



The White Man's World (Memories of Empire) (Volume 1)

Bill Schwarz

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The *Memories of Empire* trilogy explores the complex and subterranean political currents that emerged in English society during the years of post-war decolonization. Just as the empire ended, when white princesses waltzed with new black heads of state in celebration of independence from colonial rule, the registers of racial whiteness in the home society quickened, and racial segregation - the colour bar - became ever more pronounced. Where are the connections to be located between the racial dimensions of decolonization overseas, and the colonial dimensions of race at home?

Working back from the peak of Enoch Powell's influence in 1968-1970, *Memories of Empire* seeks to illuminate the impact of decolonization on the political life of the old metropole. Decisive in this respect is the question of race, or more particularly the shifting dispositions of racial whiteness. The long colonial ordering of the idea of the white man, and of its various derivatives, constituted a powerful component in the ways that the empire came to be remembered: far from disappearing, the figures of white Englishmen and Englishwomen took on new force in the immediate aftermath of decolonization.

The volumes track this story across many different times and spaces: the settler colonies, the Caribbean, in the phenomenon of West Indian migration to England, and the England of Powell and Margaret Thatcher, where these contrary histories did much to shape the political life of a nation.

Through the medium of memory, the empire was to continue to possess strange afterlives long after imperial rule itself had vanished.



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