

SPOKEN IN GOOD FAITH:

NARRATORS IN THE RAJ QUARTET

SPOKEN IN GOOD FAITH:  
NARRATORS IN THE RAJ QUARTET

by  
ANGELA TERPSTRA, B.A.

A Thesis  
Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies  
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements  
for the Degree  
Master of Arts

McMaster University  
February 1988

MASTER OF ARTS (1988)

(English)

McMASTER UNIVERSITY

Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Spoken in Good Faith: Narrators in The Raj Quartet

AUTHOR: Angela Terpstra, B.A. (McMaster University)

SUPERVISOR: Dr. James Dale

NUMBER OF PAGES: vii, 156

## Abstract

Paul Scott died on the 1st of March, 1978, leaving a legacy of thirteen published novels, some published poetry, and several plays and essays in manuscript form. He enjoyed some fame during his life; however, it has only been in the past five years that readers have gradually been giving the novelist the attention that his work merits. The present study examines Scott's method of narration. The quartet explores the relation between the British and India in the period 1942-47, adopting as central metaphors the rape of Daphne Manners in the Bibighar Gardens and the attack on a missionary teacher, Edwina Crane, and her assistant on the road to Dibrapour. The tale emerges through a variety of forms and voices, all of them the recollections of several people who were involved either directly or indirectly in these events. Chapter One examines the role of an unnamed investigator, the Stranger, operating almost twenty years later, as the controlling narrator of the whole quartet. It also shows his desire to view critically the British Raj as a failure of liberalism. The remaining chapters focus in turn on three of the most important contributors to the Stranger's story: Sarah Layton, Guy

Perron and Barbie Batchelor. Scott has deliberately chosen these narrators as voices of integrity and faithfulness in an increasingly uncertain world for it is they who will sustain human relationships when the framework of a liberal humanist world crumbles.

### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. James Dale for his advice, encouragement, and immense patience. He has persevered with me through various circumstances and, without his help, this thesis would be much less than it is.

Thanks must also go to Dr. Richard Rempel for first introducing me to Paul Scott several years ago. As well, the professional advice and personal encouragement of Dr. M. Aziz have been greatly appreciated.

Finally, this thesis would have never existed without Nicholas. Much of our discussions are in the pages of this work, and from him I have learned a great deal. His faith has taught me: E'n la sua volontade 'e nostra pace.

## Table of Contents

Abstract . . . . .	iii
Acknowledgements . . . . .	v
Table of Contents . . . . .	vi
Abbreviations . . . . .	vii
Introduction . . . . .	1
Chapter One: The Stranger . . . . .	12
Chapter Two: Sarah Layton . . . . .	51
Chapter Three: Guy Perron . . . . .	86
Chapter Four: Barbie Batchelor . . . . .	117
Conclusion . . . . .	150
Bibliography . . . . .	153

## Abbreviations

The following abbreviations have been used in the text:

The Jewel in the Crown -- JC

The Day of the Scorpion -- Day

The Towers of Silence -- TS

A Division of the Spoils -- Div



## Introduction

The British experience in India has attracted, repelled, and ultimately puzzled many writers from the early nineteenth century to the present. There have been many volumes written mostly by women who exaggerate the romantic life, portraying a world of tiger hunts and obedient servants in sentimental prose for a wide audience in the mother country. There have been several others whose fame as writers is inextricably connected with the raj: Rudyard Kipling, E.M. Forster, John Masters and, most recently, Paul Scott. Kipling, in much of his writing, identified with the rulers although not necessarily against the ruled, and spent much of his writing on the theme of men at work for the raj. Forster's attitude to imperialism is characterized by a disenchanted liberalism which caused him to dislike what he saw while his Edwardian roots made him unwilling to condemn the imperialists. Masters' novels failed to do more than chronicle the life and times of middle-class Englishmen and Anglo-Indians in India and unfortunately they present few profound insights into the raj. Paul Scott shares some thematic similarities with these three important precursors: his interest in the daily work of those in the raj; his

belief that liberal humanism was shown to be empty rhetoric by the end of World War II; and his intimate portraits of those living in the midst of the raj. Scott's similarities extend not only to themes and characterizations but even his use of the rape metaphor was prefigured in Forster's A Passage to India. However, the power of Scott's writing demands comparisons outside the world of Anglo-Indian literature.

It is the epic qualities of Scott's writing that suggest he be compared to great writers such as Henry James and Joseph Conrad. Scott's large canvas shows the sweeping changes in an entire civilization yet his extremely detailed portraits can be likened to those of Henry James, where his characters, like James', are shown successfully maintaining a strong morality despite the uncertainty of the world around them. In technique, Scott expands on Conrad's use of a narrator, like Marlow in Heart of Darkness, who not only tells the story but participates in it. In the quartet, Scott's methods of narration are not only useful techniques but become complex parts of the story itself. Scott's evocative descriptions of the East and his use of extended metaphors again recall Conrad's images of South America, while his use of such metaphors as the butterfly lace and fire are similar to Conrad's metaphor of the silver in Nostromo.

Scott's importance as a novelist is reinforced by his awareness of the details of history. He knows that he must move outside these details to enter the realm of metaphor in order to explore the British experience. The images which Scott has created use history not only to explore the Indian situation but also to reveal the clash of fundamental human issues in an increasingly alien world.

Why did Paul Scott write about India? He left clues to help answer this question in some notes for a talk to be given to grammar school students in England.<sup>1</sup> Instead of answering directly, Scott chose to read from his works especially noting two works, A Division of the Spoils and The Corrida at San Feliu. The excerpt from the first work explains the relationship that Scott knew existed between India and most Europeans who had spent some time there:

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. (Div 103)

---

<sup>1</sup> Paul Scott, "Notes for Talk and Reading at Stamford Grammar School," My Appointment with the Muse: Essays 1961-75, ed., intro. Shelley C. Reece (London: Heinemann, 1986) 164-70.

For Scott, the poetic metaphor of the skull and the bones shows the penetration and intimacy of the experience of imperialism. The possession is not only a historical and political reality often thought to be reflected more in the possession than in the possessor, but for Scott it was an all-encompassing human experience that took for itself the souls of all who were involved. More personally, Scott's second clue about his obsession with India from The Corrida at San Feliu tells of his own inspiration as a writer. Here the speaker is Edward Thornhill, a writer who has died in a car accident but has left behind several seemingly unrelated manuscripts. Thornhill tells why he writes:

But I knew that Spain was good for me, too. Here they understand about the Duende. It means imp, ghost, goblin. The Spanish poet Lorca wrote about it....He said the Duende burned the blood like powdered glass. Someone else, Manuel Torres I think, said that everything that had dark sounds had Duende. I think this is true. The Duende is inside, so the sounds that come are bound to be dark....

I think of my own duende as a little black hunchback who draws pictures on the walls of his dungeon. When I find the pictures moving he shrieks with laughter. When I find them comic I hear him weeping in the straw. There's a chain on his left leg and there's one part of the dungeon wall he can't get at to draw pictures on. I shout at him to break the chain. He curses me and tells me to break it myself. We both bleed from the strain. The book I would write is the picture he would draw on that part of the wall. You wouldn't recognize them as the same, but he's got to. If he does the chain is broken and he leaps across the page too quickly for you to see anything but

his shadow. He draws his pictures and I write my words. Then you feel him.<sup>2</sup>

The India that Scott has written about is on that other part of the wall -- the one not clearly visible to the ordinary eye but one that is as real and penetrating as anything he sees. The poetic idea of a duende expresses well the intensity and drive that is behind Scott's writing. However, there is still the question of identifying what exactly forced Scott to want to write until he would "bleed from the strain". In another address Scott indicates what he felt was so important about India in the 1940's. He wrote:

India, to me, was the scene of a remarkable and far-reaching event. I see it as the place where the British came to the end of themselves as they were. It was, even more than England was the scene of the victory of Liberal Humanism over dying paternal imperialism.<sup>3</sup>

But perhaps even more importantly, Scott knew that Liberal Humanism as he defined it; "the human consciousness of human dignity that began with the Renaissance"<sup>4</sup>, also ended with

---

<sup>2</sup>Paul Scott, The Corrida at San Feliu 1964 (London: Granada, 1974) 79-80.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Scott, "Meet the Author: Manchester", My Appointment with the Muse: Essays 1961-75, ed. and introduction Shelley C. Reece (London: Heinemann, 1986) 48.

<sup>4</sup> Scott, "Meet the Author: Manchester" 49.

the World War II and its aftermath. In his writings of India, especially in contrast with those of E.M. Forster, Scott presents a critique of the liberalism that pervaded the Victorian world and affected the eventual outcome of the imperial possession of India.

Forster's A Passage to India was an important book for Scott. It seems that Scott first read the novel around 1948 and then reread it around 1966.<sup>5</sup> This was also the year when the first novel of the quartet, The Jewel in the Crown, was published. Mrs. Moore of A Passage to India articulates much of what is immediately questionable about the lives and times of those English people occupying India in the last years of the raj. She tells her son Ronald: "Your sentiments are those of a god....And Englishmen like posing as gods."<sup>6</sup> Later she also thinks of his upbringing in the fine upstanding tradition of public schooling: "His words without his voice might have impressed her, but when she heard the self-satisfied lilt of them, when she saw the mouth moving so complacently and competently beneath the little red nose, she felt, quite illogically, that this was

---

<sup>5</sup> Paul Scott, "How Well Have They Worn?--A Passage to India, The Times 6 Jan. 1966, 15.

<sup>6</sup> E.M. Forster, A Passage to India 1924, ed. Oliver Stallybrass (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985) 69.

not the last word on India."<sup>7</sup> These criticisms would do well to please the Fieldings and the Nigel Rowans of England but Scott realizes the implications of the problem to which Mrs. Moore fears there is no answer. Scott adopts many of her sensitivities filtered through various characters but most clearly in Barbie Batchelor, arguably the most important character in the whole quartet.

Scott saw what Mrs. Moore also felt: the failure of the kind of liberalism that had supported India and the Empire for so long. The dilemma of this failure was exemplified for Scott in Mrs. Moore's words:

"Human beings are still important", Mrs. Moore decided, "but human relationships aren't--" by which she meant that these relationships were only unimportant because they were had by people who thought they knew what a human being was but had obviously calculated wrong.<sup>8</sup>

The echo of emptiness heard in the cave of Marabar by Mrs. Moore led Scott to look for a solution, for a different set of standards that would replace the tenuous morality of the liberal world that had dominated human actions for at least one hundred and fifty years. In his answer to Forster's echo, Scott finds what he calls a "moral continuum of human affairs", stemming from Mrs. Moore's realization of not

---

<sup>7</sup> Forster, A Passage to India 70.

<sup>8</sup> Scott, "How Well Have They Worn" 15.

knowing the importance of human relationships. He writes optimistically of the moral continuum: "Perhaps consciousness of its existence is also a kind of dignity. I hope so."<sup>9</sup> Scott's method of narration in the Raj Quartet and his choice of narrators demonstrate both his critique of liberalism and his assertion of a moral continuum of human affairs where relationships are given a dignity that assumes supreme importance in the modern world.

Scott's unusual method of presenting his material through various narrators, diaries, and statements probably stems from his early interest in the film medium. In a rare glimpse at his personal life he documents how he and his brother would write, direct and then create their own films.<sup>10</sup> This boyhood training in presenting the visual image is important in his development as a writer. He experiments in several of his earlier novels with different ways of narrating but none are as completely successful as the techniques of the Quartet. In another essay, Scott explains how he developed his method for the Quartet by first finding the central image and then going in and out of it until the writer can see his way:

---

<sup>9</sup> Scott, "Meet the Author: Manchester" 49.

<sup>10</sup> Paul Scott, "A Writer Takes Stock", My Appointment with the Muse: Essays, 1961-75 ed., intro. Shelley C. Reece (London: Heinemann, 1986) 153.



Going in through the back of the original image has begun to unlock its mysteries, and in this particular case - and each novel you write is a different case - by leading up to the climax of the riots it has suggested that the form the novel will take is that of approach, through different eyes, through different histories, from different vantage points of time - to a central point of reference, which is exemplified in the original image - the action of that image and the implicit emotional content of that image.<sup>11</sup>

The camera's eye has given Scott his ideas on how the novel might be seen by the reader. His technique of mirroring the raj through a variety of people from different backgrounds gives the illusion of truth but is really defining the reader's perspective even more narrowly than a more conventional narrative method. The presence of multiple narrators also magnifies the problem of truth in the novel. Scott carefully presents the illusion of truth to the reader by his use of dates, authoritative depositions and other seemingly truthful evidence to assist the main narrator, the Stranger, in his search for truth. Ultimately, Scott's presentation of truth is deliberately ambiguous but is meant to be comforting in an ironic way for he believes the reader will feel a certain security in knowing that there are no absolutes, that in the knowledge

---

<sup>11</sup>Paul Scott, "Method: The Mystery and the Mechanics", My Appointment with the Muse: Essays 1961-75 (London: Heinemann, 1986) 65.

of our inadequacies, we can build better relationships and a better world.

In choosing his narrators, Scott has carefully crafted a method by which the reader feels confident of the variety of perspectives on both the more narrow images of Daphne Manners' rape and the affair surrounding Miss Crane on the road to Dibrapur, as well as the larger scene of India from 1943-1947. However, each narrator has been chosen to expose overtly or subtly Scott's criticisms of the liberal world view that dominated the raj until its demise.

There is a distinction between the male and female narrators in all four books. The males tend to present the larger, more encompassing picture of the country and the complexity of the national situation. Count Bronowsky's narrative, although crucial to the final revelation of Ronald Merrick, is the fullest account in the Quartet of the circumstances among the Princely States of India. Similarly, Guy Perron's ironic narrative focuses on the impact of the Second World War on the British soldiers on the Indian subcontinent. Mohammed Ali Kasim's narrative is almost entirely about the political situation between the Moslems and the Hindus as they contemplate how and who will rule the country. The female narrators, who outnumber the males, are the moral beings of Scott's novels. They have a much narrower personal focus, concerning themselves with the

fundamental issues of human relationships. Lili Chatterjee presents the ambiguous world of the educated, moneyed Indian élite who are more English than Indian. Sister Ludmila's short narratives show her concern for the ordinary, forgotten Indian people, even after death. Daphne Manners' diary allows an intimate knowledge of the struggle for love despite colour and class. Most notably, with the exception of Guy Perron, whose historical eye insists that he see as clearly as possible, the female narrators are those who most forcibly and courageously refuse to continue the liberal charade. Their integrity is central to Scott's alternative of the moral continuum of human affairs and demonstrates that such a moral continuum must include love.

This thesis will examine the narratives of four of Scott's most important narrators: the Stranger, Sarah Layton, Guy Perron and Barbie Batchelor, and demonstrate his intention of exposing the inadequacy of liberalism in the post-World War II world. But more importantly, these narrators assert a more optimistic world view that Scott hopes will fill the void left by the death of liberalism.

## CHAPTER ONE

### The Stranger

The creation of a dramatized narrator in the person of "the stranger" is a successful and unobtrusive way of controlling the judgments and sympathies of the reader. This narrator develops an intimate relationship with the reader based on his trust and reliability as the omniscient investigator. "The stranger" later identifies himself as "the traveller" and, although in The Towers of Silence and A Division of the Spoils his presence is unobtrusive, it is still the same narrator controlling the story by subtly bridging the gap between the action and the commentary, and ultimately formulating the novel's moral vision.

The figure of "the stranger" is reminiscent of the eighteenth-century narration of Fielding. Although his intrusions are much more subtle than those of Fielding, they are the same guides to the reader and have the same use of distancing the reader when the narrator feels it necessary. Scott's "stranger" is also reminiscent of Joseph Conrad's Marlow who eventually participates in the action of the story.

Scott gives his narrator the role of the

historian who is looking for the truth, thus allowing him the benefits of an involved narrator but without the disadvantages of a too near-sighted narrator participating directly in the action. Scott's narrator becomes Henry James' "centre of consciousness" but with the ability, through the use of the investigative metaphor, to shift at carefully chosen points to other sympathetic narrators.

The opening page of the first novel, The Jewel in the Crown, presents the main concerns of the narrator. First, he gives an immediate invitation to participate in the story, "Imagine then, a flat landscape...", and follows that with a direct presentation of his investigation, "This is the story of a rape". Then he gives an important metaphorical reference to the historical events of the period in the "imperial embrace"; and a moral gauge by which the reader is told of his own participation in the story by a universal application of the "moral continuum of human affairs". All this is successfully presented in three paragraphs -- a tribute to Scott's ability to focus meaning into a few poetic sentences. The effect of this opening shows the controlling hand of the narrator, presenting an image of a garden and then pulling away to address the reader directly. Ironically, this shift only serves to intensify the reality of the world about to be entered -- the mystery of the garden, coupled with the mystery of a rape

puts a factual but suspenseful quality on the narrative. This is again reinforced by the truthful purpose of the investigation, and so the authority and reliability of a documentary are immediately acceptable to the reader. The language of law is deliberately used to evoke the suspense and interest in the story. Words such as "investigation", "case", "judgement", "evidence", "judicial" and "trial" also work first to distance us from the story, to control our sympathies from the beginning, and only to trust the wise narrator's judgements. In this mysterious world of law, the elusive name of "the stranger" gives a suspenseful air to the narrator. So, the first page of the Quartet introduces us ultimately to the narrator who will carefully guide what also becomes our search for truth.

The most obvious intrusion of the narrator is in his control of what the reader will discover in his subsequent investigation. This control is seen both in the method of presentation of his material, and more subtly in the selection of evidence - done as a masterful lawyer would organize his presentation to a jury. The reader is reassured of his wisdom and submits almost unconsciously to his manipulation because of his commitment to truth verified by his participation in the world of the novel twenty years after the main events have taken place.

The narrator's commitment to the quest is made

clear from the beginning and referred to often throughout the quartet. Readers are told of his goals directly: "This is the story of a rape", (JC 9) but also it is the quest for truth in a wider historical perspective of the "imperial embrace", affirmed much later when he tells that his interest began while reading the unpublished memoirs of Brigadier Reid and "a known interest of this period of British-Indian history". (JC 35). His emotional commitment is affirmed by his details of himself as "an old hand" who has returned to India after an eighteen year absence, "ended by chance and luck and the lepidopteristic intention to pin down the truth about Miss Crane, Miss Manners and young Kumar." (JC 100) A lepidopterist is one who studies a large order of insects comprised mainly of butterflies and moths.<sup>1</sup> Without reflection, the reader will assume this only refers to the minute detail of the narrator's study, but in the perspective of the entire Quartet, the narrator is consciously referring to the metaphor of butterflies caught in a web, displayed on Mabel Layton's lace, symbolically referring to the situation of the English in India. "The stranger" is taking a "God's eye view" (JC 447) of his subjects, gaining a complete perspective in order to discover the truth more accurately. His commitment is

---

<sup>1</sup> "Lepidopterist," Oxford English Dictionary, 1970.

further indicated by reference to the scope of research already undertaken, including visits to examine missionary relics at Calcutta (JC 335 & 478), and an implied conversation with Colin Lindsey, school friend of Hari Kumar (JC 336). Above all, the narrator's love for India does much to insure his integrity:

No, let [the absence] not be long, let it be short so that on renewed association the returning traveller will cry, possessively, even gratefully: Ah, India! (JC 100-101).

The narrator's participation, in the world of the novel twenty years later, gives further reassurances of his reliability. "The stranger" visits Lady Chatterjee and Parvati at the MacGregor House, a poetically important setting. He has dinner at the Mayapore Club with Srinivasan and Lady Chatterjee where he sees the signatures of some participants in the story - Ronald Merrick and Colin Lindsey. (JC 191). The reader is told of his obsessions with Robin White about the events of Mayapore, and White assures us of the narrator's credibility: "Lady Chatterjee... had finally made up her mind that your interest in what you call the Bibighar Gardens affair was genuine." (JC 335). The most vivid and realistic vicarious participation occurs when the narrator enters Miss Manners' bedroom and bathroom. The intimacy of this, her private



setting, is shared by the reader through the minute detail of his description - even to the act of bathing:

The scoop. One remembers and, having soaped, stands and scoops and pours and scoops again and so, closing the eyes against the contrary evidence of the sex, attempts a re-enactment of Miss Manners refreshing herself after a hard day on the wards of the Mayapore Hospital. (JC 102).

This scene is crucial in the developing relationship of the narrator and reader because the literal nakedness of the narrator's act creates an intimacy of mood, as well as belief.

The involvement of the bathroom scene also points to a second major aspect of the narrator's control - his use of realism to verify the investigative metaphor of the story. For example, the "facts" are clearly established by the recurrence of exact dates: Daphne's rape and Edwina's attack occur precisely on the evening of August 9, 1942; Barbie Batchelor dies on the same day as the atomic bomb strikes Hiroshima - August 6, 1945; and Guy Perron's diary entries are given for August 5 and 6, 1947 - just a few days before independence. Other details that support the "truth" of the events are the names given as the sources of documents such as Mr. Govindas and his knowledge of Sister Ludmila (JC 124), Vidyasagar and his knowlege of Hari Kumar (JC 358), the use of headlines to indicate sources such as "Lines from the Hospital of the Samaritan Mission. Ranpur

Dec 1944 - August 1945". (JC 393) and even the details of the zodiacal birthsigns of Sarah and Susan Layton. (Day 62-63). This attention to detail extends to his inclusion of historical detail contemporary to the investigation and with using actual historical figures such as Gandhi, Jinnah and Churchill. The historical association is most evident in A Division of the Spoils where the main characters and the narrative become intertwined in the problem of the Crown and the Princely States. This historical detail points to Scott's difference from many other historical novelists. The writer must consciously blend fact and fiction in such a way that his point is made clear. Scott's central focus is the fiction (the characters and personal situations) and the historical fact is used to give the story a framework, a universal morality, and an application.

A second method of achieving realism, while reinforcing his reliability, is the inclusion of what we are told are actual documents. These include the diaries of Mohammed Ali Kasim (in part), Daphne Manners and Guy Perron (in part), many letters including the letter-diary of Barbie Batchelor (TS 203-208), part of the memoirs of Brigadier Reid, verbal and written transcripts of Robin White, the "Deposition" of Vidyasagar, and, without exhausting the list, narrative based on the reconstruction of past conversations. Also, throughout the Quartet, there is the

frequent acknowledgement of the origin of material, often given in brackets. For example: there is the inside view of Sarah recalling the past, "(Sarah thought later, unable to quite recall the order of things)" (Day 346) and later, the assigning of Guy Perron and Sarah Layton's names at the beginning of their respective narratives, "The Moghul Room" (Div 2) and "The Dak Bungalow" (Div 341). This rhetoric underscores the metaphor of the narrator as lawyer collecting documents and presenting them, properly footnoted to the juror who is the reader. So, the reader is confronted subtly with his participation in the "trial of sorts going on" (JC 9) and the narrator successfully includes him in "the moral continuum of human affairs" (JC 9).

The more subtle means of the narrator's control over the reader is done first through the context and pace, directing the reader's knowledge. This can be seen in the details of Susan and Teddie Bingham's wedding, the unfolding of Daphne's account of the rape, in the gradual revealing of Ronald Merrick. The wedding is marred by the incidents of much larger importance. The narrator states, "There was, to begin with, the incident of the stone" (Day 16) implying an ordering of several pieces of information, an indirect suggestion of the beginning of Ronald Merrick's association with the Laytons and the beginning of Sarah Layton's (and

Pankot's) knowledge of the repercussions of the Bibighar Gardens affair. The narrator has, in one sentence, redirected the narrative to where he believes the truth might be found and so moves from a purely legal to a moral investigation. In the narrative of the wedding he concludes by deliberately drawing together the clues of the mystery for us: "And to end it, adding a third link to the chain forged by the throwing of the stone and the barring of the club doors to the Nawab, there was the curious incident of the woman in the white saree." (Day 214). This conclusion leads the reader to infer that the woman is Hari Kumar's Aunt Shalini, and more importantly, to arouse suspicion on the connection of the Bibighar affair with Ronald Merrick--again reinforcing the moral investigation.

The unfolding of Daphne Manners' account of the rape is a less subtle but more suspenseful pacing of the reader's knowledge. The sequence of sources is first divulged by acknowledging the existence of two letters to Lady Manners, commenting that they are "curiously dead, strangely inarticulate" (JC 96) and causing the reader to wonder what kind of evidence will "resurrect the writer" as he wishes to do (JC 97). Later, we discover the existence of a journal and anticipation is heightened when Robin White says: "Lili tells me that the journal makes it clear exactly what happened." (JC 335). Finally, the journal is

revealed and the reader, by now convinced that it contains the truth of the Bibighar Gardens affair, is not disappointed. The pace of unfolding this information is finely worked - the sense of anticipation heightened by the sense of privacy of letters is further intensified by the use of the journal, even more intimate than letters and all working to achieve a sense of confidentiality and truth.

The third example of control of the reader's knowledge is in the slow, often fragmentary revelation of Ronald Merrick. It is here also that the historical impartiality of the narrator breaks down because Merrick is only presented through the moral perceptions of the narrator's sympathetic viewpoints: Daphne Manners, Sarah Layton, Guy Perron and Count Bronowsky. He is only seen personally in a long conversation with Count Bronowsky (Day 188), who unobtrusively hints at his homosexual tendencies and it is the Count who, much later, filters the truth about Merrick's death through his irony. (Div 577). Subtly, the reader may gather that Ronald Merrick is the only major character who is not allowed to speak for himself but is only a facade seen from the different angles of other interlocuters. Robin White addresses this pre-judgement saying, "you [the narrator] have pretty well made up your mind about the central characters in the affair and particularly about the kind of man Merrick was." (JC 337).

This prejudgment is an important clue to the moral opinions which the narrator is manipulating into the investigation. Here the lawyer is indeed carefully making his case.

The second and most effective method of imposing the narrator's judgment on the reader is in his control of the reader's sympathies by distancing achieved through the use of legal language, the repetitious use of photographic metaphors, and the manipulation of sympathetic, inside narrations. In the early novels the deliberate, impartial terminology of law is used to give a sense of judicious detachment. It is the "story of a rape" - a blunt, cold statement, and the narrative is an "investigation" into the "evidence". Language is also used to distance the reader in the other novels, but in a less legal, more poetic way. The narrator talks of the continuity, "the people from the small and distant island of Britain who built and settled here", and infers a distance from the irony of the Mayapore and Pankot societies. Mohammed Ali Kasim is pictured as "the prisoner in the zenana house" (Day 48) with the irony of a Congress minister, a Muslim, cloistered in a Hindu women's house and reminding us of his political situation. In these examples we are moved away from the familiarity of the characters participating in the "moral continuum".

The recurrent use of photographic metaphors allows

the narrator to vary the intensity and distance of the reader's sympathies. Beginning on the first page with, "Imagine, then, a flat landscape..." (JC 9), the narrator focuses on the intensity of the visual perspective. In this passage we are confronted with four images: "the ochre walls", "the moving water", "the grand trunk road", and "the shadows". These images evoke romance and mystery, enticing us into the narrative, yet quickly they disappear and we are left with the colder, more distant address of intention. The photographic language appears again in the description of the garden of the MacGregor House:

Next, there is the image of a garden: not the Bibighar garden but the garden of the MacGregor House: intense sunlight, deep and complex shadows.... From the house there is the sound of a young girl singing.... The house stands in the middle of the garden... it goes back to the late eighteenth century and was built by a prince who conceived a passion for a singer of classical music. (JC 74-75).

The control is evident through the ordering of intensities in the presentation of images where the focus moves from detail of colour and light, to the girl singing, and wider to include the house and garden, and its romantic, tragic past. This ordering generates both romantic appeal and sympathy in the spirit of the scene - an example of subtle manipulation. The end of The Jewel in the Crown shows the

same movement: "Imagine, then, a flat landscape" (JC 477) giving the images a symmetrical use in the framework of the novel as well as their being fluid symbols in the larger context of the novel's meaning. There are other places where the photographic language is used: in A Division of the Spoils as the narrator moves out of Guy Perron's perspective he says; "The cameras of Perron's imagination began to tire. Presently only one remained, and this zoomed in close to recreate a memory of [Coomer's] face." (Div 107). With Daphne Manners and Lady Manners we are asked to "Picture her, then" (JC 100, Day 57) and with Lady Chatterjee we are invited to look: "She sits, then, an old Rajput lady, wound in a dark silk saree whose glittering threads catch the light". (JC 79). The immediate evocation of sight and mood generated by these images envelopes the reader, creating a rare closeness between us and the material, a closeness tightly held by the narrator in order to infuse sympathy and belief.

A third technique in distancing while imposing the narrator's judgement is in his deliberate manipulation of the inside views of well chosen characters. This is seen particularly with the narratives of Lady Chatterjee, Sister Ludmila and Barbie Batchelor. Lady Chatterjee's narrative is begun before the reader is fully aware of who she is - a deliberate means to impress her reliability before we meet



her. Later, the narrator includes her dialogue in his descriptive exploration of the MacGregor House and in this way Lady Chatterjee's sensible, sympathetic view of Daphne is implied in the description. (JC 82) Lady Chatterjee's integrity is then reinforced before her inside narrative becomes complete as the narrator stresses her "air of unencumbered wisdom" (JC 83). Thus we are prepared for both the easy tone and the veracity of her statements about Daphne and India.

A similar movement is evident in the broken narrative of Sister Ludmila. Introduced with the ironic distance of the Mayapore cantonment, we are quickly assured of her wisdom and integrity by the starkness of her reply to the priest about the nun's habit and the title of "Sister": "It is the Indians who call me that... God is not mocked." (JC 124). Her truthful words bite through the stupidity of the English mores and at once we believe in her and her judgements as one of the few whose moral and religious commitments have allowed her to transcend the pettiness of the white community and unpatronizingly serve the needs of the helpless. Later, this trust is used as Sister Ludmila's narrative is interspersed with the story of Hari Kumar and we are convinced of the truth of Hari's story. (JC 267-283).

The narrator's controlling hand is also seen in

the narrative of Barbie Batchelor as it is interrupted by the irony of the Pankot memsahibs, who replace the Mayapore English cantonment as the source of a comparatively shallow moral standard. In this way the dangerous attitudes of the memsahibs are distanced and we are drawn close to the tragedy of Barbie's private sorrows. It is important that Barbie is separated from these women in narrative because, unlike Sister Ludmila, she is too self-conscious of herself and what she feels are her inadequacies to transcend the hypocrisy of the memsahibs' attitudes by herself. An example of this distancing and separation is in "The Silver in the Mess" of The Towers of Silence where Barbie's letter-journal to Helen Jolley revealing her fears of the absence of God, her dream of Edwina's salvation, and her relationship to India, is framed by the irony of the memsahibs whose little lives are rounded by the obsession with class and protocol. In the first letter to Helen, Barbie explains her using letters as a journal form because it gives her, "the right amount of uncluttered distance." (TS 203). Taken in a broader perspective, this phrase aptly suits the narrator's manipulation of inside views juxtaposed with ironic or straight commentary. The degree of sympathy is intensified by the amount of distance between the reader and the subject. By contrasting an intimate viewpoint with narrative of much further distance, the

narrator maintains his control of sympathy while allowing the contrasting narrative to reinforce the meaning and judgment.

*Good!* The narrator also uses poetic images to control the reader's sympathies and impose his moral judgment. Three ways in which this is subtly done are through the lyrical beauty of descriptive passages, through recurrent yet fluid images, and in the symbolic meaning of the characters' actions.

The narrator employs lyrical descriptions as a means of drawing the reader into sharing the sensuousness of India, conveyed in the detail of colour and smell and in the immensity of time and space. The Mayapore evening sky is "colourless in day as if heat had burnt out its pigment,... blue is revealed but in tones already invaded by yellowing refraction of the sun... awash with green that darkens to violet." (JC 170). Later, driving in the car with Srinivasan and Lady Chatterjee, "the stranger" feels the remoteness and immensity of India: "again the sense of immensity (of weight and flatness, and absence of orienting features) blankets the mind with an idea of scope so limitless that it is deadening." (JC 208). The timelessness of India is felt through the description of labourers, "casting their pellets upon the earth" (JC 101) as if they, too, enter into an ancient history and become part of it.

The sense of smell, in both small details and important ones, evokes an atmosphere of familiarity and beauty. The small detail is part of the description of the Ranpur Muslim woman who wore Chanel No. 5 (Day 9), Barbie Batchelor whose cologne made her "always pleasant to be near," (TS 19) and Teddie Bingham who used Pear's soap on his face and hands. (TS 107). These familiar smells attract us to the subject in a dramatizing way. Ultimately, the smell of India is evoked to entice the reader to commit himself to the land the narrator loves. The smell is "inseparably part of... India as a land of primitive, perhaps even tragic beauty" (JC 192) and later Daphne is associated with it: "the curious smell - not of the railway now, but of the land- which perhaps she had learned to accept or not to notice, if not to love, to need." (JC 209). "The stranger" is vicariously attracting us to India by evoking its presence through the senses.

Apart from sensuous images, the spell of India is reinforced by the romance, intrigue and mystery of history. Mirat is described by being "two Mirats: the Mirat of palaces, mosques, minarets, and crowded bazaars, and the Mirat of open spaces, barracks, trees, and geometrically laid out roads with names like Wellesley, Gunnery and Mess." (Day 139). In this city the romance of the Muslim faith and history is blended with the traditional historical

romance of the raj. Similarly, the Fort of Premanagar is infused with the mystery of its distinguished past - of young people buried alive in its walls as an auspicious beginning, to the mercenaries of Turner's Horse who used it as a base to terrorize the countryside (Day 12). In this way also the histories of the MacGregor House and the Bibighar Gardens lend an appealing note to the reader's sensibilities and involvement.

Secondly, the use of recurrent images reminds us of continuing themes and controls our judgment. Two of these images are the picture of the "Jewel in Her Crown" and the butterfly motif. The allegorical picture of Queen Victoria surrounded by representative figures of the Indian Empire and approached by an Indian prince bearing a gem, (JC 26-27) is later shown in the hands of Barbie Batchelor, Ronald Merrick and young Edward Bingham, as well as the original owner, Edwina Crane. The allegorical meaning remains the same but, in the hands of different people, the picture becomes a changing metaphor for the various views of England's "mission" and responsibility, and through it we see the erosion and imminent collapse of an outdated and no longer upheld allegiance.

A second symbol, recurrently used, is the shawl of lace, given by Mabel Layton to Barbie Batchelor, and then to Sarah Layton. Again the motif of the butterflies caught in

a web, referring to the English relationship to India, is made fluid and complex by the significance of the owners of the shawl and their attitude towards India. Mabel Layton describes the origin of the lace, implying its significance as a symbol of human life imprisoned in an unchosen but necessary way of life, and, more narrowly, symbolic of the Indian situation where the responsibility to India has become a duty to the raj, where both Indians and responsible English are caught in the web of upholding a crumbling structure. Mabel no longer wishes to hold the Indians in the prison of the raj, as is evident in her disgust in visiting the Club: "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." (Day 202). Mabel gives the part of the lace, made into a christening dress, to Sarah for Susan's child, knowing that Sarah understands the significance of the lace pattern in knowing her burden of responsibility for the English participation in India, and tells her: "You are very young too, but I expect you understand better than I did at your age." (Day 368). The rest of the lace is given to Barbie but she fails to understand its meaning, at this point identifying herself as still a believer in the kind of liberalism that built the raj and remains dutifully serving it without question. In

seeing the shawl Barbie only understands its delicate beauty: "' Isn't it beautiful? The woman who made it was blind.' She stared at and through this lepidopterist's paradise-maze, but could see no further than the old woman's fingers." (Day 387). Significantly Barbie passes the shawl, blood-stained after her accident, to Sarah for whom the added bloodstains are even more important. In them she sees the agony of separation and says, "I didn't want the lace for one particular reason. For the same reason I couldn't throw it away." (Day 383). She does not want it because she is torn between her love for India and maintaining her responsibility to the commitment of the "imperial embrace", while also knowing the English presence is no longer a serious intention but an empty, selfish charade. By the narrator's carefully implying the meaning of the symbol through the characters' attitudes, our judgment has been controlled and determined for us.

The third method of subtly controlling the reader's judgment is in the poetic actions of the characters. Two inclusions of poetic value are the use of ghosts in the MacGregor House and the use of dreams to direct our attention to the narrator's subject. The existence of the ghosts of Janet MacGregor and Daphne Manners reinforces the sense of the past impinging on the present. The blood on Janet's bodice and the sound of

Daphne's sturdy shoes, dropping glasses and her singing (JC 83) coexist as equally past in time and yet equally present in this house - and so create a shared perception of those associated with the house. The dreams of Captain Morland, Barbie Batchelor and Sarah Layton, prefaced by the historical details of Gandhi's illness and release and Mrs. Gandhi's death, are subtle poetical associations of private thoughts with public actions and all reaffirm the narrator's supposition of a moral continuum.

It is through the distancing gained by irony that the moral vision of the narrator and the story is conveyed to readers who are drawn in less to confirm a clearly drawn lesson than to participate in the difficult role of judge. The moral purpose stated from the beginning in "the moral continuum of human affairs", reinforced by the claim "to find out the truth" (JC 9) and the concern with the intent and goal of individual human actions as they relate to history, establishes the standard which the reader accepts. The superior values of suffering for belief in what is right, striving for truth in all relationships, and the need of human life to have a useful purpose, merge as the narrator's creed and our standard of judgment. Two types of irony that clarify this morality are the intrusive comments of the narrator himself and the sustained irony of the Mayapore and Pankot memsahibs.



The purpose of the narrator's intrusive ironic comments is to show the mixed meaning that the impact of liberation has had on both Indians and English, and to enlighten the reader, steeped in the concerns of 1942-1947, on the more current repercussions. The maidan, for two hundred years the symbol of Britain in India, reflects the changes of independence. For the narrator in the past it was "evidence of the care and thought of those who preceded him of their concern for what they remembered as somehow typical of home; the silence and darkness that blessed an enduring acre of unenclosed common". (JC 192). This romantic picture is contrasted with the present "maidan", now in Indian hands, and reflecting the current troubles of Indian prejudice. Recounting the club secretary, Mr. Mitra's frustration the narrator says:

The heirs to civic pride... feel that it is a mistake to leave the "maidan" thus open to invasion by any Tom, Dick and Harry. Last year's gymkhana was ruined by the people who wandered about on those parts of the "maidan" where the gymkhana was not being held but got mixed up with the people who had paid for seats and even invaded the refreshment tents in the belief that they were open to all. (JC 172).

In the continuum of human affairs, class prejudices transcend those of race, while racial prejudices are infinitely adaptable. The English of the 1960's no longer

go to the "maidan" as is wonderfully illustrated by a woman's reaction to the narrator's question about the flower show:

"Flower show?" and to explain, to say then, "Why yes -the flower show on the 'maidan'" will call forth nothing other than an upward twitch of the mouth, which, after all, is valuable enough as an indication that one has suggested something ridiculous. (JC 173).

Generational differences on the goals and conduct of the life worth living are also a persistent element of the moral continuum. This is evident in the irony of Srinivasan's conversations with the narrator about the sole interests of young Indians in making money and advancing themselves, and the detail is enriched by the story of the young Indian expert in "centrifugal pumps" who only sees progress in industry and agriculture and has no time for playing at politics. (JC 179-181). The sad lack of morality and passion is highlighted by the disinterest in marriage being best left to parents since it is a relatively minor matter. (JC 179). The contrast of modern India with the India that pervades most of the novels is clear and our sympathetic judgment needs the distance provided by these ironic inclusions to be properly critical.

The development of human affection is too often

burdened with the ignorance of selfish prejudice perpetrated by those who need the pathetic security of superiority. The narrator's account of Mrs. Grigson's insults to Srinivasan by not accepting a drink from him and by physically disassociating herself from the group ironically highlights the desperate need of a middle-class woman to feel superior. The narrator's comment: "And this, perhaps is a pity, considering all the chat that goes on at home about the importance of trade and exports and of making a good impression abroad" (JC 176), points to the new age of economic independence which would not allow the Grigsons to live in England in the accustomed Indian style. Srinivasan's anecdote about the Hindu businessman who bought the pretended expertise of a visiting Englishman (J. 179), and Mrs. Grigson's attitudes, morally diminishes the English, giving the reader a critical distance. As well, these situations act as prefigurations of the irony of the English memsahibs where our critical judgment will soon be focussed.

The brash blather of the Pankot memsahibs' tone is used most comically to point out the narrowmindedness and selfishness that dominated the political views of the English in India. They do not completely share in the views of the old Governor but they do sympathize with his duties with the Indian leaders, described by him as:

... further fruitless talks with the Viceroy who would have further fruitless talks with bloody Gandhi and bloody Jinnah in a further fruitless pursuit of the bloody Pax Britannica, when all that was needed to scare the Indians into toeing the line was... a Brigadier as spunky as old Brigadier-General Dyer who had mown down hundreds of bloody browns in Amritsar in 1919. (TS 48).

They would sooner put up with a Governor's political extravagances and have a proper season in Pankot than have the new Governor, Sir George Malcolm, "an example of the rather alarming kind of person whom the war was throwing up, people with an immense and exhausting capacity for work and an impatience with any tradition".(TS 48). The tone of phrases like "absurd debacle of 1939" describing the Congress resigning provincial responsibility on point of principle, the description of Gandhi, "naïve Indian lawyer whose successes had gone to his head" (TS 50) and of world leaders like Stafford Cripps, "that Fabian old maid", and Roosevelt, "a liberal American Jew" (TS 50) is the bluff tone of no-nonsense practical empiricism, made less convincing and more sad by the isolation, ignorance and indifference by which it is sustained.

The attitudes of the Mayapore and Pankot memsahibs are used as a more serious social and historical criticism of the English lack of responsibility to the raj and the sahibs' immoral continuum in the raj. The tone is first

established in The Jewel in the Crown and reaches its climax in The Towers of Silence. It is adopted to introduce characters and frame the sympathetic inside views of those characters who seriously feel their moral duty. Edwina Crane, although mentioned on the first page, is more fully introduced using the tone of the Mayapore cantonment who describe her removal of Gandhi's picture as her English duty:

In war you had to close the ranks; and if it was to be question of sides Miss Crane seemed to have shown at last which she was really on. (JC 10).

The ladies of Pankot introduce Barbie Batchelor as "a retired missionary (and a born spinster if there ever was one)." (Day 134). Mabel Layton's character and unexplained distance from the other ladies is explained: "Her withdrawal was accepted with feelings that lay somewhere between respect and regret; which meant that they were fixed at a point of faint disapproval". (TS 32). By employment of the distance through irony, the reader is detached from these overwhelmingly patronizing, superior attitudes and is closer to the sympathetic characters. In The Day of the Scorpion, the narrator uses the pronoun, 'one', in referring to the collective attitude of the memsahibs and effectively distances us and centres our sympathy in the true subject. The target of their conversation is often Sarah Layton, "a

tower of strength" to her mother but, "when one came to think of it she had never seemed entirely relaxed."

(Day 134). Further criticism of Sarah is pinpointed by Lucy Smalley's assessment: "the trouble is she doesn't take it seriously... Us. India... she's laughing at us." (Day 135). But the Smalleys themselves are the target of the ladies' blather as they are labelled as "slight bores but very useful people." (TS 56). As the narrator shows, no area of society is free from the judgment of the memsahibs. The wedding of Susan and Teddie begins as something to look forward to: "One could - they said - always do with a really good wedding". (Day 133). When the wedding is moved to Mirat because of unavoidable changes in Teddie's posting, the wedding "had taken on a hole-in-the-corner air which it was somehow not easy to forgive." (Day 137).

The narrator uses the Pankot ladies' tone as a chorus to help him illuminate the particular area where the reader's sympathies are distanced and where they can be most critical of the small world of reactionary Anglo-Indians. He uses repetition to show their chorus-like function; he tell us:

The ladies of Pankot discussed this interesting situation over bridge committee teas, behind the counter of the canteen of the Regimental Institute for British soldiers of non-commissioned rank, and behind the scenes at rehearsals for their amateur theatricals. (Day 130).

A few paragraphs later, after details of the gossip, these lines are repeated, "In this way the ladies of Pankot, at bridge, at tea..." (Day 133). In establishing their choric function, the narrator uses them as a guide to help the reader judge the value of the intensifying events of the novel by implicitly asserting his moral judgment.

The figurehead of the Pankot memsahibs is Mildred Layton - a complex character who models the virtue of Pankot society, being the wife of the commander of the 1st battalion of Pankot rifles, but who also tragically recognizes the futility of her actions and will do nothing to change them. Because of her virtuous role, Mildred is allowed limitless mercy so that even her alcoholism is excused by the Pankot ladies as a weakness:

This weakness, so admirably and typically controlled, had to be put down to particular cause, a blow courageously sustained - the news that in 1941 the 1st Pankots had been severely mauled in North Africa and Colonel Layton with the remnants of his command taken prisoner by the Italians (an especial wound to pride). (TS 42)

The reader recognizes through the irony the immorality of excusing Mildred's behaviour on such grounds while affirming Mildred's torment of the innocent Barbie Batchelor as the only hindrance to Mildred receiving her rightful home at Rose Cottage. They reasoned: "It was odd that Mabel should

squander upon a retired missionary what Mildred had a positive right to and would grace in a way that the Batchelor woman never could." (TS 42). The hypocrisy of the ladies continues as they assist Mildred in driving Barbie to madness and death. Such lethal stabs as their unwillingness to act for Barbie when they realize Mildred's "obsession" (TS 294), and a selfish sense of honesty encapsulated by Clarissa Pedlow returning the silver spoons to Barbie instead of hiding them saying: "I am sorry Barbie... But I had no choice and have none now... Dearly as I should like to hide them and forget them, I cannot. I hope you will... forgive her" (TS 296), all show the immoral thoughtlessness of the memsahibs, led by the virtuous Mildred Layton. In a moral test of the clearest kind, the purveyors of no-nonsense practical empiricism crumble in obsequious cowardice.

Mildred's "pukka memsahib" conception of duty and loyalty is severely threatened by the sufferings of war and her struggle to maintain a dignified position. She manages to keep going with strength, not gained from inner moral courage, but from the gin bottle and Kevin Coley's bed. The iron exterior of her personality is betrayed by careless slips and we are made aware of the real crack in Mildred's beliefs: "She had been abandoned to cope alone with the problems of a way of life which was under attack from every



quarter but in which she had no honourable course but to continue." (TS 46). Although the reader is led to believe that she may secretly share Sarah's views on the futility of the continued British presence in India, she continues her role and carries out the performance of memsahib whose attention to detail only showed "an understanding whose only claim was a nostalgic one upon the fund of recollected duties and obligations which time and circumstances were rendering obsolete". (TS 258). The ironic distance between Mildred and the reader allows us to see the pathetic nature of her ambiguous position. The narrator has exercised his control of the reader's response by moving from the distanced criticism of the dutiful charades of Mildred and the ladies, to a more realistic intensity. This movement is evident when Mildred affirms that Teddie died for an honourable if obsolete cause:

And so after all a glow came, even if it did not spread. The glow was Mildred. The famous expression shone. It could not infect but it could remind. And when she said, 'What Teddie tried to do was worth the whole bloody war put together,' it was realized that with her unerring instinct she had gone straight to the heart of the matter, cutting through such irrelevances as divisional annoyance, the cost of a jeep, the loss of a prisoner and Merrick's arm leaving one with Teddie's blameless death, his praiseworthy sacrifice for a principle the world no longer had time or inclination to uphold. (TS 262-3)

The passage ironically points to the silliness of Mildred's comment and shows the shallowness of her moral judgment in using Teddie's death to bolster her own disbelief in the raj but there is also a shade of sympathy for the uncertain faith that Mildred represents. Full of doubt, she becomes the champion of the old ways of Pankot and in direct opposition to her step-mother-in-law, Mabel Layton. Mabel's criticisms are well known:

It had been a criticism of the foundations of the edifice, of the sense of duty which kept alive the senses of pride and loyalty and honour. It drew attention to a situation that was painful to acknowledge: that the god had left the temple, no-one knew when, or how, or why. What one was left with were the rites which had once propitiated, once been obligatory, but were now meaningless because the god was no longer there to receive them. (TS 261-2).

With their well-controlled narrative distance, the reader can see the confrontation of the truth of Mabel Layton's convictions with the pathetic attempts of Mildred to do her duty and maintain the crumbling edifice - at the moral costs of her own integrity manifested in alcoholism and adultery. Mabel's distance and silence from the Pankot memsahibs alerts them to the growing emptiness of their existence in India while Mildred's vain gestures become a parody of the traditional duty and loyalty of the raj.

The successful use of irony is an important means

of securing a comfortable distance between the society of Pankot and the reader by sympathetically drawing us to the critical vulnerability and moral courage of those who love the raj, but also love India: Sarah Layton, Mabel Layton and Lady Manners. They, and others, also serve to show the specific morality needed to maintain justly the continuum of human affairs - a morality based on one's usefulness and the importance of purposeful work in an individual's life and relationships. This moral vision is impressed by the irony and the use of sympathetic inside views of the moral guardians.

The narrator's own view of history is explored through his reporting of discussions with Robin White. When White admits he "cannot grasp the issues firmly enough to come up with a premiss from which you work" (JC 356), the narrator suggests he adopt an "attitude" (JC 357). This is his goal for us, and is the aim of all his rhetoric, both direct and indirect. The "attitude" can be more accurately identified by his use of the phrase, "the moral drift of history" (JC 357). The narrator, then, invites White and us to pose ourselves as judges of the raj - specifically of the events of Mayapore and Pankot but also of the connected but more significant situation of the "imperial embrace" of Britain and India.

The narrator implies his moral judgment on

carefully chosen subjects who are retainers of the continuum of human affairs. Two of these subjects are the marginal figure of Sir Nello Chatterjee, and the hill people of Pankot. While visiting the MacGregor House, the narrator sees Sir Nello's old collection of souvenirs, housed in a room smelling, "of the faint stagnation that seems to surround a big ship directly it stops moving." (JC 81). The metaphor continues by connecting the room with the timelessness of India which "also seems to be at anchor". (JC 81). The souvenirs are suspended, silently gathering dust, but remaining a memorial to the valuable private memories of the Chatterjees' life, particularly of their intimate relationship with Sir Henry and Lady Manners. So the narrator depicts the MacGregor House as a house of "presences" that have attempted to move from the imprisoning divisions of colour, although sustaining suffering, in order to show truth and love. In doing so both the Chatterjees and the house itself have arrested "history in its turbulent progress" (JC 82.).

The hillpeople of Pankot are a second subject where the narrator implies a moral approval of their role in the continuum. The history of these people is drawn from pre-Moghul times, asserting the importance of tradition to those who believe:

The White man's enemies were also Allah's enemies. The White man called Allah God-Father, but he was the same Allah, they called the prophet Jesus-christ, not Mohammed; but then did not the same sky cover the whole world? (Day 59).

The narrator accepts this simple faith because it incorporates the virtues of honesty, loyalty, tradition, and duty, exemplified in the temple-like importance of the Daftar: "To make the journey to the 'Daftar' was the first test of manhood. To be rejected was thought by some to be a shame a boy could never recover from." (Day 59). The dedication of the hill people was repaid by the care of the English, finely caught in the sentence, "The 'Daftar' had a long memory." (Day 59). The idea of "manbap" is central to this traditional association. Its meaning, "I am your mother and your father", sums up the intense allegiance expected and often fulfilled between officers and men. The narrator respects "manbap", although realizing its contemporary invalidity, and recognizes its historical importance in the moral continuum as a purpose and an emotional commitment, making a job into a moral way of life. The deliberate contrast between the obsolete standard of "manbap" and the modern attitude is shown in the attitudes of Colonel Layton and Teddie Bingham. Colonel Layton's loyalty and dedication to his men is evident in his suffering in prison camp and staying with them until all

were fit to travel back to Pankot together. In contrast, Teddie Bingham dies a silly, useless death because he did not understand the meaning of "manbap" other than as a magic word that might make everything all right. If Teddie had known his march into the jungle would have brought about his death, he would have stayed safe. The decline of "manbap" is the failure of the English to understand that manbap does not allow any equality for the Indians. The attitude of Teddie's regiment to his death sums up the modern, pragmatic attitude of which the narrator is critical because of its lack of moral commitment:

The division had taken a view [of Teddie's gesture] of a kind it would not, in better days, have taken, but with which one somehow could not argue .... The price of regimental loyalty and pride seemed uncomfortably high. (TS 258-259)

The ironic distance of the tone of the Mayapore and Pankot memsahibs and their system of values allows the reader to evaluate their immoral attitudes. According to these ladies, the life of the raj is made up of bridge, gin and the Club. They allow no individualism because it threatens their comfortable existence, are selfish, because of a false sense of their own importance, and are nostalgia-ridden, because of their sense of an authoritative past. Their security is guarded by an extreme class-consciousness ironically highlighted by their acceptance of Ronald Merrick

even when his presence had disrupted one of their major social occasions, Susan Layton's wedding:

The stone itself became a symbol of martyrdom they all understood because they felt they shared it; and so, entering their consciousness, Merrick entered Pankot and was, for as long as interest in him lasted... One of us. And it did not matter that he was known, thought to be, not quite that by right. He had become it by example.  
(Day 362-3)

This society is continually adhering to "form", maintaining appearances at all costs without any attention to feeling. This is well illustrated by its attitude to Lady Manners' arrival in Pankot to visit Indian friends: "And it was strange, Pankot thought...[She should] impinge... on the consciousness of sensible people who thought it would have been nicer to forget that it ever happened." (Day 32). Appearances should be maintained even to the point of deception, as illustrated in sympathy for and allegiance to Mildred Layton: "Anything else [was] unthinkable if the appearance of the order of things were to be preserved." (TS 256).

The suspicious nature of an insecure people is not absent here. Their failure to understand or forgive Aziz's disappearance after Mabel Layton's death shows an inability to feel for others. Aziz is accused of breaking "the rule of loyalty to the man or woman whose salt had been eaten"

and "His desertion smacked of unfeelingness." (TS 260). Their failure to understand Aziz's grieving helps us to see how symbolically this unfeeling attitude extends now to India, made clear in their hypocritical sense of duty. One's duty is to the class and Club, to making a "pukka" marriage and producing a grandson in the proper time (Day 132-3). This selfish duty is emphasized by their respectful silence given to Poppy Browning and her family by those "who recognized the value of selfish service" (TS 256). They show no love to anyone outside their small circle as evidenced by their attitude to the news of MAK's illness during imprisonment, "It's so embarrassing when they start getting ill." (TS 253). Above all, the narrator points to their uselessness and lack of purpose beyond the maintenance of their superior existence as despotic rulers. Their idleness is seen in the inactive committees such as the "Pankot woman's emergency committee" supposedly formed to give aid to women and children if under siege by the Japanese - yet they fail to formulate an active plan and waste time gossiping. (TS 55). To distance us from this view and to contrast it with a renewed sense of morality against this background, the narrator's sympathetic inside views of well-chosen spokesmen establish a hope for the continuum of human affairs.

The most dominating of the narrator's moral



impositions is through the choice and placement of sympathetic spokesmen throughout the investigation with whom the reader becomes intimate and shares their judgments. These narrators can be categorized into two major groups - the old, and the young - and then each can be subdivided into European and Indian. The older Indians include Lady Chatterjee, Mohammed Ali Kasim and incidentally, but with important judgment, Sir Ahmed Akbur. The older English include Sister Ludmila, Lady Manners, Mabel Layton, Count Bronowsky and Barbie Batchelor. All these people convey an air of wisdom, a perspective of the responsibility which the raj held for them, and a sense of the courage and long suffering of patiently enduring a separation from the "imperial embrace" which had defined their way of living since birth. The younger Indians include Hari Kumar, Vidyasagar and, although he does not have an inside view, Ahmed Kasim. These Indians reflect the agony of the end of empire - both as victims and beneficiaries - and show the sacrifice necessary to bring about change in India's diverse society. The younger English are Sarah Layton, Guy Perron, Daphne Manners and, reluctantly, Nigel Rowan. It is to these young English characters that the narrator gives most of the moral responsibility, imputed to them through history. In their hands lies the inheritance of the future embraces - perhaps no longer imperial - but grounded in a

deep sense of suffering and knowledge of the necessity of love. They, and vicariously, the reader will assert the "moral continuum of human affairs" and so the narrator has achieved his goal of manipulating our intentions to believing in his "moral drift of history."

## CHAPTER TWO

### Sarah Layton

Sarah Layton, the eldest daughter of Colonel and Mrs. Layton of Pankot, is one of the most important characters of the quartet and her narrative is presented by Scott to show the ambivalence of the Anglo-Indian situation from someone criticizing both the institution of the Raj and its effect on the families that compose and uphold it. Specifically, her narrative becomes Scott's mouthpiece of criticism of the raj from the inside, where Sarah stands as a memsahib and daughter of the raj, and of the interior personal point of view of Sarah as part of a traditional Anglo-Indian family. In both these situations, Sarah attempts to step outside but is caught by tradition and emotion. These two points of view serve to promote the ulterior purpose of Sarah's narrative: she emulates Scott's own hope for the future of India and those who are survivors of the end of the "imperial embrace".

It is important to note that Sarah is introduced into the story by Lady Manners, who describes Sarah's visit to her house-boat in Srinagar in a letter to Lady Chatterjee. Lady Manners comes to represent for Sarah a wisdom and compassion that she herself wishes to attain and

so Lady Manners' influence is important in Sarah's development of her real relationship to India. Lady Manners' description of Sarah immediately sets her apart for the reader, intending curiosity and interest:

She puzzled me. Nice young English girls in India don't usually give an impression of bothering their heads with anything much apart from the question of which men in the immediate vicinity are taking the most notice of them. Of course, they do go broody every now and again, but Miss Layton's broodiness struck me as odd and intricate, not at all the result of simple self-absorption. (Day 54)

When Sarah's narrative begins twenty pages later, it is tempered with this description of an older, sensitive, direct girl, whose youth in England and longing for India will absorb the reader.

Sarah's narrative comprises most of the second book of the Quartet, The Day of the Scorpion, a few lines in the third novel, The Towers of Silence, and the section entitled "The Dak Bungalow" and a few other paragraphs in the fourth novel, A Division of the Spoils. She reveals in the fourth novel that she is reconstructing her past from the much later present: "I'm trying to reproduce for you an occasion of awful disorientation. Failing probably. God knows how one could succeed." (Div 379) In the context of the quartet, she is addressing the overall narrator, "the stranger", and from the stranger's introduction to

The Day of the Scorpion, we assume that all her narrative is to be understood as a re-creation for "the stranger's" purposes.

Sarah's narrative is characterized by its testimonial quality and, by itself, stands as an eloquent testimony of the sad ambiguity of the raj - made clear by her own uncertain understanding of herself, her family, the raj and India. There are several common images that reappear in her narrative which deepen as well as unify her experience and understanding. A partial list would include light and darkness, fire, shadows, butterflies, the massacre at the Jallianwala Bagh and the Bibighar Gardens. Such images define part of Sarah's vision and lead us to a clearer understanding of the role of her narrative in the larger work.

This narrative as Scott's mouthpiece of criticism is first of all used to criticize the raj from the inside point of view of Sarah Layton the memsahib and fully inherited daughter of the raj. The ambiguity of her feelings towards these roles is what immediately characterizes her as different from all the other memsahibs presented in the Quartet - all except Daphne Manners to whom she is strikingly and deliberately similar. Sarah was born into the world of the raj, her father (Lieutenant, 1st Pankot Rifles, son of James William Layton, ICS) and her

mother (daughter of Howard Campbell Muir - Lieutenant-General (G.S.) (Day 62), were both firmly entrenched in the traditions of Anglo-India and the codes and rituals of such a civilization. Sarah's self-doubt of all that the raj has stood for is explained in her refusal to abide by the code of the raj world. Her whole attitude to the English in India shows her rejection and attempt to escape from its constricting hold. She sees this world encroach upon her: "While intending almost the opposite she was growing into a young pillar of the Anglo-Indian community." (Day 329) But she is still able to maintain enough distance to provide us with important, inside criticisms of the English.

These criticisms are sad and lonely, but some are also bitter and angry. Sarah sees their need to unify, to be always part of a group, as pathetic evidence of their weakness:

Once out of our natural environment (she thought) something in each of us dies. What? Our belief in ourselves as people who each have something special to contribute? What we shall leave behind is what we have done as a group and not what we could have done as individuals which means that it will be second-rate. (Day 148)

This fear of individualism is seen in the self-protecting clannishness of Pankot, Ranpur and even Calcutta and made all the more hollow by the striking difference of those people who Sarah also sees as different, as making a better

impact on India - people such as Lady Manners and Mabel Layton. In an ironic tone, Sarah's comments on the English reaction to the incident of the stone-throwing at Susan and Teddie's wedding reflect this hollowness:

A stone: such a little thing. But look at us - Sarah thought - it has transformed us. We have acquired dignity. At no other time do we move with such grace as we do now when we feel threatened by violence but untouched by its vulgarity.... And it was a special kind of solidarity, Sarah realized. It transcended mere clannishness because its whole was greater than all its parts together. It uplifted, it magnified...The hot-tempered words and extravagant actions that might have greeted the incident of the stone were sublimated in this surrender to collective moral force. (Day 172)

But the value of this collective moral force is only in its self-interest and protection. In fact, according to Sarah's narrative, it gives a false buoyancy to the hopes and future of the English so that they are blinded into an ignorance of the reality of their own end. She notes that "People like Teddie and Susan closed their eyes to the fact that her father's generation must be the last generation of English people who would have a choice [of going home or staying on]." (Day 128) This blindness becomes even more pathetic as Sarah describes it as a betrayal:

It was a survival of exiles. Their enemy was light, not dark, the light of their own kind, of their own people at home... In India they had been betrayed by an illusion of topographical vastness into sins of pride

that were foreign to their insular, pygmy natives. (Day 416)

Sarah, although bitter at the ignorance and superiority of these, her people, also sees the sadness of such a betrayal. This sadness stands out in the imagery of light which she uses to illustrate her ideas. In the passage quoted above, she says the light of reality, of home, of trust, is feared in the English in India because of what it will expose. In another way she uses light to illustrate the illusion they are living:

Like Sarah's mother and father, Fenny belonged to a generation of men and women - the last one there might ever be who seemed to have been warmed in their formative years by the virtues of self-assurance and moral certainty: what, she supposed, she used to think of as a perpetual light, one that shone (thinking of Aunt Lydia) on their radical as well as conservative notions of what one was in the world to do. And weren't these things illusion of a kind? (Day 420-21)

And later, Sarah approvingly quotes to Nigel Jimmy Clark's analysis of the English in India, "He said we got left behind. Preserved in some kind of perpetual Edwardian sunlight." (Dly 384) So to Sarah the English in India are in darkness or, if they are in a light, it is a false, deceptive historical illusion that only shows them up as the hold-over of a dead world.

The most important criticism of the English, as



Sarah sees, is in their inability to hold any further responsibility in India. This is related to their lack of belief in the role they have created for themselves and the ideal which they perpetuated for two hundred years. In an eloquent paragraph, Sarah realizes the disbelief; as a silent reply to Susan's questions of "Why are we finished, Sarah? Why don't we matter?":

Because, Sarah thought, silently replying, we don't really believe in it any more. Not really believe. Not in the way I expect grandfather Layton believed - grandfather and those Muirs and Laytons at rest, at peace, fulfilled, sleeping under the hummocky graves, bone of India's bone; and our not believing seems like a betrayal of them, so we can't any longer look each other in the eye and feel good, feel that even the good things some of us might do have anything to them that will be worth remembering.  
(Day 354)

And in such a realization is Sarah, the memsahib and daughter of the raj, different from Susan, her mother and most of the English people we meet in the novels. Her narration then is the moral conscience of those who understood in full the inevitable trap of guilt as well as feelings of victimization because of the coming exile from the land they love. The death of faith in the English mission in India gives rise to the end of a feeling of responsibility - something which Sarah feels is unforgivable. Sarah realizes her attachment to India is

part of an inherited responsibility but it is also an individual moral responsibility. In trying to think of a future alternative to Pankot she can only imagine Indian alternatives:

She was still in India, still of India. You could exchange one surrounding for another but not the occupation, an occupation less and less easy to explain and to follow except by continuing to perform it and seize opportunities to demonstrate... that dim as the light had grown it was still enough by which to see an obligation. (Div 130)

The nature of this obligation can be discerned not only as a moral one but also as a political and social responsibility. Sarah alludes to the political obligation when she reflects on the occasion of Ahmed's death and her relationship to Ahmed. She says:

Such a damned bloody senseless mess. The kind which Ahmed tried to shut himself off from, the mess the raj had never been able to sort out. The only difference between Ahmed and me was that he didn't take the mess seriously and I did. I felt it was our responsibility, our fault that after a hundred years or more it still existed. (Div 592)

Sarah's recognition of the responsibility of the English to India associates her with those other wise moral participants who continue to fulfill the obligation despite all other attempts to avoid it.

However, the ambivalences of Sarah's position, and

hence the ambivalent position of the conscientious English in India, is shown by her inability to avoid an association to the world of the raj which she still fully understands and even feels a certain allegiance to. It is the inbred class consciousness that causes Sarah to note, when she first meets Ronald Merrick, that he is not public school, "It was a good voice, but not public school." (Day 150) Later, when she is alone with him, the same awareness is there: "She felt vaguely ill-at-ease, conscious of those things about Ronald Merrick that Aunt Fenny put down as signs of a humble origin". (Day 219) It is a sense of historical tradition born into a daughter of the raj that allows Sarah to understand Teddie Bingham's death and the idea of "manbap" which he dies perpetuating: "... I don't know, where that kind of courage comes from or why or what its purpose is, but I know it has a purpose. It's a kind of madness, a sublime insanity ... He [Ronald] wanted to diminish Teddie for me but Teddie isn't diminished". (Day 402) Most poignantly, in Sarah's attempt to escape the world of the raj by sleeping with Jimmy Clark, she comes to realize her limited defiance against her own kind. She knows when she is with Clark that she is, undeniably, a part of her history. When Clark asks her if "that honour-of-the-regiment exterior is paper-thin" she thinks to herself:

Yes, she thought, pitifully thin; but its thinness was less pitiful than the fact that it was there and could be seen and was only exterior, the only skin she had. (Day 436)

Her pregnancy, as a result of this attempt to escape, demonstrates her final inability to ignore the Anglo-Indian world. She has an abortion because her mother insists on getting rid of the child and she sees herself: "boringly unconventional though I've always been from most people's point of view, I simply didn't have the nerve to walk around pregnant and unmarried in Pankot." (Div 373)

The full ambiguity of Sarah's relationship to the raj is best seen in the image she herself uses to describe the relationship of the English to India. It is the image of the death of a scorpion, shown to her as a child by Dost Mohammed and later properly explained by Mabel Layton. When Mabel tells her that the scorpion, when surrounded by fire, does not really kill himself but is killed by the heat of the flames, Sarah says:

And it would be impractical of the scorpion to kill itself. After all the fire might go out, or be doused by rain. It was more practical of the scorpion to attempt to survive by darting its venomous tail in the direction of what surrounded it and was rapidly killing it. Just as brave too. Perhaps braver. After all there was a saying: Never say die. (Day 88)

This image of the bravery of the scorpion reappears in her description of the pathetic trap that the English in India are now in. In making a comparison with the scorpion, Sarah is pointing to both the pathetic necessity of their feeble attempts to prevent an end to their existence, and the inevitable destruction of this Sahib race. She sees Ronald Merrick, the lower middle-class idealist of the raj whose aspirations to Sarah's class of sahib, illuminates their weakness:

You are, yes, our dark side, the arcane side.  
 You reveal something that is sad about us, as if  
 but here we had built a mansion without doors and  
 windows with no way in and no way out. All India  
 lies in our doorstep and cannot enter to warm us  
 or be warmed. We live in holes and crevices of  
 the crumbling stone, no longer sheltered by the  
 carapace of our history which is leaving us  
 behind. And one day we shall lie  
 exposed, in our tender skins. You, as well as us.  
 (Day 439)

This description emphasizes the isolation and loneliness of those English who at one time were the pride of the nation and the empire but are now reduced to living in a no-man's land - not wanted in India, not wanting to be in England. It is through Sarah's narrative that we have been able to glimpse the poignancy and ambivalence of the public world of the raj inside an intimate family setting.

Sarah's narrative also serves to portray the

private life of a raj family by her descriptions and intimate details of their way of life. This too is seen as an ambiguity, this time between the acting of expected roles and rituals within the family and Sarah's very real knowledge that often these roles are empty. Confused by her feelings of being burdened by her insensitive family, she fights to understand her love for them from something deeply inside herself. The frustration comes from having to listen to the usual raj chat and predictable attitudes that Sarah realizes are wrong but to which she often fails to react, knowing the argument that will result. An important incident when she does react is immediately after Susan's wedding when her mother, Aunt Fenny, Susan and Sarah are changing clothes. Aunt Fenny is gossiping about Lady Manners. Sarah reacts:

She felt a tide of anger and frustration spread through her body..."I was in [that awful Indian slum] too," Sarah said, and as she did so seemed to discover, through her finger tips, the secret of undoing the dress, and to touch, as well, the spring of some deeper secret that had to do with the unlocking of her own precious individuality."  
(Day 213)

Of course, the family cannot understand Sarah's desire to apologize for their behaviour to Lady Manners and Aunt Fenny's final intolerant comment about Sarah is: "You worry us all. You worry us very much." (Day 214) If they are at

all worried it is not for Sarah but for themselves for what Sarah reveals in them is the lack of a conscience that somehow disappeared in World War I, before the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh in 1919. When Sarah is recounting her and Susan's voyage back to India after their school years she tries to pinpoint the difference between herself and Susan. She concludes:

Perhaps, she thought, the difference between herself and Susan was that Susan was capable of absorbing things into her system without really thinking whether they were acceptable to her or not; whereas she herself absorbed nothing without first subjecting it to scrutiny. (Day 90)

So, Sarah is a part of the moral continuum, scrutinizing the daily life of a raj family from the objective distance she is able to maintain from this family she both loves and hates, realizing the loneliness she would feel if she broke any code that binds them together. She feels this after walking in the garden in Mirat: "She began to walk towards them, conscious of coming at them from a great, a lonely distance away.... 'My family', she told herself as she entered the geometrical pattern of light and the circle of safety." (Day 229)

This objectivity and scrutiny allows her to see and tell us a great amount of detail that would normally be told through a narrator who was not a member of the family.

We are given very close yet still balanced portraits of her mother, Susan, and even Colonel Layton both in prison camp and after his return. She sees her mother in the full knowledge of her drinking problem and is able to understand why she needs the bottle as a crutch. She thinks:

You are still attractive, Sarah thought, and you are only forty-five. It is three years since you were with him. And India is full of men. So don't think I don't understand about the bottle in the wardrobe, the flask in your handbag. (Day 147)

Sarah is able to reveal to us the intense singlemindedness of purpose that drives her mother into the conscious but necessary role of memsahib. Through Sarah's squabbles with her mother we are able to see to what destructive, terrible lengths her mother is willing to go to preserve the code and propriety of everything as a proper raj family should. This is seen most clearly in her mother's reaction to Sarah's pregnancy. Sarah tells us:

For her mother it had never happened. It was her mother's assumption of ignorance that hurt her most... For her mother the silence was part of the code, the standard: the angel's face in the dark. Or was it a demon's? Whichever it was it helped her mother to preserve an attitude of composure and fortitude and Sarah was able to admire her for it and see the point. (Div 131)

For all Sarah's ability to understand the sufferings of her mother, there is little reciprocal understanding except



under the code, the ritual of life in the raj. In her mother's determination to maintain the code despite the changes going on around them, she sacrifices her chance to become close to her family by ignoring the opportunity of learning how each person is feeling and responding to the inevitable end of their world.

Although Sarah's father spends much of the time during the novels in prison camp in Germany, we feel a certain kindred relationship to him, partly because of the detail given of his history by the "stranger" (Day 62-75), but most of all because of Sarah's attachment to him and the detail given early that "Sarah was her father's daughter" (Day 63). Our sympathies are strongly attached to him and when he finally appears showing the sufferings of prison camp life, we are wholly sympathetic. Through Sarah's narrative recounting of her relationship to her father, we see the love, and the duty of a family relationship striving to assert itself under the strain of the separation and of the code expected in the raj. It is when her father returns to India that Sarah realizes how little she knows both her father and her mother "not remembering was probably further evidence of how little she knew him, as little now as she had known him - and her mother - on her return to India in 1939 after the years of unavoidable separation." (Div 119) This sacrifice of "years of unavoidable separation" is part

of the code and is a sacrifice that most Europeans wanted to make in order to maintain the Home connection. It is interesting that when Sarah is confronted by a different idea of a family in her conversation with Leonard, she defends the traditional separation. Leonard asks her:

"But then when I think of settling down here and getting married and having kids I don't think I'd like it much. I mean sending the kids back home wouldn't be my idea of having a family. Am I wrong?"

"I don't know," She considered "I'd hate never to have been home. I'd feel I'd missed something important that I was entitled to, the thing that makes me English. You go back to claim an inheritance. Then if you have children of your own you send them back to claim theirs. It's part of the sacrifice parents have to make." (Day 428)

And so, Sarah defends what has been an unwritten family code for two hundred years and at this point chooses her English inheritance over her filial ties. But Sarah must also suffer the strained affection of those families who do not know each other very well. She describes her father's inability to express his love when she attempts to talk to him intimately: "looking at him, [she] came up against the barrier of his inarticulate affection, his restraint, his inner reservations." (Div 126) The barriers of time, propriety and tradition have created an impossible separation that has little hope of mending. This barrier is

seen by Sarah as she attempts to reach out to her father; especially to tell him of her abortion:

In India, yes, one could travel great distances. But the greatest distance was between people who were closely related. That distance was never easy to cover... And what had happened constituted the greatest distance there could be between her and her father. Or did it? She would have liked to tell him. She believed he would understand. But the train rattled on and she said nothing. (Div 126)

Echoing Tennessee Williams' words in The Glass Menagerie, these lines remind us of the same dividedness in that family; although Sarah is much more capable of reconstructing her own life and independence than Laura, her feeling of isolation and regret resembles Tom's poignant narration. Finally, it is in her father's return to the family that Sarah painfully realizes the truth of his absences: "What had held us together as a family was father's absence; his return showed how deeply we were divided." (Div 341) The reality of war and its subsequent demands of duty and attention had maintained the relative stability of the Layton family but when these demands were removed and the changes that war brings fully realized, which in this case was the inevitable death of the raj, all the sacrifices made in the name of the raj became empty and were left without even the ties of family - alone and isolated.

Sarah's narrative revealing her relationship with her sister completes the full portrait of the inside view of a raj family. As Sarah is her father's daughter, so also is Susan her mother's daughter. Susan remains absorbed in the daily life of the raj, fulfilling the necessary ritual of a young girl's life in India - courting, marrying, and producing, in the appropriate time, a son, to carry on the tradition. Sarah objectively reports on Susan's attempts to conform to the code, seeing her marriage to Teddie as without love:

"But then," Sarah thought, "we all have the same sort of history, Birth in India, of civil or military parents, school in England, holidays spent with aunts and uncles, then back to India. "It was a ritual. A dead hand lay on the whole enterprise. But still it continued... to ensure the inheritance and keep it 'pukka'." (Day 142)

It is Susan's complete acceptance of her role as a memsahib at the particular historical time when the "dead hand" had made such roles obsolete, that Sarah suggests is indicative of the blindness and incomprehensibility of those at the end of the raj. In Susan's sad, intimate portrait we see a girl who had cast herself in the only tragic role she could possibly fulfil and in Sarah's description of Susan's role she cannot help but generalize Susan's performance for the whole of the English in India. Sarah tells us:

In Susan she had become aware of a curious aptitude for deliberate performance. Susan was playing Susan and Sarah could no longer get near her. The distance between them had the feeling of permanence because the part of Susan called for a pretty, brown-haired, blue-eyed, flush-cheeked girl who entered, almost feverishly, into the fun and responsibilities of a life Sarah herself believed mirthless and irresponsible... The trouble was... that in India, for them, there was no private life, not in the deepest sense; in spite of their attempts at one. There was only a public life. (Day 148)

In casting themselves in such roles. the memsahibs (and sahibs) isolate themselves from all that is necessarily close, private and real, subjecting themselves to the unreality of an imagined existence that does not allow them to feel or love as they want. In the rare moments when Susan reveals herself to Sarah, she uses this idea of an illusion to illustrate her loneliness. She felt "like a drawing that anyone who wanted to could come along and rub out; that there was nothing to her except this erasable image" (Div 132) In this revelation, Susan's own idea of her transparency, her inability to make a mark on what she does, and to take a moral stance, associates her with most of the memsahibs we have met in the Quartet. This emptiness is again evident when she asks Sarah, "I think I envy [Ronald Merrick]. Not being one of us. Because I don't know what we are, do you, Sarah?" (Day 350) And finally, a little later, "I need help from someone like you, who

knows... What's right, and wrong" (Day 351) Susan's total lack of self-image and self-worth, outside the pattern of young memsahib ritual, is representative of the vacuous, morally questionable society of young women being held to a way of life by their commitment to tradition and to an ideal but not to the reality of the situation and to the responsibility which is inevitably theirs.

Susan's mental illness is shown by Sarah's narrative to be both a metaphorical interpretation of the glass house of the Sahib-world in those years immediately preceeding Indian independence, and a personal portrait of the sacrifice and suffering which the English must face at the end of the raj. The metaphor is made quite plain by Sarah as she looks at Susan in the nursing home:

We sense from the darkness in you the darkness in ourselves, a darkness and a death wish. Neither is admissible. We chase that illusion of perpetual light. But there's no such thing. What light there is, when it comes, comes harshly and unexpectedly and in it we look extraordinarily ugly and incapable. (Day 491-492)

The darkness, as Susan shows, is an inability to recognize oneself and not to be able to realistically accept whatever that truth reveals. Although Susan's illness is physically related to her post-natal depression and widowhood, Sarah suggests that what became obvious in Susan is also hiding inside many of the other English who, in chasing "that

illusion of perpetual light", are searching for a continued approval of their lifestyle. Her description is (through Scott) a reminder of the light from the Kandipat jail where the raj attempts to right itself of the wrongs done to Hari Kumar and the light, "the dim light, and the glaring light that shone on the empty chair," (Day 315) is the light of truth where often the English in India do appear "extraordinarily ugly and incapable."

The second purpose of Sarah's narrative of Susan's illness is the more intimate portrait of the suffering and sacrifice of those who must give up their lives in India when independence comes. The pathetic picture of Susan, who has earlier admitted to Sarah that she does not know who she is, becomes the important emotional force behind the ambiguity of Sarah's narrative and ultimately, of the English in India. Again, the poignancy of Sarah's description of her sister in the nursing home:

How pretty you look, Sarah thought. Pretty and happy. No, more than happy, profoundly content, totally withdrawn. You've found your way in. Why should it hurt to think that you don't recognize me? Or only recognize me as someone belonging to a world that's become unreal to you and isn't to be compared with the one you've always imagined and imagine, now, and smile at because you feel its protection all round you like a warmth? (Day 491)

Susan's pitiful situation shows a complete loss of purpose, and, although the meaning of her life was questionable, it was a historically inherited situation where the victims and winners are not clear. The agony of Susan's suffering has a deeper ring that disturbs even Sarah's realization of the necessity of the English departure and contributes to her ambiguous position toward India. She says of Susan's torment:

Her crying was terrible, because when she cried and I tried to comfort her we seemed very close, closer than we had ever been as children; but within a day or two were farther apart than ever. Every measure of love and affection had to be paid for by a larger measure of antagonism. (Div 350)

The final sentence above speaks eloquently of not only Susan and Sarah's relationship, but of the relationship of unsurety between Sarah and India, and even the raj and India.

Finally, in Sarah's narration of a private family life in the raj, there is an ambiguity between the pain at the sacrifice made by the family unit in honour of the empire, and her defensive feelings of love and duty towards the larger family of the raj. Throughout much of her narrative there seems little honest filial feeling and the family unit seems only a group of people joined by reason of birth. She knows the distance between them and the



differences between them yet the raj that holds them together and gives them purpose has also allowed her to feel love and given her an instinct of protection for them. It is a family she feels, "a strange irritated anguish for" (Day 409) and, "the tug of an old habit of affection and then a yearning for the powerful and terrible enchantment of inherited identity, which she had spent most of her adult years fighting to dispel." (Div 132) Sarah knows the price of the raj has been a family intimacy usually known only at home, but she also knows that the sacrifice has not completely been in vain.

The most important purpose of Sarah's narrative is Scott's use of her as a mouthpiece for his own hope in the future - for India and the English. This hope is shown in four ways: through her desire to have a purpose and sense of responsibility, through Sarah's self-knowledge of her paradoxical role in Indian history, through the development of her awareness of love and sexuality, and lastly, through her indigenous role of combining some spiritual elements of the Eastern world with some of the West to create a sense of peace and happiness.

One of Sarah's most noteworthy characteristics is her desire to be useful, to have an occupation. This is explained when she is still being introduced in The Day of the Scorpion when she insists on taking a secretarial course

before she returns to India after her schooling because she was, "determined anyway to be prepared to be of some use to someone, somewhere." (Day 78) Later she speaks to her father of an inertia she would have suffered if she had married Teddie Bingham, (Div 364), an inertia fully acceptable to her sister Susan and most other young memsahibs because it would have been fulfilling their sense of duty. However, to Sarah it would be intolerable. When her father returns to the family she immediately senses her usefulness in holding the family together as finished and tells her father of her desire to go home and get a job. At her father's insistence she promises to wait but at the expense of an increasing sense of uselessness: "I felt the net closing in again." (Div 372), the net of duty claiming her against her own sense of responsibility and direction. Sarah even considers her physical body's purpose as being frustrated and unproductive in the memsahib life she is living. She talks of her reproductive cycle:

But perhaps she had become self-conscious and read into Susan's manner what she felt about them herself: that hers were the menstrual flows of a virgin, sour little seepages such as Barbie Batchelor had presumably sustained for a good thirty years of her unproductive life. (Day 330)

Just as her body intimately reflects Sarah's sense

of needing a purpose, so does her external relationship to India need a purpose and direction. She sees an obligation of the English to India:

You could exchange one surrounding for another but not the occupation, an occupation less and less easy to explain and to follow except by continuing to perform it and seize opportunities to demonstrate - like the artist who carved angels' faces in the darkest recesses of a church roof and countered the charge that people couldn't see them by saying that God could - that dim as the light had grown it was still enough by which to see an obligation. (Div 130)

It is important that Sarah still saw this obligation and, however meagerly it was carried out officially in her duties as a WAC, privately in her growing association with the Nawab of Mirat and in helping his daughter Shiraz, she still found ways and means of giving herself a purpose. There is a certain desperation in Sarah's desire to find usefulness in her life, a desperation driven by her knowledge that the accepted memsahib role was false. She talks of this falseness of English India with a sense of fear: "I could finish with India before it had quite finished with me, rusted me up, corroded me, corrupted me utterly with a false sense of duty and a false sense of superiority," (Div 354) This corruption would come if she stayed in India in the role of memsahib. Yet, through her relationships with Shiraz and Guy Perron, Sarah comes to know a different India

- the princely states not directly under the rule of the raj where the traditional India still lay. It is there she finds a purpose and finally falls in love with India itself, as Guy Perron tells us. The final moment of uselessness for Sarah comes during the train journey when Ahmed is killed. In his death and in her own "brave little memsahib act" (Div 542) she sees only futility and a shame that the divisions within India had not changed during the hundred years of the raj. She expresses her frustration:

Such a damned bloody senseless mess. The kind which Ahmed tried to shut himself off from, the mess the raj had never been able to sort out. The only difference between Ahmed and me was that he didn't take the mess seriously and I did. I felt it was our responsibility, our fault that after a hundred years or more it still existed. (Div 592)

Sarah's frustration embodies Scott's own obsession with the work people do. He states in an essay the purpose of this theme of men and work:

The recurring theme of men at work or not at work but wanting to be, in British India or elsewhere, is used as a metaphor to convey a view of the life we live nowadays as offering few rewards to the man, or woman, who feels he must do work of some positive value, not in the context of society as such - but in the context of the philosophy on which that society bases its aspirations.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Paul Scott, "After Marabar: Britain and India, A Post-Forsterian View," My Appointment with the Muse, ed. Shelley C. Reece (London: Heinemann, 1986) 118-19.

Sarah is then a metaphorical figure for Scott, representing his belief that our society does have such a work ethic and that the development of the welfare state in our time has not destroyed a sense that what matters is around us in the present, and that there is a fundamental human truth to be acknowledged when "life is most nearly itself when here and now matter very much, when here and now are governed by a philosophy in pursuit of whose truth and rewards men know they can employ themselves." <sup>2</sup>

It is then as this metaphorical figure that Sarah's growth of self-knowledge and development of her understanding of the nature of knowledge allow Scott to use her as his expression of realized hope. Much of Sarah's story could be interpreted as the development of a young woman who is struggling to find herself and establish an individual identity. This process is matured through her realization of herself as different from those around her, particularly those of the memsahib world. In openly revealing to her family that she had visited Lady Manners and Daphne's baby, she understands that she is revealing to herself "the spring of some deeper secret that had to do

---

<sup>2</sup> Paul Scott, "India: A Post-Forsterian View," Essays By Divers Hands: Being the Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature, ed. Mary Stocks, New Series Vol. XXXVI (London: Oxford, 1970) 122-23.

with the unlocking of her own precious individuality." (Day 213) The mystery of Bibighar becomes an important key to Sarah's self-discovery as her curiosity about the affair deepens into an obsession to understand what really happened, as if it meant a realization of some sort to her too. She ponders over the burkha-clad figure who begs to Ronald Merrick at the station in Mirat after Teddie and Susan's wedding:

But it was the significance of that lonely supplication that now struck her, for the first time, and recreated Bibighar in her mind as an occasion that continued, could not be ruled off as over, done with.... she understood the continuing nature of the misfortune, realized that the boy whom the woman pleaded for must, then at least, still have been paying a price, however far and distant away in time had been the occasion of his fault, if there had ever been fault. (Day 408)

Sarah is growing aware of the sacrificial price paid by others, but more importantly, of the unethical superiority of a race and culture making judgements out of convenience rather than conviction born of integrity. Thus the nearness of the Bibighar affair to her own life, through her relationships with Lady Manners, Ronald Merrick, Nigel Rowan and Guy Perron, serve to prepare her for her interest in and relationship to the massacre at Jallianwala Bagh.

Sarah never realizes who or what Jallianwala is,

but the metaphorical significance of her relationship to this event is not lost on the reader. It is Barbie Batchelor who first asks Sarah who "Gillian Waller" is (Day 364) and later, in the grip of mental breakdown, Barbie renames Sarah as Gillian Waller when she bequeaths to her the few remnants of her missionary life. In trying to recollect where she had heard this name before, Sarah realizes that Barbie had told her she had heard Mabel Layton mutter the name in her sleep. (Day 386) The connection with Mabel Layton makes the allusion more meaningful. Scott is intending Sarah to be an heir to the legacy of Lady Manners and Mabel Layton - a legacy of conscience about the British role in India. If Bibighar itself truly showed the possible love in the relationship between India and Britain, and its aftermath showed the hate, then the massacre at Jallianwala Bagh was also an act of hate, identifying clearly the rapist and the victim. For those who saw Jallianwala in this perspective, Sarah's interpretation of the Bibighar affair is valid - an attack of the innocent by the insecure.

This development of self-knowledge has its analogous equivalent in Sarah's growing awareness of the nature of knowledge. Early in her narrative Sarah refers to knowledge as light, and as a young girl in England feels that she is excluded from the light: "So I am really in darkness, she said and this truly is the difference between

myself and Susan who lives in perpetual light." (Day 91) Later, Sarah realizes that she has entered the light: "Perhaps, she thought, I am no longer in darkness, perhaps there is light and I have entered it. But she did not know what light exactly, nor what entering it would already have laid on her by way of obligations." (Day 214) Sarah's understanding of her own development is becoming less embraced by the world around her and more independent in the sense of her own individuality - a process deliberately drawn by Scott to show her coming to knowledge in the full suffering that it meant for Sarah.

This development of knowledge, of the relationship between men and women, nations and peoples, and most importantly, of the presence of evil in the world is brought closer to Sarah through her growing knowledge of love and sex. Early in her narrative Sarah takes love lightly, naively cynical. She tells her Aunt Fenny, "But this other thing, love, love, that's never happened. If it has I never knew it, so it must be over-rated. It must be a bit of a sell." (Day 419) Later, pondering on these things alone, Sarah reveals her cynicism towards love because she relates it to the superior moral world of Anglo-India of which she is no longer sure. She thinks:

But love of the kind Fenny had described, the kind she herself and no doubt Susan had grown up to



believe in as right and acceptable, now seemed to her like one more standard of human behaviour that needed that same climate of self-assurance and moral certainty in which to flourish. (Day 421)

These are the words of an innocent woman unaware of the necessity of love and sex as interrelated. Predictably, Scott's use of a man such as Jimmy Clark, an ultra-pragmatist whose needs are satisfied by what is immediate, is necessary to show the contrast between what Sarah already has said about love and what she will awaken in herself through Jimmy Clark. She describes her experience with Clark:

The reality was this warm quiescence with which her body came back to life and consciousness, flesh to flesh with the body of the man who had penetrated it, liberated it, and was waking it again from profound rest so that it might enclose and be enclosed and go again, rapt, to the edge of feeling. (Day 452)

Later, through this experience, Sarah realizes that "She had entered her body's grace," (Day 454) a grace that changes her from innocent questioning to a mature understanding of the complexity of human relationships.

It is in the experience of the abortion that Sarah comes to learn her deepest understanding about knowledge. The abortion gave her a sense of deprivation dramatically shown in contrast to the birth of Susan's child: "the act of

ministering to her sister's child was one that could fill her with the anguish of her own physical deprivation... she felt deprived again of part of herself, of everything really except her guilt." (Div 131) It is the guilt that most affects Sarah, a guilt of knowing what she had helped create and yet had neglected in fulfilling her duty. Ironically, Lady Manners was fulfilling a similar duty on a houseboat in Srinigar when she first met Sarah and reported to Lady Chatterjee: "[Sarah] said, 'What a lot you know,'... she meant know as distinct from remember..., she made it sound like a state of grace, one that she envied me in the mistaken belief that I was in it, while she was not and didn't understand how, things being as she finds them, one ever achieved it." (Day 56) Lady Manners may have been too much in the older raj world to realize the full meaning of what Sarah was trying to say. However, Sarah later clarifies part of what this knowledge is:

Sarah stopped, examined a red rose, bent her head to take its scent and again felt the touch of that casual premonition on the back of her neck, so that it seemed to her that she was arrested, suspended, between an uncertain future and a fading history that had something to do with bending her head like this to a bunch of sweet-smelling flowers. (Day 365)

Sarah's development of knowledge is then tied to her identification and relationships with Lady Manners and Mabel

Layton. As mentioned earlier, Sarah becomes an heir to the conscience and integrity of these people both in herself and her relationship to India. Both these women recognize within Sarah the struggle to understand and to rise above the accepted mediocrity of Anglo-Indian life. When Mabel Layton shows Sarah the veil of lace in the pattern of butterflies caught in a prison she also tells her of her naïve attempt to correct the lace-maker about the butterflies. She realizes that Sarah also knows the inevitable tragedy of the short life of the butterfly and its metaphorical meaning saying, "You are very young, too, but I expect you understand better than I did at your age." (Day 368) Sarah does recognize the truth in the metaphor of the butterflies caught in the lace but only by fully recognizing the traps in her own life. She learns ironically that liberation only comes by committing oneself totally to the needs of the world around one. When she catches a glimpse of Lady Manners in the church in Pankot, Sarah thinks:

Why, what a lot you know, Sarah told her silently, what a lot, what a terrible lot. But now I know some of it too, and know that this kind of knowing isn't knowing but bowing my head, as you are bowing yours, under the weight of it. (Day 493)

So Sarah has gained her knowledge through a recognition of herself, of an acceptance of the world around her although

not accepting its morality. Instead, she has come to know a better morality based on an individual awareness of right and wrong and the necessity of fulfilling one's duty according to that morality. Her awareness of the love in the Bibighar Garden and the hatred outside the Garden has brought her to a truthful yet hopeful position. Sarah, through much suffering, shows the validity of Scott's moral continuum.

Finally, Scott uses Sarah and her growth through knowledge to portray his idea of what a better, healthier relationship of India and Britain, of East and West, should be. Sarah has an indigenous role of combining elements of both cultures to secure an awareness and sensitivity with which to be at peace. Specifically, Scott has subtly embroidered into Sarah's portrait a number of Hindu elements which enrich our knowledge of Sarah's awakening to the Eastern world.

The first Hindu principle which Sarah embodies is the idea in Hindu mystical thought that knowing is being, that knowledge encompasses total understanding.<sup>3</sup> By the end of A Division of the Spoils, Scott has made us realize the depth of Sarah's struggle to understand herself, the world she

---

<sup>3</sup> Embree, Ainslie T. The Hindu Tradition: Readings in Oriental Thought, Readings in Oriental Thought (New York: Vintage-Random House, 1972) 117-135.

lives in, and how she must live in order to be true to her morality. In Sarah's final narration of the Quartet she tells of Ahmed's murder and the massacre of Muslims on the train. The tone of her lines suggests a definite recognition of knowledge as a full realization of her understanding of the raj. She talks of herself, "And I couldn't stop filling the bloody jars, going through my brave little memsahib act" and of Ahmed's voluntary act, "he knew there was nothing to say because there wasn't any alternative... It was part of the bloody code." (Div 592-93) The tone of total scorn for her "memsahib act" and the "bloody code" shows Sarah's final rejection of a world to which she never really belonged and attitudes which she knows could not survive. In Sarah's attainment of knowledge as understanding we vicariously also have suffered in order to understand.

In her narration, Sarah's search for meaning can be described in terms of the three paths to salvation in the Hindu faith. These three paths are jnana-marga, the path of knowledge, karma-marga, the path of duty, and bhakti-marga, the path of devotion.<sup>4</sup> In each of these paths there is a clear relation to Sarah's journey towards finding peace in the novels. In each path she is made to suffer in order to

---

<sup>4</sup> The Hindu Tradition, ed. Embree 117-35.

discover the truth of what she must do. In the path of knowledge we have already seen how her search for knowledge is satisfied. In the path of duty she must shake herself free of the guilt she bears knowing she can never be and never did want to be a memsahib. This comes to her when she goes to Mirat to assist the Nawab with his daughter Shiraz and she becomes acquainted with a different tradition of India. In the path of devotion, Sarah learns to love India, not as the country of the raj and of childish illusions but in the fullness of its culture and history. Earlier in the Quartet she speaks of India as a place which the British must leave as long as it is British India to them:

My history... rendered down to a colonnaded front...and to a smoky resentment in my blood, a foolish contrivance for happiness in my heart against the evidence that tells me I never have been happy and can't be while I live here. It's time we were gone. Gone. Every last wise, stupid, cruel, fond or foolish one of us. (Day 416)

Yet, as the path leads her away from British India to the princely state of Mirat, Sarah is led from a desire for rejection towards an inward peace, learning devotion to the real India. Guy Perron reveals Sarah's success:

I have been happy since, Sarah had said; as a woman might say if she were in love. In love with whom?...The only answer seemed to be: in love with the land itself, after all; yes, in love with

that, and content to be here whatever happened. A strange but perhaps logical reversal of her old attitude. (Div 496)

And so, her narration is a central device toward Scott's intent to portray a hopeful future based on love and respect for one another and especially in learning to adapt to those elements which seem to make both West and East seem distant foreigners. This is shown metaphorically in Sarah's own description of her relationship with Ahmed: "Ahmed and I weren't in love. But we loved one another." (Div 592) Because of her history, Sarah was not in love with India but she learned to love India, as Scott ultimately wants us to vicariously love India through Sarah.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Guy Perron

Guy Perron, the "fair-haired, well-spoken British Field Security sergeant" (Div 8) is the most important sympathetic narrator of the last novel of the Quartet, A Division of the Spoils, whose narrative makes up more than half of the novel. His first names allude to mythical English heroes: Guy Lancelot Percival (Div 38), but more importantly, his surname, Perron, is carefully chosen by the author. A "Perron" is a "large block or solid erection of stone, used as a platform ...ascended by steps, in front of a church or mansion and upon which the door or doors open."<sup>1</sup> Thus Guy Perron is the platform for Scott's own views on imperialism, and his hopeful vision of the future of our society through the assertion of the moral continuum. As a historian with a degree in history from Cambridge, Perron complements the narrator-lawyer of the Quartet by tempering the latter's legal objectivity with the commitment and judgment of the historical mind. This allows Scott freedom to explore realms outside the legal world - in particular, the failure of the liberal dream to create a

---

<sup>1</sup> "Perron," Oxford English Dictionary, 1970.



rational western democracy in India. Perron criticizes the attitudes of those liberals who saw the future only through their own paternalistic relationship to the raj but, more importantly, he positively contributes to a new way of understanding the undercurrents of twentieth-century society and leading the reader to a better interpretation of the history of the raj.

As readers, we are immediately attracted to Perron because of his humane common-sense views and a sense of humour which wins us over completely. He arrives as a breath of fresh air after the complexity of emotion and determination displayed by people like Barbie Batchelor, Mildred Layton, and even Hari Kumar - all of whom stretch our emotions of compassion and understanding. Perron is realistic and seemingly free of the "awful seriousness that seemed to overcome people who worked for India. [Nigell] said he thought I'd only just stopped accusing him of not being serious enough ...There was a difference between taking a situation seriously and taking oneself seriously" as Sarah aptly describes him. (Div 280). Guy's narrative allows us to step back from the relentless seriousness of the previous novels and enjoy his relaxed attitude and his strong sense of humour which establishes a trustworthy bond between himself and the reader. The narrator immediately presents Perron in this light on the first few pages. He

tells us of Perron's attitude to the Welfare Officer's belief that his men are eager to listen to a lecture about the Mahratta kings:

A belief of which Sergeant Perron did not disabuse him because he had decided quite early in his military service that for life to be supportable officers had to be protected from anything that might shatter their illusion that they knew what the men were thinking. (Div 9).

This attitude is a welcome relief after the intensity of emotional commitment shown by Colonel Layton, Teddie Bingham, and Ronald Merrick, to the duty and virtues of the army. Perron maintains this humour in his own narrative both with his ironic tone but also in relating small details. For example, he nicknames Merrick's servant, Suleiman, the "Red Shadow" and, "stoned to the eyeballs", he tells Nigel Rowan:

I for my part long to catch him at [stealing his whisky] so that I can boot him in the arse. And believe me, Nigel, before I leave, boot him I shall, with or without provocation. It's a point of honour. The arses of the Suleimans of India exist to be booted by British Sergeants. It's traditional. One for the Sergeant, two for the regiment and three for the raj. (Div 205).

The other sustained comedy is "Operation Bunbury" - an appropriately Wildean plan devised by Perron and his Aunt Charlotte to see him safely out of India if he feels it necessary to leave. Aunt Charlotte felt Perron's decision

to acquiesce to the authorities and join the army was not right: "It wasn't going to be fair on the men for whose lives and welfare I so thoughtlessly intended to accept responsibility." (Div 204) Reassured by Perron's decision not to accept a commission and the agreement to stage Operation Bunbury, Aunt Charlotte resigned herself to the call-up of the only Perron heir.

Perron's narrative is generally in three main sections: the third-person inside view of "An Evening at the Maharanee's", the first-person view of "Moghul Room", and the third-person inside view of "Pandora's Box". In "The Moghul Room" Perron is shown to be writing for the narrator and his purpose of discovering details of the Laytons, Pankot, and Perron's perceptions of India at that crucial period of history. He says he is writing this account twenty-five years later and is conscious of the narrator's purpose, as he comments while reporting on the Laytons:

Moreover, it was an evening during which nothing happened which contributed to what you would call a narrative line and which left me with nothing more useful from your point of view than impressions of members of the family -. (Div 271)

Clearly, Perron the historian has been asked by the narrator-investigator for reminiscences and Perron is aware of the angle of vision of the narrator, a vision determined

to find out the truth. We know Perron kept a notebook in which he recorded his findings, while in India, of his observation of human behaviour during an interesting period of history. (Div 9) As Scott's platform, Perron's narrative becomes the crucial committed register where the truth of the rape, both actual and metaphorical, is finally revealed.

Perron's criticism of British India is compassionately achieved by the use of ridicule, irony and paradox. He sees the situation as the result of the society that has suffered the effects of Imperialism perpetuated for over two hundred years.

The society of British India, attacked so ironically by the narrator in the other novels, is not deliberately focussed, but we are incidentally made aware, through Guy's scornful attitudes and observations, of the unravelling of the British Indian mores under the extra wartime pressures. Guy pronounces his dislike of the memsahib world, "that monstrous regiment" (Div 271) when he first meets Sarah Layton whom he recognizes as different:

Accent, style of dress, forthrightness: these proclaimed her a daughter of the raj, but her manner lacked that quality - elusive in definition - which Perron had come to associate with young memsahibs: a compound of self-absorption, surface self-confidence and, beneath, a frightening innocence and attendant uncertainty about the true nature of the alien world they lived in. They were born only to breathe that rarified, oxygen-starved air of the upper slopes and peaks, and so

seemed to gaze down, from a height, with the touching look of girls who had been brought up to know everybody's place and were consequently determined to have everybody recognize their own. (Div 17)

Perron detests the class-ridden insular world of Club, mah-jong, bridge, and flower shows on the maidan, that characterized the empty, useless lives of these women. He sees their superior self-confidence masking a much greater sense of insecurity and inability to act for themselves. This is emphasized again when he first meets Susan Bingham: "Her self-centredness was like an extra thickness of skin. Without it, I believe, she would have died of panic or exposure." (Div 274) The immense energy needed to protect oneself from the exposure or threat of the outside world is for Perron a supreme waste. He recognizes this "hard outer-casing of the memsahib" (Div 271), in Mrs. Layton but there finds it a peculiar grace - finding her strength of mind and character sustained with the effort of the gin bottle. (Div 272-73) but maintained in order to uphold her "determination both to survive and to defeat any force that threatened her." (Div 272) Perron dreads visiting Rose Cottage because both in its name and address on Upper Club Road, he expects to find the habitat of the memsahib full of "the cosy souvenirs of a lifetime of exile on the King's business" (Div 270) and "the picture ...so vivid that it depressed

me." (Div 269) However, Perron is delighted to find that Mrs. Layton's restorations have removed the nostalgia which he most detests and recreated "an early nineteenth-century Anglo-Indian bungalow: squat, functional and aggressive, as well anchored to the ground as a Hindu temple." (Div270) He despises "Raj chat" (Div 100) or talk of India, of staying on, of where one is from, and considers his mention of Bagshaw to Colonel Layton, while having dinner there, as "inviting what I would least welcome: that alchemy in reverse which transmutes the gold of life into the lead of tiresome recollections of immaturity." (Div 276) What is perhaps most important in all these comments is that Perron feels it is all a waste - there is nothing worthwhile in the lives of most memsahibs, in the nostalgia of their world, and the memories they perpetuate to justify their existence. His attraction to the new Rose Cottage is in its being what it was meant to be - a functional building, and for the same reason, he notices the change between the Sarah of the Layton family and the Sarah working at the daftar, and comments: "Probably it was only life at home that got her down." (Div 238) Later at Mirat he admires her again for her sense of purpose: "This was the old Sarah of Area Headquarters who knew a thing or two about getting a move on." (Div 515) Thus Perron's criticism of the idleness and lack of purpose of a large part of the British society in India

coincides with the same view of the narrator and reflects Scott's view as well.

With the dislocation and change brought on by the war, this community finds it more and more difficult to maintain the manner of life to which they feel they are entitled. Amidst the influx of Indian officers and men, Perron is amazed that on his visit to St. John's church in Pankot on the first Sunday of the peace, there are still only white faces. He thinks:

Were there no Indian Christians in Pankot? No Eurasians at St. John's on this Sunday of all Sundays? Perhaps there were. My view... was limited... But [there was] no dark face that I could see. I began to feel oppressed, slightly agitated, and glanced at the nearby door. (Div 325-6)

Amidst the massive changes in British-Indian society because of the war, it is pathetic that the old white solidarity still is firmly entrenched in Pankot. Perron deplores the continuance of such segregation and gladly notes, however, that the strength of the Sahib world is failing by the end of the novel, evidenced in the loosening of their racial and class barriers. Perron's ironic tone is appropriate to relate the comments of Mrs. Grace who is commenting on the Peabodys, a couple who caricature the Anglo-Indian life :

Mrs. Grace said, "Those awful people. Do we have to travel with them? Can't we rustle up an extra

body or two and crowd them out?"  
 Interesting, this. Universally popular as the English are in India just now, among themselves there emerges this dissension. The old solidarity has gone because the need for it has gone. (Div 554)

Ironically, it is Mrs. Peabody in telling Perron of what she perceives is the problem of India, who encapsulates Perron's own view towards the British. Mrs. Peabody says, "In the villages, Mr. Perron, every peasant woman has her gold bangles. No, no. It is not the poverty. It is the disease. The superstition. The inertia." (Div 579) It is in the inertia of people like Mrs. Peabody who fail to put themselves to any use that Perron sees as part of the sickness of the raj.

The second and more important of Perron's criticisms of British India is in his attitudes to Imperialism and its determining influence on India. It is here that Perron articulates most clearly Scott's own views on the raj and he symbolically becomes the "perron" from which minds are opened to the truth of 'the "imperial embrace". (JC 9) Early on in the novel Perron gives his appraisal of British-Indian history:

For at least a hundred years India has formed part of England's idea about herself and for the same period India has been forced into a position of being a reflection of that idea. Up to say 1900 the part India played in our idea about ourselves was the part played by anything we possessed which



we believed it was right to possess (like a special relationship with God). Since 1900, certainly since 1918, the reverse has obtained. The part played since then by India in the English idea of Englishness has been that of something we feel it does us no credit to have. (Div 105)

This analysis is based on the rise and decline of liberalism in Britain. The drive to colonize was based on a conviction that the barbarous may be educated into rationality, able through example and education to see the need for, and to animate, western democratic institutions. Perron's phrase, "India has formed part of England's idea about herself" aptly sums up the superior self-confidence of those nineteenth-century liberals who sought to make supreme one colour in India, and the doubts of their twentieth-century successors. He refers to this confidence: "The most insular people in the world managed to establish the largest empire the world has ever seen...Insularity, like empire-building, requires superb self-confidence, a conviction of one's moral superiority." (Div 106) Yet the paradox is that in the decline of liberalism, indicated by Perron's date of 1900 or 1918 and World War I, when the liberal dream was shaken by four years of violence and barbarism, the moral superiority turns once again insular. Guy identifies this as "our fundamental indifference to the problems towards which we adopt attitudes of responsibility. Not moral responsibility, ownership responsibility. A moral

responsibility would be too trying." (Div 208) The insularity, which according to Perron has always been an English characteristic, becomes the inward motivating drive for the outward, morally justified, ambition to leave India. For Perron, Aunt Charlotte and Leonard Purvis symbolize the attitude of many British to India in the past and most surely now, "the overwhelming importance of the part that had been played in British-Indian affairs by the indifference and the ignorance of the English at home." (Div 222) In the interim of the vacuum left by the failure of liberal hopes, the only attitude of defence for the British is to turn in again on themselves and for most it will not mean any loss since few, according to Perron, ever really did morally commit themselves. Thus, it is not surprising that it is to these indifferent homebodies who have never seen India and to whom it only means a chapter in British history, that Perron awards the responsibility of the violence and death after British withdrawal:

It would never have occurred to [Aunt Charlotte] to examine her conscience in regard to those one-quarter million deaths, although she had in fact, as I had done - voted for them...[Aunt Charlotte] held single-mindedly to the Purvis principle, the view that a British presence in India was an economic and administrative burden whose quick off-loading was an essential feature of post-war policy in the welfare state. (Div 222)

The imperial situation is criticized more specifically by Guy's interest and involvement in the lives of Ronald Merrick and Hari Kumar. Quoting the nineteenth-century historian and essayist, Thomas Babington Macaulay, Perron says that the meeting between Merrick and Kumar was logical: "Kumar - one of Macaulay's 'brown-skinned Englishmen' - and Merrick, English-born and English-bred, but a man whose country's social and economic structure had denied him advantages and privileges which Kumar had initially enjoyed." (Div 301) Macaulay had outlined in his famous Minute<sup>2</sup> that Indians would be best educated in England or in English-style schools in India but not educated in Indian schools in India. This policy caused the collapse of several important colleges that had previously been set up to educate an Indian civil service in several native languages. Kumar had been educated in the way Macaulay intended, taken to England and educated at the source; however, he was denied a place back in the colony by the very English who should have patronized him. Hari is representative of the evangelical side of liberalism, "a symbol of our virtue". (Div 302) Ronald Merrick represents the man without class and money but who has been given the

---

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Babington Macaulay, Speeches, Poems & Miscellaneous Writings in The Complete Works of Lord Macaulay in Twelve Volumes (London: Longmans, Green, 1898) XI, 543-586.

right by education to serve in the perpetuation of the liberal dream in India. Historically, Merrick and Kumar should have been allies, linked by a privilege bestowed upon them by an allegedly similar education, but the paradox is that the very education that should have united them brings them into greater conflict. Perron says their meeting is evidence of the "real animus, the one that historians won't recognize". (Div 302) That animus is the fundamental evil of class or race prejudice which most liberal historians refused to credit yet which ultimately defeats Macaulay's "brown-skinned Englishmen".

Perron feels strongly that there still should be a moral obligation to the country, of a kind exhibited by Lady Manners, Sarah Layton and Perron himself. He feels this both historically and emotionally, as someone committed, not the imperial idea but to India itself: "certain material benefits had flowed from the imperial possession, enriching Britain if not demonstrably impoverishing India...moral considerations could surely not be ignored by economists and accountants." (Div 31-2) Guy knows that he is in a very tenuous position, attempting to find a balance between the immorality of the present raj, represented by Merrick and the cloying Mayapore and Pankot societies, and the moral obligation that must be fulfilled by a ruling nation that has taken so much from its dependent for so long. This

latter problem is summed up by his analogy of Indian and English mirrors:

In the Indian mirror the English reflection may be hard to get rid of, because in the Indian mind English possession has not been an idea but a reality; often a harsh one. The other sad thing is that people like the Laytons may now see nothing at all when looking in their mirror. Not even themselves? Not even a mirror? (Div 105)

The Laytons and those like them are the displaced persons sacrificed in the attempts to sort out the "imperial embrace". Their separate destinies will eventually help them find a place in England again but it will never again be in what for many of them is their homeland: India.

In a small but subtle allusion Perron suggests hope for that other sacrifice of independence, Hari Kumar, "the permanent loose end? Too English for the Indians, too Indian for the English." (Div 499) Hari's history is a part of the long timelessness of India and its noble past appropriately represented in the eighteenth-century paintings in the Guler-Basohli style, in the Hapgoods' living room in Bombay. After Perron has foolishly told Purvis how valuable they are, they become the victims of Purvis' pathetic drunken anger at India and the raj, being damaged by a bottle of rum. Perron describes the paintings: "They were about one hundred and fifty years old. Even the two damaged ones maintained that air of detachment and self-

sufficiency that went with a talent for survival." (Div 79) Later, in 1947 when Perron returns to visit the Hapgoods, the paintings have been repaired and as Hapgood comments, "It needs more than a bottle of rum to destroy a work of art." (Div 469) The other symbolic painting, used as a fluid image throughout the Quartet, "The Jewel in Her Crown", does not survive so well. Appropriately Ronald Merrick, the man of the past, and of the old raj, inherits the painting from Barbie Batchelor. When Perron first sees this painting he comments, "It was the kind of picture whose awfulness gave it a kind of distinction". (Div 504) This painting is permanently damaged; "blemished by little speckles of brown damp." (Div 504) Through these subtle images, Perron reveals his perception that the moral continuum has judged Ronald Merrick and the old raj and found it guilty while the resilience of India and its ability to survive under several ruling empires becomes a sign of hope for Hari Kumar and his country.

The criticism of Guy Perron is not cheap laughs at the pathetic remnants of a dying empire or simplistic moral certainties of the confident outsider. Rather, Perron demonstrates the sympathy for one who feels all the agony of the problem as a committed participant in a moral world but does not think the liberal or reformed liberal attitudes of Britain are the answer. It is the distinction between the

liberal convictions and the moral continuum that lies at the heart of the matter. Guy defined this distinction clearly:

[Merrick], a man, moreover, who lacked entirely that liberal instinct which is so dear to historians that they lay it out like a guideline through the unmapped forests of prejudice and self-interest as though this line, and not the forest, is our history. (Div 301)

Place Merrick at home, in England, and Harry Coomer abroad, in England, and it is Coomer on whom the historian's eye lovingly falls; he is a symbol of our virtue. In England it is Merrick who is invisible. Place them there, in India, and the historian cannot see either of them. They have wandered off the guideline, into the jungle. But throw a spotlight on them and it is Merrick on whom it falls. (Div 302)

The guiding path of liberal thought cannot recognize Kumar at home in India and so fails to face the truth of his unEnglish existence. T.S. Eliot, whose influence on Scott is evident in the essay, "India: A Post-Forsterian View" where Scott uses Eliot's poetry to clarify his worldview, echoes a similar kind of criticism of liberal humanism in "Gerontion":

After such knowledge, what forgiveness? Think now  
History has many cunning passages, contrived  
corridors  
And Issues, deceives with whispering  
ambitions,  
Guides us by our vanities. Think now  
She gives when our attention is distracted  
And what she gives, gives with such supple  
confusions  
That the giving famishes the craving. Gives  
too late

What's not believed in, or if still believed,  
 In memory only, reconsidered passion. Gives  
     too soon  
 Into weak hands, what's thought can be  
     dispensed with  
 Till the refusal propagates a fear. Think  
 Neither fear nor courage saves us. Unnatural  
     vices  
 Are fathered by our heroism. Virtues  
 Are forced upon us by our impudent crimes.  
 These tears are shaken from the wrath-bearing  
     tree.

Scott, through Perron, says that the corridor of liberalism, so easy to draw because of the power and might of the mother nation, does not take into account the "jungle", the giving "when our attention is distracted" rather than understanding on the only basis available to the liberals, the creed of progress and development. The "heroism" which is "fathered by our unnatural vices" is immoral, sour and empty, witnessed in the Quartet by the pathetic death of Teddie Bingham and symbolically seen by Perron in the simple object of Colonel Layton's bush-shirt hanging on the back of a chair: "[It was] a mute indication of the grand irrelevance of history to the things that people wanted for themselves". (Div 84) And so both Eliot and Scott have presented the selfishness of imperialism. Perron's alternative is in his willingness to believe that there may not be an answer to the problem of India and imperialism - that whatever is done will be with the knowledge that something must be sacrificed, usually necessary in the breaking of any



intimate relationship. Through Perron, Scott is submitting his view that there may be no distinct goal to serve as the end of all our actions: we act here and now in honesty and mutual respect.

Perron, the voice for a better way of understanding India and the history of the raj, presents a positive alternative to his criticism of the unsuccessful liberal world imposed on India by the imperial policies of nineteenth-century Britain. Guy's alternative is presented in two ways: first, through his intellectual dismissal of the liberal continuum and its replacement with a moral continuum, and secondly, through his personal involvement in the intimacy of the lives of those caught by the end of the raj and in the political situation as independence looms.

The final criticism of the attitudes to imperialism is a culmination of the presentation of liberal thought through particular characters in the Quartet. The liberal heritage extends mainly from Edwina Crane in the first novel, through Barbie Batchelor, to Nigel Rowan, a line showing a growth of respect from paternalist Edwina to Nigel's ambiguity and awareness of the untenability of reform liberalism. Edwina is Scott's quintessential old liberal, who is concerned with promoting the individual and has a strong evangelical sense of leading people towards

this goal. But, ultimately, Edwina's tone is patronizing and her actions belie what she says:

She had devoted her life, in a practical and unimportant way, trying to prove that fear was evil because it promoted prejudice, that courage was good because it was a sign of selflessness, that ignorance was bad because fear sprang from it, that knowledge was good because the more you know of the world's complexity the more clearly you saw the insignificance of the part you played.  
(JC 30)

And so Edwina's act of sitting in the rain-soaked road to Dibrapur, holding Mr. Chaudhuri's hand becomes symbolic of her realization of the inadequacy and the destructive force of the attitude of moral superiority inherent in liberal imperialism. It does not serve the Mr. Chaudhuris of India but only the English.

While clinging more closely than Edwina Crane to the picture of "The Jewel in Her Crown" and its allegory of servitude, Barbie's liberalism before she discovers Emerson is less politically and socially presumptuous than Edwina's; in practice, it is more a simple moral Christianity which led her to hope for and be satisfied by the influence on a single child. Emerson allows her both to define and take courage in her convictions, though never to the point of changing her outward, social lifestyle at Pankot.

Nigel, defined by Guy as "a man whose manner was

already naturally remote and uncommitted" (Div 263), is the final, doubting liberal - believing in the tenets of his faith but unsure as to the validity of their application in the imperial situation, brought home to him in his interrogation of Hari Kumar in the Kandipat jail. Nigel continues to live out the traditional role of the British in India by maintaining a distance, as Guy explains:

Rowan's Indian friends were rich. Gopal was the exception - the only middle-class Indian with whom he had ever become on intimate terms. At the same time perhaps the only Indian with whom he had ever been on such terms. (Div 322)

It is clear that Guy unsettles Nigel's firm notions of the British purpose in India: to lead the nation toward Indianisation, "[This view] had lain immature and unformed behind his youthful decision to seek a military and not a civil career in India; a decision he had regretted and sought to remedy before the war by undergoing a probationary period in the Political Department". (Div 152) When Nigel meets Guy again after many years he is disturbed by his casual, comic, slightly socialist views of British-India and feels relieved to be away from him: "He also felt himself being supported, braced up almost, by an unexpected sensation of being once more - away from Guy Perron - in control of things, of himself, and in surroundings that matched his mood." (Div 213) In his most crucial decisions

Nigel's liberalism hinders him from acting in the way he most wants to: it stops him from marrying Sarah despite his knowledge of Merrick, and it stops him from helping Hari Kumar directly. Guy recognized Nigel's inability to see the comparison of Merrick and Kumar as representing the conflict and failure of liberalism producing the "real animus", the fundamental evil of society: hate, disguised as prejudice, "that historians won't recognize":

I doubt that he would see it like this now. Simply, he would remain appalled and puzzled, a man with a conscience that worked in favour of both men; more in favour of Kumar than Merrick but Merrick was given sufficient benefit of the liberal doubt to leave Rowan inert. What Rowan was doing, in telling me all this, was trying to set off against his own inertia someone else's positive action: mine. He wanted me to do what he could not do: help Kumar. His ideas on the subject, it goes without saying, were woolly. (Div 302)

Guy's analysis of Nigel's attitude shows that he is unable to act in a meaningful, positive way to restore hope in the imperial relationship. He shows through Nigel that the liberal continuum will not provide the solution to sorting out the imperial embrace as Scott defined it: "because they were still locked in [it]...it was no longer possible for them to know whether they hated or loved one another, or what it was that held them together and seemed to have confused the image of their separate destinies." (JC 9)

Perron presents an alternative positive understanding of India and its history through his affirmation of the moral continuum. In his role as historian, and judge, it is logical for him to take a stand on the events which he has come to India to observe, but in Guy's narrative, we also observe the evolution of his commitment.

Early in his narrative, Guy assures us of his conviction that there is a moral obligation in the imperial commitment both in his talk with Leonard Purvis and later, when he analyzes his Aunt Charlotte's amoral, pragmatic attitude to India. Another more subtle but just as important conviction is Guy's determination to be objective, revealed most clearly after he meets Sarah Layton: "If you allowed yourself to sympathize too much [the memsahibs] would destroy you. You would lose what you valued most. Your objectivity." (Div 100) This detached, almost clinical attitude is also evident in Guy's sensory perceptions of the country. His reaction to the odour of Bombay demonstrates this:

Her scent was too cloying for his taste but welcome after the smell on the night breeze blowing in from the Bombay foreshore which Perron was convinced was used as a lavatory. Indian insistence that it was just the smell of the sea and the seaweed had not yet made him change his mind. (Div 34)

This detachment is strengthened by his attachment to Merrick and the comic yet truthful comments of the "general hallucinatory atmosphere" (Div 202) in which he exists during this time. Guy slowly becomes more involved in India through his attraction to Sarah Layton and a growing obsession with Hari Kumar. The point where his involvement becomes commitment occurs after he reads the transcript of Hari's interrogation and accompanies Sarah to the Summer Residence where they make love. Cleverly, Scott has layered the relationship of Hari and Daphne with that of Guy and Sarah so that in the act of making love, Guy realizes the truth of Hari's words in the transcript. When Guy returns to India in August, 1947, he is no longer an observer but is attached to the land and its history. His interest in the cartoons of Halki identifies him with the cartoonist's less radical, less Congress-oriented, and more generally humanist view of life (Div 456). He sympathetically understands Nehru's "shrewd fence-sitting" Foreword to My Memories of INA and its Netaji, sent to him by his old officer, commenting: "where else can one sit, and remain in balance?" (Div 476) However, Perron is now committed to India, emotionally and intellectually, as evidenced by his changed sensory perception of the smell: "He walked the few yards to the wall of the esplanade, with its view on to the Arabian Sea;; and its smell. Disgusting. Peaceful. I

shall never go back home, one Perron cried. The other said: Take me back, for God's sake!" (Div 467)

Guy's growing attachment to India is bound up with his association with Sarah Layton. He is attracted to her but initially mistakes her for the "monstrous regiment" (Div 271) of memsahibs which he detests:

He was sorry for her. He felt she deserved better of life. But so many of them did. There was nothing he could do. Their lives were not his affair. He had his own to live. Their dissatisfaction, their boredom, the strain they always seemed to be under, were largely their own fault. (Div 100)

He becomes more interested in her as he realizes her committed, involved attitude to India. With her, he may lose some of his objectivity but through her he gains an understanding of her attachment to the country, realized most clearly when he returns to Mirat in 1947:

I have been happy since, Sarah had said; as a woman might say if she were in love. In love with whom?... The only answer seemed to be: in love with the land itself, after all; yes, in love with that, and content to be here whatever happened. A strange but perhaps logical reversal of her old attitude. (Div 496)

The logical reversal of her old attitude of not being happy in India is due, as Guy realizes, to her mentally freeing herself from the chains of the memsahib world which she detests so much and participating more fully with the life

of the country itself. This is proven later when Guy (and we) find out that she has not only been helping the Nawab's daughter Shiraz, but volunteering at the Mirat purdah hospital. This action identifies her closely with Daphne Manners and Guy adds to this comparison by commenting on her relationship with Ahmed: "And she was the kind of girl who would defy the convention that a white woman didn't fall in love with an Indian." (Div 519) It is also Sarah who takes Guy to see "something of India" (Div 516) when they watch Ahmed and his hawk, Mumtaz. Most importantly, it is through Sarah that Guy realizes the importance of sacrifice, historically from the Indians giving to the raj, and now as a part of the moral continuum, of those from both sides who wish to see India free. Those who sacrifice the most are Count Bronowsky, Sarah, and Hari, and ultimately, Ahmed his own life - all suffering the tragedy of the immediate situation in the belief that a better future will evolve.

Throughout A Division of the Spoils Guy shows no pretensions to paternalism but only a respect for the beneficial aspects of the raj as well as for India. It is on these foundations that his moral alternative to liberalism is built. Through a realization of the necessity and courage of those who must sacrifice and a renewed belief in the value of useful work, Guy presents a simple, compassionate, humanist view.



The narrator of the Quartet, "the stranger", says his intention is to discover the truth of Miss Crane, Miss Manners and young Kumar (JC 100) and it is through Guy Perron that this truth is discovered. However, the truth is not merely finding the actual details and reasons for Miss Crane holding Mr. Chaudhuri's hand or dying in the suttee fire, although these things do point towards the truth, or finding out the detail of what really happened in the Bibighar Gardens. Rather, it is the author's intention for the narrator symbolically to present these things as representative of a search for the more important truth of the "imperial embrace" of the two-hundred year old raj and its effects on India and Britain. The key to solving this mystery is found when Guy and Sarah make love in the Moghul suite of the Governor's Summer Residence.

Historically, the downfall of the Moghuls came when their empire, under Aurangzeb, gained most of southern India. This acquisition was the fatal weakness because it loosened the resources of the empire because its sheer size became unmanageable and easily allowed inroads for those who wanted to revolt. The inability of Aurangzeb to tolerate and co-operate with the Rajputs, a major source of manpower, led to this loss of concrete support in battling the

Marathas, an enemy of the Moghuls.<sup>2</sup> This historical precedent has ghostly parallels to the British Empire, another foreign power, whose downfall also came with the break-up into India and Pakistan. The Moghul suite parallels the Bibghar garden which also has a turbulent past of conquerors, yet now both are part of the legacy of Indian history - a hopeful sign for the vestiges of empire left by the British, like the Pankot and Mayapore cantonment.

Not only history but also personality play a major role in understanding Guy's revelation in the Moghul room. Guy's obsession with Hari Kumar is demonstrated by Guy's frequent mental images of Hari playing cricket at Chillingborough. He remembers Hari's face during a game "an expression of concentration, of hard-held determination, of awareness that to misjudge, to mistime, would lead to destruction." (Div 107) Thus, Guy suggests that that Hari's finely developed ability to play cricket ironically points to his mistake, his misjudgement that in loving Daphne brought about a kind of destruction. But Guy finds hope in Hari by the implied meaning of his pseudonym, Philoctetes. Nigel Rowan tells Guy that Philoctetes was wounded by his own poisoned arrow and was abandoned on Lemnos because of the smell of his wounds. (Div 550) The

---

<sup>2</sup> Stanley Wolpert, A New History of India, 2nd ed., (New York: Oxford, 1982) 149-67.

hope lies in the fact that Hari chose this name for himself, aware in its choosing that although abandoned alone, Philoctetes did eventually arrive at Troy because the others needed him. Guy, in imagining the smell of both Merrick and the archer's wound in his bedroom at Mirat, recognizes the immoral infliction of the raj and the wound it has created in India. His final act of attempting to visit Hari forces him to realize the suffering that Hari has endured and that his presence "would have been a cruel gift". (Div 597) The importance of this visit is that Guy's English cricket images of Hari are replaced by the more pressing reality of the world Hari must now inhabit:

Immediately, I was appalled, and then frightened. I had to remind myself that this was where Hari lived; where he had survived....The smell of animal and human ordure and human sweat was overpowering. (Div 596)

The overwhelming assertion that Hari is surviving the suffering and agony causes Guy to realize the jewel that Britain is losing. Hari's will to live speaks much for the endurance of India.

Superficially, the union of Guy and Sarah is pleasing from the reader's point of view - a union of like-minded, compassionate people who need each other. But more importantly, the scene in the Moghul suite, happening at the

very centre of the novel, is where Guy finally realizes the answer to his question of why Hari stubbornly refused to answer "that vital question" (Div 323), the question "about where he was when she was being attacked. He said he'd never answer it." (Div 312) Guy's realization of Hari's suffering is credible because of his growing identification with Hari, most realistically shown just before the Moghul suite: "I rolled down my sergeant's sleeves, the drill for night-time. While buttoning the cuffs a trick of light made my hands seem brown." (Div 337)

The actual passage of Guy's revelation shows the narrative of the Moghul suite superimposed on that of the Bibighar:

They had emerged, erupted violently, from the shadows of the Moghul Room, attacked me, pulled me away, hit me in the face. Later when they had gone and we held each other again I said: Let me take you home. She said, No. No. We haven't seen each other. We haven't seen each other since the night we visited the temple.  
(Div 337)

Guy, mistaking the Emersonian angels of virtue (Div 333) for Daphne's attackers, experiences the realization that it was love, nothing else, that allowed Hari to keep his silence for so long on that vital question. Learning this, we are invited to interpret the relationship of Daphne and Hari as symbolic of the kind of "imperial embrace" that

characterized the history of the British in India: Hari is representative of the paternalist liberal view of imperialism in India, and Daphne represents the beginning of the more humane, unpaternal compassion which Sarah and Guy continue. Hari and Daphne's unhappiness is caused by the presence of Ronald Merrick, that intolerant, prejudiced negative product of liberal England. The sexual metaphor of rape, identified with Hari and Daphne, and also with India, is broken by Guy and Sarah whose actions metaphorically restore the imperial embrace. This understanding changes the violent nature of the imperial relationship to love and presents a reconciliation of their destinies.

As a platform, Guy allows Scott to present his vision of hope for the future of India and for those involved in it. Perron has concluded the investigation by directing and interpreting the final events which were "incommunicable in isolation from the moral continuum of human affairs". (JC 9) Perron asserts the moral continuum as a context that does not judge history as do liberal historians but rather allows us to judge human affairs in compassionate respect.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Barbie Batchelor

Barbie Batchelor, mission teacher, lonely, and alienated even from God, is a crucial character for Scott in his plan of delivering a holistic portrait of Indian history that has a human face. Barbie's voice humbles the reader by its sacrificial, tragic tone yet does much to narrow and focus Scott's own viewpoint of the British presence in India. The pathetic circumstances of Barbie's early life are as important as her actions as a missionary teacher in determining the nature of the Macaulay ideas of liberalism and Christianity that obliged Barbie to travel six thousand miles from Camberwell.

For almost as long as she could remember she had believed in God, in Christ the Redeemer and in the existence of Heaven. They were very real to her. The fate of unbelievers was equally real, particularly the fate of those who were unbelievers through no fault of their own. This was why when both her parents were dead she had given up her job at a Church School in South London, joined the mission and come to India. (TS 10)

And so, it is Barbie's allegiance to the movement which was

known as "muscular Christianity"<sup>1</sup> that defines and allows the reader the opportunity to intimately explore this particular portion of Anglo-India.

Scott did have a significant precedent for Barbie in the person of Mrs. Moore from E.M. Forster's A Passage To India. Scott has written that "[Mrs. Moore] came out of the Marabar Caves (and her experience of the caves is of greater significance than Miss Quested's) aware of nothing so much as the fact that a new definition of "human being" was essential."<sup>2</sup> For Forster, Mrs. Moore's discovery that the "bourn" of the cave is the echo of despair is so powerful that it silences him as a writer. He has no response to the failure of "Fieldingism" or liberal humanism. However, Scott creates Barbie in almost the same mold as Mrs. Moore but deliberately changes her reflections on the end of liberalism.

The similarities in the two women are striking: both suffer a loss of faith<sup>3</sup>, both women are tortured by a love incident (Marabar and Bibighar) in which

---

<sup>1</sup> F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone, The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford, 1974.) See entry for Charles Kingsley, p. 784.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Scott, "How Well Have They Worn? - A Passage to India," The Times 6 Jan. 1966, 15.

<sup>3</sup>E.M. Forster, A Passage to India, ed. Oliver Stallybrass (1924; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985) 161.

both, against all other evidence, decide that there was love involved, as Mrs. Moore decides: "The unspeakable attempt presented itself to her as love: in a cave, in a church - boum, it amounts to the same." <sup>4</sup> The most important similarity is in the desire of both women to be released into a reconciliation with the universe, as Mrs. Moore says: "To be one with the universe! So dignified and simple."<sup>5</sup> Barbie, too, ponders about the universe, her narrative echoing the Rig Veda<sup>6</sup>.

The mind demands that there be something and therefore something before something. Is the Universe an unprincipled design? Does God weep somewhere beyond it crying to its prisoners to free themselves and come to Him? If it is all explained by chemistry, that chemistry is majestic. It can only lead to the most magnificent explosion, to which God can harken while we burn and disintegrate and scatter into pieces. (TS 207)

This searching leads Barbie towards finding God again, a process begun by the almost divine nature of Lady Manners (TS 205) and her boum is "the echo of her own life" (TS 397) not the boum of total despair which Mrs. Moore hears. Their deaths, Mrs. Moore at sea and Barbie, "burnt into the

---

<sup>4</sup>Forster 213.

<sup>5</sup>Forster 212.

<sup>6</sup>The Rig Veda : An Anthology, selected, trans. & ed. Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981) 25-6.



wall behind her as if by some distant but terrible fire." (TS 397) also point to the significantly different responses by Scott and Forster to the failure of liberal humanism. Mrs. Moore, her stable liberalism shattered by India, is buried at sea - a reference to her looking into the Ganges while in the Muslim temple with Dr. Aziz where she experienced peace. Barbie's death is symbolically drawn into the future by its reference to the bomb at Hiroshima.

Significantly, it is through Barbie's relationships with other people, notably most of them women, that the purpose of Scott's control of this point of view becomes clear. Through her painful relationship with Mildred Layton, her acquaintance with the Pankot ladies and, though less so, her knowledge of and final meeting with Ronald Merrick, Barbie observes the blind stubbornness of those who are determined to carry on the facade of the raj, whether they believe in it or not. Through Mabel Layton and Lady Manners, she observes women who have sadly come to terms with the reality of the past and the necessity of the end of the raj. Knowing Sarah Layton and, vicariously, Daphne Manners, Barbie is both fearful of the future yet confident in their attitude towards India: it is the only option available that is both reasonable and peaceful. Finally, the most important relationship of Barbie's life is that with Edwina Crane in whom Barbie, seeing a mirror of

herself, awakens to her own terrifyingly real personal crisis.

The character of Barbie is so well-drawn from the beginning that the reader is suspended in an empathetic intimacy which overshadows the more mundane details given: that she was "a fairly competent teacher" (TS 10), that her elevation to superintendent of the school district was a "sop" (TS 9), a job which she left in confusion, and, most relevant to her life at Rose Cottage, "she seldom stopped talking and was inclined to act without thinking". (TS 9). All of these characteristics emphasize her working-class background yet it is Barbie's uncommonly good nature, sincerity and innocent belief in the good of man that transport her into the heart of the reader and what most affects our experience of the novel.

It is important that in The Towers of Silence the reader's first perceptions of the deadly relationship between Mildred Layton and Barbie Batchelor are given through the ironic, even at times satirical, point of view of the Pankot ladies. This is Scott's technique of pitting the reader on the side of Barbie and against Mildred. We are led into the situation by the controlling voice of the Stranger:

Demonstrably Miss Batchelor had what presumably Mildred desired, but to judge from her reactions

she was increasingly self-conscious of the fact... that she should either make herself pleasant, or scarce. Whichever course the poor woman adopted the effect on Mildred was the same. Outwardly [Mildred's] attitude towards the missionary was one of unchanging indifference and Miss Batchelor could not disguise from visitors that she was frightened of her....In company Mabel made no effort to protect Miss Batchelor from Mildred's presence. It became doubtful that the missionary woman could survive and it was not at all clear whether Mabel cared one way or the other. (TS 36-7)

Immediately, then, we are introduced to this relationship as one of victim and uncaring victimizer and indeed a slight foreshadowing of Barbie's tragic end. As victim/victimizer, the situation of Barbie and Mildred becomes an early manifestation of the prisoner metaphor as seen later in the shawl of butterflies given to Barbie by Mabel and also of the metaphor of the towers of silence where the predator entirely devours all but the bones of the dead. In either of the metaphors, Mildred is representative of the old raj, committed to a life that has outlived its traditional maternal role but continues its imperial hold on a vastly changed colony. It is through Barbie's perceptions of Mildred that Scott moves our sympathies away from the nostalgic India of the clubs, burra pegs and mess silver.

In many ways Barbie and Mildred are both from the same epoch in the history of the raj. However, Scott's focus on their relationship is to illuminate the lack of

collegiality amongst those British in India and to show the overwhelming presence of a class system, imported from the home country and magnified by the provincialism of the colony. According to Mildred, Barbie's working-class missionary background has no place at Rose Cottage, a bungalow whose architecture and physical location, looking out into the hills where generations of sahibs and memsahibs have trekked for the long Indian summer, was designed for the occupation of a family of the raj. Scott subtly explores the difference between Barbie's call to India, a call that is defined by Barbie's feelings of love, and her desire to act independently on that love, while Mildred's duty has been historically patterned as part of a collective responsibility. This difference is encapsulated in the scene where Barbie shows the picture of "The Jewel in her Crown" to Mildred and the Pankot ladies at Rose Cottage. After showing the picture around, Barbie comments: "It always seemed to me to be a picture about love rather than loyalty. Perhaps they amount to the same thing. What do you think?" (TS 72-3) And the young man to whom she had directed her question could not reply. It is in the interpretation of this picture - a sentimental, nostalgic metaphor of the raj - that these different attitudes to India lie. For Barbie, India is a commitment based on her liberal sense of need but which has evolved into an intimate

identification with the land and the people. For Mildred, love has nothing to do with it. In fact, love has little to do with anything in her life. Marriage, children, friends-even card-playing - are oppressively associated with the loyalty toward the raj and the historical tradition to which they belong.

This sense of class that underlies the spitefulness and hurt of the relationship between these women finally bursts with Barbie's realization that the raj will end in an uncaring split because of the lack of love in people like Mildred. The terrible scene, told by Barbie, is after Mabel Layton's death when Barbie goes to the hospital to find Mildred and beg her not to bury Mabel at Pankot but take her to Ranpur, as Barbie knows she wished. Here Mildred says, " You were born with the soul of a parlour-maid and a parlour-maid is what you've remained. India has been very bad for you and Rose Cottage has been a disaster." (TS 242) And a little later, "How dare you call me Mildred! To you I'm Mrs. Layton." (TS 243) Such comments show that Mildred has never been able to see Barbie as an individual but only as an undeserving recipient of Mabel Layton's aging whims, and now that Mabel had died, Mildred no longer has to tolerate her presence. More important are Barbie's perceptions given after this. Sitting in the Pankot church, a scene deliberately chosen by Scott to

emphasize his point of focus and give her humble thoughts both a divine and prophetic quality, Barbie reflects:

There (she thought) went the raj , supported by the unassailable criteria of necessity, devoutness, even of self-sacrifice....But what was being perpetrated was an act of callousness: the sin of collectively not caring a damn about a desire or an expectation of the fulfilment of a promise so long as personal dignity was preserved and at a cost that could be borne without too great an effort.

And so it will be (Barbie thought) so it will be in regard to our experience here. 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 make it as cloudless for ourselves as we can. So that my life here has indeed been wasted because I have lived it as a transferred appendage, as a parlour maid, the first in line for morning prayers while the mistress of the house hastily covers herself with her wrap and kneels like myself in piety for a purpose. But we have no purpose that God would recognize as such, dress it up as we may by hastily closing our wrap to hide our nakedness and convey a dignity and a distinction as Mildred did and still attempts. (TS 245)

In these magnificent lines, which Scott takes pains to remind us are Barbie's thoughts, Barbie realizes why Mabel felt the way she did about the whole situation. She saw, through Mildred's actions at Mabel's death, the selfishness of preserving an out-dated way of life for the sake of personal dignity. When Barbie speaks as "we", she is finally speaking of the raj "we"- which she never before had understood - and through that realization she sees herself

as useless, a mere instrument in carrying out this governing that no-one, except a few, believes in any more. It is also interesting that Barbie, although very distant from God, relates her new understanding in moral terms with God and to her distress, realizes His disapproval of the whole business. She finally sees Mildred's act as the memsahib of the Pankot hills as an immoral sham: "For that was an arrogance, the kind which Mabel always set her face against, because Mabel knew she brought no consolation even to a rose let alone to a life." (TS 245)

The apostle spoons which Barbie buys to give Susan and Teddie Bingham as a wedding present are an important symbol in the relationship between Mildred and Barbie. Barbie believes Susan has received the spoons but does not see them on display at the wedding party - likely due to Mildred's interference. The spoons are returned to her via Clarissa Peplow - a petty, class-conscious parson's wife who asks Barbie to forgive Mildred in the difficult circumstances. (TS 296) It is also in order to present spoons as a gift to the mess that Barbie walks to Captain Coley's bungalow and finds Mildred and he in bed together. Barbie later wants to give them to Parvati, Daphne Manners' daughter, but cannot express her wish. Finally, the spoons are sent to the Commandant's House to Colonel Trehearne, helping to satisfy an old soldier's obsession for silver in

the mess. These spoons, which Barbie describes as "witnesses to love of the sublimest kind." (TS 177), are symbolic of the sacrifice that Barbie has made in India and, as in the ownership of the spoons, the definite purpose for the sacrifice is not clear. Mildred rejects Barbie's sacrifice of herself, seeing it as irrelevant and bothersome, and as a secret malicious sign of this she returns the spoons to Barbie. Barbie concludes that the spoons are a part of the history and tragedy of the raj: "It's connected really....Everything seems to be. Even spoons." (TS 340) These spoons, originally a gift of Barbie's love, are symbolic of lovelessness - a bad marriage of Susan and Teddie, an adulterous wife (Mildred), and a loveless parson's wife (Clarissa). In the end they are a gift that is both fitting and sad - defying Mildred's attempts to eradicate Barbie's presence and a sad reminder of the past which Mabel Layton longed to put to rest.

The most painful revelation through Barbie's point of view is Mildred's adultery. When Barbie stumbles into Captain Coley's bungalow and finds he and Mildred in a desperate sexual act she interprets the scene for the reader in a very deliberate way. The narrator tells us:

What filled her with horror was the instantaneous impression of the absence of love and tenderness: the emotional inertia and mechanical pumping of the man, the cries coming from the woman who



seemed driven by despair rather than by longing,  
or even lust. (TS 308)

Through Barbie's eyes Scott has shown an innermost portrait of Mildred's kind - a woman who does not know love or tenderness, floating in "emotional inertia". Again, this reference to inertia or numbness is characteristic of Scott's notion of the old defenders of the raj as living completely in a paralyzed state where their morality is suspended in both the private and the public realms. It is interesting that Barbie reveals also the details that heighten Mildred's emotional situation: the international war and the absence of her husband, whose life is dedicated to masking the despair by an all-consuming sense of loyalty. This shows her own depth of character as well as showing that it is her moral sense, present even in the most fearful personal circumstances, that fractures Mildred's facade for us. The scene, however, is damaging physically for Barbie and metaphorically for her character. She awakes after the ensuing illness with a weak voice: "Her voice, of which she had been proud, had become a humiliation. It was weak on the consonants. It cracked on the vowels." (TS 334) This is the beginning of Barbie's final process of isolation from society yet a process which paradoxically brings her back to God.

And so, through the painful torment of Barbie's

vision, the reader is able to view the pathetic world of Mildred Layton, the almost invincible memsahib. It is also very important to Scott's moral framework that it is with Barbie's perceptions that Mildred is judged. Scott has carefully woven Barbie's account so that when Mildred becomes most pathetic, stripped both physically and morally naked, the reader is prevented from sympathizing with Mildred and the others' belief that they are doing right by Barbie's "sacrificial fortitude" (TS 19) and incorruptibility.

Barbie's relationship with Sarah Layton and her affinity to Daphne Manners, although she did not personally know her, are important in understanding the development of Barbie's feelings about herself and her relationship to India. The details of her thoughts about Sarah and Daphne also help to point to Scott's own moral worldview and India's place in it.

Barbie meets Sarah late in her life, when she comes to live with Mabel Layton, Sarah's step-grandmother. With Sarah, Barbie feels completely at ease, showing pieces of her past that she would not mention in front of most Pankot people. Barbie depends on the faithfulness of Sarah as a friend, in her visiting, sending postcards, and being able to talk with her, a faithfulness which is especially important for Barbie at the end of her life. Here, in the

isolation of the hospital operated by nuns, Sarah is Barbie's only contact with the world of Pankot and her past. Sarah's faithful presence helps Barbie to reflect on herself:

She looks at my old fond and foolish face and sees through it...sees right down to the despair but also beyond to the terrific thing there really is in me, the joy I would find in God and which she would find in life which come to much the same thing. (TS 175)

And so, Sarah acts as a mirror for Barbie to realize what is wrong with herself yet at the same time she can still optimistically see the good in herself too. These lines also act as a key to Barbie's end. When the despair finally leaves her, she is able to die feeling the joy that always lay beneath, waiting to be exposed.

Barbie's descriptions of Sarah and the emotional bond which she feels towards the girl are an important way of strengthening the sympathetic bond which Scott wants the reader to have with Sarah. Sarah, like Barbie, becomes one of Scott's focal points for the moral continuum of the whole Quartet. An example of Barbie's descriptions helps to show the mutual attraction and sensibilities of the two women:

Her [Sarah's] grace was a different kind from Susan's. If grace was the right word then Susan had the look of imminent entrance to it, Sarah the look of being born there....something had happened... which had heightened the other

look she had always had of taking very little on trust...It then occurred to Barbie that Sarah could have seen the child, talked to Lady Manners, taken one of those opportunities when characteristically alone to pay the visit her family steered clear of. (TS 174-5)

The fact that Barbie surmises the truth of Sarah's visit to Lady Manners and understands the full impact of such a visit on Sarah, is not just to strengthen the relationship between the two women in the narrative, but also to help bring the reader emotionally closer to Sarah and her understanding of India. Barbie can relate to Sarah's discoveries because she is spiritually alike. Later Barbie again comments on Sarah's brave visit by admiring her: "Barbie gazed at Sarah with awe and curiosity; fear for her toughness and temerity." (TS 175) Ironically, Barbie herself has not a small measure of this toughness and temerity - qualities which allowed her to leave England, join the mission, eventually come to Pankot and suffer the torments of Mildred Layton. Barbie loves something in Sarah that is present in herself, yet she appreciates it more in Sarah because she seems to know that Sarah's life may be seen as more important than Barbie's in the raj scheme of things, and that Sarah's actions will make more of a difference. However, Barbie does recognize the possible redundancy of Sarah's life:

Looking at Sarah, Barbie felt she understood a little of the sense the girl might have of having no clearly defined world to inhabit, but one poised between the old for which she had been prepared, but which seemed to be dying, and the new for which she had not been prepared at all. (TS 278)

As an outside observer, both from family and class, Barbie fears for the plight of Sarah who is beginning to see the magnitude of difference between herself and her peers in England who had not been promised the privilege of the raj.

Appropriately, it is through a conversation with Sarah that Barbie comes to realize the true nature of her friend, Edwina Crane, and Edwina's final rejection of the Anglo-Indian world. More importantly, Barbie recognizes that she herself is in the same desperate situation. Barbie and Sarah are discussing Teddie Bingham's death and Sarah mentions "man-bap", the old expression that showed the relationship of the raj to India, "I am your father and your mother." Sarah asks Barbie:

"[Ronald Merrick] talked about [Edwina] sitting at the roadside holding the dead Indian's hand. He thought that was man-bap. Was it?"

"No."

"What was it?"

"Despair."

For a moment Sarah looked stricken by the bleak word as if it was the last one she had expected; but then she smiled briefly in recognition.

"Yes," she said. "That makes sense." (TS 276)

With Barbie's perceptions of her relationship with Sarah and the feelings they have towards others, the reader has been able to follow the ambivalent attitude of the British presence in India which Scott specifically wants to convey. Indeed, all of Barbie's movements are crucial to completing this impression for the reader. Her move to Pankot deepens both her and our understanding of the liberal position and would not have been so clear if she had stayed among the missions because it is only in meeting the upper-middle-class military families who perpetuate the traditional ideas of the raj that she is able to see the dilemma of imperialism. Both Barbie and Sarah recognize Edwina's act of holding the dead hand of Mr. Chaudhuri could never be manbap - manbap only served to glorify the raj and was not sympathy for an insignificant dead Indian. Both women also recognize Edwina's despair because they too see no hope or life in the future of India under the British, only more dead Indians as Barbie's recurring dream of the unknown dead Indian shows. Ironically, Daphne Manners, that other daughter of the raj who decided to shun her privileged position for love, was also close to Barbie's heart and thought although they had never met each other. Barbie learned of the circumstances of Daphne's rape and subsequent delivery of Parvati through the gossip-mongers of Pankot. She identifies with Daphne:

[She] detected what she thought of as the girl's despair and was sorry for her....She was not convinced though that Miss Manners was telling the whole truth so she was also sorry for the police officer who had arrested the men and was convinced of their guilt. (TS 80)

The reader at this point is much more aware of the police officer than Barbie is, but her willingness to have sympathy for him is an element in her that is important for developing affinity with Barbie. Later, when talking with Sarah, Barbie says, "Wouldn't it be terrible for Mr. Merrick to 'know' he'd got it wrong?" (TS 340) However, when she finally meets Merrick, appropriately at Rose Cottage, that very proper raj home, Barbie recognizes that Merrick could never see that he had "got it wrong" with Daphne. Significantly, she puts the "Jewel in her Crown" picture, which she now knows is incomplete without the unknown Indian, into Merrick's dead hand - almost as a lament for a cause no longer morally justifiable for her but real enough for Merrick.

Barbie's knowledge of Daphne helps her to come to terms with the myth of the raj and the reality of its persecution of lives, both English and Indian. Through her observations of Sarah and Daphne, Barbie realizes the crisis of empire in a personal, identifiable way. She becomes fearful of the future, afraid that the raj will continue to

destroy the sensibilities of those like Daphne and Sarah while allowing others like Susan and Merrick to live out nostalgic but immoral lives. So, the reader through Barbie's growing awareness also is manipulated by Scott into sharing Mabel Layton's words, "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 201)

Through Barbie's relationship with Mabel Layton and an affinity with Lady Manners, although unlike Daphne she did not know her, Scott directs the reader more intensely toward his central moral framework. In an earlier novel, The Bender, he used a phrase of Stendhal: "Without work, the vessel of life has no ballast."<sup>7</sup> For Scott, work was the pivotal key to proper balance and sound moral judgement. Part of Sarah and Daphne's moral dignity comes from their desire to find a justifiable purpose in India. As Barbie comes to know Mabel and Lady Manners she, and so we, realize the deliberate sacrifice of those who gave up a way of life, albeit wrong, in order to preserve truth and human dignity for others.

Barbie observes from a distance Lady Manners who decides to raise Daphne's daughter Parvati. The distance is important in creating the effect of Lady Manners as

---

<sup>7</sup> Paul Scott, The Bender (London: Granada, 1975) 17.



something divine, and so her wisdom appears to both Barbie and the readers as truth. For most of her life Lady Manners' work was the raj; it gave her purpose and defined her life. However, with quiet grace she retreats from Anglo-Indian society and identifies with the Indians. Barbie narrates in her unposted letters to Helen Jolley how Lady Manners has ironically kept up the old custom of signing in at the visitor's gate of Flagstaff House:

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 208)

In not joining the Pankot society but going to stay with Indian friends, Lady Manners is making a statement to the others: "I am here in your midst, think about it."(TS 208) Barbie admires what Lady Manners has done but cannot move herself to join her - perhaps recognizing that in her position she has little power to do anything to change. Barbie unexpectedly finds Lady Manners in St. John's Church, an incident that only serves to heighten her divine association in the minds of Barbie and the readers. The following passage shows Barbie's experience in the church in the presence of Lady Manners:

...There was one of those mysterious adjustments, a small shift of the empty building's centre of gravity, as of a momentary easing of its tensions and stresses which created an illusion of echo without traceable source, so that to Barbie it seemed that the church's guardian angel had half-opened and then closed one of his gigantic wings. (TS 271)

Barbie's relationship with that other representative of the old raj, Mabel Layton, is also important in her role as narrator. Mabel's work has also been the work of the raj but she too has changed - even when Barbie arrives at Rose Cottage she notes that "Mabel, it was true, had let herself go, but in the manner that only people of her upbringing seemed capable of doing without losing prestige and an air of authority." (TS 20) Here again, like Lady Manners, was a woman able to ignore the life which she had been a part of for so many years and be content with a personal satisfaction in her garden, her help and friend Aziz, and most importantly, in private acts of contrition to Indians, such as donating money to the victims of Amritsar. As Barbie becomes involved in Mabel's private life she observes the suffering Mabel endures from the guilt of the raj's unsavoury history. She hears Mabel muttering, "Gillian Waller" in her sleep and observes Mabel's disgust at seeing the silver still the way it was in the officers' mess forty years before. As an outsider to this class and scene, Barbie recognizes the moral imperative of Mabel's

words but becomes tormented by her inability to act. Both Mabel and Lady Manners have not lost their ballast - but it is no longer the work of the raj. Instead, they have exchanged it for the cause of India itself, no longer to perpetuate the nostalgia of the raj but to attempt at least some recompense before they die.

Barbie envies both women. After Mabel's death she is a lost, tormented soul without any ballast. For most of her life, the missions had been Barbie's work and at the time she found satisfaction there. After she arrives at Rose Cottage, Mabel Layton becomes her work, giving her purpose and happiness. When Mabel dies, Barbie is lost and desperate:

She was laughing for Mabel because the alternative to laughter was shriek after shriek of wild and lonely despair because Mabel had gone and she had lost her occupation and she saw now that was how it was and would always be for everyone. (TS 235)

The loss of occupation and Barbie's pathetic sufferings are made intimate to the reader through her narrative role. Perhaps the most horrible of these sufferings is brought about through her struggle to have Mabel Layton buried in Ranpur and not Pankot. It is in this quest that she envisions her worst fears seen in Mabel's corpse at the

mortuary: "The mouth was open too and from it a wail of pain and terror was emitting."(TS 238)

The heart of Barbie's narrative is given in a series of six meditations entitled: "A meditation. St. John's Church. 4.30 p.m. June 7th 1944." (TS 212ff) These meditations varying from first to third person narrow Scott's focus on Barbie to show intimately the personal loss of Mabel but also to give a portrait of the liberal individual stripped of the world and beliefs she had known and left struggling to find meaning in the remnants. Barbie expresses this feeling in the fourth meditation, a rewriting of Psalm 39:1-4, that shows Barbie's own saddened sense of humour juxtaposed with her sense of the insubstantiality of life. Barbie takes the reader through her own emotional wilderness and finally relates it all to the passing of the raj:

She did not care. The charade was finished. Mabel had guessed the word years ago but had refrained from speaking it. The word was "dead". Dead. Dead. It didn't matter now who said it; the edifice had crumbled and the facade fooled nobody. (TS 229)

Ironically, Mabel's twofold legacy to Barbie eventually brings about her end. Mabel leaves her with the sparse truth of the end of the raj and therefore the end of Barbie's purpose in life yet it was meant to give her a

sense of liberation too. Mabel also leaves Barbie the shawl of butterflies, the lace where butterflies are prisoners caught in a web. Barbie, too, is caught in the web of her history and she cannot, like Mabel and Lady Manners, shake free to find another purpose. Towards the end she befriends Ashok whom she sees is also a prisoner:

"Tu es mon petit Hindou inconnu," she whispered.  
 "Et tu es un papillon brun. Moi, je suis blanche.  
 Mais nous sommes les prisonniers du bon Dieu."  
 (TS 364)

In these dark days of Barbie's torment, she only sees victims and victimizers, prisoners and prison-keepers, yet Scott's intention in narrowly focusing on Barbie's narrative is not only to portray this agony but to go beyond it and to show how Barbie finds rest. As Barbie's relationships with Mabel and Lady Manners show, her tragedy is one of losing her purpose and not being able to replace it. She is captive within the confines of the old liberal doctrines to which she can truthfully no longer adhere but has found nothing to replace that faith with. That liberalism, a part of her historical baggage to which she frequently alludes, will not let her shake free. If she did, it would seem to her that the past years which she has given to the land and the people would mean something very different than her original purpose, "To bring even one Hindu or Muslim child

to God struck her as a very satisfactory thing to do".(TS 10-11) However, the reader, vicariously through Barbie's sufferings, realizes she is afloat but at least moving in what Scott wants us to recognize is the right direction. Because of this, Barbie will be saved.

Of the two central images of the entire quartet, Daphne Manners running in the dark and Edwina Crane nursing Mr. Chaudhuri on the road to Dibrapur, the image of Edwina is most important for Barbie Batchelor. Edwina and Barbie share many similarities: two major ones being their involvement in the missions which is characterized by an activism that belies the absence of God but defines their Christian world, and their private loneliness brought about both by their spinsterhood but also by their unique place in India that is not with the Indians and not with the military Anglo-Indians.

As Barbie becomes isolated in Pankot she relies more and more on her ideal vision of Edwina Crane. Although Barbie never really knew her and any past meeting was characterized by its awkwardness (TS 27), Barbie yearns to be as she imagines Edwina, a view strongly wrought by Edwina's brave act of defending her schoolchildren:

With the children cowering behind her in the schoolroom, she stood valiantly in the open doorway, at the height of serious civil disturbances, facing a gang of crazed and

angry Muslims who had come to burn the mission down, and told them to be off; which they were (so the story went) in a subdued and silly-looking bunch. (TS 25)

This early section of the novel is introduced by the controlling narration of the stranger who wants to create the sense that Barbie may be basing her worship on embellished story-telling rather than truth by reminding the reader, "(so the story went)". This works to give the impression of Barbie as one in need of a heroine and to increase the sympathy of the reader for her. The reader also already knows of Edwina's act of suttee, told in The Jewel in the Crown (123). This is part of the author's control to make the reader omniscient and thereby show Barbie's suffering empathetically, since knowledge will make the reader more compassionate. Again when Barbie learns of Edwina's act of holding Mr. Chaudhuri's body after their attack, she interprets it as an act of apotheosis, interpreting her desire as Edwina's and wishing for her own:

How I long for an apotheosis of my own, nothing spectacular, mind, nothing in the least grandiose nor even just grand but, like Edwina's, quiet with a still-centre to it that exemplifies not my release from earthly life although it might do that too but from its muddiness and uncertainty...my release from that into the tranquillity of knowing my work has been acceptable, good and useful perhaps, perhaps not, but performed in love, with love, and humility of course, indeed, humility, and singularity,

wholeness of purpose. That is the most important thing of all. (TS 74)

Knowing this through the interior narrative, the reader is aware that Barbie's need is for something to give her purpose again, and she is revealing herself as a lost soul, someone who is discovering that the purpose to which she committed herself for her life's work was in vain and along with this knowledge comes the full realization that God is absent from her. The reader's foreknowledge again creates sympathy because we know that Edwina's act was not apotheosis but despair, making Barbie's longing seem very sad. In Barbie's need for someone to worship in the absence of God, Edwina becomes a surrogate for Him, as she tells in the first person: "And I shall be large again and shapely with intent, so close to Edwina that God will remember and no longer mark me absent from the roll." (TS 75)

The figure of the Indian from Edwina's image becomes important for Barbie and as we read her narrative, this figure develops into an image in itself that maps Barbie's realization that in much of the raj's development and history, the English have forgotten the Indian people. This was Edwina's crisis on the Dibrapur road but Barbie did not realize it until close to her death. Hari Kumar and his relationship with Daphne also help to fuel Barbie's imagination about the unknown Indian. It is the figure of



the unknown Indian which bridges the gap between the world of Barbie's imaginary ideal of Edwina and the reality of Edwina's actions forcing Barbie to a crisis of self-identification.

The first mention of the unknown Indian occurs during Barbie's pondering of Edwina's attack on the Dibrapur road. She thinks:

...there emerged a figure, the figure of an unknown Indian: dead in one aspect, alive in another. And after a while it occurred to her that the unknown Indian was what her life in India had been about. The notion alarmed her. She had not thought of it before in those terms and did not know what to do about it now that she had....But the dead man in the vicinity of the milestone had moved. Overnight there had been a rearrangement of his limbs as if while it was dark he had sat up. And howled. The hills were hunted by jackals. People would not have noticed. But she thought that she would henceforth be able to distinguish the man's cry from the cries of the animals. (TS 78)

And so, for the first time in her career in India, Barbie has come face to face with the fact that the Indian people have most often been either left to the last or dismissed completely from the consciousness of the English. Even for her, a missionary dealing daily with Indians, she has been more involved in her own personal act of saving souls than understanding who she was saving. After discovering this unknown Indian, she is haunted by the figure in various forms and her firm liberal notions are radically shaken by

what she envisions. As Barbie learns more of the affairs of Edwina and Daphne, she adds Hari Kumar to her picture of the unknown Indian,

She began to have dreams about him, but in these dreams he was the Indian Edwina had tried to save. In this dream his eyes were blinded by cataracts. He had a powerful muscular throat which was exposed because his head was lifted and his mouth wide open in a continuous soundless scream.  
(TS 81)

Upon reflection, such a scream comes to represent an eternal agony as Barbie repeats the idea again when she later sees Mabel Layton's corpse in the morgue: "The mouth was open too and from it a wail of pain and terror was emitting." (TS 238) Eventually the image of the unknown Indian becomes a symbol of what the painter has left out of the picture of "The Jewel in her Crown". As Barbie ironically tells Ronald Merrick:

"One should always share one's hopes," she said. "That represents one of the unfulfilled ones. Oh, not the gold and scarlet uniforms, not the pomp, not the obeisance. We've had all that and plenty. We've had everything in the picture except what got left out".  
"What was that, Miss Batchelor?"  
She said, not wishing to use that emotive word, "I call it the unknown Indian. He isn't there. So the picture isn't finished." (TS 388)

Through the author's control of this image, the reader is clearly able to see Barbie's crisis evolve from her confused

notions about the identity of the Indian to the sober understanding of who he is and why the cause of his liberation is so important.

As a complete contrast to the imaginary ideal of Edwina, the realism of her suicidal suttee causes Barbie to endure a tortured battle against total despair. The security of Edwina as a Christian substitution for God is stripped away from her and her natural dignity and outward confidence are ruined by the actions of Mildred Layton. Much of her agony is still caused by the marked absence of God but as the reader endures Barbie's suffering, she shows that the lack of God is related to the Anglo-Indian situation in India, emphasizing the same answer as Mabel Layton, Lady Manners, Sarah Layton and Edwina. Her dialogue reflects the changes in her character as well. She loses her old loquacity and now chooses her words and thoughts with more care and deliberation. Her answer to why God is still absent is sparsely summed up at her sad departure from Rose Cottage:

"You are now native roses," she said to them.  
 "Of the country. The garden is a native garden.  
 We are only visitors. That has been our mistake.  
 That is why God has not followed us here."  
 (TS 283)

Since much earlier in the novel, Barbie has been

visited by a "presence", that later evolves into a heavy carrion bird. She does know who the creature is:

"Poor creature," she said. She shut her eyes.  
"I know who you are and I know you are still  
here. Please go." She waited, then caught her  
breath at the sound of a slow ungainly winged  
departure as of a heavy carrion bird that had  
difficulty in overcoming the pull of gravity.  
(TS 99)

Scott has carefully crafted this image to be fluid so that it can help define the loneliness and utter desolation of Barbie's situation as well as show her identified with a certain hope that is shown in the image of the vultures in the towers of silence. The usual Western association of carrion birds as omens or related to the devil changes to the Eastern Zoroastrian or Parsee interpretation where the birds pick the bones clean thereby preventing burning or any other defilement which might not allow the spirit to be released from the body. Metaphorically, Barbie has been "picked clean" throughout the novel: the loss of her social position through Mabel's death, the loss of her position as missionary teacher, her dignity, her voice, her mind and ultimately, her will. However, Barbie's spirit still remains, as is shown to us through her caustic, almost rude comments to the nuns but more clearly through the visits of Sarah Layton. Through most of the scraps of narrative that show Barbie's final days, she is still the narrator, but

even this narration shows the spareness of what is left of her life with its short, succinct sentences and lack of much detail. As she tells, "She remembered a great deal. But was unable to say what it was. The birds had picked the words clean." (TS 396)

As Barbie's life poetically and tragically portrays the close of the raj from the perspective of the English in India, so does it also portray the decline and final collapse of liberal humanism. The actual time of her death, fixed deliberately at August 6th, 1945, is a little too contrived by Scott but it is clear that he wants the reader to recognize the significance. The meaning of Edwina's act of suttee is clarified as Barbie understands that the English have given something of themselves but have not submitted themselves totally to India and they have built an empire of self-indulgence. For Scott, this too is a loss of ballast that has been carried on for too long, as Mabel Layton recognized. Scott himself said, "SHE [Barbie] CERTAINLY BRINGS THE WHOLE THING TO A CLOSE BECAUSE she is out of the running by 1944."<sup>a</sup> Although some people were aware that a kind of destruction such as the world had never seen was inevitable with the discovery of the atom bomb, the

---

<sup>a</sup> Paul Scott, "Notes for Talk and Reading at Stamford Grammar School," My Appointment with the Muse: Essays 1961-75 ed. & intro. Shelley C. Reece (London: Heinemann, 1986) 168.

actual explosion came as a terrible shock to most people. Scott and many others felt that this kind of total destruction changed the world. His use of Barbie as the central narrator of this novel is his most narrow, focussed piece in the Quartet, suggesting that The Towers of Silence is the central novel of the four and that its main narrator is the central persona of the entire story.

## Conclusion

If Scott wanted Barbie to "bring the whole thing to a close" then the reader must wonder why he felt it necessary to continue to write another six hundred pages. The conclusion must be that Scott's vision required a return to the panorama of the wider stage and, perhaps more importantly, required the final voice of Guy Perron that brings freshness and comedy to the scene. In the beginning Scott had no idea that there would be four novels, but he did know the method he wished to use.<sup>1</sup> He called this: "seeing the central situation from different angles".<sup>2</sup> Hence his final novel, with the introduction of even more characters and the return of other familiar ones, completes the angles of vision in that here are finally the views of those who are not staying on but are on their way "home".

Scott's method of narration is vital to the meaning of the Quartet, for his narrators not only relay details of the story but their emotional involvement and

---

<sup>1</sup> Paul Scott, My Appointment with the Muse: Essays 1961-75, ed. Shelley C. Reece (London: Heinemann, 1986) 167.

<sup>2</sup> Scott, My Appointment with the Muse, 168.

desire for action are central contrasts to the disillusionment, chaos and alienation of the world around them. All the narrators are animated by the central images in the Quartet: a girl running in the dark, and a woman holding the dead Indian on the road. Their reactions to those events at that time, and the impact shown through their later reflections, provide a sense of hope and renewal for they are determined to avoid any such future tragedy. Barbie Batchelor always wanted to "cast a shadow", and in their narratives these characters have cast individual shadows made common by their shared willingness to take action with and not simply for others. This is the foundation of Scott's alternative to liberalism -- the moral continuum of human affairs.

Molly Mahood refers to Scott's story as: "a kind of narthex in which, like medieval catechumens, we are put wise before we are admitted to the cathedral itself."<sup>3</sup> These four narrators are teachers, molding us and preparing us throughout the Quartet so that we may be receptive to Scott's whole vision of a moral continuum of human affairs. The love animating Daphne Manners, Sarah Layton, and Guy Perron must replace the paternalism and sentimentality which

---

<sup>3</sup> M.M. Mahood, "Paul Scott's Guardians," Yearbook of English Studies 13 (1983): 244.



first motivated Barbie Batchelor. This love answers the  
echo in the Marabar Cave.

## Bibliography

- Allen, Walter. The English Novel: A Short Critical History. 1954. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1958.
- Beloff, Max. "The End of the Raj: Paul Scott's Novels as History." Encounter 272 (May 1976): 65-70.
- Booth, Wayne. The Rhetoric of Fiction. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.
- Cross, F.L. and Livingstone, E.A. The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church. 2nd ed. London: Oxford, 1974.
- Embree, Ainslie T. ed. The Hindu Tradition: Readings in Oriental Thought. New York: Vintage-Random House, 1972.
- Forster, E.M. A Passage to India. 1924. Ed. Oliver Stallybrass. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985.
- . Aspects of the Novel. London: Edward Arnold & Co., 1927.
- Hindu Myths: A Sourcebook translated from the Sanskrit. Intro. Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975.
- Jeffrey, Robin., ed. People, Princes and Paramount Power: Society and Politics in the Indian Princely States. Delhi: Oxford, 1978.

Macaulay, Thomas Babington. Speeches, Poems & Miscellaneous Writings in The Complete Works of Lord Macaulay in Twelve Volumes. London: Longmans, Green, 1898.

Mahood, M.M. "Paul Scott's Guardians." Yearbook of English Studies 13 (1983): 244-58.

Menon, Vapal Pangunni. The Integration of the Indian States. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.

Muggeridge, Malcolm. The Infernal Grove. Vol. 2 of Chronicles of Wasted Time. London: Collins, 1973.

Oxford English Dictionary. 1933. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970.

Rao, K. Bhaskara. Paul Scott. Twayne's English Authors Series 285. Boston: Twayne, 1980.

Sandison, Alan. The Wheel of Empire. London: Macmillan, 1967.

Scott, Paul. Johnnie Sahib. 1952. London: Panther-Granada, 1979.

---. The Alien Sky. 1953. London: Panther-Granada, 1974.

---. A Male Child. 1956. London: Panther-Granada, 1974.

---. The Chinese Love Pavillion. 1960. London: Panther-Granada, 1973.

---. The Birds of Paradise. 1962. London: Panther-Granada, 1969.

- . The Bender: Pictures from an Exhibition of Middle Class Portraits. 1963. London: Panther-Granada, 1975.
- . The Corrida at San Feliu. 1964. London: Panther-Granada, 1974.
- . The Jewel in the Crown. 1964. London: Panther-Granada, 1973.
- . The Day of the Scorpion. 1968. London: Panther-Granada, 1973.
- . The Towers of Silence. 1971. London: Panther-Granada, 1973.
- . The Division of the Spoils. 1975. London: Panther-Granada, 1977.
- . Staying On. 1977. London: Panther-Granada, 1978.
- . My Appointment with the Muse: Essays 1961-1975. Ed. Shelley C. Reece. London: Heinemann, 1986.
- . "India: A Post-Forsterian View." Essays by Divers Hands: Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature. New Series Vol. XXXVI. London: Oxford, 1970.
- . "How Well Have They Worn: A Passage to India." The Times 6 Jan. 1966: 15.
- Swinden, Patrick. Paul Scott. Writers and their Work 278. Windsor: Profile Books, 1982.
- . Paul Scott: Images of India. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980.

The Rig Veda: An Anthology. Selected, Trans., and Annotated Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981.

Tillyard, E.M.W. The Epic Strain in the English Novel. London: Chatto & Windus, 1958.

Watt, Ian. The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding. London: Chatto & Windus, 1957.

Wilson, Edmund. The Wound and the Bow: Seven Studies in Literature. New York: Oxford, 1947.

Wolpert, Stanley. A New History of India. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford: 1982.

Woodcock, George. "The Sometime Sahibs: Two Post-Independence British Novelists of India." Queen's Quarterly 86 (1979) 39-49.