

CHAPTER - IV

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The present dissertation analyses the image of Indian national leaders as depicted by Paul Scott in his The Raj Quartet. Since Paul Scott is one of the major British novelists writing on the most important historical fact of the decline and fall of British colonial power in India, it is very interesting to note his attitude towards the Indian national movement for Independence and the significant Indian national leaders like Gandhi, Nehru, Subhas Bose and Jinnah.

At the outset it is seen how Paul Scott believes in certain values which govern his novelistic vision. His belief that the English are experts in every practical matter under the sun drives home the idea that he believes in the racial superiority of the British. This view is further established when he calls India a backward country. In the context of these values the images of Indian national leaders have been analysed. As far as his aesthetics of the novel is concerned he lays a good deal of stress on the concept of image. In his opinion, a novel is nothing but a sequence of images and this sequence tells a story. Thus, by taking into account Scott's attitude towards India and the concept of image the four novels in The Raj Quartet have been analysed with special reference to Gandhi, Nehru, Bose and Jinnah.

From the image of Gandhi as depicted by Scott we learn

that he holds Gandhi responsible for creating a mass movement against the British. Similarly, Subhas Bose is denounced by calling him disloyal. He calls Jinnah ~~as~~ a selfish leader and Nehru ~~as~~ a misguided Western educated Indian. These images are distortions because the great work done by these leaders is not at all considered by Scott. It obviously points out Scott's colonizer's point of view. That Scott does not consider Gandhi as a moral force determined to make Indians realize their national identity proves the fact that he is a biased writer. As rightly pointed out by Gomathi Narayanan,

The primary image in the Indians' mind associated with the name of Gandhi is that of a leader who fought for freedom from alien rule and thought he stood for many ideals, these were all incidental to his first concern ... the revolt against British domination.¹

This view has not been recognized by Paul Scott because he considers Gandhi as a great danger to the British Empire which had the divine mission of bringing light, order and law to India. Thus, Paul Scott joins hands with Rudyard Kipling, the staunch exponent of the moral superiority of the British whose views have been expressed in the following poem:

*Take up the White Man's burden
Send forth the best ye breed -
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait in heavy harness
On fluttered folk and wild -
Your new caught, sullen peoples,
Half devil and half child.*

*Take up the White Man's burden -
 Have done with childish days -
 The lightly proffered laurel,
 The easy, ungrudged praise.
 Comes now, to search your manhood
 Through all the thankless years,
 Cold-edged with dear-brought wisdom,
 The judgement of your peer!*

Thus, Paul Scott was conscious of the British imperial mission in India in the Kiplingian manner.

The image of Indian national leaders is symbolically presented in The Towers of Silence by Scott. At the end of the novel we learn that Barbara Batchelor is hospitalized as she has got broncho-pneumonia and she is under a vow of silence. Once she points through the barred window and asks Sister Mary Thomas More, in writing, the meaning of the birds, the vultures, beyond the minaret. The sister replies that the birds are the carrion birds which belong to the towers of silence, for the Ranpur Parsees. Barbie's incorrigible state of mind is important since she often sat at the window watching through narrowed hungry eyes the birds that fed on the dead bodies of the Parsees.³ The symbol means that the dead bodies are nothing but the end of the British Raj in India and the vultures encircling on the tower mean the Indian national leaders expecting the self-rule in India. The symbol of vultures used for the Indians indicates that they are greedy persons profiting

from the misfortunes of the British. This is a total distortion of the image of Indian leaders.

REFERENCES

- 1 Gomathi Narayanan, "British Fathers and Indian Sons: Guilt and Pride for the Indian Freedom Movement in the Post-Independence Indian Novel in English", Journal of South Asia Lit. Vol. 17, No. 1, 1982, p. 210.
- 2 This poem, 'The White Man's Burden', written in 1899 to celebrate the victory of the United States against Spain, which had resulted in the acquisition of Cuba and the Philippine Islands, appealed the United States to play its part in the imperialist task, quoted from, Shamsul Islam, Chronicles of the Raj: A Study of Literary Reaction to the Imperial Idea Towards the End of the Raj. (London: Macmillan, 1979), p. 6.
- 3 Paul Scott, The Raj Quartet. (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1976), pp. 388-391.