CHAPTER 4

(III) THE TOWERS OF SILENCE

(IV) A DIVISION OF THE SPOILS
THE TOWERS OF SILENCE

The Towers of Silence, the third book of the tetralogy published in 1971 is significantly connected to the earlier novels of the Quartet. It serves as a bridge between The Day of the Scorpion (second book) and A Division of the Spoils (last book) of the series. In Hilary Spurling’s words this novel is:

... set against the background of distant European war, Japanese invasion of the subcontinent, defeat and dispersal on all sides; and it charts the gradual reluctant acceptance by one small section of the British civilian population in India that their time is up. (xix)

The focus is again directed towards the predicament of both the Indians as well as the British at a time when the struggle for freedom was at its zenith. This book again portrays Scott’s love for history and his aim to familiarise the readers with the situations that were responsible in giving shape to various historical happenings centred on India’s freedom struggle. These very events were to become landmarks in carving the history of modern India. The earlier two novels of the Quartet deal with the historical events of 1942 especially the launch of the Quit India Movement by the Congress and make the readers reflect and introspect on them. Furthermore, the growing tension and conflict between the Congress and the Muslim League is examined in detail.

History in this novel has been presented as a complicated web in which the characters are caught unawares and are unable to find away out of the
difficult situation. According to Badiger, Paul Scott has titled the book, *The Towers of Silence* "to express the nausea and madness of the aged Raj, leading to its death" (64). An interesting narrative feature in the novel is introducing Ronald Merrick in the role of a military man (his cherished desire). In the first two books of the *Quartet* he is seen as the tyrannical and autocratic police officer brutal in his treatment of the natives: responsible for the incarceration and illegal detention of Hari Kumar. This feature of the book highlights Scott's artistic dexterity in bringing the various courses of the earlier novels together to make the plot appear more lucid and coherent. *The Towers of Silence* takes into account the military action of the Raj, the rise of the nationalist parties and India's struggle for freedom. While remembering his aim of collating historical information with fictional details, Paul Scott does not forget to maintain the unity of the plot in the series. The book details the account of Susan's childbirth, her insane behaviour, Mabel Layton's helplessness and death, Barbie Batchelor's reflections on the Raj and her death.

Most significantly this book deals with the formation of the Indian National Army or Azad Hind Fauj led by Subhas Chandra Bose and reviews it exhaustively from the British-Indo perspective. Once again Paul Scott examines the relationship between Europeans (English) and non-Europeans (Indians) amidst the rise of the Indian National Army (INA) and its confrontation with the might of the British Empire. The INA aimed at putting an end to the violence and ruthlessness which had aided the British in ruling
India for about two centuries. It was now time to get rid of the foreign ruler and set the country free.

The last few years of the colonial rule are considered to be the most politically turbulent and unstable as well as excessively violent in the history of British India. This period rendered many changes in Indian history due to the various events that took place during India’s struggle for freedom. The growth of INA has been well detailed in the narrative of *The Day of the Scorpion*. This book focusses on INA’s political agenda and British’s reaction to it. It was believed that: “The loss of British power in India . . . would have been a frank confession of Britain’s moral bankruptcy” (Chakravarty 23). This was a situation the English could ill afford and measures were needed to salvage their power as well as pride.

The emergence of INA was considered as an insurgent movement led by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. The outbreak of the Second World War and the inability of the colonizer to protect India from the foreign invasions (Japan) created controversies and differences of opinion over the question of India’s future. Congress was losing as a political force because of its advocacy of non-violent means to counter the aggression of the imperial rule. It was held responsible for the suffering of the Indians and countless deaths of the natives. People had by this time understood that gaining freedom on the basis of non-violence was not possible, especially when force and violence had become the order of the day. In spite of the major differences in their approach and
methods of dealing, the nationalist parties were united in their objective of fighting for the sovereignty/freedom of their country against the British Empire.

Various events of colonial India in 1942 and 1943 have been depicted in the novel. INA’s insurgency (as in The Day of the Scorpion) is once again traced to be the result of the discriminatory politics and oppressive and suppressive measures of the colonial rule towards the natives; the political crisis faced by the British during the Second World War; the disillusionment of the Indian soldiers towards the British army – its apathy and indifference to their lot which made it unbearable for them to serve it any longer; thus time seemed opportune for them to turn to INA. World War II also brought into light the harsh reality of various policies of the British Raj which were forcefully imposed on India for its political advantage. INA emerged as a better option (counter movement) to Mahatma Gandhi’s non-cooperation and non-violent method of resistance and struggle for freedom.

Subhas Chandra Bose, loved by the Indian masses and feared by the British, was indubitably committed to the cause of India’s independence. Due to his revolutionary ideas and trenchant differences with the Congress members he had to resign from the post of President of All India Congress. He believed that Congress’s method of non-violence and non-cooperation to gain sovereignty lacked momentum and force. Accordingly, he planned his own ways of fighting the British. The idea of a Free Indian Army was the result of
his practical apprehension of the war time situation in Germany. Ranjan Borra quotes N.G. Ganpuley (Subhas Chandra Bose’s associate in Berlin) thus:

Netaji himself, when he left India, could not have, by any stretch of imagination, thought of forming a national army unit outside the country, and therefore he had no definite plans chalked out for its realization. Even while in Berlin, he could not think of it during the first few months of his stay there. (Borra)

The novel has been structured against this political backdrop. Through Ronald Merrick, the details of Indian National Army (INA) – its inception, growth and activities against the British have been provided to the readers. As Copley observes that Scott’s own military experiences allowed him to comprehend the breakdown of trust between the English army officer and sepoy and the emergence of the INA:

It is still a story for the historian to tell and this gave scope to Scott’s imaginative powers as a novelist. Merrick saw the INA as “a negation of most of the things the army, the people as a whole have believed in as a code of possible conduct” and the novel reflects well how even more deeply than the civilian Raj, the military cherished the man-bap code of filial loyalty. (Copley 67)

This concept of ‘man-bap and “filial loyalty” is best observed in Teddie Bingham’s “suicidal faith” in the continuing loyalty of the jiff and Muzzy Guide (Baksh) who had joined the Azad Hind Fauj and Colonel Layton’s confidence that he alone could find out, why Muzzafir Khan, his havildar had gone over to the INA in Germany. Merrick lends information about Subhas Chandra Bose (escaped from India in December 1940) as an “eminent member
of the All India National Congress” (Scott 129) who had become “an embarrassment to other members” of the party because of his “extremist views”. After escaping from India, Merrick explains:

... quite logically, he [Bose] turned up in Berlin with the declared intention of carrying on what he called India’s fight from freedom from there ... Indeed, all this makes a perfectly sensible pattern. Hitler, Ribbentrop, Goebbels, Subhas Chandra Bose. (130)

It was a trying and a testing period for the British government whose constant attempts to enforce subjugation on the politically awakened Indians and contain the strong national agitation were meeting with failure. The INA was perceived by the English to be the biggest threat to the Raj; it had become England’s betenoire. According to Merrick at this stage of the war (World War II) the formation of INA would appear to the Indians as a “... merciful step taken to minimize any suffering Indians might have undergone following a British defeat.” Speaking derisively of Bose he calls him the “Gauleiter of India.” The reason for his hatred and anger against Subhas Chandra Bose can be ascribed to the British being outwitted by his intelligence and dynamic leadership as pointed out by Sujit Bose in his book *Attitudes to Imperialism*. It is no wonder that Merrick insults the genius of Subhas Chandra Bose thus:

“The first is that a man who has such a high opinion of himself and his talents as to believe that single-handed he might achieve what the Congress as a whole has not managed to and takes the trouble to put a great distance between himself and his jailers, is in all likelihood suffering to some extent from delusion of grandeur.” (Bose 92)
He later also comments:

'... His [Bose] is an odyssey that deserves to be better known and no doubt will be because it is not over yet. Like many great adventures it has its marginally amusing elements. I am assured on the best authority that although Mr Bose stumbled most of the way through Afghanistan on foot he effected his entry into Kabul in a tonga.' (Scott 130)

These facts present Merrick’s point of view with regard to British India and the Second World War as well. For him Second World War meant to be an opportunity where the Raj could regain its superiority by playing its cards well. British officers like Merrick were not concerned with Indian officers who accepted the superiority of the British army and went along with their diktats and policies. Instead, the Raj was afraid of the patriotic and radical Indians like Subhas Chandra Bose and Rash Behari Bose, “an old Indian revolutionary living in exile in Japan” (132) and the head of the “... Indian Independence League in Japan. With the backing of the Japanese government he was now in a position to extend this as a going concern in all the invaded territories.” These two men were posing a challenge to the imperial rule and trying their best to destroy the Empire and liberate India from its rule. Merrick like most of the English officers perceived them to be responsible for the troubles of the Raj:

'This unit,' Merrick continued, ‘is first reported as officially in existence in January 1942. In other words it took Mr Bose at least a year to find eight or nine hundred men to accept the bait of ostensible freedom from prison-camp and to form a group which no doubt he
described as the nucleus of a great army of patriotic Indians whose quarrel was with the British and no other nation . . .

... Bose was still in Berlin when the Japanese launched their lightning attacks in the Far East, on Pearl Harbor, Malaya and Burma. Intelligence reports reveal that he was in touch with the Japanese ambassador in Berlin and it takes little imagination to work out that one of the things he must have suggested to that gentleman was that the Japanese should encourage the raising of similar forces from Indian prisoners of war to assist them in their operations in the Far Eastern theatre . . ." (Scott 131-132)

At this critical juncture in the political history of India, the war (Second World War) that had earlier appeared to be “far off was suddenly on India’s doorstep” (45). Japanese had already captured Malaya and with Singapore’s and Burma’s submission in the war, it was in a strong position to challenge the might of the British Empire. This made the English hopeless and pessimistic about their future in India:

With these stunning losses the hope of anything ever being quite the same again faded quietly away into the background. And as if things weren’t bad enough with the enemy at the gate there was an increasingly troublesome enemy inside it: Indian leaders who screamed that defeat in Malaya and Burma was a forerunner to defeat in India, that the British had shown themselves incompetent to defend what it was their duty to defend but which wouldn’t need defending at all if they weren’t there, inciting the Japanese who had no quarrel with the Indians themselves.
By incorporating these historical facts, Scott lends plausibility and authenticity to the narrative. He traces the growth and significance of INA in context of India’s struggle for freedom. That Bose was being helped by Germany and Japan to fulfil his dream of giving shape to his army and stand against the colonial power is commented upon. The successful military manoeuvres of Japan, Singapore and Malaya posed a threat to the longevity of the British Empire and the future of British imperialism began to appear dark and bleak. INA with Japanese support was well equipped to march towards Imphal. Thus, the English had two tasks ahead of them – to fight the Japanese and to combat the attack of INA, in order to preserve their dominance and extend their chances of survival in India. However, Merrick observed:

‘What I think important to bear in mind is the effect the news of Congress’s demands, and of the outcome of those demands, must have had on Indian prisoners of war in Malaya and Burma, particularly upon those who had now committed themselves to the INA . . . Would Congress really approve of the Azad Hind Fauj?’ (Scott 137)

Merrick along with the rest of the British officials believed and expected that Congress would never accept INA’s demands and thus hoped that this difference of perspective/ideological differences would prove to be advantageous to his government. The political stance of Congress favouring non-violence as a mode of agitation pitted against INA’s advocacy of militarism (extremist action) would favour the interests of the British. Furthermore, the neutral behaviour of the Congress regarding the Japanese invasion had made the situation more intolerable for Indians which the English
wanted to use to their advantage. For the INA, its aim was clear – to free India from the foreign ruler. While talking to a gathering of officers, Merrick informed them of the decision of the INA officers; they had openly asked their troops to confront the British (even their old officers and comrades) as well as the Japanese “... if the latter showed any signs of substituting the Rising Sun for the Union Jack” (Scott 137).

However, by 1944, the year of confidence, which has already been discussed in the first chapter, the situation began to look up for the English in India and the Allied forces in the West. Scott maps out these consequent developments of the Second World War in a thanksgiving scene conducted by Arthur Peplow at the rectory bungalow:

... for the defeat of the Japanese attempt to invade India at Imphal, for the news that the last Japanese soldier had been driven from Indian soil, and for the continuing good reports from France of the allied offensive against the Germans. (284)

These details affirm that the British had been successful in defending India from the Japanese invasion. France had also proved itself quite tough against the German power. Things were once again in favour of the British, and thus a special thanksgiving was being observed.

*The Towers of Silence* as mentioned earlier once again serves as a medium to recall the earlier happenings. Details omitted in the earlier books are dexterously woven into the present narrative, not only to give coherence but as well as shape and method to the text. Scott reveals Teddie's earlier liking for
Sarah Layton which later shifted to Susan Layton – the other sister whom he marries, Sarah’s secret visit to Lady Manners in Kashmir to see Daphne’s daughter Parvati (who had been rejected by the British because she was the offspring of a rape) is indicative of her liberal outlook as well as defiance of the norms laid down by the British. The book also lends information about Lady Manners who in defiance of English society not only accepted/welcomed Daphne after the rape but also took care of Daphne’s daughter after her death and raised her like an Indian child.

Teddie imbued with “paternalistic attitude towards Indians” (Badiger 92) returned to Pankot at a time when the British were living in a threat of losing at Burma. As he became aware of the actual working of the colonial system, its insidious dealings, rigid and punitive rules for the natives, he turned indifferent towards the government and was very much criticised by the other British officials for being apathetic towards his own countrymen. Being a dedicated officer he also “. . . had been rather disappointed too to discover that the Japanese had proved ‘more useful in a scrap’ than the British and Indian armies together . . .” (Scott 98). In context of his acquaintance with Merrick, he never tried to know the reason of the chain of deeply significant events related to him – Merrick’s resignation as DSP of Mayapore, the scribbled chalk marks on the wall, the broken bicycle, the stone throwing incident at the black Limousine carrying him and Merrick to his marriage, the old lady who came begging for somebody’s life at the station. Sarah, though only a commoner was
easily able to notice these important facts and tried to gauge their significance, which Teddie, though an officer was not able to. While talking to Barbie Batchelor, Sarah observed:

Teddie was awfully cool with him which was a bit unfair, but I think someone had already suggested that if Mr Merrick was the DSP in Mayapore at the time of the Manners case then the stone had probably been thrown at him and not at the Nawab’s car. And the thing that happened on the station capped it. (Scott 181)

Later Merrick tries to explain the truth about the Bibighar episode and the various accidents that were aimed at him. But he manipulates the truth to suit his own end. He did not admit his mistake; instead he stated that he had been wrongly blamed by the six men who were arrested in the Bibighar case. While talking about the lady at the station (Hari’s Aunt), he alleged that she was being used against him as a part of a well-knitted conspiracy. Sarah did not believe him, but he tried his best to make his version of the story sound true.

Throughout the Quarrel, mostly the situations that involve Merrick are a manifestation of the typical attitude (arrogant, contemptuous and condescending) of the British towards the Indians. The differences and disparities that existed between the colonizer and the colonized are brought to the surface. His character has been superbly drawn by the writer to evince feelings of dislike and revulsion towards him. Scott never allows the readers to become forgetful of the Bibighar episode; time and time again he foregrounds it with new information and different signification.
Gorra believes that “Scott’s characters know that they are living within history, know that the British are coming ‘to the end of themselves as they were’” (29). The dissolution of the Raj is not only a comment of their failure on political front but on moral ground as well:

Scott demands that we see history in moral terms—that we allow our consciences to pass judgement on the human costs of impersonal historical forces rather than merely shrugging our shoulders over their inevitability. (31)

The plot of *The Towers of Silence* moves around Mabel Layton (Colonel Layton’s stepmother) and Barbie Batchelor. Barbie as the central character in this book was a friend of Edwina Crane (the English lady attacked by the angry mob in *The Jewel in the Crown*). After retiring as a Superintendent of one of the Mission schools in Ranpur, she moves to Pankot and begins to live with Mabel Layton in Rose Cottage. Her sympathies were with India and Indians as she believed that they (Indians) needed to be loved and understood by the English. This dimension of her character helps her to be identified with the set of other liberal characters of the series (Colonel Layton, Robin White, Sarah Layton, Daphne Manners, Miss Edwina Crane). Thus, introduced in the third book of the *Quartet*, Barbie eases her way into the narrative and accords an easy acceptance in the minds of the readers. In Rubin’s words, *The Towers of Silence*:

... is like the adagio movement of a cyclic symphony that develops themes in new and unexpected ways, a long, reflective, unwinding narrative that presents again and in far greater detail events previously
related. It begins in 1939 with Barbie Batchelor’s retirement and her coming, in answer to an advertisement, to live at Rose Cottage with Mabel Layton; continues on through 1943, with the deaths of Mabel and Teddie Bingham, and a climactic confrontation between Barbie and Merrick; and concludes with Barbie’s death in a Ranpur hospital in August 1945. (Rubin 129)

Paul Scott gives voice to intangible aspects of history (Raj) with the help of metaphors and symbols. These have the potential to reach out/express those realities which history cannot give expression to. The title of the novel is symbolic of the towers of silence of the Parsees. This becomes clear at the end of the novel when Barbie Batchelor talks about the birds; a symbol that Paul Scott continues from his novel *The Birds of Paradise*. Due to her inability to speak she writes, "'The birds belong to the towers of silence. For the Ranpur Parsees'... Miss Batchelor wrote: Yes, I see, Vultures. Thank you" (Scott 399). According to Badiger, the towers referred here imply that there is a "... comparison between the towers of silence and Barbie Batchelor and Aunt Mabel, who, symbolising as they do madness and the death of the Raj, are themselves the towers of silence" (65). Critics believe that the melancholic state of the Raj has been depicted by Scott through characters like Susan Bingham, Aunt Mabel, Barbara Batchelor:

Throughout *The Towers of Silence* the view of the British continues to darken, especially as demonstrated by the detailed account of social life in Pankot, its hollowness, and the growing dreariness of its rituals. (Rubin 131)
Mabel Layton’s death in course of the novel “is symbolic of the death of the Raj” (Badiger 67). She told Barbie that she wanted to be buried near her husband’s grave at Ranpur. But Mildred disregarded Mabel’s wish and Barbie’s plea and arranged the burial at Pankot:

There (she thought) went the *raj*, supported by the unassailable criteria of necessity, devoutness, even of self-sacrifice because Mildred had snatched half an hour from her vigil to see the coffin into the hole she had ordered dug. . . . But what was being perpetrated was an act of callousness: the sin of collectively not caring a damn about a desire or an expectation or the fulfilment of a promise so long as personal dignity was preserved and at a cost that could be borne without too great an effort. (Scott 244)

The “promise” that Barbie talks about is related to Aunt Mabel’s desire to be buried near her husband’s grave and to “the promise given to Indians by the British of changing India into a “garden”. [but] Both the promises remain unfulfilled for ever” (Badiger 68).

The British justified their colonization of India as a moral duty and responsibility, an effort to “enlighten and edify” the “uncivilised Indians” and provide them with a better future. But the promised growth never took place, instead, they kept on capitalizing and exploiting India.

India was a matter of pride, an achievement of imperial purpose for the British. There was no love or affection for Indians, it had never been there; India was a business (political and economic expansion), a possession, a jewel in their Crown which they did not want to lose. They kept on revising their
policies to suit their vested interests at the cost of India and Indians. In a period of two hundred years beginning with trading – East India Company, followed by annexation of states under different policies, there came a time when the whole of India was under the Crown. Britain’s role had transformed from a trader to that of a colonialist. However, gradually the Indians awakened to their rights and then began their quest for freedom and nationhood: Quit India, Civil Disobedience Movement, Satyagraha, formation of the Azad Hind Fauj. These political uprisings destroyed the illusions of the Raj and made the British see the edifice of the Empire crumbling.

This novel also brings into focus the socio-cultural aspect of the Raj by documenting the social life of Pankot and highlighting the role of the memsahibs in the running of the Raj and maintaining the colonial identity. He has vividly presented their attitude and life in colonial India. The British women had a sense of superiority embedded in them. The wives of the British officers were required to play a role and live up to the expectations of the colonial situation: “With the memsahibs one saw the worst aspects of class snobbery and racism of the Raj” (Copley 69). They had a central role to play in maintaining the social distance between the ruler and the ruled and shoulder the paternalistic role of absent husbands. This drove the memsahibs into an artificial situation of “petty ambitions, class and racial snobbery instead of a natural lifestyle” observes Copley. Characters like Mildred Layton, Maisie Trehearne, Clara Forsdick, Isobel Rankin, Clarissa Peplow, in their vanity also
show their difference of attitude towards the older ladies like Mildred Layton and Barbie Batchelor. The apathy/indifference/ill-treatment meted out to the Indians by the Raj was at its peak in the late 1940s, and these imperial good wives maintained a strict adherence to the moral code of the Raj. While talking about Isobel Rankin, Scott concludes:

She was under no misapprehension about the mistakes made in the past and still being made by her own people in India but if she had been asked to say in what way India had most benefited from the British connection, what it was that could be offered in extenuation of fault, error, even of wickedness, she would have been perfectly clear that it was the example so often given of personal trustworthiness: a virtue that flowed from courage, honesty, loyalty and commonsense in what was to her a single definition of good.

... To Isobel Rankin a world without authority was meaningless. There would be no chain of trust if there were no chain of command. (Scott 57-58)

These thoughts demonstrate the racial antipathy/aversion and imperial uneasiness prevalent during the last phase of Indian independence. Women had been deliberately involved by the Empire in the “colonising” business. They too were influenced by the racial myth and helped the Empire to execute their plans of making the Indians feel inferior and subordinate. These memsahibs played the roles of “pukka memsahibs” very well and their haughty attitude escalated the environment of “structured inequality” (Darby 113) during the period. In course of this novel, Scott has documented the socio-cultural history
of the Raj by focussing upon the social lifestyle of its characters. “This sense of inner decay is reinforced by the sad decadence of life at Pankot” (Appasamy 79).

*The Towers of Silence* is the shortest book of the *Quartet*. It explores the growth of INA and the worsening of the political situation during the 1940s. Subhas Chandra Bose, founder of Indian National Army (INA) comes out as a hero, fighting for the cause of his country’s independence and is depicted as a great threat to the British Empire with his extremist views. The novel serves as a medium to give uniformity to the plot of the *Quartet* by working out details omitted in the earlier novels and collating them with the present narrative. It reads as a critique of author’s criticism of the colonial attitudes and policies implemented by the British against the Indians. By focussing on the role of the memsahibs of Pankot and their decadent life style, the book comes out as a social document of the times. *The Towers of Silence* presents the crumbling edifice of the Empire, as its illusions slowly disintegrate in wake of the political upheavals in the twilight years of the Raj.
Works Cited


A DIVISION OF THE SPOILS

*A Division of the Spoils*, the last novel of *The Raj Quartet*, was published in the year 1975. The book provides a picture of the “... fundamental change: the transfer of power, the dislocation of a subcontinent in the name of partition, the end of Britain's role as a great imperial power” (Darby 112). Divided into two books, the first book deals with the major events of the year 1945 and 1946; while book two deals with the year 1947, taking into cognizance the widespread violence and bloodshed that followed the Partition of the country. The novel begins with the historical details of the ongoing Second World War, its effects on the British Empire, India's final phase of struggle for gaining independence and ends with the creation of India and Pakistan out of one nation. Therefore, from the historical perspective it stands to be the most significant book of the tetralogy.

The *Quartet* had started “... with the rape of a white woman during the Quit India riots that mobilized resentment against the British in 1942” (Spurling x) and ended “... five years later with the murder of a Muslim — a body falling from a railway carriage, butchered by Hindu terrorists on an ambushed train that moves off again, after a brief bloody interval, to complete its interrupted journey across the subcontinent.”

*The Raj Quartet* marks Scott’s engagement with the history of British India; its plot is shaped with the help of historical events and instances wherein
the novelist bears witness to the Raj's many mistakes and failures — "... its inhumanity, smugness, self-righteousness and rigidity" (Spurling xv). The novel gives expression to the loss of glory, power and prestige which was once synonymous with the idea of British imperialism; in its last days the Raj was reduced to having become infinitesimal — an insignificant nothing, leaving its representatives bewildered, delirious and confused. The book brings the tetralogy to a successful conclusion by carrying the narrative forward with the events and characters detailed in the earlier three novels. One major fictive contribution to the plot that takes place in the present novel is the marriage of Ronald Merrick with Susan Layton and his death.

The story has been developed/structured with the help of the political events that were taking place at the time of Indian independence leading to the Partition of India and Pakistan in the year 1947. "In historical terms, the novel covers the period between the defeat of Germany in May 1945 to the independence of India in August 1947" (Trivedi 73). This epoch was quite a complex one, a very unfavourable one in colonial history for both British and India. The book is replete with such events, proving it to be one of the best novels dealing with the last days of the colonial period. As said earlier, A Division of the Spoils provides a logical ending to the series as well as marks the culmination of all the ideas that Scott had set to explore and present in the earlier three novels. This last book of Scott's monumental work the Quartet not only focusses on Indian National Army, Congress-Muslim league coalition,
communal riots but also helps the readers to comprehend the factors/causes leading to the Partition and genocide – the consequences of a plan initiated and implemented by the British which eventually led to a colossal displacement, dislocation and destruction of life and property.

The Second World War came to an end with Japan’s surrender. The bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki scarred the face of history and the psyche of people forever. Japan’s surrender forced its soldiers to retreat from Burma and Imphal thus leaving the Indian National Army’s (INA) soldiers irresolute, unsettled and bewildered. They were taken as prisoners of war by the English because they had dared to raise their voice against the might and absolute power of the British Empire. The INA soldiers were charged – with treason of challenging and standing against the British Rule. It was decided that proper trial would be conducted for them. The major political parties of India stood by them and resented the decision of the British government. Contrary to the English view, INA was applauded by all Indians for its patriotism as they were fighting for India’s liberation. Thus, “The prisoners who had stayed loyal came back to a heroes’ welcome...” (Scott 978). These soldiers and their fight for independence aroused the spirit of nationalism among the other Indians and on the emotional and psychological front gave a tremendous boost and impetus to the struggle for freedom.

Paul Scott carefully works out all the political and historical details so as to bring the narrative to a logical conclusion in context of the historical
The idea of division of India into two dominions had started from the year 1939. It was a time when Muslim League had gained proximity to the British Empire due to its unflinching support of the English during the Second World War. The British government had tried its best to take Congress too into its confidence by promising them (Congress) that it would leave India at the earliest. However, by then Congress had become wary of the insidious dealings and machinations of the British Raj. The nationalist party had already been dealt a blow by the Cripps Mission, according to which the power of ruling India (country's progress to autonomy) would be shared equally between the Muslim League and the Congress. Congress' loss was Muslim League's gain.

In the year 1945, the British allowed Jinnah to form a new Executive Council with Muslim members only. This infuriated the Congress and escalated hostility and enmity between the two parties and communities:

Subsequently, in press conference, the leader of the All-India Congress Party, a Muslim, blamed the leader of the Muslim League for the unbending nature of his claim for the League's right to nominate all Muslim members of the proposed Executive Council and blamed the British Government for not having foreseen that the conference would break down if one party were given right of veto on nominations and therefore the opportunity to hold up the country's progress to autonomy. (Scott 407)

Elections were held to sort out the differences between the two parties. Congress emerged victorious in these elections. In turn Muslim League decided to observe 'Direct Action Day' (16 August 1946) which led to a great communal violence in India. Scott writes that it was "... Jinnah's decision to
resort to violence in the belief that the Viceroy had betrayed him by allowing Congress to enter the central interim government without him” (Scott 876). The British were unable to control the situation which led to communal disturbances in the country.

The political upheavals and turbulent condition of India had made it amply clear to the British Government that the time had come for them to leave India. The ever growing volatile situation and the pressure by the Labour Party at home (after the Second World War) acted as a cue for the British to free India. Lord Wavell was succeeded by Lord Mountbatten; the last Viceroy of British India who announced the Empire’s decision of setting India free on 15th August 1947:

Along with Lord Mountbatten’s appointment to the viceroyalty of India, came the momentous announcement of the British Government in which it stated its intention of transferring both the power and the responsibility of ruling India to responsible native hands by June 1948. Sir Cyril Radcliffe was appointed to oversee the partition of India. The Indian Independence Bill was passed without any dissent in the British Parliament on July 1947 and on the 15th of August of the same year, British rule in India came to an end. (Trivedi 74)

With this declaration, people prepared themselves for the inevitable Partition of the country into the dominions of India and Pakistan.

Book Two of the novel which portrays the year of 1947 has been titled as “Pandora’s Box”. The narrative time frame is from June 1947 till the Partition of the country. While giving title to this section of the book, Scott,
probably had “. . . in mind the chaotic scene of communal riots and the massacre of Hindus and Muslims at the time of the Partition . . .” (Badiger 74). In light of the turbulent situation of the country India’s independence was “. . . almost like the opening of the box India’s past by the Viceroy, to let out all the evils into the country.”

It was on 3rd June 1947, that Viceroy Lord Mountbatten broadcast to the nation that “. . . the division of India into two self-governing dominions, India and Pakistan, was inevitable . . .” (Scott 869). With this announcement the British found themselves in a state of complete trepidation as they had only ten weeks for transferring of power to the Indian administrators. Furthermore, the inevitability of Partition heightened communal tensions/hostilities and led to increased communal violence. People began to leave their homes in search of new ones. Thus, the division of the country brought in its wake a mass exodus of people – dislocated and displaced refugees looking for new homes to settle in. Tempers flared, bitterness crept in, and hostilities broke out resulting in arson, vandalism, violence and bloodshed. The same phenomenon has been discussed by Khushwant Singh in his novel Train to Pakistan. The book talks about the fictitious village Mano Majra where Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs lived in perfect harmony. But a train full of corpses shattered their peace and good will forever. The once good friends and neighbours became thirsty for each other’s blood. Internal politics and conflicts led to massive social
turbulence which in turn led to the displacement of thousands of innocent souls.

In this novel, Perron becomes the narrative voice to inform about the calamitous forthcoming Partition and also about the Direct Action day which took place in Calcutta (Bengal), leading to mass destruction of life and property when “the civil population ran riot” (Scott 979). While talking to Mr Hapgood (Purvis’ neighbour), Guy Perron informs him of his plan to set off for Mirat because of the communal riots. He commented upon the prevailing situation thus:

‘... it’s in the Punjab things are getting tricky. Too many people on the move in the hope of ending up in right place. But what can you expect when you draw an imaginary line through a province and say that from August fifteen one side is Pakistan and the other side’s India? The same applies to Bengal.’ (887)

A similar idea of an “imaginary line” has also been expressed by Amitav Ghosh in his book “The Shadow Lines”. He has given voice to his belief that though imaginary (partition) lines could be drawn to divide a piece of land but to divide a (once upon shared) sense of belongingness, land, culture and history was totally another matter. He also has given glimpses into the aftermath of partition, riots and communal disturbances – providing the readers with images of savagery, barbarity, a change of mindset of people due to the disintegration of one nation into two.
The newspapers too were flooded with information about the Partition. Times of India, Statesman, Mirat Courier and Ranpur Gazette, all discussed the same phenomenon. Reference to the newspapers (a mode of discourse) aims to accentuate the reality of the time, signifying the historicity of the moment:

... in the national newspapers some play was being made with the latest difficulties Jinnah was said to be raising: questions about the precise status Mountbatten would have in Karachi when he made his last appearance there as Viceroy on August 13. Two days later Jinnah would become Governor-General of the new dominion of Pakistan (moth-eaten Pakistan as he had called it, when he found he wasn’t getting either the whole of the Punjab or the whole of Bengal – least of all Kashmir or a corridor connecting the west with the east). (Scott 938-939)

The cited information did not augment well for the future of the two nations. Mohammed Ali Jinnah was not happy with the areas that were supposed to become Pakistan after Partition. According to him the division had not been a judicious one. Kashmir and Bengal, the two major portions were not accurately segmented. Had they been, then Pakistan would have comprised the whole of the two states. It informs the readers that the relationship between the two newly formed nations was not going to prosper and there were very high chances of more complications and problems to develop in their relationship.

As stated earlier, Paul Scott has made use of alternative/indirect modes of narration – to aid the movement of the plot, express different points of view as well as inform the readers about the major events that shape the Quartet. Once again, the extract from Perron’s diary written on 6th August 1947 (nine
days before the transference of power and Partition), reads as a socio-political
document validating facts of recorded history – communal riots, loot and
murder that had engulfed the whole of India. Perron writes: “The police and
military kept them away from the palace, and from a convoy of Muslim
families making their way in trucks, carts, dhoolies and on foot . . .” (Scott
969). It was a story of widespread violence with “angry Muslims attacking
Hindus. Attack. Counter-attack.” Fear, suspicion, hatred, violence was
everywhere. However, amidst all this turmoil/angst, the British, who had
instigated and fuelled the rivalry between the two religious communities and
created differences between them by following the policy of divide and rule
were resting “quietly in the darkness behind” (970) and were celebrating
farewell parties.

An extremely poignant scene, raw in emotion and execution,
representative of the prevailing mood of intolerance, savagery and brutality is
of the railway station at Mirat. With the events turning for the worst, the British
too began to leave India. Perron, Sarah, Ahmed Kasim, Mrs Peabody were
moving to Premanagar when there was commotion outside their compartment.
Suddenly screams and shouts began to be heard: “There was a bang on the
door . . . When it stopped a man’s voice came quite clearly: ‘Come on, Kasim
Sahib.’ . . . ‘Come on out. Kasim? Kasim Sahib? Come on. Or do we have to
break in and annoy all the sirs and ladies?’” (1002). The people outside wanted
(only) Ahmed. He too understood it well and said, “‘It seems to be me they
want’” (Scott 1002) and with this “vacated without saying a word.” Outside: “A turbanned head appeared . . . He got one hand on the door-handle. In his other was something that looked like a sword . . .” The “turbanned head” is indicative of the mob outside to be that of Sikhs because of the Partition of Punjab, the communal issue had now involved the Sikhs as well.

Ahmed Kasim becomes the scapegoat through whom the Sikhs satiated the thirst of their hatred. Though he was the son of a prominent Congress leader yet he was killed; not only “. . . because he was a Muslim but because the people who killed him didn’t want Muslims in the Congress, or didn’t trust Muslims in Congress and his father was still in Congress” (1012). The Sikhs were killing all the Muslims they could find on the train and hence Ahmed too became their victim. Ahmed gave up his life in order to save the others in the compartment from a bloody assault. The massacre carried out in the train actually was in “. . . retaliation for the killings and burnings the night before in Mirat when Muslims attacked Hindus because Mirat was going under Congress rule.” In the frenzy of religious intolerance, outrage and hatred everyone was equally responsible for the senseless fury and destruction that took place.

The whole nation was bleeding with riots and rampages, “. . . men, women, youths, young girls, babies, in death looking all the same, like dummies stuffed for some kind of strange fertility festival” (1003). The horror of the situation is encapsulated in the following description by Scott:
Some of the dead were already being brought out of the third-class carriages. . . . Most lay motionless when put down, one or two seemed to be trying to crawl back in . . . From some of the windows of the coaches heads and arms hung down. Blood slowly made shapes on the dirty grey concrete of the platform. . . . A wave of panic swept along the platform and then because the train didn’t move died away and left only the wailing of those searching among the rows of dead and dying passengers. (Scott 1005)

With the day of independence drawing near “. . . the response to the threat of an unknown borderline was, quite simply, frantic” (Khan 108). This could easily be seen in the riot laden scene. Punjab and Lahore had become the most communal sensitive of places. Sikhs and Muslims had become thirsty for each other’s blood. “Sikhs, people were saying, had been among the gang that stopped the train and slashed Muslim passengers to death with swords” (Scott 1005). The British after witnessing such a spectacle started believing that it was the beginning of the end; they mocked at the ideals preached by Mahatma Gandhi and Congress. A British woman and man talking to each other commented on the situation, “. . . Once we’ve gone they’ll cut each other’s bloody throats. Non-violence. Makes you laugh, doesn’t it?” (1007). Perron helplessly witnessed the scene. While offering water to the wounded he came across “. . . an old grey-beard who seemed to be smiling up at him gratefully, joyfully . . . The eyes were glazed and the smile was merely a death-smile.”

Death and destruction had become the order of the day. Though India became independent of the colonial rule but the Partition — a product of colonialism paved way for volatile and explosive circumstances and situations.
The creation of Pakistan led to an unimaginable "scenario of death and destruction" (Khan 142). People like Sarah realized that this state of affairs was the handiwork/fault of the British. It was the duty of the British Government to have vouchsafed India’s/Indians security and safety at the time of the transference of power as it had been a British colony. It had failed to fulfill its duty and obligation.

History is witness to the fact that the time just before India’s independence was a period of distrust, hatred and prejudices not only between Indians and English, Muslims and Hindus but as well as amongst Hindus and Muslims themselves. Paul Scott, conscious of these political, regional, religious rifts and schisms has manipulated and organized the events and characters of the novel to highlight this aspect of history. The conversation between Sayed and his father Mohammed Ali Kasim (MAK) brings out the growing sense of insecurity and discontent among the Muslims. He urged his father to leave the Congress and join the Muslim League because he believed that it was “...no good relying on principles and no good relying on the British ...” (Scott 846) as they themselves did not possess any. The British had become insignificant and were “afraid of the Americans and the Russians” and “to curry favour with USA and USSR” would try to do away with India as soon as possible. The Muslims would be handed “over to Gandhi and Nehru and Patel” which eventually meant being reduced to nothing in India.
The feelings of hatred and distrust were so deeply embedded in them that they failed to see the positivity of being citizens of free India; masters of their own country in the politically changing scenario. The rift created by the British among both the parties prevented them from realizing that if they had worked together against the British the situation would have been entirely different. Sayed and other Muslims, their minds poisoned by the Divide and Rule policy of the British, could only perceive the Indian Congress as a Hindu party: "... They will exploit us as badly as the British have done, probably worse. There is only one answer that is to seize what we can for ourselves and run things our own way from there" (Scott 846). In his diatribe against the Hindus, Sayed concluded that when Hindus were not able to love their own fellow beings then how they could accept/love Muslims. "A Hindu from UP hates a Hindu from Bengal and both hate a Hindu from the South. A Hindu raj would be a catastrophe."

This vitriolic outburst of Sayed stuns a man as patriotic as Mohammed Ali Kasim (modelled on Abul Kalam Azad). He was already in a difficult situation because of his disappearance for nearly three years (1942-1945) and his sudden appearance along with his son Ahmed raised innumerable questions about his loyalty. MAK was bewildered to see his own son speaking against his party, against the nation for which he had lived and worked throughout his life. He was "an advocate of not a divided India but a united India" (Trivedi 84). When he asks his younger son Ahmed about his views about Sayed’s
suggestion to him of joining the League, Ahmed responded according to his own ideology that "... it all means nothing to me, parties and such-like" (Scott 853). MAK tells Ahmed that he would never leave the Congress and "go over to Jinnah" (854), especially at this critical juncture of Indian history when the party needed its loyal workers the most. His views present an insight into the political scenario of the times; the then powerful Muslim League which was so "strongly placed" (853) and that his own party position (seat) was not at all secure in India. During the last years of the freedom struggle "while most of the Congress was in prison they [Muslim League] have paved the way to divide the country." Through this episode, Paul Scott has given expression to a whole range of political and religious attitudes and perspectives attendant to the history of the time.

The formation of the Indian National Army, its genesis and policies and its being the ever looming threat over the British Empire under the leadership of Subhas Chandra Bose has already been discussed in the third chapter. A Division of the Spoils talks about its subsequent failure in the year 1944 due to the fall/surrender of the Japanese army. Scott with great creative ingenuity brings Ronald Merrick and Sayed Kasim and other INA soldiers (prisoners of war) face to face, which other than providing historical information also comments upon the ruler-ruled relationship. This narrative ploy once again posits Ronald Merrick in the role of a typical colonialist – conscious of his
racial superiority and political powers to maintain control over the people and the country he (Britain) colonized.

Through the character of Sayed Kasim, Scott opens a chapter of history dealing with the gruesome details of a harsh reality experienced by the Indian soldiers in the British army before they had joined the INA. With this he also brings Mohammad Ali Kasim of Congress and Sayed Kasim of INA face to face. Congress and INA were the two national parties with different ideologies working for the freedom of their country. Through the character of Sayed Kasim, Scott provides an insight into the actuality and factual details that made him join the INA. He joined INA because his father (MAK) was arrested and other than that "... the whole of India was rising and telling the British to quit" (Scott 826). Like him there were many young soldiers who believed that to stand up against the British was to do their duty towards their motherland; that INA had no other motive other than gaining independence for India. Furthermore, he reveals that another reason for his joining the INA was anger, indignation and acerbity caused by the exploitation, ill treatment and indifference of the British towards Indian soldiers. Sayed informs his father Mohammad Ali Kasim thus:

'... They [British] were too interested in saving their own skins. As at Kuala Lumpur. "Hold this position, Kasim old chap," Colonel Barker said. So I held it while the rest of the battalion and all the British officers disappeared. I held it for four days. Nothing happened for three of them. In three days Colonel Barker and the others got down to Johore. He got one of the last ships out of Singapore or Malacca, I
don't know which. All I know is that on the fourth day the Japs came and that on the fifth we couldn't hold them off any longer. We had nothing. Nothing to eat. No ammunition. At the time I said, Well, it is war. Somebody has to carry the can. Since then I thought there was another explanation. Here in India, father, the army looks very sound, very pukka, very good form and very secure, very gentlemanly. In Burma and Malaya you realized a lot of it was eyewash. They never wanted us. They never trusted us.' (Scott 827-828)

This points to the fact that the British soldiers who were prisoners of war were more concerned to save themselves and left the Indian soldiers to face the worst. Sayed also talks about the trial of the soldiers which basically targeted the Indians and not the British. Everything was justified for the British because they were the colonizers, the superior race. Even if they gave up before the Japanese there act was not to be questioned. These factors motivated and helped the Indians to overthrow the English and demolish the myth of their superiority. While clarifying about the broadcast made by him for the INA, in January 1946 before moving "'... into Burma in command of a battalion for the advance into Manipur'" (837), he explains that he had talked about "... the fight for India's freedom and the choice that had to be made by someone like myself, an officer in the Indian Army" (838). Apart from this, the main purpose behind that broadcast was:

'To encourage people here at home [India] who had opportunities to listen. It was important for them to know that if the Japanese invaded, Indians would be with them. One could not say anything about not trusting the Japanese, but people listening could read between the
lines. They’d realize that we’d be doing our best to stop the Japs
giving them trouble.’ (Scott 838)

Sayed also informs his father that though INA had collaborated with the
Japanese power, yet in the politically turbulent times, the awareness of power
hungry nations (during the Second World War) prevented them (INA) in
completely trusting the Japanese because “there were many Japanese officers
who had their own ideas” which were in variance with the policies of the INA.
This group of officers “… didn’t agree that India should be Netaji’s sphere of
influence” and they “wanted to see the Rising Sun hoisted in Delhi in place of
the Union Jack.” Therefore, it had been the INA’s duty to caution the natives
of the looming threat/danger.

The formation of the INA and the impact of the Second World War
forced the British to change their course of action. For example they allowed
Mohammad Ali Kasim to meet his son Sayed, an INA prisoner of the British. It
surprised everybody because the orders were that no one could meet the POWs.
The decision was a well planned political measure, a bait offered by Governor
Malcolm (British Government) who wanted to persuade Mr Kasim to reform
his ministry. If new elections were held without Mr Kasim’s new reformed
ministry, then it would have been a violation of Section 93. Nigel Rowan
informs Governor Malcolm that according to this Section, “… In the
provinces where ministries as well as legislatures still exist the assemblies will
be dissolved by due process, prior to new elections. In Section 93 (sic)
provinces the Governors will have to order dissolution” (591). It was
mandatory because even Viceroy was not able to organize ""the Simla conference without doing so"" (Scott 591). Rowan tells the Governor that conducting elections ""without inviting Mr Mohammed Ali Kasim kindly to reform his ministry first"" would not be a wise act.

_A Division of the Spoils_ begins with an important piece of historical information related to the Second World War:

HITLER WAS DEAD, the peace in Europe almost a month old; only the Japanese remained to be dealt with. In June the Viceroy left London, flew back to Delhi, said nothing in public for nearly two weeks and then announced a conference of Indian leaders at Simla to discuss proposals which he hoped would ease the political situation, hasten final victory and advance the country towards her goal of full self-government. To enable all the leaders to be there he had to issue several orders of release from imprisonment. (407)

This hints at the fact that on the international front the Great Second War was drawing towards its end and at the imperial/colonial front – India’s gaining of freedom was only a matter of time:

In India the final phase in the national movement began when Wavell came back from London with the proposal that with the exception of the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, all other members of the Viceroy’s Executive Council were to be Indians. (Trivedi 73)

The British were now disposed towards liberating India from its rule and bring to an end the ongoing violence carried out by both Hindus and Muslims in the name of freedom and power. Their panel (Viceroy’s Executive Council)
included members from both the parties, the Congress as well as the Muslim League. Both the nationalist parties were extremely discontented with each other, which made it evident that there was no possibility of any reconciliation between the two and that Partition of the country was the inevitable conclusion.

7th August 1945, the day of Barbie Batchelor’s death and with which Paul Scott ended his previous book, *The Towers of Silence* continues to be of narrative/historical/political significance in the present novel as well. It was the day when, “the bomb of ‘devastating power’” (Scott 520) had been dropped on the “Japanese city of Hiroshima” by the Americans. The same day, Sarah Layton along with Colonel Layton (her father) set out from Delhi to Pankot with a few soldiers who had been released from the Ranpur hospital. The historical details have been woven with this journey:

... there was confirmation in the evening papers. It had been an atomic bomb. The ultimate weapon. The question was whether Hirohito would now surrender to save other cities, Tokyo itself, from devastation. . .

... No one expected the liberation of Malaya and the conquest of the Japanese mainland to be accomplished quickly or cheaply. (520-521)

The end of Second World War meant different things for different people – on the political front the Indians were hopeful of gaining freedom and sovereignty; in contrast the British were to come to terms with the diminution of its imperial/colonial status. The ongoing political disturbances had changed the
lives of thousands of people. History had intervened in their lives in such a way that it was difficult to escape from the changing times. Amidst all this, Sarah Layton hoped for a better life with her father’s return and his reunion with the whole family. It was to free her from the responsibilities that she had to take over in his absence. She hoped for, “an illusion of serenity, of entering into a period of life which by contrast with the one just ended might be described as free, uncluttered, open at last to endless possibilities” (Scott 521). The all pervasive impact of the war was not just in terms of physical loss - life, land and property but psychological as well. The trauma of the war experiences of Colonel Layton of British Indian army are subtly alluded to in course of the novel. Sarah noticed that:

Father was the only person at the table not talking, and at the moment I became conscious of the dogs I became conscious of this too; aware of the nervous intensity of the silence in which he listened to the cries of those chained animals. He stopped eating. (767)

She observed that: “It was the effect of barking of the dogs that left him unable to eat another mouthful, unable to speak . . . or even to move, because of what the dogs reminded him: what, locked up, they represented.” The “barking dogs” reminded Colonel Layton of the pain and anguish of the “prisoners of war” and the drudgery of life in the prison camps.

In the novel, the changing political scenario of the late 1940s has been brought to life through the description of Halki’s cartoons. As part of responsible journalism, these political cartoons were to give expression to the
reality – the turbulence of the year 1947 as witnessed by the cartoonist: “Scott handles the whole complex story of the transfer of power by describing a series of political cartoons: a neat solution to coping with a story so exhaustively worked-over by historians” (Copley 71). For Paul Scott, the real life inspiration for Halki’s cartoons came from the cartoons of Shankar Lal. Harish Trivedi in his book Colonial Transactions writes: “Halki is the pseudonym of a young Brahmin cartoonist whose name is Shankar Lal”; he was from Punjab but lived in Bombay and had pilloried both the British and the Indians in his cartoons. (74)

There is a description of fifteen cartoons in the novel which provides a picture of the politically altering India. Paul Scott has made use of the cartoons as a technique to document historical reality. As a writer he has privileged himself by making his fictional characters – Guy Perron and Count Bronowsky give an update on the political situation of the times by discussing and commenting on Halki’s cartoons published in the newspapers. Through this section of cartoons/lampoons/comic strip, Scott has engaged the reader’s attention through a unique blend of visual cum verbal medium to help them understand the social, economic and political scene of India of 1947. “Paul Scott has made effective use of this interesting medium of communication in The Division of the Spoils (sic), the various stages in the ultimate retreat of the British from India are captured for the readers . . .” (Trivedi 74). It effectively
augments, revives and reinforces the era between the years 1942-47 and helps in comprehending the problems/issues confronting (about to be liberated) India.

In his cartoons Halki has hinted at the disharmony between the League and the Congress; depicted Churchill with his two fingers labelled as "Jinnah" and "Princely India" (Scott 410) – throwing light on the machiavellian designs and political manipulations of the British/Churchill with regard to Indian affairs. Scott, through the cartoons coalesces information about the princely states also, who had always been the “loyal supporters of the Crown in two world wars” but were finding it hard to exist amidst so much of chaos and confusion from both the sides. This theme has been one of the predominant one in almost Scott’s all major novels dealing with colonial history of India. Once again he sheds light on the fact (through the cartoons) that they (rulers of princely states) believed the British Crown to be their well wisher, unaware of the fact (they were just pawns in their hands) that the British were using them for their vested interest:

It is now commonly known that the contemporary princes were attempted to be convinced by Churchill not to join the federation of Indian states. The ulterior motive was to delay the coming of Indian independence. This Churchill did because he was an imperialist. Paul Scott denounces the hypocrisy of Churchill’s attitude towards the national movement in India. As far as England was concerned, he celebrated the demise of imperialist Germany and the fall of its dictator, but he did not have the same attitude to Indian independence. In some political circles it was being said that Churchill was encouraging communal disharmony in India in an attempt to delay the
coming of Indian independence. . . . Thus, by utilizing the Jinnah factor and the princes, Churchill sought to extend British rule in India. (Trivedi 75)

The conversation between Nigel Rowan and Count Dmitri Bronowsky sheds light on what the future held for these small states. During this significant discourse, Bronowsky comments upon the effect of the British withdrawal upon the princely states thus:

'... when you go the princes will be abandoned ... I have told Nawab Sahib so. He pretends not to believe it. I show him the map. I point to the tiny isolated yellow speck that is Mirat and to the pink areas that surround it which are the provinces directly ruled by the British. Since India passed under the Crown, I say to him you have relied on the pink bits to honour the treaty that allows the yellow speck to exist. But you cannot have a treaty with people who have disappeared and taken the crown with them. The treaty will not be torn up but it will have no validity. It will be a piece of paper. A new treaty will have to be made with the people who have taken the pink parts over from the British. You will have to negotiate a new treaty with Mr Gandhi and Mr Nehru. . . . So you will have to bargain for the continuing existence of the yellow speck which is Mirat with Mr Nehru and the Congress High Command. Nawab Sahib smiles ... No, Dmitri, he says, we have supplied the British with money and men in two world wars. And there are over five hundred yellow specks and some not so little. The British are pledged to protect our rights and our privileges and our authority. I nod my head... But they are pledged as well one day to hand over their rights and privileges and authority to Mr Gandhi and Mr Nehru. They are pledged in two directions but can go only in one. (Scott 575-576)
Thus, even when India was on the verge of gaining independence and the British on the brink of losing their imperial supremacy, the princely states continued to delude themselves about the good will of their benefactors (British) who would safeguard their rights and interests for having provided them with their loyalty as well as material resources.

An editorial report titled “Pandora’s Box” (in the Ranpur Gazette) talked about the “pocket-kingdom of Mirat” (Scott 939) which was “in direct relationship with the Crown” for most of the time and it “suited all parties and conformed with the geographical and political facts of life.” The conversation between Ahmed and Bronowsky after reading the editorial provides a flashback into Indian history. Mirat existed “as a separate political unit” because of “pure luck and chance of the fall of the dice of history.” Three centuries (17th-19th) had witnessed the “battle for power between the European merchants and the ruling Indian powers” and then in 1857 the British government “made a settlement with what was left of the scattered remnants of Moghul India” (940). The first war of independence in 1857 jolted the British Government out of their political complacency. They realized that the need of the hour was to come forward with the treaty of “‘no further territorial ambitions.’” These “treaties were made with the rulers of the nearly 600 remaining states, widely scattered and varying in size”, and had assured them of “their princely rights, revenues, privileges and territories”; it “assured them of autonomy in all” but at
the same time took away their right to “major subjects of external affairs and national defence” (Scott 940).

According to this doctrine the British “could depose an unruly prince, withhold recognition from a prince’s heir and generally take steps to ensure the peace, prosperity and well-being of a prince’s subjects.” Later at the time of liberation of India the “doctrine of paramountcy” had run out. The time had come when these rulers “. . . found themselves abandoned not only by their British overlords but also by their people [Indians]” (Narayanan 3). The natives of these princely states were filled with a restlessness with the news of the end of British rule. It made them conscious of their ruler’s predicament - the uncertainty of their future placement and belongingness. Apart from this, the princely states were governed by both Hindu and Muslim rulers and the news of Partition resulted in bewilderment and perplexity among them. It became apparent to them that: “Geographically and politically they cannot survive individually once the Crown abdicates and twentieth century India (or Pakistan) takes over” (Scott 942-943). This alarming situation arising out of the political and historical scenario forced these rulers to declare themselves as independent states on the basis of their religion which led to loot and carnage between the two religious communities. Paul Scott has depicted their predicament through the miserable plight of Nawab of Mirat who was unable to decide what to do with his territory. Whether to remain in India under Congress or declare it as a Muslim state affiliated to Pakistan?
While conversing with Perron, Count Bronowsky informed him that Mirat had not been a sensitive area till the Second World War. But the new circumstances and prevailing conditions gave rise to communal dissatisfaction, a “feeling the educated Hindus had” that they were “at a disadvantage” (Scott 977) which rendered the atmosphere with divisive sentiments. There was a time when the common man/natives did not have the vaguest of idea about who Jinnah and Gandhi were. But then during the war like the rest of India “Mirat was also affected by the realization that the British raj had proved far from invincible in Burma and Malaya and in Europe” (977-978).

Guy Perron, a new character who becomes the mainstay of the novel gets introduced in this book. Scott lends him his narrative voice. Perron’s political perspective and liberal point of view is a studied attempt on part of the novelist to create a character as an alter ego to his own self; to give voice to his opinions in this conclusive novel of the series. Perron has been presented as a historian by Paul Scott. According to Copley:

If there is an autobiographical voice in the Quartet, it is that of Guy Perron and he of course, is himself an academic historian, turning to the years 1833 to 1857 to discover “some of the clues to what eventually went wrong”. And through Perron, Scott voices the difficulty he experienced in structuring his experience in India into any historical framework. (61)

The period being observed and researched by Perron is from 1833 to 1857. These years of colonial Indian history can be termed as the journey of Indians from “innocence to experience” when they began to realize and resist the
policies of the foreign ruler leading to the Rising of 1857 generally termed as First War of Indian Independence. A strong urge for self-determination had led the Indians to question the imperial domination and (eventually) nearly hundred years later gained them freedom from the colonizer.

Guy Perron’s role in the narrative is that of a British Field Security Sergeant:

[He] had been stationed in the Bombay Presidency for nearly three months but before becoming involved in operation Zipper he had visited the city only once. The reason for that visit, made in the company of his officer, had been the arrival of a ship that had sailed from Bordeaux in June bringing several hundred Indian soldiers, ex-prisoners of war captured in North Africa, who had succumbed to the temptation to secure their release from prison-camp by joining a Free India Force which its leader, the revolutionary ex-Congressman, Subhas Chandra Bose, at that time in Berlin after escaping police surveillance in India, had hoped to put into the field to fight alongside the Germans. (Scott 446)

In his investigation of Havildar Muzzafir Khan (1st Pankot Rifles captured in North Africa) Perron finds him to be a tough and resolute man; he was being tried for treason but was essentially a man of courage and steadfast loyalty for his regiment. Perron tries to make Muzzafir Khan understand that Subhas Chandra Bose had failed as a leader and left him and the rest of the INA soldiers in a lurch; and that his (Muzzafir Khan’s) defection to INA was an act of betrayal, shame and sorrow.
Later when Ronald Merrick takes charge of the case and personally conducts the interrogation of Muzzafir Khan, he tries to prove him guilty of every fault he did not commit. He was one of the “zippers” (Indians) who had collaborated with the INA to fight against the British Rule. The arrangement made by Merrick for the interrogation of Muzzafir Khan proved that he had already decided his fate. He considered all the INA soldiers as traitors. He took keen interest in the INA soldiers because he wanted to punish them for challenging the British and defying them. Perron was surprised by Merrick’s show of vengeance as he was unaware of his contempt for the natives; his abhorrence of them prompted him to prove that all Indians were traitorous, seditious, not worthy of trust. His main intention behind his treatment of Muzzafir Khan was to teach a lesson to all those who dared to raise their voice against the British and also to extract all possible information so as not to give him any chance for his defence. He believed “... implicitly in the Raj and its panoply of racial privilege and power” (Spurling xvii). As he had tortured Hari, similarly he ill-treated Muzzafir Khan which eventually led him to commit suicide. Both Perron and Colonel Layton are critical of Merrick’s biased attitude. Merrick is aware of his own high handedness and unjust ways and warns Perron not to talk about Muzzafir Khan:

'. . . I should want you to say nothing about Havildar Muzzafir Khan, either to him or Miss Layton. In fact nothing at all about the circumstances in which we met before. The other taboo subject, at least in front of Miss Layton, is the subject of Hari Kumar. It might
For Merrick realized that his behaviour would not find favour with the liberals among the Britishers (Colonel Layton, Miss Sarah Layton) and would result in his indictment.

The novel completes its full circle when once again the central event of the novel (the Bibighar episode) is referred to. Ronald Merrick, the dominant character in *The Raj Quartet* series is shown progressing “... steadily throughout the four volumes, shifting him from one rung to the next up the official ladder of command and trust, until he reaches his high point (and his dreadful end) ...” (Spurling xvii).

*A Division of the Spoils*, once again talks about the Bibighar event, the friendship of Daphne and Hari, its consequences, the worsening of the political situation in light of the Quit India Movement and adds to them more facts and verifiable truths. The characters of Captain Nigel Rowan and Guy Perron help to shed more information on the happening. Rowan’s association with the Bibighar incident is in the capacity of an interrogating officer when Lady Manners got the case reopened. He was also an old Chillingburian who was handed over “... the confidential file on a man currently detained under the Defence of India Rules. ... Rowan found it surprising that the boy [Hari] he had known should have developed into a political activist” (Scott 693). The Bibighar happening was not an ordinary one. At a time when Quit India...
campaign was at its height, this case left a deep impression on everybody’s mind:

Rowan remembered the Bibighar Garden case quite well. . . . The Bibighar Gardens affair was something out of the common rut among the reported incidents of rioting, arson and sabotage that followed the arrest of political leaders, because it involved what in spite of that cautious phrase ‘criminal assault’ had clearly been the rape of a white woman. (Scott 693)

Through the interrogation, the readers become conscious of the reality behind the various charges levelled against Hari Kumar by Merrick. Given complete freedom and assurance of safety, he (Hari) gives expression to his views and thoughts related with the incident that altered the course of his existence. It becomes clear that the charges against him were the consequence of the feelings of jealousy and inferiority suffered by Merrick; his aim was to put Hari on trial and make him suffer for it.

A complete study of the whole case shocked Rowan because, “. . . Kumar had not been arrested on political grounds but on suspicion of leading a criminal assault by several Indians on an English girl called Daphne Manners in Mayapore in August 1942.” While probing the case he found the report made by Ronald Merrick, incriminating Hari Kumar on following grounds: firstly, Daphne was captivated with Kumar; secondly, during the questioning Hari Kumar took Daphne Manners’ name even before Merrick mentioned it; thirdly, when Merrick with other policemen reached Kumar’s place, he was found washing his face marked with scratches and bruises (probably the result
of the girl's self defence); fourthly, Daphne's picture was found in his room and he declined to comment on it; fifthly, a letter "from England signed 'Colin'" (Scott 696) referred "to a letter Kumar had written to him but which he'd [Colin] been unable to read because his father had opened" and later "destroyed it" (697) as it was "of a political and anti-British nature" and lastly he denied having met Daphne since a long time (a lie). On the basis of these unproved charges Hari was arrested and condemned for punishment. Ronald Merrick out of spite had turned a rape case into a political one, and in the wake of Quit India campaign it worsened the situation. "From the date Kumar was first questioned by Merrick he was under surveillance" (698). He had come into Merrick's notice who playing his cards well trapped him by false means. He was not able to accept Hari's personal courage and self-will. Rowan exonerates Hari's complicity in the case thus: "He [Kumar] had - just - once been taken in for questioning because his attitude to a police officer had been unsatisfactory and arrogant" (697); this was not enough to prove him a convict and hence he was granted release.

The sudden demise of his father had brought Hari back home to colonial India - bankrupt, without any identity and with no one to be called a friend; he realized that he belonged to nowhere. His Englishness was of no consequence to him in England due to the colour of his skin and in India his accent (Englishness) made him an alien among his own people. In India, he became one of the colonized - oppressed under the British rule. Despite being "a man
of talent and character” he was to become “a misfit and a failure” in India (Goonetilleke 145). He realized the power of the “white” colour/skin in the colonial world, when his friend Colin Lindsey refused to recognize him among a group of Indians. Hari had never thought about his colour when he was in England, but in a colonial India, he became conscious of the colour that created a non-negotiable distance between him and his friend Colin. Guy Perron singles out the Lindsey episode in Hari’s life of playing a significant role in turning his life into a tragedy. Perron confirms thus:

Where I agree with Rowan is in pinpointing the meeting with Lindsey as the one meeting in Kumar’s life which, leading directly to the other from which all his true misfortunes flowed, must bear a special significance: no Lindsey on the maidan that day, no drinking bout with young Vidyasagar and friends; no wandering on to waste-ground, no stretcher-bearers, no Sister Ludmila, no Sanctuary; no morning waking there, hungover, resentful and unco-operative.

No Merrick. (Scott 715)

The holding of elections (to sort out the differences between the Congress and the Muslim League) has been detailed in the novel during a discussion between Nigel Rowan and General Malcolm. The Governor informs Rowan that the Congress believed the British to be in favour of the Muslim League – and the idea of Pakistan, and that they (British) wanted to punish “Congress for non-co-operation in the war” (592). He observes that everyone including the British wanted the elections so that differences between the two leading political parties could be sorted out:
‘Yes. War virtually over, so — elections. To the central legislature first, then in the provinces.’

‘... Jinnah wants them. Nehru wants them. Even we poor overworked provincial Governors want them...’

‘... Wavell wants them. ... He’ll announce the decision to hold elections in a week or two, and then pop off back to London to make sure everyone is talking about the same thing, and that the British Government understands that an election in India is rather different from one at home at any time of year.’ (Scott 590)

However, the electoral triumph of the Congress proved to be a great setback for many; it became a political fuse which set the whole country on fire; wherein communal violence became the order of the day and worsened the situation.

The book ends with Perron’s (unfinished) letter to Sarah informing her about the whereabouts of Hari Kumar. As a Chillingburian, he was acquainted with Hari who was also the product of the same school. Before leaving India, he went to the address given to him by Nigel Rowan. Hari lived at a place (away and secluded from the regular world) and earned his livelihood by giving English tuitions. Perron was not able to meet Hari as he had gone to visit one of his students. He recalled how once he had asked Hari the difference between karma and dharma but failed to get an answer. However, Perron realizes that he had ‘... learned the answer long ago. So had Hari. He was living it’ (1017). He was living the promise of being true and faithful to the one whom he loved
— Daphne. It did not matter that they belonged to two different races, to two different classes — of the ruler and the ruled, amidst the colonial times.

Like many others, Count Bronowsky, too believed that Merrick had evil intentions towards the natives and specifically against Hari Kumar. According to him, Merrick had “… left the police temporarily under a cloud and harboured a grudge. But he had tried for years to get into the army. He was a very ordinary man on the surface but underneath, I suspect, a man of unusual talents” (Scott 558). These ‘unusual talents’ have negative overtones as Count Bronowsky explained — His (Merrick) want of power and glory, his involvement in the Bibighar happening gave him an excellent opportunity to make himself known to the higher authorities and wrest a post in the army:

... in the Manners rape case Merrick had acted with that forthright avenging speed which had once made the raj feared and respected, and India a place where men did not merely operate a machine of law and order, but ruled and damned the consequences of ruling.

Merrick had used the rape case as a medium to overcome his colonial anxieties and emerge as someone all powerful and in authority. However, he could not command respect from officers and men like Rowan, Count Bronowsky or Guy Perron. Nigel Rowan even doubted his act of saving Teddie Bingham during the Second World War as an act of heroism: “If there had been a weakness, a fissure through which rumour and conjecture could flow and adversely affect Merrick’s future, it had now been sealed by the heroic act” (563). His unsuccessful attempt to save Teddie had cost him his arm but through this act
he emerged as a hero, salvaged his position and saved himself from being
dammed in the eyes of the administration for his unjust and prejudiced conduct
during the Bibighar episode.

In a conversation between Rowan and Perron, Merrick's colonial
ideology and belief – racial prejudices/colour apartheid are brought to the
forefront. Perron comments on his (Merrick’s) beliefs thus:

‘... He’s been sucked in by all that Kiplingesque double-talk that
transformed India from a place where plain ordinary greedy
Englishmen carved something out for themselves to balance out the
more tedious consequences of the law of primogeniture, into one
where they appeared to go voluntarily into exile for the good of their
souls and the uplift of the native ... Poor Coomer obviously never
stood a chance. An English public school education and manner, but
black as your hat.’
‘Not so black.’
‘Black enough for Merrick ...’ (Scott 620)

The details and findings related to the Bibighar incident as revealed in the
course of the four novels make it read as a conspiracy or a punishment planned
by Merrick for Hari. Daphne too had got involved in it because somebody had
to be there. It was her bad luck that it had to be her. People like Merrick and
Brigadier Reid were colonially biased towards the Indians and this racial
prejudice prevented them to understand the love Daphne and Hari had for each
other. This relationship was believed to be a well knitted plot, an offense, a
mistake solely committed by an Indian against the whole of the British race.
Till the end, Merrick continued with his efforts to make people believe that Hari was responsible for the Bibighar tragedy.

With time Merrick had come to realize the uncertainty of his future in England and wanted to stay back in India after Indian independence. Furthermore, his mental condition had also become unstable. He had “acutely become conscious of a dangerous threat from the other side of the racial boundary” (Badiger 73); this fear of retaliation was the consequence of his acts of brutality and intolerance against the Indians. Once while following Ahmed and Sarah, he had accidentally fallen from the horseback into the nullah, and complained of a non-existent attacker.

Scott very artistically has designed the end of the novel and the end of *The Raj Quartet* with Merrick’s death – a character whose presence is felt in all the four books; a character who negotiates certain harsh realities and hard truths of reality (history) with fiction. In fact Merrick’s death in mysterious circumstances is made to coincide with the death of the British Empire. The place of his unnatural death is described to be in absolute shambles: The floor was painted with “cabalistic signs” (Scott 966) and the word “Bibighar” scribbled on the wall of his room. At this stage when the British were trying to settle things before leaving India, the murder of an Englishman was “the last thing” they could have wanted particularly when it looked “...as if the murder was intended to cause disorder and racial conflict” (967). Everyone including Pandit Baba, Hari Kumar and others surmised the Bibighar suspects
to be responsible for Merrick’s murder but Aziz, his servant and homosexual partner, “a victim of sado-masochism” (Badiger 73) had killed him because Merrick himself seemed to have wished it. His desire to be killed shows that he had come to realize that it was not possible to escape the loss of his repute and dignity; he knew that he would not be forgiven; furthermore, it seemed that in his disturbed mental state “… he hoped 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 —” (Scott 991).

The announcement of granting independence to India brought in its wake attitudinal changes in the lives of the British in India (as observed by the novelist). This broadcast had made the British insecure and diffident about what the future held for them and changed their outlook and their way of dealing with the natives. For example when Guy Perron visited the place where Purvis had committed suicide he “paid the wallah off, tipping excessively” (882) as it had become mandatory “since Mountbatten had removed the last doubt that the British intended to go and so made them the only people left in India who were universally popular.”

This last book of the Quartet reworks history and brings to life the last phase of Indian independence as it actually was. Trivedi writes:

It is now many years since the British Indian empire has passed into the pages of history. The imperial British administrators are no more
nor are the stalwarts who achieved independence for us. But in Paul Scott's *A Division of the Spoils* (sic) they become alive, jostle in our imagination and re-enact the great days once again. (89)

*A Division of the Spoils* (the longest book of the *Quartet*) along with the historical details of the Partition and the violence and bloodshed that took place in the year 1947, also conjoins the events discussed in the earlier three books. With this novel, the tale of imperial embrace is brought to a ceremonious end. For at least two hundred years, India had formed part of England's idea about herself and the thought of getting rid of India was a harsh one, leading to innumerable complexities, both for the ruler and the ruled. This quagmire has been presented in the final book of the series. The fictional details once again have been excellently amalgamated with that of history. Historically/chronologically the book covers the period from the time of Germany's defeat in May 1945 to the independence of India and British retreat in August 1947. The novel helps the readers to penetrate through the deeper layers of meaning of Raj phenomenon and hence gauge the death of the Raj. The story that started with *The Jewel in the Crown* focussing on the rape of Daphne Manners and the violent attack on Miss Edwina Crane ends with *A Division of the Spoils*, detailing the dissolution of the Empire, the significance of Britain's withdrawal from India, division of India and Pakistan followed by the transfer of power and the retreat of the British from India. The novel along with the earlier books thus gives an insight into the culture of imperialism and
Indo-British politics that comprised the Raj (history) through the lives and situations of its many characters.
Works Cited


