CHAPTER VII

THE SETTING
Well, it is a vast country; easy to get lost in. And again the sense of immensity (of weight and flatness, and absence of orientating features) blankets the mind with an idea of scope so limitless that it is deadening. Here, on the ground, nothing is likely, everything possible. Only from the air can one trace what looks like a pattern, a design, an abortive, human intention.

—Paul Scott

Setting in a novel may be defined as the backdrop (geographical location, historical moment, and general cultural environment) against which the action of the novel takes place. Like the background in a painting or a photograph, setting is unobtrusive and yet it is one of the essential ingredients in a novel. A novel must take place somewhere and at a particular time. The primary purpose of setting is to render fictional scenes vivid (that is visualizeable) and clear and thus permit the reader feel the world in which the characters are living. The more the reader can visualize in a narrative the more fully he may be able to participate in the story.

Paul Scott's locale is India; the India of transition from the Raj to independence— the country passing through some of its most critical moments of change in history. In Paul Scott particularly the milieu and the story are most integrally tied up together. India, during the
sunset of the British empire is the heart of the matter. In fact it is the history of India unfolding itself in fiction - the undivided India partitioned as the empire falls. India is a helpless protagonist as it were, a helpless prey to history. India's history, like any history, is India's destiny. What the novelist does is to reconstruct most vividly a world in turmoil, at the end of an era facing some vast unknown.

The nexus of history and geography gives Paul Scott's work its specific dimension of reality. Paul Scott has pinned down the stories on a particular map. In his novels Paul Scott shows his first hand experience of India.

The Indian locale is inexplicably interwoven with the personal experiences of the author who might have observed and stayed at several places. This he could achieve because he came to India many times with open mind and receptive heart. The writer's vision is developed with the help of the setting.

Paul Scott portrays the normal background of the time - the condition of India. Even with a cursory reading of his novels with Indian setting one recognises the moment of time. Except Satving On all of them are dated between 1940 and 1947. The location of most of Paul
Scott's novels is India. The location of *The Chinese Love Pavilion* is Malaya and that of *Corrida* is Spain, though their parts have also been set in India. England is the setting of *The Bender* and *A Male Child*. Leaving these novels alone, one finds that the setting of all the other novels is Indian. It is no exaggeration to say that India looms large in the mind of the novelist. India has cast some inescapable spell on him.

There is authenticity of the raw material used by Paul Scott. To construct Indian setting, the cities, cantonments, civil lines, Anglo Indian clubs, officers' messes, Guest houses, railway trains, hospitals streets and its people in 1940s are all most authentically portrayed; which shows Paul Scott's most intimate relationship with India.

Paul Scott's novels are bound up with the setting where day to day experiences take place. The particular circumstances in which the characters operate could be only in India of a particular given time. The question is: what happened in India from 1940 to 1947 and who were the persons in that drama?

Generally fiction is feigning its external garb, but in case of Paul Scott it does not even seem to be so. Here time, place and events have all an integral unity.
In the setting of the novels almost all historical novelists have selected historical or real places with history attached. In Sir Walter Scott's novels London and other real places provide setting for action. Tolstoy depicts Moscow and Petrograd while Balzac chooses Paris for the locale of his novels. Instead of unfolding his story against a realistic background including the real places, Paul Scott largely gives fictitious names to places and even persons so that he could create with greater artistic freedom. He attempts to filter geography and history through the mould of fiction as it were. The names of the places and their description are typically Indian. Mayapore, Marapore, Dibrapur, Pankot, Mirat and Rampur sound Indian, but nowhere to be located in the map of India.

Pankot, a hill station, has similarities with Simla, Darjeeling and Nainital. The description of these cities is generalized and it can be made applicable to many of the Indian cities. Mayapore can be any district town on the banks of a river. Rampur can be Lucknow, Kanpur etc. These cities in the novels of Paul Scott have the characteristics of typical Indian cities divided into two parts - one the old one and the other in most of the cases across the river - the new one having a planned development with clean and wide roads in a complete contrast to the narrow dirty streets of the old part. There are glimpses of Bombay and Calcutta.
also in *The Raj Quartet*. These mythical place names in consonance with the imaginary characters are to Paul Scott a very vital part of his fictional strategy. After all he is a novelist and not a historian. History is his raw material out of which he attempts to mould historical fiction, and what could be more congenial to the freedom of his vision as an artist than such a blurring of the line of demarcation between history and fiction, the real and the imaginary - even the blending of the two? What is irrevocable is the span of time chosen by the novelist.

*The Raj Quartet* is a classic example, as it has a wide panorama with contrasts of classes, races and backdrops. The main action of *The Raj Quartet* takes place at Mayapore, Rampur, Pankot and Mirat. These places are peopled by Indians as well as Englishmen. They are imaginary places and the time is between 1940 and 1947; the most disturbing decade in the history of the subcontinent. The canvas has a large scale.

In *The Jewel in the Crown* the scene opens at Mayapore and it stays put there throughout. There we see much of Miss Crane, Lady Chatterjee, Sister Ludmila Smith, Mr. Rabin White the Collector, Mr. Merrick the DSP and Mr. Harikumar the British educated boy fallen on evil days. It is mini-India of the forties. The every first line of *The Jewel in the Crown* calls the reader to "imagine then, a flat
landscape dark for the moment." As the reader proceeds to ahead, he has not imagine, as the writer helps the reader to see 'landscape' as well as 'the moment in time'. To describe the place Mayapore Paul Scott follows his characters. As in a landscape painting, the background looms large. Places and people are integrally linked up together and the places provide the structuring of their life.

Like a jewel in an ornament the characters are seen in their settings. Sister Ludmila Smith is shown transacting her business in the Imperial Bank. The writer begins like the story tellers of yore. "In those days (1942), on every Wednesday morning, Sister Ludmila set out on foot from the cluster of old buildings". (1)

After transacting her business at the bank she walks back home:

Sister Ludmila's journey back to the Sanctuary took her through Eurasian-quarter, past the church of the mission, over the level crossing for which... she sometimes had to wait to be opened before she could continue across the crowded Mandir Gate bridge.... Beyond the temple the road forks into two narrower roads. At the apex a holy tree shelters a shrine, ruminant cows, old men, and women with their fingers held to their nostrils. At the head of the road that forks to the right towards the jail the Majestic Cinema announces an epic from the Ramanaya (now, as then). The left

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of Sister Ludmila Smith. She leads the reader to her abode:

Within the compound there are three squat single-story buildings, relics of early nineteenth century, once derelict but patched up, distempered white, calm, silent, stark, functional, and accompanied (these days) by a fourth building of modern design. This was the Sanctuary. (4)

After this the reader is lost in the person who had founded the institution - Sister Ludmila Smith.

Like most of the historical novelists Paul Scott, too, tends to construct unfamiliar setting that fascinates the reader. Englishman in India lived in cantonments and civil lines - areas clearly separated, even segregated from the rest of the population, lest they should be contaminated. There, they maintained an inbred little cultural circle abroad in a colony.

Like E.M. Forster, Paul Scott with the help of the setting of the various places, introduces the political theme. The division between the British rulers and native subjects is brought home with great clarity by the physical separation of the dirty Indian section of Mayapore from the clean and orderly civil station and cantonment across the river where the Europeans live. The character of the two communities is skilfully suggested in the topography and structure of their respective residential areas which have nothing in common.

In The Jewel in the Crown the setting of the Bibighar

4 The Jewel in the Crown, p.128.
Garden with its chequered history is shown to the reader. It is very much felt and it impinges the action as well as the characters of the novel. It is dramatic. The writer remarks about it: "Bibighar is not an end in itself or descriptive of a case that can be opened . . . on such and such a day".\(^5\) The atmosphere of the garden is full of darkness which holds dangerous dimensions.

In the Bibighar case a concordance of mood and scene is vividly felt. The place and the hour are not designed to make the novel sensational, but it is the logical outcome of the situation. Some manipulation of mood and circumstance there certainly is, but there is no law which says that a creative artist shall not manipulate his material.

The perceptible Indian milieu with its sights and sounds springs up when the narrator reaches the temple. From the nearby restaurant "a popular song of Celluloid civilization"\(^6\) is heard. Cows move around. He shows an English writer moving around with some Indians. As soon as they step out of the car they are pestered by beggars. Inside the temple compound "there are people walking, people praying and people sitting on the ground who seem to be gossiping. . . . there is a bitter-sweet smell in the air."\(^7\) He visits the places where the main events of the story might have taken place. He describes the places in detail. It can be

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5 *The Jewel in the Crown*, p. 133.
6 Ibid., p. 205.
7 Ibid., p. 206.
taken as a guide book for his town Mayapore - its roads, church, DC's bungalow, artillary mess, Mayapore general hospital, club road, mission school, Mandir Gate Bridge Road, Court House, Police barracks, Cantonment Bazaar, Victoria Road and a host of other places.

In the same novel while describing Kumar's lineage the writer describes at length the details of the marriage of Duleep Kumar. That gives the reader some idea how marriages (arranged by parents with the help of astrologers) are performed in India. The household of Duleep Kumar is a typical Indian household. It is a joint family, where the father is the head of the family, where money has more esteem than learning. In the end the oldman of the house takes sanyas and the property is divided among the four sons. Sanyas may not be common in modern India but joint families even today stay put till the death of the head of the family.

In India people have ragas for morning, evening and seasons. The writer shows Parvati singing:

Dooliya le aō re more babul ke kharwa.  
Chali noon sajan ba ke des.

(Oh my father's servants, bring my palanquin.  
I am going to the land of my husband).

(a morning raga)

The same raga is sung by the ladies when the bride is

8 The Jewel in the Crown, p.480.
being taken out of her father's house at the time of Duleep Kumar's marriage.\(^{(9)}\)

The visit of Daphne Manners and Hari Kumar to the temple is used to show how Indians venerate their gods and how they worship in the temples. Kumar and Manners feel themselves as "trespassers" - though they are agnostics, the scene is truly typical of an Indian temple. It is all this and more. The opulence of detail indicates Paul Scott's devouring eye and faculty of assimilating local colour. Take a small observation of the description of the temple:

Around the walls of the courtyard there were the shrines of various aspects of the Hindu gods.\(^{(10)}\)

Lord Venkatashwara, the god of the temple, is a manifestation of Vishnu. ... Nearby there was a shed and platform where the temple barbers worked, and where devotees gave their hair to the god.\(^{(11)}\)

The description of MacGregor House gives the picture and smell of a south Indian house garden with the sensitivity of a poet:

There is the image of a garden: ... the garden of the MacGregor House: intense sunlight, deep and complex shadows. The range of green is extraordinary, palest lime, bitter emerald, mid-tones, neutral tints. The textures of the leaves are many and varied, they communicate themselves through sight of imaginary touch, exciting the finger-tips: leaves coming into the tenderest flesh, superbly in their prime, crisping to old age; all this at the same season because there is no autumn. In the shadows there are dark blue veils, the indigo dreams of plants fallen asleep, and odours of sweet and necessary decay, numerous places layered with the cast-off fruit of other years.

\(^9\) The Jewel in the Crown, p. 224.
\(^{10}\) Ibid., p. 420.
\(^{11}\) Ibid., p. 422.
softened into compost, feeding the living roots.\(^{(12)}\)

The Quit India movement, in spite of all its moral basis as the final freedom struggle, launched under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, had its own lapses. The rape of Daphne Manners and the attack on Miss Crane, against the background of widespread violence, create private misgivings in the minds of Englishmen in India, besides raising the problem of ends and means.

Miss Crane, the mission school superintendent, goes to Dibrapur on an inspection tour of a school. In the morning of 10th August 1942, she is informed by the school teacher of the disturbed conditions after the arrest of the Mahatma and the working committee of Congress party. She finds the telephone lines snapped. Still she undertakes the journey in her car with Mr. Chaudhari, the school teacher, as her escort. On their way they find rioters "spread out across the road". She cannot run over the crowd. The rioters drag Mr. Chaudhari out, taking him as a traitor, they belabour him. Miss Crane though let off by the crowd returns to rescue her Indian companion. But she too is assaulted. The moment the news of this incident spreads in the district headquarter, the English lose their sense of

\[\text{12 \textit{The Jewel in the Crown}, p.74.}\]
proportion. Here we see human behaviour in a typical imperial steel-frame. The happenings, the upheaval of Quit India movement cast a shadow on the "people" in The Raj Quartet. The two tendencies - public menace and private doubts are fused by Paul Scott into a Wagnerian atmosphere. Through the Journal of Brigadier Reid, Robin White the Collector and Vidyasagar - an underground political activist - the writer makes the reader feel the din of the civil disturbances that broke out on August 9, 10, 11, 1942.

The atmosphere of racial antagonism between the White people and the natives is revealed through the love of Hari Kumar and Manners and the subsequent unjust arrest and detention of Hari Kumar and its reaction upon the white people.

In the second novel of The Raj Quartet, The Day of the Scorpion the scene shifts from Mayapore to Ranpur the provincial capital. There are some glimpses of Premnagar Fort (maybe the writer had Ahmednagar Fort in mind while writing about Premnagar). The thread of the time is picked from Quit India. Some of the important characters visit Pankot and Mirat. Mirat gives a glimpse of princely India. The Nawab of Mirat, his palaces, his prime minister and his guest house remain the glory of the princes. As the Nawab
is a Muslim, the Muslim festivals and customs loom large on the background. When Merrick - the policeman of the Bibighar fame as the bestman of Teddy Bingham - drives through Mirat, a stone is thrown at him which hits Teddy Bingham. This reminds us the hit and run tactics of the underground leaders of 1942 Quit India Movement. Kumar's interrogation throws light on the work of the police and the administration.

Pankot has a special place in the novels of Paul Scott. Its setting forms the background of The Day of The Scorpion, The Towers of Silence, A Division of Spoils and Staying On. The descriptions of the place are photographic. It has some similarities with Simla:

Pankot was a place to let off steam in. It was thoroughly English. The air was crisp, the trees coniferous. India, real India, lay below. To the north - defining the meeting point of heaven and earth, distantly, was the impressively jagged line of the Himalaya (usually invisible behind the cloud, but occasionally revealed, like the word of God). (13)

The theme of fission and fusion; of separateness and of desired union is reflected in the setting of Pankot. The gap between the Indian and the English localities of Pankot, Mirat and Mayapore is obvious.

In The Towers of Silence the scene is Pankot.

And the focus is on the sahibs. It is a hill station and the summer capital of the province. It is a true picture of a cantonment. The activities revolve round the Mess, the club, parties and tennis. Incidents overlap *The Jewel in the Crown* and *The Day of Scorpion*. After some time the scene shifts to NEFA, the background of INA is explored through sheer class-room method.

The Brigade Intelligence Officer, Mr. Merrick - formerly the DSP of Mayapore - delivers an exhaustive discourse on INA. Again the scene shifts back to Pankot where the focus is reflected on the memsahibs and officers of the Pankot Rifles and a retired missionary Barbie Batchelor. Most of the characters are connected with the army, except Barbie Batchelor, who stays with Mabel Layton. Mabel Layton's stepson is a colonel but at present he is a POW in Germany. His wife Mildred Layton is seen moving in clubs and parties. She indulges in adultery - the pastime of hill stations during the Raj. Life at Pankot in *The Raj Quartet* and *Staying On* is an exact picture of provincial life in an upcountry station.

Social life of Pankot is explored with the help of social events - marriage, birth and death. After the marriage of Susan, a party is held in the Officers' Mess. Paul Scott describes a typical mess of the British officers which was decorated with silver wares donated
by British officers to commemorate happy occasion in their families.

When Teddy dies in the War, the hill station organises a service in the church. After some days Mabel Layton dies suddenly and again they gather in the church. Susan's sickness takes us to the local hospital. In this novel Paul Scott offers us a clear and accurate picture of the condition under which the English lived in a place like Pankot. The novel closes with a definite mark of time on the last page with a letter from M.A. Kasim, the former Congress Chief Minister of the province, to M.K. Gandhi.

I find myself uncertain which of the two recent events—the election of a social government in London and the destruction of Hiroshima by a single atomic bomb—will have the profounder effect on India's future. (14)

This "appendix" brings the reader back to the movement of time that is picked in the next novel _A Division of the Spoils_.

_A Division of the Spoils_ is a political and historical novel. It has a definite stamp of place, time and action. It begins at Bombay and the date is 1945. The British forces are shown preparing to recover their lost glory by planning Operation Zipper. Sights, sounds and smells of Bombay are very much felt on the pages of this novel. Despite sympathetic description of the

14 _The Towers of Silence_, p. 397.
scenic beauty of the country, one finds in the works of Paul Scott pictures of the filth and squalor of India also:

The smell on the night breeze blowing in from the Bombay foreshore which Perron was convinced was used as a lavatory. (15)

Thus Paul Scott shows that for him India was not the majestic romantic adventurous place as it was found by Kipling.

The overall set of characters continues from the earlier novels. Merrick is there to interrogate the POWs of the INA. Sarah is there to receive her father. Purvis and Perron - the first is a socialist economist and the second a student of history - are there in the army. They play the role of chorus on the events of history and actions of other characters. From Bombay the characters move to Ranpur, Pankot and Mirat. The train journey not only shows "uneasy distances" but also the landscape of rocky land around Mirat. It helps the author to show rural India:

The huddles of mud villages; buffalo wallowing in celebration of their survival from the primeval slime; men, women and children engaged in the fatal ritual of pre-ordained work.

Only the slow train stops at the wayside stations. On their single platforms people wait with bundles and a patience that has something exalted about it, although this impression could

15 A Division of the Spoils, (Heinemann, 1975), p.34.
be the result of the express passing through too quickly for individual faces to be clearly noted. ...

Everything is immense, but - lacking harmony or contrast - is diminished by its association with infinity. (16)

The sweep of the novel is very wide. The social events have a special stamp on the novel. Communal killings take place. Merrick is murdered. So is the fate of Ahmed Kasim. Many conferences at Delhi, Simla and London are held. News cartoons become a medium of history. Halki, the cartoonist records the main events of the era in his cartoons. The cartoons cover the visit of Cabinet Mission, Naval Mutiny, INA trials, Interim Government, Elections to the Constituent Assembly, activities of Indian leaders, Mountbatten, the integration of states and last of all the partition of the subcontinent.

India emerges of these situations, characters and crises in human relations as the greatest protagonist and this image dominates the reader's mind.

India in the novels of Paul Scott is vast great, grey but not "formless" to borrow Kipping's words. Paul Scott's vision of India is different from that of Kipping and Forster. There may be disturbances, but it is not a vision of chaos. Paul Scott does not consider India as a muddle or a mystery. It is a land like other lands but a bit dirty and undeveloped with

16 A Division of the Spoils, p.111.
a vast, rural population full of poverty and unemployment, that is the image of India of Paul Scott.

All foreigners complain that Indians do not keep their surroundings clean particularly Rutty Prewar Jhabvala finds India "very very poor and very very dirty". Even Mahatma Gandhi complained that Indians had not learned the western ways of sanitation and public hygiene. In the novels of Paul Scott the readers feel the smell emitting from the surroundings described by him. He describes the place Mayapore - a representative place with its narrow dirty streets, its disgusting poverty, its raucous dissonant music, its verminous dogs, its starving, mutilated beggars, its fat white sacred Brahmini bulls and its ragged population of men and women.(17)

In one of the provincial capitals the "smell of animal and human odour and human sweat was overpowering and it was full of squalor". In the description of Indian cities we almost smell dirt.

He finds that even gardens are used for defecating by poor people. We all know that our rivers and seashores near our towns are used as open-air latrines. So there is always "the smell of night-soil near the rivers and the seashore." Paul Scott is utterly disgusted with the public hygiene of the Indian people.

17 The Jewel in the Crown, p.18.
Indian cities are inhabited by the middle class people and Kumar is one young Indian among countless others who could never expect to achieve any kind of position of authority; youngmen doomed, it seemed, to spend their lives as members of a literate but obscure and powerless middleclass, thankful for jobs as ill-paid clerks in shops and offices and banks. (18)

Bazaars of these cities are a nightmare with "buses, cyclists, hooting taxies, overladen trucks, horse drawn doolies and jaywalking pedestrians and carts". The life in big cities like Bombay and Calcutta is so horrible that "these cities never sleep".

Paul Scotts feels that if a person from England who knows a bit about farming looks at India generally thinks that he is "back in the middle ages. To some extent there is truth in the statement.

Maypore, Ranpur, Pankot and other places in the novels of Paul Scott have their distinctive colours, textures, weathers and physical contours. Pankot is again the setting of his last novel. But this Pankot is post-independence Pankot. Englishmen are gone except the Smalleys. Other changes in the setting are described by Lucy Smalley in her letter to Sarah:

We, as you see, are back at Smith's Hotel... There is now a new and very smart hotel next door called Shiraz. Unfortunately it does rather loom over our own compound. The bazzar is much

18 A Division of the Spoils, p.293.
the same, although there are some rather smart new shops. Ghulab Singhs and Jalal-ud-Dins you will remember. The New Electric Cinema has been smartened up... we are really... cosmopolitan and getting more modern every day. (19)

As the date of the novel is 1972, Pankot of Staying On is a bit different from the Pankot of the Raj. The first thing to mark the change is that now it is connected by air with the nearby provincial capital. This has made the station more "attractive".

The white sahibs and memsahibs have gone leaving their servants like Ibrahim to remember them with a nostalgia. (20) Absence of the Raj is also felt at Mrs. Williams the ladies' hair dresser which tells something more:

When most of the English women had gone home and Pankot gradually filled with Indian wives who washed and dressed their own hair, never had it cut, and many of whom still seemed almost to be in purdah, so shy and retiring were they. (21)

Among the Indian festivals Holi is the most boisterous, it comes with spring. Paul Scott describes it:

Before Easter there was Holi, the Spring fertility festival of the Hindus whose lower classes spent the day roaming the bazaar and throwing colour powder over one another. Sometimes they squirted coloured water although this was supposed to be illegal because it ruined their clothes and they were poor people.

At Holi, the well-off usually stayed indoors to avoid getting spattered by gangs of merrymakers. Some of them had friends in and played token holi

20 Ibid., p.30.
21 Ibid., p.206.
in their gardens like the Manektaras. (22)

The setting of the novel is Smith's Hotel Pankot, owned by Mrs. Lila Bhoolabhoy. In the annexe of the hotel stay Tuskar and his wife. They have stayed on with their memories of colonial Pankot. The Anglo-Indian milieu would be incomplete without their native servants. In the earlier novels, Mehamood, Minnie and few others served their white masters. Their prototype is Ibrahim, the personal servant of the Smalleys. He is truly Indian and speaks pidgin English. This may be taken as a parody of Indian English. (23) In a flash back Mrs. Lucy Smalley remembers the midnight of August 14, 1947 the final retreat of the British forces marching past the Union Jack on the drum beating of, "Abide With Me." She also remembers the union Jack coming down, the Indian tricolour going up and Indian soldiers marching past it. (24)

Jonnie Sahib is a good documentary on the newly introduced air transport RAASC and RAMC in NEFA and Assam jungles in the second World War. Its setting is the jungles of Assam and the characters are a few British officers and Indian ranks. The author had

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22 Staying On, p.172.
23 Ibid, pp.239-40.
served in that theatre of war and had the first hand knowledge of the area and in that way the setting can be taken as authentic. The scene is in Burmese jungles; the places being Comitaria, Prulli, Tamel Pyongiu and Mandalay. It is a documentary on the RAASC. The details of the air dropping supplies are accurate as the author had taken the technical advice on the point from Lt. Col. T.R. Newman. (25) Burmese jungles, rivers and mountains are vividly portrayed. But the most important part of the setting in the novel are camps and the temporary barracks of the officers and the rank of the RAASC units. The social setting of the novel is Anglo-India - with British officers and Indian ranks.

The Alien sky depicts the atmosphere prevailing on the eve of Indian independence with special reference to Eurasians and Englishmen in India. In June 1947 the British Resident of Marapore learns that they are no longer the rulers of India. Soon they would be aliens in the land they had come to regard as their own. The effect is shocking on Gower, Dorothy Gower and Cynthia Mapleton. We catch the atmosphere of transformation of a nation. This is done in a framework of vividly realised background. The Eurasians feel insecure and

the English begin to pack. It also visualizes the atmosphere of violence against some selected Englishmen. Steele is murdered inside the court premises at Marapore and the experimental farm run by Gower is burnt. In spite of the fact that Gower wants to stay as a friend of Indians, he is requested to quit. In the same novel the intensity and scene of Indian summer finds expression in the oppression of Mackendrick, an American.

The heat had oppressed him for he had not accepted it. The old Indian, asleep on a charpoy in the shade of the peepul trees, the single files of women, dressed in unlovely, magenta coloured sarees, walking purposefully from nothing, towards nothing, the naked children... all these had accepted it, seemed content to be exhausted by it.(26)

And then comes a sandstorm in summer :

Looking up he saw that the sky was the colour of slate. The hot wind had died but suddenly it came fiercely alive again; an overwhelming force that whirled dust in stinging, angry clouds. ... The wind whipped round the bungalow and lashed their skin. There was a roaring above their heads as the trees tossed their branches in the storm. A violent gust shrieked down the drive.(27)

The monsoon follows the storm :

It fell... as though it had been falling since the beginning of time. Rivers of ochreous, muddy water covered the khattcha strips at the sides of the roads. People who lived beneath roofs of corrugated

27 Ibid., p.97.
iron shouted, to make themselves heard, and in shouting found their spirits lifted. Even the black, turbulent clouds rolled and tumbled in the sky as if pleased to be released from the bondage of warm oceans, exploding their mirth in cracks of thunder, linking hands whose touch sent streaks of lightning to the earth like fireworks thrown in time of carnival.(28)

With the feeling of a poet Paul Scott approaches nature. It is nature to him in all its variety and splendour that makes bearable here the filth, squalor and miseries with which the country is reeking. The harsh climatic conditions according to Paul Scott proved difficult to adjust for the Englishmen. They are shown suffering under adverse conditions. He is specially obsessed with Indian smell. About Marapore in *The Alien Sky* he writes:

Smith's hotel was situated at the northern end of the cantonment, close to the station and the bazaar. Beyond the station was the town where the European air of exhausted respectability, drifting across the railway, was befouled and soured and inextricably mixed with the smell which rose from the cluttered streets; a small compound of the individual scents of burning joss-sticks, cowdung, hot spiced food, urine and rotting piles of refuse. The tongas which jingled along the quiet, suburban roads of the cantonment brought the smell with them, as Charon's boat, ferrying the dead, must have retained about its timbers the pungent breath of the farther bank.(29)

29 Ibid., p.32.
And here is an Indian town market:

Beautiful and squalid.
He stared out at "the narrow street of open shopfronts, where the goods spilled out on to the road-side... When the tonga stopped he helped her down and followed her across flagstones laid down like a tiny bridge across an open drain, into a trinket shop.(30)

The Birds of Paradise depicts the declining days of the Maharajas of India. It catches the proper atmosphere of the negotiations of the princes with the new Government of India and their helplessness. He shows many rajas crumbling under the impact of Indian independence. The Alien sky and A Division of Spoils show Maharaja Jimismith of Kalipur and the Nawab of Mirat respectively facing the tide of history.

The Mark of the Warrior makes the reader enter into the physical environment of an officers' training school in War-time India. The hero goes out of the school to make a survey for a tactical exercise in the hills. The picture of the hill and the village are typically Indian:

He walked to the village in the fading light. Dogs and children greeted him. The air was spiced. Dung fires cooked meals and young women bathed in the pool. He was brought to the headman's family and begged water and chappatties of them. They wondered, but gave him water and the unleavened wheaten pancakes warm from the fire, brought him rice and curried vegetable; surrounded him with their suspicion and their friendliness and their silence.(31)

30 The Alien Sky, p.95.
31 The Mark of the Warrior, (Mayflower, 1968), pp.76-77.
The beginning of *The Chinese Love Pavilion* is set in Bombay, later on the scene shifts to the jungles of Malaya. Paul Scott admits, "Bombay isn't India" but still he takes the reader to the interior of Bombay:

The interesting bit was a network of alleyways and thoroughfares of considerable squalor. We kept to the brighter lit of these, Saxby assured me. It seemed to me that all the cutthroats and beggars of Bombay were congregated there and I kept a hand on my wallet. If you have ever seen a Bombay beggar you will understand the trepidation with which I followed Saxby across the fouled pavements, through the gauntlet of their armless, legless bodies. I would swear that one of them was no more than a living head on a bed of straw. They howled at us and, if they had hands, clawed at us. (32)

From Bombay Tom Brent along Saxby drives towards the north:

Mud-spattered the car now entered regions where the rains had not yet penetrated, where the sky was milk white and the earth cracked and parched as if it were centuries old and had no memory of water. On flat endless plains distant and minareted towns glimmered like mirages, and yellow mudwalled villages loomed and were gone, hidden in the dust to crumble away invisibly behind us, forgotten. As the sun fell to the western edge of such plains the violet pigment of its rays would settle low in the air like the lees of wine leaving the sky above us clear, as pink as seashells....

We came again to regions where the wet monsoon had filled the muddy streams and brown rivers, where rain water stood in rice-fields and turned them into vast mirrors reflecting the swollen grey-yellow sky and sometimes the chance, lone figure of a man standing like a brown statue on a raised bank, or a single file of women carrying burdens on their heads.

It was a land's land, too vast, too beautiful to harbour well the designs men sought to carve upon it. (33)

Scenes and settings like this depict the land of primitive beauty.

India haunts Paul Scott's fiction even when the books are set somewhere else. Besides *The Chinese Love Pavilion*, *The Corrida at San Feliu* and *A Male Child* have reminiscences of India. A part of *The Corrida at San Feliu* is set in India. The landscape with its flora and fauna is vividly Indian:

On the winding road to Mahwar they saw langur monkeys in trees, and parrots, and the shimmer of the rice fields below on the plain. Avoiding Mahwar itself they came out on the road to Kotimala at a junction where there was a roadside temple. They passed a line of ox-carts and heard the tinkling bells on the beasts' necks. ... They could see the lakes gleaming in the distance. (34)

The market of Mahwar, road to Darsansings, the caves and stones, the Dak bungalow, Panther House and picnic in Kashmir hills are truly Indian.

Most of the events of *Corrida at San Feliu* take place outside India but some incidents of the novel that take place at Mahwar and Darshansingh play an important part in the development of the story as well as the vision of the novelist.

There is a universal human tendency to take one's milieu for granted. It is when we look at our own world through other eyes that we realise how different it is from what we felt it to be. Paul Scott has an eye for the detail. It is not merely what man has made of man but also what man has made of the world in which he lives seems to be disturbing him; and hence the jostling of the variety of images, beautiful and ugly, noble and mean that constitute his setting.

The themes, that have been discussed in the earlier chapters as inner surface, lie very close to the outer surface (i.e. setting) and they are implicit in each other. These stories could only take place in India alone and only at a given time. A Miss Manners and Hari Kumar could have met their fate in India alone. As it happens in a good novel Paul Scott has fused characters and setting. "There are... three ways only of writing a story", wrote Robert Louis Stevenson, "You may take a plot and fit characters to it, or you may take a character and choose incidents and situations to develop it, or lastly... you may take a certain atmosphere and get actions and persons to express and realize it." In the third way of writing a novel Paul Scott employs setting as an active agent in the narrative, and specially, in The Raj Quartet, indicating its moulding influence on the characters. It is a known
fact that environment influences man's attitude and behaviour, that time and place largely make us what we are. Paul Scott chooses to emphasize the importance of place and time. India as a place is an active force in the novels of Paul Scott. Further he makes India as a singular place. He has also used the setting as a structural or forming device. A few examples from some of the novels may help to understand how they are framed in the setting. By describing MacGregor House, the Bungalow of Miss Crane, Rose Cottage and the "Sanctuary" he places Lady Chatterjee, Miss Crane, Mabel Layton and Sister Eudmila Smith respectively on the social map and displays his characters. Paul Scott's detailed specification of MacGregor House and Rose Cottage, and a variety of other houses including Smith's Hotel are neither irrelevant nor wasteful. The houses express their owner. They affect as atmosphere and explain the people who live in them. Mayapore, Luni, Pankot, Ranpur, Mirat, Jundupur, Clubs, Officers' Messes and residential houses furnish a plausible abode for the characters' world of feeling; these places have a good deal to do with making the characters real. The setting defines the characters. It is a known fact that Englishmen changed their behaviour east of Suez. India and her climate had to do a lot in making the English a bit crazy and racially arrogant. The reader feels that setting wields
a delicate control over the characters and defines them. The setting becomes the gathering spots of all that has been felt and it is directly experienced in the novels.

Places, people and even their feelings are most integrally related to one another. The stories of Paul Scott would be other stories, and unrecognizable, if they took up the characters and plot somewhere else. A police official Merrick could never have dared to behave like that with Hari Kumar in England. The star-crossed love between Kumar and Manners might not have been starcrossed and gone unnoticed by Englishmen in England. Hyde Park could never become Bibighar Garden. The Indian background in the novels of Paul Scott is more than a backdrop. His novels have sociological implications, his human beings are dependent on the society in which they live. The historical events put heavy pressures on the people of his novels. Both time and place largely control the behaviour of these people. Imagine *The Jewel in the Crown* laid out in London or *The Chinese Love Pavilion* in Europe or *The Birds of Paradise* in Scotland. The very idea of moving the novels of Paul Scott to a different setting is unthinkable. So is the case with time. There is no room for the movement of their places as well as time. So these novels are
bound up with place and time.

The glory of The Raj Quartet lies in the place. The setting is the ground-conductor of all the currents of emotion, belief and moral conviction that charge out from the story in its course. It could be Pankot (maybe Simla or Darjeeling) where an Englishman could not take roots, but the roses that he brought took to the soil, but the Englishman remained alien. The situation is summed up with a crisp statement of Barbie while looking around the roses:

'You are native roses' she said to them, 'of the country. The garden is a native garden. We are only visitors. That has been our mistake. That is why God has not followed us here.' (35)

The setting makes the characters of Paul Scott operate in an established world. The fixed place connects everything; character, theme and point of view. In the pages of his novels India comes passionately alive. Through the place the writer focuses the eye of his genius and brings his gaze to the point that conveys feeling. The special focus on India by Paul Scott has its beauty and meaning.

His characters are fused in the living events of India in texture, colour and composition. There is no blur of inexactness, no cloud of vagueness. The picture

is lucid and steady. The homes, streets, markets, hotels have Indian specialities and characters. No one can mistake about them. It is so clear that the picture of the outside world in the novels does not grow dim. It helps the writer establish a chink-proof world of appearance. In all specific details he completely adheres to social fact by the unerring aim of observation. It is what Allan Tate calls "putting man wholly into his physical setting".

The Indian setting in the novels of Paul Scott absorbs the reader's notice. It makes him aware of the problem and situation. He explores his themes - the distintegration of the empire. Paul Scott's art speaks most clearly, explicitly, directly. His Indian setting is an all inclusive framework, it conditions his mode of characterization his sense of direction - in brief, his entire point of view.

As earlier pointed out Paul Scott has been very acutely conscious of his place in time, of his own contemporaneity. His novels describe moments in India. In the Indian setting Paul Scott has not only given a local habitation and a name, but a solid world of everyday life of a particular period.

In The Raj Quartet the localization of the setting is perfectly valid. The characters could only act out these stories at Mayapore, Ranpur, Pankot and Mirat.
There is the panorma of situation and a good setting for Merrik, Smalley, Mabel Layton, Miss Crane, Robin White, M.A.Kasim, Ahmed Kasim and Harikumar. They all move against a background which is as vital as they are, a background full of colour, echoing with the traditional and difficult experiences of an age-long civilization.

The case of the Moghul Room at the Guest House at Pankot is in accord with the mood of Sarah and Perron; maybe Paul Scott deliberately presents an association of mood and situation. The descriptions are very subtle. Paul Scott is not chary of descriptions. Wherever there is relevance of the background he makes ample use of such scenes. The jungle background of The Mark of the Warrior is relevant in the novel and he describes the jungle and the river in detail. At times he looks at the scene with a painter's eye - the greatest of them is the scene of the train hold up in A Division of Spoils. A painter could have painted the scene. Such scenes with details of the background add to our sense of reality in all its dimensions. And the readers who know the background relish it.

The scenes and descriptions are an integral part of his novels. The scene and the action cannot be separated. In that way setting fulfils the purpose. When the palaces of the Rajas and Nawabs are described,
the description matches the exotic atmosphere of the princely states. Paul Scott gives a vivid picture of differences between English and Indian manners also.

The setting of Paul Scott appears realistic. It may be the palace of Jundapur or the shikar expedition in *The Birds of Paradise* of Smith Hotel in *Staying On*, they sound real.

After reading the novels of Paul Scott the reader feels that it is not a fictitious world. Some people after reading *The Birds of Paradise* thought that the writer was the son of a former Resident of British India. The reason for it was the depiction of the lives of the princes and British Agents and Residents is extremely naturalistic. In his novels Anglo-Indian setting is depicted, as it has never been done before.

The *Raj Quartet* presents scenery, climate, flora, fauna, natural vastness and at places of beauty. It does not consist just of scenery but of the whole environment, the country, district, urban or rural location, dates, customs, economic, and occupational groups, buildings, family pattern, religion, politics, moral assumption, intellectual and cultural life, education, entertainment, standard of living and so on. All this is built with
sufficient, but not tedious detail. As in Kipling's work, a woeful list of negative traits of India is found in the works of Paul Scott—heat, dust, disease, to name a few but, who can escape from them in India?

At places Paul Scott implies social criticism by his portrayal of the Indian and Anglo-Indian environment. In this connection like a serious historical novelist he is not dependent on hearsay.

The setting of Paul Scott's novels is so vivid, so real and authentic that it seems, to its making must have gone not merely his frequent visits to the country but also his extensive reading and first-hand experience. Orville Prescott reviewing Paul Scott's *The Jewel in the Crown* remarked:

> Rarely has a time and a place and a political and social crisis been more brilliantly or more dispassionately described. Rarely have the sounds and smells and total atmosphere of India been so evocatively suggested. So comprehensive is Mr. Scott's scope, so detailed his focus, so intimately authoritative his knowledge that reading his novels becomes a major experience and a prolonged one. (36)

In this way the novels of Paul Scott are set in a land of immensely varied races, religions and climatic and geographic conditions, a land reflecting admirably all the world and all its people. In words of Paul

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Scott,

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.(37)

The setting is one of the most integral parts of the novels of Paul Scott. Neither these people nor their stories could ever be at all transplanted elsewhere. In a sense out of Paul Scott's novels emerges India in all its range and diversity, its joys and sorrows, beauty and ugliness, as a world passing through some of the most agonising and crucial moments of its history. It is India: moving from bondage into freedom, but in transit getting terribly mutilated.

Paul Scott was a novelist with a profound sense of history and poetic vision. The raw material of his novels is certainly far more complex and challenging than that handled by many an historical novelist. But history could not cramp his vision as an artist nor his art distort history. His novels transport the reader to a world which has both its own beauty and ugliness, humanity and brutality, love and hatred all comprising a vortex of experience too complex to be patterned out in a fictional mould. But that Paul Scott has done it with the creative

37 The Jewel in the Crown, p.9.
imagination of an artist and impartial understanding of an historian is an achievement quite rare. That he could steer away from the approaches of writers like Kipling, Miss Mayo, Naipaul or even Nirad Chaudhuri speaks volumes for not merely his intellectual integrity and catholicity but also an extraordinary breadth of vision.