

THE THEME OF ALIENATION
IN PAUL SCOTT'S QUINTET OF NOVELS:
A STUDY OF RONALD MERRICK

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A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree
Master of Arts

McMaster University

MASTER OF ARTS (1986)
(English)

McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: The Theme of Alienation in Paul Scott's
 Quintet of Novels: A Study of Ronald Merrick

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NUMBER OF PAGES: vi, 85

ABSTRACT

If a man does not understand his mistakes, he is doomed to repeat them. Scott saw that this was the case in colonial India where the English, in their myopia, constantly repeated their mistakes over centuries and so alienated the Indian population. However, these same English, in their insularity, also alienated those people from their own country who did not meet the standards of their self-imposed mores, those who were not quite pukka. More than in any other modern novels Paul Scott explores in his quintet of novels, The Jewel in the Crown, The Day of the Scorpion, The Towers of Silence, A Division of the Spoils, and Staying On, this theme of alienation and its tragic results.

As none of the characters is more alienated or tragic than Ronald Merrick, I examine in the following pages how and why this happens to him historically, socially and psychologically. Scott's attitude is explored as are the techniques he uses to emphasise his theme of alienation.

TEXTUAL NOTE

In the body of this thesis, references to Scott's quintet of novels - The Jewel in the Crown, The Day of the Scorpion, The Towers of Silence, A Division of the Spoils, and Staying On - are abbreviated and given in brackets: (Jewel), (Scorpion), (Towers), (Division), and (Staying On).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank Dr. James Dale for his assistance and encouragement during the preparation of this thesis.

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After such knowledge, what forgiveness? Think now
History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors
And issues, deceives with whispering ambitions,
Guides us by 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.

T.S. Eliot, "Gerontion", ll 33-47

CHAPTER ONE

Over the last century, the word alienation has changed from describing insanity to a more general, modern meaning of "an inability to identify with the culture, society, family or peer group".¹ There are examples of all these forms in Paul Scott's quintet of novels. Of course, the theme of alienation in English literature did not begin with Scott any more than it began with the writers who came after the First World War. It is in the novels of Joseph Conrad that alienation is first shown in a world that is without pity or understanding, a world as dry as T. S. Eliot's The Waste Land, and the theme of alienation has continued until today when authors such as V. S. Naipaul write about nihilism and colonialism *excellent insights on domination* wonder about the futility of life in an increasingly anarchic world, and refuse to see any hope for mankind; a view shared by many of his readers. Paul Scott, whose favourite poet was Eliot, saw the increasing alienation in the world but believed that it could be overcome by love or compassion between people or nations. *willingly, but difficult*

Loving India as he did, Scott saw that the real problem which caused the alienation of the English from the Indians

lay in their contempt for, and refusal to understand, Indian cultures and religions and in their inability to socialise with individual Indians who were often as well, if not better, educated than they; Indians became invisible to most English. This insularity is accentuated in the novels by the many long train journeys. However, the English who did not fit into the self-imposed social mores of the English middle-class were also alienated by that society whose social prejudices were exaggerated in a distant country where a few thousand whites ruled, without permission, millions of Indians. That is why Scott admires people who not only do not conform but are able to withstand public opinion: people who follow their hearts or their consciences against terrible odds, some even losing their lives in that pursuit: compassionate people like Daphne Manners, Sister Ludmila, Mohammed Ali Kasim and Sarah Layton.

M. M. Mahood believes that the lack of literary criticism about Scott's The Raj Quartet is due to its being labelled "popular history in fictionalised form", and believes that many critics have not read the novels for that reason.² The reticence is there but is difficult to understand when one considers the complexity of the novels which are not just another story about the demise of the raj. One critic who does praise Scott's achievement is, ironically, the historian Max Beloff, who believes that the novelist,

unlike the historian

has the freedom both to represent the circumstances of the case, and through symbolic reference, the complex of feelings, physical and moral, that go to make up the experience as a whole One cannot read Paul Scott without being moved, and what is the sense of studying history if it is not to move one and widen one's moral responsibilities? His achievement is on any count a major one.

3

The novels, with their many time and space sequences, are indeed complex, for underlying that particular era of history, in the shifting images, in the names of places and people, is the evocation of an India before the English came, of the arrival of the traders and then the East India Company, of the Mogul Empire, of the over-zealous Victorians with their missionaries, of Amritsar, and of the beleaguered garrison mentality in remote hill stations whose inhabitants still retained an illusion of power. All this, combined with imagery of imprisonment, of freedom gained and of captivity prolonged, emphasises the alienation of the English in India who are living in "a perpetual Edwardian sunshine" (Scorpion 437).

In an attempt to unravel the complexities of the novels, K. B. Rao says that Scott uses "the visual techniques of the cinema".⁴ I prefer to say that Scott uses dramatic narrative techniques, for theatrical imagery permeates the novels.

When Merrick arrived in India, he thought "it all seemed so unreal, like a play", (Scorpion 221), and Perron thinks that the Second World War is "an under-rehearsed and over-directed amateur production" (Division 10). Scott's prose does not pan over crowds of people or glorious vistas like a movie camera but rather concentrates on people's thoughts, a dialogue or a single dramatic incident and stays there until Scott is ready to move on. The prose does not hurry or cut away abruptly but lingers on the characters; the scenery, beautiful as it is, is only incidental. In this way, the reader is able to concentrate on the characters and the different points of view, some in prolonged conversations. This succeeds in isolating the characters, and "India is made to impinge on us exactly as it did on the Raj, seeping in discreetly from the corners of a claustrophobic frame".⁵ An example of this is Miss Crane sitting by the side of the road with Mr. Chaudhuri's dead body cradled in her arms and the rain streaming down her face as she realises that her whole life has been wasted. The bleak countryside surrounds her, but is unnoticed.

Throughout The Raj Quartet, the narrator suddenly orders the reader to "Imagine then", "Picture then", and a picture is framed:

Imagine then, a flat landscape, dark for the moment, but even so conveying to a girl running

in the still deeper shadow cast by the wall of the Bibighar Gardens an idea of immensity, of distance, such as years before Miss Crane had been conscious of standing where a lane ended and cultivation began: a different landscape but also in the alluvial plain between the mountains of the north and the plateau of the south. This is the story of a rape, of the events that led up to it and followed it and of the place in which it happened. There are the action, the people, and the place; all of which are interrelated but in their totality uncommunicable in isolation from the moral continuum of human affairs. (Jewel 9).

These lines from the first page of the first novel, The Jewel in the Crown, frame a picture of an Indian landscape which has survived and will survive all invasions and ^{good choice of words!} rapes. Here the tragedy of Daphne Manners is linked not only to the eighteenth-century poet Gaffur's "girl running" but to all the connotations derived from the word bibighar, the place of women: the place which was burned down by the early nineteenth-century Scottish trader MacGregor, who was jealous of his Indian lover: the place which witnessed atrocities by English and Indians at Cawnpore in 1857. The darkened view of the country from the edge of Mayapore is seen by an already isolated Miss Crane in the early twentieth-century before the airport was built and the duck shooting spoiled. Scott's towns and characters are imaginary, but the land and many of the events are not, for they all connect. What rape? The rape of Daphne Manners by Indians or the rape by the English of India of all her raw resources: cotton, jute,

* *Figurative rape! Take body and fortunes*

indigo, tea and coal? The results of the latter can be seen in the worked-out mines in Dibrapur where the resulting unemployment is one of the underlying causes of the communal rioting in 1942, when Miss Manners is raped and Miss Crane is assaulted. The results of the former form one of the major themes of The Raj Quartet and connects with every character and event.

Even the names of places are connected. Miss Crane teaches at the mission school in Chillianwallah Bazaar; Hari Kumar lives in Chillianwallah Bagh; Chillianwallah was the site of the Khalsa's defeat of the English in 1849. These in turn sound like Jillianwallah Bagh in Amritsar and Mabel Layton's elusive Gillian Waller or even Chillingborough, the English public school which so many of the characters have attended. The names like the images are not static but are like "the moving water of the river" and are like the old houses of the old town "which are stained too with their bloody past and uneasy present" (Jewel 9).

That Scott intends the past to be part of the present is demonstrated again when Mohammed Ali Kasim returns to his former prison at Premanagar.

It had originally been a Rajput fort. The Muslims had conquered it. It was they who had built the mosque and the zenana house in the inner courtyard where Kasim had spent his imprisonment. The Mahrattas had invested it.

The British had acquired it. So much history in so insignificant a monument? Insignificant, that was to say, in relation to the vast stretches of the Indian Plain. (Division 397).

Moreover, Sister Ludmila tells the stranger, "that given the material evidence, there is also in you an understanding that a specific historical event has no definite beginning, no satisfactory end? It is as if time were telescoped and space dovetailed" (Jewel 133). Nevertheless, Scott's novels are about "human nature and human relationships as they reveal themselves in a society under stress" 6: a society isolated from "the moral continuum of human affairs".

II

In his quintet of novels, Paul Scott reveals a penetrating insight into the nature of women, the memsahibs, especially the elderly and middle-aged: Lady Manners, Sister Ludmila, Mabel Layton, Edwina Crane, Barbie Batchelor and Lucy Smalley, all of whom are alienated from, or outsiders of, the English society in Mayapore and Pankot. It is left for the young, Daphne Manners and Sarah Layton, to break down the racial barriers with love, not just of individual men but love of India too. The upper-class Lady Manners, however, does move in both societies but at a level where there are no racial barriers. As Scott sees the conception of love as essential in any moral element, Lady Manners is imbued with angelic qualities, mysteriously appearing when both Sarah and Barbie are alone and troubled. Lady Manners is the guardian of Daphne's daughter Parvati. In Hindu mythology, Parvati is the wife of the god Siva whose image is on a carving in Sister Ludmila's room: "He of the two legs and four arms, dancing, leaping within a circle of cosmic fire, The dance of creation, preservation and destruction. A complete cycle of wholeness" (Jewel 152). It is this circle of fire which is such a strong symbol in The Raj

Quartet. Parvati is the mother of knowledge, and knowledge is, for Scott, a state of grace. Sarah says to Lady Manners: "'What a lot you know'. She made it sound like a state of grace" (Scorpion 56).

In the tightly packed prose of the first section of The Jewel in the Crown, the reader is shown what is wrong with the relationship between the English and the Indians and between the English themselves. The reader's sympathy is, at first, directed deliberately towards Miss Crane, the lonely, alienated missionary standing on the periphery of English India because of her class, of her lack of education and of her own difficult, uncommunicative personality. To the conservative English, she is too fond of the Indians; to the liberal English, her views are too simplistic, for her idea of political action is to remove Gandhi's portrait from her wall when he tells the English to "Quit India". Although Miss Crane claims to love India and Indians and has Indian ladies for tea, she knows "she had never been wholly accepted by the Indians" (Jewel 11), and she is honest enough to acknowledge that even if she does not approve of the "clan gathering" call of the English, she does "recognise it as having always been a bleak but real enough source of comfort and protection" (Jewel 15). After decades in India, Miss Crane is still relieved to have the young B.O.R.s around in case faithful old Joseph "suddenly goes berserk"

(Jewel 39). One can empathise with the lonely old missionary who has risen by her own ability to be Superintendent of the Mission Schools, but one cannot sympathise with Miss Crane, who by her stubborn arrogance and condescending paternalism, is the direct cause of the murder of her Indian "subordinate".

Miss Crane had at one time been the teacher at Muzzafirabad and had courageously prevented the destruction of the school by shouting in fluent Urdu at the rioters. When, because of the adulation of the children, she leaves Muzzafirabad, she is relieved by Barbie Batchelor who, in spite of her later, lonely imaginings, has never been friendly with, or understood Edwina Crane, for she believes that Miss Crane, who in reality was not religious, "had always seemed so strong and sure in God" (Towers 98), and when Barbie looks at her miniature copy of the picture "The Jewel in her Crown", she realises she dislikes it "because she guessed it was not the picture but Miss Crane for whom the dislike was felt" (Towers 25).

The picture had been used by Miss Crane to teach the children English, and a copy of it had been presented to her when she left Muzzafirabad. This semi-allegorical picture, a symbol of the raj, is last seen when it is taken off young Edward's wall where it had been put by his step-father, Ronald Merrick. It is removed when the English leave India.

Miss Crane, however, does not believe in the picture and sees its faults, for she sees

the importance of courageously accepting duties and obligations not for self-aggrandisement but in self-denial; in order to rid the world of the very evils the picture took no account of: poverty, disease, misery, ignorance and injustice (Jewel 30).

No amount of self-denial by Miss Crane will ever rid the world of these evils. To Sister Ludmila who is selflessly attempting to help by looking after the dying people of the Mayapore poor, Miss Crane only nods her head; Sister Ludmila is not English and lives on the wrong side of the bridge. When Miss Crane is forced to drive through the rioting mobs with Mr. Chaudhuri, she comes to trust an Indian for the first time, and she has the feeling that she is "about to go over the hump" (Jewel 64). It is too late, and Mr. Chaudhuri is murdered.

Miss Crane realises at last that she is too late, and now there is nothing she can do, nothing, for she now knows "that she never dirtied her hands" (Jewel 117). When Miss Crane is hospitalised with pneumonia, it is the Indian Lady Chatterjee who visits her and who offers her a hand of friendship which is refused again, but for a different reason, despair. This is why she dresses in the white mourning saree of the Hindu widow, sets fire to the garden

shed and commits suttee in a ring of fire, achieving in death what she could not achieve in life, oneness with India. Only Barbie and Joseph mourn her death; the sharp Lady Chatterjee only sees a courage that was ineffectual.

She sits, then, an old Rajput lady wound in a dark silk saree just as years before she sat erect on the edge of a sofa and frightened Edwina Crane into the realisation that to work to, and put her trust in, the formula of a few simple charitable ideas was not enough (Jewel 79).

Her charity for Indians and her disapproval at the lack of improvement in their condition is what makes Mabel Layton alienate herself from the English in Pankot; her deafness emphasises her moral isolation from them. When she becomes a widow for the second time in 1917, Mabel withdraws to Rose Cottage in the hills and becomes less and less involved with the English community, although her social position and wealth should, according to the other women, make her the doyenne of local society. Mabel tries to ignore them and works all day in her garden: "I've become something of a recluse but of course that's not possible in India, for us" (Towers 30).

The reason for Mabel's alienation, a reason she tells only her step-son, John, is her disgust at Dyer's action in shooting unarmed Indians in Amritsar in 1917.⁷ While Dyer is being treated as a hero in English India and funds were being raised for him, she anonymously donates money for the

victims of Amritsar. It is only when she is dead that her generosity over the years to Indian charities becomes known, and resented, especially by John's wife, Mildred, who not only objects to Mabel's behaviour but covets Rose Cottage. Mildred is even angrier when Mabel takes as a paying guest the lower middle-class Barbie Batchelor; Mabel has now broken all pukka rules.

As Mabel becomes more of a recluse, Barbie takes over the running of the house, but she has already sensed a disquiet in Mabel as

she waits with Spartan fortitude for her life to run its course. Her days are spent in celebration of the natural cycle of seed, growth, flower, decay, seed (Towers 207).

However, Barbie never discovers the identity of Gillian Waller who haunts Mabel's restless sleep. Mabel's refusal to participate in the hypocritical rituals of the other mem-Sahibs is contrasted with Mildred's arrogance in giving matriarchal advice to the wives of Indian P.O.W.s: "For that was arrogance, the kind which Mabel always set her face against, because Mabel knew she brought no consolation even to a rose let alone a life" (Towers, 245).

When Mabel and Barbie attend Susan's show of presents,

Barbie finds Mabel standing alone in front of the display of regimental silver, a great deal of which her first husband had presented to the mess. As she stares at it, she says,

I thought there might be some changes, but there aren't. It's all exactly as it was when I saw it more than forty years ago. I can't be angry. But someone ought to be. (Towers 201).

In spite of her charitable donations, Mabel, like so many female characters in the novels, believes that there is nothing she can do to improve the relationship between the English and the Indians and sinks into despair. But the repressed anger is seen when she is dead, and "the mouth was open and from it a wail of pain and terror was emitting" (Towers 238).

Like Miss Crane, Lucy Smalley acts too late and so is able to do nothing about her situation. But unlike Miss Crane and Mabel Layton, Lucy is a memsahib who is trying hard to achieve a higher position for herself in the social hierarchy of the army memsahibs whose positions depend on the ranks of their husbands. She is first seen in the early part of The Day of the Scorpion and is the lone English survivor in the coda to The Raj Quartet, Staying On. In The Quartet, Lucy Smalley's character is one of Paul Scott's delightful finely drawn miniatures which give colour and realism

to the novels. Lucy Smalley, "little me", misses nothing and tells all: "One of the advantages of having Mrs. Smalley on committees was her intimate knowledge of the affairs of the lower deck" (Towers 63). She is constantly made to feel inferior to the other women by such remarks as, "You mean you can actually write shorthand, Mrs. Smalley?" (Staying On 169).

Because her husband, Tusker lacks ambition and married without regimental approval - "Approval! Great Scott I was pushing thirty" (Staying On, 85) - Lucy remains for many years junior to the other women of her age, so she relishes any crumbs of condescension from them: "Trembling, Lucy Smalley accepted a cigarette from Mrs. Fosdick" (Scorpion 135). Mrs. Payton had agreed with her and addressed her as Lucy.

When the Smalleys decide to stay on, it is in Lucy's flashbacks, fantasies and conversations with men who are not present that the reader comes to understand just how dismal and disappointing her life has been. Philip Larkin says of the Booker Prize-winning novel, "Paul Scott brings his two main themes to a triumphant resolution: the end of an empire, and the end of a long, inarticulate love that is as poignant as it is convincing".⁸ However, Malcolm Muggeridge says that he has difficulty working up sufficient sympathy for any of the characters to care about what happens to them.⁹

Does one not sympathise with the lonely Lucy, who has always been dependent on her husband and has never questioned him, as she agonises about her financial position when her husband dies? Does one not care about the contents of Tusker's shrewdly accounted "love letter"? Lucy's last words said to him amid her clichéd alien corn: "Oh, Tusker, Tusker, Tusker how can you make me stay here by myself while you yourself go home?" (Staying On, 255), must make all but the most unfeeling reader wonder what will happen to the old lady. She has always had an unhappy and disappointing life with Tusker but she has always loved him although she is reduced to dancing by herself and having imaginary affairs with a long gone chauffeur and with the film stars she sees so often at the cinema.

The arguing with Tusker about poached eggs, the mali, Ibrahim and walking the dog is very amusing, but it does show to what a petty level their lives have arrived at. Lucy, always the memsahib, has no friends except for a condescending and dependent friendship with the Eurasian hairdresser Susy, who has always been kind and sympathetic to her. The new raj is Indian: a fact Tusker accepted and Lucy did not. She is, in her old age, a foreigner in India and England, and so she is left, lonely, homeless, alienated, and she can do nothing about it, for, like the other alienated characters in Scott's novels, she is a victim of the system, just one butterfly caught in the net of English insularity.

The last book of The Raj Quartet is called "Pandora's Box". According to classical mythology, when this box was opened all the evils in the world escaped, and, when the lid was closed, only hope remained. Scott's hope for a diminishment of the alienation in the world today remains in the box and will stay there as long as destroyers like Dyer, Reid, Merrick or even Mildred Layton exist and as long as most people feel that they can do nothing. Only with love and compassion may hope begin to emerge. Parvati is the personification of Scott's hope, but only Sarah Layton asks to see her. Hope lies with people like Sarah and Ahmed Kasim who selflessly leave the herd to help their friends, no matter what their colour is or what the risk. Ronald Merrick is a courageous man, but he is a selfish man who wants to join the herd, not leave it; he is a hollow man.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1. D. Leigh, C.M.B. Pare and J. Marks, eds., A Concise Encyclopaedia of Psychiatry, (Lancaster: MTP Press, 1977), p. 21.
2. M.M. Mahood, "Paul Scott's Guardians", The Year Book of English Studies 13, 1983, 254.
3. Max Beloff, "The End of the Raj: Paul Scott's Novels as History", Encounter 272, May 1976, 66-70.
4. K.B. Rao, Paul Scott, (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980), p. 127.
5. Rick Groen, The Globe and Mail, October 6, 1984, E1.
6. J.I.M. Stewart, Joseph Conrad, (New York: Dodd Mead, 1968), p. 28.
7. Dyer and this action are manifested in many forms throughout The Raj Quartet, always with disapproval.
8. Philip Larkin, comment on the back cover, Staying On, (London: Panther, 1977).
9. Malcolm Muggeridge, Review of Staying On, New York Times Book Review, August 21, 1977, 36.

CHAPTER TWO
THE HOLLOW MEN

We are the hollow men
We are the stuffed men.
Leaning together
Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!
Our dried voices, when
We whisper together
Are quiet and meaningless
As wind in dry grass
Or rats' feet over broken glass
In our dry cellar.

Shape without form, shade without colour,
Paralysed force, gesture without motion;

Those who have crossed
With direct eyes, to death's other Kingdom
Remember us - if at all - not as lost
Violent souls, but only
As the hollow men,
The stuffed men. (T. S. Eliot, "Hollow Men")

Unlike the Indian Civil Service which recruited mainly from Oxford and Cambridge, the Indian Police recruited young men who had just matriculated from school. Moreover, "nearly all the young men joining the Indian civil and military services shared the common background of the English public schools".¹ When John Rivett-Carnac applied to join the Indian Police Service, he observed that

the mentality of the applicants was that of

the public school prefect. We were very innocent of life in general. We were straight out of public school we had no experience of English people who told lies and we never doubted the word of a fellow Englishman. 2

Charles Allen adds that it was precisely this innocence which made these men ideal officers to govern a country like India because they possessed the strictest ideas about truth, honesty, fairplay and decency.³ For Ronald Merrick to be able to join the India Police Service straight from a grammar school, meant that he had to be an exceptional candidate: "it was my athletic skill as much as my academic achievement that got me into the Indian Police" (Towers 160). A person's character, and later attitudes, are formed when he is a child, and the lower-middle class Merrick has had an unhappy childhood, being ashamed of his parents and being humiliated at school in England divided as it was, and is, by strict class distinctions:

It's the kind of thing that makes life difficult for clever children from humble families. One suffers proportionately I doubt there's a more unattractive sight than that of a schoolmaster currying class favour by making fun of the boy in his form whose background is different from the others. It's the kind of situation in which it's as well to be tough as clever (Towers 160).

Here is someone who already is not innocent of life, and

who does not believe in truth, honesty, fairplay and decency. Merrick is alienated long before he goes to India.

Orphaned in his teens, Merrick was enabled to finish his schooling through the help of his assistant headmaster, who seems, significantly, to be the only person the boy ever cared for.

If there is not much love from parents or parent-substitutes, resentment at social restraints is much more likely to be constant; the impersonal ideals of an institute or home may, to some extent, take the place of love, but there will be a greater strain in that case. 4

This strain turns Merrick into a complex man in whom neither vice nor virtue is unalloyed. As he is seen through so many peoples' eyes, he is "one of the most fully realised characters in contemporary fiction".⁵ Merrick is an imaginative man, a loner without humour, and solitary people seldom achieve a knowledge of human nature because they do not encounter it close enough, ever. Merrick demonstrates this flaw time and time again. His character is too well-rounded to be seen, as it is by so many reviewers, only as a symbol of the deterioration of the raj: "Merrick's artificial hand, which replaces the limb lost in the war, is a signature of the mental mutilations of which he is guilty".⁶ Although this may be so, remarks like this pass Merrick off

as a symbol only, instead of the only character who is present in all four novels of The Raj Quartet: "the touchstone for every tragedy, the brutal pragmatist, the efficient imperialist appeasing his personal devils in a borrowed land".⁷ One is able, through various narrative techniques - letters, journals, private depositions, interior monologues, recurrence of names and events - and careful syntax and diction, to judge Merrick. Although there are no fewer than thirteen versions of the Bibighar affair, the reader never knows Ronald Merrick's version, thus the reader is never allowed to know what Merrick thinks and has to depend on other characters' descriptions and opinions of him to see how much he is alienated historically, socially and psychologically from the Indians, from the English and from himself.

As has been shown, the past is to Scott part of the present, and so to study and try to understand a man like Merrick, one has to go back in history and look at one of the Titans of the Punjab, Brigadier-General John Nicholson, on whom Merrick's character is based:

At headquarters the officers who met him for the first time doubted they could ever get to like him. He did not smile; he scarcely spoke, An immense Pathan orderly, as silent as his master, stood behind his chair at the mess-table, a cocked revolver in one hand, serving dishes with the other. In his presence jokes died away.

Like Merrick, Nicholson disciplined the districts under his supervision with the utmost severity, pursuing criminals personally. Nicholson, like Merrick, was tormented by homosexual desires which both shamed and horrified him. This arrogant man "did not like India, or Indians, detesting sepoys with a hatred no words could describe".⁹ Notwithstanding, Nicholson's servants and sepoys admired and even deified him, to their cost: Merrick's servants and subordinates admire him not only in the army but in the police where he allows his sub-inspectors to treat their prisoners as they please and to accept bribes. Sister Ludmila notes that Rajendra Singh, the local sub-inspector, takes bribes and steals prisoners' watches: "Rajendra Singh had such a watch on. It was a finer watch than the one on Mr. Merrick's wrist" (Jewel 139). Merrick, like Nicholson, is incorruptible, getting his rewards through his sado-masochism; both men are also English. George Carrol maintains that when he was a superintendent of police, and in spite of low salaries, that he was convinced that no Englishman ever took a bribe in India.¹⁰ He states that

for their own protection, all government officers were subject to the phal-phul rule, by which they were forbidden to accept presents other than fruit or flowers. 11

"The fire-eating Nicholson himself raised a Pathan foster-

son" and "asked Edwards, his friend, in a letter 'whether there are any humming-tops, Jews-harps, or other toys in Peshawar'.¹² Merrick raises Susan's son Edward, of whom he is very fond and with whom he plays games and whom he dresses in Pathan clothes.

Although Merrick shares a liking with Nicholson for Pathans, the blue-eyed, exotically dressed, cruel tribesmen from the North-west Frontier, he also unfortunately shares Nicholson's pathological abhorrence at the thought of an Indian man touching a white woman:

The idea of simply hanging the perpetrators of such atrocities is maddening. I wish that I might take the law into my own hands I would inflict the most excruciating tortures I could think on them with a perfectly easy conscience. 13

Indeed, Nicholson makes Merrick, who also likes taking the law into his own hands, appear quite liberal. Nicholson held few courts-martial, for his punishment by death obviated the need for a trial; whereas, Merrick privately tortures prisoners and allows them to rot in jail without a trial. But, each man is convinced that his way is right. Like Nicholson, Merrick must attend to all duties personally, and, throughout The Raj Quartet, one is aware of Merrick's ob-
 sessional attention to details and lists; and so he can say to Robin White during the riots in Mayapore that "he'd per-

sonally checked all his patrols" (Jewel 121). Nicholson was a man, however, in whom the moral imperative was very strong, built as it was on Old Testament fervour; whereas, Merrick is a twentieth-century hollow man.

Merrick shares Nicholson's overbearing behaviour, but he too is undermined by inner doubts and insecurities. Even those who did not like Nicholson could not but admire his industry and determination. People do admire Merrick's efficiency: "neither Robin White or Jack Poulson liked him much, but they said he was good at his job. Judge Menen couldn't stand him" (Jewel 91-2). Although Swinden says that Merrick is first seen en passant as an efficient police officer,¹⁵ the reader first hears from Edwina Crane that Merrick "is a young man overanxious to excel in his duties and quarrelsome at the club" (Jewel 41). Later, D.C. White, after the rape, says that he

thought Merrick might have made a mistake but could not criticise him for his prompt action, at least not in the light of what Merrick himself had told him of the circumstances attending the arrests (Jewel 313).¹⁶

Merrick has broken the code of the English gentleman, for he has lied to White, knowing that he would be believed.

If Merrick's character has an historical base, so does

the crime of which he is accused by the Hindus in Mayapore, arresting six innocent youths, beating prisoners, forcing them to eat beef and so defiling them, and imprisoning them without trial. Merrick has acted in an unacceptable arbitrary manner. Parallels to historical events are deliberate, for Scott repeats names and, as has been noted, every name is important in Scott's work: all connects.

In Mayapore in 1942, "the Europeans seldom went [to the Bibighar Gardens] except to look and sneer and be reminded of that other Bibighar in Cawnpore" (Jewel 146). In Cawnpore in 1857, two hundred English women and children were imprisoned by Nana Sahib's men in the Bibighar, and later they were massacred and their bodies stuffed down wells. Another Titan of the Punjab, Brigadier-General James Neil, decided, against direct orders, to punish anyone whom he suspected of being involved in the affair, although Nana Sahib and his men had gone. All suspects had to lick a square foot of the blood-stained floor which had water poured on it by Untouchables. The prisoners were whipped while doing this, fed beef and pork and then hanged. The Hindus' castes were broken and they were defiled before death.¹⁷ Although Merrick cannot behave publicly in the way his historical predecessors had, he does defile and beat his prisoners privately. When he is in the army, the reader does not know what regiment he is in, and all that is known is that he is an officer

in a Punjab regiment. Surely this is not just coincidence?

The other parallel to Merrick's action occurred in the Punjab too. After an enormous war effort in the First World War, India did not receive the recognition she deserved, and, in the rising nationalism that followed, unrest arose in the Punjab,¹⁸ "but the worst blow of all was the publication in January 1919 of the draft of what became known as the Rowlatt Acts"¹⁹ which extended the powers of the executive stated in the Defence of India Act. This now allowed the executive to arrest, to search and to imprison without trial anyone suspected of sedition or of having his hand on a seditious document, and it allows Merrick to arrest six young men on suspicion of rape and imprison them for knowing Moti Lal, the nationalist. In the Punjab in 1919, riots broke out which culminated in the deaths, in Amritsar, of five Englishmen and an assault on an English missionary, Marcella Sherwood. When Edwina Crane is assaulted in 1942, Barbie Batchelor is "reminded of Miss Sherwood, Amritsar 1919" (Towers 66). After gaining temporary military control in Amritsar, Brigadier-General Reginald E.H. Dyer fired indiscriminately into an unarmed crowd in Jillianwallah Bagh.²⁰ In 1942, Reid repeats this action, and after 1919, Mabel Layton is haunted by it.

Dyer instigated even more ill-feeling among the Indians,

however, when he designated the ground on which Miss Sherwood was attacked as holy and ordered passing Indians to crawl through it, so defiling the Indians. Later, Dyer set a triangle up on the street, and six boys suspected of the assault were whipped. The ensuing riots were quelled by aircraft with machine guns, just as they were in Dibrapur in 1942. Everything connects. So, Merrick's act of contempt can be seen in an historical context as representing one of the worst aspects of the raj, complete contempt for the people of India, which succeeded in alienating the English in India and increased their insularity and illusions of everlasting rule.

At its nastiest racialism overrides class and someone, who on the grounds of education, calling or personal qualities would not command much general esteem, will express contempt, and try to assert superiority, just because he is white, over an Indian who on personal grounds deserves respect. 21

After Sister Ludmila has been corrected by the stranger, she says, "you are right to correct me. A Scotsman, forgive me for momentarily forgetting. Such nice distinctions" (Jewel 146). Here, she is talking about the rich Scottish trader, MacGregor, who lived when Mayapore was "the seat of the native ruler, and the only foothold the English had was cut out by trade, need, avarice" (Jewel 146). According to Kenneth Warren, "anybody with a Celtic streak was immediately

more at home in India. They seemed to integrate better than the very conventional English".²² It is this feeling of conventionality that makes the English feel that they are on show all the time: "you are a curious people. In the main very conscious, as you walk in the sun, of the length or shortness of the shadow you cast" (Jewel 168). It is this attitude which prevents all the English in Mayapore, with the exception of Daphne, from appreciating the truly charitable work which the foreign Sister Ludmila is doing.

The strict class system of the English has often been likened to the strict caste system of the Hindus, but the middle-class English in India are adhering to, and exaggerating, a system which is being relaxed in England because of the Second World War. Francine Weinbaum says that in a personal interview with the author, Paul Scott said that he believed the class structure is at the heart of insularity:

You can't be English and alive without being sensitive to the class problem I don't think an English writer can write a novel without class in the background, even if it's not consciously written in: class cannot be detached from the English novel.

Scott also believed that the nuances of the English class system became stronger when they were transferred to India.²³ These nuances are so fine that many people, such as the American Weinbaum, do not understand them completely. While

aristocratic and upper-class English ignore them and the working class can do nothing about them, it is left for the middle-class to lay great emphasis on these distinctions in order to conserve, or improve, their place in society. So, the objective upper-class Perron, who is an outsider, can say about the lower-class Merrick,

Can't the fool see that nobody of the class he aspires to belong to has ever cared a damn about the empire and that all that God-the Father-God-the-raj was a lot of insular middle and lower class shit (Division 208).

But most of the English in India give a damn, and some, like Teddie Bingham even die for it. Sarah Layton confirms her father's doubts about Merrick, "it's true, he's not our class. Class has always been important to us" (Division 365), and she describes the non-regular subaltern, Edgar Drew, as someone who had been to a public school but had "reached the stage of feeling slightly ashamed because he realised it ranked as 'minor'" (Division 351).

What kind of society is presented here that prefers a man who was "a duffer" at school and whose "recollection of his scholastic ability and only average capacity at games caused him no regret: certainly no shame" (Towers 160), over a man who can claim academic achievement and athletic skill? Merrick is not considered a gentleman; he did not go to an

English public school: "he is not quite pukka, a shade middle-class in the vowel sounds" (Towers 100). However, Merrick realises only one of the reasons why he is alienated from the upper and middle-class English.

I wasn't the same class. You can't disguise it, can you? It comes out in subtle ways, even when you've learned the things to say and how to say them. It comes out in not knowing the places or the people your kind of people know, it comes out in the lack of points of common contact. People like me carry around with them the vacuum of their own anonymous history (Scorpion 387).

Knowing this does not stop Merrick from trying to climb the social ladder. It is too late, but Merrick's bitter, tough schooling will not allow him to accept that his unfortunate childhood has made him emotionless, humourless and shy, and the pity about shy people is that they know how to behave socially, but they themselves are unable to. This can lead to a life lived in almost total isolation, as they store up the love and anger that they cannot express. Shy people have a low self-esteem and go through life feeling negative evaluations by others, and assuming others are thinking negatively about them, and so Merrick is always seeking the approval of the socially superior English. He does not understand human nature or the esprit de corps which normally forms part of a boy's education, especially a public school boy's. Although he tries and succeeds in most of the outward

forms, Merrick will never be a gentleman, not only because he was not born one or that his vowel sounds are a bit flat but because his manner makes people distrust him; he makes people feel uncomfortable. Merrick thinks only of himself and what other English people think of him; he is completely self-centred. If Merrick is on stage in one of Scott's dramatic scenes, he is centre stage, always, either obsequious or overbearing.

The vague and naïve newcomer, Daphne Manners, the only woman of whom Merrick is fond, is the only person who does not bother about his background, another reason for liking her: "Daphne didn't give a damn who your parents were or what school you went to" (Scorpion 223). But the astute memsahib, Sarah Layton, who gives a damn, senses his need for acceptance, and she muses that Merrick's "eyes, his whole physical presence, struck her as those of a man chilled by an implacable desire to be approached, accepted" (Scorpion 227). Both these women are instinctively appalled by Merrick's cold, emotionless manner and realise he is unable to be frank and open and, so, they are uncomfortable in his presence, for Merrick lacks charm, one of the forms that can be switched on and off like one of Mildred Layton's smiles: "it was charm again, my dear, simple creamy English charm ... Charm is the great English blight".²⁴ The cosmopolitan Anthony Blanche's remark to Charles Ryder in Brideshead Re-

visited is an extreme example, for although Blanche sees charm as dangerous, he, ironically, does not lack it himself. A certain amount of charm is necessary if one is to make other people comfortable in one's presence, but it is not acquired and crosses class and racial barriers and needs a consideration for other people's feelings.

Although Merrick has acquired most of the English middle class forms, he cannot master all the niceties: "he's quite the little gentleman, isn't he, and terribly efficient over detail. That's a sign of humble origin too" (Scorpion 150). Count Bronowsky also notices Merrick's compulsive attention to detail but gives an ostensibly different reason for it:

Compulsively tidy people, one is told, are always wiping the slate clean, trying to give themselves what life denies all of us, a fresh start, They say it's characteristic of someone who wishes to be the organising centre of his own life and who has no gift for sharing (Scorpion 188-9).

But, although the Count admits to sharing Merrick's compulsion and suspects his suppressed homosexuality, Bronowsky is not like Merrick at all, for he is content in his acknowledged homosexuality and has the gift for sharing; he is not shy but is gentle, kind, charming, and misses nothing, not even Merrick's inferiority complex.

Scott deliberately compares Merrick to the rather priggish Teddie Bingham in The Towers of Silence, but Teddie's public school is not named, for he is certainly not the stuff of the Chillingborough men. When he gets confused and upset over the changes in his wedding plans, Teddie ends up "blubbing" in the closet. One cannot imagine Rowan or Perron, or even Merrick, "blubbing". Moreover, "the duffer" Teddie does not believe or understand Merrick's clear, lucid speech about the Indian National Army. After the speech, an awed non-regular adjutant, senior to Teddie, asks Bingham if he thinks Merrick is a spy, but Teddie is more concerned about the man's social class.

He had a plebeian voice and manner. He was the sort of chap one found in the bars of Tudor-styled road houses back home in the vicinity of Kingston-on-Thames. The fellow actually winked as such fellows did. The vulgarity of modern English life suddenly overwhelmed Teddie. It was flowing into India, blighting everything (Towers 146).

The adolescent Teddie is an "anachronism". He petulantly waits for Hosain to put on his shoes; Merrick hands him a shoehorn. He allows himself to be fed medicine for his "Mirat tummy" by Merrick: "I'll pour", Merrick said, "because it tends to come out in a dribble and then a rush".... It was brown and looked nasty. Merrick leant forward and obediently Teddie opened his mouth" (Towers 150). Mer-

rick enjoys playing Nanny to dependent people, and Teddie is still an adolescent who has gone straight from school and Sandhurst into an army regimental mess where no one is allowed to talk of politics or women.

After the band had played off and the anteroom was cleared, games were played: "High Jinks", described as a fairly rowdy game, or "High Cockalorum" Whatever its code, regimental esprit was dependent upon shared values. Those who fitted in got on, the misfits were quickly 25 eased out.

Merrick playing High-Jinks? Never! There was a great deal of hard drinking in the mess and an ability to have "a good head for good liquor was one of the few things that still distinguished a gentleman from others" (Towers 159). Merrick is not a great drinker and strictly limits himself. So, although Teddie is drunk, he is still on his feet, but it is Merrick who has to put him to bed.

Teddie's regiment is the Muzzy Guides, which may well be equated with the Guides; "one of the most famous regiments in the Indian Army, they were It",²⁶ and it consisted of both infantry and cavalry until the Second World War: "He had old-fashioned convictions He should have had a horse" (Scorpion 384). Teddie must have conformed to mess etiquette, because his Urdu is weak, and he is not aware that Mirat is a princely state. He is the opposite of Mer-

rick; he is slow-witted (Towers 113), and has never really grown up:

His knees smelt of leather, which reminded him of when he was a boy having a bath after a game of football. He reached for the Lifebuoy soap. (Pears was for face and hands) (Towers 112). 27

Teddie is deeply disturbed by the stone throwing incident and Merrick's silence about his culpability:

I've got a terrific favour to ask old man he had said but really it had been the other way round the favour being done to Merrick who as a boy could not have dreamed ever of supporting an officer of the Muzzafirabad Guides as best man at a wedding (Towers 165).

Without Merrick there would have been no wedding. Another adolescent serving in India is Ronny Heaslop in E.M. Forster's A Passage to India, where Mrs. Moore is quick to note her son's schoolboyish behaviour.²⁸

The English distrust of other classes and foreigners is fostered in the public schools where boys learn isolation, privilege and self-discipline, and they know how to receive as well as mete out punishment through the prefect system, and most lead a spartan existence. As Evelyn Waugh points out:

Anyone who has been to public school in England will always feel comparatively at home in prison. It is the people brought up in the gay intimacy of the slums who find prison so soul-destroying.

29

The socially ambitious Merrick enjoys his luxuries and pretends to despise the products of the public schools.

The good pukka sahib is a public school boy exaggerated by transplanted. Just as the public school in the colonies is more "public school" than the British, so the public school boy in the colonies is more public schoolboyish than in England. British are superior to Indians, patriotism is essential to good government, and patriotism means always preferring one's own race and nation to any other.

30

The English cannot help becoming Forster's Turtons, and Scott's Tuptons (Jewel 199), for they carry their insularity with them as well as their prejudices. Merrick's prejudices mark him as English, but he has seen the nastier side of life and is no innocent, and considers regular army officers as public school boys enjoying the game of war. Teddie Bingham is still a fifth-form boy like Ronny Heaslop: "Ronny's religion was of the public school brand he retained the spiritual outlook of the Fifth Form",³¹ but Teddie is the one character in the novels who is only called by his diminutive name, and this emphasises his refusal to grow up.

Unlike Teddie, the smarter Merrick has an inferiority complex for which he overcompensates with either an obsequious or an overbearing manner with alienates him further. For example, Sarah Layton constantly feels ill-at-ease with him because she is

conscious of these things about Ronald Merrick that Aunt Fanny put down to signs of a humble origin. Phrases like 'under her roof' and 'not unconscious of the obligation' had a stilted, self-advertising ring that she didn't altogether care for (Scorpion 219).

Not great faults, one might say. Sarah Layton is such a snob! Sarah, however, distrusts and dislikes Merrick and she has since she first met him; this feeling increases when she becomes fascinated by the Bibighar affair. Moreover, it is to Sarah that Merrick reveals the most. One could say that Sarah has lost the English racial prejudice but not the English class prejudice. But, Sarah would not let class distinctions come between herself and someone she likes, and one only has to look at her strong affection for the alienated Barbie to see this. Her independence and non-conformity is demonstrated when she visits Lady Manners' houseboat and asks to see the illegitimate, miscegenetic Parvati. Merrick, whom she knows better than the others, appals her.

However, it is Merrick who surrounds himself with some

comfort wherever he goes; it is the alienated loner who can indulge his enjoyment of art and music, unlike the public school types who are used to a spartan existence and even enjoy "shapes" for dessert. None of the English in India, outside the cities, appears to enjoy art or music, although they do enjoy boxing matches and military parades. Merrick, who does not smoke at all or drink much, is able to have in his house in Mayapore "several rather glamorous things there was this super radiogram very nice tableware, and a marvellous Persian rug" (Jewel 110). This lack of interest in the arts in India was noted by E. M. Forster who, although aware of the insularity of the English in India does not succeed as Scott does in presenting realistic, working characters, either English or Indian.³²

Their ignorance of the Arts was notable, and they lost no opportunity of proclaiming it to one another; it was the Public School attitude, flourishing more vigorously than it can yet hope to do in England. If Indians were shop, the Arts were bad form. 33

Although Merrick can maintain his enjoyment of Sousa's marches to Daphne at the club, he has to keep quiet about his love of Romantic music.

Unlike Teddie, Merrick speaks fluent Urdu, Hindi, and several Indian dialects and he is learning Japanese; he

knows and understands Indian history and politics, because he not unnaturally considers these things essential to his job, whether as a policeman or an army intelligence officer. This enthusiasm also alienates him from less ambitious officers. Not possessing the paternalism of the regular English officers towards their Indian troops, Merrick understands why there is an Indian National Army. This is just one of the instances where one cannot avoid seeing Scott's imaginatively drawn characters acting with a background of history and a foreground of accurate contemporary events. Merrick knows about, and understands, the confusion of the Indian soldiers, who, when captured, have been immediately separated from their English officers and hear of the humiliating surrender of the raj at Singapore and the Allied defeats in Burma. They see the raj crumbling and remember the rising nationalism at home. Although the English officers do not discuss politics, Merrick realises that the Indian officers and soldiers must discuss Congress, nationalism and the loss of Indian troops in Europe and North Africa. Meanwhile in India, the English are once again suppressing nationalism with repression and jailing without trial those likely to cause them trouble, including members of Congress. Even now, Teddie Bingham, who has walked back in defeat from Burma, does not approve of jungle guerilla tactics because they were "hardly a pukka strategical operation of war" (Towers 123). There is a pukka war?

While the "amateur" Teddie is missing the comradeship of his old mess, the "professional" Merrick is enjoying his work as an intelligence officer, for, although he appreciates the intricacies of the I.N.A., he has no sympathy for them, as they are traitors to the raj. What is more, he does not believe that any of the Indian soldiers have joined the I.N.A. to return to their old regiments, for he takes "the less romantic view that guns only got thrown down when the alternative was hunger and no other escape route" (Division, 404). Merrick is now a "professional" soldier just as he was a "professional" policeman, keenly performing his duties - "He must be a wizard at interrogation!" (Jewel, 110) - and enjoying the power. Unlike the regular officers, Merrick realises that the Indian soldier's first loyalty is to his family and village, not to his regiment, so he instinctively knows how to attack the weakness of the Frei Hind prisoner, Havildar Karim Muzzafir Khan:

What will they say? That this is a matter of great shame? Is this what troubles you? What your wife and children will say? What the people in your village will say to your wife and children? That your wife will not hold up her head? (Division 47)

Perron is attending the interrogation because of his fluency in Urdu, but the "Punjab officer spoke a resonant classic Urdu . It was a language that lent itself to poetic imagery,

but Perron had heard few Englishmen use it so flexibly, so effectively, or to such purpose. Merrick, who has a facility for languages, prides himself on his Urdu, and enjoys using it for effect, and that is what it is, effect, for Merrick is trying to impress the upper-class Perron; whereas Perron, although impressed, is appalled at Merrick's deliberate attempt to break down a manacled prisoner, who looks "fairly harmless" (Division 48). It is the "amateur" Teddie Bingham who gets himself killed because of his paternalistic belief in man-bap, I am your mother and your father, a belief held by the regular officers and their families. But the days of man-bap are over, if they were ever there. Of course, Teddie believes in it, while Merrick claims he does not but envies those who do. Forgetting the debt he owes Merrick, Teddie now distrusts the lower-class Merrick and avoids him:

Teddie looks at us and honestly believes we lack a vital gift as well, some sort of in-born decency that's not our fault but makes us not quite trustworthy. (Scorpion 387).

So, Teddie sets off ahead of Merrick with the Muzzy Guide Jiff, Baksh, and is blown up with his driver and jeep, his prisoner escaping from the ambush. Merrick is seriously injured trying to rescue him: "I think it counted against Teddie afterwards", says a smug, masochistic Merrick (Scorpion 400).

Is Merrick telling the truth when he tells Sarah that he only went down the hill to capture the Jiff and that he did not have the courage to go looking for him? Is it true that he only "pulled Teddie out because I was afraid of what people would say if I left him to fry"? (Scorpion 405). Merrick's motives are, as usual, mixed. The reader knows of Merrick's past reputation and that he does care what people think, but, as has been seen, Merrick has never lacked courage and enjoys danger. Sarah does not believe him and delivers a sermon about the twelfth man being part of the team, but she fails to mention that the twelfth man is seldom asked to play. Whatever his motive, Merrick is awarded the D.S.O. and becomes a war hero, thereby relieving the raj of its concern about what to do with an ex-superintendent of police who made a ghastly mistake in Mayapore in 1942. Sarah is still "the Colonel's daughter" and understands men like Teddie who put their regiments above their personal safety, but she cannot understand a man like Merrick although she senses his bitterness and self-imposed isolation; he receives no letters when he is in hospital, so badly wounded.

I see a man who was in love with all those legends, that way of life, all those things that from a distance seemed to distinguish people like us from people of his own kind, people he knew better. I see a man still in love with them but who has chosen to live outside in the cold because he couldn't get in to warm his hands at this hearth with its dying fire (Scorpion 405).

This is the man who can only see a man's personality as existing "at the point of equilibrium between the degree of his envy and the degree of his contempt" (Scorpion 309), a selfish, lonely, perverted man who is incapable of love, of compassion or of understanding, for he does not realise that the envy is all on his side.

Merrick is a man who, by using his intelligence and by being conscientious and efficient, has risen to be District Superintendent of Police before he is thirty. The Mayapore district "covers an area of 2,346 square miles" and had, in 1942, a population of one and a quarter million people and is divided into five sub-divisions (Jewel 169), so Merrick's responsibilities are not inconsiderable.

Moreover, he has achieved this position without the aid of "the old school tie". Because "he hobnobbed on equal terms with people who would snub him at home and knew they would snub him" (Scorpion 309), Merrick believes he has climbed the social ladder in India. This man is dedicated to the ideals of the upper and middle classes as he believes they should be, but they are, unfortunately, the ideals of his lower-middle class childhood, and so he appears old-fashioned in his outlook and manner and provides ammunition for Perron's cannon. When Lady Manners places an announcement in The Times of India about the death of her niece and the birth of Daphne's child, Merrick sees it as a "direct chall-

enge to everything sane and decent that we try to do out here" (Scorpion 302), and it shocks him when Count Bronowsky introduces the subject of the rape in front of a lady. An exasperated Perron is driven to "a refutation of Emerson" because of his dislike of Merrick. Confident in both Rowan's and his own ingrained sense of class security, Perron maintains that:

Emerson was obviously too much of a peasant to appreciate the significance of you and me. Society is a wave. The wave moves onward. You and I move along with it. Emerson was writing for the Merricks and Purvises of the world. The ones who get drowned (Division 208).

Lieutenant-Colonel Merrick has not been socially accepted by his sergeant, for the angry, aggressive childhood of the superior officer lies only beneath the surface of his burned skin, burned like the thin-skinned scorpion in the ring of fire.

An ambitious Merrick has come to India for social and professional opportunities not available to him in England, bringing with him his feelings of inferiority. O. Mannoni, the French psycho-analyst, says that those westerners who are first drawn to a colonial system are immature personalities who are drawn to a world without people, the better to occupy it with figures from their own unconscious minds.

The more immature the personality, the less it will have made the imaginary figures of the unconscious correspond with the people it meets.³⁴ Merrick, whose signature at the club is "curiously rounded and childlike" (Jewel 191), is pursuing victims in his unconscious mind. As Philip Mason points out,

everyone in a competitive society has an inferiority complex to some degree which may be expressed in different ways, a manly determination to make good, a desire for perfection, a perfection in some minute or unimportant form of escapism, or, in among other things, aggressiveness. 35

This is a picture of Merrick, who demonstrates all these traits, which prevent him from feeling any compassion, the ingredient needed to heal any rift between people or nations. This is what is wrong with the raj, for Merrick is only one example of men who are, and have been, responsible for its certain disintegration.

Very few men are capable, when they are at length obliged to acknowledge the existence of other people, of recognizing in themselves what they never suspected was there, without an outburst of fear, hatred and harshness they had directed towards an aspect of themselves which, in very truth, they wanted to ignore. On working to the real situation, they will find themselves pursuing a type of colonial life anywhere between evangelism and sheer brutality, depending on the way they dealt with this internal threat - with an inflexible will or with scorn, ignoring it or reconciling themselves to it. 36

People with a sense of their own worth reconcile themselves, as Hari Kumar does, to a given situation, people with great strength of character change the situation as Daphne and Sarah do. Merrick, like Nicholson before him, is inflexible, scornful and brutal towards the Indians.

Imagine then, the situation between the blond, blue-eyed Merrick and the dark-skinned, brown-eyed Kumar who says with an English Public school accent, "I'm afraid I don't speak Indian" (Jewel 143). Here is everything that Merrick envies and despises combined in one man, but a man who, like Merrick, has been alienated by the English in India: "Two such darkneses in opposition can create a blinding light. Against such a light ordinary mortals must hide their eyes" (Jewel 146).

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1. Charles Allen ed., Plain Tales from the Raj, (London: Futura, 1975), p. 42. Hereafter referred to as Raj.
2. Raj, p. 42.
3. Raj, p. 42.
4. Philip Mason, Prospero's Magic, (London: University Press, 1962), p. 45.
5. Patrick Swinden, Paul Scott, (London: MacMillan, 1980), p. 91.
6. D.M. Burjorjee, "The Raj Quartet: A Literary Event", The New Quarterly 2, no. 2 (1977), 128.
7. Rick Groen, The Globe and Mail, October 6, 1984, E1.
8. Christopher Hibbert, The Great Mutiny, (New York: Viking Press, 1978), p. 292.
It is interesting to note that one of the acknowledgements in this book is to Paul Scott.
9. Hibbert, p. 293.
10. Raj, p. 225.
11. Raj, p. 226.
12. Charles Miller, Khyber, (New York: MacMillan, 1977), p. 109.

13. Hibbert, p. 293.
14. Hibbert, p. 294.
15. Swinden, p. 85.
16. Emphasis my own.
17. Philip Mason, A Matter of Honour, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), pp. 300-2.
18. "The monsoon failed in 1918, and a famine followed which, in turn, led to restructuring corn laws. Added to this a new stringent income tax law maimed the business community. Influenza and other diseases killed five million people. India had raised three war loans and had contributed L100,000,000 to the War Fund and was not unjustified in expecting some reward".
R.A. Huttenback, The British Imperial Experience, (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), pp. 175-6.
19. Huttenback, p. 176.
20. Huttenback, pp. 181-2.
21. Mason, Prospero's Magic, p. 4.
22. Raj, p. 39.
23. Francine Weinbaum, "Aspiration and Betrayal in Paul Scott's The Raj Quartet", Diss. University of Illinois, 1976, p. 130.
24. Evelyn Waugh, Brideshead Revisited, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962), pp. 311-2.
25. Raj, pp. 178-80.

26. Raj, p. 175.
27. Scott always mentions soap. Hari Kumar uses Pears, and Merrick uses Lifebuoy but buys Coty Chypre for Daphne. Sarah thinks Teddie is like a cake of Pears soap because he is transparent and gets into a lather.
28. E.M. Forster, A Passage to India, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), p. 50.
29. Evelyn Waugh, Decline and Fall, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), p. 180.
30. John R. Reed, Old School Tie, (Syracuse: University Press, 1964), pp. 8-9.
The American Reed consistently interchanges England and Britain.
31. Forster, p. 250.
32. Aziz, for example, is a caricature compared to Ahmed, Sayed, or Mohammed Ali Kasim.
33. Forster, p. 40.
34. O. Mannoni, Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonialism, trans. Pamela Powesland, (New York: Praeger, 1956), pp. 101-2.
35. Philip Mason, in the "Foreword" to Prospero and Caliban, p. 11.
36. Philip Mason, Prospero's Magic, p. 199.

CHAPTER THREE

When he is explaining the differences, as he sees them, between Forster's A Passage to India and his own novels, Scott says that he writes about men at work in India.¹ Everyone who works or lives in Scott's India is seen performing his regular tasks: women, politicians, soldiers, civil servants and policemen. The reader knows that Merrick patrols Mayapore by horse or truck and drives around in a jeep; he knows how he controls crowds and conducts interrogations; he knows where he lives and what he eats and drinks; he even knows that Merrick does not start smoking until after the Bibighar affair. As the efficient, rapidly promoted army officer, Merrick is seen in the lecture room, in the mess, in battle, even bathing and sleeping. The reader, however, also knows about the use of lathis, about secret interrogations in police station basements and quiet army offices and about Merrick's sado-masochism: "Be a man and admit you deserve punishment" (Jewel 371). The only thing the reader does not know is what Merrick is thinking, for although Merrick speaks and gives his version of events, one

is not allowed to know what he really thinks, That he has friends as well as enemies is demonstrated when Kumar cannot be released from prison until the Inspector-General stops being "stubbornly opposed to any course of action that belittled Merrick's earlier performance as a guardian of the law" (Division 320).

The working politician Count Bronowsky is the insightful character in The Raj Quartet, for his laser eye misses nothing, and his charm helps to disguise his insatiable curiosity. Knowing about Merrick's homosexuality, it is the wily émigré who best sums up Merrick's character:

He has a number of admirable qualities, but none of them strikes me as likely to promote the cause of anyone's happiness. Not even his own. He is one of your hollow men. The outer casing is almost perfect and he carried it off almost to perfection. But, of course, it is a casing he has designed. The loss he has sustained - the left arm - even this fits. If he regrets the loss, presently he will see that he has lost nothing or any way gained more in compensation. What an interesting thought. I am tempted to say that had he not suffered the loss he might one day have been forced to invent it.

Rowan smiled. "To the extent of removing part of a limb?"

Bronowsky laughed. "But absolutely!"

For a while he gazed at Rowan and then said sedately, "I speak metaphorically, naturally".

(Division 171)

Of course, the Count maintains that Merrick was interested

in Daphne and only noticed her when he realised that she knew Kumar on whom he had had his eye for a long time: "The young man was an obsession, an absolute fixation. Perhaps even Mr. Merrick does not fully appreciate all the possible reasons why" (Division 170). A homosexual himself, Bronowsky sees that as the only reason for Merrick's obsession. But Merrick is completely different from the aging sybarite, for he is disciplined, repressed and humourless. In fact, very few of the middle-class Anglo-Indians have a capacity for enjoyment. It is the upper-class outsiders who laugh and enjoy themselves, Major Clark without, Guy Perron and Count Bronowsky. Merrick seldom smiles, and when he does, he has "a special smile that [of] an armed man [who] smiles in a way that keeps you out of his thoughts" (Jewel 142). But this humourless, emotionless exterior disguises a sensitive, lonely and perverted man.

The suppression of emotion by Merrick manifests itself in his compulsive, neurotic behaviour, his keeping of lists, his attention to minutiae and his careful arranging of his cap, briefcase and swaggerstick. "Freudian psychodynamics stresses the importance of expiation of guilt in compulsions, often related to unconscious aggressive tendencies",² and Merrick says that his conscience is clear. If Merrick tortures and molests Kumar but seems unconcerned, what has he done in the past? One is reminded of the many compulsions

of Merrick throughout the novels; he always wears his watch with the face on the inside of his wrist; he always flicks the tobacco from his fingers after he has finished smoking; he meticulously lights a cigarette and transfers it to his artificial hand; he picks up small pieces of confetti and carefully disposes of them. Kumar notices twice that Merrick has a nervous tic in his face, and most characters notice his obsession about Kumar's guilt and the Bibighar affair. "An obsessional state is an unwanted but repetitive thought, image, idea, impulse or doubt which intrudes imperatively into consciousness".³ These states can occur in normal people at times of particular stress or can be associated with psychological illnesses such as depression, and Merrick shows no signs of depression. Otherwise normal people who experience obsessional states tend to be bound by habit, rigid and punctual

worriers over detail, meticulous and conscientious. They may be described as perfectionists by their acquaintances. Emotionally they tend to be controlled and inhibited: indecisiveness in action may be taken as obstinacy or stubbornness. They tend to resist change and be plagued by feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt. 4

All this may be seen in Merrick, so it is little wonder that his opposite, in every way, the relaxed and good-natured Perron thinks that Merrick is "as mad as a hatter" (Division 265). Nevertheless, Merrick is quite sane until

the persecution by the Indians and the acknowledgement of his own homosexuality drive him to paranoia; there is no one throwing stones on the ~~m~~ullah:

Paranoid reactions are the exaggerated response to disappointing or humiliating circumstances displayed by certain sensitive individuals It becomes morbid when it persists and carries conviction. 5

Merrick is convinced, in the ~~m~~ullah, that this is another stone-throwing incident, but no one is there.

Molly Mahood points out Scott's attention to clothing, "an attention he shares with most popular novelists and Shakespeare".⁶ As Mahood is trying to defend The Quartet as literature against some academics' declaration that Scott is a woman's magazine writer, she has to defend this careful attention to clothes. Of course, it is part of Scott's technique, as it adds colour to his pictures and adds dimension to an aspect of a character, but Mahood sees it for a different reason.

"Soft tweed hat misty Harris tweed fawn cavalry twill the high glossy polish of old shoes originally expensive and since well cared for" (Towers 375-80). The catalogue could have been penned by any sob-sister or sob-brother. It is actually the way Merrick is dressed when Barbie meets him in the ravaged rose garden. Nothing, outside of popular fiction, could be more calculated to inspire confidence in an old lady originating from Camberwell.

And calculation it is, for the devil is a
great conman.

For those readers who do not believe in the devil, there is another reason for the stress on Merrick's clothes at this particular time. It is the first time Merrick has been described out of uniform, and it is used by Scott to emphasise an aspect of the man's character. Scott's scene has Merrick standing up alone at the edge of the verandah of Rose Cottage, not the garden, looking over the hills until a nervous Barbie appears. He is expecting to meet the Laytons; she is expecting to meet the ghost of Mabel. Ever polite, Merrick raises his hat to her and "the nausea and her apprehension faded, scorched out of her by this courteous gesture" (Towers 375). One remembers Daphne's thought: "people don't like you much, but you're fundamentally kind" (Jewel 111). However, Merrick's clothes are not for Barbie's approval, but for the Laytons, Merrick's chosen family, and he is dressed as he believes a gentleman should dress. His clothes, like his quarters, exhibit good taste, and he knows that gentlemen, like public schoolboys, have a fixation about good quality, well polished shoes. When the author John Mortimer attended Harrow, he was taught by an ex-Major of the Brigade of Guards that:

Properly shined shoes are the mark of a good regiment and a decent Classical Shell. It

gives me little pleasure to listen to Virgil
 being construed by a boy with shoes the
 colour of elephant's hide. Look down, and when
 you can see your faces in your toe caps,
 you shall inherit the earth. 8

No detail can be missed in Merrick's careful dressing of "the outer casing" of the hollow man: hollow in his self-destructive failure to adapt: hollow in his doubts and perversities.

Merrick's perverse attitude can be seen in his treatment of those who are used to further his needs or social advancement, his victims and his chosen. Some characters are strong enough to decide that they do not want to be victims or chosen: others are not in a position to choose. Such a one is Hari Kumar, for "he had long ago chosen him as a victim, having stood and watched him washing at the pump" (Jewel 159). Some reasons have already been given as to why Kumar is chosen - class, race, repressed homosexuality and sado-masochism - but is Kumar beaten and molested only because he represents everything Merrick hates in himself and others, or can the jealousy of a rejected man be added? The Superintendent is **certainly** worried when Daphne Manners is missing and before he connects her disappearance with Kumar. It is the first and only time that Merrick leaves his post. But to answer the question, one has to decide whether Merrick, in his own way, was ever fond

of Daphne, for the only account of his proposal is given by Daphne in a letter to her aunt. Apart from his question to Lady Chatterjee before the rape, Merrick never tells anyone. One thing is agreed on by most characters, including herself, and that is that Merrick only appears to take an interest in Daphne after he has seen her talking to Hari on the maidan: "I wonder just how much he was genuinely and quite unexpectedly attracted to me as a person?" (Jewel 406). A shy, insecure man could grow fond of Daphne because of her natural, unpretentious ways, something he had never experienced in a memsahib, especially one who is the niece of Lady Manners and is considered quite plain. They find they can talk easily together, something Merrick never experiences, before or after, until he meets young Edward. He does propose and does show more concern for her than his police duties during the communal riots.

Daphne, however, is naive and ingenuous and not a little vague. She does not tend to attach much significance to what she sees or does: for example, it takes her a long time to discover that the girls at the club do not like her. She, like Merrick, is an orphan who is seeking affection. Daphne notes Merrick's meticulous preparations for an "English-style" dinner: she notes how comfortable he has made his house, and that he does not smoke and seldom drinks. The new brandy and liqueur bottles are noted: "curaçao or crème de menthe, very dull" (Jewel 111). It does not occur

to her that, as a young English girl just out from England, she might be being manipulated. As it does not match her conservative image of Merrick, she is surprised at his taste in art: "a David Wright cutie two rather good reproductions of those drawings of people huddled in the underground during the Blitz" (Jewel 111). Henry Moore's art was considered very avant garde in the 1940's, so they must have been recent acquisitions. Merrick has bought Coty Chypre soap and a new pink towel specially for her. His choice of music surprises her too, for he not only enjoys Sousa but plays her brother David's favourite piece of music, Debussy's "Claire de Lune", and she thinks, "you and I have always got on surprisingly well" (Jewel 111). When she turns down Merrick's strange, old-fashioned proposal, he is genuinely shocked, and his sensitivity is revealed openly for the last time. He never recovers, and it is difficult to believe that he is not deeply hurt:

Do men know how vulnerable they look when they
slough off that tough not-caring skin?
All the lights go out. Like a house where the
people have gone away. If you knock at the
door now there won't be any answer. (Jewel 112-3)

Only Daphne has ever seen Merrick vulnerable, and it is only later that she realises that he "never so much as touched my hand" (Jewel 113). Knowing Merrick's feelings of shyness and inferiority this may not be surprising, but

it does show a lack of emotion, complete control and a singular lack of imagination. Did Merrick only propose to Daphne because of her social position? There is no answer. What is certain is that Daphne's preference for the Indian, Hari Kumar, over the English Merrick, seals the young man's fate.

Kumar, too English for the Indians and too Indian for the English, receives the undivided attention of Merrick from the minute that Merrick suspects Hari of being involved in Daphne's rape. A complete belief in the guilt of Hari is a belief Merrick never loses. Such a prospect obviously never enters Daphne's head, when she sends Hari away and tells him to say nothing. All Merrick's confused feelings of envy, contempt and attraction are revealed to Kumar during Merrick's obscene and contemptuous interrogation: "What price Chillingborough now?" (Scorpion 314). Kumar is only able to defeat Merrick by keeping silent and not participating in the face-to-face confrontation which Merrick has long anticipated and sees as symbolic: "the situation only existed on Merrick's terms if we both took part in it" (Scorpion 312). It is to the helpless Kumar that Merrick divulges his theories:

When he considered all the things that made him one of them in India - colonial solidarity, equality of position, the wearing of a uniform, service to King and Country - he knew that these

were fake What they had in common was the contempt they all felt for the native race of the country they ruled. (Scorpion 309).

Ironically, it is the Indian's feeling of self-worth that saves him, just as the Englishman's feeling of inferiority destroys him. Nevertheless, Kumar has a "flash of admiration" for Merrick: "he was totally unconcerned about what I could or do that could get him into trouble" (Scorpion 313). Of course, the stiff-upper lipped public schoolboy, Kumar, says and does nothing and goes to jail on a made-up charge of sedition, and Merrick gets off again. This risk taking, almost a death wish, is a trait of Merrick which is seen throughout the first four novels.

It is the people who come from the outside who see that the English in India are living an illusion, for they realise that

the past by the very nature of being past contains an element of unreality Reliance on past forms prevents creative individuality and leads to death-in-life, 9 to bitterness and despair.

Merrick, like so many of the alienated characters in the novels, Lucy Smalley, for example, is a creature of the past and of past forms. It is this belief in past forms

which causes Merrick to behave as he does with Indian prisoners, behaviour that would have been ignored forty years before. He sees the disintegration of the raj as having been caused by weakness. This belief furthers his bitterness towards the English. It is this belief in past forms, this inability to see that conditions must be changed, that makes Merrick feel that "might is right".

The outsider Guy Perron is chosen by Merrick to be one of his victims but he is "a tough nut to crack" (Division 63) and immune from Merrick's threats, so he is never a victim. Chosen by Merrick because he is upper-class but only a sergeant, Perron has an Aunt Charlotte who "has several friends in what are called high places. Permanent establishment" (Division 204) and can arrange a priority demobilisation for her nephew the minute she hears about the death of his friend "Bunbury", so he is not afraid of Merrick and his histrionics. Because of his lack of understanding of human nature, Merrick, unlike Perron, does not appreciate that "only a man born and bred in the officer class can decline a commission" (Division 24). Perron quickly understands Merrick's nature. When asked by Rowan why Havildar Karim Muzzafir Khan is special, Perron knows Merrick enough to say,

The havildar was special because Merrick
chose him It's part of the technique

of the self-invented man. Merrick
 looks round, his eye lights on someone
 and he says, Right I want him. Why do
 you think I am here? I'm a chosen one.
 I expect Coomer was. (Division 206).

Elaborating, Perron says that Merrick has principles and considers that upper-class people are "scum" because they have abandoned the principles by which they used to live: principles which enabled them to consider themselves superior to other people. Merrick is as anachronistic as Teddie Bingham, and his belief in past forms "is and always was hollow" (Division 209). Perron knows why Kumar and himself were chosen: one is an Indian with an English public school education, the other is an upper-class Englishman but is only a sergeant and so has to obey his superior officer, albeit reluctantly: "Oh no you won't. You bloody well won't, he said aloud" (Division 102). His extra smart salutes and always correct "Sir!" are used to mock Merrick, and his remarks are used to shock Merrick, who never uses bad language:

Are you one of these people who think that
 if you teach an Indian the rules of cricket
 he'll become a perfect English gentleman?
 'Hardly Sir, since I know quite a few Eng-
 lishmen who play brilliantly and are abso-
 lute shits'. 'Do you?' Merrick said.
 (Division 80).

Perron's antics never amuse Merrick as they do the reader. However, it is the objective Perron who can see that Merrick

has "chosen" the Layton family although he despises Colonel Layton for his concern for his Indian soldiers and knows the name of every man in his regiment, the Pankot Rifles, and "because Layton has and is everything Merrick covets" (Division 209). Colonel Layton shows great weakness, in Merrick's book, for concerning himself about the fate of his traitorous havildar. No matter that the Colonel is back in India after four years in a prisoner-of-war camp and is still emotionally and psychologically in shock.

Perron only proves to the medical N.C.O.s at Pankot that he is not part of the team of Golden Boy, Count Dracula and Miss Khyber Pass 1935 by abusing Suleiman verbally and physically after Merrick has left for Calcutta. Unknown to Perron, Merrick, knowing that the N.C.O.s hated him, deliberately engineered a friendly discussion in front of their mess window and this had led to their ostracising Perron who as usual was giving his smart salute and shouting "Sir!". Perron is now told the story of another of Merrick's victims, Lance-Corporal Pinkerton, by the amusing, blatantly homosexual Corporal Dixon, Sophie, or, "just call me Mum". Playing on his knowledge of Pinky's suppressed homosexuality and unhappiness, Merrick devises an elaborate scheme to blackmail the boy after introducing him to his first homosexual experience. In this way, Merrick is able to obtain the key to the psychiatrist's secret files, as Pinky is an

orderly in his office. Once there, Merrick studies the file on Susan Bingham. It is the knowledge gained from this information that makes Merrick appear such an understanding man to Susan. Dr. Richardson knows, or suspects, what Merrick has done and kindly arranges a transfer for the tragic Pinky: "I think you were extremely unfortunate to have come up against that particular officer", says the doctor who had examined Merrick psychiatrically after the amputation of his arm (Division 258). By assuming that the psychiatrist, for professional reasons, will not report him, Merrick is risking all, once again.

To help him in his plan, Merrick uses his bearer, the Pathan Suleiman. When he shared quarters with Merrick, Teddie had seen "a Pathan in a long robe - standing in the middle of the room" (Towers 102). Teddie saw it through a drunken haze after spending the evening with Merrick. Did Merrick deliberately make Teddie drunk? Was it Suleiman or Merrick dressed in his Pathan clothes? Few people, certainly not Ronald Merrick or John Nicholson, "failed to respond to the picturesque figure of the Pathan, a great chap for a swagger".¹⁰ After his police duties are finished in Mirat, Merrick intends to go up to the frontier to Peshawar - "the city of a thousand and one sins"¹¹ - where he thinks he has a better chance of a job and "where administration was much more a question of off-the-cuff decisions and not

just going by the book" (Division 547). Claude Auchinleck tells of his days in the North West Frontier; "the Pathan is an attractive man, but he has a very, very cruel streak in him, and , if you left a wounded man behind, he was not only killed but frequently mutilated in the most obscene manner".¹² Like other great warrior tribes, such as the Spartans and the Aztecs, Pathans consider homosexuality as normal. Francis Dillon recalls how the soldiers in his Indian Mountain Battery sang the famous Pushtu song "The Wounded Heart":

'There's a boy across the river with a bottom like a peach, but, alas I cannot swim'".¹³ Like Suleiman, Pathans have kohl-ringed blue eyes, so that Merrick with his blue eyes, on which Scott lays such emphasis, is able to wear Pathan clothes and darken his skin as a ritual humiliation for his perverted emotions. When his dead body is found, Merrick is wearing these clothes, and his coloured make-up has been used to write Bibighar on his mirror. Although he has been strangled with his own sash, his ornamental axe has been, significantly, used to mutilate the body. Count Bronowsky considers it a quick, compassionate death, but compassion has always been foreign to Merrick and is something he would never look for or want, just as he would not have liked his murder to be listed as a riding accident for political reasons.

When Merrick demonstrates his knowledge of Indian history ostensibly for Colonel Layton's benefit but really for

the benefit of the historian Perron, the sergeant realises "that he was a man to be reckoned with" (Division 87). Because he instinctively dislikes Merrick and appears to be alone in this: "I do not love thee Dr. Fell, the reason why I cannot tell" (Division 205), Perron is relieved when Rowan eventually "dropped his guard and disclosed that his distrust and dislike of Merrick were almost as great as my own" (Division 233). Rowan, the quintessential Englishman, has never understood how an Englishman could have behaved to Kumar as Merrick did, but, at one point, he disbelieved Kumar, an ex-member of his old school, Chillingborough, and he never tells Kumar that he knows him. It is left to the "tough-nut" to see, to understand, and to be angry at what Merrick is doing to the havildar and has done to Kumar, both helpless victims. Merrick takes

a sadistic delight in totally dominating and humiliating those whom [he] selects as victims. The element of secrecy and danger involved in playing this 'game' is a necessary part of it, and Merrick enjoys pushing a situation to its limits - where exposure of himself is gambled against the total disintegration of the victim's character and, on occasion, his death.

14

Havildar Karim Muzzafir Khan commits suicide. The sight of his pathetic body is described by Perron as a tableau vivant which has been deliberately set up by Merrick to shock Perron:

'Come over to D block, will you sergeant?
 There has been an interesting development.'
 At four o'clock in the morning I'm
 surprised he let them cut him down
 The whole thing was unspeakably ugly and sordid.
 (Division 210).

As Merrick knows, a sergeant is not likely to put a lieutenant-colonel on report, but once again Merrick has risked his career.

Sarah Layton is a strong enough character to withstand Merrick, and, although she is unfailingly polite to him, she, too, dislikes him instinctively; a fact which Merrick realises but ignores, for she is a member of his "chosen" family, although he does warn Perron, who does like Sarah, that she has a domineering instinct (Division 101). Swinden is wrong when he says that

it is Merrick's relationship with Sarah,
 built on the substructure of Daphne's
 relationship with Hari Kumar, that gives
The Quartet its balance, so far as plot
 is concerned. 15

Surely it is Sarah's relationship with Ahmed Kasim and India itself that forms the balance. Sarah and Merrick are at opposite ends of Scott's "moral continuum". When Merrick reveals, as closely as he ever does, his real nature, his feelings of inadequacy and his shyness, to Sarah

when she visits him in hospital, he only reaffirms her earlier opinion that "he was an appalling man whom she didn't trust" (Scorpion 224). And it is to Sarah that Merrick tells what he thought of being in the police.

There's the constant irritation of being strait-jacketed by policy from above You find yourself automatically implementing a policy you feel passionately is wrong and the only thing you can do short of resigning is detach yourself from the reality of the problem, from the human issue if you like. You become a rubberstampI sometimes think that if I'd done something terribly wrong the rubberstamp would have endorsed it. (Scorpion 221-2).

The rubberstamp of the raj has endorsed his mistake, although the Indian community has not forgotten or forgiven it. While she agrees with her father that Merrick has physical courage, Sarah says that if he has moral courage, she prefers "a bit of moral cowardice Or whatever it is that makes you admit there can be two sides to a question, other points of view as good as your own" (Division 366). Sarah has gradually come to see what is wrong with the raj; she, like Daphne before her, realises that what is lacking in the relationship between the two countries is compassion and a willingness by the English to accept individual Indians. Moreover, the English of the raj suffer from the inability to believe that all Indians are entitled to the same democratic rights as they themselves are. As Winston

Churchill said to Lord Irwin when urged to update his ideas on India: "I'm quite satisfied with my views on India, and I don't want them disturbed by any bloody Indians".¹⁶

The line between right and wrong does not have to be drawn for most people: "the line's already there" (Towers 156). If one does believe this, it is very difficult to explain, as one expects others to believe it too. However, Merrick does not believe it, or understand it, and has to draw the line for himself:

Well it's arbitrary. Nine times out of ten you draw it in the wrong place. But you need it there, you need to be able to say: There's the line. This side is right. That side is wrong. Then you have your moral terms of reference. Then you can act. You can feel committed. You can be involved. Your life takes on something like a shape (Scorpion 223-4).

This shape is the outer casing of a hollow man. Daphne Manners has crossed Merrick's line and so will Sarah Layton if she becomes friendly with the handsome Indian, Ahmed Kasim. This "self-invented" hollow man does draw the line in the wrong place, for he sees himself as a "professional" soldier as opposed to the Sandhurst-trained regular army officers who have an affection for their men, an affection which Merrick believes prevents them from making decisions which would adversely affect these men: "I don't

think I was ever an amateur either as a copper or as a soldier. I had no affection for the job, in either case. But I did the job" (Scorpion 387). It is little wonder that Sarah, with her upbringing and nature, does not understand Merrick, as he does not understand himself. But she realises when he is in hospital that he has a weight on his mind and wonders astutely:

was it the [Bibighar] victims, not Teddie who now lay like a weight on that conscience of his which he said he could examine but give a clean bill to? Perhaps that was the way into him, to become his victim and then to haunt his conscience All the people whom he chose as victims lay scattered on his threshold (Scorpion 418).

This is the man who chooses Sarah's sister Susan to be his wife, this "board-school boy with a brain and a gentlemanly veneer, and only one arm" (Scorpion 418). But he enters his chosen family by the back door, for Susan is emotionally unstable, and even Mildred cannot interfere and risk her daughter's sanity.

Susan has had a complete mental breakdown after the birth of her son, Edward Bingham. It is this boy whom Merrick really covets. Everyone says, "he's very good with young Edward", a very difficult child, but no-one sees why, although they see Merrick patiently playing with the little boy who responds to some masculine attention,

for he has been surrounded by women, of whom only Sarah and the Ayah give him unadulterated affection: the child is "that brat" to his grandmother, and his mother is emotionally incapable of love. Edward does not threaten Merrick's self-esteem in any way, in fact, the child's admiration and love are a soothing balm to the emotionally scarred Merrick who can relax and be natural with the boy. Although Susan has always admired Merrick for his bravery and is " beholden" to him for trying to rescue Teddie at such a cost to himself, she does not love Merrick, for she is unable to love anyone but herself, the fact of which Merrick is well aware, as he has studied her psychiatric files. Because of his knowledge, he understands Susan, and she responds with gratitude. She does, however, care for Merrick and cries when she sees his chafed stump of an arm. Although he allows her to help him with "his arm", she does not know of the pride or masochism which makes Merrick bear, or even enjoy, the suffering, nor does she know that he refused analgesics and other drugs, when in hospital his suffering must have been so acute.¹⁷

Neither Susan nor Edward appears to be adversely affected by Merrick's scarred face or artificial arm. As Susan is gullible, needs firm direction, and does not enjoy sexual intercourse, as was seen in her brief marriage to Teddie, she makes a good wife for the homosexual Merrick.

It is only Count Bronowsky who notices that the only time he saw Merrick "glow with the old conviction, was when he was with the child" (Division 561). At last Merrick has someone to whom he can talk and give affection without feeling that he is on show. It is young Edward who has Barbie's "The Jewel in her Crown" hanging up on his wall, and can explain its allegorical meaning to Perron. Merrick has unconsciously always believed in man-bap and has given the picture to the one person he loves, for to one with Merrick's artistic taste, the picture has no other merit. The influence of Merrick on the little boy is seen in his wearing Pathan clothes and in his precociousness: the boy is very rude and talks like an adult. As the child's mother is incapable of disciplining him, Merrick can mould him and treat him as an equal. The family is never together in The Quartet, and the reader has to depend on other characters' opinions and on Edward's ingenuous remarks, to find out the degree of confidence Merrick has in this little boy: "Daddy says Mummy saw an angel once, an angel in a circle of fire, but I mustn't talk about it because it upsets her" (Division 505). Edward was that angel. Even Susan imitates Merrick's tone and opinions: "you have to do all sorts of things that so-called pukka members of the raj pretend don't have to be done" (Division 510). It is fortunate that Susan's mother is in England, for the pukka memsahib would immediately have reached for the gin.

Susan never knows about Merrick's past, for no one tells her. Because of her inability to cope, she relinquishes all decision-making to him, even to setting up house. Here, Susan is acting wisely, for Merrick's frank enjoyment of comfortable surroundings has been seen throughout the novels. But he is playing Nanny again and treating Susan like a child, so preventing her from becoming a whole person: she is another victim.

Susan's insecurity and inability to understand Merrick are demonstrated when he dies and she finds a tenuous hold on reality in his memory:

He was the most secure person I've ever known and when Edward talks to servants the way he does I sometimes think he's just copying Ronnie. Ronnie was always very firm. But fair the servants adored him (Division 513).

Susan is wrong about Merrick being secure, but she is correct about the servants liking him. In Mayapore Daphne writes: "another point in his favour from my point of view was that his houseboy is obviously devoted to him" (Jewel 110). Hosain, the bearer in the Mirat barracks preferred Merrick to Teddie, and the disgusting Suleiman is devoted to him. However, Merrick's preference of handsome young Indians must be taken into consideration, although

it may be remembered how considerate he was to the Military Policemen who refused the Nawab permission to join Susan's wedding party. In sympathy, Merrick excused them and sent them out refreshments. Teddie would have jumped up and down. Susan, whose brittle sanity is kept intact with an artificial shell of drugs, appears childlike, and even Edward accepts the fact that his mother cries a lot. Being in a world of her own, she does not even know how or why Merrick was killed, but she has a new life as the widow of a hero.

It is when Susan and Edward have been sent back to the cool hills of Pankot that Merrick chooses his next victim, Laura the wife of Nigel Rowan, who is still suffering from the shock of her internment by the Japanese. Unable to talk about her experiences to Rowan, Laura tells them to Merrick: "he must be a wizard at interrogation!" (Jewel 111). Rowan sees Laura as a victim of Merrick, who only pays attention to her when her husband is away, but Laura is a strong personality who can break away by herself. When Laura finds a snake in her bath, a snake probably intended for Merrick who had only recently vacated the bungalow, and, as Rowan is away, she asks Merrick to deal with it:

"It was Merrick who killed the snake". Yes
Perron thought, Merrick was bound to come

into the picture. "I imagine he
got the last ounce of drama out of it"
(Division 541).

Of course he had, for Merrick had enticed the snake with his artificial hand and, when it struck, beheaded it with a kukri. When he came out of the bathroom and let the snake's head slip from his black glove, Laura "was at once sick, all over her elegant shoes", leaves the house and refuses to see the apologetic Merrick again (Division 542). As Rowan firmly believes that Merrick knows of the private investigation into Kumar's case, he sees the victimisation of his wife as Merrick's revenge on him. Perron, on the other hand, is convinced that because Merrick was posted to Singapore he knew all about the war criminals and the conditions of the prisoners, and that is how he alone managed to get Laura to tell her experiences. When Rowan finds this idea a little far-fetched, Perron responds, "Nigel - for me, nothing was far-fetched with Merrick. I believe he had a photographic memory" (Division 545).

Although Merrick becomes socially acceptable by his marriage to Susan, he never receives the social acceptance he really wants. He is treated with politeness but never with friendship. Rowan feels the antagonism between them; Sarah has never liked him, and he knows it; Ahmed Kasim, an Indian, refuses to allow him to watch him hawking. So,

the alienated Merrick becomes a victim of his own paranoia and the extremist Hindu faction which never has allowed him to forget the Bibighar affair.

The persecution of Merrick by the Indians has gone on for five years, and it has taken the forms of cabalistic signs, anonymous letters, stone throwing, the appearance of Kumar's Aunt Shalini dressed in widow's white, a lady's rusty bicycle, sometimes with a rotten pork chop in the saddlebag, and, probably, a snake in the bath. Although Merrick has always maintained that these incidents do not upset him, he does not start to smoke until after the Bibighar affair, and his obsession about Kumar has been observed. No matter how far he travels from Mayapore, he is always reminded of Bibighar. M.A.K., who knows all about Merrick's treatment of the Indian youths in Mayapore, asks Merrick if he is troubled by the incidents,

Merrick smiled. A cheerful smile, Kasim thought."The incidents have a two fold purpose- to let me know it's known where I'm currently living and working - which they do - and to undermine me psychologically - which they don't" (Division 407).

Assuming that he and M.A.K. will be enemies after Independence, Merrick is taken aback when Kasim denies any knowledge of "the list", and

for the first time Merrick looked uncertain of himself, disappointed Kasim thought: He's proud to be on the list in which case what people said about his character in Mayapore is probably true (Division 409).

Merrick appears to enjoy the drama involved, the attention received and the risk taken, for, as has been noted, he must have a challenge in life even if it has to end with his own death.

Merrick's resistance is lowered, however, when his Indian persecutors resort to more subtle methods, too subtle for Pandit Baba, Bronowsky thinks, for the Count is convinced that Merrick is only being used as a political pawn to be killed at the most expedient moment. The new form of persecution plays on Merrick's repressed weakness, an attraction for handsome Indian boys. So, Merrick is unaware of the pattern in the arrival of the non-Mirati boys who come to his house looking for work, and succumbs to one night of pleasure with young Aziz. However, Aziz reveals to Merrick the aspect of himself which appals him, for, at last, he is forced to see "the connexion between the homosexuality, the sado-masochism, the sense of social inferiority, and the grinding defensive belief in his racial superiority" (Division 571), and, the next night he viciously beats the boy's face. Other boys, accompanied by a Pathan, follow, but Merrick has descended to paranoia: "he wanted

there to be a man in the rullah. He wanted there to be a stone thrown at his horse" (Division 571). How angry Merrick would have been to know that he was a "convenient victim" used to aggravate racial tension:

Perhaps he hoped that his murder would be avenged in some splendidly spectacular way, in a kind of Wagnerian climax, the raj emerging from the twilight and sweeping down from the hills with flaming swords (Division 571).

When Merrick dies, no one mourns - "Mistah Kurtz - he dead". With Merrick's death comes the death of the raj, and his moral, physical, and mental deterioration can be paralleled to the disintegration of the raj which Merrick both venerated and despised.

Just as a compassionate Scott sympathises not only with the Indians but also with the English people who have devoted a life's work to the raj and are now no longer needed or wanted, so he sees people like Merrick and Kumar as victims of that same raj, for Merrick no less than Kumar is the alienated Philoctetes. Scott associates the suffering of the abandoned bowman with the sufferings of both Kumar and Merrick. The classicist, Kumar, calls himself Philoctetes when he writes for the Ranpur Gazette, but Merrick is associated throughout the novels with sick out-

cast Greek, a man of great potential, who was left to fend for himself, abandoned by his countrymen when they could not stand the smell of his wound. Sarah thinks that Merrick's professionalism is a "distinction he has made to heal a wound" (Scorpion 406). Later Perron thinks that "the smell in the room is not after all just Merrick's smell, but also the smell of the archer's wound" (Division 550), and Perron's room, in which Merrick slept, has "a resonance" (Division 545). But, unlike the Greek hero, neither man has his wound healed or reaches his goal which, in fact, had never been possible to reach. Kumar is left by the English in an alien land, India, and Merrick, alienated from all, is murdered by the Indians, but the smell lingers still, even today. The departing English, like the ancient Greeks, suffer dissension in their ranks, and the pretended violence of Edward's war inside the railway carriage is matched by the real, and increasing, violence outside, which is caused by the division of the spoils.

This is the way the world ends
 This is the way the world ends
 This is the way the world ends
 Not with a bang but a whimper. 18

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1. Paul Scott, "India - A Post-Fosterian View", Essays by Divers Hands, being the Transaction of the Royal Society of Literature, N.S. 36, ed. Mary Stocks. (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 131-2.
2. A Concise Encyclopaedia of Psychiatry, p. 96.
3. C.E.P., p. 263.
4. C.E.P., p. 263.
5. C.E.P., p. 272.
6. Mahood, p. 251.
7. Mahood, p. 267.
8. John Mortimer, Clinging to the Wreckage, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), p. 49.
9. Weinbaum, p. 100.
10. Raj, p. 198.
11. Raj, p. 199.
12. Raj, pp. 206-7.

13. Raj, p. 172.
14. Swinden, p. 86.
15. Swinden, p. 85.
16. James Morris, Farewell the Trumpets, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), p. 298.
17. No hospital would allow this to actually happen, for sleep is the great healer. Scott uses this disdain for drugs as an extreme example of Merrick's masochism, as no one can call it courage.
18. T.S. Eliot "The Hollow Men". conclusion.

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