CHAPTER - VI

CONCLUSION

In the preceding chapters of the present thesis, Paul Scott's idea of the novel as an art-form as well as his practice of it was analysed and interpreted in order to prove that he is not a historical novelist like Walter Scott and Leo Tolstoy, but that he is a self-conscious novelist with a serious concern for the form and function of the Novel. The first chapter explained Scott's "poetic" idea of the novel as an "image of human reality", the second chapter sought to give some insights into Scott's early practice of the conventional idea of the novel as Story and his gradual shift to his own method of making the novel an "image of reality", the third chapter attempted an interpretation of the novels of the middle phase by analysing the central symbols and their significant bearing on the theme or "idea" of each novel, the fourth chapter proved the Quartet as an "extended metaphor" and its sequel as the final metaphor by exploring the images, symbols and dominant metaphors of the novels as also the thematic co-relation among them, the fifth chapter argued that Scott's vision of life is 'Absurdistic' by interpreting the vision which arises out of his images of life.

This chapter devotes itself to the evaluation of Scott, comparing and contrasting him with some of his eminent predecessors.
and contemporaries. Also, it points out his contribution to contemporary fiction, especially to fiction of the historical kind.

Before proceeding to evaluating and highlighting his contribution, it is necessary to recapitulate the main argument of the thesis. Throughout the thesis it has been argued that Scott had his own idea of the novel as an art-form, which he laboriously practised in his novels. Scott held that the novel is the "most exacting form of literary composition there is."¹ In all seriousness, he believed that it is one of the literary forms like poetry and drama, having its own definite form and function. To differentiate himself from James, however, he states that the form of the novel is "far from precise."² Comparing the novel with painting and architecture, he further expounds that the novel as an art-form has a vision fundamentally. Also, he admits that it has no "conscious moral purpose" beyond its only function of communicating the author's personal view of life. Accordingly, he, with all the seriousness of a literary artist, practises it in novel after novel, trying to communicate his "private" vision of life. Though he began as a practising novelist with the conventional idea of the novel as Story in his early period, in the middle phase, he developed the idea of the novel as an Image, which he rigorously practised in A Male Child (1956).

and *The Mark of the Warrior* (1958); later he improved upon this idea of the novel and came to conceive of it as a metaphor, in the *Quartet* and *Staying On*. According to this idea of the novel as Art-form, a central significant symbol grows to the extent of filling the whole novel. The novels of the middle phase are analysed in order to interpret the inlaid symbols as well as to highlight all the significant images that hold the key to the meaning and form of the novel. It appears that Scott was not fully satisfied with the idea of the novel as a symbol. Therefore he developed it into a still more improved idea, viz an idea of the novel as a metaphor, in his last phase, which consists of *The Raj Quartet* (1976) and *Staying On* (1977). Keeping in view Allen's description of the novel as an "extended metaphor", Scott introduces the metaphor of the Raj, and extends it into a series of symbols, significant images, and metaphors. The metaphor of the Raj overwhelms all other aspects of the novel to such an extent that the novel itself becomes an Extended Metaphor for Scott's view of Man. *Staying On* (1977), the sequel of the *Quartet*, continues the metaphoric expression of the Raj and its symbolic overtones. The symbolism of the *Quartet* is continued in this novel with the same sort of significant meanings.

Thus, it is proved that Scott is not merely a "historical" but an "experimental" novelist who had his own idea of the novel as an art-form, which he practised with all the earnestness
of a literary artist, in order to communicate his "private" vision of life. Unlike the historical novelist of the past, he tries to explain the historic process and its inevitability of rise and fall through the metaphor of the Raj. In this sense, he is to be placed in the tradition of James, Conrad and Ford, and judged accordingly.

I. The Achievement of Paul Scott:

To properly assess Paul Scott's achievement as a novelist it is quite necessary to compare and contrast him with some of his eminent predecessors and contemporaries. As Scott belongs to a mixed tradition of Anglo-Indian and British, he should be compared with novelists of both the traditions. However, as Anglo-Indian literature is a part and parcel of British literature, no separate divisions need be made.

To begin with, Scott stands close to Henry James in his idea of the novel as an "image of reality". Though Scott does not have a systematic theory as such, he has a definite idea of the novel as an art-form. Scott stresses the intimate relationship between form and function, as James emphasised the relationship between 'idea' and 'form' and again between 'novel' and 'story'. Scott also believes in Story, but the story is not all for him. In his view, the action of the story is mainly to be rendered
in terms of images by a character from its point of view. For Scott, the function of the form is more important than the artistic perfection of the form of novel. Unlike James, Scott wants the form to serve the idea. Scott, in the Quartet and other novels, uses masterful symbols and metaphors, in addition to a multi-layered symbolism. In this respect, James could do little even in his later novels, The Golden Bowl and The Wings of the Dove. Thus, Scott appears to be more serious than James in putting his idea into practice. Scott took up the work abruptly abandoned by James. In the Quartet Scott's symbols and metaphors are meaningfully "extended" so elaborately as to expand it to an epic-length novel. In the practice of his art of fiction, Scott is more serious than James in "rigorously keeping his pictures within the limits of a frame, and choosing his centre of composition." In comparison to James's, Scott's symbolism is multi-layered, with a variety of metaphoric expressions of language. James certainly lacked Scott's elaborateness of epic style and grandeur of a great theme as seen in the Quartet.

Scott comes closer to Conrad than to James in his art of creating a "series of human images." Both Conrad and Scott speak of the aim of their art as being to make the reader hear, feel and see. Scott in the Quartet uses several narrators and

3. Henry James, "The Art of Fiction", op.cit., p. 64.
their multiple points of view to invest his giant metaphor of the Raj with density and verisimilitude. Scott has the "ability to create convincing pictures of men at work, subject to the strain of conflicting responsibilities."4 Scott adopts the narrator-character to render the action of the story in terms of vivid images, like Conrad, in the Quartet and other novels. Besides his "poetic" method of making a symbol or metaphor the heart of the novel, he uses Conrad's absurdistic devices of "delayed decoding" and also "dwarfing" - witness, for example, the revelation of Daphne's death by Lady Manners and Ahmed's hawking. Compared with Conrad's Nostromo, Scott's Quartet exhibits a far greater variety of narrative techniques - cinematic and theatrical. Both novelists concern themselves with the modern theme of alienation and moral corruption of the contemporary British society - Scott in India, Conrad, in the Congo. Having no philosophy as such, Scott and Conrad communicate the sad and gloomy vision of a lost Paradise. Scott's description of Pankot Valley and of the Himalayas, bears the 'naturalistic' marks of Conrad's description of Sulaco valley in Nostromo.

Scott's kinship with Ford Madox Ford is not only in respect of theoretical views about the novel as an art-form, but also in respect of the use of history in fiction. As Ford speaks

4. Patrick Swinden, Paul Scott. Images of India, op. cit., p. 6
of creating "mental reflections" of reality through the eyes of the character (i.e. Christopher Tietjens), Scott speaks of setting up "a series of human images". To obtain impersonality into their works of art, Scott and Ford used narrators and their shifting points of view. As observed by Scott, a significant image is the beginning of the creative process, as Ford sees it, from an analysis of the creative process of his art, a character is the beginning of the creative process. A "situation" is the centre of the novel (i.e. Hari's situation in Quartet) in Scott's view of the novel, an "affair" is central to the novel, according to Ford. Through the Quartet, Scott intends to communicate "a mora continuum of human affairs" and through Parades End, Ford offers an authentic and imaginative rendering of history during the wars. Unlike Ford, Scott is more serious about the practice of his idea of the novel as an art-form than about the interpretation of British-Indian history. Scott claims that he is "no scholar, nor a historian" but Ford wants to take his "really proud position as historian of his own time." Both novelists commonly share a sense of portraying "desperate human situations against the background of social, moral and political upheaval." Unlike Ford, the great master-craftsman of his times, Scott is essentially an artist in works.

Scott is also closer to Rudyard Kipling, an Anglo-Indian predecessor, in connection with the theme of British Raj in fiction. Scott, being his successor, concerns himself with the "closing years of British rule in India" in contrast to Kipling's portrayal of the heyday of the Raj in India. Both choose different periods of British-Indian history. Scott, in the Quartet, "laments the failure of the imperial ideals" whereas Kipling, in his masterpiece, Kim, captures a "sense of pride in British accomplishment, a faith in the success of the imperial purpose." Scott's notion of the marriage between India and England is "egalitarian", where the couple are equal and prone to divorce, in contrast to Kipling's concept of "imperial" marriage of East and West as unequal partners. Scott treats the death of the soldiers in the act of defending Raj as foolish, self-made victims of the imperial idea of paternalism, whereas Kipling eulogises the soldierly death as a matter of great honour and sacrifice. Scott's India is far more complex, consisting of diverse geographical, climatic, social, moral, religious, cultural and mythological aspects. Kipling's India, though poetic in the rare descriptions of the Himalayas, is essentially, in plan, far smaller and simpler.

Scott resembles E.M. Forster, his immediate Anglo-Indian predecessor, not only in his treatment of British Raj in the Quartet.
but also in his basic approach to the Novel. As against Forster's conventional idea of the Novel as Story, Scott is seen to have developed his own "poetic" idea, according to which he makes the Novel as "a series of images" of life. Scott, though he believes in story as one of the aspects of the Novel, emphasises his act of rendering the action of the story in terms of images, and as presented by a narrator or narrators. Forster defines the Novel as "a narrative of events arranged in their time-sequence" and presents it in a rather "dramatic" mode. Scott shares his penchant for symbolism commonly with Forster. Scott's symbolism in the Quartet is a multi-layered one - of settings and objects, of private and natural symbols, whereas Forster's is comparatively limited - e.g., wasps and the Malabar Caves in A Passage to India. Scott, of course, does not have a philosophy or prophecy to put forth through the Novel as Forster has. Scott's vision of the absurd state of Man is essentially that of an artist in words. To some extent Scott exhibits himself as a Jamesian and Forsterian. Scott, as he historically belongs to the last phase of the Raj's decline and fall, portrays and interprets the British-Indian relation through the metaphor of the "love-rape" incident involving Hari and Daphne, in more concrete terms than Forster's treatment of Adela Quested's hallucinatory experience of her rape by Dr Aziz.

in the Malabar Caves Calling himself a Post-Forsterian, Scott, however, differentiates his India from Forster's - "my India made me talkative, Forster's stunned him into silence." In sum, Scott's treatment of British-Indian history (i.e. Raj in the Quartet) is far more significant to us by reason of its choice of grand theme, use of great style and swelling out the narrative to epic length. Scott surpasses all his Anglo-Indian predecessors not only in the ambitious task of making a four-volume novel but also in the metaphoric treatment of history in fiction. Scott stands out as the last and greatest of the Anglo-Indian litterateurs. With him ends the literature of a century.

A comparison of Scott with L.H. Myers, another British novelist but less well-known who wrote about the India, seems imperative because of the common problem they faced in tackling the literary form of the Novel and their use of it as a vehicle for conveying their moral and psychological preoccupations. Scott makes use of Raj (i.e. Anglo-India) as a metaphor for his view of life. Myers used a remote period of the Moghul empire as a symbol for the expression mainly of his psychological and philosophical problems. He explores the possibilities of "a solution of Eastern and Western approaches to the problem of

14 "India A Post-Forsterian View", op. cit., p. 117
15 Ibid., p 118.
16 Ibid., p 120
Scott's multi-dimensional symbolism is more comprehensive than Myer's natural symbolism of the roots and the flowers. Scott tends to be an absurdist in his vision of life whereas Myers is an existentialist. Scott's treatment of history is really poetic and Myers lacked Scott's skilful use of a variety of Victorian and modern techniques.

Scott may also be compared with George Orwell, yet another British novelist who wrote about the colonial experience with irony and cynicism. Both novelists, having served the Raj, do share common feelings of disgust and indignation towards the oppressive British Raj - Scott in India and Orwell in Burma. Towards the Raj in its decline, Scott is mildly ironical rather than sympathetic, but Orwell has a "Swiftian bitterness and irony at the Raj's injustice." Scott bears "a disillusionment and sad resignation." In the Quartet, Scott portrays not only the moral degradation of the Raj but also its senility and death, but Orwell pictures the Raj only as "exploitative and suppressive." Scott's characters are physical and morally courageous in that, with "flaws" of their own, they yet try to "find meaning in extending themselves regardless of personal risk." On the contrary, Orwell's heroes are physically weak and cowardly.

19. Ibid., p. 102.
20. Ibid., p. 102.
21. Ibid., p. 102.
like Flory in *Burmese Days*. The elephant as a symbol used for the Raj by Orwell in "Shooting an Elephant" is small but significant in comparison with Scott's "extended" metaphors for the Raj and his use of various related symbols and images. With his skilful use of diverse Victorian and modern techniques in poetic form, Scott of course excels Orwell as a fictional chronicler of the Raj.

Among Scott's eminent contemporaries, there are two distinct groups - novelists who are not particular about the use of history and those who write 'historical' fiction. In the first group, we have Greene, Durrell and Allen, and in the second group, we have Caute, Berger, Johnson, Farrell and Fowles.

So far as the narrative modes are concerned, Scott comes very close to Graham Greene. Both novelists happen to have had similar sorts of experience of the beginning of the creative process while writing a novel. Scott frankly quotes the example of Greene's experience of beginning with a significant image while writing *A Burnt-Out Case* (1961), to justify his own similar experience. Scott uses symbols and metaphors more extensively than Greene. He uses a multi-layered symbolism of settings, places, objects and metaphors like the scorpion in the circle of fire in *the Quartet*. Greene uses mainly the metaphors, especially of roads, in his novels. Both writers create, in their novels, an imaginative verisimilitude.

22. The MS of the lecture, "The Form", op cit., p. 11
of 'real' events in their lives. As post-modernists they use "the traditional narrative with symbolism and also the modern cinematic technique." Both use the letters, journals, interviews and diaries predominantly in their poetic method. The only contrast is that while Scott does not have any kind of political commitment, Greene has. Scott is not a topical writer concerned with contemporary socio-economic problems, like Greene. It is noticeable that Scott's writings have "some stylistic similarities with Greene."  

As far as theme and structure of the Quartet are concerned, Scott stands closer to Lawrence Durrell, another contemporary novelist, known for his famous tetralogy, The Alexandria Quartet (1957-68). Both Scott and Durrell, in their novels, commonly deal with "the worlds that have ceased to exist." Scott's setting for his epic novel, The Raj Quartet, is India, Durrell's setting is Egypt. The narrative techniques of both novelists are similar. Both employ narrator-character or characters to get their stories told impersonally. In the Quartet, Scott introduces a "stranger" and other characters to unravel the knitting of stories, as Durrell sets Pursewarden, a pretentious novelist to quote "indifferent epigrams and some erudite philosophically barren observations." Scott does not use any "relativity-proposition" in writing the Quartet.

25. Max Beloff, op.cit., p. 66.
as Durrell does in his. Scott cuts his narrative breadthwise and lengthwise making an extensive use of symbols, metaphors, allusions to various myths and poems. As a result, Scott's Quartet is more poetic than Durrell's.

Scott's affiliation with Walter Allen's description of the novel as an "extended metaphor" is theoretical rather than thematic. Scott's maturest idea of the novel as a metaphor is akin to Allen's description of the genre - "an extended metaphor for the novelist's personal view of life."^{27} Scott is not a critic of fiction, as Allen is. But, though Allen has written a considerable number of novels, he is not taken seriously by critics. Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that both Scott and Allen think about the novel as an art-form on the same lines.

Likewise, a comparison of Scott with some of the contemporary novelists who made use of history in fiction is certainly necessary to know how Scott stands in relation to them. These novelists may be divided into two distinct groups - Marxists and non-Marxists. David Caute and John Berger are Marxists, B S.Johnson, J.G.Farrell and John Fowles are non-Marxists. Paul Scott falls in the latter category and comes closest to Farrell.

^{27} "India. A Post-Forsterian View", op. cit., p. 116.
Scott stands quite opposite to David Caute, a novelist historian and Marxist intellectual. In his approach to the historical novel, Scott is a "liberal humanist" who portrays the past of British Raj with its impact over the present, as manifested in the lives of individuals as well as nations, but there is no conscious effort on his part to penetrate into the historical process and inevitability of decline and fall, as Caute does in his novel, *The Decline of the West* (1966), set in Africa. As novelists of British history and of the British people, they observe widespread "sex, violence and atrocities" in the tumultuous society of racial and ethnic conflicts. However, Scott belongs to the "impressionistic" school of novelists, in contrast to Caute's "naturalistic" coterie. Being a liberal humanist, Scott delineates the historical deeds of common individuals rather than the great acts of historical personages like Gandhi, Nehru, Bose etc. In his method of making the novel a metaphor Scott is poetic unlike Caute.

Scott may also be compared with John Berger, another historical novelist of the Marxist school. Scott's liberal humanistic approach to the historical novel is entirely different from the Marxist approach of Berger who establishes a close relationship between the historical progress and the inevitability of an institution's

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fall. Of course, Scott's portrayal of the interaction between the "public" events and the events in the "private" life of individuals is quite similar to the method of Berger and Caute who "wish to relate the private and the public, and to show how History directs human lives and is directed by them." Scott's use of several characters to narrate the stories and to reveal, through that method, the impact of historic events is different from Berger's use of Giovanni, his central character, to narrate the important tracts of contemporary European history in his novel G. In Scott's *Quartet* there is no hero nor villain except the British Raj, unlike as in G, where Giovanni is the Don Juan-like hero. Scott does not predominantly use the Victorian narrative technique of 'authorial presence' as Berger does in the manner of Fielding, Thackeray and Meredith. The nature of Scott's fiction of history is metaphoric whereas Berger's, is realistic.

Scott is close to B.S. Johnson, a non-Marxist novelist, who conducted a terrible polemic against the "realistic" mode of fiction. Scott is inclined towards making the history of the Raj a metaphor for communicating his "private" view of life, whereas Johnson is interested in making "supreme fictions, fantasies and fabulation." Both Scott and Berger do share their common practice of the novel as a mimetic art. But, whereas Scott, like Conrad,

31. Ibid., p. 52.
uses the narrators and their points of view to render the action of stories in terms of images, Johnson reaffirms his belief in the age-old technique of "story-telling and keeping the reader interested in what happens next." Scott's Quartet embodies the impersonal narrative presented wholly from the points of view of the narrator characters, while Johnson's novel, See the Old Lady Decently (1975) is mainly a "personal" narrative interspersed with 'impersonal' narratives. Scott treats history obliquely with the understanding that it is not only the record of the events of nations but also the deeds of the ordinary people. Scott uses historical facts and the names of historical personages only as references within an accurate historical framework to enhance the density and reality of the narrative. Johnson makes his novel "a series of apparent guidebook extracts about famous places in British history" while, Scott's treatment of the closing years of British rule in India, has Tolstoyan breadth and depth of vision which Johnson lacks. As against Johnson's belated acquisition of interest in history in the writing of fiction, Scott was interested in history from the very beginning of his career as a novelist.

Scott, in his interpretation of British-Indian history in the Quartet is similar to J.G. Farrell's. Both Scott and Farrell passionately pursue the theme of the decline of the British people.

33. Ibid., p. 52.
but in different places - Scott, in India, Farrell, in Ire and, India and Singapore. Like Farrell, Scott has also demonstrated the possibility of "a conscious realism and of the use of history in fiction, two concepts which clearly converge and overlap." In his epic-length novel, Scott chooses the contemporary history of British rule - the decline in India and treats it metaphorically in contrast to Farrell's choice of the remote period of Incaan Mutiny and its realistic treatment in The Siege of Krishnapore (1973)

The treatment, by both, of a particular period of British-Indian history is similar in the sense that it is "off stage, preoccupational, the personal and the domestic." Scott seems to practise Farrell's idea of history "not in the abstract, but in its effect on individual human lives and with the extent to which it serves as a metaphor for the present." Though Scott's view of history, as his treatment of it in fiction are similar to Farrell's, there are obvious differences.

The last novelist with whom Scott may favourably be compared is John Fowles, a self-conscious experimenter with the form of the novel of history. Both Scott and Fowles, as postmodernists, are keen to explore the mystery of the creative process at work in the novel Scott quotes Fowles's personal experience of getting a significant image to serve as the real beginning of

34. Bernard Bergonzi, op.cit., p. 57.
35. Ibid., p. 58.
36. Ibid., p. 54.
a fictional work\textsuperscript{37}, while writing his famous novel, \textit{The French Lieutenant's Woman} (1969). Scott also admits that he has same kind of experience. Of such experience in general, Scott argues that a significant image often visits the novelist's mind persistently and compels him to write about it.\textsuperscript{38} In their experience of writing the initial chapters of a novel, Scott and Fowles do not have any difference of opinion. Like Scott, who attempts to probe into the nature of the creative process of a novelist at work through the persona of Edward Thornhill, a fictitious novelist in \textit{The Corrida at San Felu} (1964), Fowles also tackles the problem in his novel, \textit{The Collector} (1963). Both Scott and Fowles portray women as mysterious and enigmatic. Scott's \textit{Corrida} is not only experimental but also educative for those who would like to become novelists. In comparison with Scott's "world of rich and diverse characters"\textsuperscript{39} in the \textit{Quartet}, Fowles shows a poor knowledge of characters in his. Essentially both novelists are "experimental" in their approach to the fiction of history. Being more an inheritor of Jamesian techniques, Scott avoids using the Victorian technique of commenting on the action of the characters, which Fowles often adopts in his novels. Scott, exhibiting no extremes of fictional experimentation, stands as a better novelist than Fowles.

These comparisons indicate that Scott is a distinguished

\textsuperscript{37} The MS of the lecture, "The Form", op.cit., p 11
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., p. 13.
novelist having a "poetic" idea of the Novel and assiduously practising it with a view to articulate his "private" view of life. As a novelist he is unrivalled not only in forming a conception of the Novel as an art-form but also in giving a metaphoric interpretation of a particular period of history in fictional form - i.e. his use of Raj as a metaphor and its execution into the Quartet as an extended metaphor for his view of life. Both in virtue of his poetic idea of the Novel as an art-form and its serious practice and in his use of history as a metaphor in fiction, Scott's place as a historical fiction writer has been recognised as distinctive. By any critical standards, he is bound to be acknowledged as supreme in the contemporary fiction and he is in a class by himself. J.G. Farrell, pointing the greatness of the Quartet, says that it has "two great and time-resisting virtues - first, the extraordinary range of characters it so skilfully portrays and secondly, its powerful evocation of the last days of the British India, now quietly slipping away into history."  

It is needless to emphasise that Scott is in the mainstream of the "great" tradition of James, Conrad and Ford. He evidently has two marks of a major novelist, as pointed out by F.R. Leavis - one, he has an 'immense concern for the novel as an art-form' and, second, he has his own 'moral preoccupations'. At the same time

one finds him working in the tradition of liberalism. As a remarkable novelist of this century he has his own contributions to make to the theory of fiction as well as to the contemporary novel.

II. Paul Scott's Contributions:

The contributions of Paul Scott as a post-modernist fiction-writer, are two - one, to the theory of fiction, the other, to the contemporary novel. His contribution to the theory of fiction is as important as his contribution to the contemporary novel in general and to the Anglo-Indian fiction in particular.

a) Scott's contribution to the Theory of Fiction

Paul Scott's contribution to the theory of fiction is of unique importance. The theory of fiction is itself of recent origin. Henry James himself declared that the English novel before him had no theory.\(^41\) He obviously meant that the Victorian novelists, howsoever great they might be, had no theory of fiction as such. It is a fact that they had some stray thoughts as to what a novel is and what it should do. Henry Fielding, the early nineteenth century novelist, called his own novelistic genre "a comic epic in prose."\(^42\) In his 'novel of character', he effectively dealt with the "psychological process" of human behaviour, with his

\(^{41}\) Wimsat and Brooks, op.cit., p.680.
unavoidable "authorial presence". Jane Austen, his successor, working in the same tradition of "social novel" showed "a capacity for experience, a kind of reverent openness before 'life' and a marked moral intensity."\textsuperscript{43} George Eliot, the first of the Great Tradition, according to Dr. Leavis, had preoccupations regarding the form of the novel and its practice. For the first time, she tried to establish a "relation between her" "art" and "life" extending Fielding's philosophical tone and evincing the same kind of interest in the psychological process in portraying her characters. Meredith, not only adopted George Eliot's interest in "the mechanism of the psychological process"\textsuperscript{44}, but also became more interested than George Eliot in tracing the "subtle twists of heart' where in lies the comedy of sentiments."\textsuperscript{45} He renewed the technique of "dramatisation" of the action, having a penchant for parable and symbolic abstraction. Together they broke the conventions of both, form and matter.

Charles Dickens, the chief of the Victorians, concerned himself with portraying picturesquely a variety of social evils of the contemporary society on the broad canvas of his novels. He thought that in a novel "the accident is inseparable from the passion and action of the characters, where it is strictly consistent

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., p. 14.
\textsuperscript{45} Joseph Beach, The Twentieth Century Novel, op cit., p 35.
with the entire design and arises out of some calculation proceeding on the part of the individual which the whole story led up to?, it seems to me to become, as it were, an act of divine justice." Thackeray, in contrast to Dickens, set out to depict the follies and foibles of aristocratic people. Unlike Dickens, his approach to the subject of the novel was intellectual. He says, - 'The Art of the Novel is to represent Nature, to convey as strongly as possible the sentiment of reality."

All the Victorian novelists aimed at telling a story—quite a long story—interspersed with anecdotes, with a moral purpose, intruding their "authorial presence" throughout their novels. They developed two techniques of the predecessors, viz., "psychological insights" and "dramatisation" of the action of the story.

Henry James, an American novelist, started a movement against the Victorian novelists and propounded his own theory of the Novel as an organic and impersonal art-form and that its potentialities needed to be explored. He originated the device of using a character and his or her point of view to present the story impersonally. Borrowing the elements of symmetry, coherence, completeness and harmony from fields of architecture, music and

47. Ibid., p. 67.
geometry; James aimed at achieving the "highest perfection and rearest form" in the novel. He also believed that the story is the essential part of the Novel and made it illustrative of his "idea" of the novel. James's method of dramatising the action of the story is called "subjective" drama. Besides this, he used images and symbols to enrich the meaning and depth of the subject matter in his last novels. Conrad also threw his weight behind James's theoretical view and formulated his own art of presenting the novel in terms of vivid "images". As Conrad puts it, his task, as a novelist is to make his reader hear, feel and see. He evolved his own devices of using several narrators and their shifting points of view, "delayed decoding" and "dwarfing". Furthermore, he increased the significance of using symbols in the form of the novel. Ford, their collaborator in theorising about the novel, termed his method of creating "mental reflections" as "impressionism". He also used a narrator as the pivot, making "an affair" to be the vital part of the novel and using a narrator through whose eyes he presented his "impressions" of reality, not his own. Besides his own method of impressionism, he also used other devices, like "intensification" and "ironic distance." Unlike James's and Conrad's, Ford's main interest was to depict the

49. J W Beach , op. cit., p. 179.
50. Quoted by Cedrick Watts, op. cit., p. 112.
51. Quoted by Cedrick Watts, op.cit., p.112.
historical events of world war through the fictional form. His techniques are often called "craft-devices", not "art-devices". So he is known as the great craftsman of twentieth-century fiction.

Rooted in the theoretical tradition of James, Conrad and Ford, Scott too concerned himself seriously with the novel as an art-form, and felt that its potentialities are necessarily to be explored. Of all the literary forms, he found the novel as "the most exacting form of literary composition." He asserted that the novel as an art-form, has its own definite form and function, though the form may be "far from precise." Comparing it with a work of architecture, Scott points out that the novel has fundamentally a vision. In his view, the form and function of the novel "are or should inseparable." As a critic of the novel, he divides the form of the novel into three types - outer, inner and communicative. To justify his idea of the outer layer of form, he quotes Bernard Bergonzi's words - "a small, hard rectangular object." The inner form is made up of images, subsequent images and connected images. The communicative form is "a formless undefinable area of consciousness" created by the novelist between himself and the reader. Scott also points out the limitations of the language as it is used by the novelist. He poetically conceives the novel as an

52 Contemporary Authors, op. cit., p 1271
53. "The Form", op. cit., p. 8
"image of reality". In addition to this main poetic method, he also makes use of the conventional techniques of characterisation, plot-structure and "points of view" as "playful tricks" in order to persuade the reader about the density and reality of the image of the particular aspect of human reality. With his idea of the novel as "an image" in and by itself, he makes a new break-through in the very theory of the novel. The novelists behind him, from James to Lawrence, had used symbolism only as an added dimension to the main aspects of the novel as Story, but never attempted to make the symbolism the warp and woof of the novel. According to Scott, all the conventional aspects, including the story, merge themselves into the central significant symbol or metaphor, which stands by itself as the novel. As we have noticed, the centre of a Scott's novel is an image or symbol or metaphor, but not the story. By virtue of his unique idea of the novel and his practice, he places himself amid the great masters of literature, like Shakespeare who shaped a whole into the form of a symbol or complex of related symbols for conveying its theme or experience of the particular aspect of reality.

Scott's views on the art of the Novel are at once those of a literary artist as well as of a craftsman. In his theoretical approach to the novel as an art-form he is not guilty of the Jamesian

55. Ibid., p. 21.
excesses of incorporating elements of other fields like music, architecture, sculpture and geometry into the literary form of the novel. Because of his greater emphasis on the function of the novel than its form, he is said to be an artist who practised art not for art's sake but for life's sake. Like James, he does not think that the novel has any "conscious moral purpose" except its only function of communicating the novelist's view of life. Though he normally adopts the Jamesian principles of organic and impersonal art, he seldom forgets that the novel is basically an artefact made by the novelist for the purpose of expressing his personal experience of life. Scott thinks of the novel not only in terms of aesthetic pleasure but also in terms of its use for the society in general. In his opinion, the novelist is not a mere story-teller but a literary artist who has a vision of life to convey through the literary medium of the novel. His very conception of the novel as an image or symbol or metaphor as a vehicle for the novelist to communicate his view of life is a rare strand in the theory of English fiction. Such making of the form into a symbol, was previously done only by a great playwright like Shakespeare. There are no examples in contemporary English fiction other than Paul Scott's.

56. Henry James, op. cit., p. 55.
b) Scott's Contribution to the Contemporary Novel

The contemporary novel came into existence from 1940 onwards, soon after the prediction of some critics about the death of the Novel stood falsified. A group of young novelists reacted against the novel as practised by Joyce and Woolf and went back to the Victorians for resurrecting the "social novel" in England. These were Amis, Braine, Wain and Alan Sillitoe who aimed at recreating the contemporary "social reality" especially the life of the lower-middle class working people. Later, C P Snow, Anthony Powell, Angus Wilson, and others sought to reinstate the 'realism' and the social novel.57 The novel after 1950 splits itself into various genres - sociological, historical, philosophical and "experimental". The novelists, some writing in more than two traditions, remain unclassified. Another distinct feature of this period was the rise of women novelists

Paul Scott belongs to the "historical" class of novelists, who revived traditional historical novel in a new mode by their experimentation and innovation into the form of the Novel. They are Caute, Berger, Johnson, Farrell and Fowles. Of these, however, Bergonzi brackets Paul Scott and Olivia Manning together as being the novelists who adopted "other ways bringing a sense of history

57 Bernard Bergonzi, op. cit., p. 9.
to fiction." It is evident that he distinguishes these two from other contemporary novelists.

Scott's contribution to the contemporary novel lies in this particular field of what Bergonzzi calls "fictions of history." It is yet to be researched whether Scott had any idea of history, resembling that of the Marxists, who claim that there is a relationship between "the cause of progress and the historical inevitability," In the context of the Quartet, Scott quotes Emerson's philosophical idea of history - "If the whole history is one man, it is all to be explained from individual experience. There is a relation between the hours of our life and the centuries of time." (RQ-TS, p. 68). No doubt, Scott's idea of the history and its treatment in fiction is quite similar to that of Farrell's whose concern with "history" is not in the abstract, but in its effect on individual human lives, and to the extent to which it serves as a metaphor for the present." Unlike Farrell's use of the Majestic Hotel as a symbol socio-economic degradation of British people in his novel Trouble, Scott uses extensive symbolism with the giant metaphor of the Raj at the centre of the Quartet. Although he makes use of historical personages and events he uses as mere "references" to the "private" history of representative individuals during a tumultuous period of history. By fitting his fiction

60. Ibid., p. 58.
in an accurate historical framework (1942-1947), he enriches the density and reality of the metaphoric representation of history. As a literary artist, he earnestly metaphorises history as a web in which 'foolish' individuals get caught and suffer from madness, nausea and death. He uses the metaphor of the christening shawl of butterlies for his idea of history of Raj's decline as a web. In the ultimate analysis, Scott uses history as a metaphor for his vision of suffering humanity in its imprisoned existence. Thus by using a period of history as a concrete metaphor for his "Absurdist" view of life, Scott elevates himself as a novelist of "historical" fiction to a higher position of his kind. This is what traditional historical novelists like Walter Scott and Tolstoy had never dreamt of. In his choice of the great theme of the British empire and its metaphoric treatment, Scott undoubtedly occupies the position of a major novelist of "fictions of history".

In the light of our interpretation of Scott's idea and practice of the Novel as an Art-form, he ceases to be a historical novelist in the old sense of the term, say like Walter Scott and Tolstoy. He is working in the mainstream of the "great tradition" of English fiction. He is a historical novelist with a difference, because, as we have noted, he evolved his own "poetic" idea of the novel and practised it to impart his "private" vision of life.

His poetic idea is based on his preoccupation with the novel as an art-form, and his obsessive zeal to explore its potentialities to the fullest extent. Certainly he evinces the Jamesian seriousness about the novel as an art-form and as acute consciousness about making it into a fine "work of art." He is, however, free from the Jamesian extremist weakness of bringing in the elements of geometry into the novel. He regards the novel as an imaginative vehicle for the artistic expression of his vision. Besides allowing himself the luxury of the aesthetic appeal of the novel as an art-form, he has the aim of expressing it. He is also aware of its aspect of "usefulness" for himself and the society. He is a self-conscious literary artist who is interested genuinely in practicing the novel as an art-form, like a painter or an architect or a sculptor. Writing a novel, for him, is like writing a poem, or painting a picture or building a mansion. Like these fine artists, he too, has a vision to communicate it through the artistic form of the novel. As a novelist, his vision and its communication through the medium of the novel, are both of the highest importance. Fundamentally, his idea and practice of the novel as an art-form is that of a literary artist. His numerous devices belong more to the realm of art than of craft.

Paul Scott's idea and practice of making a novel into an image or symbol or a metaphor to embody his experience of a particular aspect of "human reality" in each of his novels, has been
the rarest phenomenon in contemporary fiction. In the seventeenth century, it has successfully been done by a great dramatist like Shakespeare whose last drama "The Tempest" stands into a perfect metaphor for his perception of a truth about life. John Donne's poem "The Flea" is an image made into a poem to convey the union of eternal lovers. In twentieth century, T.S. Eliot did the same in *The Waste Land* and called it the "objective correlative" for his experience of moral degradation and spiritual vacuum of post-war generation of Western civilisation. Scott's greatness, as a novelist, lies not merely in his "poetic" conception of the novel but in his tremendous capacity to make the *Quartet* an "extended metaphor" interspersed with cognate images, symbols and metaphors, to stand for his vision of mankind. Such practice of making a novel into a symbol has not been attempted by any other contemporary novelist. There are examples in European and American literature - of course of William Faulkner, Earnest Hemingway, Franz Kafka, Thomas Mann etc but in British fiction, none to be sure. The *Quartet* is "a classic"² like *The Iliad, Ulysses, Moby Dick, The Old Man and Sea* etc. In the words of John Leonard, he is certainly a "genius"³ of fictional art in the twentieth century.

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² Dr. Weinbaum's unpublished thesis, op. cit.
³ Peter Green, "The Lost Jewel", *Spectator*, (23 July 197), p 28