culture and Imperialism*. 1 edition. New York: Vintage.

Stirling, S. M. 2003. The Peshawar Lancers. Reprint edition. New York: Roc.

Tharoor, Kanishk, 2015 'The New Indian Classics.' April 13, *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, https://lareviewofbooks.org/review/new-indian-classics (accessed August 25, 2018).

Watt, Nicholas. February 20, 2013. 'David Cameron Defends Lack of Apology for British Massacre at Amritsar', *The Guardian*, https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2013/feb/20/david-cameron-amritsar-massacre-india (accessed August 25, 2018).

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2628500