CHAPTER X

VIEW OF LIFE
Both all things vain, and all who in vain things
Build thir fond hopes Glorie or lasting fame,
Or happiness in this or th'other life;
All who have thir reward on Earth, the fruits
Of painful Superstition and blind Zeal,
Nought seeking but the praise of men, here find
Fit retribution, emptie as thir deeds; ...

- John Milton,
Paradise Lost, III, 448-54.

It has been seen in the above chapters that Paul
Scott has depicted a period of Indian history. But his
novels are not merely historical documents. Like all
historical novelists, Paul Scott interprets the events
metaphysically. While depicting history, he also presents
man in the universe. So one gets Paul Scott's vision of
life in his novels. The achievement of the author lies in
weaving his vision of life and ideas about life in the
"texture of the novel" under the "guise of historical
detail". Paul Scott expresses his vision of life in "an
overt" way through his comments on events and characters.
He makes one or more characters his mouthpieces and it is
easy to recognise the author behind the various masks.
His own comments are supplemented through the projection
of his ideas in various characters. With the documentation
of history one comes across a definite vision of life. His
vision of life is shaped by his sense of history and it is supported by the vision of life. As a writer, Paul Scott has considerable stoicism. He nevertheless is quite sensitive to the frustration and disenchantment of life, and life's terrible things hurt him. He does not take sunny view of human existence. He is concerned with the ultimate crisis of human experience. At times the human soul is stripped in his novels.

In the novels of Paul Scott "life, like a dome of many coloured glass, stains the white radiance of eternity." The world, reeking with not merely prejudice, passion, tensions and conflict, but is also full of men and women who eventually make the world a veritable vanity fair. It is only not the world of the rulers and the ruled, for Paul Scott's novels are historical novels. History does not view merely the chronicle of events. It goes to the root of human behaviour in order to arrive at some value judgement. Life in all its abundance and variety, joy and grief, success and failure, good and evil is here. The novelist's vision which is essentially the artist's vision is here conditioned by his view of history and in the context of history it assumes a very complex character. Life in the context of history is life as its intensest with its rhythm modulated by the events of history. It is life viewed in an hour of crisis that puts to test men and women all alike, both as
individuals and groups. And Paul Scott visualises that when put on their mettle most of them fail miserably. If moral decay accompanies or even precedes the fall, the fall in return debases men and women. It is a vortex, a crisis, a catastrophe in which they are all caught. And the emerging view is indeed tragic when things fall apart without any centre to hold.

We miss in Paul Scott's view of life any accent of faith and hope. It is a bleak world that leaves one in sheer despair in the face of wholesale crisis and catastrophe. We are not allowed to gaze beyond the horizon and wait for a glorious sunrise beyond the gathering storm. Even freedom does not descend on the subcontinent as an unmixed blessing. History here does not inspire hope. On the whole it is a tragic view of life. It appears that Paul Scott has been influenced by Gibbon and Toynbee. He tries to look at life filtered through history.

Paul Scott finds that man is a helpless creature. Man is no more than

an insect entirely surrounded by the destructive element, so that twist, turn, attack, or defend yourself as you might you were doomed; not by the forces ranged against you but by the terrible inadequacy of your own armour.(1)

This inadequacy of the armour exposes man to various hazards. The world is something like an arena.

Symbolically the corrida represents the world. Every page of the novel *The Corrida at San Feliu* is loaded with ore. It is not easy to interpret life; but the hero of *The Corrida* - who happens to be a novelist — tries to interpret life in terms of the corrida - a bull fight.

For good measure it offers a reasoned exposition of Paul Scott's view of life. Life is a fight; a struggle among the unequals - the bull versus man. In this fight even experience may not be helpful. He tries to interpret the thoughts of Ordonez (the famous bull fighter of 1958-60) in the following words:

> It is difficult... we are all ignorant of each other's capacity, and all a bit clumsy. There is a lot to learn and not much time to learn. (2)

The corrida is to bull what the world is to man. Both are the tests of courage and intelligence. "The corrida portrays man's desire for recognition as the supreme creation." (3) He elaborates the same theme more explicitly when he says that the corrida is a drama of endless tyranny and eternal rebellion, a masque of love, a comedy of sexual deviation... There are always at least three fights going on at any one time in the plaza when...

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3 Ibid., p.201.
the corrida is in progress: the fight the bull puts up, the fight the torero tries to conduct and the fight spectators think they see.(4)

In the corrida Paul Scott finds the whole pattern of life.

He makes Thornhill (the hero of the novel) write:

It would have not been difficult to have seen in the pattern of the corrida the whole pattern of a single human life. When you think of the empty ring and of the young bull coming out into it, you can build up out of that image, if you're so inclined, an allegorical fantasy in which the bull is a young man... and the arena is that little bit of the big wide world, God tells him he can have for himself if he works hard at it and is able to teach every other marauding bastard to keep his hands off it. So he works hard... and tries to keep the marauding bastards out...... Each time he sees one of the marauders off, he feels pride. Each time one of them gets a blow under the belt, he pities himself and calls it sorrow. Pride and sorrow are self-inflicted wounds. They make him bleed, and that is the beginning of the end.(5)

This is the glimpse of reality behind the illusion of life. The sense of belonging and possession generates conflict and our life becomes a corrida where sometimes the opposing forces are undiscernable like the metador and the crape to the bull. In this novel Paul Scott interprets life in terms of corrida. The ritual of bullfight as a whole can be interpreted as an allegory of human life.

In The Chinese Love Pavilion Paul Scott tries to interpret life through dreams. "It's only in dreams you

4 The Corrida at San Feliu, p.201.
5 Ibid., p.203.
get anywhere near the truth." He makes Saxby quote Conrad that

directly a man is born he's flung into his dream as if into a sea, that he would suffocate if he tried to climb out of his dream, out of the sea into the air. Commit yourself... to the destructive element and by the exertion of your arms and legs keep yourself up.(7)

To keep consel up, one has to struggle. Struggle is the business of life. Saxby makes many experiments in trying to find the meaning of life. In one of the experiments he starts living with plants, as if they were persons. Saxby tries to understand and live a life free from pain, but we find in the end the web of life as intricate behind him as it was before him. The intericacy of life finds further expression in Saxby's words. He says that he stumbled his

way through the maze, round and round, search­
ing, ___penetrating, mortifying his mind and body be­cause he wanted to deserve his soul, deserve the grace that was coming to him. And then I thought that there was yet another way, the way of vision. The vision that would reveal all, that would lift me up in the manner of death.(8)

Saxby in search of a meaning in life wanted to uplift himself spiritually and like an ascetic, disliked material persuit as "coal heaving". He also confirms that common human beings "need the dreams, to keep going", and as soon

7 Ibid., p.32.
8 Ibid., p.64.
as the dream is stripped the process of life begins to slow down.

This is amply made clear by Paul Scott in his other novels also. When some of his characters find the struggle unequal - as that, of bull versus matador or when they think their dreams no longer sustain them, they feel their life shattered like a "dome of many coloured glass". In The Alien Sky John Gower has a dream of helping the Indian people, but when the dream is shattered, he tries to sustain himself with a dream of happy life with his wife in England, but the wife shatters this by deserting him and it results for him in the loss of meaning in life. Then he makes an unsuccessful attempt to commit suicide.

In The Chinese Love Pavilion the Japanese Officer Hakinawa dreams of being in love with Teena, but a rumour shatters it and he has no option but hera-keri. While Teena, incapable of love, dreams of a wider world - Paris, Venice, Rome - but her world does not expand more than the pavilion. On realization of this truth, she explores peace in such an erroneous way that she puts herself at the mercy of an impotent man, who instead of giving her temporary satisfaction, directly dispatches her to the next world. Her another lover Tom, deluded in despair, concludes that life is only an anticipation of desire and when these desires
remain unfulfilled or half fulfilled men go out of this world with sad memories. The entrance of the world is through the gate "anticipation of desires" and the "exit is through the memory of love". While Kumar-down with disappointment and despair - recalling the good old British seasons and the trees, writes:

I looked at them and did not think of the summer just gone, and the spring soon to come, as illusions; as dreams, never fulfilled, never to be fulfilled. (9)

A frustrated Willian Conway - in search of a vocation - becomes the spokesman of the author. He talks about his father and his own training for life:

I would finally admit that it was all *maya*, that nothing a man could do with his life would really satisfy him, unless he were a slug and content with the sight of his own slimy wake? There were times... when I almost believed Father... He had... wanted to save me from discovering in too hard and slow a way that there were no means of matching deed to will, had wanted to put me, early on, on the quick sharp road to this discovery by getting me used to the habit of disappointment, to recognising the reality behind the apparent magic. (10)

So the world according to Paul Scott is a *maya*, a magic, an illusion and a lost Eden or Paradise. There is a vast gap between the dreams and achievements of a man. And when the dreams collapse men are doomed to disappointment and even self destruction, as we see in case of Edwina

9 *A Division of the Spoils*, p.536.
Crane, Teena, Gower, Thornhill, Ned Pearson, Barbie and Kumar. It is something like the realization of Shakespeare's Troilus:

That the will is infinite, and the execution confined; that the desire is boundless, and the act a slave to limit. (11)

By giving the title to one of his novels The Birds of Paradise and then showing in this novel as well as in other novels that men aspire for something— an illusion— but in the end that aspiration or the dream remains unfulfilled— "a lost paradise"— Paul Scott presents a bleak view of life. Most of the characters are shown pursuing maya. Teena aspired to go to Europe, William Conway tried to search for a vocation, Gower tried to serve in India, Hari dreamed of England, M.A.Kasim aspired for a Governor's post, Thornhill wanted to escape disgrace, Merrick wanted to play an endless game against the natives, Miss Crane tried to find solace in service. They all failed in their aspirations or illusions and in the end we come across the shattered dome of their illusions. In a way, most of Paul Scott's characters are self-deceived. For Gower in The Alien Sky, India was a sort of paradise. But independent India has no place for him. In the end he discovers that the whole of his career was an exercise in self-deception. His world was being separated from him, which he could

11 William Shakespeare, Troilus and Cressida, Act III, Scene II.
not bear, and the way out was suicide. Like other characters, Craig in *The Mark of the Warrior*, is also a failure. In *The Chinese Love Pavilion* the pavilion is a sort of Paradise - "the illusion of the occasion found" - but in reality it is a bawdy house presided by Teena the expert prostitute.

Paul Scott's sombre and depressive vision of life is reflected in the pattern of *The Raj Quartet*. It begins with the killing of Chaudhri by the hooligans in 1942 and ends with the description of holding of the train and killing of many Muslims. In *The Raj Quartet* the poem of Urdu poet Gaffur finds a special significance. Gaffur pines for "what is not" or the unfulfilment of dreams and illusions:

Fleeting moments : these are held a long time in the eye,
The blind eye of the ageing poet,
So that even you, Gaffur, can imagine
In this darkening landscape
The bowman lovingly choosing his arrow,
The hawk outpacing the cheetah,
(The fountain splashing lazily in the courtyard),
The girl running with the deer.(12)

On the surface *Staying On* appears comic, but under the thinnest vineer it has tragic over-tones. Tusker's collapse is a moving incident emphasising the seriousness of the effort that men make to uphold certain values that they cherish. The effect of the novel has a similarity with other novels of Paul Scott. This is the same sad view of life. The desolation experienced by Johnnie Brown, Dorothy Gower, Gower, Hari Kumar, William Conway

12 *A Division of the Spoils*, p.598.
and Edward Thornhill is similar to that of Tusker and Lucy. Lucy reflects:

I have had rather a sad life. . . . Yes, from the beginning I had a sad life . . . A life like a flower that has never really bloomed, but how many do? (13)

Paul Scott's pathetic vision of life finds a very poignant situation in Staying On. Mr. Smalley is dead. Lucy asks her servants to sleep in her living room. At night when she wakes, she finds three figures:

Curled up near the almost dead fire were two shapes in blankets. Minnie and Ibrahim, one on each side of the fireplace. Going gently past them she caught her breath because there was a third shape, huddled with its back to the wall.

Joseph.
The three of them. (14)

This is the picture of three dispossessed Indians at the feet of their unprovided mistress. This is the bleakest image of spiritual desolation in Paul Scott's novels. The impression one gets from Staying On is not different from the other novels of Paul Scott. In spite of a facade of happiness, almost all the characters except the Mali, are sad at (their) heart. They are worried about worldly prospects. Col. Smalley is finding it difficult to meet the two ends, as he has frittered away his assets in drinking and gambling. His death looms large on him.

14 Ibid., p.252.
In anticipation of his death he makes financial arrangements for his wife. The Bhoolabhoys are always calculating money prospects. So is the case with Ibrahim, the personal servant of Smalleys who always dreams of going again to England for material gains.

_Staying On_ seems to be a commentary on the text quoted by Father Sebastion in his sermon:

'Therefore I hated life, because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit. Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun: because I should leave unto the man that shall be after me. And who knoweth whether he shall be wise man or a fool?'(15)

The world of today is not conducive to the fulfilment of ideals. Ideals are cherished only in dreams. Uncle James in _The Corrida_ takes to heavy drinking when his finance does not marry him. In desperation heavy drinking leads him to reckless driving and to death. In _Johnnie Sahib_ Captain Johnnie is separated from his company - that is his life. In _The Towers of Silence_ and _The Day of Scorpion_, Susan thinks that life was a game and she plays her part, but in the end she finds it meaningless and suddenly writes everything off. Her sister, Sarah, for some time takes life too seriously and undergoes sad experiences, then gives it up and thinks herself fit "for human

15 _Staying On, p.129._
consumption" as if she was a commodity. Barbie Batchelor finds life shocking and she literally turns into a tower of silence from the tower of Babel. Figuratively the lady is the last remains of the empire and she thinks that the crumbling British empire cast her away as an act of misplaced charity as is the custom with the Parsees who throw their dead in the Towers of Silence to the vultures. Dr. Deintree in The Birds of Paradise could bear any hardship to relieve others of pain, in the end loses himself in wine and women. For Conway life cease to be attractive. He tries to find in other "men's vocations" a substitute of his own, failing in it, gives it up and then goes after the birds of paradise. Miss Crane a missionary teacher, failing in her mission, thinks it better to perform the Sati ceremony to her lost ideals.

Thornhill (the novelist hero of The Corrida) after a life time spent in observing and commenting on human behaviour "seems to find it difficult to understand his own." Thornhill in a state of disgrace, thinks himself to be a bull in the corrida. Like a bull, he is driven by the lures of pride and ambition to leave the safety of his querencia (which is the name given to the particular spot in the ring, the bull likes to go back to, because he feels safest there) for the dangerous arena of the life of action, where the long sharp sword will in the
end pierce him to the heart. Feeling the state of disgrace at the unfaithfulness of his wife, Thornhill thinks that he is out of his querencia and is tempted to the danger of heavy drinking. After going through a process of agonising appraisal of himself, his talent, his beliefs, his work, the love affair of his wife with the godling, he loses his mental peace. He is like Othello with his "occupation gone". He symbolically bleeds like a bull with a few pricks. He would have been the last man to have signed his death warrant, but the circumstance and the mental tortures destroy his instinct of self preservation and due to heavy drinking he drives recklessly into a swollen river.

Thornhill, in *The Corrida*, sums up the affair of his wife Myra with the boy as

> running through the dark after a will-o-the-wisp, whose light had never been lit, a journey from one house of cards to another, through fields of stones and petrified gardens ringing to soundless carillons, along tracks that bordered but never cross the frontier between the two kingdoms.(16)

So Myra's tempting adventures and ours as well, are nothing more than a visit to a new house of cards.

In the light of the above experience one can say with Saxby that man "is the real freak of nature, the throwback, the one mechanism that got chemically out of hand." These

16 *The Corrida at San Feliu*, p.182.
instinctive weaknesses generate conflict, betrayal, defeat and destruction. For safety one has to evolve one's own castle or armour or a place in society, out of that place one finds himself exposed to dangers. Paul Scott borrows the analogy from the corrida. He calls the safe place as querencia. In life three things tempt men towards difficulties—pride, ambition and desires. He makes Thornhill write, "if we come out of the querencia, our privacy, we are wounded and destroyed". Even in the querencia one is not safe from the two deadly sins of men—PRIDE and AMBITION. One may guard against them, but they are in the nature of men, and "men, it was known had difficulty controlling their natures". Men know that some of the steps are always risky and dangerous. But still they are tempted towards them. For some time they decide not to take those steps, but whenever there are temptations they forget the earlier decision and like the bull in the corrida leave their querencia and get pain and suffering. This is the mark of a warrior as well as of a villain. The extremes are represented by Ramsay and Merrick.

The stoic attitude of the author is reflected in the fact that the characters suffer but do not give vent to their feelings in public. Their case is like that of horses in the corrida with their vocal chords cut or like that of young Craddock being carried through
the jungle to safety with his vocal chords cut, so that he could not cry out and give them away to their pursuers. In the same way Kumar, Manners, Barbie, Thornhill, Thomson, Crane, Johnnie, Ramsay and Gower suffer silently. Theirs is the private anguish. If the strain is much, the figure collapses or commits suicide. In the last days of his life Paul Scott himself suffered a lot, he bore it all and never complained. (17)

According to Paul Scott, love has a soothing effect. It is the hope of mankind. But lovers are rarely left alone by the world. It always penalizes lovers. It may be Manners and Kumar, Thelma and Ned Pearson. They are punished and undone for love. "The penalties it (world) extracts are harsh, as harsh as the temptation... The stronger the temptation the harsher the penalties for succumbing to it." (18)

For some there is death as it is "the price the world demands for love." (19)

At times Paul Scott's treatment of love is romantic, especially in The Corrida at San Feliu and The Jewel in the Crown; although he is largely antiromantic.

17 See appendix No. 5. p.392.
18 The Corrida at San Feliu, p.217.
19 Ibid.
Like Hemingway, Paul Scott sometimes uses sex and wine to blot out painful thought, but when passion grows into love in this world, we have a deeper meaning. Kumar and Manners make a star crossed pair of lovers. Colour, race, status, political turbulence and the total conspiracy of circumstances tear them asunder. While Kumar is behind the bars, Manners dies of child birth, without his being aware of the tragedy. In Paul Scott's novels the path of love does not run smooth. As in Hardy so in Paul Scott love is a purblind doomster as it were. Men and Women are caught in its snare and then eventually doomed.

Even then a careful reader may not miss the theme of universal love - a love which transcends politics, religion, and race, and which is not related to the struggle against the British rule in India. The importance of Mrs. Ludmila Smith, Mabel Layton, Barbie, Sarah and Daphne Manners can clearly be seen to relate to this idea of the supreme value of love in human relationship. The sympathies of Mabel Layton and Sister Ludmila Smith reach out beyond race and class. The two persons show how divisions between people can be resolved only by the spirit of love. Yet Paul Scott is aware
that love does not automatically win the battle. In the same way love's course can not be spontaneous. The failure of individuals to communicate is a related current in the novels of Paul Scott. There is a variety of communication breakdown resulting in loneliness. Sarah fails to communicate with her mother, who fails to click with Ahmed, while Laura fails to tune with her husband Rowan, so is the case with Gower and his wife. Crane failed to communicate with the Indians around her. The result is people are isolated, self-soliloquizing beings, each borne along upon his island of individual fantasy. Here the writer is much truer to the facts of human behavior than we are generally prepared to admit. Almost all the novels of Paul Scott show the important characters suffering from loneliness. It may be George spruce in The Bender, Ian Canning in A Male Child; Ramsay in The Mark of a Warrior; Thornhill, Thalma, Myra, Thompson in The Corrida at San Feliu; Johnnie in Johnnie Sahib; Gower and Dorothy in The Alien Sky; Kumar, Daphne Manners, Crane, Barbie, Sarah, Perron, Mabel in The Raj Quartet and Smalley and Lucy in Staying On; all are lonely birds in search of love and communication. The failure of love for one
reason or the other runs in all the novels. Sarah's pathetic attempts to fall in love first with Rowan and then with Ahmed Kasim are not essentially different from the pathetic attempts of the British to build a 'bridge' between the races and creeds. The friendship between Rowan and Gopal, and love between Daphline Manners and Hari Kumar demonstrate that a bridge based on mutual respect might be built. So is the case of friendship of Ahmed and Sarah.

In a way one becomes aware of the romantic agony of the failure on the part of man to "connect". The wavelength of love among human beings remains sadly disturbed, and it fails to light up life's sordidness.

From love Paul Scott turns to art and finds art more beautiful than life. Money, love and liquor provide little respite, but one can find some solace in art. Paul Scott confirms the opinion of Keats. In the Corrida Thornhill observes what he calls

dramatic representation of my own endless struggle to transmute the raw perpetual motion of life into the perfect immobility of art.(20)

But the matador can have a temporary peace in killing the bull, as peace is "an illusion". There is no hope of peace in life.

Perhaps it is only in art that this more durable peace is to be found; not in the creation of it - no, not there - but in contemplation of what has been created, endless Edens, shapely worlds formed out of the terrible void and the deep blue darkness of endless frightening space; the carved stone, the painted canvas, the living word, the sound of music. (21)

So Thelma who is a bundle of unfulfilled desires, dreams, and passions, yearns to be turned - along with her dead lover -

suddenly to stone, because here a union, an awful wholeness has been achieved between man and nature; so we lie for ever in carved cohabitation, in the dark and in the light, in the rains, through all the seasons of the year, immortally joined and lying as still as if we were dead so that the birds light on my nipples and on my toes, on his neck, his heels and his marble buttocks. They fly away from us flapping their wings, cooling us in the heat when we have no moisture to sweat. Centuries pass. My cheeks and hands and the long curved column of his back are lichenized over. Thunder bounces away from us. The flash of lightning reveals his face, petrified in its expression of ecstasy. The dew settles and we lick these tears of heaven with our parched stone tongues. The heat of the summer scorches our stone bones and the frosts of winter fracture our stone flesh. But we are joined as no man and woman were ever joined before, and only the crack of doom can destroy us. (22)

22 Ibid., p.221.
There the principle of immortality of union and beauty expressed in art is preferred to separation, suffering and death in real life. There through the life of the artist Thornhill and Thelma, Paul Scott conveys the impression that it is not possible for an artist to convey the uncertainties of life in the formal description of art. But plastic arts might incorporate a shape, a serenity, an order, a paradisiacal stasis that cannot be achieved in life. After imagining that plasticity and giving expression to it, he finds a tranquillity in that achievement-finding a tranquillity in art—but it is imaginary and cannot give him respite from the ultimate disgrace, so he seeks tranquillity in death.

Some of these people would like to gain peace by resigning themselves to the winds without endeavouring anything on their part. The girl Gillian in The Bender—the case of a modern girl—has lost the freedom of will and the result is an invitation to the devil. She drifts and without morality, loses the purpose of life. She finds herself in a mess and it is very difficult to get out of it. Other libertines also fail to get peace out of sensations. They believe with Anne that the "world was born and
will die when she dies". These "suckers" and "munchers" of life appear to have sold their souls so cheaply to the devil and got so little out of it. Solace in sex and forgetfulness in wine are only a temporary escape from the strain of life.

Overtly Paul Scott gives the impression that this is due to lack of religion. Absence of God does away with puritan morals. People easily become permissive. Mildred Layton, Teena, Dorothy, Thelma, Sarah, Anne, Tom, Coley, Johnnie, George Spruce and a host of others enjoy sex without any pricks of conscience. They are tipsy and promiscuous but not happy.

For those who are not self contented and can not get peace for themselves, death seems to be the best solution. In The Chinese Love Pavilion, Paul Scott means to say that from the maze of life only death can "lift us up over the hazards and show us the point of exit."(24) So, many people in his novels - Crane, Kumar, Leela, Mitzi, Thornhill, Thelma, Ned Pearson, and Gower - have a death wish and some of them fulfil it through suicide.

23 The Birds of Paradise, p.233.
24 The Chinese Love Pavilion, p.64.
As death is inevitable so are the incidents in the novels of Paul Scott. Like the major happenings in history, incidents in personal life have no rational explanation. Discussing the fate of Kumar and Manners, Sister Ludmilla Smith tries to argue against the events, if he had never met Mr. Merrick the D.S.P. then "there might never have been Bibighar". (25) After these ifs and buts she concludes that the happenings good or bad are a result of a "cycle of inevitability". (26)

While dealing with history, Paul Scott appears to subscribe the view that the partition of the subcontinent and the subsequent mass killing of the innocent people have no rational explanation.

The inevitable sad events may not be due to evil. In Paul Scott's novels, characters are doomed to tragic fate without any villain, except in The Raj Quartet, where, we have got a real Mephistopheles in the person of Merrick. He is neither affected by the pain of others nor gives any sense of pain when he himself is suffering from "third grade burns and a bullet injury". He is amputated, disfigured, but his inner darkness remains intact. In spite of the belief that one has to pay for one's actions, he

26 Ibid., p.159.
does not repent. He is like Dr. Faustus who hastens his own ghastly end by indulging in vice. His Indian counterpart is Pandit baba. There are other representatives of evil, but none of them prevails in the novels of the writer.

Tragic disillusion is writ large on the faces of the Europeans and Anglo-Indians in that period of turmoil and trouble - (1942-47); yet some people are shown having faith in God and goodness. Mr. White, Mrs. Mable Layton, Sister Ludmila Smith, Mohammed Ali Kasim, Peroon, Brownosky, Alan, Canning, Aunt Shalini and to some extent Gower, are the torch bearers of faith and good sense. They stand for some ideals. Because Paul Scott believes that without ideals "men are distinguished from birds, bulls and leopards" (27) only in the sense that he has "no season of desire, no winter sleep, no spring quickening, no summer browsing or autumnal migration." (28) But it is difficult for one to know how far one is living up to an ideal, for Paul Scott says, "the conscience is an inefficient instrument of detection. Its edge grows blunt with use." (29)

27 The Corrida at San Feliu, p.150.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid., p.158.
In the earlier ages religion provided the conscience for the people. But in the modern world, after the two world wars and the material progress, God has disappeared in the blue. That's why most of the characters of Paul Scott are agnostics. The whole set of Laytons have no belief in God. God's name is rarely mentioned by the characters. Paul Scott has a substitute for traditional religion. He presents his ideal through the belief of Sarah that one may not be religious but one could do "was to be cheritable and try not to be selfish". This will be the religion of the future generations of mankind. Traditional religion fails to provide peace to the torn spirit of man. Barbie Batchelor, a teacher in mission schools, is intent on bringing her merciful Christian God to the offspring of the heathen. Her God, a friend of Queen Victoria does not respond to her loud prayers. She writes Him off, loses her vision and balance of mind. Miss Crane another teacher in the missions, an agnostic, after re-examination of her missionary myopia, committed suicide choosing to do so by fire as Hindu women were once accustomed to do on the death of their husbands and as Buddhist monks of southeast Asia were to do later on as their protest against a senseless war.(30)

He makes it amply clear that the need of the present world is liberalism, charity and generosity. Charity and generosity help to gain happiness in life. But peace and happiness in life are a very complex phenomenon. It is a state of mind liable to be disturbed by so many things. As already explained, Paul Scott thinks that life is a test of man's endurance rather than the gratification of desires. This struggle is a continuous endeavour, like a series of tableaux there may be some moments of peace and "tranquility seen after the other in rapid succession like the frames of a motion-picture." (31)

Peace in our lives is only "a temporary respite from the prick of ambition, and the soaring and sinking of passion." (32)

Now the question is how can one find some respite, solace or escape from the rigours of life and how one save the dream turning into a nightmare and continue the endeavour to live? Paul Scott makes Thornhill say that to staunch the wounds of life one needs the balm of life. But this balm is not available easily. One has to make sacrifice for it.

32 Ibid.
As "there is no love without compassion, no compassion without self-pity and no self-pity that hasn't sprung from deprivation." (33) This spirit of compassion and sacrifice may provide some peace and solace to man. In absence of love one can get a respite only through self contentment. He makes Perron quote from Emerson's essay on self Reliance: "Nothing can bring you peace but yourself... Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principles." (34) By quoting Emerson twice Paul Scott stresses the importance of self reliance and adherence to principles in personal life. More a man is contented and self satisfied, the less he will suffer. This is the only hope for mankind - the "disgraced species". (35)

The ideas on life, reflected by Thelma and Thornhill in The Corrida, can be taken seriously. Through their voice the writer presents a bleak outlook of life. The cases of Thelma, Myra, Ned Pearson, Manners, Kumar, Thornhill, Thomson, Barbie, Crane, Gower, Teena, Tom, Saxby, Sarah, and Canning are the representative cases of the writer.

33 The Corrida at San Feliu, p.145.
34 A Division of the Spoils, p.498. The Towers of Silence, p. 94.
35 The Corrida at San Feliu, p.213.
After reading the novels of Paul Scott we are reminded of Dr. Johnson's remark that in life there is more to be endured and little to be enjoyed. The impression Paul Scott gives is that in life there may be roses at some places but it is difficult to enjoy the fragrance and the beauty of the roses.

Paul Scott thinks that in spite of our weak armour we can keep ourselves away from pain and suffering if we shed pride, prejudice, ambition, jealousy, greed and follow the middle course in life — always ready to be compassionate and charitable. Love of humanity and humility can save us from a bad end.

He speaks of life as something to be borne rather than enjoyed. Indirectly he confirms Conrad's attitude "woe to the man whose heart has not learned while young to hope, to love and put its trust in life".

He sums up his attitude to life through a poem of his own character Gaffur:

Everything has meaning for you, Gaffur: the petal's fall, the change of seasons. New clothes to celebrate the Id.
The regard of princes.
Rocks. These are not impediments. All water flows towards uneasy distances. Life also — (36)

36 A Division of the Spoils, p.397.
There may be rocks and impediments in the way of life, still it flows like water. In spite of flaws and impediments there is an endeavour to live. Like water, it faces rocks and makes its own way through them. Failure to live like this is the end of life.

There may be evil in life but it does not mean that it prevails over good. Evil is like darkness. Even a flicker of light makes darkness on the move, so is the case with good and evil. Paul Scott brings this thing home by quoting Emerson:

The world rolls; the circumstances vary every hour. All the angels that inhabit this temple of the body appear at the windows, and all the gnomes and vices also. By all the virtues they are united. If there be virtue, all the vices are known as such; they confess and flee. (37)

One can conclude that Paul Scott like his Saxby "was a man who understood the oddity, the eccentricity of life." (38)

37 A Division of the Spoils, pp.333-34.
38 The Chinese Love Pavilion, p.73.