CHAPTER 3
LAST PHASE NOVELS: THE RAJ QUARTET

(I) THE JEWEL IN THE CROWN
(II) THE DAY OF THE SCORPION
THE JEWEL IN THE CROWN

The Jewel in the Crown is the first novel of Paul Scott’s monumental work The Raj Quartet. The authorial intention of Scott in it was to map the significant moments in the history of colonial India during the twilight years of the Raj in 1940s. Thus, began his literary sojourn in the form of four novels, popularly known as the Quartet which stands as a testimony of his creative prowess. The Jewel in the Crown is a marker of Scott’s growth as a writer and his art of experimentation in novel writing. With the publication of the Quartet, Scott’s name became clubbed with the literary greats like E. M. Forster, Rudyard Kipling, John Masters and M. M. Kaye, who had made India a significant locale of their creative writings to traverse India’s colonial past (pre-Independence and Partition era).

The Quartet novels, like all his other major books once again reflect his deep interest in history which added to his creative zeal a narrative purpose:

It is apparent, then, that in considering the circumstances and significance of Britain’s withdrawal from India we are not dealing with an episode with well-defined boundaries and clear-cut features that the historian can map and lay before us. Rather, it is a matter of perspective – like the view of a landscape – and as such the novelist is at least as likely to produce an insightful picture. (Darby 112-113)

The Quartet read as a critique of imperialism, an exposé of the political manipulations, discriminatory politics and socio-cultural apartheid,
surreptitious dealings, practiced by the British in imperial India. "For Scott, history, at times, seems be no more than the record of the cyclical repetition of human error" (Rubin 145). His objective was to draw attention to this aspect of history by engaging in the historic developments in the closing years of the Raj in his four novels namely, *The Jewel in the Crown*, *The Day of the Scorpion*, *The Towers of Silence* and *A Division of the Spoils* (brought out later as a single volume edition under the title of *The Raj Quartet*). All these novels are significantly and organically connected with each other with the help of a single fictive event of a rape set against the Quit India Movement. The *Quartet* also takes into cognizance the outbreak of the Second World War and its affect and effect on the Raj in India. No other writer has so recreated the last days of India under the British rule. In the words of Badiger:

The metaphor of the Raj achieves its full unfoldment in an almost epical dimension, by way of symbols, motifs, and images of symbolic significance. In each volume, the reader perceives a stage in the life of the Raj — its thwarted love in the first volume, its state of imprisonment in the second volume and madness and death respectively in the third and fourth volumes. (75)

This was the kind of book which Scott had been struggling to write about India for the last twenty years. Cognizant of the various historical situations of India's pre-Independence era, each novel follows the other chronologically, skilfully collating with the other through flashbacks, reveries, retrospect and prolepsis. "Events do not succeed one another in a straightforward linear way, rushing from past into the future. Instead they curve
around from the future into the past and back into the present . . .” (Swinden 98).

Paul Scott’s portrayal of India in the Quartet is different from his other novels. He has brought forward those aspects and details which he had left out in his earlier novels. He has been able to make Britain’s withdrawal and the Partition of India more intelligible and real than it might have been for readers by blending history with fiction. He has successfully conveyed both the meaning and the significance of the events for those who have been affected directly, or indirectly. As a writer, he has powerfully evoked the last days of British rule in India which were quietly slipping away into history. The historical events shown in the Quartet cover the period of 1940s – from the beginning of the Quit India Movement, the preparation for Partition and finally the withdrawal of the British in August 1947. Also, the Quartet:

... marks some subtle changes in the author’s attitudes to India over his earlier novels. Along with the open avowal of guilt, there is the further realization that India is a country, a people and a way of life, which cannot be treated simply as part of the Englishman’s image of himself. In his Quartet Scott has done justice to the final confrontation between the ruler and the ruled. With its mastery of technique and imagery, its insightful analyses of the motivations of individuals and groups, and kaleidoscopic shifts that afford multiple views of the events, the Quartet stands as a fitting literary monument to the Indian transition. (Narayanan 132)
Narayanan notes that the place 'Bibighar' which Paul Scott has chosen for the narrative development of the *Quartet* is significantly symbolic of the accursed and execrable relationship of British with India:

Scott's evocation of the memories of the first of these two crises—those of the Mutiny—begins with his use of word "Bibighar" in the opening sentence of his *Quartet*, carrying us at once to the Bibighar massacre, Cawnpore 1857. Perhaps no other device would have served equally well to recall the horrors of the Mutiny (Indian atrocities as well as the British vengeance that followed) as this locale of the massacre of nearly two hundred English women and children who were hacked to death and thrown into a well in July 1857. The Bibighar Gardens which is the scene of love as well as rape in *The Jewel*, is, therefore, by its very name, designed to set off certain painful responses in the reader – British and Indian. (21)

Paul Scott has thus, given voice to a postcolonial perspective by showing how the British rule marked by racial considerations proved to be hazardous and undermining – politically, socially, culturally for India and its natives; and how eventually, it led to a serious and long battle of defiance and protest on part of the colonized natives. These agitations and conflicts consequently escalated into resistance and full scale struggle for freedom. Indians had become fully aware of the colonizer's motives and this growing umbrage and dissatisfaction of the natives made the Indian National Congress conclude that nothing less than Swaraj would be acceptable to the Indians. The whole of India was burning with the desire for independence. British India was facing rebellion in all forms – non-violent (Mahatma Gandhi) and violent Indian National Army
Furthermore, the situation worsened for the English due to the ongoing Second World War. India was yearning for independence and its leaders had decided to take the moment in their hands and drive out the British from India.

The Jewel in the Crown, the first novel in the tetralogy is divided into seven parts and is set in the fictional town of Mayapore. The historical background covers the period of political disturbance in India due to the launch of Quit India Movement (1942) and the demand made by Congress to vote (claim for more rights and to consider India as a dominion). It also portrays the British fear of Japanese invasion and India’s claim for independence, marking the last days of British rule in India. It is about the time when out of pressure and unwillingness, “. . . the world’s mightiest modern empire, on which “the sun never set,” abandoned its vow to protect one-fifth of humankind” (Wolpert 1).

The entire novel is set within the framework of two incidents. Firstly, the rape of an English girl, Daphne Manners and secondly the violent attack on Miss Edwina Crane, a superintendent of Missionary Schools. Both these events evoke historical flashes from the past of two major (historical) happenings, namely the Revolt of 1857 and the Jallianwalah Bagh Massacre of 1919. The sordid tale of a rape of an English girl, amidst the hostile political situation is replete with multiple dimensions, all of which when (dexterously) blended with history reveal a number of different, compelling, and climactically illuminating
perspectives of both – the British as well as the Indians. *Quartet*'s theme of rape reminds the readers of E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*, where the rape incident of Adela by Dr Aziz, brings to the surface, the deep seated hatred and distrust of both Indians and English. The only difference is that Adela's rape was imaginary while Daphne's rape is real. In both the novels, the culprit was an Indian, and both highlight the theme of racial segregation/apartheid at a time when India was about to free itself from the imperial rule. In the *Quartet*: “Both the stories are of thwarted love and death which, at metaphorical level, are seen to be the history of thwarted love between Indians and the British at the end of the Raj in India” (Badiger 49). Thus, a perfect amalgamation of fiction and history can be seen. Different perspectives of various important characters in the novel enable the readers to draw their conclusions about the other subordinate and minor individuals and situations. As observed by Gorra: “Part of the book is written in the third person, and part takes the form of a series of first-person monologues, responses to questions asked by an unnamed "stranger" on a visit to Mayapore in the 1960s” (19).

The reader gets acquainted with the Bibighar affair through Daphne's letter and diary entries, General Reid's memoirs, through the account/conversation of Lady Chatterjee, Hari Kumar, Sister Ludmila, Aunt Mabel, and Miss Edwina Crane, all of which help the readers to analyze a single situation from different points of view. Their recollections and musings are related to the incidents and the then prevailing political situation during the
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twilight years of the British in India, thus, endowing upon a particular event distinctive probabilities/possibilities.

Paul Scott acknowledges the objective of his novel on the very first page:

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 incommunicable in isolation from the moral continuum of human affairs. (Scott 5)

The whole book is an attempt to explain this incident, to convey to its readers the events that led to it and to blend historical facts with it. There are several masterfully integrated and superbly drawn characters, British as well as Indians; their stories are connected with each other in such a manner that they provide a coherence and uniformity to the episode as well as to the narration.

The historical dilemmas of the imperial situation when India was on the verge of gaining freedom have been depicted with great authenticity and realism with the help of these characters.

The novel begins on 9th August 1942, the day following the passing of the resolution of 'Quit India' movement by the Indian National Congress. Quit India Resolution is also known as the August Movement which was launched in the year 1942. According to this operation, a call for immediate independence or instant British withdrawal was demanded by the Indians. India was gearing up to encounter her last confrontation with the foreign ruler. 1942
was the year, during which the Second World War was also at its zenith and to the British the year marked the beginning of their end in India:

In 1942, which was the year the Japanese defeated the British army in Burma and Mr Gandhi began preaching sedition in India, the English then living in the civil and military cantonment of Mayapore had to admit that the future did not look propitious. They had faced bad times before, though, and felt that they could face them again, that now they knew where they stood and there could be no more heart-searching for quite a while yet about the rights and wrongs of their colonial-imperialist policy and administration. (Scott 6)

Due to the prevailing conditions, the English knew that, "...they now had their backs to a wall that the Indians seemed set on removing, brick by brick" (42).

Set against the political background of Quit India Movement, the narrative has structured into its plot – tales of violence, riots, loot and arson, to show the outrage of the Indians towards the English for the imprisonment of their national leaders and the freedom fighters. The story begins with Miss Edwina Crane, who when transferred to Ranpur, was presented with a picture entitled *The Jewel in Her Crown*, in recognition for her show of courage and strength when she had stopped the rioters from entering the school at Muzzafirabad where she was earlier posted. The picture:

... showed the old Queen (whose image the children now no doubt confused with the person of Miss Crane) surrounded by representative figures of her Indian Empire: princes, landowners, merchants, money-lenders, sepoys, farmers, servants, children, mothers, and remarkably...
clean and tidy beggars. The Queen was sitting on a golden throne, under a canopy, attended by her temporal and spiritual aides: soldiers, statesman and clergy... An Indian prince, attended by native servants, was approaching the throne bearing a velvet cushion on which he offered a large and sparkling gem... Miss Crane had been bound to explain that the gem was simply representative of tribute, and that the jewel of the title was India herself, which had been transferred from the rule of the British East India Company to the rule of the British crown in 1858. (Scott 23-24)

The jewel in the crown is a metaphor for India which the prince presented to the Queen/British. The description of the painting also provides historical information about the transference of power to the British Crown after the Revolt of 1857. Though, India was their glory, a jewel in the crown for the British but in the hearts of many, like Miss Crane and Mr Robin White (the Deputy Commissioner of Mayapore):

The India of the picture had never existed outside its gilt frame, and the emotions the picture was meant to conjure up were not much more than smugly pious. And yet now, as always, there was a feeling somewhere in it of shadowy dignity. (26)

In the summer of 1942, Miss Crane had completed her seven years in Mayapore as a teacher of Mathematics and English for the Eurasians and Indian Christian girls in her civil lines school. In the same year, with the Second World War at its height, the situation between the English and the Indians had worsened. She reflected upon the arrest of Congress party members inevitable as they would definitely vote for Mahatma Gandhi's Civil
Disobedience Movement. Such a happening would have a disastrous impact on the imperial and political objective/design of the British. It would leave:

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\ldots \text{their armies on the Assam–Burma frontier impossible to feed, clothe, arm or support; impossible, for the simple reason that there would be no one who was willing to operate the railways, the posts and telegraphs, the docks, the depots, the factories, the mines, the banks, the offices, or any of the administrative and productive services of a nation they had exploited for over two hundred years and, by failing to defend Burma, brought to the point of having to succumb to yet another set of imperialistic warmongers. (Scott 42)}
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During the turbulent political scenario of 1940s in India, two distinctive groups of Englishmen with differing political mindset and beliefs had emerged. The group with liberal humanist leanings understood that they were living their last days in India. They knew that they had ill-treated the country, its countrymen and it was time to grant independence to India. This group included people like Miss Edwina Crane, Daphne Manners, Robin White and Sister Ludmila who though belonging to the ruling class had deep attachment and sympathy for the Indians. On the other hand were those Englishmen like Ronald Merrick and Brigadier Reid who with their paternalistic pretensions and rigid authoritarianism thought it their right to suppress the voice of the thousands of Indians and control it for times to come. They were the moral guardians, the dispensers of ‘divine justice’ who in India were bearing the ‘white man’s burden’. They had no compassion for Indians and could glorify their wrongs in the name of moral duty and responsibility to the Raj.
In the May of 1942, Gandhi’s call to the British to leave India, “‘to God, or to anarchy’” (Scott 41) jolted Edwina Crane from her complacency as it meant leaving India in the hands of the Japanese. She criticized Gandhi, not because she did not want the British to leave India, but because she was not able to accept that India should be governed by Japan. Paul Scott has made use of the unfolding of historical events in the development of the story as well as to reflect and gauge people’s psychology and bent of mind. Thus, events of history are interpolated with fictional details to ascertain realizations and to determine the attitudes and behaviour of people.

A day before i.e. 8th August 1942, Congress had voted in favour of the working committee’s resolution in Bombay and as a result Mahatma Gandhi had been arrested. This was a signal for the arrest of other leaders and Indian agitators all over India. In the words of Brigadier Reid:

...Congress planned the kind of open rebellion that could snowball into a campaign of terror and bloodshed and civil war such as we had not seen in India since the days of the Mutiny. ... Before the summer was out the country was in the grip of rebellion and in Mayapore the commotions got off to the worst kind of start. It was in this pleasant old district that two dastardly attacks on Englishwomen were made, within a few hours of each other; the first upon an elderly mission teacher, Miss Crane, and the second on a young woman, Daphne Manners, who was criminally assaulted in a place called the Bibighar Gardens. (294)

The whole country had ruptured into violence and chants of “Quit India” could be heard everywhere. Telephone wires between Mayapore, Tanpur, Kotali and
Dibrapur had been cut. Every place was under surveillance; the police could be seen, sitting under the trees on roads, trying to make contact with other towns. Scott describes the situation thus:

In the district as a whole, as in many other provinces of India, there had been widespread disruption of railways, posts, telegraphs, looting of warehouses, shops, houses and Government grain and seed stores . . . Police posts had been attacked, policemen murdered. In one subdivision of the district, so it was rumoured, the Indian magistrate had run the Congress flag up over his courthouse, released prisoners from custody, fined liberals and moderates, illicitly collected revenues and hidden away money that should have been paid into the treasury. (Scott 69)

Amidst this turbulent time (Mayapore riots) Miss Edwina Crane with Mr Chaudhuri sets out on 9th August 1942 from Dibrapur to fulfill her commitment and responsibility to the cause of education. As a teacher she thought it her duty to safely escort the children back to their village. Consequently, they are attacked by the agitators near Tanpur on their way back. Seeing an Indian, Mr Chaudhuri with a White, the rioters considered him to be a traitor. They beat him up mercilessly and then killed him when he tried to save Miss Crane. Mr Chaudhuri’s murder/death by the agitators, results in an emotional and psychological breakdown for Miss Crane; she realizes the level of hatred that Indians had for the English and all those associated with them. Later, she heard the Indians commenting, “. . . that in those few days of Brigadier Reid, things had been almost as bad as in the days of General Dyer in Amritsar in 1919” (68).
Thus, Paul Scott interpolates into the narrative, the reference to the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, whereby, with great critical acumen he juxtaposes two distinctive historical events of great brutality and atrocity involving the Indians which impacted the course of Indian history. Brigadier Reid was a local Brigade Commander, in his approach and treatment of the natives, he is presented as ruthless and arrogant as General Dyer. Nourished and sustained on the myth of the Raj, he exemplifies the same rigid authoritarianism and professionalism as that of General Dyer. Scott has dexterously blended these two characters – one real and the other fictitious. An artistic ploy employed by Scott (keeping history in mind) is in the naming of his character – Reid. If Reid is spelled and pronounced backwards it reads Dier (Dyer), the man responsible for the Amritsar Massacre which took place on April 13, 1919. Brigadier General Reginald Dyer, the then military commander of Amritsar had ordered firing on an unarmed gathering of men, women and children. The very reference to this nightmarish happening evokes historical flashes/memories for the readers. As an event (in the scale of importance) it made a tremendous impact on the psyche of Indians no less than that of the Revolt of 1857 and thus catapulted the Indian resistance movement into the final mode and mood for independence; for nothing less than Swaraj/freedom was acceptable to them (Indians).

Miss Edwina Crane’s story does not simply end here. The incident is a comment upon the political turmoil and chaos, its impact on the natives as well
as the English during the last phase of India’s struggle for independence. In the course of the novel, the readers are informed that she immolated herself in the traditional manner of sati dressed in a white saree. By doing this Miss Crane transcends her death to the level of sacrifice and dignity. Her manner of death, hints at her deep attachment for the Indians and their culture; it is as well her mode of seeking forgiveness for her sin (being the cause of Mr Chaudhuri’s death). She discovers the harsh truth of colonial rule amidst historical changes. The story of Miss Edwina Crane is linked with the Bibighar episode, as that too was the consequence of the riotous conditions in the wake of Quit India Movement; it exposes the contemptuous and tyrannical attitude of the English, where an Indian (Hari Kumar) is subjected to indignities, injustices and inhuman treatment in the hands of the British police for a crime neither committed nor proved against him.

The Bibighar episode in the novel is the story of Daphne Manners and Hari Kumar. It begins with the letters of Daphne Manners to her Aunt Ethel, from Mayapore to Srinagar. She (Daphne) was the niece of Late Sir Henry Manners, one-time Governor of Mayapore, who and his wife had looked after her, since her parents’ death. The letters written to Aunt Ethel communicate and impart information about Daphne, her relationship with Ronald Merrick and Hari Kumar; about Sister Ludmila and the ongoing political situation in the town of Mayapore. For example the driver of Merrick’s car told Daphne, “( . . . ) Hindus have concealed weapons in their houses to chop off the heads of
English and Mohammedans alike) (sic)” (Scott 107). This is suggestive of the finality of independence for India and the formation of Pakistan (Partition). The time was of “Congress-inspired anti-British feeling boiling up.” It was a time when no Indian or British was safe. Daphne, at Mayapore was staying with Lili Chaterjee, an old friend of her aunt at MacGregor House, which had a history of its own. It was believed that the house was built by a Scottish merchant named MacGregor:

MacGregor burns down the Bibighar, perhaps because he had been rejected by an Indian girl he wished to maintain there, although there are many different versions of the story. In the Mutiny, MacGregor is killed by mutinous sepoys and his wife murdered on the veranda of her house, to be known forever as MacGregor House, . . . The MacGregor House, Lili Chaterjee says, is the place of the white and the ruins of the Bibighar the place of the black, and thus Scott defines the point where Daphne Manners begins her journey and her destination. (Rubin 124)

This once again foregrounds the disturbed relationship between the British and the Indians – the socio-cultural divide, racial and colour discrimination. Thus, Daphne “begins her journey” from there, unknowing that she would fall in love with Hari Kumar, whose only fault was of being an Indian.

The details of Hari Kumar’s formative years have been dwelt upon by the writer in order to posit their significance in context of the role they play in his later life. Born in India but brought up in England turned Hari Kumar into an Englishman, in habits and attitude, the only difference being the colour of
his skin. His mother had died after his birth and he was taken to England at the age of two by his father, Duleep Kumar who wanted his son to be brought up as a perfect Englishman. He knew that power, "... lay not in money but in this magical combination of knowledge, manner, and race" (Scott 213), this is what he had witnessed in colonial India, and thus wanted to gift the same advantage to his son. Apart from this:

To Duleep, Indian independence was as simple as that, a question of evolution rather than of politics, of which he knew nothing. He believed in the intellectual superiority of the English... They ruled it [India] because they were armed with the weapons of civil intelligence that made the comparable Indian armoury look primitive by comparison. (227)

He always taught Hari that, to behave like an Indian was to have no future in the British world. Therefore, Hari was admitted to a public school, where like other boys, he was given a proper training to behave like an Englishman. Hari led a happy and contented life in England till the time of his father's death (suspected as suicide), leaving him in debt and penniless. The only recourse left for Hari was to return to India to his aunt Shalini. His aunt, a widow, herself was without any support and lived on Romesh Chand Gupta's (her brother-in-law) assistance. Thus, Hari came to India to lead a life of a misplaced exile. Being an Indian his situation was worse for him. Like the English people he found himself psychologically, culturally, socially, linguistically different – detached and alienated.
In the colonial world of British India, he was totally confused and confounded; for it was a world, where natives like him had no right to live freely; they were mere slaves to the foreign/colonial ruler. He realized his worthlessness, the meaningless existence when the English (whom he thought his own people) treated him as an unwanted being. This became apparent when he went to buy the Pears soap at Gulab Singh's pharmacy. Because of his accent he was able to capture immediately the attention of the shopkeeper, but people working at the shop could not relate his accent to his skin and thus ignored/humiliated him. An Englishwoman present in the shop mocked at him and her smile suggested it to Hari of being "bitter, [and] contemptuous" (Scott 254). Among the Indians, he was an Englishman but among the English he was invisible which ultimately meant that he belonged to nowhere. He was an anachronism in British India. The anomaly of his existence, British upbringing (was a deadly band of Styx) from which he could not break free.

His only respite was to communicate through letters with his friend Colin Lindsey, in England, the only link with his early English life; with him he shared his anguish in India and discuss about the ongoing political disturbances. Through this exchange of letters, he is informed by Colin about the ongoing Second World War and of his possibility of coming to India, and "...if things come to a head India will be in the war too. Which will mean me'" (270). This piece of information reveals that till then India had not been
involved in the war by the British. However, two months later, when the war had begun in Europe, Hari in his letter commented upon the situation thus:

'Such a fuss,' . . . about the resignation of those provincial ministries which had been dominated by the Congress. . . . The Viceroy had to declare war on India's behalf because he's the King-Emperor's representative, and the Germans now rank as the King's enemies. But since for some time now the British policy towards India has been to treat her as an embryo Dominion that only needs time to become self-governing, the Viceroy might at least have gone through the motions of consulting Indian leaders. Some people say that under the 1935 Act he was actually committed to consultation, and even if he wasn't how much more effective it would have been if the declaration could have been made with a simultaneous Indian statement of intention to cooperate freely. And one can understand why with all this talk going on about British War Aims the Indians feel one of them should be independence for India immediately the war is over. (Scott 271-272)

The above quoted paragraph unfolds the pages of history to detail the participation of India in the Second World War. It highlights the Raj's arbitrariness as they "might at least have gone through the motion of consulting Indian leaders" (272) as well as contrariness when "committed to consultation" as professed by its policies (Act of 1935) towards India. The entire detail acts as an exposé of the façade of British political contrivances and manipulative dealings in India which were strongly resented and opposed by the growing nationalist spirit spearheaded by Indian leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawahar Lal Nehru and others. Brigadier Reid too comments on the British-Indian relationship thus:
Right from the beginning of the war with Germany relations between ourselves and the Indians had steadily deteriorated. At the outset of that war Congress members of the central assembly had walked out to protest the sending abroad of Indian troops to the Middle East and Singapore and the Congress ministries in the provinces had resigned because the Viceroy had declared war without consulting them! (Scott 291)

Despite opposition from its prominent leaders, India did participate in the war against Nazi Germany when the bombing on Madras made them realize that they were in the thick of the war:

On April 6th a few bombs fell on Madras . . . A little later, it is true, Mr Gandhi very kindly suggested that the British army could stay in India and use it as a base from which to fight the Japanese, and that in ports like Bombay and Calcutta he could promise there wouldn’t be any riots to disrupt the flow of arms and war material! (292)

Thus, during the Second World War British took all possible support of India’s financial and military resources. Apart from the details about the Great War in Hari Kumar’s letter and Brigadier Reid’s memoirs, there is also reference to the Indian National Army (dealt in greater detail in the third book of the Quartet).

In course of The Jewel in the Crown, Scott has interwoven important historical data which informs the period of the novel’s setting. In his letters to Colin, Hari talks about all the major political figures and situation of the time (read history) – Mahatma Gandhi’s non-violent, non-cooperation movement; Jawahar Lal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose, Mr Jinnah; the communal problem, Indian
princes’ treaty with the British Crown, and of the upcoming Partition. Hari Kumar commented about the Divide and Rule policy of the British thus:

I think there’s no doubt that in the last twenty years — whether intentionally or not — the English have succeeded in dividing and ruling, and the kind of conversation I hear at these social functions I attend . . . makes me realize the extent to which the English now seem to depend upon the divisions in Indian political opinion perpetuating their own rule at least until after the war, if not for some time beyond it. They are saying it openly that it is “no good leaving the bloody country because there is no Indian party representative enough to hand it over to”. They prefer Muslims to Hindus . . . are constitutionally predisposed to Indian princes, emotionally affected by the thought of untouchables, and mad keen about the peasants who look upon any Raj as God. What they dislike is a black reflection of their own white radicalism . . . They look upon India as a place that they came to and took over when it was disorganized, and therefore think that they can’t be blamed for the fact that it is disorganized now. (Scott 278)

Thus, with time Hari Kumar’s outlook changed. His notions about the Raj were different till he came to India and became witness (later a victim himself) to the injustices and discriminatory politics of British policies/rule towards Indians during the widespread turbulent situations. Paul Scott makes Hari Kumar his spokesperson for shedding light on the negative aspects of the imperial rule. The British had divided the Indian population into small manageable portions and made it impossible for them to come forward together and raise their voice against the sovereign authority. In the hands of Scott, history becomes a medium to engage in the development and delineation of his major characters in the novel.
Second World War (history) brings Colin to India and he becomes the instrument for Hari’s biggest realization of life. In India, for Colin, his best friend Hari was just any other face in the crowd, not any different from the rest of the Indians. “... Lindsey looked at him [Hari], and then away, without recognition, not understanding that in those babu clothes, under the bazaar topee, there was one black face he ought to have seen as being different from the rest” (Scott 284). Kumar acknowledged it to Sister Ludmila, “I am invisible... not only to white people because they are white and I am black but invisible to my white friend because he can no longer distinguish me in a crowd... I am nothing, nothing, nothing” (284-285). Till that time, he had felt secure in his earlier knowledge and belief in the English. “And then when the war came close, when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, invaded Siam and Malaya and Burma and even fluttered the English dovecots in Mayapore, didn’t I say to myself, “Well, poor old Colin is in the thick of it again?”” (282). History helps in the moving forward of the narrative as well as to help Hari to mature and realize. Colin’s arrival in India helped to remove all possible doubts/hopes about his (Hari’s) individual self and identity. This feeling of worthlessness compelled him to move towards Daphne Manners who offered him friendship and the solace that somebody was there to understand him. She reciprocated his love. They both expected that they would be able to create their own world through love despite the odds against it. However, the future had something else in store for them as their love, emotional affinity became a challenge to the notion of the racial and cultural superiority of the British.
Their relationship presents before the readers the frightening distancing between the Whites and the Blacks in the colonial times. In the novel, the treatment of Hari Kumar is illustrative of this reality/truth. Though educated in England “[whose] accent alone, would pass for an upper-class Englishman; even his name [had] been Anglicized to Harry Coomer and he [had] never actually known himself as Hari Kumar” (Rubin 125) is subjected to humiliation by the British. Merrick conscious of Hari’s englishness feels jealous of him on the basis of his own “... sense of social inferiority and the grinding defensive belief in his racial superiority” (Darby 116-117). Ronald Merrick, District Superintendent of Police in Mayapore was courting Daphne, but she found him to be distasteful. Instead she met Hari Kumar and fell in love with him. Since both, Daphne and Hari developed deep affection for each other, their friendship soon became the talk of the town because, “... although a white man could make love to a black girl, the black man and white girl association was still taboo” (Scott 385). Apart from being a taboo it became a matter of prestige for Ronald Merrick who took it as a personal slight because Daphne gave preference to Hari over him. This situation was totally unacceptable to him as well as to the English. “With Merrick keeping an ever-vigilant guard on any white-black affair, and the whole community watching her every move, Daphne feels that she and Kumar might well have been marked...” (Narayanan 84). Thus, the efforts of Daphne’s and Hari to put an end to the colour and racial apartheid become embroiled in the socio-political circumstances of the time.
Daphne’s rape serves as the central plot of the tetralogy and foregrounds the many historical and political issues of the period. The concluding days of British rule became a time of violence and bloodshed; Raj was slipping away into history and this made the British both cynical and insecure of their position. The times of paternalistic pretensions were over; the colonial ruler was ready to control and annihilate any Indian challenge and uprising. Amongst all this, the affair of Hari and Daphne triggered a crisis in the district. The British administration had its hands already full in trying to quell the political disturbances and diffuse tension. In such a time they were not prepared to take chance of any kind with any Indian. It was a situation of total mistrust. Thus, the news of a white girl’s rape by an Indian completely blew the fuse. Therefore, the British took as many safe and as many harsh measures as they could to crush the uprising as well as end this inter-racial affair. Paul Scott, in the instance of the Mayapore riots has made use of the historical data of violence and riots connected with the Quit India Movement and integrated it with the story of Hari-Daphne affair to bring alive the experience of history. He has blended the historical data with fiction, so as to give the matter a perspective and allow the readers an insight into the violent times.

Thus, in the novel, Hari’s life was about to take the strangest turn in the wake of Quit India Movement. The Indian freedom struggle had come of age; India was evolving in context of the ongoing historical/political changes and amidst them Hari’s life too was going to change forever. The rude shock that
Hari received from Colin – the rejection of their friendship, made him sink into an abyss of loneliness and isolation.

History and fiction are fused together in the Bibighar incident when (on the night of 9th August, 1942) Hari-Daphne consummate their love in Bibighar Gardens. The same night and in his presence, Daphne is raped by six men. It was this very night when the Quit India Movement started and led to the arrest, injury and killing of a large number of people:

According to official statements published later, the number of occasions throughout the country on which the police and/or military had to fire upon the populace totalled over 500. Over 60,000 people were arrested, over 1,000 killed and over 3,000 severely injured. (Scott 335)

In the wake of Mayapore riots the rape became an act of revenge on the part of the six Indians. Mr Chaudhuri was killed because he was with a White (Miss Edwina Crane); similarly in the Bibighar case Hari Kumar was mercilessly beaten for being with a White and Daphne humiliated (raped) for being English. According to these Indians, they were punishing the British, who deserved this sort of treatment. These violent acts were an expression of their hate and abhorrence for them. It was an announcement for the white colonizers that their days in India were over; that they were not to be tolerated; that they were no more safe and it was time for them to leave.

Ronald Merrick, had warned Daphne not to associate with the Indians. The Bibighar incident proved to be a great opportunity for Merrick to avenge
the slight inflicted on him by Daphne’s preference for Hari. His hatred of Hari was not only at a personal level but had all the overtones of the colonial relationship between the ruler and ruled/white and black/English and Indian. He also wanted revenge from Hari because he had not given him the due respect (in the sanctuary) as an Indian should give to his colonial master. The dislike, contempt and derision that the English had for the Indians are all confirmed in the behaviour of Merrick towards Hari. Thus, Hari is suspected and implicated of the crime (rape) by Merrick. He is arrested along with five other Indian men. In due course, Daphne’s bicycle is found parked outside the gate of Hari’s house (allegedly got placed by Merrick himself). That Hari is innocent of the vile act (rape) is a matter acknowledged between the author and the reader in context of the narrative. While the investigations are going on Hari keeps silent as promised to Daphne. The entire novel is made up of multiple narratives/accounts of the Bibighar episode, and none of them implicate Hari Kumar’s complicity in the crime. At the fictional level, the Bibighar case makes a parallel reading with Adela’s rape in A Passage to India where the accused (Aziz) is innocent. However, when Merrick’s plan to convict Hari fails (due to Daphne’s statement in favour of him), he gets Hari arrested under Defense India Act. Ronald Merrick’s entire conduct vis-à-vis Bibighar episode is irrational and vengeful because Hari was in no way involved in politics. All this was the result of Merrick’s unreasonable prejudices and jealousy. In course of the novel the readers are informed that
Daphne died giving birth to a baby girl who was named Parvati as per her mother’s wish and brought up by Lady Manners.

While talking about racial differences, Merrick had remarked, “... It does matter. It’s basic. It matters like hell” (Scott 423). His character stands as a testimony to racial superiority and imperial arrogance of British towards the Indians. He is an epitome of imperial deceptions and myths. Similarly, when Miss Edwina Crane decided to join the mission school while employed (as Governess) by Mrs Nesbitt Smith, the lady had remarked, “You’d be with blacks and half-castes, cut off from your own kind. . . .” (18). Such comments and remarks and incidents bring out the embedded racial consciousness and bias to the surface. The English had ruled for around two hundred years guided by the inherent norms of racial supremacy; yet when in 1900s they realized that they had lost their control over India, they could not overcome their racial/colonial arrogance:

... Scott goes deeper than the British refusal to admit Indians to their society; he shows how they denied an entrance into their consciousness as well – how in their very perception of the Indian they denied him his humanity, reducing and simplifying him to an appurtenance to their life in India. (Narayanan 84)

The memoirs of Brigadier Reid make one remember Rudyard Kipling’s idea of India as “white man’s burden” and sheds more light on India’s colonial situation. They also make clear that he believed India to be a source of unlimited bounty, fortune and assets. He further believed the Bibighar incident
to be the result of Quit India Movement and justified General Dyer's action of Jallianwalah Bagh incident. He supported Merrick in his actions because he was very much like him in very many ways. Both were white men/officers doing their duty and executing their responsibilities as per the requisite of the Raj. The British colonizers as self appointed guardians of the natives masked their violent methods in the name of duty and governance (law and order). They believed in inflicting punishment on the natives in order to teach them lessons. Merrick's intention in plotting against Hari Kumar and the other five Indians was understood by Brigadier Reid as a way to control and subdue the unruly, rebellious Indians (orientals).

Reid's account also informs the readers of the strain and uncertainty the British were facing with their failing performance in the Second World War. It was a time when the Indian politicians and leaders were appealing openly for more rights of self governance. It was no time for any judicious concord between Britain and India. He wrote: "It was after the failure of the Cripps Mission in April 1942 that Mr Gandhi launched his famous Quit India campaign, which of course looked to us like an invitation to the Emperor of Japan to walk in and take over the reins of government!" (Scott 290). The Deputy Commissioner Robin White, a liberal can be described as Paul Scott's voice/spokesperson. He has been presented as an antithesis to Reid and Merrick. He was highly critical of Britain's colonial attitude and practices towards India/Indians. According to him, Britain had acted tyrannically as a
colonial master and needed to moderate its stance and action towards the Indians. His empathy for the Indians (unlike Merrick and Reid) made him believe the attack on Edwina Crane and Daphne Manners to be the result of Britain’s authoritarian attitudes.

The entire novel is made of different characters who voice their opinion about a single incident. Their views about India as a colony/the jewel in the crown are in context of colonial history.

*The Jewel in the Crown* analyzes and inspects history by exploring a range of characters related directly or indirectly with the ongoing political happening/crisis of the times. It describes the love-hate relationship between India and Britain, between white and black. The novel focusses on the cursed relationship of an inter-racial love affair between Daphne and Hari Kumar, and the consequences of her (Daphne) rape by six Indian men. The rape of Daphne Manners, symbolically represents the rape of India under British Empire. It also focusses on the plight of Indians in their homeland which is confirmed through the characters of Hari Kumar and Lili Chaterjee. The primary events are told through different narrators and the story moves forward against the backdrop of Quit India Movement of 1942 which started due to the failure of Cripps Mission. The consequent disturbances, riots and rampages in the district because of the ongoing struggle for independence are all detailed in context of history. The novel represents the decline, debacle and demise of imperial power and its dominance over its jewel (India) in the crown.
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THE DAY OF THE SCORPION

The Day of the Scorpion is the second novel of The Raj Quartet. The Quartet is, "... a historical novel in which the author has transmuted contemporary history into fiction" (Goonetilleke 139). He has recreated the political upheavals of India and Britain at a crucial point in the history of British India. The Revolt of 1857, the first uprising by the Indians to regain their motherland has been mentioned only in passing by the writer. But as he deals with the 1940s of colonial India, "... we see the ghost of the first uprising driving the British officers into extreme actions and atrocities at the slightest provocation" (Prakash 210).

This book of the Quartet, once again deals with the disturbance and political turmoil preceding Britain's withdrawal, India's independence and the creation of the State of Pakistan. Scott has also dug deep into the period of the Second World War, and has tried to capture all the political/emotional/psychological nuances of the said period. The politics of the subcontinent (India) has been recreated with force and subtlety at a turning point of its history.

The book displays a wide range of interesting (new) characters – Count Bronowsky, Barbie Batchelor, Mildred Layton, Sarah Layton, Susan Layton, Mohammed Ali Kasim, Ahmed Kasim whose lives are inescapably bound with
both fictional and historical considerations of the novel. The book negotiates and reworks the events and characters of *The Jewel in the Crown*; the narrative purpose is to depict the affect and effect of the events of the first book on the characters both old and new from the political/historical perspective. Set in India of 1942-44, the British are shown fighting a desperate war against the Japanese, and at the same time facing stiff opposition from the Indians/natives:

... historical personages are introduced as determining the historical events in which the characters are caught up, but they are not themselves characters as such in action. The Daphne-Hari Kumar case intensifies the public disturbances in Mayapore, but these disturbances are part of nation-wide unrest which has nothing to do with them and, certainly, has not been originated by their case. (Goonetilleke 139)

The “scorpion” in the title is a marker of the thematic and symbolic significance of the novel, that when encircled by a ring of fire it (scorpion) stings itself to death. This factor contextualizes the historical reality of the British Raj as it worked towards its own destruction; its political arrogance prompting it to commit mistake after mistake when confronted by the fire of Indian resistance and freedom struggle.

A striking feature of Scott’s narrative art is the expression of a “symbolic relationship between history and literature” (Padley 173). While negotiating with the “obvious areas of historical enquiry” he has brought together disparate sources so as to create the historical sense of the given period. Thus, history remains not “merely a backdrop to the study of the text” but permeates and informs it. This is where his creative genius draws a close
parallel with the interests of the new historicists. The period of 1940s is both significant and critical from the historical point of view. It changed the destiny of nations: in fact it transformed the very course of history. The decline of British imperialism, the dissolution of its colonial empire in India; creation of the State of Pakistan were significant happenings that changed the face of the world. Scott’s interest in history makes him take cognizance of all these aspects.

Set against the backdrop of Quit India Movement the novel is able to present and analyse many significant issues related to India’s independence. It also explores Britain’s policy of divide and rule in detail. “Hindu-Muslim relations, which were always treated superficially by the English writers because of ignorance as well as prejudice also receive a fair treatment from Scott” (Prakash 219). Scott has showed how the British made use of the Divide and Rule strategy to control India/Indians and extend their political monopoly over it.

Indian society was divided on the basis of religion and the British successfully created artificial boundaries within the country making use of this fact (religion). When the Empire granted separate electorates to Muslims in 1909, it was an example of advocating and fanning religious differences to extend their control over the colony for more years to come.

The growth of the Indian National Congress was a matter of great concern for the British. They felt the growing politicisation of India would
eventually lead to the downfall of the Raj. Thus, they thought to divide a
country upon religious grounds (to cause animosities and communal rifts), to
create separate electorates for Muslims would definitely grant the imperial god
a fresh lease of life. However, in this game of Divide and Rule (during the Quit
India Resolution) they did not meet with complete success because there were
some Muslim leaders who remained loyal to the Congress till the end.

Not every Hindu or Muslim was in favour of the Partition. This aspect is
factorized by the character of Mohammed Ali Kasim (an important leader of
the Congress). The book begins with his arrest on 8th August 1942. He
belonged to an eminent Muslim family, related to the nawab of Mirat and the
famous Urdu poet Gaffur (fictitious names and details). According to Trivedi:

The presentation of this character [Mohammed Ali Kasim] is quite
near to that of the great Muslim Leader of the Indian National
Congress – Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. Considering that ‘Azad’ was
an appendage to his real name, it may be pointed out that the initials
of Mohammed Ali Kasim, a creation of Paul Scott and those of
Maulana Abul Kalam (Azad) are the same. (83-84)

Sir George Malcolm, the Governor of Ranpur informed him that all
national leaders including Mahatma Gandhi were being arrested and
imprisoned for their political agitation and the launch of Quit India campaign.
He offered him a job in his executive council as a political manoeuvre so as to
turn the tables on Congress. He tried to exploit Kasim’s religious and
communal sentiments but failed in his efforts as Kasim understood the
nefarious designs of the British Governor and refused to accept the offered post thus: "Because you only offer me a job. I am looking for a country and I am not looking for it alone" (Scott 510). He like the other millions of Indians was waiting to free his country from the foreign rule. His imprisonment was historically significant because he had dedicated his life to his country and to the ideals/principles of Mahatma Gandhi. He had joined Congress in 1919, "...whose aim in that same year and for the same bloody reasons and under M. K. Gandhi's leadership was reversed from independence by peaceful co-operation to independence as soon as possible by non-co-operation" (555). As a staunch party member, he was ready to sacrifice his life and pleasures in order to keep his country, unified and undivided. His denial of the prestigious post manifests his love for his country and "impels him to suffer incarceration for two years" (Badiger 57). In response to the offer made by the Governor he comments thus:

'... Independence is not something you can divide into phases. It exists or does not exist... The idea, you know, isn't simply to get rid of the British. It is to create a nation capable of getting rid of them and capable simultaneously of taking its place in the world as a nation... That is why we go on insisting that the Congress is an All India Congress... we try to do the job that your Government has always found it beneficial to leave undone, the job of unifying India, of making all Indians feel that they are above all else, Indians... I can look for it better in prison, I'm afraid than from a seat on your Excellency's executive council.' (Scott 510-511)

The attempt of Governor Malcolm to blackmail him in the interest of his son's (Sayed) life and safety who had fought in Malaya, was captured and was
then a prisoner of war of the Japanese also met with a rebuttal. This piece of information introduces the Second World War indirectly into the narrative. It informs the readers how the lives of every individual (directly or indirectly) was affected by it:

No doubt you [Kasim] have heard rumours of the pressures being put on Indian prisoners, officers and men, to secure their release from prison camp by joining units that will fight side by side with the Japanese. News of your imprisonment might well be used by the enemy to add those pressures in your son’s case . . . His loyalty as an officer might be subjected to severe strain if he hears that we have put his father in jail. (Scott 512)

Governor Malcolm’s meeting with Mr Kasim was for the purpose of persuading him against the Congress, “a Hindu-dominated organization whose real motive was power for the Hindus” (506); the aim was to disillusion him on communal and religious grounds:

Where would your slim Congress Party majority be with most of your non-aligned Muslims and even some of your Congress Muslims gone over to the League? Repeat that picture all over India and where is your party’s proof of speaking for all India? Where is it, Mr Kasim? Where has it gone? You know the answer as well as I do . . . Down the creek. Sunk . . . You were striking a blow at your own existing and potential political power . . . a Congress-ruled India would mean a Hindu India that has made eventual partition of this country almost certainly inevitable . . . But who even a few years ago had ever heard of Pakistan let alone thought of it as practicable? (507-508)

The British favoured the Muslim League because it had supported them in the Second World War. In return they too supported the League and helped it to
gain stability and strength. According to historians the ‘divide and rule’ policy practiced by the British gave impetus to religious and sectarian feelings among the Indians and eventually paved way for the creation of Pakistan.

The novel captures the conniving moves and machiavellian designs of the British Government which tried to create differences between the two leading political parties and hinder the ongoing struggle for freedom. Such divisive policies became detrimental to India’s practice of democratic ideals in its struggle for freedom. The arrest of Mohammed Ali Kasim and the attempt to break his loyalty on grounds of being an outsider is commented by Rubin thus:

The anomalies of the Kasim family in some ways dimly parallel the situation of some of the British in India: like them, the Kasims, no matter how Indian they become, remain even now on the fringe of that Hindu world, rarely loved and trusted despite the fact that their entry into India preceded that of the English by several centuries; like them, they have achieved neither mastery nor integration. (126)

With the unfolding of the plot, the readers are acquainted with the reality behind the Bibighar episode: crucial facts are added and admissions made that allow the picture/happening to become clearer. “... the plot keeps coming back to Bibighar, forcing the characters to discuss it and investigate it, and occasionally increase our knowledge of what happened in it...” (Swinden 98). In doing so, Paul Scott exposes the socio-political/historical reality attendant to the Bibighar incident. Amidst the demonstrations against the British Government in Mayapore and in other parts of the country (in the wake of the
arrest of Congress leaders) comes the report of the rape of a white girl (Miss Manners) and the arrest of Hari Kumar and six Indians in connection with it. In a conversation between Ahmed and Pandit Baba the harsh prejudices underpinning the English-Indian relationship is commented thus: “But we are Indians and they are English. True intimacy is not possible. It is not even desirable . . . We can never be friends with the English, or they with us . . .” (Scott 603). This conversation between Ahmed and Pandit Baba focusses on the differences and schism that existed in the relationship between English and Indians and how racial apartheid played a significant role in the Bibighar happening:

‘. . . But chiefly there was no trial because Miss Manners was saying the men arrested could not have anything to do with it. So now District Superintendent produced evidence that all these boys were engaged in subversive activities and no doubt the English thought it was not possible to set them free in any event. So, they were imprisoned without trial under Defence of India Rule, as your father and many others are imprisoned.’ (606)

The treatment given to Hari Kumar was the result of the political, cultural divide, which had created differences between the sahibs and the natives. Other than this, Hari made Merrick conscious (as discussed earlier) of his own social inferiority as well his personal vulnerability vis-à-vis Hari’s English public school education and intimacy with Daphne. Thus, Hari embodied to him the native who was interrogating the ruler in colonial India. This was unacceptable to him. It made Merrick feel contempt for him and Hari
was eventually condemned by him. Mad with rage and personal animosity, he targeted Hari. The Bibighar episode provides him the chance to exploit the situation and seek revenge on him. Merrick makes use of the political situation to justify his acts. Brought up on the myths of the Raj, he strongly believed that there could not and should not be any social affinity between the ruler and the ruled. According to him, true closeness between the people of different races was impossible. As long as this separation and segregation was maintained, Empire would be safe. The British were already confronting the violent disturbances of the political situation and were not in favour of adding the problem of racial intimacy. Such relationship could have survived in England but not in colonial India. However, hard they tried, the natives could never be equal to the English, and if they tried to be it would prove disastrous for both.

Merrick belonged to that category of British members who, "... wanted to run the administration on traditional imperialist lines" (Bose 77). Therefore, to fulfill this objective he could go to any extremes. As expressed earlier, the violence of his methods was in the name of professional duty and responsibility. An advocate of strict authoritarianism, it was his firm belief that use of force and repressive measures was the only way to enforce law and order. People like him believed that inculcating fear was the only way of ruling the natives and that any act of compassion would give rise to revolt. Such colonial attitudes prompted by imperial considerations and personal motives can be interpreted to be chiefly responsible for perpetuating resentment,
outrage and hatred in the natives. Colonial history is replete with episodes of cruelty, intrigues, injustices, oppression, and barbarism and Scott has accordingly made use of them by creating fictional situation out of historical reality/truth.

The Bibighar episode is suffused with colonial colouring of racial discrimination and prejudices. The imperial mindset fuelled by ideas of oppression and suppression was unable to distinguish between right and wrong. The English saw only what Merrick wanted them to see. For him and many others – the white colour was God’s gift to them to mark their superiority. Count Bronowsky understood Merrick very well. At the wedding ceremony of Susan and Teddie, he questioned him about Pandit Baba, the six arrested boys for the rape of Daphne Manners, the inhuman and brutal treatment meted to them, the letter which he received at Sundernagar in which he was questioned about the convicted people for rape. But the brazen Police Superintendent Merrick had a different tale to tell:

‘You’ve drawn your picture out of context. You’re forgetting what day it was and what had happened during the day. It was the ninth of August. On the eighth the Congress passed their Quit India resolution. On the morning of the ninth we arrested not only leading Congressmen but Congress members of sub-committees throughout India. Everything had come to the boil . . . They’d had a white woman. They thought the country was rising. Their day was dawning. They could see it quite clearly. The raj was on the run. The long knives were out. In a day or two the white man would be crawling,
licking their shoes, and there'd be as many white women to rape or murder as they wanted.' (Scott 695-696)

Such was his explanation for the Bibighar episode; with the Raj on the run, they (Indians) could celebrate their victory by assaulting and raping the white women. He had a “shrewd and wicked clarity” (Gorra 52) to justify his misdeeds. He also informed them (Count Bronowsky, Sarah, Ahmed) that he had found a letter in Kumar’s room, “... from an English boy warning Kumar not to write bolshie things ...” (Scott 697). Merrick had plotted well against Hari. If he proved to be innocent in the rape case (as was the truth), then he would be tried under Defence of India Rule for plotting against the British. One is reminded of lines from Frost’s poem “A Roadside Stand” that Merrick along with Brigadier Reid were “beneficent beasts of prey”; they were beneficent for the British, but were no less than animals who preyed upon Indians to assert their supremacy and power over them.

Hari Kumar’s imprisonment (prison experience) makes the readers recall Sher Singh of Khushwant Singh’s I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale. This novel also depicts the Quit India Movement at its height in Amritsar. Sher Singh too, like Hari Kumar was given the option to betray his companions to save his life or be hanged. Merrick, like the British in I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale tortured Hari beyond measure and tried every alternative to make Hari speak out the untruth (he wanted to hear). However, every atrocity was
met with a determined silence in keeping of his promise given to Daphne — never to tell anyone about their meeting.

Pandit Baba, the teacher of Hari Kumar in *The Day of the Scorpion*, comes out as the biggest and the bitterest critic of the British. From his perspective, the Mayapore incident was an act of rebellion as well as self defense on the part of Indians, who were tired of being suppressed and oppressed by the English people; they had borne enough of torture and atrocities. It was time to rise against the tyranny of the Raj. In his view, the Mayapore riots took a turn for the worse when the six boys were arrested for a crime which they had not committed. He openly claimed Merrick to be responsible for escalating the problem and worsening the situation. A strong advocate of Indian nationalism, he firmly believed it was time for the Indian people to regain power and prestige of their motherland by driving out the foreigners from their country.

Captain Rowan (from whom Lady Manners learns the truth about Daphne’s rape and Kumar’s love for her), Count Bronowsky and Sarah Layton discuss the rape case in the train (in detail) while returning from Calcutta. Bronowsky was very critical about Merrick. By this time it had become very clear to everyone that Kumar along with the six other men was innocent, that these men were used as scapegoats and it was time to release them. But their release would prove Merrick (English) guilty of wrongful confinement and
torture. A situation untenable and unacceptable to the British. Thus, while talking about Merrick, Bronowsky commented:

'The reason is — and you would do well to remember it — that Captain Rowan has recognized with the sure instinct of his race, that Mr Merrick’s recent history is the key to the preservation of the status quo . . . . The one thing the English fear is scandal, I mean private scandal. If Mr Merrick had ever been asked to account for his actions the outside world would never have heard of it.' (Scott 967-968)

Paul Scott adroitly introduces the Layton family into the narrative in order to negotiate and work out different strands and themes of colonial history of India. The Sarah-Ahmed episode has been woven into the text to focus upon its similarities and differences with Daphne-Hari relationship. Set against the backdrop of the British Raj — with its colonial attitudes and assumptions, any relationship/friendship between an Indian (native) and English (ruler) could not be sanctioned. Thus, this fictional account of Sarah-Ahmed relationship is explored against the historical truth of British-Indian relationship in colonial India.

The Bibighar incident happened in the year 1942, and by the time Sarah-Ahmed came together, the Daphne-Hari relationship had acquired the shape of an evil — to beware of. In the twilight years of the Raj, a liaison between an Indian and English was bound to be suspect. The British could never allow a repeat of Hari and Daphne affair. Both, Sarah and Ahmed were well aware of this. As an Indian, Ahmed was conscious of the vulnerability of his position
and did not want to transgress the boundaries set for the Indians by the colonizers. After the Bibighar episode, Sarah and Ahmed knew their limitations very well and respected the code of conduct as laid down by the English in violation of their own feelings. Sarah was well aware of the English social superiority and ascendancy over the Indians, being of the ruling class herself.

During the wedding ceremony of Susan and Teddie:

As Sarah followed Mrs Grace she carried with her an impression of Ahmed alone, disengaged; standing restricted in the centre of a world she would never enter, did not know and could not miss. How lucky we are, she thought. How very, very lucky. (Scott 674)

The world of the British was extremely different from that of the Indians. The English were the rulers, who had no right to get intimate with the natives. Along with this fact, the situation of the 1940s was not in favour of the natives. They were suppressed and proscribed by violence, fear and atrocities. Ahmed, like all other Indians avoided interacting with the English. He was afraid of any chance mishapening, which would lead to his ruin, nobody knew when his innocent act would condemn him to become the object of their hatred, scorn and anger. Ahmed’s susceptibility reminds the readers of Aziz in E. M. Forster’s *A Passage to India*. Their friendship reminded both of them of Daphne Manners and the tragic consequences of her affair with Hari Kumar. The thought of Daphne was enough to chill her. She had neither the courage nor the intention to defy the established norms and endanger Ahmed’s life along with her own. The Sarah-Ahmed relationship reworks and lays bare the
truth of the socio-cultural aspect of colonial history: imperial policies of exclusion and discrimination which were hostile to Indo-British relationships.

The Layton family consisted of "... the father a prisoner of war in Germany, the mother an all-too-typical snobbish and bitchy memsahib, given to drink and infidelity, while the two daughters, Sarah and Susan, represent polarities of British awareness" (Rubin 126). This family in the novel is shown to be significantly associated with and impacted by the major historical events (Second World War and India's independence) of its time.

Mabel Layton, the step grandmother of Susan and Sarah is shown as a conscientious, upright woman of impeccable socio-political credentials. She had sent a cheque of £100 anonymously to Sir Ahmed Akbar Ali Kasim (father of Mohmmed Kasim) for a fund to help the families of Jallianwalah victims. Sir Kasim labels this unexpected act of sending a cheque by the English lady as a gesture of sincerity and reviews it in context of the political reality of the time. Showing the cheque to his son he explains thus:

"Jallianwallah could never have happened if the British who talk freedom were not sincere... They have frightened their opponents with their sincerity. I do not mean us. Their opponents, the ones who matter but who will matter less and less, are also British. They are men like General Dyer. Why do you call that man a monster? He believed God had charged him with a duty to save the empire. He believed this sincerely, just as he believed sincerely that in Amritsar there was to be found an invidious threat to that empire. (Scott 555-556)
Through this conversation, once again Jallianwalah Bagh (1919) weaves its way into the narrative and Scott yet again with the aid of imaginative reworking presents the incident from another point of view. General Dyer’s massacre of the nationalist demonstrators at Amritsar is perceived as evidence of his fear — a threat to the Empire. He took law in his own hands and massacred thousands of unarmed Indians. This barbarous act charged and ignited the whole of India with nationalist fervour. It brought great contempt for the colonizers and dealt a severe blow to their image — weakening the structure of the British Raj.

The account of Susan Layton’s marriage to Teddie Bingham in the novel marks a careful fusion of fiction and historical truth. The car taking Teddie and Merrick (his best man) to the church is provided by the Nawab of Mirat; on the way a stone is thrown at their limousine as a result Teddie gets hurt; later at the station an old Indian lady (Hari’s aunt) in a white saree kneels down at Merrick’s feet and begs for mercy. The period described was simmering with political dissent, distrust and disturbances. Even the quietest of the places had suddenly become sensitive. Scott with remarkable perceptiveness strings together these disparate scenes to recreate the socio-political scenario of the 1940s and captures the hostile outburst of the Indians against the repressive measures of the British. He provides cohesion to the plot by recalling and giving subtle hints to past events and depicts a turbulent future for Mirat:
"Perhaps the incident of the stone was a warning shot, a sign that dear old Mirat was suddenly going to explode" (Scott 662).

The throwing of the stone is a reminder for Merrick that his role in the Bibighar affair was neither forgiven nor forgotten. The old woman pleading for mercy is a comment on the use of force and violence inflicted by the British on the hapless and helpless natives. The Nawab's car is a reflection of the superficial friendship and cordiality that existed between the Indian nobility and the colonizers; of exploitation and favours rendered to each other for political advantages and vested interests. However, Merrick tries to explain the incidents as reactionary behaviour of the Indians because of his strict dealing with the agitating natives; that the Indians were trying to pin him down by force and fear. As an officer in colonial India his actions read as an attempt to enforce subjugation on the socially and politically awakened Indians and to take a hostile perspective of their spirited demands for freedom.

Other than these issues, another matter of great political concern was the future of the princely states. These small states were struggling hard for their survival. This issue has been dealt by Paul Scott in almost all his novels. The characters of Jimmy Smith in *The Alien Sky*, Dingy Row in *The Birds of Paradise* convey his preoccupation with this theme. The rulers of these princely states had no option other than to be loyal to the British. They were no better than vassals of the British Government, due to their signed treaties with it. They could neither raise their voice against the British nor could they join
the freedom struggle. At this juncture, when India was on the verge of gaining sovereignty for itself, the princely states were fighting hard for their very existence.

Once again in *The Day of the Scorpion*, the Nawab’s incident of not being allowed into the club to attend the wedding ceremony of Susan Layton and Teddie Bingham highlights the indignities and humiliation meted out to the Indians. Merrick showed Sarah Layton a wedding invitation and conveyed that: "A servant just brought me this. One of the MPs sent it through. I’m afraid he’s stopped the Nawab from coming in" (Scott 664). The Nawab of Mirat was denied entry into the exclusive premises of the English Club because of his colour. This incident reminds the readers of Hari Kumar in *The Jewel in the Crown* who was also denied entry into the club on account of his skin. The Nawab too knew the real reason why he was stopped from entering the Club but pretended to be unaware of it just as all (read English gentry) present at the club acted as if they were unaware of the incident. This illustrates the political and social posturing of the English people; such happenings in reality were common during the Raj, where the native, even if he was a Prince or a Nawab was treated with contempt and arrogance by the English. This aspect has also been discussed in detail in the second chapter. *The Birds of Paradise* depicts the apathy of Indian princes who faced extremely adverse situations during the British rule; yet ironically they remained faithful and loyal to the British. These
rulers had signed treaties with the British, which provided them the right to rule but no right to take any crucial decision.

In a carefully crafted manner, Scott weaves other important historical information into the narrative structure and connects it to the main story i.e. the death of Teddie Bingham during the Second World War in Burma at the hands of the Japanese. He is killed in a bomb blast while trying to save Mohammed Baksh, a jiff. The term jiff referred to:

‘... Indian soldiers who were once prisoners of the Japanese in Burma and Malaya, chaps who turned coat and formed themselves into army formations to help the enemy. There were a lot of them in that attempt the Japanese made to invade India through Imphal.’

(Scott 877)

The real facts of Teddie’s death are narrated to Sarah by Merrick, who himself lost his left arm while trying to save him. He informed Sarah that Teddie "preserved a sort of tight-lipped silence" (878) when it came to those Indian prisoners (Baksh) who had joined the jiffs. Teddie did not believe that:

... Indian soldiers who’d eaten the king’s salt and been proud to serve in the army generation after generation could be suborned like that, buy their way out of prison camp by turning coat, come armed hand in hand with the Japs to fight their own countrymen, fight the very officers who had trained them, cared for them and earned their respect. (877)

Whereas, Merrick had a different perspective when it came to these Indian prisoners. He told Sarah:
... I was trying to get a different picture. I wanted prisoners. Prisoners who would talk, talk about the whole thing, recruitment back in Malaya and Burma, inducements, pressures, promises. Which Indian officers had gone for the thing and which had only been sheep. (Scott 877)

Thus, when Mohammed Baksh asked his pardon from Teddie he was convinced of his sincerity. This made him fall prey to the Japanese plan. Through Merrick, Paul Scott justifies the Indians mindset of joining the Indian National Army (INA). Merrick explained to Sarah thus:

The British had always excused their imperialism by pointing out that their presence in India was a guarantee of freedom from invasion. But they hadn’t kept the Japanese out of Burma and Malaya. The Japanese were freeing all Asia from the white man’s yoke and self-respecting Indians couldn’t just sit by and let another nation do their job for them. (887)

Merrick believed to have extracted a lot of information from Baksh and wanted the British to take quick and strong measures against the INA and Subhas Chandra Bose:

I suppose we might hang Subhas Chandra Bose, who’s at the head of the whole thing, but for the rest I expect it’ll be a question of weeding out the hawks from the doves, tracking down those who’ve had their own men tortured.

The death of Teddie Bingham at the hand of Baksh – a jiff and Merrick’s attempt to save him which results in his getting wounded is a narrative ploy of Scott to make the readers conscious that his role is of
considerable significance in the continuum of the *Quartet* series as well as his involvement in the Bibighar episode.

In the novel, the readers gain a complete historical perspective of Subhas Chandra Bose and INA, as Indians (Ahmed and Mohammad Kasim) too, express their views about them in context of their own complicity in the narrative situation. When Ahmed goes to meet his father Mohammed Kasim imprisoned in Premanagar, he informs him of his elder brother Sayed having joined the INA after being captured by the Japanese in Kuala Lumpur in 1942. Mr Kasim refuses to believe that Sayed, his son, was a traitor who would fight and kill Indians in order to help the Japanese invade his own country. With extreme derision and contempt he dismisses the concept and existence of the INA:

The Indian National Army? What can that be? A handful of madmen led by other madman, Subhas Chandra Bose, who was never any good to Congress. . . . First he escapes from India, then turns up in Berlin and then in Tokyo. He sets up an absurd paper government-in-exile and perhaps a few Indians living in Malaya put on a uniform and help him kowtow to the Japanese, fooling themselves that if the Japanese ever defeat India they will allow Subhas to set up his paper government in Delhi. (Scott 974)

However, he could not deny the truth any further, when Ahmed tells him that Sayed was forced to join the INA because of his (Mr Kasim’s) arrest:
This represents a tragic and dishonoring development for Mohammed Ali, who is himself renowned for his absolute integrity and idealistic devotion in all circumstances to the rules of the game. (Rubin 129)

The history of the British Raj in 1940s is a record of the growth of the INA – as a counter movement to the non-cooperation and non-violent measures advocated by Gandhiji; the discriminatory treatment of the Indian soldiers in the British Army during the Second World War; their incarceration in the Japanese war camps; and their becoming “turn coats” to join it (INA).

*The Day of the Scorpion* documents the growing political pressures and strife during the last days of British India. Amidst these tensions, the Bibighar incident has been commented upon from different perspectives of the various characters. This incident signifies the growing mistrust, hostility and intolerance between the ruler(s) and the natives. Other than this, the Indian National Movement is depicted as having become an indomitable force working towards India’s independence. The British viewed the aggressive demands of the politically awakened Indians as political insurgency and resorted to the use of force and violence to instil fear and enforce subjugation on them. The plans, actions and reactions of the characters in the novel are the manifestation of this political and turbulent situation of the country. The historical factors are used to inform and influence the life of all the characters who live their lives in context of the political happenings during the last years of the Raj. The discriminatory politics, social and political posturing as well as the insidious dealings of the colonizers are examined as historical truths in the
narrative leading to the weakened power structure of British India and hastening the dissolution of the Empire. In the novel, Scott has with great accuracy and remarkable perceptiveness recreated the spirit of the time.
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