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Paul Scott's Later Novels: The Unknown Indian

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Abstract

The *Raj Quartet* is a novel in which Scott has transmuted contemporary history into fiction—the many forces at work in India over a period of five years, from the 'Quit India' motion of the Congress Committee in 1942 to the eve of Independence and Partition. Deeper than Scott's interest in history and politics, however, is his aim to probe the nature of human destiny, conveying a philosophy of life that shows man's destiny and moral sense sometimes at variance. He also focuses an ordinary human point of view on the world around him, valuing integrity and decency. *Staying On* is not a political or historical novel, although its background has political implications. It focuses mainly on problems relating to personal destiny. Scott's later novels constitute a major achievement in colonial, indeed, all, literature.

One thing I know, that love with chance
And use and time and necessity
Will grow, and louder the heart's dance
At parting than at meeting be.
—Edward Thomas, 'When First I came Here'

All history becomes subjective: in other words there is properly no history, only biography.
—Emerson, 'History', in *The Complete Essays and Other Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson* ed. Brooks Atkinson (N.Y.: Random House, 1950 edn.)

Paul Scott's reputation as a writer rightly rests on *The Raj Quartet* and *Staying On*. His creativity begins as a child-film maker, when he first develops the ability to conceive dialogue, scene and structure; proceeds in adult years through attempts to write poetry and plays; and, finally, to the realisation in 1951 that fiction was the true medium for his

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voice. His 'inner conviction' that his vocation was that of a creative writer never failed him, and his wife was supportive, in the years before he arrived.[1] He became a professional (full-time) writer at the age of forty. He took a long time to find himself. He was 46 years old when *The Jewel in the Crown* was published in 1966 and he had already written eight novels. When *The Quartet* was completed with *A Division of the Spoils* (1974), Scott was 54. Its reception was, generally, disappointing. Its coda, *Staying On*, was written quickly and published in 1977. It won the Booker Prize, and, as a consequence, both the literary world and the reading public took more notice of Scott. But maturity as a writer, worked for tirelessly and consciously as indicated not only by biographical evidence but also by *The Corrida at San Feliu* (1964), and success came too late; he died just three months after winning the Booker.

The succeeding generation has been fairer to Scott than his contemporaries. He had written to his closest Indian friend, Dorothy Ganapathy, three days after *The Jewel in the Crown* was published in England (17 July 1966): 'wouldn't it be marvellous if some producer decided to make a film of the *Jewel*?'[2] Granada's television serial of *The Raj Quartet* was, indeed, marvellous. In the translation from a verbal to a visual medium, the philosophical dimension of *The Quartet*, difficult to render because of its very nature, was virtually lost, although the camera powerfully captured the disturbing resonances of Barbie's silence and the shadowy flight of birds wheeling, and mirrored something of Scott's ability to speak in images. But the socio-political context and the personal relations were beautifully brought out. The serial made Paul Scott a household word at that time. *Staying On* too was made into a television film two years after publication, with Celia Johnson as Lucy Smalley and Trevor Howard as Tusker. Yet the memory of the films has dimmed. In 1983, *The Raj Quartet* and *Staying On* were among the list (thirteen in all) of the 'Best Novels of Our Time', selected by the Book Marketing Council in Britain, while his publishers recognised his stature by issuing a Collected Edition of his novels. The fact is that there has been no *steady* interest in Scott, no attention commensurate with his achievement, his standing insecure.[3]

[1] Paul Scott, 'A Writer Takes Stock' (1973), in *Paul Scott: An Appointment with the Muse: Essays 1961–75* ed. Shelley C. Reece (London: Heinemann, 1986), pp. 153–64.

[2] Hilary Spurling, *Paul Scott: A Life* (London: Hutchinson, 1990), p. 321.

[3] John Holloway's view of Scott, in his survey of the contemporary literary scene, is symptomatic: 'Paul Scott's *Raj Quartet* (1966–75), set in post-Independence India,

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Radically devaluing *The Raj Quartet*, Salman Rushdie wrote:

> The Raj Quartet and the Kaye novel (M.M. Kaye's The Far Pavilions) are founded on identical strategies of what, to be polite, one must call borrowing. In both cases, the central plot-motifs are lifted from earlier and much finer novels. In The Far Pavilions, the hero Ash ('A Shock')—raised as Indian, discovered to be a sahib[4], and ever afterwards torn between his two selves—will be instantly recognisable as the cardboard cut-out version of Kipling's *Kim*. And the rape of Daphne Manners in the Bibighar Gardens derives just as plainly from Forster's *Passage to India*. But because Kaye and Scott are vastly inferior to the writers they follow, they turn what they touch to pure lead.[5]

But Scott had protested almost ten years earlier, in a letter to Dorothy Ganapathy of 14 July 1975: 'The one thing I've had to fight here is the awful English literary-academic fixation on Kipling and Forster. For heaven's sake! Did nothing happen between 1924 and 1945?'[6] I had argued earlier: 'Of course, it is true to say No Kipling and No Forster, No Kaye and No Paul Scott. But then, it was also No Marlowe, No Shakespeare. It is perfectly natural and legitimate for a writer to take off from the tradition available to him and the crucial question is what he makes of this tradition.'[7] If Scott echoes Forster, it is with a purpose. Moreover, the difference between Kaye and Paul Scott is immense. It is true that, when Kaye sent her manuscript to Scott, he rang her and said: 'I have only one word for you—*Shabash*!', the great Indian cry which means so much more than the cool English 'Well done',[8] but he, probably, saw it as a bestseller and correctly so. Kaye dilutes the Kim motif into a nice popular romance, whereas not only does Scott ring a significant change on Forster (among other differences, his rape is real, whereas Forster's is imagined), he faces up to and exploits the epic potentialities of his subject which neither Kipling nor Forster did and for which he had the examples in ancient times of *The*

makes a detailed and sustained effort to avoid blinkering itself within post-colonial attitudes; but even so, there is a tendency for the work to dissipate itself in the peripheral and melodramatic, as if the task the writer had set himself were impossibly difficult to carry out in the event.'—Holloway, 'The Literary Scene', in *The Present: The New Pelican Guide to English Literature* ed. Boris Ford (London: Penguin, 1983), p. 71.

[4] Like Edgar Rice Burrough's Tarzan discovered to be Lord Greystoke and E.M. Hull's Sheik, Ahmed, also discovered to be a European.

[5] Salman Rushdie, 'Outside the Whale', in *Granta* (London, 1984), No.11, p. 127.

[6] Robin Moore, *Paul Scott's Raj* (London: Heinemann 1990), p. 121.

[7] D.C.R.A. Goonetilleke, *Images of the Raj: South Asia in the Literature of Empire* (London: Macmillan, N.Y.: St Martin's, 1988), p. 138.

[8] Roderick Gradidge, 'How M.M. Kaye found her guide to India', in *The Times*, 15 July 1984.

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Ramayanaya and *The Mahabharatha*. His style does not work on the level of greatness found in Forster, but he possesses a reasonable manner of writing, not spectacular, often plain and homely but substantial, often unselfconsciously and expertly drawing on the resources of poetry. He does not always suffer by comparison with Forster. Robin Jared Lewis claims that 'the first novel in *The Raj Quartet*, *The Jewel in the Crown*, is so similar to *A Passage to India* in its basic details that it almost seems that Scott was rewriting Forster's novel'[9] and he thereby unconsciously emphasises the deliberate intertextuality which Scott plays on.

Scott's choice of a rape as his central event and motif is validated further by his form, his structure by epic tradition. The stories of ancient epics are woven round acts of sexual violence, though not necessarily rape: in *The Iliad*, an abduction (of Helen by Paris) and the 'rape' is with consent; in *The Ramayana*, an abduction (of Sita by Ravana) but no rape; less importantly, in *The Mahabharatha* a woman is dishonoured.[10] In *The Iliad* and *The Ramayana*, the sexual violence involves important historical personages, but in *The Raj Quartet* neither Daphne Manners nor her rapists, Indian peasants, are of this stature, being ordinary members of society, though Daphne has the standing of belonging to the ruling race. In fact, in *The Raj Quartet*, historical personages are introduced as determining the historical events in which the characters are caught up, but they do not appear in person as characters. The Daphne-Hari Kumar case intensifies the public disturbances in Mayapore, but these disturbances are part of nation-wide unrest which has nothing to do with them and, certainly, has not been originated by their case. It is true that M.A. Kassim writes a short letter to Gandhi, that his son Sayed says that he slightly knew Shah Nawaz Khan of the Indian National Army, that Edwina Crane knew Marcella Sherwood, that Mabel Layton sent money to the funds the Indians raised for the victims of the massacre at Jallianwallah Bagh. But there is not a single occasion when a fictional character directly interacts with or meets a historical personage. The ordinary people occupy the centre of the stage; history is woven into the texture of

[9] Robin Jared Lewis, 'The Literature of the Raj', in *Asia in Western Fiction* ed. Robin W. Winks & James R. Rush (Manchester: Manchester Unversity Press, 1990), p. 67.

[10] Scott's use of the motif of lovers enchanted into stone in *The Corrida at San Feliu* recalls, in a general way, episodes in Sanskrit works with their ramifying and interlaced tales such as Dandin's *Dacakumaracarita* and, more specifically, Subandhu's *Vasavadatta* where a princess is turned into a statue which awakens to life at the touch of her long separated lover (A. Berriedale Keith, *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, Oxford University Press, 1961 edn, 309), suggesting some familiarity with Sanskrit literature.

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the work while the historical figures themselves play a minor role. All contribute to create, in Roland Barthes' words, 'the glow of reality, not of glory.'[11] *The Raj Quartet* is an epic in modern dress.

It is important to understand the genre to which *The Raj Quartet* belongs. It should be considered not as a novel dealing with India like *Kim* or *A Passage to India*, but as a series of historical novels in which the author has transmuted contemporary history into fiction, like Solzhenitsyn's *The Red Wheel*, a cycle of historical novels which began with *August 1914* and *Lenin in Zürich*. Mary Lascelles defines 'historical fiction' as 'embroidery on a given fabric'.[12] But 'embroidery' is an unsatisfactory word, suggesting superficiality and want of seriousness; 'fleshing out' is more appropriate in the case of Paul Scott. Moreover, Scott is only partly an orthodox realist. He is also partly poetic, and also treats the novel as an artefact and a construct in post-modern fashion. Scott's talent cannot be contained within received categories. His own disclaimer that he was not a historical novelist, because 'a historical novel is a novel concerning a period during which an author did not live'[13], is interesting and illuminating; he is referring to one kind of historical novel, a contrast to his own.

Solzhenitsyn said: 'A novel differs from a tale by its encompassing a multiplicity of destinies, by the horizontal nature of its sweep and the verticality of its thought.'[14] *The Raj Quartet*, certainly, has historical breadth and sweep. It also possesses historical accuracy, deriving from hindsight and from the fact that this was one of Scott's aims.[15] He dealt with a period of history that had passed and he could avoid the kind of blunder Forster could not help committing in making a Muslim, Aziz, the chief Indian character in a predominantly Hindu country in a novel titled significantly as *A Passage to India*. Moreover, Scott could present a view of history.

Scott would have agreed with J.G. Farrell's view: 'It seemed to me that the really interesting thing that's happened during my lifetime has been the decline of the British Empire.' *The Raj Quartet* spans the most dramatic and far-reaching phase of this decline—the period

[11] Roland Barthes, *S/Z* (trans. Richard Miller, N.Y.: Hill & Wang, 1974), p. 102.

[12] Mary Lascelles, *The Story-Teller Retrieves the Past* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), p. 128.

[13] Quoted from Caroline Moorehead, 'A White Man's Burden', in *New Statesman Society*, 2 November 1990, p. 33.

[14] Quoted in Donald Watt, '"The Harmony of the World": Polyphonic Structure in Solzhenitsyn's Longer Fiction', in *Modern Fiction Studies*, XXIII, 1 (1977), p. 106.

[15] Paul Scott, 'Author's Note', in *A Division of the Spoils*.

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of five years from the 'Quit India' motion of the All India Congress Committee in August 1942 to the eve of Independence and Partition. Paul Scott himself saw that as 'the last great confrontation between East and West in India was in 1942.'[16] The British generally regarded India as, in Churchill's words, 'that most truly bright and precious jewel in the crown of the King, which more than all other Dominions and Dependencies constitutes the glory and strength of the British Empire.'[17] The surrender of India meant the annihilation of all that India stood for and the beginning of the end of the Empire—and more. Lord Curzon, one of Britain's greatest imperial pro-consuls, was boastful and also prescient when he said in 1901, during the heyday of Empire: 'As long as we rule India we are the greatest power in the world. If we lose it we shall drop straightaway to a third-rate power.'[18] The final phase of the Indian Independence struggle was contemporaneous with World War II, the biggest conflict in modern history. Such a momentous period serves to highlight the many forces at work in India, makes them 'stand out with particular force and colouring' (to use a comment of Joseph Conrad on his art).[19] Scott has chosen North India as the setting for *The Raj Quartet*—rightly because it is in keeping with his implied intentions. Not because, as M.M. Mahood thinks, 'it was there that the liberal philosophy last *excited* the British'[20] but simply because the British presence was more marked in the North (with its cantonments, princely states and the Afghan problem) than in the South.

David Rubin observes that each of the four novels of *The Raj Quartet* 'is dominated by a single figure'[21]—*The Jewel in the Crown* by Daphne Manners, *The Day of the Scorpion* by M.A. Kassim (not Sarah Layton as Rubin thinks), *The Towers of Silence* by Barbie Batchelor and *A Division of the Spoils* by Guy Perron. Such changes of focus, as found in *The Mahabharatha* and *The Illiad* too, are in keeping with the technique of epics. Scott's figures by virtue of what they are, generate the

[16] Scott, *My Appointment with the Muse*, p. 62.

[17] Winston S. Churchill, *India: Speeches* (London: 1931 edn) p. 47.

[18] Quoted from Trevor Royle, *The Last Days of the Raj* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990 edn), p. 16. Mahatma Gandhi predicted that, after India, all the other British colonies would follow suit.—*ibid*., p. 16.

[19] Conrad, Letter to Henry S. Canby, 7 April 1924, in *Joseph Conrad: Life and Letters* ed. G. Jean-Aubry (London: 1927), Vol.2, p. 342.

[20] M.M. Mahood, 'Paul Scott's Guardians', in *The Yearbook of English Studies*, XIII (1983), p. 245.

[21] David Rubin, *After the Raj: British Novels in India since 1947* (Hanover & London: University Press of New England, 1986), p. 122.

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predominant interest in each novel—the racial aspect of the Indo-British encounter, the political aspect, the moral aspect and the historical aspect, respectively.

Guy Perron, after several years of scholarly absorption in Britain's imperial history, is actually in the country where much of it had originated. It is logical that it is in his novel *A Division of the Spoils* that the reader cannot fail to see the economic, commercial motivations behind the British occupation of India. Hapgood the banker tells Perron:

> Nearly every stranger from home you come across nowadays is either a journalist or a member of parliament swanning around ostensibly to observe the democratic process of dismantling the empire but actually making soundings for his private business interests. Nothing wrong with that of course. India's going to be an expanding dominion market once it settles down. The thing is, we'll have to meet more inside and outside competition.[22]

Hapgood, in fact, suggests the basic motive of both colonialism and neo-colonialism. Perron makes the same suggestion when observing soldiers in a guardroom:

> The faces were those of urban Londoners and belonged to streets of terraced houses that ended in one-man shops: newsagent-tobacconist, fish and chip shop, family grocer, and a pub at the corner where the high road was. What could such a face know of India? And yet India was there, in the skull and the bones of the body. Its possession had helped nourish the flesh, warm the blood of every man in the room, sleeping and waking. (*ADS*, p. 103)

The condition of these young men in England is underprivileged and India has proved their salvation. But such passages, fine as they are, are few. Paul Scott acknowledges economic exploitation but does not dwell on it or examine it.

Yet one of Scott's aims in the *Quartet* is to recreate the Raj. The Raj for him, unlike for E.M. Forster, is not so much the British administrative machinery as the 'imperial-military apparatus' (*ADS*, p. 27). And this is not really because of the wartime conditions and the Independence struggle, though such circumstances make it appear nakedly and highlight it. Scott does not conceal the power of the army and the military-bureaucracy and he is keenly aware that it formed the basis of the Raj. From one perspective, the *Quartet* may seem to be all about the Majors, the Colonels, down to the Corporals and privates. In

[22] Scott, *A Division of the Spoils*, p. 472.

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The Towers of Silence, Scott accentuates the Pankot Rifles,[23] suggesting a military mystique which recalls his own earlier novel *The Mark of the Warrior* and appears a more sophisticated, less sentimentally stirring descendant of Kipling's

> But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
> When two strong men stand face to face, though they come from the ends of the earth!
>
> (*'The Ballad of East and West'*, 1889)

Scott also critically goes into what is called *man-bap*. The English have, or Scott has, been a trifle careless in that they do, or he does, not get the indigenous term quite right as 'ma-bap' or 'mam-bap';[24] everyone who has seen Satyajith Ray's famous Apu trilogy knows that 'ma' is 'mother'. Merrick, the most important and prominent single character in *The Raj Quartet* as a whole, appears as the District Superintendent of Police in Mayapore in *The Jewel in the Crown*, but by *The Towers of Silence* he has realised his original ambition of joining the army. As an Intelligence Officer, he gives a lecture to the contingent in Mirat:

> "the one thing the Indian army has been especially rightly proud of—the high level of trust between men and officers which is based on the real concern shown for the men's welfare by those officers." (*ADS*, p. 134)

The phrase *man-bap* is not used, but this is the concept. Later on, the implied author states:

> Man-bap. It meant Mother-Father, the relationship of the *Raj* to India, of a man like Colonel Layton to the men in his regiment, of a district officer to the people of his district, of Barbie herself to the children she had taught. (*ADS*, p. 275)

He provides both a definition and illustration. He shows that the conventional, less intelligent British officers believe in it literally and totally, and act by it even at the expense of reason. Teddie Bingham finds it impossible to believe that the Indians in the Muzzy Guides could turn against the British and become genuine members of the Indian National Army. He pays dearly, with his life, in fact, in his foolish attempt to recall two such Indians into the fold. On the other

[23] Scott, *The Towers of Silence*, pp. 38–9.

[24] See Charles Allen's 'A Short Glossary of "Anglo-Indian" Words, Phrases and Slang' in *Plain Tales from the Raj* (London: Futura, 1978 edn) p. 281, which has it as "*ma-bap*—mother and father ('op mai ma-bap hai'—'you are my mother and my father')."

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hand, Scott suggests that there is something to *man-bap*. He reinforces it and complements it in the way the Pankot Indians come to enter the army, from their villages—in their case too, such a career (sepoyhood) running through generations. The *man-bap* relationship does have historical reality. In Kipling's *The Ballad of East and West*, Kamal who stole the Colonel's mare and is caught by the Colonel's son who led a troop of Guides, gives his only son to the Guides:

'Now here is thy master,' Kamal said, `who leads a troop of Guides,
'And thou must ride at his left side as shield on shoulder rides,
'Till Death or I cut loose the tie, at camp and board and bed,
'Thy life is his—thy fate it is to guard him with thy hand.
'So, thou must eat at the White Queen's meat, and all her foes are thine,
'And thou must harry thy father's hold for the peace of the Border-line.
'And thou must make a trooper tough and hack thy way to power—
'Belike they will raise thee to Ressaldar when I am hanged in Peshawur!'

Yet Scott shows that the applicability of *man-bap* to the 1940s, despite its measure of validity in the past, is dubious and the credo even obsolete. Sarah Layton converses thus with Barbie Batchelor:

'He (Merrick) talked about her (Miss Crane) sitting at the roadside holding the dead Indian's hand. He thought that was man-bap. Was it?'
'No.'
'What was it?'
'Despair.' (*ADS*, p. 276)

That Sarah asks 'Was it?' underlines the fact that *she* does not know what man-bap is, she knows the phrase but is unfamiliar with its implications—although she is Colonel Layton's daughter. In view of her being, as it were, a central standard of integrity, it shows that Scott is devaluing the concept of man-bap, at any rate in the 1940s. Mildred Layton's reaction: 'What Teddie tried to do was worth the whole bloody war put together', is closely followed by the ironical authorial comment: 'his praiseworthy sacrifice for a principle the world no longer had time or inclination to uphold.' (*ADS*, pp. 262–263) This explains the rise of the INA (Indian National Army) and no further acceptance of *sirkar* (the government). In an early scene of *A Division of the Spoils* (pp. 9–10), the War in Europe is over, the Empire in India is near the end, Perron is giving a lecture on India to British soldiers, and the soldiers exhibit an utter disregard for the sub-continent; it has no place in their lives.

Scott also depicts the society of the Raj. It has been said of the British army in India, 'wives tended to acquire the rank of their husbands. The

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colonel's lady regarded herself as a sort of colonel and certainly she commanded all the other wives of the regiment.'[25] When Colonel Layton was a prisoner of war in Europe, his wife, Mildred, played this role in India. As Mrs Colonel Layton, her behaviour is impeccable—the correct gestures, the stiff upper lip, the concern, her distinction, never blurred even by drink. But it is indicated that this composure is a mere facade. In privacy, it is not her spirit that supports her but gin; she does her duty by Colonel Layton and the empire by maintaining his image and hers—but is Captain Coley's mistress. When she visits the villages around Pankot where she was stationed, to comfort the wives of the Indian soldiers in her husband's regiment and thank them for their goodwill, her conduct is undercut by the very fact that she is accompanied by Captain Coley (*TS*, p. 258). She is representative of a decadent empire.

Mabel, Colonel Layton's stepmother, is different and representative of the more spacious days of the Raj, yet her vision extends beyond mere imperialism. She occupies a pivotal position in *The Towers of Silence* which is, in a sense, a key to all the novels of *The Raj Quartet*, though less eventful, slower and simpler (explicably so since it is Barbie Batchelor's book). Mabel's home is Rose Cottage whose desirability, attractions, even paradisal beauty with its profusion of roses she so carefully tends, pruning as well as nourishing, (recalling Eden with its threat of loss) are stressed. The rose is commonly linked with love, with love both divine—as in Dante in the XXX Canto of *The Paradiso* and echoed by T.S. Eliot at the close of the *Four Quartets*[26]—and secular though not necessarily sexual as in Chaucer's *The Romaunt of the Rose* and the fulfilling communion of Eliot's rose-garden. 'Love' may seem an incongruous note to strike in connection with the remote, self-contained, unsentimental Mabel, a figure austere rather than soft or maternal; yet her perceptive kindness towards Barbie, her approval of Sarah, are pointers to what lies behind her reserve. Mabel's love extends to Indians and makes her take a more serene, even Christian approach to them. She does not give a penny to the fund for General Dyer when he was disgraced after the Government found that he had exceeded his duty, firing on the unarmed mob in the Jallianwallah Bagh and retired on half-pay, but she sent money to the victims (*TS*,

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 182.

[26] Dante Alighieri, *The Paradiso* (a verse rendering for the modern reader by John Ciardi; N.Y.: New American Library, 1970 edn), p. 338; T.S. Eliot, 'Four Quartets', in *The Complete Poems and Plays of T.S. Eliot* (London: Faber, 1982 edn), p. 198.

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p. 318). She also made anonymous donations to Indian charities. The picture, *The Jewel in the Crown*, is interpreted in *The Towers of Silence* as an illustration of *man-bap*, 'this aspect of the imperial attachment: the combination of hardness and sentimentality *from which Mabel had turned her face*' (my italics, *TS*, p. 275), perhaps because paternalism implies hierarchy, an unequal relationship. The father, as in Blake, is repressive; though benevolent to submissive Indians; there is no acceptance of them on terms of equality. It is significant that the accumulations of years gave Rose Cottage 'the quality of survival and the idea behind it—that survival meant change' (*DS*, p. 134). Earlier, when Mabel goes to the Officers' Mess, The Pankot Rifles, for Susan's post-nuptial party, she identifies a servant at the entrance as an individual, Ghulam Mohammed, and after a long room in the Mess with its flags, arms and regimental silver is described in detail, Mabel suddenly says: 'I thought there might be some changes, but there aren't ... it's all exactly as it was when I first saw it more than forty years ago ... I can't even be angry. But someone ought to be.' (*TS*, pp. 200–201) She thus condemns static preservation of old conditions.

Mabel is unusual in death too. Barbie feels that somehow in Mabel's case it would be seemly if the eyes were open and they were. 'The mouth was open too and from it a wail of pain and terror was emitting' (*TS*, p. 238), a soundless cry like the unknown Indian's. Right had not been done. She was not buried where she wanted to be, despite Barbie's protests to Mildred. Later on, Barbie feels, 'she probably forgives me about the grave,' and closes Mabel's eyes. She adds, 'it was not everyone who saw that they were open' (*TS*, p. 246), presumably because the memsahibs always dismissed Mabel as eccentric. Even dead, Mabel remains very visible *via* her disputed resting place and becomes a tower of silence (the significance underlined by Scott's title for the novel), 'for whereas one had been in the habit of looking in on the eccentric elder Mrs Layton to satisfy oneself that the purpose and condition of exile were still understood (however idiosyncratically by her), furthered and supported, now she would look down from an eminence upon the purpose, upon the condition, accusingly, still silent; but silent like someone who knew that events could speak for themselves and would do so.' (*TS*, pp. 257–258)

In a memorable scene, when Barbie sits in church, hears footsteps and expects Mabel's ghost, the person who enters is Lady Manners. The solar topee with the veil, the old-fashioned clothes, the fact that her husband was Sir Henry Manners, recall that she is Mabel's equivalent—another representative of the most spacious days of the

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Raj. She too has a sense of justice towards the Indians; she is instrumental in reopening the Hari Kumar case when Hari cannot help but languish in jail despite his innocence. But she goes further: her connection with Lili Chatterjee is close; she sends her niece Daphne to live with Lili in the MacGregor house; she herself lives with Indians on West Hill. She defies the conventions of British society in India even more daringly; she welcomes Daphne after she was raped, she looks after Daphne's child after Daphne's death and wishes the child to be brought up as an Indian. Lady Manners, in fact, sets up a standard of the relations that ought to exist between the British and Indians, as equals, different from and better than the relations between the British and the Indians as loyal servants or loyal, brave soldiers, the traditional model.[27]

Mildred's daughters, Susan and Sarah, do not have the stature of either Mabel or Lady Manners, but nevertheless play key roles. Susan, the younger, is pretty, superficial and self-centered. Anglo-Indian types, encouraged by Mildred, sooner or later transfer their attention from Sarah to Susan. Teddie Bingham was one such, and Susan and Teddie decide to get married soon. Teddie goes to the front but he has left Susan pregnant. The child arrives after premature labour brought on by the shock of the sudden death of Mabel Layton. Death and birth are juxtaposed. 'There went the Raj' (*TS*, p. 245), thought Barbie at Mabel's funeral. In a way, Mabel's garden is a symbol of British culture, even of England itself; Kipling wrote:

> Our England is a garden, and such gardens are not made
> By singing—"oh, how beautiful!" and sitting in the shade.
> ('The Glory of the Garden')

Mabel represents the old imperial order, the British past, Susan is the conventional memsahib, Teddie the pukka sahib. Their child is of the old Raj and the new factor of War and the Independence struggle. The posthumous child prefigures Britain's future, shorn of Empire and its old self-image.

Soon after giving birth, Susan appears clearly the memsahib. Mildred pays a compliment: 'The poor girl had done her damndest to do everything right. She'd been a brick.' (*TS*, p. 247) The death of Mabel, childbirth and the death of Teddie cause Susan to get into a

[27] Trevor Royle was born in India in 1945 and he reports: 'my mother's servants, my father's soldiers—staring out at me, loyal, curious, smiling. This was the India I came to know as a child.'—Royle, *Last Days of the Raj,* p. 14.

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mental state. She even tries to suffocate the child by fire in the way a scorpion is destroyed, but the ayah, Minnie, saves the child. The action carries a symbolic meaning:

> An insect entirely surrounded by the destructive element, as that twist, turn, attack, or defend yourself as you might you were doomed; not by the forces ranged against you but by the terrible inadequacy of your own armour. And for armour you read conduct, ideas, principles, the code by which you lived, then the sense to be read into Susan's otherwise meaningless little charade was to say the least of it thought-provoking. (*TS*, p. 296)

This is a definition of the scorpion-scorching acted out unconsciously by Susan. It is a seeming mockery of the position of the British in India—an unequivocal authorial statement.

Giving the child a father is the next question. Obviously, if the child (nearly burnt or suffocated to death yet rescued) represents the British post-Empire future, the step-father (*not* the father who, of course, has to be an upper class, stiff-upper-lip Muzzy Guide) cannot be an upper class Freddy Threepwood with a name recalling the Norman Conquest—Dicky *Beauvais* (not the plebian Bovey!), the immediate candidate. He *has* to be a meritocrat. Even at this point, whatever obsession or oddity Merrick had and, given Susan's mental state, he could taper off into a slightly obnoxious but sober and lasting step-father. Thematically, this would be the logical course and Scott rightly pursues it. Merrick's more denigratory presentation in the last volume, *A Division of the Spoils*, is a complex matter and does not invalidate this. In fact, Merrick's Christian name is significant and, in this volume, it is explained: 'Ronald means the same as Rex or Reginald. It means someone with power who rules.' (*ADS*, p. 503) The narrative motivation for this explanation is debatable but it confirms the symbolic point, the shift of power at this crisis of history.

Susan and Sarah faintly recall Jane Austen's Marianne and Elinor in character, though they are part of a far more complex fictional organism than *Sense and Sensibility*. They are, in the first place, two different types of human beings as commonly found in families in real life too, whether they be sisters or brothers. But they also possess a representative status, 'opposing tendencies within the Anglo-Indian psyche', as Robin Jared Lewis puts it, or 'polarities of British awareness', as Rubin does.[28] Sarah is described earlier on in these terms: 'an unassuming and intelligent girl . . . obviously took her

[28] Lewis, 'The Literature of the Raj', p. 68: Rubin, *After the Raj*, pp. 126–7.

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obligations seriously . . . quietness . . . there was backbone there.' (*TS*, p. 35) She is thus established as heroine *via* a simple feminine view suitable to the 1940s and, probably, native to a man of Scott's age. Her growing maturity is natural and inevitable, given the responsibilities she has no alternative but to shoulder. Her father is a POW in Europe and her mother, Mildred, unable to cope with her added burdens, resorts to drinking and an adulterous liaison with Kevin Coley, and lapses into financial irresponsibility. Susan is of no help and, in fact, needs support herself after her husband dies and her sanity is impaired. Sarah feels burdened by her family obligations and frustrated by the nature of Anglo-Indian life, of being 'permanently on show' as Charles Allen puts it.[29] This has an equivalent in Scott's use of cinematographic techniques (panorama, close-up, montage) and it is significant that one of Scott's major locations is called Mayapore, the city of illusion. Sarah confesses to Guy Perron that India is not a place she could be happy in. Yet she consistently reveals the sterling Raj qualities and soundness too. Nigel Rowan is a reliable witness when he suggests that Sarah's character reflects her words: 'nothing was an excuse for working at half-pressure, or standing back from a job while it's still there to be done.' Perron is equally reliable when he observes that she is 'a daughter of the Raj' but not a memsahib. (*ADS*, p. 17) She, in fact, represents the last generation of idealistic Empire-builders—aware of the good (the sense of responsibility as typified by Colonel Layton's attitude towards his soldiers—he defers the family reunion for the sake of six sick soldiers from Pankot; and the sense of an emotional bond shown in the confrontation of Teddie Bingham and Mohammed Baksh, once a Muzzy Guide) and of its faults, follies and foul play (of Merrick's sort); and also aware it is ending. She, unlike the others, has a close relationship with Mabel who is remarkable in her strength, reliability and sense of justice; and establishes contact with Lady Manners who is remarkable in her closeness to, and her feelings for, Indians. Nicky Paynton says of Sarah: "She thinks too much" (*TS*, p. 249), but Nicky's condemnation is to be interpreted by the reader as a compliment to Sarah.

Richard Cronin makes much of the point that the British see India as a country, as a whole, whereas Indians see it as diverse regions.[30] But Paul Scott is exceptional; he has a sense of the latter too. In *The Day of the Scorpion*, Sarah goes to Calcutta to visit Merrick in hospital (he

[29] Charles Allen, *Raj: A Scrapbook of British India* (London: 1984 edn), p. 13.
[30] Richard Cronin, *Imagining India* (London: Macmillan, 1989).

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is severely wounded during his attempt to save Teddie from death) to appease Susan's concern. She realises how different it is from Pankot and that she had 'travelled into another world.' She then generalises: 'it amazed her that is was ever possible to make the mistake of thinking of India as one country.'[31]

In Calcutta, Sarah allows herself to be seduced by a British soldier, a notorious womaniser. To her, the sex act was to get rid of her virginity, an essay in experience. This completes her passage to womanhood and the enhancement to her personality is noticeable. Nicky Paynton is a memsahib but even she can recognise Sarah's newly acquired 'nerve'. Sarah becomes pregnant but agrees to an abortion as a concession to convention and because the child is not important to her as Daphne's was to her. Yet the abortion is not a trivial episode and appears central to Sarah's feelings. After it, she feels 'intimations of freedom', a new liberation. Colonel Layton, on his return, learns of his daughter's abortion and accepts her despite this knowledge. It is not necessary for the abortion to have a symbolic significance, but it could be interpreted as a symbol of the difficulty of liberalism to survive in a colonial context. Sarah can enter upon a, presumably successful, marriage only with changed historical circumstances, and with a kindred spirit like Guy Perron. Paul Scott's own problems with his wife Penny developed after several years of happy marriage. This ties up with the fact that he depicts Sarah so positively and the Guy Perron-Sarah relationship with what might be termed tenderness and evocativeness in *A Division of the Spoils*. Towards the end, Sarah confesses, again to Guy Perron, that she is very happy in India.

Even more striking than Teddie Bingham's man-bap attitude to the natives, the Muzzy Guides, is, I find, the intimacy and love the British third-generation Laytons and Lady Manners actually feel for India, the land and the landscape, and their wistfulness is because India was familiar and home to them. Their feelings approximate to those beautifully conveyed in my epigraph from Edward Thomas' poem 'When First I Came Home'. The emphasis on British gravestones in *The Raj Quartet* and *Staying On*—in Flora Annie Steele's *On the Face of the Waters* and Ruth Prawer Jhabvala's *Heat and Dust* too—suggest not only history and generations who have given their lives to India, a sense of commitment to India on the part of the British, but that India too is home, by virtue of intimacy and inheritance, a rootedness

[31] Paul Scott, *The Day of the Scorpion*, p. 371.

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in India, and also, thereby seem in the eyes of the writer to give a kind of fallacious legitimacy to the presence of the British in India:

> One had (as Barbie had done) only to wander in the churchyard of St. John's and see the names of Layton and Muir on headstones to realise that in those lichened-over advertisement for souls there was an explanation of Mildred, . . . (*TS,* p. 45)

Scott suggests lives interknit with India, rather than Britain. He, in fact, harps on the Layton and Muir gravestones and also on the place of Mabel's burial. There is a forewarning of India's possible future too. In *The Day of the Scorpion*, there is recorded a rumour regarding the birth of an Indian child with two heads whose mother does not survive, the infant monster suggesting the fear of a race with a divided identity. The new births in *The Raj Quartet* are instinct with symbolic meaning as hints and visions of the future.

The armed might of the Raj was strengthened by the Princes, who ruled one-third of the sub-continent, the Native States. The native rulers supported the British in every conceivable way, for their own preservation. In *The Raj Quartet*, Mirat is the example of this kind of trade in power between native élites and alien invaders which is one of the features of imperialism. Though the *Quartet* does not examine this fully, it suggests something of it in the way anti-British unrest is stamped out in Mirat, how Mirat tries to weed out anti-British elements and keep them out of the State. It also shows the dilemma of the Princes when their special relationship with the Crown was threatened by Independence politics. It lays greater emphasis on another, equally true, aspect of the Native States—their backwardness. Mirat was feudal and its Nawab an autocrat. It was the achievement of Count Bronowski, its Russian emigré Chief Minister, to have modernised it, to have made it semi-democratic, responsive to the needs of its subjects, whatever the community they belonged to, Hindu or Muslim. It is not impossible that here we have in miniature, applied to a simple princely state, Scott's view of the role of Empire as a positive force—the imposition by the Europeans of the rule of law, which ensures equity and safeguards the interests of its subjects, unlike the autocracy which was often a feature of Princely rule. His perception that such a state of affairs must necessarily be the result of European influence is perhaps unconsciously revealed. Possibly the pre-Independence Hindu-Muslim conflicts reinforced his underlying impression.

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The politics of Independence is one of Paul Scott's preoccupations and he focuses on it from diverse points of view. In *The Jewel in the Crown*, Brigadier Reid, in his memoir of approximately forty pages, recapitulates in detail the suppression of riots around the time of Daphne Manners' rape from the standpoint of 'a simple soldier'. To say that this account is 'painfully reminiscent of actual military memoirs'[32] is not really to criticise but to pay tribute to Scott's skill, the authenticity he has achieved. The Deputy Commissioner White takes a different, a liberal, point of view, though he finally follows the orders for repression even though they go against the grain. Whereas Reid favours the incarceration of Congress leaders and members, White believes in their professions of non-violence and feels that their imprisonment will aggravate rather than ameliorate unrest. Here Scott presents an active and dramatic conflict of the forces which Forster reflects as a condition of Anglo-India in *A Passage to India*—the existence, side by side, of British liberalism and repressive Imperialism.

In *A Division of the Spoils*, politics on the eve of Independence is conveyed partly through reference to cartoons, while direct dramatisation too is used. Richard Cronin observes: 'The partition of India and the killings that accompanied it have impressed themselves on the imagination in a single image, as an attack on a train.'[33] But in Scott's novel, the image does not appear a mere cliché both because of its real historical basis and the fresh, moving terms in which it is presented. At this time, the Muslims in India trying to escape to Pakistan and the Hindus in Pakistan trying to reach India, took to trains and the trains provided a concentration of victims, a substantial target for the murderous fanatics of both races. In Scott's presentation, Ahmed Kassim, the son of the staunch Congressman, M.A. Kassim, former Chief Minister, is travelling with Europeans as a fellow passenger when a Hindu mob is howling for the blood of Muslims; he steps outside to face certain death rather than cause them problems and suffer indignity himself—a gesture that is more poignant and ironical in the context of his father's political convictions than empty heroics because it is in the logic of his character. Gandhi is shown in different lights. Miss Crane is disappointed that he 'had extended what looked like an open invitation to the Japanese to come

[32] Anonymous, *Times Literary Supplement* 1966, Review of *JC*.
[33] Cronin, *Imagining India*, p. 84.

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and help him rid India of the British.'[34] Lady Chatterjee's explanation for such attitudes is that 'the English have always revered saints but hated them to be shrewd' (*JC*, p. 77), while she regards Miss Crane as 'another woolly liberal' (*JC*, p. 77). Merrick, obviously a very different type of person, considers Gandhi 'a crazy old man who had completely lost touch with the people he thought he still led.' (*JC*, p. 318) White provides the deepest analysis of Gandhi: 'People in public life are supposed to project what today we call an image, ideally the image has to be constant. Gandhi's never was. ... I think what he was actually doing was trying to bring into the open the element of *doubt* about ideas and attitudes which we all undergo but prefer to keep quiet about.' (*JC*, p. 344)

There are many references to General Dyer and the Amritsar massacre, rightly because it was perhaps as decisive a turning-point in British-Indian relations as the 'Mutiny'. The Governor in *The Towers of Silence*, a man of the old school (actually, a bit of an embarrassment), thinks: 'all that was needed to scare the Indians into toeing the line and getting on with the war was a regiment or two of British infantry and a Brigadier as spunky as old Brigadier-General Dyer who had mown down hundreds of bloody brown in Amritsar in 1919.' (*TS*, p. 48) Such allusions serve to highlight the jingoism of some of the British. Brigadier Reid excuses Dyer and the conservatives among the British thought 'he'd saved the poor old Empire.' But other Britishers 'blamed him for turning Gandhi against us', while a person of Mabel Layton's standing does not support him. It is also important to note the specific spot where the Amritsar massacre took place—Jallianwallah Bagh. 'Gillian Waller' is the name distracted Barbie assigns to a Sarah she no longer recognises (*ADS*, p. 382)—the name she (Barbie) does not recognise on Mabel's lips as Jallianwallah Bagh (*ADS*, p. 386). Kumar is made by Scott to live in *Chillianwallah* Bazaar (my emphasis). Scott thus attempts to keep Jallianwallah subliminally in our minds. The upshot is to link Merrick's type of persecution of Kumar, a trend in the present, with Dyer's Fascist imperialism. The form of the *Quartet* permits the stressing of a point through recollection or reinterpretation.

The spectrum of historical currents close to Independence is particularly well caught—the Indian pressures, international (especially American) influences, the view of the Labour Party (in

[34] Scott, *The Jewel in the Crown*, p. 10.

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power in England at that time) that India had turned into an economic drain and that it was prudent to leave her to solve her own problems. The *Quartet* portrays the Indians, Hindu and Muslim alike, as playing a part in fomenting communal friction and violence, but the British are blamed for failing to contain it. Lady Manners writes to Lili Chatterjee: 'The creation of Pakistan is our crowning failure... Our only justification for two hundred years of power was unification.' (*JC*, p. 473) It is true the British gave India a unity through their administration, which they needed to run the Raj, and through the use of the English language. It is equally true that the British, unwittingly or not, practised the classic colonialist policy of divide and rule. This is suggested in Hari Kumar's view (as expressed in a letter to his English friend Colin Lindsey): 'I can't believe that Pakistan will ever become a reality, but if it does it will be because the English prevaricated long enough to allow a favoured religious minority to seize a political opportunity.' (*JC*, p. 276) But Scott is right not to hold the British wholly responsible for the division of the sub-continent, though he regrets it. After all, the Hindu-Muslim division and inequalities precede the British occupation.

Guy Perron desires 'opportunities to study in depth human behaviour during an interesting period of history.' (*ADS*, p. 9) He is, in a way, an *alter ego* of Scott: his voice and Scott's are indistinguishable here. Deeper than Scott's interest in history and politics in *The Raj Quartet* is his aim to probe into the nature of human destiny—the contradictory nature of existence, the random, unpredictable nature of suffering. This is brought out through the two main relationships in the *Quartet*: Daphne—Hari Kumar and Sarah Layton—Ahmed. After all, Scott's major characters are, in the first place, fully fleshed individuals, whatever symbolic significances and patterns of meaning they generate and whatever historical circumstances they are placed in. Therefore, it is their fate as individuals that matters most.

On one plane, Daphne Manners is portrayed as a realistic character and is convincing as such. Contact with her father, and with her uncle and aunt, Sir Henry and Lady Ethel Manners, brings her under the influence of liberal attitudes as does the fact that in India she stays at the MacGregor House, the home of Lili Chatterjee, where Indians and the British meet socially on terms of equality. She becomes a naive liberal, like Forster's Adela Quested. Again, like Adela, she is not attractive though she has her own kind of charm. She is plain, big, clumsy, blinks behind her spectacles before speaking; she is not a virgin. She is thus far from the conventional frail English rose.

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Kipling, Leonard Woolf and George Orwell portrayed Englishmen having sexual relations with native women, but Scott possesses the extraordinary boldness to depict a sexual relationship the other way round. He gets beyond Forster too in this respect; Forster merely hints at the attraction Aziz holds for Adela and the rape in his novel is a hallucination. Scott brings out the complexities and tensions in such a relationship and, because he exploits intertextuality, Forster must constantly be borne in mind. Hari Kumar is handsome and Daphne is, at first, attracted to him physically; his colour titillates her. Both have the daring to defy deeply ingrained social convention, overcome hesitation and plunge into their relationship. Its course is not smooth and, having no proper place to meet, given the social context of the Raj, they are reduced to meeting in such places as The Sanctuary, Sister Ludmila's refuge for the sick and dying among destitute Indians, or the unkempt Bibighar Gardens. They consummate their love in the Bibighar Gardens but, soon after, Daphne is raped. It was a characteristic fear of the colonisers that Churchill voiced when he spoke of British 'women and children, throughout this enormous land, in hourly peril amidst the Indian multitudes.'[35] The nightmare becomes a reality and also an English woman—upper class to boot—wishes of her own free will to have sex with a native. *The Raj Quartet* is thus doubly shocking.

Two things, then, happen at the Bibighar Gardens—an act of love and an act of violence, and the associations of the Gardens relate to both. It is ironical that the former should take place at the site of a former house for courtesans, 'an abomination' in the eyes of the Scottish nabob MacGregor who razed it to the ground. (*JC*, p. 75) That the latter should occur, gains added emphasis because during the 'Mutiny', at Cawnpore two hundred and eleven British women and children were confined in a building, known as the Bibighar, where they were mercilessly put to death.[36] Paul Scott notes that the Europeans at Mayapore seldom went to the Bibighar Gardens 'except to look and sneer and be reminded of that other Bibighar at Cawnpore" (*JC*, p. 146); so the allusion to the massacre is, certainly, intended. But, like

[35] Churchill, *India: Speeches*, pp. 46–7. J.G. Farrell voices the same fear in one of his imitation news items in *Troubles*: 'There is not a white woman from the Congo to the Cape who does not shudder at the thought of a native rising but there is hardly a native in the country who would not rise tomorrow if he dared.'—*Troubles* (London: Cape, 1970), p. 264.

[36] R.C. Majumdar, H.C. Raychaudhuri, Kalikinkar Datta, *Advanced History of India* (London: Macmillan, 1950), p. 977.

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T.S. Eliot, Scott is not keen that *all* his readers catch his allusions. For instance, in *The Corrida at San Feliu*, he keeps introducing at recurrent intervals a motif from Subandhu's fairy love tale, an obscure text—not a well-known work like Kalidasa's or the *Mahabharata*. Here, however, the name, Bibighar, is repeatedly referred to—presumably because Scott wants the reader to draw the relevant connections.

In the dominant orientalist metaphor, the East is identified as having feminine traits and the West masculine. Daphne is, certainly, the West as feminine and she surrenders to Hari. He is the East as man in the relationship. Yet Daphne is not the conventional or normal type of Western woman, while Hari has been emasculated by the West and, therefore, is not fully Indian as such. Their case is more complex than a simple departure from the stereotype.

The deeds at the Bibighar are of dual significance. In the first place, the sexual penetration of Daphne by Hari, not a rape as such but an act of love, symbolises the element of love in Indo-British relations. Critics discount this but Scott, in fact, draws attention to it:

> 'What's your theory, Major Mackay?'
> 'Well, yes, I have a theory. Glad you asked. My theory's this. If you love and marriage isn't on or isn't easy sooner or later you get round to poking, to put it crudely. My theory is Miss Manners and this Kumar fellow poked in the Bibighar. . . . (*TS*, p. 89)

The frame of formal question and answer stresses Mackay's 'theory', a word repeated three times and itself appropriate because he had earlier emphasised the fact that he had not known Daphne personally. He is objective and detached. He gives the correct or near correct reading of the Bibighar episode. Scott accentuates McKay's hard drinking to suggest hard-headedness and lack of sentimentality, and this lends weight to his interpretation. Even his crude way of stating the relationship between Hari and Daphne enforces this reliability.

> 'I think you have to forget the politics, the friends, even the rape, and concentrate on this one proposition. They were in love.' (Mackay)
> 'What do you mean, forget the rape?'
> 'I mean forget it because it's irrelevant.' (*TS*, p. 89)

The last line is startling, hardly forgettable.

Yet, from another perspective, the rape is relevant and a central image of the *Quartet*. David Rubin claims: 'The relationship of Britain

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and India, as Scott portrays it, is allegorised as a sexual embrace.'[37] This is not true to the text in the correct sense of the term allegory. Nor is the obvious interpretation of Daphne's rape, as a symbol of the rape of India by the British,[38] correct. Salman Rushdie is right to an extent: 'if a rape must be used as the metaphor of the Indo-British connection, then, surely, in the interests of accuracy, it should be the rape of an Indian woman by one or more Englishmen of whatever class. . . .'[39] M.M. Mahood too thinks: 'As a political symbol this use of rape as Daphne has suffered it is far from satisfactory, if only because of the awkward reversal of black and white needed to make it work.'[40] Rushdie's and Mahood's point would be valid if Scott's action took place during the heyday of the Raj, but it occurs during the end of the Raj. Rushdie and Mahood completely fail to take into account the changes in history. The rape in Scott's *Quartet* symbolically suggests the change in power relations, the growing strength of the Indians and the effeteness of the British Empire at that time. At a simpler level, Daphne's rape is also a symbol of the impossibility of inter-racial sex relations and the inappositeness of naive liberalism, in a colonial context.

The name Daphne 'for those who still remembered snippets of classical mythology produced the image of a girl running from the embrace of the sun god Apollo, her limbs and streaming hair delineating the arboreal form in which her chastity would be preserved, enshrined forever; forever green. From her, then, the god could pluck no more than leaves.' (*TS*, pp. 67–68)[41] These classical associations are ironical. The classical Daphne ran away, inviolate, and produced only leaves, but Daphne Manners surrenders (to Hari) and produces fruit, a child. She refuses to undergo an abortion despite being condemned by the European community whose view is that her salvation lies in getting rid of the abominable foetus. She goes to her aunt, Lady Manners, now in Kashmir, to have the baby and it is her unshakeable conviction that it is in the fitness of things that she should undergo a natural delivery despite the advice to the contrary of

[37] Rubin, *After the Raj*, p. 121.
[38] Anonymous, *TLS* 1966, review of *JC*.
[39] Rushdie, 'Outside the Whale', p. 127.
[40] Mahood, 'Paul Scott's Guardians', p. 247.
[41] There is another classical myth regarding Daphne, but it is irrelevant to Scott's purposes. See Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths* (London: Penguin, 1969 edn), Vol.2, p. 22.

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the doctor. She dies in childbirth. A Caesarian operation is necessary and the child is saved.

Daphne's child is the most important of the children in the *Quartet*. Parvati is fathered, on the one hand, by love and, on the other, by violence and force. She is a symbol of the interrelations of the two races and cultures, the Indian and the British, and a symbol of India's future. India's birth too was not natural. It was also accompanied by death (the blood bath during Partition) and a kind of surgical operation was necessary to divide the sub-continent. (Daphne's child is, probably, Hari's as she believed; Lili Chatterjee confirms the baby's resemblance to him; nevertheless, her paternity is not fully certain and the uncertainty is in keeping with the symbolic meaning.) Parvati, unlike Hari, successfully unites East and West, and is a symbol of this too. She is Westernised, yet plays the tamboura, sings *raga*. Physical traits have symbolic significance: Daphne is clumsy, stumbles literally and figuratively, a failure; Parvati is 'light as a feather'. Daphne was a liberal and an idealist, yet she suffered and met with a premature death. Such is the nature of life, in Scott's view.

Hari Kumar was brought up in England and educated at an English public school, Chillingborough. He is compelled to return to India when his father, who had settled down in England, dies, leaving him penniless and homeless. He is one of Macaulay's 'brown Englishmen'.[42] It has been thought that he is 'a very special case'.[43] Of course, there are unusual cases in literature and in life, and unusualness is not necessarily a barrier to sympathy or interest. But Hari is not, in fact, 'very special', belonging to a type common in British colonies, before and after Independence. Nirad C. Chaudhuri is a well-known example of a deracinated Indian. Paul Scott's characters are never projections of disembodied ideas but rooted in real life.

Hari Kumar—to whom Scott wittily gives a more appropriate, alternative name, Harry Coomer—is too English for the Indians, too Indian for the English. His English predilections are severely shaken when he finds that he is invisible not only to the British in Mayapore but to Colin Lindsey, his best friend in England and his most precious connection with that country, when the latter comes to Mayapore. Circumstances compel him to live in the Indian quarter in Mayapore, work as an employee of Indians, first as a clerk and later as a

[42] Paul Scott, 'The Raj', in *John Kenneth Galbraith Introduces India* ed. Frank Moraes and Edward Howard (London: 1974), p. 82.

[43] Anonymous, *TLS* 1966, review of *JC*.

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journalist, being spurned by a European firm when he tries to improve his prospects. After the rape, Daphne wants him to remain silent about their having met that night and he keeps to his promise, even under torture and in prison, and presumably will always do so. When his case is reopened because of the intervention of Lady Manners, he cooperates fully with those who cross-examine him, at least until he suspects that Daphne is dead, but nothing will persuade him to break his promise to her, not even the prospect of his own freedom. It is only he and Lady Manners who shed tears for Daphne. Only Lady Manners weeps for both lovers.

The reopening of Kumar's case in *The Day of the Scorpion* is important. Captain Nigel Rowan comments later: 'I felt . . . that it wasn't Coomer who was being examined so much as a system that had ostensibly given us equal opportunities but had ended like this with me on the comfortable side of a green baize-covered table and him on the unpleasant one. And one of the interesting questions was, where precisely did this this leave my Indian colleague and co-examiner [Mr Gopal]?' (*ADS*, p. 291) It is underlined that the significance of the case is far more than personal, and complex. The record of it is twice shown as distinct from the real core of the situation and sketchy. History is a record, yet words cannot encapsulate the real and the record cannot capture the situation anyway, given deletions and suppressions and the subjectivity of the recorder(s). Paul Scott's fiction provides the reader with what history cannot and more of the real as distinct from fact. Scott's perspective here is ironic: Merrick, white, attacks Kumar, black; Gopal attacks the white in Kumar in a complex fashion, while trying to bring about justice for Kumar the black as the victim of the whites. The two races are not clearly demarcated sides. Saul Bellow articulated the obvious: 'The novelist is an imaginative historian who is able to get closer to contemporary facts than social scientists possibly can.'[44]

Daphne believed that the promise she exacted from Kumar would help to save him from British justice in India which she described as 'a blundering judicial robot' (*JC*, p. 452), but she could not see in the dark the tell-tale bruises on his face. She saves him from standing trial. She courageously remains firm in expressing her view that those caught by the police were innocent (that they were educated youths whereas her rapists were peasants; that they were all Hindus whereas

[44] Saul Bellow, in Michiko Kakutani, 'A Talk with Saul Bellow', in *Dialogue*, 58 (1982), p. 57.

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one of her assailants was circumcised, a Muslim) and that she was, in fact, so unsure of the identity of the rapists that they could have been British soldiers with their faces blackened. The sense of outrage among the British at her insistence is equivalent to the outrage and annoyance when Adela denies the charge against Aziz in *A Passage to India* (there is a similar, if slighter, resemblance in regard to Edwina Crane's refusal to identify her assailants).

Yet Daphne cannot save Hari from prison. Merrick, as the District Superintendent of Police, invokes the Defence of India rules to send all the 'accused' to prison without trial. He is particularly keen on punishing and taking revenge on Hari. Hari wastes away in prison physically, but his character remains unimpaired and he even achieves a sort of identity. After his release, the pressures on his life towards Indianness force him to be his own sort of Indian. He retires to a shabby Indian quarter and ekes out an existence as a private tutor in English. He writes articles under a pseudonym, Philoctetes, whose symbolic significance he himself may, or may not, have fully appreciated. Philoctetes was the Greek with the unhealing wound that was so malodorous that he was cast aside during the Trojan War. England has inflicted a wound on Hari which will never heal, and he is in bad odour, as it were, with his fellow Indians. He concludes a newspaper article thus:

> I walk home, thinking of another place, of seemingly long endless summers and the shade of different kinds of trees; and then of winters when the branches of the trees were bare, so bare that, recalling them now, it seems inconceivable to me that I looked at them and did not think of the summer just gone, and the spring soon to come, as illusion; as dreams, never fulfilled, never to be fulfilled. (*ADS*, p. 536)

Hari has become more of an Indian yet he nostalgically reaches out for an England, he knows, will elude him. A man of talent and character, Hari is a misfit and a failure. Such are the ironies and tragedies of life, in Scott's view.

Scott stresses that Hari is non-political or apolitical, different from fellow Indians of his age group. In that letter to Colin Lindsey, he does comment on Indian politics, but he is unable to make sense of it. Even as a journalist, his task is mainly editorial, a corrector of the mistakes in English of his colleagues, and he does not cover Indian politics or take an interest in it. He does not develop a political philosophy or take a political stand even though the whole country is embroiled in politics. It is ironical that this kind man is a central character in a series of

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novels with this kind of political framework. The irony is worked out meaningfully. Hari is trapped by political circumstances and crushed by the world of irrational political forces. More specifically, by Merrick who, from one perspective, symbolises rabid racism.

The complex and enigmatic Merrick is, in fact, the most important and prominent single character in *The Raj Quartet*, as I said earlier, and the crowning achievement of Scott's powers of characterisation. His origins are humble and he has had no more than a grammar school education. The fact that Hari, though a member of a subject race, has enjoyed a better education (at a public school), speaks English with a more refined accent and is more attractive than Merrick, generates in the latter an inferiority complex and resentment. When Merrick tortures Hari in prison, they both understood that it was 'a master and man situation' and the former tells the latter: 'there were only two basic human emotions, contempt and envy'. (*ADS*, p. 313) Probably, in the case of Merrick vis-à-vis Hari, these were contempt for the 'native' and envy for the Chillingburian.

Mahood identifies 'social ambition' as dominant in Merrick's feelings towards Daphne Manners.[45] But it seems to me that Merrick's feelings are more complex and mixed, though his striving to get off with upper class girls, Daphne and Sarah, is partly an attempt at social mobility. He first takes notice of Daphne when he sees her talking to Hari. That she keeps company with an Indian suggests both that she is available and that she is not snobbish, an important consideration for a man of Merrick's origins. He begins to take an increasing interest in her for a complex cluster of reasons, though he is incapable of love: because of the race and class jealousies excited by Hari's success with her; class ambitions; to have access through Daphne to what goes on among Indians as revealed at Lili Chatterjee's house; to find an escape from his loneliness. He warns Daphne against 'associating' with Hari and even proposes to her. Daphne rejects him but feels that he is fundamentally kind.

Merrick, however, shows a contrary side to his character in his dealings with Indians. He is a rabid racist, as I said earlier. After Daphne's rape, he arrests a few Indians without a shred of evidence and is not averse to planting evidence to implicate Hari. Unable to frame them for rape or bring them to trial because of Daphne's stand, he sends them to prison on the groundless charge of political suspicion

[45] Mahood, 'Paul Scott's Guardians', p. 247.

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after torturing Hari and violating the religious susceptibilities of all of them (forcing Hindus to eat beef). A sadist, he enjoys torturing Hari. His homosexual sadism, suggested earlier on, in clearly exposed through Count Bronowsky in the last volume, *A Division of the Spoils*. As O. Mannoni argues: 'repressed tendencies towards sadism, rape, or incest . . . is an important though invisible element in the composition of colour prejudice, or racialism.'[46]

It is difficult to discern Scott's own homosexual proclivities in *The Raj Quartet* as we can E.M. Forster's in his presentation of Stephen Wonham in *The Longest Journey*. Merrick's homosexuality is presented, in an orthodox view, as deviant and repelling. Yet Scott's suppression of his adolescent homosexuality fits in perfectly with the fascinated revulsion of his seemingly cool presentation of Merrick and even more obviously with his presentation of Bronowsky's unindulged propensities; his romantic, rather than lustful, leanings towards homosexuality. On the other hand, the undeveloped and unfulfilled heterosexual attraction of Sarah and Ahmed is presented attractively, strongly and in depth. Scott was, after all, in real life both a homosexual and a heterosexual.

It is true that Merrick is a rabid racist, but his feelings towards Indians are, in fact, more complex and ambivalent. In *A Division of the Spoils*, he is shown wearing Pathan dress in private. The British, in physique and in spirit, felt akin to the tough, courageous Pathan with his greyish blue eyes; 'few failed to respond to the picturesque figure of the Pathan, "a great chap for a swagger".'[47] During the torture session, Merrick feels Hari Kumar's private parts, partly to humiliate Hari no doubt, but he is not averse to doing so. More importantly, his homosexual partners are Indians. This may or may not indicate a racial preference but, certainly, shows no aversion to Indians. Its significance is something more than a mere, or only, practical method by which Merrick can satisfy his urges. There is a suggestion that Merrick too is drawn to the semi-mythic potency that white men associate with dark men, in his references to Hari a 'a randy fellow' and 'a healthy fellow' when Hari was being whipped (Lady Manners hears Hari speak of this as she sits invisible to him). [*DS*, p. 300]

Class considerations are strongly and repeatedly stressed in *The Raj Quartet*, and that Merrick, from this angle, is disadvantaged, is

[46] O. Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonisation* (London: Methuen, 1956), p. 111.
[47] Charles Allen, *Plain Tales from the Raj*, pp. 197–8.

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underlined. Nigel Rowan tells Guy Perron: 'our inner conviction of class rights and class privileges ... Nothing can erode our ingrained sense of class security. ... the Merricks and Purvises of the world. The ones who get drowned.' (*ADS*, p. 208) Merrick reveals an awareness of the suffering caused by class distinctions and amusement. He tells Teddie Bingham: 'One suffers disproportionately. ... it's as well to be tough as well as clever. Fortunately I was both.' (*TS*, p. 160) These are among Merrick's positive traits. He is aware that 'in India he'd got on far better than he could have done at home. In India he automatically became a sahib. He hobnobbed on equal terms with people who would snub him at home.' (*DS*, p. 309) Merrick is thus related to John Osborne's Jimmy Porter. Yet the Britishers in India socially higher felt that Merrick was not by right 'one of us' (*DS*, p. 363), a recurrent phrase of Marlow's with reference to Conrad's Lord Jim, suggesting class and a code of ethics, relevant to both Conrad and Scott. But these Britishers acknowledge that Merrick had become one of them 'by example'. (*DS*, p. 363) Merrick's efficiency is constantly praised—for instance, by Robin White when Merrick is in Mayapore, by Count Bronowsky for his reorganisation of the Mirat police. It enables him to rise professionally: he is a Colonel when he dies. His bravery too is held up for our admiration. Brigadier Reid testifies to his 'guts'. It is stated: 'Teddie felt pleasantly superior to him in occupation as well as in type, background and—as was clearer the longer he listened—in class. The police weren't quite as particular as the other services.' (**TS**, p. 151) It is a telling irony that it is Teddie who is shown up as stupid and Merrick who tries to save him from death. When he marries Susan, after her husband Teddie's death and her breakdown, he has lost an arm and his face is disfigured (in trying to rescue Teddie), yet he wins her affection, not only her gratitude, and gives her a sense of security.

After Merrick wrongfully sends Indians to prison after Daphne's rape, he is never allowed to forget this misdeed. Signs and incidents that recall the rape case appear wherever he goes: broken bicycles and symbols in chalk intrude; in Mirat, when he as best man travels with Teddie Bingham for Teddie's wedding ceremony, a stone is thrown at the car; Hari's Aunt Shalini falls at his feet at the railway station just before Teddie and Susan leave for their honeymoon. The case gets under Merrick's skin and haunts his mind: he cannot stop himself talking about it; formerly abstemious, he begins drinking. Finally, he is murdered by Indians. All this could be interpreted as vindictiveness on the part of the Indians or, in a less simple-minded way, as reflecting their righteous indignation, which is connected with the anarchist

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conspiratorial element in the nationalist movement. This was distinct from the frontal movement led by Gandhi and Nehru, and represents the fringe which links with the militant Subhas Chandra Bose and terrorists such as Bhagat Singh.[48] *The Raj Quartet* brings in Bose and the Indian National Army, while an extremist politician, Pandit Baba, hovers in the background and is in Mirat when the stone is thrown at Merrick and Aunt Shalini appears.

Fascinated revulsion is what the reader, like Paul Scott, feels for Merrick. The reader's view of Merrick becomes momentarily equivocal when worthy characters like Reid, Nigel Rowan (in *The Day of the Scorpion*) and Bronowsky are impressed by him, but the view is generally unfavourable, and Merrick's presentation becomes increasingly denigratory. The central symbol of the Raj in the *Quartet* is, not Daphne's rape, but Merrick himself. It is he, above all, who represents imperial decadence and corruption. Merrick's activities, as presented in the *Quartet*, reflect the darker side of the colonial encounter. He confirms Sara Suleri's argument: 'The image of the colonized country as a woman raped by the colonizer is overthrown in favour of homoeroticism; the colonizer loved himself and his own kind far too much for heterosexual rape to be a suitable trope. Rather, there is a recurrence of "deferred homosexual decorum" in the stories of Anglo-India.'[49]

From another perspective, Merrick is the upwardly mobile meritocrat, the new modern man—and perhaps the man of the future whereas the Chillingburians (Colonel Layton, 'Nobby' Clark, Guy Perron, Hari Kumar) belong to the past while one of them, Nigel Rowan, is seen by Guy Perron as 'going native', another extreme. At the same time, Merrick's misunderstanding of man-bap, his keenness for it, his eagerness to join the Army, to marry Daphne or Sarah, are all proof of his urge to merge with the ruling class and legitimize his aspirations, his own claim as a meritocrat. Among the recurrent elements in Paul Scott is that both Tom Brent, the narrator and central character in *The Chinese Love Pavilion*, and Merrick have in common a defective arm, injured in Brent's case and artificial in Merrick's, in both instances drawing the tenderness of women, Teena

[48] Michael Edwardes, *The Last days of British India* (London: 1963), p. 59. R.K. Narayan, from an Indian angle, confirms Scotts's presentation of the violence of the wing distinct from Gandhi and its connection with Bose and the I.N.A., in *Waiting for the Mahatma* (Mysore: Indian Thought Publications, 1976 edn), pp. 113–14.

[49] Uma Parameswaran, review of Sara Suleri's *The Rhetoric of English India*, *in World Literature Today*, 66, 4 (1992), p. 783.

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Chang and Susan respectively. Merrick himself draws attention to his artificial arm by his studied use of it to hold articles such as a cap or a cigarette—as a badge of his heroism and martyrdom; this is meant to evoke both admiration and pity. Yet the constant emphasis on it is disproportionate if merely realistic; its significance is larger. Guy Perron and Bronowsky refer to his defective arm as an invention and Perron, in fact, calls him 'the self-invented man' (*ADS*, p. 206)—suggesting a modern version of the self-made man. While referring to Merrick in these terms, Bronowsky also comments: 'He is one of your hollow men.' (*ADS*, p. 171) The original hollow man was Conrad's Kurtz and his personality, like Merrick's, was not animated by principles. T.S. Eliot's 'Hollow Men' are the modern men. The intertextuality underlines Merrick's representative status from this angle.

The Sarah Layton-Ahmed relationship is in some ways similar to, and in others different from, that of Daphne and Hari. It is not elaborated as fully, yet presented well. It begins in Mirat when they go riding together. Their horses are fractious. Ahmed controls his 'by what looked like main force. She noted the ridged muscles on his bare forearms.' (*DS*, p. 122) This suggests Sarah's awareness of his masculinity and strength, a hint of sexual awareness too. At the end of the ride, Ahmed 'remounted, touched his topee with the tip of his crop and brought the horse's head round—all, as it were, in the same capable movement.' (*DS*, p. 159) This suggests a sense of alertness, grace and control. Sarah is attracted to Ahmed, yet he holds back. Sarah tells her Aunt Fenny: 'He only spoke when spoken to and kept almost exactly the same number of paces behind me from start to finish.' (*DS*, p. 159) Ahmed, aware of the barriers and differences between the British and the Indians, is circumspect. Sarah and he never fall in love as such, like Daphne and Hari, but they come to love one another. Their relationship is not allowed to develop further: Ahmed is cut to pieces. Destiny was cruel to them too.

Curious echoes of E.M Hull's Sheik and Byron in his Mediterranean avatar haunt the depiction of Ahmed and tinge Sarah's potential attraction towards him with that ambience of exotic romance between mem-sahib and Oriental. Ahmed is a hard-riding, game-hunting, drinking, womanising playboy. But the final sacrifice of his life reveals that there is more to him. His conversations with his father reveal a shrewdness which prevent the reader from regarding his mind as null. Like Hari, it is stressed that he is non-political or apolitical, all the more ironically because his father, M.A. Kassim, is a leading Congress

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politician and the Chief Minister of his State. Ahmed tells his father: 'I've got no view . . . people are still always dying of starvation. . . . Or . . . they're killing one another *senselessly*. It all means nothing to me, parties and such-like.' [my italics] (*ADS*, p. 439) Like Hari, Ahmed is trapped by political circumstances and crushed by the world of irrational political forces. In Ahmed's case, he is destroyed by 'the damned bloody senseless mess' (the Hindu-Muslim massacre) from which he tried to shut himself off.

Underlying *The Raj Quartet* is a certain philosophy of life, a certain philosophical attitude. It shows that the destiny of man, his *karma*, and man's *dharma*, his moral sense, are sometimes at variance. It is only then perhaps that *dharma* becomes real *dharma*. Hari sacrifices his personal interests for the sake of his devotion to Daphne; Guy Perron's comment at the end of *The Raj Quartet* has an ironical poignancy: 'I remembered saying to Hari: what is the difference between *karma* and *dharma*? He didn't know. I had learned the answer long ago. He was living it.' (*ADS*, p. 597) Ahmed courageously goes to meet his death at the hands of the Hindus who were clamouring for the blood of Muslims and leaves the railway compartment to save the English and the *ayah* in it from possible problems. Sister Ludmila devoted her life to succour the needy, the sick and the dying in Mayapore, though this kind of charity was regarded as "mad" in the judgement of Merrick (*DS*, p. 200) and the generality of whites in Mayapore, but she ends up bedridden and blind, though unquenched in spirit and provided for by Lady Manners. In the political side of the *Quartet*, M.A. Kassim goes to prison rather than change his principles for the sake of political expediency and office.

Scott's basic attitude to life is existential, non-political; his political views are secondary. He is able to see beyond 'the terrible looking cuts, the whiteness of the bone and the redness of the flesh'—which is the *same* in the case of all. His 'philosophy' is conveyed through both Indian and European characters. He also focuses an ordinary human point of view on the world around him, valuing integrity and decency above everything else.

The Church and mission schools constitute an important ingredient in the Raj and, as such, are a significant component of the *Quartet*. The first embodiment of Scott's positive values of integrity and kindliness of mind is Miss Crane. She comes to India as a travelling nurse-companion to Mrs Nesbitt-Smith and then remains as governess. When the Nesbitt-Smiths return to Britain, she stays on as a teacher in mission schools. Her exceptionality is indicated by her entertaining

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regularly at her home the British Other Rank against whom the ladies of the cantonment, for all their flag-waving, nursed a prejudice. Its full extent is suggested by the fact that she wishes to teach, not British children, but Indians in the mission schools. She had performed a heroic act at Muzzafirbad by protecting the children of her school from armed men by sheer force of personality. Having risen to the rank of Superintendent, she sets out on 8 August 1942 to inspect the school in Dibrapur, undeterred by rumours of trouble. Unrest does occur after she reaches her destination and the teacher there insists on accompanying her on her return journey. Mr Chaudhuri, Mission teacher, Anglicized Indian, product of the Raj, an expression of the way of life it engendered, is killed in protecting a representative of that life, Edwina Crane, killed by Indians demanding not the Raj but *Swaraj* [self-government]—a different future, a different India. 'Edwina's act of guarding the body had been one of startling simplicity and purity which possibly only a woman like Edwina could have had the occasion to perform and in performing it sum up the meaning of her life in India. ... Not teaching but loving.' (*TS*, pp. 73–74) These words of Barbie Batchelor are accurate and the conclusion important. Edwina had been trying to reach out to the Indians but it is only at this point that her heart had been unlocked fully. Again, Barbie comments: 'My poor Edwina sat huddled by the roadside in the rain, holding that dead man's hand... For me that image is like an old picture of the kind that were popular in the last century, which told stories and pointed moral lessons. I see the caption, "Too late".' (*TS*, p. 208) Barbie is right. She throws more light: '... the dead body .. Edwina guarded—her life in India come to nothing .... that gesture that had seemed sublime revealed an Edwina who was dumb with despair not purified by love.' (*TS*, p. 98) Edwina's next decisive step is logical—suicide, like an Indian widow. She burns herself, wearing a white saree, rather than face the tragedy of living in a country in which the values she had reached for all her life, had been completely negated and will never be fulfilled.

Forster's Christian missionaries, old Mr Graysford and young Mr Sorley, divide living beings into categories and are suitable as butts for satire. Scott's missionaries are different. Barbie is a genuinely Christian missionary but becomes sort of disenchanted. She identifies herself with Edwina Crane: 'And yet Edwina must have felt it too, the ever-increasing tenuousness of the connexion, the separation in space as God inexplicably turned His face from humble service He no longer found acceptable but was too kind to refuse.' (*TS*, p. 99) Barbie suffers, not from loss of faith, but from the feeling that God has turned away

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from her and from her work, that she no longer has a spontaneous, intimate contact with God. More significantly, she feels that God's Will is no longer the continuance of the missionaries and, indeed, the British mission in India. She, however, stops short of sharing Edwina Crane's state of mind as expressed in the contents of her suicide note which Barbie hears from Merrick: 'There is no God. Not even on the road from Dibrapur.' (*TS*, p. 386)

Barbie sees God as love and the Devil as despair, and the Devil not as a demon but as a fallen angel. Barbie's statement 'God was love' (*TS*, p. 98), recalls Forster's 'God si Love',[50] suggesting the distortion of God's love in India, and appropriately so even in the case of a person like Barbie. She recalls an episode as a teacher, early in *The Towers of Silence*: 'A little Hindu girl once gave Jesus a bright blue complexion because that was the colour of Krishna's face in the picture her parents had at home. ... After the Krishna episode she had taken away the blue crayons. And then the children had no way of colouring the sky.' (*TS*, p. 16) 'The sky' could suggest the heavens too. At this stage, Barbie believed fully in proselytisation. Later, in an attempt to sleep,

> 'she counted children. ... She called the roll and crossed the names out with a blue crayon. When all the names were crossed out one child remained uncalled: the little Indian girl to whom the blue crayon had belonged. She could not remember the little girl's name. The little girl couldn't remember it either and accused her silently of depriving her both of name and crayon. The little girl would not go away until her name was called. It was an impasse. We are stuck with each other, Barbie said, which is absurd because you have Krishna and I have Jesus. We are separately catered for. Let's shake hands and call it a day. But the little girl had her hands behind her back and kept them there.' (*TS*, p. 92–93)

This suggests not only Paul Scott's awareness of the possible erasure of Indian identity and the maiming it can cause, but Barbie's developing dissatisfaction regarding proselytising activities vis-à-vis religion in India, and the resentment[51] and doubt on the part of the Indians in respect of the motives of the British missionaries. Still later Barbie thinks: 'And when we are gone let them colour the sky how they will. We shall not care. It has never truly been our desire or intention to colour it permanently but only to make it as cloudless for ourselves as we can. So that my life here has indeed been wasted ....' (*TS*, p. 245) The materialistic intentions of the Empire-builders—'pilgrims', as

[50] E.M. Forster, *A Passage to India* (London: Penguin, 1959 edn), p. 281.

[51] R.K. Narayan, from an Indian angle, confirms this resentment; see *Swami and Friends* (Mysore: Indian Thought Publications, 1977 edn), pp. 5–6.

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Conrad ironically calls them in *Heart of Darkness*—conflict with her personal aspiration. Barbie's character embodies the significance Emerson ascribes to each individual man: 'Each new fact in his private experience flashes a light on what great bodies of men have done, and the crises of his life refer to national crises.'[52]

Barbie loses her keenness to serve the Church, for personal relationships become more important to her than religious orthodoxy. Her sturdy independence and strong personal devotion to Mabel Layton who shares her house with Barbie, are striking. When Mabel dies, Barbie finds it unthinkable that she should be buried in a place contrary to her wishes, but her impassioned attempts to see to it that Mabel's wishes are respected, are thwarted by Mildred Layton. But what is more remarkable is her fine, compassionate understanding of the Indian poor, which shines through brief but wonderful passages—for example, her conversation with eight year-old Ashok, whose ambition, 'dream', is to work in the elephant stables of a maharajah. Barbie moves towards love of Ashok—a reciprocated love, she discovers, when Ashok tells her that he had decided to give up his dream of being a mahout in Rajputana unless she is there too. (*TS*, p. 366) She had earlier remarked of Lady Manners: 'Her arrival and simultaneous disappearance serve to emphasize the stark division there is between our India and theirs. She has made herself one of them. The division is one of which I am ashamed. I have done nothing, nothing, to remove it, ever.' (*TS*, p. 208) Barbie's language was very emphatic. But now she clasps Ashok although 'he smelt musky' and murmurs 'Ashoka, Ashoka, Shokam, Shokarum, Shokis, Shokis.' (*TS*, p. 364) Scott wants the reader to recall the conjugation of 'amo', the Latin word for 'love', and comments: 'Somewhere she had got that wrong.' The comment applies beyond the immediate context too. Barbie is also concerned about what was left out of the imperial splendour in the picture 'The Jewel in the Crown'. She calls it 'the unknown Indian.' (*TS*, p. 388) Her 'unknown Indian' howls—sometimes the voice is confused with the howling of jackals, sometimes it is 'soundless', suggesting unheard too. She even thinks that 'the unknown Indian was what her life in India had been about. ... She could not very well look for him because she did not know where to do that.' (*TS*, p. 78) Aziz, Mabel's servant, for instance, does not strike her as representative or 'as being in distress of any kind.' (*TS*, p. 78)

[52] Emerson, 'History', in ***The Complete Essays and Other Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*** ed. Brooks Atkinson (N.Y.: Random House, 1950 edn), p. 124.

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In the safekeeping of Barbie are two symbols of Imperial destiny, not only the picture but also the butterfly lace. It had been given to Mabel by her first husband's mother in a *French chateau*, recalling the Norman Conquest and the Angle kings. Mabel meets the lace-maker or spinner, a blind sybil in a tower, reminiscent of the Fates (three spinners). The blind lace-maker touches the white butterflies in the lace and calls them her prisoners. The butterfly is perhaps a symbol of the psyche. Mabel has no children. She offers this length of old lace to Barbie (half has been used for Sarah's christening gown and Mabel hands it on request to Sarah for Susan's child), but does not give it. Barbie discovers it in her trunk; she thinks Mabel had given it to Aziz and he to her during that time he had the key to her trunk. The lace shawl reminds me oddly of the fatality and importance of Othello's handkerchief; the echo lends it portentousness.

Barbie's character is deliberately played off against that of Lady Manners. They both represent the same kind of essential decency. Barbie hails from the London cockney milieu whereas Lady Manners is of the upper class, yet Barbie develops into a person as worthy as Lady Manners. Of course, Barbie is portrayed far more fully. She is preoccupied with questions of Crime and Conscience; she reflects on Merrick, questions him about his conduct, and even sees him briefly as the Devil; she constantly probes her own motives. A contrast is drawn between her garrulousness and 'the private realm of inner silence' which she enters. This relates to the title of her volume. The end of Barbie in a deranged state may seem bizarre, but the neurotic ending, like that of Mrs Moore in Forster's *A Passage to India*, is carefully motivated. Barbie is shocked by unexpectedly discovering Mildred's adultery. Her health breaks down. She is lonely, especially after Mabel's death, and experiences problems in finding accommodation. The society around her is hostile, even suspecting that her affection for Sarah and Susan Layton is of an 'unnatural' sort. At the close, Barbie, tragically bereft of the power of speech, especially precious to a person of her volubility, sees vultures on the Parsee 'towers of silence'. Paul Scott is suggesting, in symbolic terms, that the Raj is dead and its bones are waiting to be picked. In fact, Barbie's own death signifies the end of the Raj. It occurs on the same day as when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima (this meant the end of the Japanese threat to Empire) and when the Labour Government was installed in London (this becomes the new threat to the Raj and dismantles it). The circumstances of her death ('They found her thus, eternally alert, in sudden sunshine, her shadow burnt into the wall behind her as if

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by some distant and terrible fire.' *TS*, p. 397) resemble what actually happened to some victims of Hiroshima and suggest how the shadow of the Raj falls on India. Barbie's character operates on as wide a field of reference as Mrs Moore's and is as rich on the symbolic plane, but she is more dynamic and more lovable, one of the greatest female portraits in English literature.

Scott's positive values are developed through other characters as well. Guy Perron, an army sergeant, is an academic who can move with ordinary people and, without idealising them, see his link with them as the mainstay of his life. He is an intellectual without pretensions. Paul Scott's view of the public school, when one considers its chief representatives in the *Quartet*, Guy Perron, Nigel Rowan, Colonel Layton and Hari Kumar, is positive, unlike E.M. Forster's and Evelyn Waugh's views which are negative. This is important because the British Public School ethic was the background common to British employees overseas[53] and is an aspect of Scott's view of Empire. There are counterparts of Perron among the Indians—the lawyer Sirinivasan and, more importantly, Mr Gopal. In *The Day of the Scorpion*, there occurs a covert tussle between Rowan and Gopal as they re-examine the Hari Kumar case. Rowan is a fellow Chillingburian, but, apparently moved by white solidarity and protectiveness, is unwilling to sacrifice an English officer, Merrick. Gopal is alert, tough and just. He is partly responsible for exposing Merrick and he discreetly helps Hari Kumar after he has been freed from prison. The positiveness of the *Quartet* is enhanced by the fact that the association of Gopal and Rowan ripens into friendship and affection in *A Division of the Spoils*.

The philosophical and ethical framework of the *Quartet* confirms Paul Scott's view:

> Mr Walter Allen has called the novel an extended metaphor for the novelist's personal view of life, and I can think of no better description. The India in the novels I write about India is used as a metaphor for mine. If I write about Anglo-India in 1942 I do so only because I find that period lively and dramatic and because it helps me to express the fullness of what I'm thinking and feeling about the world I live in.[54]

Like all good historical novels, *The Raj Quartet* thus transcends history.

[53] Charles Allen, *Tales from the South China Seas* (London: Futura, 1984 edn), pp. 22–3.

[54] Paul Scott, 'India: A Post-Fosterian View', in *Essays by Divers Hands: Royal Society of Literature* (Oxford, 1970), 36, pp. 116–17.

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It is true that Paul Scott successfully depicts the British in India rather than India itself; there is more of India itself in Kipling. But two of Scott's most important characters are Indian, Hari Kumar and Ahmed Kassim, and he has wisely selected them from the two major communities, Hindu and Muslim. The Hindu Hari is more central than the Muslim Ahmed not merely because Scott is conforming to the demographic realities of India but because he apparently understands the positive value of a person from a Hindu background better than one from an Islamic background and portrays the former more skilfully. M.A. Kassim too is important. Add the minor characters, Gopal and Sirinivasan, and the reader is impressed by Paul Scott's presentation of Indians as strong and responsible, as more respectful than E.M. Forster's. Forster's social comedy in *A Passage to India* does tend to diminish the stature of even a major character like Aziz but it is not applied in the same way to the Englishman Fielding. Yet, in *The Raj Quartet*, the mass of the Indians remain more or less indistinct. Time and again Scott refers to 'the unknown Indian' as a symbol of exploitation and injustice and also to show how he is excluded from the picture 'The Jewel in the Crown'. Scott allegorically suggests how 'the unknown Indian' is excluded from the concerns of Empire. Yet 'the unknown Indian' is not a presence in the *Quartet*. Though Scott did not have the knowledge and equipment to include him, Scott's sympathy for him is, I suspect, one of the founts of Scott's inspiration.

The barrack-room atmosphere is strongly felt in the *Quartet*: there are many references to waiters, bearers and servants crouching and cringing. Of course, deference comes naturally to an Indian because a hierarchical, feudal system has long been a part of his culture. But the Raj added its own demands for deference and this sometimes took the form of sycophancy. Scott himself rightly attacks the Raj shibboleths of master-servant devotion, the condescending attitude of the white man to the Indian. He shows that, when Aziz leaves the house soon after Mabel's death and refuses to explain his conduct on his return, this is not lack of feeling or defection, but Aziz's desire to mourn by himself in his own dignified fashion. Moreover, there is that remarkable moving passage, in *A Division of the Spoils*, when Scott affords us a glimpse of what might be the new India. Guy Perron is going in search of Hari Kumar; an Indian boy takes him along, invites him to have tea; he is anxious to speak English to the Englishman. Perron offers him money, but he *refuses* it.

When in his poem 'Shabby Imperial Dreams', D.J. Enright, a present-day liberal like Paul Scott, handles the British Empire, he

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is critical but embarrassed: he obtrusively notes that it is in the past and portrays himself as if he were in a dream. But Scott is able to confront the Empire not only critically but also squarely and steadily. In *A Division of the Spoils*, there is emphasis on the maimed 18th-century European adventurer in India, Pierre Cuiller, known as Perron. Colonel Layton, Nigel Rowan and Guy Perron are familiar with this character, while the Nawab of Mirat refers to him (*ADS*, p. 533). Although ostensibly it is Perron's name that recalls this figure, the connection is slight. There is far more emphasis on the fact that both Merrick and Bronowsky are also maimed. Merrick is connected with Cuiller. On a simple level, all this suggests a long-standing tradition of European adventurers in the colonies. On a more complex level, Merrick and Bronowksy have gone beyond normal roles of Europeans in colonies and in their different ways, malevolent and benevolent respectively, have involved themselves with Indians. Yet, in doing so, they have retained the tendency to exercise the control which characterises a master race and suffered what Sara Suleri calls 'the psychic disempowerment signified by the colonial encounter',[55] symbolised by their being maimed. It is only exceptional characters like Sir Henry and Lady Manners who do not seek to impose their will or control, who are able to escape this, and, significantly, remain unimpaired.

History is, in effect, a major presence in the *Quartet*. It is mentioned time and again and portrayed, especially in *A Division of the Spoils,* as 'the perpetually moving stream' or 'the ever-flowing tide', echoing the hymn, quoted and distorted for the purpose of conveying a gory story in Waugh's *Decline and Fall*:

> O God our help in ages past
> . . .
> Time like an *ever-rolling stream*
> Bears all its sons away.
> (my emphasis)

Scott's characters are caught in the tides of history, but they are not necessarily its 'victims' as Robin Jared Lewis thinks.[56] Some—like Mildred Layton or even Barbie—are finished with the end of Empire, but others—like Sarah or Guy Perron—possess the qualities necessary for survival.

[55] Quoted from Uma Parameswaran's review of *The Rhetoric of English India*, p. 783.
[56] Lewis, 'The Literature of the Raj', p. 68.

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The references to Gaffur, the poet, constitute a motif in the *Quartet*. He is an ancestral relative or connection of the Nawab of Mirat and M.A. Kassim. He is translated by Major Tippit, Kassims's ex-jailer and a conventional, uninterpretative historian, and by Bronowsky, an inspired statesman, an emigré with aristocratic experience of Red Revolution. He is read by M.A. Kassim and Guy Perron, the historian. Lady Manners, with her love of, and closeness to India, always a Presence, an Angel or Guardian in the Eliot sense, and who is like Mabel Layton, suggests to Sarah that a volume of Gaffur's poetry would be an ideal gift for the Nawab of Mirat when he hosts her family. The Gaffur motif emphasises the course of history and that, while history changes countries and cultures through the ages, there is also continuity.

In his time, Forster could conceive of a Commonwealth of Nations in a nineteenth-century sense and see the possibility of much real togetherness between Britain and India even after Indian independence. When Paul Scott writes, much later in the day, he is aware of a deeper division between Britain and India and of the strains within the Commonwealth. Yet he sees an unfulfilled promise in Empire. What he sees as wrong (*via* Mabel Layton, Lady Manners, and, finally, Barbie Batchelor) is the cleavage between rulers and ruled, not so much oppression (exploitation, yes) as a chill indifference, a gap maintained by lack of concern. A gap that could have been crossed, in Scott's view. 'As John Rowntree found when he joined the Indian Forestry Service, a public-school education helped to iron out many of the creases in his initial dealings with Indians but in the long term he found that it had its disadvantages too: "Our relationship with the Indians was too much that of prefects with the lower-fourth, one which hardly recommended itself to a people with an older culture than our own."'[57] Trevor Royle notices: 'an unmistakable sense of racial superiority. Although there were numerous examples of friendships between British and Indian colleagues, the colour bar was never far from people's minds. There was an unthinking prejudice that Indians were different, separate but not equal, and in many cases that attitude was encouraged by a natural deference amongst the Indians.'[58]

[57] Trevor Royle, *The Last Days of the Raj*, p. 50. In R.K. *Narayan's Swami and Friends*, an Indian says: 'Our ships sailed the high seas and we had reached the height of civilisation when the Englishmen ate raw flesh and wandered in the jungles, nude.' (p. 83).

[58] Royle, *The Last Days of the Raj*, p. 60.

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The Raj Quartet is not 'a tragedy' as Lewis interprets it[59] but a requiem for the Raj. Paul Scott accepts what has transpired and is saddened by it in a dignified way. The *Quartet* ends with the last poem Gaffur had composed:

> Everything means something to you; dying flowers,
> The different times of year.
> The new clothes you wear at the end of Ramadan.
> A prince's trust. The way that water flows,
> Too impetuous to pause, breaking over
> Stones, rushing towards distant objects,
> Places you can't see but which you also flow
> Outward to.
> Today you slept long. When you woke your old blood stirred.
> This too meant something. The girl who woke you
> Touched your brow.
> She called you Lord. You smiled,
> Put up a trembling hand. But she had gone,
> As seasons go, as a night-flower closes in the day,
> As a hawk flies into the sun or as the cheetah runs; as
> The deer pauses, sun-dappled in long grass,
> But does not stay.
>
> Fleeting moments: these are held a long time in the eye,
> The blind eye of the ageing poet,
> So that even you, Gaffur, can imagine
> In this darkening landscape
> The bowman lovingly choosing his arrow,
> The hawk outpacing the cheetah,
> (The fountain splashing lazily in the courtyard),
> The girl running with the deer.
>
> (*ADS*, p. 598)

The poem is a product of *dhvani* (suggestion, evocation) and *vyanga* (indirection), the essence of Sanskrit and ultimately of all Indian poetry, including Urdu. It communicates how things die and continue. It accepts change as survival (an idea reinforced earlier by the text) and fittingly encapsulates the whole spirit of the *Quartet* at the close.

Lawrence Durrell deliberately planned *The Alexandria Quartet*,[60] but *The Raj Quartet* is the result of unplanned growth and accretion. Paul Scott said: 'There was no grand design. I only wanted to do one book, but it was a question of . . . you got about two-thirds of the way through

[59] Lewis, 'The Literature of the Raj', p. 69.

[60] See Lawrence Durrell, 'Preface', *The Alexandria Quartet* (London: Faber, 1962 edn).

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the first book and you realised, yes, there must be a second because it's taking its own pace. And you got through two-thirds of the second and you said, yes, there must be a third and hence . . . . The one thing I was terrified of was getting two-thirds of the way through the fourth and last and thinking there had to be a fifth because that would have killed me completely.'[61] Scott, in fact, had 'sneered at sequences à la Proust, Snow and Durrell',[62] but he went on to produce his own and it has affinities with theirs and has, consciously or unconsciously, been influenced by them. In *The Raj Quartet*, matters dealt with in one volume may be elaborated in another, as in *The Alexandria Quartet*—where much is explained in *Mountolive* as in *The Towers of Silence*. Martin Green has observed that Scott's form is 'post-Proustian, with its reverbatory action and reflective analysis.'[63]

The volumes of *The Raj Quartet*, for all their sweep, their crowd of characters, are by no means sprawling, 'a somewhat shapeless baggy monster' as Anthony Burgess called them,[64] but tightly organised, linked by recurrent phrases and motifs, in addition to characters in common. In the multiplicity of characters or 'voices' set against the common background of a period of disintegration and in this unifying principle, they recall T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*—not surprisingly since Scott 'said at the end of his life that Eliot had been the strongest and most enduring influence on him as a writer' and the impact of *The Waste Land* on him had been 'staggering'.[65]

Scott deploys a remarkable range of techniques in the *Quartet*. A poetic impulse, an image, ideally provides his originating inspiration. In *The Jewel in the Crown*, it was 'a girl, in the dark, running, exhausted, hurt in some way, yet strangely of good heart—tough, resilient, her face and figure a sense rather than an observed condition.'[66] In the case of *The Day of the Scorpion*, it was the Muslim woman in the *burkha*,[67] an arresting symbol yet uncertain and ambiguous, perhaps suggesting the mystery and unpredictability of destiny.

[61] Michael Barber, 'Plain Tales from the Raj and Other Worlds', in *The Guardian*, 24 November 1977, p. 10.

[62] Hilary Spurling, *Paul Scott*, p. 244.

[63] Martin Green, *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire* (London, 1980), p. 336.

[64] Anthony Burgess, *Ninety-Nine Novels—The Best in English since 1939: A Personal Choice* (London: Allison & Busby, 1984), p. 116.

[65] Hilary Spurling, *Paul Scott*, pp. 70–1.

[66] Paul Scott, *My Appointment with the Muse*, p. 60.

[67] *Burkha* is a long enveloping garment worn in public places by Muslim women to screen them from the view of men and strangers.

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The four novels deliberately vary in method. There is a vast difference between *The Day of the Scorpion* and *A Division of the Spoils*. The former is very much an artefact with a conscious presentation of images, direct statement of ideas, traces of fabulation in the dreams of Morland, Sarah and Barbie. The latter is basically (if not altogether) realist: for instance, reflections on the British relationship with India are presented *via* Perron's bedtime ruminations; modern British ignorance and indifference to India *via* Perron's lecture; the liberal attitude to the Indian connection *via* Purvis. *A Division of the Spoils* is exceptional in the *Quartet* in incorporating comedy *via* the mellow Perron.

The *Quartet* is impressive partly because Scott is a master of both panorama and close-up. A panoramic perspective of history cannot emerge through a tracing of a course of events, however significant. The *Quartet* shares more of the nature and, therefore, the technique of Tolstoy's *War and Peace* rather than, say, of George Eliot's *Middlemarch*. But there is also an element of post-modern artifice and arbitrariness in Scott's structure, the presentation of foci.

Meenakshi Mukherjee observes: 'The digressional method of story-telling is perhaps the oldest device in narrative literature. Weaving in stories within a story, or pausing to narrate a parable to drive home a point, these are characteristic devices of the *Panchatantra*, the *Vishnu Purana* and other Sanskrit narrative treatises, and of the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* as well.'[68] An aspect of Scott's post-modernism is really an exploitation of traditional resources of fiction. Like Solzhenitsyn, Scott speaks through a 'multiplicity of characters' where the characters become 'many competing centres of attention'; they meet at a 'knot' in point of time and space.[69] Ultimately, the major achievement of *The Raj Quartet* is possible because Scott, to use the terms of Solzhenitsyn again, integrates 'the horizontal nature of its sweep' with 'the verticality of its thought'; the history and the changing climate of thought, the history and personal destinies, are fused.

Scott considered his last novel, *Staying On* (1977), a 'postscript'.[70] He does not wish to make it appear an entirely independent entity. The connections in relation to the *Quartet* are maintained in respect

[68] Meenakshi Mukherjee, *The Twice-Born Fiction* (New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, 1974 edn), p. 133.

[69] Quoted in Donald Watt, '"The Harmony of the World": Polyphonic Structure in Solzhenitsyn's Longer Fiction', pp. 102, 158.

[70] Quoted in Michael Barber, 'Plain Tales from the Raj and Other Worlds', p. 10.

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of locale, time, and some of the characters too. Lucy and Tusker Smalley, its main characters, were 'marginal people' (in Scott's own description)[71] in the *Quartet*; Sarah Layton, now married to Guy Perron, enters as a correspondent; the Layton's young *ayah*, Minnie, is now an employee of Mrs Lila Bhoolabhoy. But it would be quite obvious to anyone who examines this novel in terms of implied intention and, significantly, technique and language too that it is not a mere extension of the earlier work. The difference in language strikes one immediately. The style of *Staying On* is more relaxed and surer probably because it is dealing with a small group, the Smalleys and the Bhoolabhoys, in the evening of their lives, while the style of the *Quartet* is more turgid (using the adjective in a neutral sense, without its usual pejorative associations) in keeping with its large subject and turbulent period. In fact, I dare say that *Staying On* is a fine work, a minor masterpiece which can be appreciated for its own sake. It has an integrity of its own, a sense of perfection and completeness, for it is the expression of a personal vision which is in touch with areas of experience that are only cursorily dealt with in the *Quartet*. *Staying On*, unlike the *Quartet*, is not a political or historical novel, although its background has political implications. The important point is that the chief characters transcend the background and are made to confront problems relating to their *personal destiny*.

In a sense, *Staying On* is the story of Everyman—that is, ordinary man—and his struggle for survival, for happiness and fulfilment. Smalleys, their very name suggests their position in society. As Mildred insists in the *Quartet*, they were nonentities in the colonial world, and remain so to the British present in India after Independence. The Indians do not pay them respect as such, certainly not as sahib and mem-sahib, but they are human to the couple.

Lucy makes an important statement:

> The upper-classes and all the people who like to think of themselves as upper-class, are never happy unless they are competing at something in the open air, living what they call a full life. But in these indoor things I can recognize my own life and through them project and live so say many lives, not just the one I have.[72]

'Indoor things'—that is only one of her lives. She is typical of people like her (a vicar's daughter who needed to work for a livelihood), belonging to her social class and environment, and individual in having

[71] *Ibid.*, p. 10.
[72] Paul Scott, *Staying On*, pp. 166–7.

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individual traits. As she says elsewhere: "I've always had this tendency to imagine, to fantasize, to *project*. Like many young girls in those days I was stage-struck but much too shy and nervous to do anything about it except work for the local amateur dramatic society, which I more or less had to because it raised money for the Church Hall." (*SO*, p. 137) So the ordinary mind of Lucy has a complexity of its own and her complexity of thinking and feeling is heightened, aggravated through her marriage to Tusker Smalley, who has his own complexity, like and unlike hers.

The early beginnings of their characters have a bearing on their development. 'Cut off from one another, living separate lives under the same roof' (*SO,* p. 73)—Lucy and Tusker have been born into that: an environment of loneliness, alienated from their background. He is in the army, strong and aloof, 'merging unobtrusively with the background.' (*SO*, p. 71) She is an impoverished small-time secretary in a solicitor's office, having had to leave her family, itself uncongenial. Their coming together was meant to save them from all this. To Lucy 'amid all these dusty, boring files .. the young officer provided the element of mystery', but *that* did not last long. Because of Tusker's lack of ambition and the military and social hierarchy, Lucy had to suffer for a long time the humiliations of being a junior wife. Ironically, no sooner has Tusker risen to the rank of Colonel, than the old hierarchy collapses with Independence, and, under the new dispensation, her position (and his) is as lowly. To Mrs Bhoolabhoy, their landlady, they are of no consequence, even on a human level. Tusker's mismanagement makes their financial circumstances more straitened than these would have been anyway. He was responsible for what Lucy repeatedly calls 'the débacle'. When eating in their annexe, they seem to live on eggs prepared in various forms. There is truth in Tusker's final reflections on their lives as expressed in his last letter to Lucy:

> 'I still think we were right to stay on, though I don't think of it any longer as staying on, but just as hanging on, which people of our age and upbringing and limited talents, people who have never been really poor but never had any real money, have to do, wherever they happen to be, when they can't work any more.' (*SO*, p. 195)

The typicality and universality of their situation thus underlined, is confirmed by the British characters in Parr Cooper's novel *The Gesture Comes First* (1949) who realised they were

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The very last representatives of the vulnerable British in India. Time and history would touch them as it would touch everyone else and send them sculling back to the drab struggle for existence that was the lot of their fellows.[73]

Marriage is the *major* event in Lucy's life, to shape her future—until the death of her husband and also thereafter. It is implied that they did get on reasonably well in private life before Independence but, after it, the changed circumstances bring about a change in Tusker's personality—for the worse. Lucy does her best to keep him happy; her efforts centre on keeping their garden trim and the crimson canna lilies flowering because these are very important to Tusker. In fact, Lucy tells her servant, Ibrahim, after Tusker's first heart attack: "I don't want to lose my husband. And if I'm not to, then the grass must be kept neat and the canna lilies watered." (*SO*, p. 32) Mrs Bhoolabhoy does not care about the garden, stops looking after it, and would encourage it to grow wild and 'jungly'—recalling Hamlet's lines:

> Fie on 't! O fie! 'tis an unweeded garden
> That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature
> Possess it merely.
> (Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act I, sc.2)

But Lucy finds allies in Mr Bhoolabhoy and Ibrahim, and, without Tusker's knowledge, employs a new *mali* (gardener), Joseph. Joseph has a grave reverence for the dead and religious feeling (like Frank Bhoolabhoy) and tends both the garden and the Church graveyard. Ibrahim and Joseph recall Abraham and Joseph in the Bible, father and son, and this hints that there is a kind of functional connection—both Ibrahim and Joseph are garden-fosterers—and underlines the seriousness of their task. Like Mabel's garden in the *Quartet* in some aspects, Tusker's too is a symbol of grace and order. He dies among the flowers he loves.

The relationship of Lucy and Tusker breaks down. Their failure to adjust to each other sexually may be one cause. Lucy does fantasise at times about her uncle's chauffeur, Toole, who has a touch of Lady Chatterley's lover. He awakens the sexual propensities in Lucy, which are really not what Tusker satisfies, or seeks to satisfy. Toole, in fact,

[73] Quoted from W.W.S. Bhasker, 'India in the Novels of Parr Cooper', in *The Image of India in Western Creative Writing* ed. M.K. Naik, S.K. Desai & S.T. Kallapur (Dharwar: Karnatak University, 1970), p. 32.

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brings out both the romantic and the sensual element in Lucy (the latter appears pretty minimal though)—given her lasting awareness of the back of his neck; the emphasis on his name, Toole, referring to the slang for genitals, unmistakable because of the fact that Lucy's brothers make a secret private joke of it; his getting his country girl pregnant. The purpose of this figure is to show both what Lucy gets, and does not get, in her relationship with Tusker. But what she does not receive, is not so important to her as to make her seek satisfaction outside marriage.

It is ironical that Lucy and Tusker appear a unit to Pankot military society, but actually there is no unity between them. Even when Lucy wishes to help Tusker as in the case of providing a *mali*, this has to be done secretly. In a scene that carries more significance than its ostensible subject, their disagreement as to who was the last person buried at St. John's, she bursts out: "You obfuscate, you stupefy me. You bewilder me. I do not know where or what I am when I talk to you." (*SO*, p. 83) Thus, Lucy is now finding Tusker a difficult person to get on with. She tries to attribute this tendency on his part to bully, to stupefy, to his having 'stayed on' in India, thereby deliberately courting loneliness. But she realises gradually that this is an ingrained trait in him, probably his reaction to the kind of person *she* is, more refined and more cultured than he. This is brought out in the episode regarding theatricals at the army headquarters when Tusker, aware of her talent and enthusiasm for acting, denies her the chance of taking part in *The Wind and the Rain* (*SO*, p. 138). Tusker withdraws more and more into seclusion. Lucy is forced into long interior monologues; this is both a psychological condition and a literary device appropriate to it. Significantly, 'her appetite, never great, seemed less than ever. She *now* ate like a bird' (*SO*, p. 44)—a common effect problems have on people. And Tusker drags Lucy with him—until it is too late.

Read as the story of two married people who fail through the entire period of their lives to come to understand each other and make necessary adjustments, *Staying On* has a deep poignancy, probably deriving, in the last analysis, from Paul Scott's experience of his own later difficulties with his wife, Penny. The inevitability of the drabness, the boredom and the monotony is made to appear so natural, with Lucy resigned to it and Tusker shying away from their failure to 'connect' in aggressive, clownish posturing, anything other than being natural—until Lucy strikes out. Tusker makes attempts to resolve their differences before he dies. He offers her a treat on his birthday. At the end, he proffers his love to her indirectly in a letter. But these

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are placed as momentary stances of his. At the close, after the letter, Lucy makes much of Tusker; she knows his hardness and cruelty, and yet thinks of the good. The positive aspects are openly stressed but amount to poor consolation, given the fact that Lucy has sacrificed her whole life. She says at the end: "everyone else gone and just Tusker and me, peering out into the dark waiting for transport that never turned up." (*SO*, p. 216) Tusker too has gone, she is stranded alone. The tragedy is hers more than his.

In *Staying On*, there is no forcing of situations to bring about a happy ending. So commonplace these people are, but how Scott engages our sympathy for them, making their lives worth reflecting on. For there is a philosophical wisdom underlying the novel, which the author of *Ecclesiastes* gave expression to—a simple and distilled wisdom which is tragic and enlarges our vision:

> Again I saw under the sun, the race is not the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favour to the men of skill; but time and chance happen to them all.
>
> (Ch. 10, verse 11)

Ecclesiastes is quoted twice in *Staying On* and has, probably, influenced Scott's basic view.

Apart from furthering the plot, Ibrahim and Minnie, Mr and Mrs Bhoolabhoy are presented as contrasts to Lucy and Tusker on the level of theme. The sexuality missing in the relationship of the British couple is the main ingredient in that of the two Indian servants. Ibrahim and Minnie follow a kind of farmyard morality:

> "Good. Good. For me also, my love, much trouble. Sacked again." He nibbled at her ear and tweaked her nipples and muttered his tale so that she laughed, pressed herself against his hardening organ and ran. A little stooped, he went back to the Burra Sahib. (*SO*, p. 205)

Lucy and Tusker find no sexual fulfilment in marriage, yet they are loyal to one another. Mr and Mrs Bhoolabhoy have sex, yet their satisfaction is temporary and both are unfaithful. It is suggested that Mr Pandey, the chief clerk to Mrs Bhoolabhoy's lawyers, conducts more than business with her in her room. Mr Bhoolabhoy is attracted to Susy Williams, his Eurasian church co-worker, but she is interested not in a sexual but purely spiritual association. But he does commit adultery in Ranpur with Hot Chichanya, a cabaret dancer, in the double-lotus position. Experimental sex, yes, but deviant sex, no; he beats a retreat when she, with a whip, wants to initiate him into the

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delights and mysteries of the Koshak Dance. Ironically, Mr Bhoolabhoy is a pillar of the Church in Pankot and his religious feelings are genuine. He is humane: he does not wish to ask his friend Tusker to quit the annexe his wife owns, in view of Tusker's heart condition and financial straits, but Mrs Bhoolabhoy is not to be deterred on these grounds. She is a mercenary, brutal, domineering woman, physically a shapeless mountain of flesh. Her character is as repulsive as her appearance: like Lady Bracknell in Oscar Wilde's *Importance of Being Earnest*, 'she is a monster, without being a myth.[74] It is true that Mr and Mrs Bhoolabhoy achieve some togetherness when they both want to preserve their hotel, Smith's. The crack occurs when Mr Bhoolabhoy wants to retain the hotel in its old style which reflected a more stable, gracious, less money-ridden era, and he finds that his wife has decided to sell it because of her greed. Yet the pathos is that he has no alternative but to tag along with her, like Lucy with Tusker though in a different vein.

The panorama of history is very important to Scott. The *Quartet* ended with 1947. *Staying On* depicts the development of India and the world after that. Memories of the Raj remain. Lucy, in her letter of sympathy to Sarah after hearing of Colonel Layton's death, dwells on the nostalgia of Indian servants for the old Anglo-Indian days. This ties up with the idea that the best Indians (for the British and for British writers) are faithful servants—Kipling's Gunga Din was one such. The smart Shiraz hotel, next door to the annexe of the Smalleys, is a symbol of the new and casts a shadow on them. The symbolic point is made obvious when Lucy tells Ibrahim: "We are people in shadow." (*SO*, p. 31) But the symbolism extends further and ties up with the Residence to which Sarah and Guy Perron go in *A Division of the Spoils*: they sit on a dais; the windows hold the sun, till they seem to *let it go down*. The sun, we may connect with 'the sun never sets on the British Empire.' The passing of the days of the Raj is also put explicitly (e.g. *SO*, p. 22). The comparison of the Smalleys' twin thunder-boxes to 'vice-regal thrones' (*SO*, pp. 16, 35) is a parody of Empire.

After Lucy had struck out at Tusker, she remembers an incident which, to the reader, radiates social meaning:

> At the Taj, when—half-cut yet again—he had bitten Mrs Poppadoum's ear, spilt his wine and said "**** it," which made Sigrid Poppadoum laugh and

[74] Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, in *The Works of Oscar Wilde* ed. G.F. Maine (London&Glasgow: Collins, 1954 edn), p. 334.

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laugh but caused her husband great offence, and Solly and Mary-Lou (and Mr Sylvester, the Managing Director of Smith, Brown & McKintosh) to smile bleakly in that way Lucy remembers the old race of British sahibs and Memsahibs smiling if you did anything not quite pukka. . . . . Watching them, Lucy realized that nothing had changed for *her*, because there was this new race of sahibs and memsahibs of international status and connexion who had taken the place of generals and Mrs Generals, and *she and Tusker* had become for them almost as far down in the social scale as the Eurasians were in the days of the *raj*.

(*SO*, p. 181)

Just as Scott presents through Merrick the arrival of the lower middle class/working class/non-Public School meritocrat, and the grudging, rather frosty reception accorded to it by Public School and Colonel types—I have noted that Nigel Rowan is favourably impressed by Merrick, though only to begin with; Sarah, however, bars him right from the start; it is evident that young Kassim, a *horseman* as Yeats would recognise, no plebian, is a gentleman, a real pukka sahib (though Indian) and Sarah responds to him—Scott gives us here a view of today's oligarchs, wealth and power without style or standards. On the other hand, the hippie has also arrived on the scene.

Scott also depicts three aspects of India as such. 'Tiny' Menektara, embodying the best traditions of the army, is a Sandhurst type, a brown sahib, but essentially gracious and decent. Lucy accepts his wife, Coocoo, as an equal—a memsahib. The Colonel's lady was Kipling's synonym for the social apex ('The Colonel's Lady and Judy O'Grady are sisters under the skin'). The crude, the greedy and the material in Indian society are represented by Mrs Bhoolabhoy, with her greed for food, sex and money; in fact, a symbol of that emerging Indian middle class (satirised by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala too with her intimate knowledge of the Indian scene) whose motivating values were solely pleasure and profit. The Consortium to whom she sells out, is equally greedy. Interestingly, her connection with Mr Pandey is both financial and sexual—corrupt and faithless. Then, there are the loyal, supportive, kindly Indians—Ibrahim, Frank Bhoolabhoy, Susy Williams. Even the kindness of the young male hair stylist, Sashi, is noticeable. When he hears that Tusker had died, Lucy still being ignorant, he himself takes over the styling of her hair from his assistant, Susy, and tells Lucy, after he has performed an excellent job, "Oh any time will do for the bill, Mrs Smalley." What is dramatised is true equality between the British and the Indians, both social and emotional, which Aziz and Fielding in *A Passage to India* could not reach

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despite their wishes, and which Scott himself found lacking in India during the days of the Raj in the *Quartet* and which only an exceptional person like Lady Manners was able to achieve. In *Staying On*, Scott does not present a full or balanced portrait of India (for instance, the common people, apart from servants, do not matter), but this is not one of his aims, nor is this possible given the dimensions of the novel.

Essentially, *Staying On* is about adjusting experience to the inexorable passage of Time. The theme, first suggested to Scott in a crude form by M.M. Kaye,[75] is superbly brought out by its technique, a realistic technique at its best, in essence, in spirit and in form. But it is not without its innovativeness. The most important event, Tusker's death, is introduced at the beginning and also forms the climax at the end. The circular structure is reinforced by a repetition of Ibrahim's reaction, specifically to the last of his dismissals by Tusker just before his death, but applying beyond it: "The world collapses around one's head. Salaam Aleikum." (*SO*, pp. 12, 205) In-between occur artfully arranged shifts of time and place.

Feelings are beautifully presented through the characters, while Scott's handling of dialogue is equally remarkable. He makes the dialogue complementary to what the characters think and feel in a natural way. Observe how this dialogue between Lucy and Tusker captures the impasse which they have reached:

> "By all means then, Tusker, have a poached egg. But I'm really very hungry, so I shall have chicken pulao."
>
> "Not today you won't because you're not going to the dining-room and Ibrahim isn't going to fetch a tray from the dining-room. We've finished with the dining-room and we've finished with trays."
>
> A pause.
>
> "There are a lot of things I could say to that, Tusker, but suppose first I'd better ask, *why*?"
>
> "Because I say so."
>
> "And what precisely is the connection between what you say and what I do?"
>
> "The connection is that I'm still the master of this bloody house." He waited. "Well? Am I or aren't I?"
>
> "I can't deny that. No. Indeed, I can't. You are the master of this house. On the other hand, I am the mistress. . . . ."
>
> (*SO*, pp. 177–78)

[75] Roderick Gradidge, 'How M.M. Kaye found her guide to India', in *The Times*, 15 July 1984.

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Scott's dialogue is thus always true to the character. It is very lively, varied and can be humorous too. He possesses the remarkable ability to blend pathos and humour, which recalls Dickens. I have already pointed out the tragic quality of the novel; the humour too is integral. There is an element of Dickensian caricature in Scott's portrayal of the Bbhoolabhoys and the servants. When Tusker is stricken with a heart attack in the bathroom, there is humour deriving from the mixing of the incongruous—the sordid and the serious. Perhaps Dickens has influenced Scott in the writing of this novel: *Great Expectations* is mentioned in the text; Scott was familiar with Dickens' work from childhood and saw parallels between his life and Dickens'.[76] In the last analysis, Scott's novel moves as life flows, in ways pathetic and humorous, capturing life's vicissitudes, quirks and uncertainties. It is realistic in this deep sense, the deepest sense available.

The Raj Quartet is more obviously innovative and ambitious. *Staying On* is less venturesome, yet remarkable on a much smaller scale. Both work simultaneously on the level of the individual, the social and the universal—the hallmark of a great writer.

Editions and abbreviations used:

The Jewel in the Crown (London: Panther, 1973 edn)—*JC*
The Day of the Scorpion (London: Mayflower, 1970 edn)—*DS*
The Towers of Silence (London: Panther, 1973 edn)—*TS*
A Division of the Spoils (London: Heinemann, 1975)—*ADS*
Staying On (London: Heinemann, 1976)—*SO*

[76] Hilary Spurling, *Paul Scott*, pp. 26, 50–1, 231, 282.

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