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THE ETERNAL ANTI-FEMININE

An Essay on Feminism and Anti-feminism in Chaucer

By Stanley F. Rajiva

> 'Satire on women is as old as the Egyptian Book of the Dead and as new as the American comic strip.'
>
> —Francis Lee Utley, *The Crooked Rib* (Ohio, 1940), p. 25.

Anti-feminism was a subject of considerable discussion in medieval times. The discussion usually centred on marriage and the various moral issues involved. The most prominent institution involved in this discussion was the Church. With a few exceptions, the early Church Fathers, while accepting marriage as necessary for the propagation of the race, represented virginity as the greater good. The sexual relationship between husband and wife was viewed as shameful and sinful by the medieval Church. Aquinas declared the sexual act in marriage a venial sin, its sinfulness depending upon the amount and kind of pleasure derived from it. Jerome's *Epistola adversus Jovinianum* looked upon marriage so unfavourably that the letters were withheld from the Romans by his contemporaries. Between the time of the Church Fathers and the thirteenth century, there was little change, at least in the Christian Church, in the basic attitudes to women.

A corollary to the above viewpoint was the view which looked on woman as an evil temptress bent on man's destruction. According to Professor Gist, the most extreme of these attitudes appeared among the clergy.[1] Eileen Power, on the contrary, thinks that this narrow and bigoted view was not generally accepted. Miss Power blames the Church for oscillating between veneration of women on the one hand (in its adoration of Mary, for instance) and blame and censure on the other, deriving from Eve's responsibility for man's fall.[2] Miss Power asks:

> Was she Eve, the wife of Adam, or was she Mary, the mother of Christ?[3]

The question is difficult to answer because both positions are clearly exaggerated. Miss Power adds:

> The view of woman as an instrument of the Devil . . . was the creation of the Church. . . . The ideal of marriage which inspires the majority of the didactic works addressed to women in the course of the Middle Ages is founded upon this idea and demands the most implicit obedience. It is set forth in the stories of Patient Griseld and the Nut-Brown Maid. . . .[4]

The cult of the lady was the invention of the medieval aristocracy. It derived without doubt from the cult of the Virgin, begetting in its turn the idea of medieval chivalry, 'one of the most powerful ideas evolved by the Middle Ages'.[5]

Secular literature is as hostile to women as the Church. In Chaucer, of course, both the feminist and anti-feminist viewpoints have their respective spokesmen: the Merchant and Jankyn (the wife of Bath's fifth husband), for instance, are the chief spokesmen for the anti-feminist point of view, while the Wife of Bath and the Clerk seem to speak for women. Yet something is obviously wrong somewhere; the Wife of Bath and the Clerk seem strange advocates of a like cause. We know, of course, that the Wife of Bath is militantly feminist as well as anti-clerical. She puts the blame for medieval anti-feminism squarely on the church when she says,

> For trusteth wel it is an impossible
> That any clerk wol speke good of wyves. (D 688-9)

This is as it should be. But what of the Clerk's Tale of Patient Griselda? It is, as Chaucer warns us in the Envoy, an ideal impossible to attain, and best not attempted at all. In real life, however, things may have been a little different. As Eileen Power dryly observes:

> There is a sort of poetic justice in the fact that men whose ideal wife was Patient Griselda not infrequently found themselves married to the Wife of Bath.[6]

One such man was the Merchant, whose tale of January and May is a masterpiece of Chaucerian irony.

I

THE TRADITION

There were two streams of medieval anti-feminist satire: one, of Juvenalian indignation with its anti-matrimonial note, found in the work of Jerome, Theophrastus and Walter Map; the other, the Ovidian revelation of the way to a woman's heart, a revelation both realistic and artful, seen in the Goliards, Jean de Meun, Boccaccio, Chaucer, and the rebellious lover poems.[7] While the second is more substantial in literary examples, one must not imagine it to be completely distinct from the first. For instance, Jean de Meun's catalogue of the evils attending marriage in the *Roman de la Rose* and Jean's jealous husband, who denounces all women as coquettes and calls Juvenal as a witness for the prosecution, clearly partake of both traditions.

To what shall we attribute Jean de Meun's anti-feminism? It is in the best secular traditions of the Middle Ages, traditions which find expression in the fabliau, the mime, the beast epic, the fable, and other literary forms. It is the middle class which provided the great audience for medieval literature, just as it provided some of the most gifted writers. Chaucer belonged to the middle class, and places his satire in the mouths of those very bourgeois souls, the Wife of Bath and the Merchant, making the gentle Franklin the exponent of courtly marriage.

Unlike Jean de Meun, Chaucer was not a cleric and he was not celibate. It has been suggested that anti-feminism may, in part, have originated from 'monkish satire' of women and in part, from a reaction to the formalization and codification of the manners of love in the courtly love tradition. The monk's view of mankind was derived primarily from Jerome's paraphrase of Theophrastus, who seems to have said emphatically,

> No man can serve his books and his wife with equal zeal.[8]

As for courtly love, the reaction took a form somewhat as follows:

> When the Middle Ages formalized love the ambivalent hate was included in the formula.... The simultaneous view that women are merciless and full of pity, that they bring a man to honour and bring him to his doom, that they should be reverenced and reviled—these paradoxes are the very essence of the courtly tradition.[9]

This is true of the anti-feminist tradition, too. If one remembers the lack of reverence for women in Goliardic poetry, the influence of the classics, the traditional antagonism of the sexes suggested in the strut of the male and the coquetry of women (the dialogues of Chauntecleer and Pertolete in Chaucer's *The Nun's Priest's Tale*, for example), and the tone of banter and jest in most satire, we have enumerated most of the factors which account for anti-feminist satire. Thus the interminable debates, the *jeu partis*, the palinodes, and the repeated myth of the poet who had sinned against the law of love, the Chaucer of *The Legend of Good Women*, Gavin Douglas's *The Palace of Honour* and the continued popularity of both parts of the *Roman de la Rose* can be explained only in terms of the paradoxes inherent in the courtly love tradition.

Professor Utley has rightly pointed out that the quarrel about women was endless because its arguments and exempla could be turned either way. The inventors of courtly love had satirists among them; Alain Chartier's *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, for example, enjoyed a great reputation as a satire. Andreas Capellanus wrote a final book rejecting love. Maltheolus's vicious *Lamentations* and Hoccleve's *Dialogue* must have had numerous admirers. C. S. Lewis believes (and not entirely without reason) that Guillaume de Lorris might well have written a palinode if he had lived to finish his poem.

As for the *Legend of Good Women*, C. S. Lewis observes:

> Some politicians hold that the only way to make revolutionary safe is to give him a seat in Parliament. The Duck and Goose have their seats in Chaucer's *Parlement* for the same reason; and for the same reason we have

> satire on women in Andreas, we have the shameless Nekke in the *Rose*, we have Pandarus in the book of *Troilus* and Dinadan in Malory. . . .[10]

Dorothy Bethurum points out the same thing when she thinks that Chaucer's mention of Jerome and Walter Map as defenders of faithful women in the Prologue to *The Legend of Good Women* is ironic. Such a view resolves for us the apparent conflict between Chaucer's pose of detachment in his work and his often complete identification with his characters.

II

THE FORMS

Satire and defence of women could be cast into many different forms. A few of the more important forms may be mentioned here. There was, for example, the *chanson d'aventure*, whose traces may be seen in sophisticated love-visions like the *Roman de la Rose* and the *Book of the Duchess*. The 'confession' (closely linked with the form known as the *chanson de mal mariee* of the wife's lament) has, as its most celebrated medieval examples, the Wife of Bath's *Prologue* and the revelations of La Vieille in the *Rose*. Of the 'debate' and its many counterparts, *The Owl and the Nightingale* and *The Nut-Brown Maid* are the best known. The 'catalogue' is frequently used both by Boccaccio and Chaucer; and the 'anti-feminist treatise' or verse essay is used by Chaucer in the Merchant's *Prologue and Tale* and in the *Romaunt of the Rose*. Chaucer's poem *Merciles Beaute* (generally ascribed to him) is an example of 'the rebellious lover poem'; and Lydgate's *Bycorne and Chychevache*, a satire on women's shrewishness, is the best example of the form known as 'the denunciation of love', a didactic branch of satire on women closely related to the warning to beware in the choice of mistress or wife. We might remember that Chaucer, in the Envoy to the *Clerk's Tale*, warns noble wives against such humility as Griselda's 'lest Chichevache you swelve in hire entraille!' (E 1188) In *L'Envoy de Chaucer A Bukton* the conversion of virtuous maidens to wicked wives is described and the Wife of Bath is referred to for further read-

ing 'Of this matere. . .' Apparently, the Wife of Bath was the last word on the subject of marriage and the single state; the text of her 'sermon' in her Prologue is that it is better to marry than to burn, and she derives her authority from St. Paul, Jovinian, and Deschamps.

Other kinds of anti-feminist satire, notably the fabliau and the beast-fable, were built around specific charges against women: pride, obstinacy, the desire for mastery, lasciviousness, jealousy, garrulity, vanity, and greed, qualities which form the nucleus of the shrew literature. *The Nonnes Preestes Tale* is one example of such satire. In works like Gower's *Confessio Amantis* misogyny is classified as a type of pride and exemplified by Narcissus and those descriptions of a virtuous woman, of which, in Chaucer, the *Clerk's Tale* of Griselda is the classic example.

III

SOME EXAMPLES

A comparatively simple example of the use of anti-feminist material is the passage in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* where Gawain bursts into an invective against women and speaks of men who are deceived by women:

> But if a dullard should dote, deem it no wonder
> (l. 2414. Tr. Marie Boroff)

In *The Nun's Priest's Tale* we have the following:

> Wommennes conseils been ful often colde;
> Wommannes conseil brought us first to wo,
> And made Adam fro Paradys to go,
> Ther as he was ful myrie and wel at ese.
> But for I noot to whom it might displese,
> If I conceil of wommen wolde blame,
> Passe over, for I seyde it in my game.
> Rede auctours, where they trete of swich mateere,
> And what they seyn of wommen ye may heere.

> Thise been the cokkes wordes, and nat myne;
> I kan noon harm of no womman devyne.
> (D 4446-56)

On closer examination of the passage, however, we are in something of a quandary. If, for practical purposes, we assume on the one hand that Chaucer is quoting the cock verbatim, we are forced to take the cock seriously—being eaten by a fox is no laughing matter. On the other hand, we know from the medieval beast-epic and beast-fable that birds and beasts spoke with human voices, tones and opinions, and that these forms of narrative were often used for debate, argument, and the exposition of human ideas and problems. So here at least, the cock can be considered a spokesman for a medieval point of view.

The other passage is perfectly in context; and yet Gawain is no misogynist in the remainder of the story. Besides, the passage looks too much like a prepared insertion. Gawain begs the Green Knight to commend him to his lady and to the other lady her companion. Gawain's hindsight has all the marks of traditional authority behind it. He has been fooled; and he would warn others not to follow his example. I quote the passage in full:

> But if a dullard should dote, deem it no wonder,
> And through the wiles of a woman be wooed into sorrow,
> For so was Adam by one, when the world began,
> And Solomon by many more, and Samson the mighty
>
> And one and all fell prey
> To women that they had used
> (ll. 2414-17, 2425-6)

The oddest thing in the passage from Chaucer is that it is Chaucer and not the cock speaking. It is difficult, nevertheless, to make Chaucer the spokesman for the cock's point of view, the cock being, as we know, a cock in a fable with a human voice, opinions and personality. One way out of this has been suggested by Lumiansky, who explores the personality of the Nun's Priest and suggests that the anti-feminist aspects of the tale

represent the Nun's Priest's ways of hinting his dissatisfaction at being under the petticoat rule of the Prioress.[11]

Lumiansky also suggests that the anti-feminism represents the Nun's Priest's attempt to comfort the Host and a direct answer to Chaucer's tale of Melibeus:

> By means of his story, the brilliant gaiety of which contrasts sharply...with the lengthy and dull Melibeus he makes clear that a husband is not always wise in following his wife's counsel. As Severs has shown Chaucer's originality in the tale consists in emphasizing this point. In suggesting that his listeners read the authorities (3213 B The Monk's Tale) he has in mind the same anti-feminist writings found in Jankyn's book.[12]

All this, however, is a little beside the point. If the point of the *Nonnes Preestes Tale* is that a husband is not always wise in following his wife's counsel, it need not be buttressed with anti-feminist material. One of the points of the tale is that Chauntecleer is unwise in disregarding the meaning of his dreams. We do not know which 'auctours' Chaucer refers us to as he slyly and ambiguously evades responsibility and blame for his attitude to women. All he tells us is:

> Thise been the cokes wordes, and nat myne;
> I kan noon harm of no woman divyne. (B 4455-6)

The main point of the tale (deriving from a tradition going back to Aesop's *Fables*) is moral, Chaucer makes it at the end:

> Lo, swich it is for to be recchelees
> And necligent, and truste on flaterye. (B 4626-7)

As for the *Monk's Tale*, it is clear that Chaucer is enjoying himself at the expense of the Host. The so-called 'murye wordes of the Hoost to the Monk' (Rubric to *The Prologue to the Monk's Tale, Group B*) are really our most vivid glimpse into Harry Bailly's domestic situation, in which the hen-pecked Bailly is tyrannized by Goodelief. Of her he says in his saddest manner,

Al be it that I dar nat hire withstonde
For she is byg in armes, by my feith (B 3110-11)

and provokes our laughter rather than our sympathy.

IV

JANKYN'S BOOK OF WICKED WYVES

In the anti-feminist material used by Chaucer we often find the same examples being used again and again. In stories like those of the Monk and the Nun's Priest this material is used without too much complexity, as part of an argument whose pros and cons were still being debated and where one's opinions did not necessarily reflect one's character. But all this is changed when we come to the Wife of Bath. In her Prologue and Tale, for the first time in the *Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer uses traditional anti-feminist material through a speaker to give depth to character and to point to an attitude.

It is not very important whether or not the Wife of Bath's Prologue was intended to introduce a 'Marriage Group'. Jankyn's anti-feminist opinions come out of a book whose principal authors have been obligingly mentioned by Chaucer. They include Jerome, Theophrastus and Walter Map, besides Tertullian, Solomon and Ovid. It is interesting to follow Chaucer as he shapes and reshapes the material of the anti-feminist tradition.

R. A. Pratt suggests that Chaucer developed the Wife of Bath over a period of years and through a number of stages as he gradually assimilated and reworked this tradition, combining it with other material and his own knowledge of contemporary English life.[13] He bases his position on the thesis that the first part of the Wife of Bath's *Prologue*, which is a defence of marrying and marriage, is distinctly different from the rest of her *Prologue* in tone, purpose and source material used.[14]

Pratt divides the Wife of Bath's Prologue into *three* sections: the first, her combative and argumentative defence of marriage based on Jerome's *Epistola adversus Jovinianum*; the second, expository and descriptive, describing how she browbeat her first three husbands, and based on Deschamps and Theophras-

tus; and a narrative and dramatic third section describing her adventures with her fourth and fifth husbands, based on excerpts from Jerome, Walter Map and Valerius Maximus. Now Jankyn's 'book' contained extracts, we are told, from the *Aureolus Liber* of Theophrastus and from Jerome, Solomon and Ovid. But Jankyn is not the only one who draws on these sources. The Wife herself draws on Theophrastus for her description of her first three husbands. It is entirely possible, as Pratt suggests, that since Alice, earlier in her *Prologue*, quotes from 'Theofraste' and Jankyn after becoming Alice's fifth husband quotes only from Jerome, Solomon, Valerius Maximus and Ovid, Chaucer had not yet thought of presenting the book as the favourite reading of Alice's fifth husband or of using it as a crucial factor in the story of Alice's struggles with him. In fact, Pratt's theory of an earlier Wife of Bath, whose Prologue consisted only of her accounts of her first three *old* husbands, using the anti-matrimonial and anti-feminist materials adapted from Theophrastus and Deschamps, and following neatly after the Tale of *Melibee*, 'where touches of anti-feminism are matched by touches of feminism'[15] is very plausible. This would make the opening lines of her *Prologue* lead directly to the Pardoner's interruption and her rejoinder to him:

Alice, thus, would begin with:

> Experience, though noon auctoritiee
> Weere in this world is right ynough for me
> To speak of wo that is in mariage;
> For, Lordynges sith I twelve yeer was of age
> Thonked be God that is eterne on lyve,
> Housbondes at chirche dore I have had fyve,—
> If I so ofte myghte have wedded bee,—
> And alle were worthy men in hir degree. (D 1-8)

At this point, she would be interrupted by the Pardoner:

> 'Now dame,' quod he, 'by God and by seint John!
> Ye been a noble prechour in this cas.
> I was about to wedde a wyf allas! (D 164-8)
> . . .'

Alice's rejoinder (D 169-77) telling him that her tale was 'nat bigonne' (169) and that when she was through telling her tale 'of tribulacioun in mariage' (173) he would have to decide if he would still 'sippe/Of thilke tonne...' (176-7) would lead directly to the 'ensamples mo than ten' (D 179) which she promises. According to Pratt, the Wife of this section, who describes her good, old and rich husbands, is concerned with 'money, clothing, dances, deceit and her *bele chose*...'[16] This is the wife who wields the whip of matrimonial tribulation and is probably closest to Chaucer's first conception of her.

Chaucer here dramatizes anti-feminist material by making the Wife accuse her husbands of anti-feminism in words which are paraphrased from Theophrastus and Deschamps.

Chaucer's method of adapting his anti-feminist material is unique. In Jean de Meun, Theophrastus and Deschamps, passages of monologue, for instance, are quoted only as exempla, and the Jealous Husband in the *Roman de la Rose* is an example of the evils of sovereignty in marriage. But Chaucer, as Muscatine points out,

> saw in the sample speech, a needed opportunity for broadly extending his character's remarks without violating her personality. Accordingly, part of the Wife's monologue is quotation of what she could and did say at different times and under far different circumstances.[17]

Thus her first example from the fragment of Theophrastus and its imitations was originally spoken by a shrew. Chaucer makes the Wife of Bath, who *is* a shrew, speak it and thus, to quote Muscatine, 'converts exemplum into autobiography'.[18] There is, then, a special irony when the Wife says:

> Thou seyst we wyves wol our vices hide
> Till we be fast, and thanne we wol hem shewe—
> Wel may that be a proverbe of a shrewe!
>
> (D 282-4)

When the Wife of Bath quotes the masculine abuse of her three old husbands it is not Chaucer's purpose so much to

rehash the old anti-feminist literature again as it is to give depth to the Wife's character and to portray clearly her aggressive nature and her constant struggle for sovereignty in marriage.

V

THE ETERNAL ANTI-FEMININE

One agrees with Muscatine that '*The Clerk's Tale* has been very little appreciated, much condemned, and almost never analysed.'[19] But Muscatine himself takes everything, including the *Envoy* (spoken probably by Chaucer or the Clerk himself), seriously. This is a great pity, because it becomes clear from a careful reading of the Tale and its *Envoy* that a special kind of Chaucerian irony is to be found in the *Envoy* and in the two stanzas which (it is generally assumed by scholars) he added to fit the Tale into the dramatic framework of the tales dealing with marriage.

I suggest that the *Clerk's Tale*, though serious and pathetic enough in itself, was used by Chaucer with ironic anti-feminist implications whose nature is to be found in the so-called *Envoy* to the tale. Germaine Dempster, for example, defines dramatic irony in Chaucer as

> A strong contrast, unperceived by a character in a story, between the surface meaning of his words or deeds and something else happening in the same story.[20]

In this sense, there is no dramatic irony in the *Clerk's Tale*. Dempster emphatically states that

> In the pilgrims' short and accidental relations to one another—relations that involve no action but only talk—there obviously was not much chance for dramatic irony.[21]

But she concedes that there are ironic strains in the pilgrims' lives which are found in the different prologues and links. She does not, however, explore these strains.

Now recent critics (R. A. Pratt, R. F. Jones and others) have tried to suggest that the Wife of Bath's Tale (supposedly

illustrating 'sovereignty' in marriage) of the loathly hag and the knight is really an expression of the Wife of Bath's desire for a sixth marriage, the desire not to be sovereign in marriage, but to submit to a husband who will take her by force (the 'rape' in her tale makes this point clearly) and rule her. Such a suggestion is not as far-fetched as it appears to be; for the same desire is seen in her life with Jankyn the clerk after their little disagreement and fisticuffs over his anti-feminist Bible; we are told by the Wife herself that 'After that day we hadden never debaat.' (D 822)

There is an interesting similarity between Jankyn's promise to his wife, where he says,

> ...Myn owene trewe wyf
> Do as thee lust the terme of al thy lyf (D 819-20)

and the knight's assurance to the loathly hag:

> My lady and my love, and wyf so deere,
> I put me in your wise governance
> Cheseth youreself which may be most plesance
> .....
> For as you liketh, it suffiseth me. (D 1230-2, 1235)

Compare, too, the Wife's words:

> God helpe me so, I was to hym as kynde
> As any wyf from Denmark unto Ynde (D 823-4)

and the hag's answer to the knight:

> For by my trouthe, I wol be to you bothe,
> This is to seyn, ye, bothe fair and good
> .....
> But I to you ne also good and trewe
> As evere was wyf, syn that the world was newe.
> But but I be to-morn as fair to seeme
> As any lady, emperice, or queene,
> That is bitwixe the est and eke the west.
> (D 1240-1, 1242-7)

These similarities in phrasing and thought are more than accidental.

In my opinion, there is a similar subtle irony in the Clerk's tale of patient Griselda. Whoever its first teller (and we have no definite evidence regarding that) the fact that Chaucer assigned it to the Clerk (traditionally regarded as anti-feminist) is of significance. The Wife of Bath having named Jankyn, her fifth husband, as 'a Clerk of Oxenford' (obviously to rile the Clerk) goes on to make her famous generalization about clerks, in which she was supported without doubt by the anti-feminist tradition of the celibate clergy. She says:

> For trusteth wel, it is an impossible
> That any clerk wol speke good of wyves
> .....
> By God! if wommen hadde writen stories,
> As clerkes han withinne hire oratories,
> They wolde han writen of men moore wikkednesse
> Than al the mark of Adam may redresse
> .....
> Therefore no womman of no clerk is preysed.
> The clerk, whan he is oold, and may noght do
> Of Venus werkes worth his olde sho,
> Than sit he down and writ in his dotage
> That wommen han nat hepe hir mariage!
> (D 688-9, 693-6, 706-10)

The logic of this is irrefutable because it is simply common sense.

The Clerk who sits quietly through the Tales of the Wife of Bath, the Friar and the Summoner is reproved by the Host for sitting like a newly-married maid. 'This day ne herde I of your tonge a word' (E 4), says the Host and wonders if the Clerk is biding his time, pondering 'som sophyme' (E 5). In fact, while the Friar and the Summoner were telling their tales the Clerk has indeed been biding his time. Being a scholar he has thought out his own ironic rejoinder to the Wife of Bath's frontal attack on himself and all of his cloth.

The Clerk's tale is a solemn tale and is told even more

solemnly by the poker-faced Clerk. For the most part of the tale, we suspect nothing; but when at the end of the story Griselda's cup of humiliation is full, the Clerk says this:

> Men speke of Job, and moost for his humblesse,
> As clerkes, whan hem list, konne wel endite,
> Namely of men, but as in soothfastnesse,
> Though clerkes preise wommen but a lite,
> Ther kan no man in humblesse hym acquite
> As womman kan, ne kan been half so trewe
> As wommen been, but it be falle of newe.
>
> (E 932-8)

At this point one sits up and takes note. Observe what he says:

> Clerks, when it pleases them, have spoken well of *men*, but frankly speaking, although clerks rarely or never praise women, no man can be as humble as a woman nor be half as faithful as a woman, unless things have changed recently.

Now I am inclined to believe that this praise of women by the Clerk is tongue-in-cheek praise and hence ironic. Whether or not the company got the point is another matter.

The Clerk does not pause (and no one interrupts!) but continues with the sixth and last part of his story. The story itself ends at E 1141, but the Clerk is not done yet. 'Herkneth to what this auctour seith...' (E 1141), he requests the company. The story, says the Clerk (Chaucer is ostensibly paraphrasing Petrarch here), is not meant to encourage wives to follow Griselda in humility, 'for it were unportable, though they wolder' (E 1144), but to make every person, 'constant in adversitee' (E 1146). 'Unportable' means 'intolerable' and the Clerk is true to his cloth when he says that. One word more, he says (this was Chaucer's addition to the story, as was the *Envoy*); it would be very hard to find two or three Griseldas in a whole town nowadays; and even if there were some, they would not last long if put to 'swich assayes' (E 1166). His last thought is of the Wife of Bath of whom he has been thinking all along:

For which heere, for the Wyves love of Bathe—
Whose lyf and al hire secte God mayntene
In heigh maistrie, and elles were it scathe—

he will sing a song.

The song is the *Envoy*. This may or may not be 'a remnant of the pre-Canterbury Tales form of the Griselda narrative',[22] as Professor Baugh has suggested, but it brings the *Clerk's Tale* of patient Griselda to its magnificently ironic conclusion. No one reading the six stanzas of the *Envoy* and remembering who the speaker is can now doubt the Clerk's intentions in re-telling the old story of Petrarch. The tale is a manifesto, a prognostication and a little bit of sardonic advice to 'archewyves', 'sklendre wyves' and 'noble wyves'. The 'archewyves' and 'sklendre wyves' are asked by the Clerk not to give way to men; and the 'noble wyves' are warned against following Griselda's bad example, 'lest Chicevache yow swelve in hire entraille' (E 1188). After reading that, who can doubt the Clerk's intentions?

VI

THE CASE OF THE MISOGYNOUS MERCHANT

The Merchant's *Prologue* is one thing, and his *Tale* another. This is because the Merchant, taking up where the Clerk left off, points to himself as a standing, living example of the woes of matrimony. 'We wedded men lyve in sorwe and care' (E 1228), he cries, but a few lines later tells us that he has been married only two months. His *Prologue* is autobiography, but clearly his Tale is not all fiction. His tale, in fact, illustrates his plight and comments on it by implication. The defence of marriage in his tale is cynical and ironic. The sixty-year-old knight who decides in his old age to commit matrimony and in defiance to Theophrastus offers reasons for his folly is the Merchant himself, speaking with the ironic hindsight of a man who knows it is two months too late now.

And certainly as sooth as God is kyng
To take a wyf it is a glorious thyng

. . . . . .

For who kan be so buxom as a wyf?
A wyf is Goddes yifte verraily
. . . . . .
A wyf! a, Seinte Marie, benedicite!
How myghte a man han any adversitee
That hath a wyf?

(E 1267-8, 1287, 1311, 1337-9)

He follows it up with a series of Biblical exempla of wise women, among them Rebecca, Judith, Abigail and Esther, and after mentioning Seneca in passing, cites Cato's advice:

Suffre thy wyves tonge, as Catoun bit.
She shal commande, and thou shalt suffren it.

(E 1377-8)

It is the use of Cato as an authority on marriage which gives him away. For of all the schoolmen, as recent scholarship has shown, Cato was one of the chief sources of Chaucer's anti-feminist material, apart from Deschamps, Jean de Meun and Walter Map.[23]

January, in the Merchant's tale, marries in spite of his brother Justinus's misgivings: saying, 'Straw for thy Senek and for thy proverbs' (E 1567) he dismisses the schoolmen and their reasons. In a last desperate attempt to make him change his mind, Justinus even attempts to cite the Wife of Bath's account of 'tribulation in marriage' as a warning and an example (though Justinus could not possibly have heard the Wife of Bath!). But January is firm; marry he will and marry he does.

We come now to the middle of the tale. January and May are in the garden, with the squire Damyan in the pear tree. May is about to betray January, when the 'kyng of fairye' tells his queen of 'The tresons whiche that wommen doon to man' (E 2239) and decides to restore January's eyesight. Pluto and Prosperpina have a little argument in which some of the old anti-feminist arguments and rebuttals are exchanged. One wonders, a little irreverently, at what might have happened had not the Gods intervened. That the tale is, after all,

anti-feministic in implication the Host's comments at the end prove conclusively when he says:

> Now swich a wyf I pray God kepe me fro!
> Lo, whiche sleightes and subtilitees
> In wommen been! For ay as bisy as bees
> Been they, as sely men for to ceceyve,
> And from a sooth evere wol they weyve
> By this Marchantes tale it preveth weel.
>
> (E 2420-5)

Harry Bailly too has a wife. Like the Merchant he regrets his marriage bitterly:

> Me reweth soore I am unto hire teyd. (E 2432)

CONCLUSIONS

Thus Chaucer's use of traditional anti-feminist material reveals itself as subtler than a mere surface reading of the Tales would indicate. The simplest use of his material is in the *Nonnes Preestes Tale* where he uses it in the form of debate and argument, to state the case for and against women. Chauntecleer and Pertelote are clearly spokesmen for traditional viewpoints. However, Chauntecleer's deliberate mistranslation of 'in Principio, / Mulier est hominis confusio' (B 4353-4) as 'Womman is mannes joye and al his blis' (B 4356) shows us which way the wind of medieval anti-feminist opinion was blowing. Yet Chaucer, here at least, refuses to take sides or arbitrate in the age-old argument. He will say nonchalantly,

> This stories is also trewe, I undertake,
> As is the book of Launcelot de Lake
> That wommen holde in ful greet reverence (B 4401-3)

tease us with the ambiguity of 'These been the cokkes wordes, and nat myne' (B 4455), take a mock-chivalric hat off to women with 'I kan noon harm of no womman divyne' (B 4456), and then give us the Wife of Bath.

Chaucer used all kinds of feministic and anti-feministic material. One need not read *The Legend of Good Women* to know the case for the defence; many of the Canterbury Tales themselves catalogue the names and deeds of good women. *The Franklin's Tale*, for instance, mentions some twenty-one examples, all classical; and the conversation between Pluto and Proserpine states both sides of the weary argument. Pluto's case rests on Solomon's evidence on women as deceivers and shrews; to which Proserpine says quite rightly, 'What rekketh me of your authorities?' (E 2276) and cites the stories in Roman history as her proof that women are 'ful trewe, ful goode, and vertuous'. It is true, as Professor Utley observes, that

> When Chaucer makes fun of women or of courtly love he is attempting neither to abolish a code nor to transform a sex. He is merely participating in a very courtly game, which fits excellently into medieval pomp and ceremony.... Satire was an integral part of 'the olde daunce....'[24]

But we are concerned with Chaucer's *use* of his material and not with his own views of women. The artistic development of Chaucer shows us a writer who saw the complexity of human character and motive, especially in women. Criseyde and the Wife of Bath are different, not in kind or degree, but in the complexity of their character and motivation.

Therefore all was grist to Chaucer's artistic mill—the classical writers, the schoolmen, the patristic authors, traditional proverbs and saws, the Bible, contemporary poems and tracts, fabliaux, lays, and a hundred other literary forms—as long as he could use the material for his purposes. Thus the Wife of Bath emerges finally as something more than an aggressive, talkative, much-married shrew; her personality achieves, it seems to me, something of that depth which Shakespeare is able to give Falstaff, and the means used by both writers are not so very dissimilar. The wealth of material which Chaucer uses to represent points of view opposed to those held by the Wife is truly astonishing. Professor Wayne Shumaker has summed up the actual extent of the Wife's 'learning' thus:

> In the eight hundred twenty-eight lines of her *Prologue* she refers to Jesus, Solomon, St. Paul, Lamech, Abraham, Jacob, Mark, Ptolemy, Argus, Job, Metellius, Venus, Darius, Appelles, Mars, Simplicius Gallus, Ecclesiastis, Valerius, Theophrastus, Jerome, Jovinian, Tertullian, Chrysippus, Trotula, Heloise, Ovid, Midas, Adam, Mercury, Eve, Samson, Hercules, Dejanira, Socrates, Xanthippe, Pasiphae, Clytemnestra, Amphiaraus, Eriphyle, Livia, Lucilia, Latumyus (whoever he is), and Arrius, not to mention the various saints by whom she swears—an average of better than one new literary or mythological reference to every twenty lines.[23]

Many of Chaucer's borrowings and adaptations can only be appreciated by reference to the textual source. To do this is to recognize the artistry with which Chaucer could manipulate his source material. The characteristic liberty with which he handles his sources reminds us of another great borrower, William Shakespeare. In both Shakespeare and Chaucer the style is not only the man, but the character in whom it is embodied. Style in these writers is more than a manner of speaking. According to a commentator, the Wife of Bath is

> A magnificently natural creature in domestic squabble; she is also the embodiment of experience ripping out the pages of the book of authority, and of militant feminism fetching traditional masculine domination a healthy blow on the cheek.[26]

But as the same critic points out,

> The symbolism of her position could not have been made secure without the naturalistic style whereby Chaucer creates and then protects it.[27]

One might say, in conclusion, that though the anti-feminist theme holds up the so-called 'marriage group' of tales, it is the ironic hindsights it offers into the lives of some of the pilgrims that really interest us. The relation of tale to teller

is never so crucial as it is in the prologues, stories and epilogues of the *Wife of Bath's Tale*, the *Clerk's Tale* and the *Merchant's Tale*. The irony of the *Merchant's Tale* and the *Wife of Bath's Tale* is not merely the simple dramatic irony found in all the fabliaux as critics like Germaine Dempster would have it; it is a subtler, deeper irony linking the tale with the life, character and opinions of its teller. In other words, it is the stuff of Chaucer's tragi-comedy.

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COLERIDGE'S HOBBY-HORSE: PSYCHOLOGY

By R. R. Mehrotra

'Metaphysics and psychology have long been my hobby-horse', so wrote Coleridge in *Biographia Literaria*.[1] Shelley describes him as 'the subtle-souled psychologist', and Mr. Stephen Potter goes a step further and calls him the 'Father of modern psychology'. In his *Clark Lectures*, Humphry House characterizes Coleridge as 'a father of Existentialism, an anticipator of both Freud and Jung, of the Gestalt psychology and so on'.[2] Coleridge was, undoubtedly, one of the great 'seminal minds' of the nineteenth century—that is, his writing and thinking were of incalculable power in affecting the development of thought during and after his time. In many departments of thought Coleridge was, indeed, before his time—which is, perhaps, why some of his contemporaries considered him useless. But in literary criticism, and more especially in psychology, he was one of the most original writers of all time. Psychology consists essentially in the study of the mind by the mind, and this was Coleridge's life-long preoccupation. In criticism his firm conviction was that in order to recognize his place in nature man must first learn his own inner nature. In this respect Coleridge becomes the first psychologist in criticism; indeed, the first literary critic to make use of the very word 'psychology'[3] in his criticism of literature. In the lectures on Shakespeare, for example, we are continually aware of his restless search into the mind of the creative artist, the imaginative insight with which he read a play or analysed a poem. Again in his lecture on Beaumont and Fletcher, he dwells upon the same idea:

> Shakespeare shaped his characters out of the nature within; but we cannot so safely say, out of his own nature, as an individual person. No! this letter is itself but a *nature naturata*, an effect, a product, not a power. It was Shakespeare's prerogative to have the universal which is potentially in each particular opened out to him in the homo-

> generalis; not as an abstraction of observation from a variety of men, but as a substance capable of endless modifications of which his own personal existence was but one, and to use this one as the eye that beheld the other, and as the tongue that could convey the discovery.[4]

Here Coleridge is obviously anticipating the hypothesis of Jungian psychology known as 'the collective unconscious', a deep store of phyletic experience to which the poet has direct access and of which he is the inspired exponent.

It is no exaggeration to say that Coleridge presented for the first time a systematic and correct treatment of the 'sub-conscious' long before Freud came to make it his specific field of research. One may well recall here the modest confession of Lowes in this matter: 'I am not a trained psychologist and I am fully aware that in using, as I shall sometimes have to use it, the term "unconscious" I am playing with fire.'[5] I still think it safe to assume that to Coleridge goes the credit of making the earliest recorded use of the word 'sub-consciousness'. In his discussion of Memory Coleridge introduced the word as early as 1806:

> ...the vision enriched by sub-consciousness of palpability by influent recollections of touch.[6]

That this was not a chance or isolated application of a prefix to an accepted word is borne out by other discussions in the *Notebooks* of the relation of conscious to unconscious process:

> (*a*) depths of Being below, and radicative of all consciousness.[7]
> (*b*) Man...how much lies below his own consciousness.[8]
> (*c*) Viewed in all moods, consciously, uncons[ciously] semicons[ciously.][9]
> (*d*) he added to the consciousness hidden worlds within worlds.[10]
> (*e*) We being semi-demi-conscious.[11]
> (*f*) Poetry a rationalized dream dealing[? about] to manifold Forms our own Feelings, that never per-

haps were attached by us consciously to our own personal Selves.[12]

(g) a consciousness within a consciousness.[13]

These are but a few instances out of many. It is interesting to note in this context that the *OED* attributed to De Quincey the first use of 'subconscious' (1832-4), and 'sub-consciously' (1823). Subconsciousness did not appear until 1879.

Mr. Edmund Blunden says that E. S. Dallas 'detected the subconscious as the actual writing force before the term was invented.'[14] And Mr. C. D. Lewis repeats the same attribution.[15] In fact the term and the idea were ready to be born, Coleridge having paved the way. It may be of interest to notice that E. S. Dallas studied under Sir William Hamilton, a student and admirer of Coleridge. Dallas's *Poetics: An Essay on Poetry* and *The Gay Science* are worth careful attention at the hands of Coleridge-scholars.

One may, therefore, venture to state that the general distinction between conscious and unconscious modes or thought, which we regard as a discovery of modern psychology, was already fully realized by Coleridge. He described the unconscious as 'the twilight realms of consciousness'.[16] It presupposes that ideas and images exist 'in that shadowy half-being', 'that state of nascent existence in the twilight of imagination and just on the vestibule of consciousness'.[17] It assumes, again, a 'confluence of our recollections' through which we establish a centre, as it were, 'a sort of nucleus in [this] reservoir of the soul'.[18]

However, the distinction Coleridge made between the conscious and unconscious is not his own. He borrowed it very clearly from Schelling and tried to test it against his own poetic experience, giving it a touch of vivid reality. It is pertinent to quote here a passage which well illustrates the point:

> In every work of art there is a reconcilement of the external with the internal. . . the conscious is so impressed on the unconscious as to appear in it. He who combines the two [the conscious and the unconscious] is the man of genius; and for that reason must partake of both.

> Hence there is in genius itself an unconscious activity; nay, that is the genius of the man of genius.[19]

This obviously implies that the objects of perception are vividly fused into the neutral structure of the brain where they remain unconsciously latent. Here Coleridge echoes even more specifically a statement of Schelling which discerns in the best works of art a combination of conscious activity (*Thatigkeit*) and unconscious force (*kraft*).[20] For Coleridge, as for Schelling, the unconscious was a reality of immense psychological significance.

Even in his appreciation of Nature Coleridge furnishes an excellent example of what a modern psychologist has termed 'empathy', the projection of self into the lines and curves of landscape. This is a characteristic of the essentially aesthetic attitude or emotion and of a perpetual experience of a situation. The shapes and shifts and colours of Nature are used by him as symbols of emotional and mental states. At times, in his later life, he did respond to the genius of the Lake Country, ceasing to look on the mountains in Euclidean abstraction, 'only for the curves of their outlines, losing himself in a worship of the spirit of unconscious life'. And so he was to write:

> One travels along with the lines of a mountain. Years ago I wanted to make Wordsworth sensible of this. How fine is Keswick Vale! Would I suppose my soul lies and is quiet upon the broad level value! Would it act? It darts up into the mountain-top like a kite and like a chamois goat runs along the ridge—or like a boy who makes a sport on the road of running along a wall or narrow fence.

Lamb was, therefore, justified in writing of Coleridge: 'He long had been on the confines of the next world...for he had a hunger for eternity.'

Coleridge is, without doubt, the finest dreamer in English verse. The poet and the dreamer, as modern psychology has demonstrated, are closely akin. The images which occur to both are nothing but dramatizations of the subconscious. With Coleridge, the comparison is particularly relevant. His supreme

strength lay in his marvellous dream faculty. One might say that the dream faculty lay at the same time at the root of his greatness as a poet and his weakness as a man.

Kathleen Coburn is not at all exaggerating when she says, 'On Coleridge and his dreams a volume might be written.'[21] Dream with Coleridge was the greatest opium of all. Until the age of fourteen, Coleridge described himself as leading the life of a 'playless day-dreamer'. It was in his dreams and day-dreams that his imagination was intensely active. Even in his school-days Coleridge carried with him two divergent trends. His intellect was directed from his early days to Voltaire and Darwin, while the mystical strain in him took to Plato and the neo-Platonists. His nature was throughout fundamentally religious and he was inclined to the mystical. Speaking of his childhood, he informed Poole that by reason of 'my early reading of fairy tales and genie...my mind had been habituated to the Vast, and I never regarded my senses in any way as the criteria of my belief.'[22] *Kubla Khan* and other compositions of this period endeavour to express his mental or spiritual apprehension of the Vast, of the universe, as a whole.

Coleridge, in other words, lived in a sort of vacancy peopled by spectres, and lost, at the age of six years, his ability to distinguish between the miraculous and the normal, and with it his capacity for surprise or incredulity. Even the contrasts between night and day, sleeping and waking, ceased to be clearly defined. Already the present was like the dream of a somnambulist, and a dream equally at noon and midnight caused in him the worst terrors, and yet he continued with a morbid appetite to indulge in the reading which begot them.[23]

It would not be out of place here to refer at least to one incident of his early life, which explains his dreamy nature. One day walking along the Strand, Coleridge was enacting one of his day-dreams—this time, he was Leander swimming the Hellespont. But the pavement was crowded and the swimmer's outstretched arms caught the pocket of a passer-by. The alarmed boy, when challenged, denied any intention of picking the stranger's pocket and explained his unusual actions with such charm and ability that he not only escaped punishment but was actually presented with a free ticket to the

circulating library in King Street, Cheapside.[24] This is just one instance out of many to this purpose.

In his day-dreams, Coleridge withdraws into his own consciousness and tries to fathom it. In our wakeful moments we are in touch with the fringe or margin of consciousness; and in day-dreaming we approach the main stream of consciousness. Our becoming aware of the stream is what he calls a reverie: a vision.

It is in this vision that intuitions, hopes and fears that kindle hope, flash into shapes. Intimations are given form and move through stories or allegories. Figures and scenes have the particularity and weighted sense of unstated significance of the figures in visions. Thoughts are seen as things, in coruscating colours; yet outside the central glare everything fades to phantoms, and the transitions are as unnoticed or as unpredictable as in dreams. Few poets experience for long 'the somnial magic superinduced on, without suspending, the active powers of the mind.' But Coleridge reaches three times at least the inexhaustibility of great poetry in *The Ancient Mariner*, in *Christabel*, and in *Kubla Khan*.

Besides being an authentic dreamer himself, Coleridge was also a great expert of the psychology of dreams. He makes copious reference to the unconscious activity of the dream and was directly influenced by Mesmer, whose pioneer work on hypnosis led to the development, in good time, of the whole theory of a dynamic unconscious that Freud made the basis of his doctrine and practice of psychoanalysis.

'Dreams are no shadows with me, but the real substantial miseries of life,'[25] so wrote Coleridge in a letter to Welles. Elsewhere in a lecture on Dreams in 1818 he said 'in ordinary dreams we do not judge the objects to be real; we simply do not determine that they are unreal.' That is, the dreams for Coleridge have a logical coherence and they carry with them some tragic trait or other. The emphasis here is on the latent tragic quality, not on the reality or otherwise of the dream-content. Following are the entries from his *Notebooks* covering some of his dreams with a strong strain of the spirit of tragedy in them:

A sad night—went to bed after Tea—and in about two

> hours absolutely summoned the whole household to me by my Screams, from all the Chambers—and I continued screaming even after Mrs. Coleridge was sitting and speaking to me!—O me! O me!—[26]

> My dreams now always connected in some way or other with Isulia, all their forms in a state of fusion with some feeling or other, that is the distorted Reflection of my Day—Feelings respecting her/but the more distressful my Sleep, and alas! how seldom is it otherwise, the more distant, and X st's Hospitalized the forms and incidents.[27]

Here we find a pre-Freudian observation of the painfulness of the depths below consciousness and of dreams as involving the 'distorted Reflection' of the previous day. We may note yet another entry of the same import:

> Wednesday Night—Dreamt that I was saying or reading, or that it was said to me, 'varrius thus prophecied vinger at his Door by damned frigid Tremblings'—just after which I awoke—I feel to sleep again, having in the previous Doze meditated on the possibility of making Dreams (regular), and just as I had passed on the other side of the Confine of Dozing I afforded this specimen / 'I should have thought it Vossius rather than Varrius—tho' Varrius being a great poet, the idea would have been more suitable to him / only that all his writings were unfortunately lost in the Arrow. Again I awoke. . . .[28]

Here we have from Coleridge a most remarkable Freudian observation concerning the recurrence in sleep of the impressions immediately preceding the day—residue. It is significant to recall in this context the letter he wrote to Thelwall:

> Oft times, for a second or two, it flashed upon my mind that the then company, conversation and everything, had occurred before with all the precise circumstances, so as to make reality appear a semblance and the present like a dream in sleep.[29]

This he expressed in a sonnet thus:

> Oft my brain does that strange rapture roll
> Which makes the present (while its brief fit last)
> Seem a mere semblance of some unknown past
> Mixed with such feelings as distress the soul
> When dreaming that she dreams.[30]

And even as late as 1807 in his *Recollections of Love* he could say:

> You stood before me like a thought
> A dream remembered in a dream.

Coleridge clearly believed that, in the modern sense, dreams have meaning, a view not generally held before the present century. In dreams we have the mingling of the familiar and the unfamiliar, the associated and the discrete dissociated as is evident in the following entry:

> How much of the pleasure derived from the countenance of an old friend or woman long beloved—at least continually gazed at, may we trace it to this in dreams—so very strangely do they instantly lead to Sara as the first waking Thought / no recollection giving a hint of the means, except only that in some incomprehensible manner the whole Dream seems to have been about her? nay—perhaps, all wild, no form, no place, no incident, anyway connected with her!—What then? Shall I dare say, the whole Dream seems to have been her—She.[31]

Bodily sensations do play a large part in dreams and Coleridge is fully aware of it. In one of his entries he says, 'When I awoke, my right eyelid swelled.' Swollen eyelids and other bodily pains frequently go with them, and the figure of the menacing pursuer, usually feminine, is almost constant. Thus, there is a significant entry dated August 1805:

> 5' Clock, Wed: Morn: 14 Aug. 1805—very unwell yester eve on my return from St. Antonio—Boil on my arm—fell back on my stomach, and gave me on the sopha an epileptic dream—alas! alas! the consequences. The

> dependence of ideas, (consequently of Memory etc.) on states of bodily or mental Feeling (a truth so important to my consolations) strongly exemplified in the first moments of awaking from a Dream / A healthy man will often be utterly unable to do it within a few seconds of awaking—a nervous man, or one of perturbed or morbid functions of the lower bowels, can often carry on the Dream in his waking thoughts / and often in its increasing faintness and irrecollectibility has time to watch and compare.[32]

An epileptic dream is presumably a comatose state accompanied by muscular spasms. It is of interest to note that the questions Coleridge asks out of his own experience—the relation of dreams to bodily feelings, the relation to waking thoughts, the persistence of dream feelings into the waking state—all appear in Freud.[33]

Coleridge also observes frequently the intimate connection of anger and fear:

> How often am I doomed to perceive and wonder at the generation of violent Anger, in dreams, in consequence of any pain or distressful sensation in the bowels or lower parts of the Stomach. When I have awoke in agony of pure terror, my stomach I have found uniformly stretched with wind/, but anger not excluding but taking the lead of Fear, the bowels, and them most commonly it is 'Le Grice.'[34]

Like Freud, Coleridge writes about 'the work of sleep.'[35] Sleep seems to have a great fascination for him. In a letter to Thelwall he says:

> I should much wish, like the Indian Vishnu, to float about along an infinite ocean cradled in the flower of the Lotus and wake once in a million years for a few minutes just to know that I was going to sleep a million years more.[36]

On Coleridge's interest in the experience of falling asleep, the following entry is of special significance:

> O then as I first sink on the pillow, as if sleep had indeed a material realm, as if when I sank on my pillow, I was entering that region and realized Faery Land of Sleep. O then what visions have I had, what dreams, the Bark, the Sea, all the shapes and sounds and adventures made up of the stuff of Sleep and Dreams and yet my Reason at the Rudder/ O what visions as if my cheek and Temple were lying on me gale o' mast on—Seele meines Lebens!—and I sink down the waters, thro seas and seas—yet warm, yet a spirit—[37]

Otto Isakower describes similar fantasies which he interprets as a regression to the early phase of the infant at the breast.[38] One might also note the significance of the half-concealment in the pun and the foreign languages. The use of the pillow infant images in the above passage looks back to the early love poem, *The Hour When We shall Meet.*

Thus Coleridge was deeply interested in the 'facts of mind'—in all that arises in the mind directly or indirectly. He realized many of the factors and forces of psychology which Freud, Jung and the Gestalt psychologists have brought to light in modern times. Both as a poet and critic, he was concerned more with the process of human mind than with its product. Besides being greatly preoccupied with the mysteries of the human mind, he was himself subject to certain psychological complexes and abnormalities which not only determined the bent of his personality but also affected his literary outlook and style.

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33. Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, London, 1937.
34. *Notebooks*, Entry 2613.
35. *Collected Letters*, Letter No. 612 (February 1805).
36. Ibid. Letter to Thelwall.
37. *Notebooks*, Entry 1718.
38. Otto Isakower, 'A Contribution to the Patho-Psychology of Phenomena Associated with Falling Asleep', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, vol. xix, 1938, pp. 331-43.

BEATRICE OF SHELLEY'S DRAMA *THE CENCI*

By D. D. Baskiyar

Whereas Shelley's long poems such as *Queen Mab*, *Alastor*, *The Revolt of Islam* and *Prometheus Unbound* written before *The Cenci* are brilliant repositories of his 'dreams of what ought to be, or may be', this tragedy 'is a sad reality' (cf. Shelley's dedicatory letter to Leigh Hunt, dated May 29, 1819): it is a mirror that reflects the stark reality of human life—the flower of innocence and purity mercilessly crushed by Evil. Unlike *Prometheus Unbound* whose characters are apparently abstract and ethereal *The Cenci* deals with only human characters and is essentially a representation of human life and action. 'Everywhere', as Lady Shelley justly observed, 'we feel the earth under our feet. The characters are not personifications of abstract ideas, but are true human beings, speaking, indeed, a language exalted by passion, but, nevertheless, a language which has its roots in nature, and draws its sustenance from life' (*Shelley Memorials*, ed. Lady Shelley, 1859, p. 117).

Shelley, however, did not invent the Cenci story, but merely built up his drama on a historical fact. Its origin lies in an 'old manuscript account of the story of the Cenci' which a friend handed him in 1819 when the Shelley's were in Rome. The story hinged upon the pivotal incident—incest committed by Cenci upon his daughter Beatrice—and dealt with the latter's enormous sufferings. Naturally, the poet who was an emancipator of mankind and violently reacted against any act of oppression became interested in the Cenci story which was saturated with Beatrice's sufferings. It appears from the preface to the drama that Shelley's interest in the story increased tremendously when he saw Beatrice's portraits in the Colonna and Doria palaces. In his opinion her portrait (then thought to be by Guido) at the Colonna palace is 'a just representation of one of the loveliest specimens of the workmanship of Nature'. From this picture, Shelley says, Beatrice 'appears to have been one of those rare persons in whom energy and gentleness dwell together without destroying one another: her nature was simple and profound. The crimes and

miseries in which she was an actor and a sufferer are as the mask and mantle in which circumstances clothed her for her impersonation on the scene of the world.'

Shelley endows the Beatrice of the source with grace, beauty and majesty; and in the drama she appears as a new Beatrice, who is a living embodiment of innocence and more impressive than her historical counterpart. In his hands her character becomes so lofty that it elevates the very conception of human nature. The source says that she was an extremely orthodox Christian and belonged to the Roman Catholic Church. On the night previous to her execution she was immersed in religious meditation—reciting psalms and prayers. It is also stated in the source that on the day of the execution she and Lucretia 'confessed, heard mass, and received the holy communion'. Her last speech was saturated with intensely religious feelings—when she was ascending the scaffold she turned her piteous eyes towards heaven and invoked Christ:

> Most beloved Jesus who, relinquishing thy divinity, becamest a man; and did through my love purge my sinful soul also of its original sin with my precious blood; deign, I beseech thee, to accept that which I am about to shed at thy most merciful tribunal, as a penalty which may cancel my many crimes and spare me a part of that punishment justly due to me.

These last words as recorded in the chronicle are, no doubt, moving and characteristic of a deeply religious soul. But they are hackneyed too. Shelley created a different Beatrice. His Beatrice does not invoke Christ, but remembers God, the God of the universe and not of Christianity; and feeling that her angelic innocence is going to achieve triumph in death, she becomes supremely calm and embraces death. Her last words show how unaffected she is by the horror of death:

> Here, Mother, tie
> My girdle for me, and bind up this hair
> In any simple knot; ay, that does well.
> And yours I see is coming down. How often
> Have we done this for one another; now

We shall not do it any more. My lord,
We are quite ready. Well, 'tis very well.

Perhaps this calm is a manifestation of the triumph of her innocence. In contradiction to the historical character of Beatrice which is tinged with orthodox Christianity, Shelley strips his heroine of religious colouring; and universalizes her by idealizing her individual self. In her adversity she does not turn to the church, but remembers God. When she becomes victim of her father's outrage she prays to God and obeys the command of her conscience, because she thinks that God speaks through her conscience. She tells Lucretia and Orsino:

I have prayed
To God, and I have talked with my own heart,
And have unravelled my entangled will,
And hence at length determined what is right.
(III. i. 218-21)

Unlike the historical Beatrice, Shelley's, in dealing with the representatives of the church, Orsino and Carnal Camillo, considers herself as their equal. This aspect of the characterization may have been imperceptibly influenced by Shelley's belief that like men women are born free and must have equal status in society. The fact that Beatrice's attitude is not that of an inferior elevates her character and makes her appear more real than her historical counterpart. She possesses a sharp intellect and has insight into human character. She does not take long to understand Orsino's 'sly, equivocating vein' and unhesitatingly tells this feigned lover that she would not marry him even if he obtained the dispensation of the Pope to marry, though she promises him a spiritual fidelity. To her Cenci's strange behaviour is no riddle: when the frowning friend smiles on her she becomes suspicious of his dark intentions.

The Cenci is a drama of crime and punishment; and the world it presents is the world in which the most abandoned of men with constantly increasing fiereceness endeavours to subdue the whole human world around him. Cenci delights in the agony of others and is so merciless that when he hears the

news of the death of his sons, Rocco and Cristofano, who did not obey him, he rejoices; and in the presence of the guests whom he has invited to celebrate 'a most desired event', as he calls their death, he expresses his exultation while pouring wine into a bowl:

> Oh thou bright wine whose purple splendour leaps
> And bubbles gaily in this golden bowl
> Under the lamplight, as my spirits do,
> To hear the death of my accursed sons!
> Could I believe thou wert their mingled blood,
> Then would I taste thee like a sacrament,
> And pledge with thee the mighty Devil in Hell,
> Who, if a father's curses, as men say,
> Climb with swift wings after their children's souls,
> And drag them from the very throne of Heaven,
> Now triumphs in my triumph!
>
> (I. iii. 77-87)

This demoniac father, who wishes to taste the blood of his sons, later on assumes his fiercest form when his daughter Beatrice refuses to submit to him. All others around him have been subdued—even the dictator of religion, the Pope, is subservient to him. But he finds that the will of Beatrice alone is still unvanquished. Enraged by the resistance of 'her stubborn will', and, almost in despair, he decides to commit incest upon her thinking that this act will make her 'meek and tame'. It must be noted here that whereas in the source every behaviour of Cenci towards his daughter reflected his lust, in the drama his crime is motivated by his rancour, and by an uncontrollable desire to subdue 'her stubborn will'. Though this tendency to victimize the girl is reinforced also by his desire for revenge on his first wife,[2] in committing the crime his sole aim was to subdue her will; for after the outrage when she persistently refuses to appear before him he says:

> For Beatrice worse terrors are in store
> To bend her to my will. (IV. i. 75-76)

And a little before uttering these words, he seeks some means which might bring her under his control:

Might I not drag her by the golden hair?
Stamp on her? Keep her sleepless till her brain
Be overworn? Tame her with chains and famine?
(Ibid. 6-8)

But all his attempts to subdue her have failed: now he realizes that neither the dungeon of the Castle or Petrella, where she was transported to undergo rigorous punishment, nor the sinful charm, which he had thought would make her 'meek and tame', could bend her to his will. This realization only aggravates his anger; and in a state of exasperation he heaps curses upon the innocent soul. A character more loathsome and dreadful than Shelley's Cenci can scarcely be found in any other drama. Cenci is an incarnation of evil in its most dreadful form. In fact, in one of his speeches he declares himself how horrible he is:

I bear a darker deadlier gloom
Than the earth's shade, or interlunar air,
Or constellations quenched in murkiest cloud,
In which I walk secure and unbeheld
Towards my purpose. (II. i. 189-93)

Such a horrible creature as Cenci, who is absolutely devoid of any human feeling, cannot be placated by love and forgiveness. Though, in the preface, Shelley asserts that 'the fit return to make to the most enormous injuries is kindness and forbearance, and a resolution to convert the injurer from his dark passions by peace and love', there are some crimes which extinguish the very feeling of love and forgiveness existing in the victim's heart. Until Beatrice became a victim of Cenci's unspeakable crime she endured all the sufferings which her father inflicted upon her; and did try to move his heart by 'patience, love and tears' but in vain—his heart was too hard to feel pity for the sufferer. She also prayed passionately to God 'through the long sleepless nights', but his tyranny did not cease. Thus she kept clinging to piety; but when Cenci's outrage cracked the armour of righteousness she had to 'cast it off in favour of the cloak of a murderess',[3] In a momentary madness precipitated by the outrage she feels that everything

around her has become contaminated—even the sky, the sun and the air seem to be infected with the dark crime; the poison which has polluted her body cannot be purged from it:

> I cannot pluck it from me, for it glues
> My fingers and my limbs to one another,
> And eats into my sinews, and dissolves
> My flesh to a pollution, poisoning
> The subtle, pure, and inmost spirit of life!
> (III. i. 19-23)

But soon she realizes that she is innocent of any sin. Her mind and soul are still pure, though the body has been polluted. What frightens her most is the memory of what has been—she realizes that what has been done cannot be undone. If Cenci lives, the memory of his outrage will not only haunt her mind but it may deepen. So to obliterate this nightmarish memory 'something must be done'—something that will annihilate the source from which it sprang. At first she thinks of getting rid of this painful memory by committing suicide, but soon she recoils; she thinks that she has no right to destroy her body which is the 'temple' of God's spirit. And even death itself may not satisfy her conscience. Moreover, if she escapes from the world by committing suicide, there is no guarantee that the oppressor will cease to victimize others; and who will protect her step-mother and younger brother from the tyrant's clutches? A 'religious awe' and a sense of duty preclude her from committing suicide. But I think, apart from these two obvious reasons, there is a third reason too, suggested by her angelic innocence but not expressly mentioned anywhere in the drama, why she does not commit suicide. Unlike others, who may have suffered a similar wrong in the past, and being ashamed of the wrong, committed suicide without letting the world know the cause of their deaths, she feels no shame; because in her eyes she is still chaste—she is not guilty of the nameless crime; so in this situation she prays to God, and turns to her conscience. Her conscience commands her to destroy the dark injurer; and she obeys its command without any conflict; for she knows that this command is the command of God, Who speaks through the conscience. In fact, for her

who has suffered the wrong, there is no alternative but to annihilate the wrongdoer, because if he lives he may repeat the crime. She is also fully aware of her position—even a flock of shepherdless sheep would not be as helpless as she is; she knows that it is futile to look to the Pope for any help.[4] Furthermore, after the outrage it is now impossible for her to cling any longer to her principle of love, patience and forbearance; so, being dictated to by her conscience and not 'impelled by madness'[5] she casts off, as overworn garments, the old principle of love and peace which would now be a mockery to her holier plea (cf. Act III, i, lines 207-17) and becomes herself, as it were, both the judge and executioner of her unnatural father. She is fully convinced that the murder of Cenci is a holy act. Since her conscience says that it is a righteous act, she undergoes no conflict before the murder and feels no remorse after the deed is done. Entrusting the murderers Olimpio and Marzio with the task she reminds them

> Ye know it is a high and holy deed? (V. ii. 35)

She believes that Cenci's murder is only a fulfilment of God's will, because as soon as she hears of his death she says to Marzio,

> Thou wert a weapon in the hand of God
> To a just use. (IV. iii. 54-55)

After the murder she feels a sense of great relief and enjoys a supreme calm. As Cenci is now dead, no memory of his dark deed will haunt her mind any more. Thus in 'her we behold', as Medwin aptly says, 'the Angel of Parricide' (cf. Medwin's Revised *Life of Shelley*, p. 217). The man she murdered was not, she believed, her father; so she is not guilty of parricide. When Savella, who happens to enter the castle of Petrella immediately after the murder, suspects her of the guilt she at once exclaims:

> Guilty! Who dares talk of guilt? My Lord,
> I am more innocent of parricide
> Than is a child born fatherless.... (IV. iv. 111-13)

In the trial scene she persistently denies that she is guilty of parricide.[6] Many contemporary reviewers who witnessed the performance of *The Cenci* on the stage (in 1886) found the heroine's denial of her act as a blot on her ideal character. To them her lie was wholly out of keeping with her lofty character. But we must remember that Beatrice's denial of her deed is not a lie, but an assertion of her innocence—in her eyes she is not culpable. As already pointed out, she thinks that in destroying Cenci she has only executed the just order of God. Moreover, she thinks that she is innocent of parricide because the man she destroyed was not her father but a devil of hell in a human form; and by killing him she has merely dislodged 'a spirit of deep hell/Out of a human form' (cf. Act IV. ii. 6-8). She is so deeply convinced of her innocence that even under torture she never confesses the crime she is accused of. She is convicted of parricide and dies; but even at the time of death her pure and innocent heart is not tainted by any feeling of guilt or of morbid self-reproach.

Thus, in the drama, Shelley exalts the character of his heroine who, though apparently guilty of the nameless crime and of parricide, thought herself to be spotless. In his hands the historical Beatrice becomes an angel of innocence. Her tragedy is the tragedy of innocence itself. The story of her tragic life is the story of an innocent soul who, 'Though wrapped in a strange cloud of crime and shame', was 'ever holy and unstained'. The divine halo about her innocence is powerfully manifested in the trial scene which is the most impressive part of the drama. So great is the power of her 'white innocence' that even Marzio, who committed the murder of Cenci at her dictation, retracts immediately, when she reproaches him for accusing her of the murder, his earlier statement that she is guilty of parricide. Hypnotized by her innocent face and powerful speech he tells the judge that 'She is most innocent'. It is curious to note that Marzio, who is a professional murderer, and is therefore least concerned with the nobility of human nature, is strongly influenced by her lofty character. Even to this ice-hearted man she is a 'fine piece of nature'; and he protests that he will not give her to the judge to 'rend and ruin'. Cardinal Camillo too, who is overwhelmed by her angelic face radiating innocence, simply refuses to believe in the fact that

she can be guilty of such a dreadful crime as she has been accused of, and bursts out:

> I would pledge my soul
> That she is guiltless. (V. ii. 61-62)

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. According to the chronicle, Beatrice's head was separated from the body when she was uttering the words *fiant aures tuae* of the second verse of the psalm *De Profundis*.
2. Cenci calls her a loathed image of her mother. cf. II. i. 121.
3. Carlos Baker, *Shelley's Major Poetry: The Fabric of Vision*, 1948, p. 148.
4. When Camillo requested the Pope to stop Cenci's cruelty upon his children, the Pope became furious, and approbating Cenci's action expressed his own attitude towards the case:

> In the great war between the old and young
> I, who have white hairs and a tottering body,
> Will keep at least blameless neutrality. (II. ii. 38-40)

5. The reviewer of *The New Monthly Magazine* for May 1, 1820 commented that 'In destroying her father she seems impelled by madness rather than will.'

A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE SPEECH OF THE INDIAN CHARACTERS IN FORSTER'S *A PASSAGE TO INDIA*

By Bikram K. Das

Stylistics has not yet been defined precisely by its practitioners; very loosely, we may call it the application of descriptive linguistics to literary texts. In the past, descriptive linguisticians were preoccupied with the spoken forms of language but more recently they have begun to feel that the language of literature also is amenable to the techniques of descriptive analysis since it may be said to comprise a special language-variety or dialect.

Linguisticians who have interested themselves in literature claim that the linguistic sciences can aid close textual analysis, by making precise and explicit the critic's intuitive response to language. However, most literary critics are not certain if the linguistician can tell them anything about what makes literary text *valuable;* at best, they feel, stylistic analysis can be a useful pre-critical activity.

The linguistician is concerned with linguistic form—with the structures of language and their distribution in a given corpus of language (spoken or written). He is totally unconcerned with matters outside the text. Several schools of modern criticism—for instance, the New Critics—seem to share, to a large extent, this unconcern with extra-textual elements; to them, the 'printed word' is everything. But in the most influential critics, concern with language is interpenetrated by other kinds of concern, such as the moral and the sociological; in F. R. Leavis's criticism, for example, the value of language-organization appears to be almost therapeutic. It is felt, therefore, that if the linguistician aspires to the status of a literary critic, he must be prepared to go beyond the level of form. Formal organization and structure must be linked with extra-linguistic elements, such as theme.

One school of linguistics now current in Britain—the neo-Firthian School—makes use of the concept of *context,* to identify those elements in language which relate demonstrably to elements in the extra-linguistic situation. Since language is a

social phenomenon, a *complete* description of language will include a description not only of formal patterns but also of the social context of situation in which language is used, i.e. of the users of language, the use to which language is being put, the relationship that exists between the users, etc. The branch of linguistics which studies these aspects of language is termed Socio-linguistics and the linguistic concept of style belongs to this particular branch of the study.

'Style' is the relation existing between elements of language form and elements in the extra-linguistic situation. More simply, style is what distinguishes between one utterance and another, which are equally possible or permissible as grammatical alternatives and convey approximately the same information: for example, 'I can see you' and 'I am able to perceive you'. The choice between this pair will be determined by such considerations as: who is speaking to whom; what is the relation between speaker and hearer; what is the topic or subject of discourse, i.e. whether the utterance is taken from a simple real-life situation or a philosophical discourse, etc. Stylistic analysis attempts to relate each set of formal features (e.g. syntax, morphology, lexis) to some features of context and to classify the relationships so obtained.

In any given context of situation, a certain style is regarded as the norm; for instance, when two friends are speaking to each other in an informal situation, 'I can see you' is the norm, while 'I am able to perceive you' is a deviation from the norm; the converse is true if we imagine two philosophers formally discussing the nature of sensory perception. This concept of stylistic norms and deviation from norms is exploited in stylistic analysis.

But when a critic is examining a literary work, it is not enough to be able to say what the stylistic norm is and to point out instances of deviation; one must also be able to analyse why a deviation from the norm is significant in the total organization of the work.

To decide on the issue of significance, another concept is used, that of *foregrounding*. The author of a literary text, it is argued, wishes to highlight those features of his use of language which carry a 'functional load' or, in other words, are particularly relevant to his thematic or structural organization. If

we find a significant deviation from the stylistic norm or norms, we can assume that this deviation is functional, and is related to important extra-linguistic concerns.

With this brief and totally inadequate enumeration of the theoretical notions involved, let us now attempt an analysis of a particular literary text—E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*, in order to trace how far the formal and contextual deviations are functional and appropriate to Forster's theme; how far the language in this text carries the burden that artistic structure and organization impose upon it, and which elements of language form are foregrounded by the author as appropriate to the theme.

First, let us attempt to identify Forster's theme in order to see how far the use of language is relevant to it. Forster's *A Passage to India* has been interpreted, *inter alia*, as a portrayal of the human predicament in a mysterious and hostile universe, bordering on tragedy; it has been read, also, as an ironic picture of human institutions, verging on social comedy. Some critics have seen it as a liberal manifesto, with important political overtones; still others have regarded it, not as a generalized and symbolic representation of human existence, but as a sketch of a particular society at a particular point of time.

The interpretation which appears to be most relevant to our purpose is one which has been noted by most critics but taken by some to be at the most superficial level of organization. This is the theme of social interaction between two cultures: the Indian and the British. Elsewhere in Forster's writings we have evidence of his interest in inter-personal, inter-group and inter-cultural relationships: the theme appears again and again in his fiction, for example in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and *A Room with a View*, as well as in his occasional writings, e.g. on Egypt and India. The confrontation between different or alien cultures is also present in a number of instances. A part, at least, of the significance of Forster's theme is the failure of human beings in communicating across group or cultural barriers; the words which Forster uses as an epigraph in *Howard's End*—'*Only connect*...'—could serve as the leit-motif for his fiction.

In *A Passage to India*, Forster found an appropriate frame for

his theme: the confrontation between two cultures is heightened and dramatized by the fact that one group of persons stands to the other group in relation of the rulers to the ruled. The presence of the British in India is resented by the Indians, while most of the British feel it a waste of time to attempt to communicate with the Indians. The gap cannot be bridged, in spite of the fact that a certain amount of goodwill exists; individuals do attempt the passage but fail.

The breakdown of communication between two cultural groups may be regarded, then, as the central element in the theme, and one may set out to investigate how far this is foregrounded through the use of language. As has been stated above, the theme is particularly suited for stylistic representation. Language being the main channel of communication between the different groups, the breakdown in communication is *signalled* through language; moreover, communication, or the loss of it, is determined by the social and cultural—hence stylistic—restraints placed on language. The situation is made more piquant by the fact that the two interacting groups constitute two different language-communities, in the Bloomfieldian sense, the members of each sharing the same responses to identical linguistic stimuli; but the two groups must communicate with each other in a language which is foreign to one, so that language serves to divide, rather than to connect, the two communities. Obviously, those elements of language will be foregrounded in Forster's use which serve to signal the breakdown in communication. *Within* each language community, it will be noticed, communication is total; it is only when communication is attempted across linguistic communities that it fails.

Like other authors writing in English about India and Indians, Forster had to grapple with the two-fold stylistic problem of:

(*a*) trying to represent, in English, how Indians converse among themselves in languages other than English; and
(*b*) trying to represent how Indians use English.

The first of these problems has been of special interest to Indians writing in English about India (the term 'Indo-

Anglian' is in use currently to describe this body of literature). Most writers belonging to this group try to interpret India to the English-speaking world; they highlight those aspects of Indian life and culture which might be of special interest to the English-speaking world, and these include Indian speech. Also, many of them are trying to forge a new idiom which seems to them appropriate to the Indian sensibility. The result is the creation of a dialect, or series of idiolects, which nowhere exist except in works of imagination; nor is it the intention of such writers to suggest that this pseudo-dialect actually exists. It seems somewhat strange that Kachru, in his two important papers on 'Indian English',[1] has drawn most of his illustrations from this pseudo-dialect. A few citations will suffice: 'Spoiler of my salt'; 'sister-sleeper'; 'May the vessel of your life never float on the sea of existence'; 'turmeric-ceremony', etc. These are purely literary coinages, having no actual currency in any situation in India in which English is used; they are *not* examples of Indian English, which is a very real socio-linguistic phenomenon.

Of Englishmen writing about India, few have had the necessary knowledge of Indian languages to attempt to represent Indian speech in English. Kipling attempts it, but his representation mostly takes the form of a courtly, archaic, almost biblical style, interlarded with Indian conversation-initiators and lexical items. Here is an example from *Kim:*

> 'Thus do we beg who know the way of it. Eat now and I will eat with thee. *Ohe, bhissti!*' he called to the water-carrier, 'give water here. We men are thirsty.' (p. 21)

There is no resemblance here to the actual syntax and lexical range of Indian speech, though the syntax of the first sentence, with the defining relative clause separated from the antecedent by the lexical verb, is strange enough to sound exotic. Kipling very commonly uses the ASP pattern to represent Indian speech, as in:

> 'To the *madrissah* I will go. At the *madrissah* I will learn. In the *madrissah* I will be a Sahib.' (p. 50)

In actual Indian syntax, the SCP or SAP patterns are

normal; but few writers ever represent this. In fact, Kachru himself does not cite a single example of deviant syntax—all his examples deal with lexical and contextual transfer.

Forster seems uninterested in representing in English the nuances of Indian speech; partly, this may have been because of his inadequate knowledge of Indian languages. More important is the reason that Forster did not feel that this was central to his theme; he was concerned with showing that when individuals in a homogeneous linguistic group converse in a language which is native to all of them, communication is natural, spontaneous and unhindered; when, on the other hand, communication is through a language not native to all the participants, it is likely to break down—the language-signals are missed, or misinterpreted; wrong stylistic choices are made, and social confusion results. The language forms which Forster selects to illustrate the two phenomena are completely determined by extra-textual context: the field, mode and tenor of discourse, relationships between participants (who is speaking to whom), etc. There is no manipulation of forms for the sake of effect, or what is traditionally (not in linguistic meta-language) termed style.

Forster was intrigued by the fact that Indians frequently used English for internal communication in preference to any native language. Here is an extract from his essay 'India Again', published in *Two Cheers for Democracy;* it is quoted at some length because it is highly relevant for this paper:

> The Indians I met mostly talked English. Some of them spoke very well, and one or two write in our language with great distinction. But English, though more widely spoken than on my last visit, is worse spoken, more mistakes are made in it, and the pronunciation is deteriorating—'prependicule' for 'perpendicular'. 'Pip' into my office for 'pop'. Here are two tiny slips which I noted in a few minutes, and both of them made by well-educated men. The explanation, I think, is that Indians at the schools and universities are now learning their English from other Indians, instead of from English teachers as in the past. Furthermore, they have little occasion to

meet our people socially and so brush it up; intercourse is official and at a minimum, and even when there are mixed clubs the two communities in them keep apart. So it is not surprising that their English is poor. They have learnt it from Indians and practise it on Indians.

Why talk English at all? This question was hotly debated at the P.E.N. Conference of All India writers. . . . Meanwhile, in this uneasy interregnum, English does get talked and gets interlarded in the oddest way with the Indian vernacular. . . . And my reason for wanting English to be the common language for India is a purely selfish reason: I like these chance encounters, I value far more the relationships of years, and if Indians had not spoken English my own life would have been infinitely poorer.

To illustrate my thesis that communication within a language community is facilitated by socio-cultural conventions which determine context, I quote an instance from *A Passage to India*, illustrating a piece of conversation in which all the participants are Indians:

'Hamidullah, Hamidullah, am I late?' he cried. 'Do not apologise,' said his host. 'You are always late.'

'Kindly answer my question. Am I late? Has Mahmoud Ali eaten all the food? If so, I go elsewhere. Mr. Mahmoud Ali, how are you?'

'Thank you, Dr. Aziz, I am dying.'

'Dying before your dinner? Oh, poor Mahmoud Ali.'

'Hamidullah here is actually dead. He passed away just as you rode up on your bike.'

'Yes, that is so,' said the other. 'Imagine us both as addressing you from another and happier world.'

'Does there happen to be such a thing as a hookah in that happier world of yours?'

'Aziz, don't chatter. We are having a very sad talk.'

(p. 12)

Stylistically, this could not have been a conversation between a group of L-1 speakers of English. All the speakers are

intimate friends, but their register betrays a kind of formality which might be 'un-English'.

'Do not apologise', 'Kindly answer my question', etc. belong to what Martin Joos[2] might have called the 'frozen' style. The humour in this piece of conversation is laboured, even slightly awkward; death is not generally a topic for humour, except in a grimly ironic style. There is an element of the grotesque about the conversation, which is un-English again, if one remembers that Forster's English dialogue is 1924 vintage. But the banter is perfectly effective because all the participants share the same linguistic and stylistic conventions; if one of the speakers had been an Englishman, the humour would have misfired—in fact, this happens repeatedly in exchanges between the English and the Indians in *A Passage to India*.

A stylistic problem faced by Forster was the representation of the English used by Indians, both among themselves and in conversing with native speakers of English. The extract from 'India Again' shows Forster's awareness of 'Indian English', which has interested many British writers on India. Traditionally, the Indian speaker of English has been a figure of fun—almost a character from music-hall comedy, caricatured and burlesqued from Kipling to Peter Sellers. 'Babu English' has been described at length, though not with precision: one may note, among its other characteristics, confusion of the phonology of Standard English; its tendency to confuse registers, juxtaposing highly ornate and formal features with informal, even 'slangy' patterns; its use of archaic and obsolete forms, resulting from 'book learning'; unusual syntax and lexis, resulting from L-1 interference.

All deviations from Standard English in *Kim* are of the grossest kind, conforming fairly closely to the stereotypes of 'Indian English'. The inappropriateness of the English used by Kipling's Indian characters is fundamental—grammatical rather than stylistic; they used 'bad English', but this does not matter at all because Kipling's Englishmen (who are thoroughly at home in India) expect Indians to use bad English and make every allowance for it. There is no confusion, no breakdown in communication.

Forster, on the other hand, is not fundamentally interested

in caricatures of Indian English; as an observer of the social scene, he could not have helped noticing this phenomenon (vide his remarks in 'India Again'), and he does, in a very few instances, attempt to depict—in rather an impressionistic way, far less accurate than Kipling's—how Indians typically use English. But his main concern is with the loss of communication resulting from utterances inappropriate to certain situations, since this alone contributes to his theme. Violations of grammar are less relevant than stylistic deviation; wrong or 'bad' grammar is less likely to create confusion in sophisticated communication than wrong context. In the former case, one is liable to reject an utterance as being unacceptable; one either understands or fails (refuses) to understand, but there is less likelihood of one's *misinterpreting* an utterance. Contextual ambiguity is more complex than grammatical, and for an artist like Forster, who is trying to manipulate social situation to reveal group-interaction, stylistic choices are more challenging technically than more gross deviations of grammar. Consequently, Forster passes very lightly over the grammatical deviations in the speech of his Indian characters and concentrates on contextual deviance.

Most of Forster's Indian characters speak fairly 'good' English, consistent with their education, intelligence and refinement; they are highly articulate in English and have a 'feel' for the language. Forster himself had a relatively short stay in India—during 1912-13, 1921-22 and 1945. His most fruitful contacts with Indians were in Britain; among his close friends were people like Syed Ross Masood (who is said to be Forster's model for Dr. Aziz). Forster seems to have been impressed with the command of English which these Indians displayed. In *A Passage to India*, Fielding—who might resemble Forster himself—has occasion to reflect on this:

> He was often struck with the liveliness with which the younger generation handled a foreign tongue. They altered the idiom, but they could say whatever they wanted to say quickly; there were none of the babuisms ascribed to them at the club. (p. 65)

We may, in passing, note a few instances of the more obvious

deviations in grammar, lexis and phonology in the speech of the Indian characters. Some of these occur in the speech of Aziz:

> 'Then we are in the same box,' he said cryptically. 'Then is the City Magistrate the entire of your family now?' (p. 23)
>
> 'Sir, excuse me, I did. I mounted my bike and it bust in front of the Cow Hospital.' (p. 53)
>
> 'Good bye, Miss Quested.'...'You'll jolly jolly well not forget those caves, wont you?' (p. 77)
>
> 'Well, here's luck! Chin-chin!'
> 'Here's luck, but chin-chin I do refuse,' laughed Fielding. (p. 154)

Some of the other Indian characters also use noticeably deviant English:

> 'You will make yourself *chip*,' suddenly said a little black man. (p. 36)
>
> 'The shorter lady, she is my wife, she is Mrs. Bhattacharya. The taller lady, she is Mrs. Das.' (p. 42)
> [This is an instance of two subjects in apposition in a single clause—a common feature of Indian syntax.]
>
> 'Half one league onwards!' The Nawab Bahadur fell asleep. (p. 85)
>
> 'Even when the lady is so uglier than the gentleman?' (p. 213)

These deviations, interesting though they are as representations of Indian English, are not functional in Forster's scheme. They do not signal the breakdown in communication which results from stylistic confusion. Forster's depiction of this other kind of linguistic deviation is highly subtle—it takes into account the various contextual parameters such as addressee-relationships, forms of address, tenor of discourse, etc.

The personal tragedy of Aziz is largely stylistic. He is warm,

eager to respond to friendship, generous and highly emotional. His intimate friends understand and respect him, but with others—particularly those who do not share his language—he is likely to be misunderstood and to misunderstand, to look for signs of intimacy or equally for slights where none are intended, to become patronizing or garrulous in the wrong situations, and also to become 'frozen' or appear to be frozen on the wrong occasions. Ultimately, he is unble to communicate, even when the ground has been prepared for communication.

The first meeting between Aziz and Mrs. Moore, which is also the first instance of the two cultures meeting, illustrates this. Aziz has entered the mosque in order to be alone with his thoughts, when he sees Mrs. Moore:

> ...Suddenly he was furiously angry and shouted: 'Madam! Madam! Madam!'
>
> 'Oh! Oh!' the woman gasped.
>
> 'Madam, this is a mosque, you have no right here at all; you should have taken off your shoes; this is a holy place for Muslims.'
>
> 'I have taken them off.'
>
> 'You have?'
>
> 'I have left them at the entrance.'
>
> 'Then I ask your pardon.' (p. 21)

The ferociousness of his address and the inadequacy of his apology reveal ignorance of the socio-cultural constraints on the use of language in English-speaking societies, particularly in addressing women. But he makes matters worse.

> 'Madam!'
>
> 'Please let me go!'
>
> 'Oh, can I do you any service now or at any time?'
>
> 'No, thank you, really none—good night.'
>
> 'May I know your name?' (p. 21)

Without intending it, Aziz is being boorish; he is totally mishandling his language. A little later he appears to patronize her, again without intention.

'. . . I shall tell my community—our friends—about you. That God is here—very good, very fine indeed. I think you are newly arrived in India?'

'Yes—how did you know?'

'By the way you address me.' (p. 22)

Within seconds, Aziz begins to assume an air of intimacy and to address Mrs. Moore informally; fortunately for him, she is not offended, as another English lady might justifiably have been.

'And why ever do you come to Chandrapore?'

'To visit my son. He is the city magistrate here.'

'Oh no, excuse me, that is quite impossible. . .'

(p. 23)

The implication in the last remark might have been that Mrs. Moore was lying in order to impress Aziz: the ambiguity is contextual.

Mrs. Moore, at this first encounter, is being extraordinarily polite to Aziz, but he mistakes conventional politeness for friendship, misreading the linguistic signals. Mrs. Moore makes a very guarded comment about Mrs. Callendar—the Civil Surgeon's wife—and Aziz immediately responds with a flood of confidences that takes her by surprise.

He was excited partly by his wrongs, but more by the knowledge that somebody sympathized with him. It was this that led him to repeat, exaggerate, contradict. She had proved her sympathy by criticizing her fellow-countrywoman to him but even earlier he had known. The flame that not even beauty can nourish was springing up, and though his words were querulous, his heart began to glow secretly. Presently it burst into speech.

'You understand me, you know what others feel. Oh, if others resembled you!'

Rather surprised, she replied, 'I don't think I understand people very well.' (p. 24)

Aziz has gone 'hay-wire' stylistically; there is no real

communication, and he makes the mistake of assuming too much. He is impulsive, undoubtedly, but the linguistic context is plainly too much for him.

In a complete study of Forster's style, the speeches of Aziz and Godbole must claim thorough analysis. The present paper has aimed at indicating the nature of stylistic deviation from accepted norms and its relevance to artistic organization.

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VIRGINIA WOOLF'S *NIGHT AND DAY*

A Study in Feminist Assertion

By O. P. Sharma

Virginia Woolf was destined to be the dominant force in favour of new feminism in the English novel. She transformed feminism, through the finest aesthetic process, into a song and a fantasy; through the imaginative felicity of her treatment of it, she made it into an integrated and enduring vision. She fertilized and enriched the feminist tradition that she had inherited and gave it new psychological proportions and artistic nuances. In the development of her art and mind is mirrored the growth of the new feminist image more fully than in any other single woman novelist of the period. It was she who realized the potential value, both for the art of fiction and for feminist thought, of what she termed as Dorothy Richardson's invention of 'the psychological sentence of the feminine gender'. And it was left to Virginia Woolf to develop and perfect this 'psychological sentence', so as to subsume within its fold the fusion of the deepest reality of a woman's psyche and the flow of her sensibility and consciousness, in direct response to the beauty and movement of life. Thereby she extended the frontiers of the feminist realm, from the vortex of the suffragist struggle, with its documentation of social manners and political vicissitudes, to the sublimest reaches of imaginative process, working its salvation in the twilight realms of the woman's personality, charged with peculiar tensions and joys, conflicts and attachments, poetry and agony. She was to annex a deeper and richer area of the feminine being and assert with the avidity of the feminist the claims for the recognition and undetstanding of its exclusive preferences and scales of values in art and life. Here was the emergence of the real woman, in her innate intensity and fulness as a woman, with unfailing stress upon her preeminence, in sharp polarity against the male nature and tradition.

It is not without significance that in 1919 Mrs. Woolf launched her challenge by repudiating the principle of segmentation and stultification of reality of life's experience by

the traditional male novelists like Galsworthy, Arnold Bennett, and H. G. Wells. She issued the manifesto of a new concept and method in the novel by re-assessing the nature of reality in terms of art and in relation to the artist. In an utterance of profound and far-reaching consequence for the English novel, particularly for the women novelists, Mrs. Woolf expressed herself with originality and animation:

> If we tried to formulate our meaning in one word we should say that these three writers are materialists. It is because they are concerned not with the spirit but with the body that they have disappointed us, and left us with the feeling that the sooner English fiction turns its back upon them, as politely as may be, and marches, if only into the desert, the better for its soul...whether we call it life or spirit, truth or reality, this, the essential thing, has moved off, or on, and refuses to be contained any longer in such ill-fitting vestments as we provide...is life like this? Must novels be like this?
>
> Look within and life, it seems, is very far from being 'like this'. Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions—trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from of old...life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; but a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end.'[1]

In this new focus on the 'essential thing' the 'truth or reality' of life, 'the myriad impressions' that the mind receives and on life as a 'luminous halo', lies the beginning of a new phase in the English novel. It spells out new experiments and directions for the literary artist. In actual practice, the woman's exclusive sphere of experience was to attain a unique centrality in the novels of Mrs. Woolf. The woman protagonists of her novels tend to assimilate within their being this 'luminous halo' and the 'semi-transparent envelope' of consciousness, until they

march finally as having seized and animated with the validity and intensity of a woman's experience, within the framework of this newly discovered reality of life in art. Her women in their transcendence and complete immersion in the flux of life become the fulfilment of this new dream. New avenues and horizons are thereby opened for the fiction in England. Mrs. Woolf was gradually to evolve her women protagonists, in the two decades under study, into articulate symbols and myths of a living feminism; she was also to correlate and harmonize their emergence with the projected vision of the new novel. Both feminism and the English novel were, under new aesthetic stresses and in search of unexplored territories of psychological and emotional experience, to fuse into the integrated pattern of the 'Feminist Novel'.

Exactly a week after the publication of her significant statement about the role of the new novelist, on April 17, 1919, Mrs. Woolf made this quiet but revealing entry in her diary:

> The male atmosphere is disconcerting to me.... I think what *an abrupt precipice cleaves under the male intelligence*, and how they pride themselves upon *a point of view* which much resembles stupidity.[2] [Italics are mine.]

That Mrs. Woolf is conscious of the earnestness of purpose in writing her diary is borne out by an entry three days later (April 20, 1919), where she expresses her intention of seeing the diary 'refined itself and coalesced' into 'a mould, transparent enough to reflect the light of our life, and yet steady, tranquil compounds with the aloofness of the work of art'.[3]

Her entry of April 17, 1919, expressed the seminal idea of the polarity generated by the 'male intelligence' and the egotistical insistence upon the 'point of view', which runs through the best of her fiction and non-fiction. It spells for us, as early as this, the image of the cleavage between the male and female natures and scales of values, which were to be psychologically presented in her novels from *Night and Day* (1919) to *Between the Acts* (1941). Herein is touched the liveliness of Mrs. Woolf's feminism, whereby the eternal dichotomy of masculine aggressiveness and overweening obsession with the rational point of view is set off against woman's primal impulse, intuition,

enlarged sensibility and sympathy. Her non-fiction writings like *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and *Three Guineas* (1938) extend this polarity into the area of basic conflict of the sexes as a result of the historical process of male dominance and exploitation of woman.

A critical assessment of the aesthetic evolution of feminism in the novels of Mrs. Woolf, particularly during the period under scrutiny, necessarily begins with the publication of *Night and Day* in 1919. Seven entries in her diary dating from March 27, 1919 to February 4, 1920 refer to this novel, its reception by friends and eminent critics and the author's satisfaction with her latest novel. She finds *Night and Day* 'mature and finished and satisfactory'.[4]

In *Night and Day* Mrs. Woolf plunges into the heart of the traditional world of feminist fiction. The novel reveals a study at close-range of the suffragist movement—its passion and froth, committees and statistics, tactics and war-cries, slogans and jargon. We are carried right into the centre of the fray. It has the feminist atmosphere and the suffragist scaffoldings, so familiar to the traditional novelist. It seems from a casual view closer to the world of H. G. Wells's *Ann Veronica.*

Here the resemblance ends. Mrs. Woolf deals with the growing intellectual emancipation of woman and her urge for impersonality, not merely her agitation for votes. Woman is breaking fresh ground; she is asserting her claim on a deeper psychological level. She wants to experiment in the masculine sphere of intellectual activity. Here is Katharine Hilbery, who prefers 'star-like impersonality' to 'vagueness of the finest prose'. She prefers mathematics to literature, even though the latter is an integral part of her middle-class heritage. And yet the 'unwomanly nature of science made her instinctively wish to conceal her love of it'. She runs counter to the family tradition and yet hides it as 'unseemly'.[5] She can utter the words: 'It's life that matters, not but life—the process of discovering—the everlasting and perpetual process, not the discovery itself at all'.[6] Thus she places new accent upon the immersion of the female sensibility in an 'incessant shower of innumerable atoms', almost as if symbolizing a new aesthetic philosophy as a woman novelist.

Katharine is not a suffragist. She is the dilettante of the

suffragist world, living at its periphery, but at times turning into a prism for our detached view of that world. She does not participate in the feminist activities, but she evinces tender tolerance, if not emotional identification with it. In fact, on three occasions, she romanticizes the suffragists, with Mary Datchet as the supreme symbol of their enchanted, even possessed lives. The office humming with suffragist activities becomes for Katharine a 'bewitched tower'—'aloof' and 'unreal', of the 'nature of a dream', with the 'typewriters muttering incantations', and 'flinging their frail spider's web'[7] upon life flowing through the streets. At times she strikes us as the fantasist of the suffragist world, imagining Mr. Basnett as 'the citizen of a nobler state than ours'.[8]

Katharine and Ralph, at the end of the novel, find a solemn and steady symbol in 'the golden light of a large steady lamp' and 'the illuminated blinds' of Mary's room of her own, where she is working for the feminist cause late in the night 'for the good of the world that none of them were to know'.[9] Thereby, Mary becomes for them the symbol of an impersonal fulfilment and affirmation of the new woman through a new way of life. It lies precisely in her working out her salvation through work in an independent life.

Even though Mary is not the principal character of the novel, she is drawn with sentisitive inwardness. She also offers the most sustained and rounded study of a suffragist proper in the whole of Virginia Woolf's fiction. She becomes, through the psychological polarity of planes. as well as through the resolution of her conflict in the end, the first full-blooded and convincing protagonist of this sphere in the fiction of the women writers.

When Mary enters the novel she is twenty-five, but looks older. She has inordinate physical strength and stamina for a traditional clinging female; she has in her nature the impulse of the country girl; she has in her blood the faith, integrity and capacity for work. She breaks from the family pattern and takes a room of her own in London. Describing this bold gesture to Katharine as 'a power of being disagreeable to one's own family', Mary adds: 'I didn't want to live at home, and I told my father. He didn't like it.'[10]

She joins as the honorary secretary of the suffragist office

after completing her university education, but ends by being paid for it. In Mary 'all the feminine instincts of pleasing, soothing, and charming' are crossed 'by others in no way peculiar to her sex'.[11] She likes to rub her mind against men's. She enjoys arguing like a man, sometimes deliberately choosing to disagree to exhibit that her 'female judgement' can have 'male muscularity'.[12] Her attic is a rendezvous for the dilettantes of the middle class, lovers of literature, the slighted low-class intellectuals like Ralph, social enthusiasts and trade unionists. She has a wide range of fellow travellers and comrades, reminding us of the world of the Fabians, Tolstoyans, suffragettes, intellectuals, and equalitarians of Wells's *Ann Veronica*.

Mrs. Woolf has conceived Mary not entirely in the traditional image as it may appear. She has been drawn as a woman, not merely as a stock desexed suffragist. She is delineated, on the other hand, as sensitive and warm in flesh and spirit. She is the woman wedged between the pulls and tensions of forces that run point counter point and create for her the supreme privilege and dilemma of the New Woman. Mary does not live merely on the external plane of votes for women and in the psychological realm of masculine protest; she lives on a vital and tremulous inner plane of feminine being, throbbing with its peculiar fantasies and preferences.

Mary responds with tender perception to the 'flight of a bird',[13] the smell of the turnip-fields, 'mist of the winter hedges',[14] and the evocation of the Elgin Marbles. She has a woman's impulse towards love and marriage; she quivers to the beauty of ardent nature; she has the purest texture of female sensibility. Her natural urge as a woman brings her on the verge of the 'slippery banks', particularly as she holds her brother between her knees, making her feel tremors of a 'stronger passion than her brother can inspire'.[15] Mary feels a strong impulse to regress to the natural life in the country, to live on fifteen shillings a week and to cultivate her own vegetable garden. When Ralph asks her about the suffragettes, she states without a conflict, 'There are other things in the world.'[16]

This inner realm breaks through insistently, almost poignantly, in Mary's life. Possessed by 'a wave of exultation and emotion', in the presence of 'the solitude and chill and silence of the gallery', and 'the actual beauty of the statues' in the

British museum, she almost yields to an impulse to say to Ralph in her imagination: 'I am in love with you.' She feels transfigured by a new emotion:

> The presence of this immense and enduring beauty made her almost alarmingly conscious of her desire, and at the same time proud of her feeling which did not display anything like the same proportions when she was going about her daily work.

Mary soars into a fantasy of travelling with Ralph 'on a camel's back', in a desert, attended by the natives. 'A glow spread over her spirit, and filled her eyes with brightness.' But she could not utter even 'in the privacy of her own mind, "I am in love with you."' Then she slides into her inhibited pattern again with 'all her customary objections to being in love'. It was 'amateurish', she argued as a defense mechanism, 'to bring in love into touch with a perfectly straightforward friendship' which was based upon 'common interests in impersonal topics, such as housing of the poor, or the taxation of land values.'[17]

But on the idealistic level the polarity of Ralph and Mary is touched upon in a subtle manner by Mrs. Woolf. Ralph finds Mary's suffragist pursuits as a narrow groove and her sphere of activity as 'backwater of life'. Mary cogitating over their relationship, feels as if 'the two lines of thought bore their way in long, parallel tunnels which came very close indeed, but never ran into each other.' After he leaves her she thinks about her state of feeling towards him: 'If love is a devastating fire which melts the whole being into one mounting current, Mary was no more in love with Denham than she was in love with a poker or her tongs.'[18]

In a powerful scene the innate sensibility of Mary is shown as unfolding and the priority of woman's values asserts itself, cutting across the alternate values acquired by her as a suffragist heritage of the New Woman. After inviting Ralph to Disham, her ancestral home, during Christmas, Mary finds herself in a kindled emotional state:

> Under this process, the committee rather dwindled in

> importance; the Suffrage shrank; she vowed she would work harder at the Italian language; she thought she would take up the study of birds.[19]

The scene where Mary returns to the committee-room reveals Mrs. Woolf's subtle art in portraying the two states of being in her. Mary's stream of mind is flowing in two different directions. She is reading the minutes as the secretary in the Suffragist meeting, but her spirit is afloat in the realm of fantasy, centring around the image of Ralph:

> A pleasanter and saner woman than Mary Datchet was never seen within the committee-room. She seemed to be a compound of autumn leaves and the winter sunshine... an indefinable promise of soft maternity blending with her evident fitness for honest labour...her reading lacked conviction, as if, as was indeed the case, she had lost the power of visualizing what she read.[20]

Mary is a suffragist with a difference. Her feminity does not completely conform to the feminist pattern. She darts into a region beyond the suffragist; she cleaves into the elemental air of her natural being as a woman. The rounded treatment of Mary contrasts against Mrs. Seal's pathological case as a suffragist. Mrs. Seal, 'our little priestess of humanity',[21] represents the hardened incubus that settles upon the feminine tissue and makes of it a shrivelled maniac thing. She is drawn in the tradition of Miss Miniver of *Ann Veronica*. The contrast between Mary and Mrs. Seal is brought out in a scene where Mrs. Seal sees in Mary the potential and eternal bride—a privilege which she as a woman had been denied in life. She imagines Mary as a 'visionary existence in white with a sheaf of lilies in her hand'. With her chagrined query, 'Must we all get married?' Mary provokes the collapse of the unnatural incubus for some time, even in poor Mrs. Seal. 'She [Mrs. Seal] seemed for one moment to acknowledge...shivering virginity.' Mrs. Seal forgets for a while 'those enthusiastic, but inconsequent, tirades upon liberty, democracy, rights of the people, and inequities of the government'.[22] Mrs. Seal, of course, after a temporary suspension reverts to her conditioned reflex

as a caricature of a suffragist, but she certainly serves as a foil for projecting Mary's personality, her conflict and aspirations in proper perspective.

The transformation of Mary is not melodramatic; it evolves through a natural process of conflict and pain. She cannot share, to begin with, either Mrs. Seal's hysteria or Mr. Clacton's scientific thesis on the suffragist crisis, with his inspired call to 'generate and stimulate'.[23] Mary feels that she has really no convictions and that her heart is not in the movement. But gradually she realizes the need of purpose and faith, even the semblance and illusion of it, to keep life going. She feels that even the typewriter and furniture have a purpose in the office. Why not she?

Mary finally emerges into strength and gets adjusted to her professional work. She appears dressed 'more or less as a Russian peasant', and her dress almost symbolizes the mellowing of her spirit. Looking at Katharine, Mary remarks to Basnett, 'Marriage is her job at present.' A little later as she stands in the street with Katharine, she feels for the first time a conscious tie of womanhood, the essence of which is insistently brought out by Mrs. Woolf in the relationships between Clarissa and Sally Seton in *Mrs. Dalloway* and Mrs. Ramsey and Lily Briscoe in *To the Lighthouse:*

> Unfortunately for her [Mary Datchet's] composure, Mr. Basnett and his paper seem to her an incidental diversion of life's serious purpose compared with some tremendous fact which manifested itself as she stood alone with Katharine. It may have been their *common womanhood.*[24] [Italics are mine.]

Mary, however, resolves her conflict. She bears the strain of her emotional predicament with poise and dignity. She has no hysterics of the man-made heroines of fiction; she has pain, silent pain; she refuses to be bitter and is almost stoical under the stress. She bravely accepts the alternate set of values after failure to attain the primal fulfilment through love and marriage. She accepts work as something positive in her order of priority. She seeks a new salvation and work becomes her

balm and her sanctuary: 'I tell you work is the only thing that saved me, Ralph.'[25]

She finally moves towards integration and affirmation as a woman who begins anew. Ralph and Katharine find in her 'illuminated blinds' the symbol of 'something impersonal and serene in the spirit of the woman within'. The glow of the light transfigures the surrounding gloom; the 'future' is bathed 'in the golden light of a large steady lamp'.[26]

Virginia Woolf has to travel a long way from this 'golden light' into the universal symbol of the lighthouse. But the first significant stage to subtilize and fuse a new feminism in the English novel has already been covered. In spite of the conflict of the woman in search of happiness and fulfilment through the traditional medium, which has been brought out with psychological insight and realism, Mrs. Woolf's heroine repudiates the eternal feminine finale of Ann Veronica, by seeking affirmation of the life-principle through impersonality and integrated devotion to work. Instead of succumbing to the conventional compromise and escape, Mary Datchet resolves a positive approach by accepting the new alternative for woman. By launching her as a symbol of break from the past and hope for the future, Virginia Woolf has given a new articulation to the feminist message and vision in the English novel.

'A Society', a story, published in Mrs. Woolf's *Monday and Tuesday* (1921), deserves attention as it bears the feministic impress of the author, even though set in a minor key and to a burlesque tone. A group of women are described sitting around a fire and talking about men. Poll, a woman without beauty and prospects of marriage, bursts into tears out of sheer animus against men and in utter desperation of her situation. She has been constricted by the will of her father, an eccentric bibliophile who has made her inheritance of her patrimony conditional upon her studying all the books in the London library.

These ladies talk about how men write books and women bear children. 'We have populated the world. They have civilized it.'[27] They then decide to form a society, within specific terms of reference, with the object of investigating how to secure the 'objects of life' by producing 'good people and

good books'. A facetious vow is taken by all of them: 'We vow solemnly that we would not bear a single child until we were satisfied.'[28]

They assign responsibilities and areas of operation among themselves, after drafting a questionnaire to elicit information on the prescribed lines. Rose goes to the captain of his majesty's ship; Fanny repairs to the law courts; Helen to the Royal Academy, and Catalia to Oxbridge. It is Catalia who creates complications for the society when, on her return from the round of investigation, she announces that she is 'expecting a baby'. Mrs. Woolf suggests humorously that instead of asking questions from men, Catalia seems to have answered them. She is full of cynical banter on chastity in her present situation. 'Where is my chastity. . . we are neither of us chaste', she remarks. The youngest member of the society says, 'What is chastity then?' Poll declares chastity *as* 'ignorance—a most discreditable state of mind'.[29] Thus all of them debunk the myth of chastity in a mock-heroic style.

They have discursive discussion. Judith talks of her invention, 'to safeguard the nation's health'. They pour ridicule upon the women authors and the statistics of the sociologists. Everything ends in a fiasco.

Five years later Cassandra and Catalia, two members of the defunct society, while looking at the old files, begin to think in retrospect. They make pungent attack upon the masculine intelligence, which renders man unnatural and unfit. They come to realize that their faith in man's intellect is a fallacy. According to them man is sensitive and natural as long as he does not hammer out a brain. After that he is never at ease and is a constant source of irritation and nuisance to others. He consoles himself with the badge of money, always trying to fill some inner vacuum of insufficiency.

This story seems to have no serious intention and the burlesque tone is too obvious. But there is an unmistakable note of satire on the male intelligence, its imbecility and muscularity. The theme of sex polarity and satire upon male insufficiency project, however facetiously, Mrs. Woolf's feministic angle.

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19. Ibid. p. 164.
20. Ibid. p. 166.
21. Ibid. p. 170.
22. Ibid. pp. 262-3.
23. Ibid. p. 257.
24. Ibid. pp. 355-9.
25. Ibid. p. 392.
26. Ibid. pp. 506-7.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.

THE STRUCTURE OF *THE GRAPES OF WRATH*

By P. S. Sastri

The Grapes of Wrath as a work of art raises the problem of structure. The novelist had to bring into a unity the adventures of the Joads, the Wilsons, and the Wainwrights in the general context of the great depression. We must add to this the author's speculations in the intercalary chapters which number sixteen. They present the social situation, or they comment on or foreshadow the actions. The first chapter describes the drought which compels the Joads to leave their land. The 'woman and children knew deep in themselves that no misfortune was too great to bear if their men were whole.' The women can keep going if their men do not give up. Steinbeck takes it up in the portrayal of Ma Joad. The exact, but poetic, description of the dust storm recalls the picture of Egdon Heath in Hardy. The two are symbolic and suggestive. The word *dust* is repeated 27 times. It suggests the land and the fundamental situation out of which the action evolves itself.

In the third chapter the turtle is 'dragging his highdomed shell across the grass'. In its march it crushes an ant. Later a red ant runs over 'the folds of loose skin' on Granma's neck and she reaches up with her 'little wrinkled claws'. Ma Joad picks it and crushes it. The picture of the moving turtle is graphic. With great fortitude it struggles, thereby suggesting the predicament of man. The Joads are driven by the same indomitable life-force that drives the turtle. It picks up seeds and drops them on the other side of the road. The Joads pick up life in Oklahoma and carry it westwards. The turtle overcomes the attempts of the truck to destroy it, as the Joads endure the dangers of their journey. The very account of the crossing of the highway by the turtle is an act of heroic persistence against all odds. This wonderful chapter compels us to relate it to the nature-descriptions of Thoreau and Hardy; and in its suggestiveness it takes us to a wider context.

In the fourth chapter we note Tom seeing 'the highdomed shell of a land-turtle' (18). When he lets it go, it travels 'southwest as it had been from the first'. The Joads too drove south-

west, as many groups of persons did many a time in the past.

The fifth chapter deals with the conflict between the tenant farmer and the banks. The tractor plunges into a house. A man threatens the driver with his rifle. Joe Davis, the driver, is a family acquaintance of the anonymous tenants. Later we find Willy to be an acquaintance of the Joads.

The jalopy in the front yard of the Joads is similar to the one appearing in the seventh chapter. The eighth chapter ends with Al Joad driving off to sell household goods. The next one describes anonymous farmers selling such goods. The last chapter but one describes the rain; and the action of the novel ends with the rain. This intricate interweaving of details is thematic. It is also symbolic. The specific cross references suggest the validity and universality of the communal experience.

The action in the novel is comprehensive. Steinbeck presents this action by exploiting the pictorial and scenic techniques. In unifying the diverse elements he offers cross references of details, interweaves symbols, and dramatizes the theme. The pictorial and the scenic sections are interconvertible. That is, the theme is the presentation of a situation. Since this situation is not a quality but life itself, the theme is life. But instead of narration, Steinbeck takes the aid of description, a device employed by the oldest epic poet. Life as presented here involves (*a*) buying cheap and selling dear; (*b*) the coming into being of social forms; (*c*) mass-production for economy and profit; (*d*) hungry men coming to have the superfluous oranges; (*e*) blindness of property; (*f*) common interest; (*g*) man who finds his lost soul in his devotion to the Common Cause; (*h*) spring in California. These incidents provide a variety and they also reinforce the basic problem of the modern Odyssey. The structure is epical and the ethos it embodies is essentially humanistic.

Narration may be the proper form for an epic. But as Aristotle reminds us, as in all other matters here too Homer is our superb ideal. He conducts his *Odyssey* through description and narration; and Steinbeck adopts this method. The Joads, however, are unlike Odysseus; and his crew, at least in some aspects.

The Joads do not migrate alone. They are accompanied by

animals, insects, and birds. Here we see the very process of life. It is a process embodying man's eternal search for the promised land; as Kazin calls it, it is the quest for the Happy Valley. If the paradise is acceptable, admission into it is rendered difficult by man's possessive instinct, as in the novel under consideration.

The action of the novel has three stages: drought (chapters 1 to 10), journey (chapters 13 to 18), and California (chapters 20 to 30). This structure is reminiscent of the story told in the Old Testament: oppression in Egypt, the exodus, and the sojourn in the land of Canaan. The plague, the Egyptians, the exodus, and the hostile tribes of Canaan have their parallels respectively in the erosion, the banks, the journey, and the Californians.

The Biblical structure is supported by an iterative symbolism. The most important symbol is that of the grapes. In the novel we read: 'In the souls of the people the grapes of wrath are filling and growing heavy, heavy for the vintage.' The title of the novel comes from 'The Battle Hymn of the Republic' where we read:

> He is tramping out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored.

This is a reference to *Revelation* (14.19):

> And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God.

Deuteronomy (32.32) refers to the 'grapes of Gall'. In *Jeremiah* (31.29) and in Aesop we have 'sour grapes'. The grapes are also symbols of plenty. Joshua and Oshea bring back one large cluster of grapes. Grampa refers to this meaning. He returns as the anonymous old man in the barn, and is saved from starvation by Rosashorn who bared her breast. "You got to," she said. She squirmed closer and pulled his head close. "There!" she said. "There." Her hand moved behind his head and supported it. Her fingers moved gently in his hair. She looked up and across the barn, and her lips came together

and smiled mysteriously.' We read in *Canticles* (7.7): 'This thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes.' The grapes have turned to wrath and it is necessary to note the first milk of the mother is bitter. Rosasharn gives new life to the old man. As we read in *Canticles* (2.1): 'I [Christ] am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.'

This Biblical framework is reinforced in a variety of ways. Jim Casy, it is said, has significant initials. The word Joad is allied to Judah. Casy and *twelve* Joads started west. Uncle John places Rose of Sharon's still-born child in an old apple crate, like Moses in the basket. He places the box in a stream and lets it float toward the town saying, 'go down an' tell 'em.'

In their exodus the Israelites developed a code of laws. So do the migrants here: 'The families learned what rights must be observed—the right of privacy in the tent..., the right of the hungry to be fed; the right of the pregnant and the sick to transcend all other rights' (178). This 17th chapter is their *Deuteronomy*.

The journey of the Joads has an archetypal character. The mass-migration of the Indo-Europeans, we are told by the historians and archaeologists, was towards the south and the south-west. This is an important part of the racial unconscious. Westward migration was again the case with the Israelites and with the Pilgrim Fathers. Finally there was the same westward move in the United States. This larger framework elevates a particular fact to the level of the universal. Art 'tends to express the Universal' and Steinbeck was not presenting only a situation of the depression era. The symbolic overtones make the novel profound. It is a novel presenting the quest for a home. It is a journey into the unknown land of which man had many a dream from the remotest times. The theme presents life as it was, as it is, and as it ought to be. The *ought* makes it probable. This probability is heightened by the intercalary chapters. Yet Steinbeck seeks an answer to the Why of it; that is, he considers what Aristotle called the *dynamis*.

An aspect of the theme goes back to the Transcendentalists. In celebrating life Steinbeck, like Whitman before him, has a mystical sympathy for the individual and the *en-masse*. But the novelist is aware of the division between man and man. This sense of division makes him rebel against the forces that

perpetuate this division. As Camus stated, '*I* rebel, therefore *we* are.' Steinbeck too moves from *I* to *we*. The felt division and the revolt are brought together. In chapter 14 '*I* lost *my* land' becomes '*we* lost *our* land' (138-9). In 13 'the family became a unit' (127). In 16 we read that 'all we got is the family unbroke' (155). In 17 we find that 'the twenty families became one family' (177). In 19 again we note, 'our people are good people; our people are kind people' (219). In 20 Ma Joad tells Tom: 'Why, Tom, we're the people that live. They ain't gonna wipe us out. Why, we're the people—we go on' (258). In this process there is a deep belief in the value of solidarity. It is even said that 'All that lives is holy' (132).

Faith in the value of solidarity is bound up with the inarticulate yearnings of the poor. In misery the Joads stick together. The poor people are dependable. 'If you're in trouble or hurt or need—go to poor people. They're the only ones that'll help—the only ones.' Steinbeck is in love with life; and here again he inherits Emerson's faith in the Oversoul. Jim Casy says: 'May be all men got one big soul and everybody's a part of.' This vision came to him in his retirement into the hills: 'There was the hills, an' there was me an' we wasn't separate no more. We was only one big thing. An' that one thing was holy. That's the Holy Spirit—the human spirit—the whole shebang (24). An' it on'y got unholy when one mis'able little fella got the bit in his teeth, an' run off his own way.... Fella like that bust the holiness.' This faith has serious implications. It refers to the education man receives from life. Casy assumed in the beginning the role of an evangelist. Gradually he turned to social prophecy. He was 'in the hills, thinking, almost you might say like Jesus'. His experiences with the Joads bring forth a revelation of the Oversoul. He moves from a purely speculative level to the pragmatic. Like Emerson, he rejected his congregation in order to preach to the world. It is a kind of *anagnorisis* as outlined by Aristotle. This anagnorisis is combined with peripety in the case of Tom.

At the outset Tom was an individualist. He was looking out for himself. When Casy strikes out against the trooper, Tom learns that he must save his friend. When the family stays in a federal migrant camp, Tom progresses further. He avenges the death of Casy. When he meets his mother for

the last time, he asserts his spiritual unity with all men. Thus he moves from personal resentment to moral indignation, from particulars to principles. The mother and the son meet in what looks like a cave, and it is suggestive of the prenatal state. He is reborn. Talking like Casy he says: 'Then I'll be all aroun' in the dark. I'll be ever'where—wherever you look. Wherever they's a fight so hungry people can eat, I'll be there. Wherever they's a cop beatin' up a guy, I'll be there. If Casy knowed, why, I'll be in the way guys yell when they're mad an'—I'll be in the way kids laugh when they're hungry an' they know supper's ready. An' when our folks eat the stuff they raise an' live in the houses they build—why, I'll be there' (385). This is not mere rhetoric. It is the expression of an awareness which Ma Joad always had: 'We are the people.' She got this expression from the Bible, which alone she had been reading. When Grampa was to be buried, Tom searched for a suitable verse. Ma Joad told him: 'Turn to Psalms, over further. You kin always get somepin outa *Psalms*.' In *Psalm* 95.7 we read: 'For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.' This doctrine of we-are-the-people is gradually unfolded in the pages of the novel. It is not given as an article of faith, but as a fact of experience. This experience is portrayed negatively and also affirmatively.

The pattern of the novel seems to present a negative aspect of life. At the beginning we find the Joads in straitened circumstances. They have $ 154, their household goods, two barrels of pork, a truck and good health. At the end of the novel, they lose everything. This economic decline is fused with a disintegration of the family's morale. The family unity is broken. Grampa dies in Oklahoma. Granma is buried a pauper. Noah leaves the family. Connie deserts Rosashorn. The child is still-born. Tom is a fugitive. Al plans to leave. Casy is killed. The Joads have to give up the Wilsons.

Yet, life is not all so bleak. Life endures. The pattern cannot be destroyed. It is a universal. The Joads make up a larger group. The Wilsons and the Wainwrights join them. The social solidarity is strengthened by oppression and intimidation. The people co-operate, and in this co-operation, the democratic view finds a hope.

The relationship of the Joads with the Wilson family is symbolically developed. Grampa dies in the Wilsons' tent. He is buried in a blanket of the Wilsons. His epitaph is written on a page torn from the Wilsons' Bible. That is the page generally reserved for noting family births, marriages, and deaths. The Wilsons have adopted the Joads, and the Wilson family has become one with that of the Joads.

Steinbeck's values are sacred and universal, not utilitarian. Kinship is sacred. Home is sacred as it implies the centre of one's universe. In such a world the humanity of the human being becomes so important as to make one aware of his potentialities. This universe has a pattern and a novel like *The Grapes of Wrath* becomes significant when we approach it from the standpoint of the pattern given by Steinbeck. This pattern is similar to the Aristotelian concept of the plot. There may be, said Aristotle, a tragedy without character, but none without a plot. If this statement is accepted as a working hypothesis, one should not complain that Steinbeck offers no creative character. Though Steinbeck *seems* to hold to a non-teleological view of the universe as against Aristotle, his view of life is closer to Aristotle's concept of *becoming*. The Joads accept the rhythm of life. The end of this rhythm is not a quality, but a mode of life. Edmund Wilson calls it the 'unpanicky questioning of life.' The word 'unpanicky' is significant since the questioning must emerge out of a dispassionate way of looking at things. It is a questioning that Steinbeck conducts in a contemplative way; and it provides what Aristotle called the *dianoia* of the work. The *dianoia* refers to the exploration of life and the ethos is that of we-the-people. The mythos is a part of the racial memory reinforced by the biblical story and by the historic facts. In this rendering of the mythos Steinbeck affirms the value of life as process; and life as process is the theme of the novel.

The last chapter re-enacts the process of life in terms of a new myth. The rain continues, the baby is still-born, the box car must be given up. The Joads are on the highway in search of food. They find a starving man. It was Rose of Sharon's own need that compels her to give life. The profoundest depth of despair gives way to the highest assertion of faith. Life-instinct prevails. The common people persist. They cannot be

completely overwhelmed. They have the will to live. Their faith in life triumphs at the end. It is a kind of kathartic experience that emerges as we close the novel.

THE EXISTENTIAL CONCERN IN GRAHAM GREENE

By S. H. Majid

Commenting on *The Quiet American*, Robert O. Evans records, 'The Catholicism in Greene's novels, even the "entertainment", is plainly stated and easily recognizable, but the tendency for his Christian doctrine to move in the direction of existentialism has hitherto largely escaped his critics.'[1] Greene has definitely moved towards the Sartrean brand of existentialism in his later novels. The chief preoccupation of *The Quiet American* is the search for some sort of ethics even in the absence of God. The hero, Fowler, represents the free individual who has left religion behind, and who regards himself fully responsible for what he does. His actions are not given broad religious or anti-religious implication. But the individual's freedom of choice which is of central importance to Greene as well as to the existentialists, leaves little scope for action. Small actions lead to large consequences in Sartre's novels as in this novel of Greene. Fowler's betrayal of Pyle is only partly a matter of free choice; largely it is the psychological motivations which bring him to act. Like Sartre, Greene views man's freedom in the context of the modern psychological and scientific determinism. Fowler is a free individual who has no moral scruples. He lives with Phuong because she can provide physical satisfaction to him. Marriage which means so much to Pyle means little to him. He agrees to marry Phuong in the end simply because she wants it. But in the absence of the idealism and the grand passion that activates Pyle; Fowler falls in a sort of mental stupor from which he is only rarely awakened by some kind of involvement which he resents. Fowler's growing indifference towards the world of action links him with Sartre's Roquentin. The Sartrean hero realizes that Being in general and he himself in particular, are *de trop:* that is, existence itself is gratuitous, contingent, and unjustifiable. It is absurd in the sense that there is no reason for it, no outside purpose to give it meaning or direction. His Being is enclosed by Nothingness. 'We were a heap of living creatures, irritated,

embarrassed at ourselves, we hadn't the slightest reason to be there none of us; each one, confused, vaguely alarmed, felt *de trop* in relation to the others.... Even my death would have been *de trop*.'[2]

For Sartre the experience of the Absurd constitutes the starting-point of his movement towards affirmation and optimism; as for Greene, it is a descent into abysmal pessimism. Bendrix truly is the last of the active heroes of Greene, and *The End of the Affair* marks the end of the phase of feverish activity and idealistic enthusiasm. The novel ends with the prayer: 'O God, You've done enough, You've robbed me of enough, I'm too tired and old to learn to love, leave me alone for ever' (p. 237). The transition from Bendrix's feeling of exhaustion (his inability to move towards greater acceptance of life) to Fowler's lassitude and Querry's indifference is easy and natural. The novels of the third phase, beginning with *The Quiet American*, reveal a set of psychological patterns characteristic of modern life which have produced the new type of individual who distinguishes himself by virtue of his passivity. There is a growing stress upon change and flux, and 'character' and 'personality', which suggest permanence and fixity, finally give place to a consciousness which merely registers the absurdity of the human situation. The spiritual chaos projected through the delineation of the strife-torn Vietnam or Haiti stands in sharp contrast to the inner struggle we have in the novels of the second phase (*Brighton Rock*, *The Power and the Glory*, *The Heart of the Matter*, and *The End of the Affair*), ensuing from the allegiance to religious ideologies. The spiritual or ideological hunger of the earlier heroes and their yearning for the Absolute, give place to a sort of passive indifference. Various types of ideologies are brought in through the characters of *The Comedians* in order to highlight the difficulty of committing oneself to any set of beliefs, all of which appear outmoded and absurd. The profound inner sense of absurdity finds expression in a tone of mockery that informs the entire novel. It stems from a breakdown in the relationship between the inner and outer worlds and destroys the sense of symbolic integrity we find in the novels of the earlier phases. The priest's inner formulations of the self in *The Power and the Glory*, for example, become meaningful in the context of the

'outside' world in which his actions take place. In the absence of such a context Brown cannot possibly find or fix his bearings. Like Meursault, he easily accepts his worsening situation without showing any visible signs of reaction. This reveals a realization of the absurdity of the universe around him which has gone deep down into his unconscious and beaten him hollow. The hero of *The Comedians* is neither Dr. Magiot who lays down his life for the communistic cause, nor Don Quixotic Jones parading his mock-heroism on the stage, but Brown, the passive observer. Brown has attained the complete detachment of a reporter which Fowler vainly aspired to achieve. He is able to accept existence without the aid of the heroic light in which underdeveloped individuals like Jones and the Smiths must have it, nor does he need certain positive ideals to live by as Dr. Magiot does. The Greenean hero has at last become capable of facing the truth about human existence in all its starkness. Awareness of the fundamental absurdity becomes the measure of man's achievent in terms of knowledge. According to Camus, man's intellectual adventure is bound to lead him to such a situation. 'Under the fatal lighting of that destiny, its uselessness becomes evident. No code of ethics and no effort are justifiable *a priori* in the face of the cruel mathematics that command our condition.'[3] Greene envisions a similar spiritual situation in the novels of his third phase.

Brown has reached the same level of intellectual awareness as Dostoevsky's underground hero: 'The long and the short of it is, gentlemen, that it is better to do nothing! Better conscious inertia!'[4] In the context of this absurdity, 'only donkeys and mules are valiant',[5] and man becomes 'a comical creature'. 'But yet mathematical certainty is, after all, something insufferable.'[6] The comedy of Greene is characterized by a similar penumbra of feeling, and has the same depth of focus.

Brown is the conscious comedian who knows all about himself—his role, and his way of life, and the loss in terms of genuine feelings they represent, whereas Smith and Jones are prisoners of innocence—'donkeys and mules'. Like Pyle, 'both are fantasists whose fantasies make them impervious to reality. But they have the courage of their fantasies. They are comic figures whose pathos and gallantry are never denied.'[7]

The opposition between realism and romanticism represented

by Fowler and Pyle in *The Quiet American* loses its edge in *The Comedians*. The romantic personality becomes purely comic, and the string that binds Fowler (or the earlier heroes) to the past gets snapped. Brown has learnt better to seek a way back to the lost home. He knows his exile to be eternal. Thus the novel is a dispassionate but heart-rending account of complete dispossession. Brown is dispossessed of the temporary home he has built in Haiti, of his beloved, of his business, and of his vocation as a hotelier. In the end he is compelled to take up the job of an undertaker, a work which is most distasteful to him. He has to put up with existence that fills him every minute with nausea. Death becomes the ever present reality. Realism has been skinned to bare bone. Nothing can be more illusory than hope. Greene uses the setting of Haiti to render this vision of total gloom:

> Poor Haiti itself and the character of Doctor Duvalier's rule are not invented, the latter not even blackened for dramatic effect. Impossible to deepen that night. The Tontons Macoute are full of men more evil than Concasseur; the interrupted funeral is drawn from fact; many a Joseph limps the streets of Port-au-Prince after his spell of torture, and though I have never met the young Philipot, I have met guerrillas as courageous and as ill-trained in that former lunatic asylum near Santo Domingo. Only in Santo Domingo have things changed since I began this book—for the worse. (p. 2)

This furnishes a very suitable background for a story of spiritual and physical exile. Brown is described as a 'cuckolder of South American diplomat, a possibly illegitimate birth and an education by the Jesuits' (p. 1). His passionate love affair with Martha has, therefore, little possibility of permanence, and frustration is inherent in the very situation. His education in a tradition that has already lost its validity for him, and his bastardy make him a completely uprooted individual without any connection with the past whatsoever. The bastard is the fittest representative of the modern man. 'The Bastard is the individual who assumes our common and original bastardy; to do this, of course, his particular situation must make it

impossible for him to conceal that situation from himself as the rest of us are tempted to do.'[8] Brown represents a consciousness in which the subject finds himself completely detached from his own self and the world around him. Brown's philosophic lucidity comes from such an awareness of his own play acting. His colloquy with Martha proves this:

> 'Sometimes I wish I were.'
> 'But you are Catholics, you and Louis—'
> 'Yes, we are both brought up by the Jesuits,' I said.
> 'They taught us to reason, so at least we know the kind of part we play now.' (p. 155)

There are moments when Brown wonders who his real father was: 'He had deposited not so much as one childish memory. Presumably he was dead.... But I felt no genuine curiosity about him; nor had I any wish to seek him out or find his tombstone, which was possibly, but not certainly, marked with the name Brown' (p. 212). He has never known any sense of property which is another aspect of his bastardy:

> There are those who belong by their birth inextricably to a country, who even when they leave it feel the tie. And there are those who belong to a province, a country, a village, but I could feel no link at all with the hundred or so square kilometres around the gardens and boulevards of Monte Carlo, a city of transients. I felt a greater tie here in the shabby land of terror, chosen for me by chance.
> The first colours touched the garden, deep green and then deep red—transience was my pigmentation; my roots would never go deep enough anywhere to make me a home or make me secure with love. (pp. 212-13)

Brown resembles the child in the 'Basement Room' who is overwhelmed by the incomprehensibility of the adult world. If the adults today find reality too humdrum, it is because their control of it is derisory. 'When they compare themselves to those who really "act" in the world, who "make history", who "lead the world", they find they are in the same impotent condition in relation to these people as children are to adults.'[9]

Like a typical Sartrean hero, Brown sees existence as purely contingent. The world of *The Comedians* presents the picture of the world viewed passively, without any effort at projecting a future for it. It, therefore, reveals a petrified consciousness. In the absence of any desire for transcendence, it is obsessed by its own factitiousness: 'Only the nightmares are real in this place. More real than Mr. Smith and his vegetarian centre. More real than ourselves' (p. 154). In the absence of any belief, any desire for transcendence, Brown's consciousness is overtaken by its own factitiousness, and life becomes mere sound and fury, signifying nothing.

The three heroes Fowler, Querry and Brown are failures in the sense that they fail to discover any principle that would lend meaning to their existence. They represent the type of modern consciousness which is swallowed up and encumbered with itself, and finds itself futilely floating on the surface of things. Brown is at the extreme end of the scale, and is almost a perfect embodiment of the feeling that Heidegger calls boredom. 'Real boredom comes when "one is bored". This profound boredom, drifting hither and thither in the abyss of existence like mute fog, draws all men and oneself along with them, together in a queer kind of indifference. This boredom reveals what is in totality.'[10] These heroes of Greene are consciousnesses which have lost their natural condition, their illusion of being part of the world they inhabit and which they can mould. They are like Baudelaire, the man who never forgets himself, the man who has no immediacy, in whom 'everything is rigged because everything is looked at and broken down into their elements.'[11] In Sartrean terms freedom's first real moment, its moment of pure lucidity, is the point at which it experiences the shame of being fundamentally that very being from which it believed itself so radically distinct.[12] *The Comedians* ends with a description of the moment of 'pure lucidity' which Brown, obsessed with his own contingency, achieves in a dream in which he discovers a striking similarity between himself and the absurdly comic figure of Jones:

> When I was a boy the Fathers of the Visitation had told me that one test of a belief was this: that a man was

ready to die for it. So Doctor Magiot thought too, but for what belief did Jones die?

Perhaps, under the circumstances, it was only natural that I dreamt of Jones. He lay among the dry rocks on the flat plain beside me and he said, 'Don't ask me to find water. I can't. I'm tired, Brown, tired. After the seven hundredth performance I sometimes dry up on my lines—and I've only two lines.'

I said to him, 'Why are you dying, Jones?'

'It's in my part, old man, it's in my part. But I've got this comic line—you should hear the whole theatre laugh when I say it. The ladies in particular.'

'What is it?'

'That's the trouble. I've forgotten it.'

'Jones, you must remember.'

'I've got it now. I have to say—just look at these bloody rocks—"This is a good place"; and everyone laughs till tears come. Then you say, "To hold the bastards up?" and I reply "I didn't mean that." ' (p. 274)

The word 'Comedians' is used in the book in its traditional theatrical sense, denoting the improvisation of roles. In this age of incongruities, the individual is compelled to play a comic role. The bastard, in the absence of any justification for his existence, is always conscious of his own incongruous play-acting. It is this consciousness of incongruities that generates the philosophic awareness, and in our age of objective uncertainty the bastard becomes the truly representative figure. Meeting Jones was for Brown like meeting an unknown brother. 'For all we knew we were both bastards, although of course there might have been a ceremony—my mother had given me that impression. We had been both thrown into the water to sink or swim. . . . (p. 254). There are frequent references to play-acting. Brown's mother dies with the question on her lips: 'What part you are playing now?' (p. 65). Even the mulish Mr. Smith on one occasion becomes conscious of playing an absurd role in preaching vegetarianism: 'I realize that now. Perhaps we seem rather comic figures to you, Mr. Brown' (p. 182). Brown, the centre of consciousness of the novel, is obsessed with his own play-acting: 'I felt like

the player-king rebuked by Hamlet for exaggerating his part' (p. 96). When Jones tells him that his office smelt like stage dressing room, he promptly enquires: 'The grease paint drowned the smell of water?' (p. 254). The novel ends with the description of a dream in which Brown sees himself and Jones acting on a stage. This persistent awareness of playing a part dries up the very sap of life, 'everything is rigged' and broken into its elements.

'Impossible to deepen that night' (p. 1). This is how Greene describes Haiti which he has chosen to project the chaos of the spiritual situation. The charnel fauna of Africa in *A Burnt-Out Case*, though emblematic of death and decay, has a festering life of its own. But Haiti presents a picture of complete sterility, emptiness, and horror:

> The journey was slow, rough, and tiring and took us eleven days, nine days of lying up, of sudden dashes from one point to another, to doubling on our tracks, and finally two last days of imprudence because of hunger. I was glad enough when we came in sight at dusk, from our grey eroded mountain where nothing grew, of the deep Dominican forest. You could see all the twists of the frontier by the contrast between our bare rocks and their vegetation. It was the same mountain range, but the trees never crossed into the poor dry land of Haiti. (p. 262)

This marks the final stage of the journey which begins with a bleak ray of hope. 'I was returning without much hope to a country of fear and frustration, and yet every familiar feature as the *Medea* drew in gave me a kind of happiness' (p. 36). The book presents an account of successive exiles till a point is reached where the protagonist is in a fix where else to go. 'With the help of that note I took a room and a bath and cleaned myself up and slept for twelve hours before I went to beg for money at the British consulate and for expatriation—to where?' (p. 263). Brown's unwilling acceptance of the undertaker's job in the end symbolizes the surrender to the pure contingency of existence. The change in his vocation from that of a hotelier (catering to the living)

to that of an undertaker (catering to the dead) also sums up the thematic progress of the book from life to death.

The narrative begins with a rumination over the memorials erected in London to the heroes of war and politics who have passed into oblivion. Images of darkness, desert, and exile constitute the recurrent motif of the novel. There is a sort of mock-nostalgia in the recollection of Jones and in relating him with the past heroes which is a way of repudiating the past itself—its peace and security which 'home' symbolizes. A modest stone 'commemorates Jones on the far side of the international road which he failed to cross in the country far from home' (p. 3). There is no possibility of returning alive or dead. Home has receded too far to be more than a mere illusion, a hangover from the past. Brown is not 'to this day absolutely sure of where, geographically speaking, Jones's home lay' (p. 3). But at the beginning of his journey into the night on a 'sullen August morning on the Atlantic in the wake of the *Medea*, a cargo-ship', Brown has still an illusory faith in his future—'even the future of my empty hotel and of a love-affair which was almost as empty' (p. 3).

The images persistently evoke feelings of dread, uncertainty, and finally of sullenness and surrender. 'The level of pink gin in my glass shifted with the movement of the boat, as though the glass were an instrument made to record the shock of the waves,' and the flat grey sea 'seemed to lie within the three mile limit like an animal passive and ominous waiting to show what it can do outside' (p. 4). Jones, the first passenger introduced to us, appears rather ambiguous and out of place. 'Jones was a small man very tidily dressed in a pale grey suit with a double-breasted waist-coat which somehow looked out of place away from elevators, office-crowds, the clatter of typewriters—it was the only one of its kind in our scrubby cargo-ship peddling the sullen sea' (p. 5). If Jones was fake and mysterious, Mr. Smith 'was a genuine article, if ever there was one, a complete contrast to Mr. Jones.' The phenomenon of human individuals having been reduced to the level of things is also highlighted by the employment of animal imagery: 'A man without legs set under the customs-counter like a rabbit in a hutch, miming in silence' (p. 36), and Petit Pierre had 'the quick movements of a monkey, and he seemed to swing

from wall to wall on ropes of laughter' (p. 37). The general effect of emptiness and void is created by an obsessive recurrence of certain terms: 'The hotel which I owned on the hills above the capital had done without me for three months; it would certainly be void of clients, and I valued my life more highly than an empty bar and a corridor of empty bedrooms and a future empty of promise' (p. 3). The journey finally takes Brown into a waste land: 'There were no heights and no abysses in my world—I saw myself on a great plain, walking and walking on the interminable flats' (p. 274). The reality has merged into the nightmare.

The archetypal symbol of journey generally serves as the dominant symbol of a Greene novel. 'Journey' has been used right from the days of Homer to symbolize man's spiritual quest. Specially in the medieval allegories and romances, it becomes the most handy symbol for transcribing the medieval man's heroic and religious pursuits. In the modern age, with the reversal of fiction to subjectivism, it has again acquired the same important place. Almost every significant novelist has used it in his major work. But now the journey does not lead the modern hero to Ithaca (back home) or to the discovery of the Holy Grail or to the Celestial City. It leads him towards an overwhelming sense of the misery, the sordidness, and the absurdity of human existence. R. W. B. Lewis rightly observed that Greene's three novels—*Brighton Rock*, *The Power and the Glory* and *The Heart of the Matter*—in so far as they may be said to constitute a trilogy, reverse the direction of the greatest religious trilogy, *The Divine Comedy*. 'Dante's poem moves from ignorance to knowledge, from discord to harmony, from unspeakable darkness to overwhelming light. Greene's "trilogy" moves stealthily deeper and deeper into the darkness, moves through the annihilation of our confidence in human knowledge to a helpless awareness of impenetrable mystery. . . .'[13] The castles of sand that his heroes have been trying to erect by affirming to the religious creed finally crumble to dust. Greene's search for meaning leads him to a desert without any prospect of oasis. Brown portrays such a consciousness: 'Don't ask me to find water. I can't' (p. 274). Greene is closer to Celine and Kafka than he is to Camus and Sartre, the purveyors of ideologies. The journey in each of his individual novel and

also on the larger plane of his career as a novelist, leads into the sky where nothing shines.

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THE UNDEFEATED: TRIUMPH OF THE IDEAL

By S. P. Jain

The Hemingway hero fights the contingencies of life and dominates them, thereby preserving his ideals of individuality and self-fulfilment in an ideal-less and sordid world, says Professor DeFalco.[1] According to him, the best illustrations of this type of hero in Hemingway's stories are Christ in *Today is Friday*, Manuel in *The Undefeated*, Macomber in *The Short Happy Life* and Harry in *Kilimanjaro*. He, however, stretches the definition a bit far and remarks that occasionally the adjusted hero, such as Cayetano in *The Gambler, the Nun and the Radio* and Jack in *Fifty Grand*, is suddenly forced by life's contingencies, takes up his cross as it were, and reaches quite near the Hemingway hero.[2] This definition is largely identical to Professor Philip Young's concept of Hemingway's code hero (not of Hemingway hero) who conducts himself with courage and honour, adheres to the norms and standards of his professional behaviour and integrity and holds tight in a world of tension and pain.[3] While these distinctions separate Hemingway's men of intelligence and integrity from the rest, they fail to provide a really satisfying appreciation of the character of Manuel the undefeated. It seems to me that Manuel should not be classed with others precisely because he is a class by himself; and the stuff his professional integrity and uncompromising individuality are made of is far too superior to that of the other illustrations of Hemingway hero of Professor DeFalco's definition. Indeed his character and conduct seem to achieve a certain distinctive triumph of the ideal, seldom protrayed in Hemingway's works, and never again in his short stories.

I

Bullfight, according to Hemingway, is not sport but tragedy, i.e., not an equal contest between the man and the bull but

one 'in which there is danger for the man but certain death for the animal.'[4] However, in *The Undefeated* Retana can only offer to put Manuel the bullfighter in a nocturnal with lousy pics, and the stiff he is to fight is 'what the veterinaries won't pass in the daytime.'[5] This naturally tilts the delicate but absolutely necessary balance (danger for the man but certain death for the animal). To make a fair deal of it Manuel seeks and gets the willingness of the great picador Zurito to pic for him. There is, to be sure, a curiously ironic ambivalence underlying Zurito's understanding of Manuel. To him Manuel is not a good bullfighter, for he may have enormous skill but he no longer has the prowess of proper sword-thrust. But what Zurito doesn't understand is that Manuel is yet a complete bullfighter because he has taken repeated gorings, has accepted the certainty of wound, of eventual death, and has retained his courage, endurance, honour and determination. Still the attitude of the adjusted Zurito is humane and helpful: he pics for Manuel not because it is his job to pic (Manuel can't pay him well enough for pic-ing even if he pays all he is paid for as bullfighter) but because of his sympathy and feeling for the aging bullfighter. Lowest in the hierarchy are the insensitive spectators. They care for the very young among the bullfighters such as Chaves and Hernandez, are somewhat debauched with theatricality in bullfighting, do not understand the style in which old Manuel fights and have forgotten all about him. With a saddening insight one recognizes, not so much the theme of confrontation between youth and age as the handicaps and pitfalls of oldgrowing—an utterly inescapable tragedy of human life in the present context.

Manuel, however, is not deterred by it. He is a simple man but he has a true bullfighter's pride in his profession; and his proud defiance of his advancing age and receding prowess and of the consequently increasing danger of goring and death is of a piece with his quiet neglect of the crowd and spectators now crazy for burlesque and funny things done by the very young in bullfighting. Luckily the bull he faces is not vicious but a good bull who responds well and charges accurately; and ably assisted by the brilliant pic-ing by Zurito Manuel dominates and controls it. He holds the cape against his hip and pivots with such perfect self-composure and finished skill

that the cape swings out like a ballet dancer's skirt and winds the charging bull around him like a belt. In the 'second' act he works so close that the edge of the cape gets wet with bull's blood. Exposed to such dexterous and bold manoeuvres the bull is effectively fixed and ideally prepared for the planting of banderillos. 'Manuel swung the cape under his muzzle with one hand, to show the bull was fixed, and walked away.' (p. 201). But:

> *There was no response.* (p. 202. Italics added)

This short, chilling statement immediately wakes us up to the fact that indifferent spectators, just not interested in whatever this aging man might be doing, are around. They have damned him as it were even before watching his performance. The critic of *El Heraldo* is busy enjoying warm champagne and casually scribbles '—the aged Manolo rated no applause for a vulgar series of lances with the cape and we entered the third of the palings' (p. 202);—this when he was working 'awful close' (p. 201) and was risking himself too much in working 'that close' (p. 201) to the animal. This focus upon the crowd's understanding of the gallantry and valour of the noble bullfighter is but a preview of things to come. Still it sharply indicates the tragic propensity in the ideal of active and isolated individualism and professional integrity when it is pitted against a capricious and unconcerned universe which dooms it.

After the planting of banderillos every bullfight reaches the third act in which the bull 'is faced by only one man who must, alone, dominate him by a piece of cloth placed over a stick, and kill him from in front, going in over the bull's right horn to kill him with a sword thrust between the arch of his shoulder blades.'[6] No amount of self-control and valour and concentration and strength can be too much in a bullfighter at these crucial moments. He has to fight the worst contingencies and to hold tight, and show maximum grace under pressure. Manuel, alone in the ring, moves very near the bull showing immense 'cogones' as they call it in Spain, and observes him closely. 'Walking forward, watching the bull's feet, he saw successively his eyes, his wet muzzle, and the wide, forward-pointing spread of his horns. The bull had light circles about

his eyes.' (p. 205). The way Manuel works with muleta indicates his absolute control of reflexes and earns the compliment from Retana's man: 'If it was Belmonte doing that stuff they'd go crazy' (p. 207). When the bull is perfectly dominated and framed right, Manuel, his instincts and knowledge working automatically, launches himself on the animal for 'the final stuff with the sword' (p. 203). Neither courage, nor skill, nor determination, nor honour fail him, but the strength of his aging body gives way. Four times he misses the target in thrusting the sword deep enough, is cruelly punished by the bull, and bumped in back, in face, barely saved from being gored. And then:

> The first cushions thrown down out of darkness misses him. Then one hit him in the face, his bloody face looking towards the crowd. They were coming down fast. Spotting the sand. Somebody threw an empty champagne-bottle from close range. It hit Manuel on the foot. He stood there watching the dark, where the things were coming from. Then something whisked through the air and struck by him. Manuel leaned over and picked it up. It was his sword. He straightened it over his knee and gestured with it to the crowd. (pp. 210-11)

He had sent back men with the capes for their presence was against the code of his profession. He had worked with muleta with such immaculate skill that in pase natural 'the bull had gone clean up in the air with the charge. Manuel had not moved' (p. 206); and in pase de pecho 'the hot black bull body touched his chest as it passed.' (p. 206). And even when lifted and going up in the air he had pushed on the sword into the bull's body as far as he could. But what he receives in return are the hitting empty champagne-bottles and cushions thrown by the jeering and derisive crowd. This is what the unfeeling world offers to those who strive to stick fast to their standards and to defend their honour. This comes fast and from the dark and goes deep into you, and you watching the dark with your bloody face; and still you are to conduct yourself with honour and endurance. This rejection at the hands of uncomprehending spectators, one can imagine,

is more painful to Manuel than the bumps he had got from the bull, as it is also not mere unconcern but a total misconstruing of his noble and epic struggle. Such onlookers can, with justice, be characterized as the 'well-fed, skull and bones-ed, porcellian-ed, beach-tanned, flannelled, panama-hatted, sport-shod ones';[7] and their unawareness of Manuel's heroic struggle evokes, in a large measure, reader's sympathy and identification with him.

The bull, having remained in the ring longer than it should, learning quick and getting wise, forces Manuel to step close and jam the sharp peak of the muleta into its muzzle, and that moment he is gored. He feels broken and gone but gets up coughing, shouting for a sword. He pays no heed to Hernandez who persuades him to go to the infirmary. Maybe, he is going far out in his pride, far beyond its true place in life. And with a dogged determination and heroic steadfastness and concentration, and with the intensity and ferocity of them all, he makes an enormous effort, an almost superhuman effort. He summons all the prowess he is capable of, draws the sword out of the muleta and flings himself onto the bull. 'He felt the sword go in all the way. Right up to the guard. Four fingers and his thumb into the bull. The blood was hot on his knuckles, and he was on top of the bull.' (p. 211). Yes, he had gone out too far in his pride in his profession; but in going out too far alone has he found the fullest powers of his endurance and courage, of his gallantry and determination. His victory is compounded of all these ingredients, a mixture that cannot be unmixed. 'To be poised against fatality, to meet adverse conditions gracefully, is more than simple endurance; it is an act of aggression, a positive triumph.'[8] And in striving for his ideal Manuel has not only reached it, he has positively triumphed it; indeed, he has even purified and hallowed and honoured the ideal itself.

They—Retana and Zurito—hadn't cared to understand him. They hadn't heard him. They are both in the infirmary looking at him. With evocative irony and poignant awe recoiling upon them both, we read, 'Retana smiled at him and said something. Manuel could not hear it.' (p. 212). And then, 'Zurito said something to him. Manuel could not hear it.' (p. 212). He is too tired and broken, but he is careful enough

to see that they do not 'cut off his coleta' (p. 212). He is happy: he was going great, only he didn't have any luck. And the adjusted Zurito stands *awkwardly*, watching.

II

It seems to me that Manuel stands out prominently as *the* only illustration of the Hemingway hero (of DeFalco's concept) in religiously adhering to the code of professional conduct and integrity, in fighting the worst contingencies of life and dominating them holding tight, in journeying towards the ideal of uncompromising individuality and self-fulfilment. His is the uncontaminated avowal and dedication to the ideal at every step of life under all circumstances, unlike Macomber and Harry. He has had many gorings but has stuck to the most exacting standards and has learned to live with his wounds and scars and with full awareness of eventual death. Also, he has rejected all jobs that demanded adjustments and compromises, thereby partial surrenders. And in the hierarchy of such Hemingway heroes he unmistakably stands on top, deservedly occupying pride of place.

A close study of *Today is Friday* reveals that the reference to the Crucifixion of Christ here does not transcend the limits of being a motif, and the myth of Christ a concretization of an abstract—the ideal for man. Christ is, as Jung suggests, 'a sacred symbol...of the only meaningful life, that is, of a life that strives for the individual realization.'[9] Christ is the Infallible One, Lord of us all. His triumph of the ideal is not a human achievement but an ideal set up for human achievement precisely as Christ is not so much a human as an ideal for humans. Only the Roman soldiers with their ironic commentary in the story—'Hey, what you put in that, camel chips?' (p. 290) or 'I got a gut-ache' (p. 290)—are humans. In fact, with the myth of Christ and motif of Crucifixion deeply planted in our minds, and with the awareness that Christ is not human in that He is more than human, His reaching the ideal is a foregone conclusion. Also, 'Today is Friday', the story encompassing the Crucifixion-theme, is in the main a brief, suggestive dialogue, 'hardly more than a vignette',[10] rather

than an intense and evocative experience that the other three stories are.

Macomber in *The Short Happy Life*, however, needs examination on a different footing. The moment he achieves the ideal of manhood, e.g. he becomes true to himself and learns to live, he is accidentally killed by his wife, says Professor DeFalco. He adds, 'The victory of Macomber over himself releases him, but at the same time it condemns him to death.'[11] Without undermining the significance of this coming of age in Macomber it may be remarked that the achievement of the ideal in this case is a transitorily felt experience engulfed in too swift an onrush of death. One may also argue that Macomber's achievement of the ideal is not only cut short by death but might otherwise have been a short-lived one. It depends upon how he would have reacted had he only been seriously hit and not killed, upon how he would take the wounds repeatedly, upon how he would live with those wounds and scars. His realization of manhood is a *young phenomenon*, like the young phenomenon in a bullfighter of which Hemingway himself never took serious notice. Indeed, Hemingway said that a bullfighter cannot be adequately judged until he has received his first serious wound. Hence the young Pedro Romero in *The Sun Also Rises*,, often mistaken as an ideal bullfighter in Hemingway, 'represents more of the possibility of the ideal than the ideal itself.'[12] The experience is to be repeated over and over, as it is in Manuel, as it is not in Pedro and Macomber, before one can be adequately judged. It is, then, obvious that Macomber has 'approached the ideal'[13] for once, not for good; and exactly to this extent he goes down in the hierarchy of Hemingway heroes.

'Kilimanjaro' enumerates Harry's lamentations for missed opportunities and 'self-accusation that he has betrayed his real self for women and money.'[14] Of course his self-realization underlines his development too. Professor DeFalco, however, points out that Harry is redeemed by Compie and transported (through death) to Kilimanjaro, the House of God, 'now that he has recognized all his failings'.[15] But the recognition of his past failings in Harry is not necessarily his remedying them, and there is no more than recognition in the story. It is just a dawning awareness of the right and the wrong, of the useful

and the misused life. This awareness, to be sure, can be seen in many of the adjusted heroes such as Jack in *Fifty Grand* and Cayetano in *The Gambler, the Nun and the Radio,* but this does not remedy their deficiency (of limited idealism, of compromises and partial surrenders). Ironically, indeed, Harry's chance, as that of Macomber, of living up to his ideals and of translating those ideals into practice is cut out by approaching end. But as it is, his lamentations and self-accusations are little more than a dying man's regrets: and at best, his dawning idealism synchronizes with death that overtakes it.

Both Macomber and Harry have had their lapses, not so with Manuel. If true test of adherence to the ideal lies in testing a man repeatedly against trying odds and in taking into account all his past performances as also his present conduct, and also, if achievement of the ideal is taken as a human experience and achievement, and not as an achievement of our Lord (for whom nothing is impossible), Manuel is its purest and supreme example in Hemingway's short stories. He, in this regard, exemplifies the successful application and execution of myth (of Christ's striving for the individual realization) on the level of a stirring and profound human experience. He has allowed no stigma on his life in terms of his professional conduct and integrity, of his individuality and self-fulfilment; nothing demeaning about it, no degeneracy. He, therefore, stands out not only as an undefeated but also as an unmatched human figure in Hemingway's stories, and metaphorically epitomizes man's plight in an irrational universe—the lonely little man facing the big black bull.

III

Curiously enough, there are some subtle yet striking resemblances between Manuel of *The Undefeated* and Santiago of *The Old Man and the Sea.* This is not to say that there are not sharp points of contrast between them. To recount a few: the story emphasizes the ideal of individuality and self-fulfilment, the novel that of 'human solidarity and interdependence';[16] the former points out the pride of Manuel, the latter the humility of Santiago (which, however, carries no loss of

true pride); the former stresses the rejection of society mainly in damning the spectators, the president, Retana and partly of course, even Zurito, the latter earns 'the right to reject rejection'.[17] Still, the strange, old Santiago in the sea and the strange, oldgrowing Manuel in the ring have much in common. Both have vast reserves of quiet courage and skill, and are some kind of ex-champions who proved their mettle in the past, but are intent upon proving it again. Further, both go far out in their pride and neither has any luck in the venture. However, in fighting against impossible odds both lose tangible rewards in a worldly sense but win moral victories; and the dignity, grace, endurance, heroism and gallantry they bring to bear upon their struggle indicate the stature the simple man may have. Finally, while mostly Hemingway's human beings struggle and attain or adhere to the code and die, both of them are miraculously allowed to survive, to point out 'what a man can do and what a man endures.'[18] And most of all, together they establish the truth of Hemingway's words: 'A man can be destroyed but not defeated.'[19]

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ON THE POETICS OF SRI AUROBINDO

By P. Kotoky

A larger field of being made more real to man's experience will be the realm of the future poetry.

(*The Future Poetry*, p. 327)

* * *

The day when we get back to the ancient worship of delight and beauty, will be our day of salvation; for without these things there can be neither an assured nobility and sweetness in poetry and art, nor a satisfied dignity and fulness of life nor a harmonious perfection of the spirit. (Ibid. p. 335)

* * *

The poetry which voices the oneness and totality of our being and Nature and the worlds and God, will not make the actuality of our earthly life less but more real and rich and full and wide and living to men.

(Ibid. p. 328)

* * *

We have not given adequate time and attention to the study of *The Future Poetry* and therefore Sri Aurobindo's formulation of his literary and poetic principles remains yet largely unrecognized. This work, which may rightly be called his poetic testament, has not yet been appreciated at its full value. The aim of this article is to make an assessment of the work and to bring out the salient features of Sri Aurobindo's poetics. The intention here is, however, more descriptive than evaluative.

Sri Aurobindo sets out in this work 'to sound what the future has to give us through the medium of the poetic mind and its power for creation and interpretation' (pp. 10-11). His work is essentially based on the ancient Hindu notion of the poet as the seer—*Kavayah Satyadrastārah*. The author has elaborated all the niceties of implications involved in the view. And all the elaboration is precious because it has come from one who was endowed with the gift of vision and whose mind was deeply imbued with the spirit of wisdom and culture of

the East and the West. The work, of abiding significance, should prove very deeply interesting to us in the last quarter of the twentieth century because it has shed unique light on such oft-discussed subjects as expression, style, realism, mysticism, poetic intuition and critical intellect, and art and music, and has also envisaged the unique poetry of the future.

The work, originally published in a series of articles in the *Arya*, the monthly philosophical journal which the author edited between the years 1914-1921, is, in its present form, divided into thirty-two chapters of which seventeen (Chaps. VII-XXIII) are dedicated to a survey of the course of evolution of English poetry almost since its inception, one might say, till the first few years of the twentieth century. In Chaps. II, III, IV and V, he deals respectively with the essence of poetry, rhythm and movement, style and substance, and poetic vision and the *mantra*. Chapter VI is given to an examination of the question of national evolution of poetry. Chaps. XXIV-XXXII are devoted to an examination of such subjects as the ideal spirit of poetry, the soul of poetic delight and beauty, the form and the spirit, etc. However, the work is not a collection of chapters on motley subjects, it is one and integral. The 'survey' chapters do not form an independent entity. In them Sri Aurobindo has examined the quality of the entire range of English poetry from the peculiar standpoint he has adopted in the book, and has thereby shown where the true spirit of poetry lies. This survey seems to be the only work of its kind. The author's scrutiny of the English poetic mind sheds new light on it, and shows remarkable critical power. He has tried to determine the essential quality of English poetry of various ages by holding it in the light of the 'spirit and temper' of national evolution peculiar to them. For, Sri Aurobindo holds that 'Poetry flourishes best when it is the rhythmical expression of the soul of its age, of what is greatest and deepest in it, but still belongs to it' (p. 191). Commenting on the character of English poetry generally, he says that its 'history has been more that of individual poetic achievements than of a constant national tradition; in the mass it has been a series of poetical revolutions without any strong inner continuity.' The generality of Elizabethan dramatists, other than Marlowe and Shakespeare, lacks, according to Sri Aurobindo, that 'inter-

pretative vision' which can give 'an explicit or implicit idea of life and the human being'. On Shakespeare, Sri Aurobindo writes: 'It is the sheer creative Ānanda of the life-spirit which is Shakespeare: abroad everywhere in that age it incarnates itself in him for the pleasure of poetic self-vision' (p. 99). He has acknowledged the greatness of *Paradise Lost*, and yet has this remark to make: 'he (Milton) has not seen God and heaven and man or the soul of humanity at once divine and fallen, subject to evil and striving for redemption; here there is no inner greatness in the poetic interpretation of his materials' (p. 119). Commenting on some of the leading romantic poets, he writes: 'They have the faculty of revelatory sense in a high degree, but little of the revelatory thought which should go with it; or, at least, though they can suggest this sometimes with the intense force which comes from spiritual feeling, they cannot command it and constantly give it greatness and distinctness of body' (p. 175). After an elaborate examination of the course of evolution of English poetry, he notes a change in the mind and soul of the race, and says: 'Mankind is still engaged in thinking and searching with an immense stress of mental power, but it is now once more in search of its soul and of the spirit and deeper truth of things' (p. 250). In poetry he considers Whitman to be the most illustrative example of this change: 'Whitman by the intensity of his intellectual and vital dwelling on the things he saw and expressed, arrives at some first profound sense of the greater self of the individual, of the greater self in the community of the race and in all its immense past action opening down through the broadening eager present to an immenser future, of the greater self or Nature and of the eternal, the divine Self and Spirit of existence who broods over these things, who awaits them and in whom they come to the sense of their oneness' (p. 255).

The above extracts are very clearly indicative of the new approach to poetry and criticism of poetry adopted by Sri Aurobindo. But they hardly suffice to give us an idea of his poetics. Some idea of his important observations is necessary and to that end the following passages, taken at random, are brought in:

(*a*) Realism is in fact a sort of nether idealism. (p. 7)

(*b*) All art starts from the sensuous and sensible, or takes it as a continual point of reference or, at the lowest, uses it as a symbol and a fount of images. (p. 8)

(*c*) For neither the intelligence, the imagination nor the ear are the true recipients of the poetic delight, even as they are not its true creators; they are only its channels and instruments; the true creator, the true hearer is the soul. (p. 13)

(*d*) A divine Ānanda, a delight interpretative, creative, revealing, formative,—one might almost say, an inverse reflection of the joy which the universal Soul has felt in its great release of energy when it rang out into the rhythmic forms of the universe the spiritual truth, the large interpretative idea, the life, the power, the emotion of things packed into its original creative vision—such spiritual joy is that which the soul of the poet feels and which, when he can conquer the human difficulties of his task, he succeeds in pouring also into all those who are prepared to receive it. And this delight is not merely a godlike pastime; it is a great formative and illuminative power. (pp. 13-14)

(*e*) Intensity...is the stamp of the poetical speech and of the poetical movement. (p. 22)

(*f*) Poetry...is an intuitive seeing and an inspired hearing. (p. 125)

(*g*) The essential power of the poetic word is to make us see, not to make us think or feel. (p. 33)

(*h*) Vision is the characteristic power of the poet. (p. 39)

(*i*) Poetry, like everything else in man, evolves.... And evolution means a bringing out of new powers which lay concealed in the seed or the first form. (pp. 265-6)

(*j*) The cut and dried distinction between idealism and realism in literature has always seemed to me to be a little arbitrary and unreal, and whatever its value in drama and fiction, it has no legitimate place in poetry. (p. 5)

From a close consideration of passages cited above one thing emerges clearly: though Sri Aurobindo has accepted the ancient Hindu view of the poet as the seer, and has asserted ideative

truth to be the poet's goal, he is not guided by any tradition, Eastern or Western, in the formulation of his poetics. Here, as in his own practice of poetry, he is himself. He is leading back our thought to belief in the spirit.

It should be obvious that it is difficult to put Sri Aurobindo as a critic exclusively into any conventional school. He has admitted that there is a truth in the historical theory of criticism, but has hastened to point out its inadequacies. He has insisted on objectivity, but has, at the same time, admitted that there is no universal standard of objectivity; and even an objective standard is not free from the imposition—*adhyāropa*—of one's objective self. What Sri Aurobindo considers necessary for appreciation of poetry is the rare quality of insight; he also speaks of the correspondence, or dissonance, between the poet and his reader that decides the relation between the two. There is little harm if we understand this correspondence as *sahṛdayatā*.

It is, however, interesting to discover what can perhaps be called an affinity of critical perspective between Sri Aurobindo and some of his brilliant contemporaries of the West. In the context of T. S. Eliot's well-known emphasis on tradition and its relation to the flowering of individual talent, the following observation of Sri Aurobindo sounds significant: 'The work of the poet depends not only on himself and his age, but on the mentality of the nation to which he belongs and the spiritual, intellectual, aesthetic tradition and environment which it creates for him. It is not to be understood by this that he is or need be entirely limited by this condition or that he is to consider himself as only a voice of the national mind or bound by the past national tradition and debarred from striking out a road of his own.... [In nations] which have had a vivid collective life exercising a common and intimate influence on all its individuals or in those which have cherished an acute sense of a great national culture and tradition, the more stable elements of that tradition may exert a very conscious influence on the mind of the poets, at once helping and limiting the weaker spirits, but giving to genius an exceptional power for sustained beauty of form and a satisfying perfection. But this is no essential condition for the birth of great poetry.' (p. 52).

That Sri Aurobindo has transcended Eliot in this regard is quite obvious.

Further, Eliot's 'continual extinction of personality' in the progress of an artist will not fail to remind the reader of Sri Aurobindo's 'Impersonal' which is 'concerned with the creative idea and the motive of beauty' (p. 54). Sri Aurobindo remarks that 'the personality of the seer is lost in the eternity of the vision' (p. 48). Also, Eliot's adaptation of Remy de Gourmont's principle of 'Eriger en lois' as an epigraph to his essay, *The Perfect Critic*, might remind us of Sri Aurobindo's insistence on the 'universality' of poetic 'delight and beauty'; besides, Eliot's observation on the transmutation and crystallization of different experiences prior to their consecration in a work of art also brings to our mind Sri Aurobindo's observation on the 'supreme aesthesis'. This, however, is not to suggest any link between the two processes.

A. N. Whitehead once said: 'Great art is more than a transient refreshment. It is something which adds to the permanent richness of the soul's self-attainment. It justifies itself both by its immediate enjoyment, and also by its discipline of the inmost being. Its discipline is not distinct from enjoyment, but by reason of it.... *The fertilisation of the soul is the reason for the necessity of art.*' How well this compares with what Sri Aurobindo said in the following: 'In the greatest art and poetry there should be something of the calm of the impersonal basing and elevating the effort and struggle of the personality, something of the largeness of the universal releasing and harmonising the troubled concentrations of the individual existence, something of the sense of the transcendent raising the inferior, ignorant and uncertain powers of life towards a greater strength and light and Ānanda. And when art and poetry can utter the fullest sense of these things, it is then that they will become the greatest *fortifiers and builders of the soul of man* and assure it in the grandeur of its own largest self and spirit.' (p. 356)

It may appear rather bold to attempt to discover any affinity of critical or aesthetic perspective between the philosophy of aesthetics of Benedetto Croce (1866-1952) and the poetics of Sri Aurobindo who once expressed his polite disagreement (Letters, 3rd Series, pp. 278-81) with some of the views of the former. Yet, in spite of their basic difference as regards what

they understand by intuition [for Sri Aurobindo, intuition is 'direct spiritual perception and vision' (*The Future Poetry*, p. 309), while for Croce, 'perception is intuition' (*Aesthetics*, Vision Press edn., p. 3), but 'Intuition is blind; intellect lends her eyes' (ibid. p. 2)], the temptation to discover some near approximation of views persists, and such an effort should not prove entirely useless either.

Occasional closeness of outlook as suggested in the preceding paragraphs does not, however, deserve consistent emphasis, for they appear to be only accidental, and do not prove anything of significance.

The few extracts with which this article begins are expected to give an adequate idea of the poetry of the future that Sri Aurobindo envisages; and it is not proposed to bring in extra elaboration of the point here. The interested reader may, however, refer to chapter XXVIII of the book for a fuller discussion of this aspect of Sri Aurobindo's poetics.

Sri Aurobindo has, besides, a large corpus of writings on the subject of literary and poetic criticism. These, now available in his *Letters*, 3rd Series, supplement *The Future Poetry*. The range of subjects treated in those writings tells us of the writer's wide interest, and their treatment is marked by critical acumen and clarity of vision. In addition to these, his dissertations on Kalidasa deserve particular mention. Of these, the discourse on Hindu drama is as penetrating as it is original, and is a fine specimen of comparative assessment of the values of literature of the East and the West.

This survey is expected to give a fair idea of Sri Aurobindo as a literary theorist but, as in the case of many other creative writers who were also great critics, his formulation is to be understood best only in relation to his own practice of it. And the author's great epic poem *Sāvitrī* illustrates it fully.

THE BOY WITH A CART: CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE OF FRY'S FIRST PUBLISHED PLAY

By T. Ghatak

It is not enough to say that Christopher Fry had a deeply religious childhood, that his father was an Anglican lay-preacher and his mother a quaker, that his two aunts who played a role of some importance in his upbringing were very religious women; and that naturally, therefore, these early influences are manifest in some of his plays. For a student of Fry and the modern drama, it is necessary to understand how the playwright's religious beliefs and tendencies have coloured and moulded his response to the contemporary predicament. There is an unfortunate—and wrong—notion in some quarters that Fry's response to the dilemmas of the age has been feeble and half-hearted. True, Fry's world appears less spectacular when it is judged in terms of Brecht's Epic form or Ionesco's profoundly absurd images. But to say that Fry loves to live in an insular world of delightful unconcern, blissfully devoted to the quaker ideals of his childhood days, regaling his audience with exhilarating verse and nothing more, is to take a very limited and inaccurate view of him. Somewhat quiet, no doubt, he is. This quiet he achieves within himself with the help of a mental apparatus to the making of which religion has contributed a great deal. He needs this quiet for a proper apprehension of the nature and destiny of our unquiet universe. As his Merlin says in *Thor, with Angels:*

> I shall move
> Myself, into the quiet of the tumbling tower,
> For an hour or two of casual obliteration
> And break more ground for dreams.

It is not without significance that Fry's first published work, *The Boy with a Cart,* is a religious play. It was written, staged and published between 1937 and 1939. A period marked by convulsive changes in all spheres, these years proved to be

truly climacteric for England and the Continent (and, later, for the whole world). This period saw the formation of the fateful coalition ministry in England under Chamberlain, Japan's attempted conquest of China, the annexation of Austria by Germany, the signing of the Munich Agreement between Chamberlain, Daladier, Hitler and Mussolini, the recognition of France's dictatorship by Great Britain, Italy's seizure of Albania, Hitler's repudiation of various international treaties, and, finally, the outbreak of the Second World War on 3 September 1939 followed by the disconcerting possibility of the withering away of the League of Nations. By any standard these were stirring events and had the effect of giving mankind the creeps. The fabric of human society could not but present a tattered spectacle to a sensitive mind. At this point when time-honoured structures were collapsing all around and mankind seemed plagued by loss of all values, Fry was in his early thirties. He was fully conscious of the storm in which man was caught; and could immediately perceive 'how ludicrous it is to strut in a storm'. We may turn with profit to *The Boy with a Cart*, published in 1939, for a reliable clue to the shaping of Fry's thoughts during that period of corrosive tumult. That we discover the orientation to be almost wholly religious does not detract from the genuineness of his involvement or that of his response.

The boy in *The Boy with a Cart* is Cuthman, a young shepherd, who, as the play opens, appears to be driven by a vision whose intensity is not marred even by the news of his father's death.

> It is the first day of the year that I've kinged
> Myself on the rock, sat myself in the wind:
> It was laying my face on gold. And when I stood
> I felt the webs of winter all blow by
> And in the bone-dry runnel of the earth
> Spring restart her flood.

But his preoccupation with the vision does not make him forgetful of the immediate realities. He knows that

> ...the sheep are foot-loose
> and green-

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> Spring restart her flood.

But his preoccupation with the vision does not make him forgetful of the immediate realities. He knows that

> . . . the sheep are foot-loose
> and green-

> Hungry. They will be lost in Sundown, and
> no bell-wether.

The seeming contradiction between Cuthman's realization of the calamity that has befallen him and his utter unconcern in the face of that realization surprises the neighbours. '. . .And of all things on earth / He is making a cart!' The wooden cart seems to engage all his attention. When completed, the cart is used by the boy to carry his old, widowed mother about. At last, they reach the village of Steyning in Sussex. Here Cuthman sets about building a church. Obstacles are placed in his way; he is made a butt of ridicule by the frivolous and the flippant. But 'I am dangerous as I stand over the foundations of the church. I have the unsleeping eyes of a watch-dog.' The church at last is completed.

Writing on *The Boy with a Cart*, Derek Stanford has remarked that the play 'does not bother itself with a plot' and that 'incidents are homely and the characters simple'. To my mind, to arrive at a correct estimate of the plot, the incidents and the characters, they have to be judged in the light of the author's context and motivation. The incidents may be 'simple' but the forces that they appear to symbolize are truly of enormous dimensions. The play in its opening lines gives us the picture of a world in harmony with itself, the divine will and the human hand united in a perfect symmetry.

> In our fields, fallow and burdened, in grass and furrow,
> In barn and stable, with scythe, flail, or harrow,
> Sheepshearing, milking or mowing, on labour that's older
> Than knowledge, with God we work shoulder to shoulder;
> God providing, we dividing, sowing, and pruning;
> Not knowing yet and yet sometimes discerning:
> Discerning a little at Spring when the bud and shoot
> With pointing finger show the hand at the root,
> With stretching finger point the moon in the sky:
> Sky and root in joint action; and the cry
> Of the unsteady lamb allying with the brief
> Sunlight, with the curled and cautious leaf.

The ideal universe, as Fry perceives it, is one where faith and

insight ('Not knowing yet and yet sometimes discerning') combine to make man live a happy, purposeful life, secure in the thought of 'flower and star spattering the sky / And the root touched by some divinity'. All this sounds very delightful and, in the pastoral setting of the play, entirely appropriate. But writing in the late thirties of the present century when darkness was closing in from all sides, Fry, even though he did not mouth catchy revolutionary slogans, could not have remained content by having his head in the clouds. As Cuthman's father's death is announced, one cannot but feel that Fry is acutely aware of the calamity that has overtaken mankind. Through the death of the young shepherd's father, Fry seems to emphasize the disappearance of that integrating, directing, ennobling spirit which is taken to pervade all creation, investing it with meaning and purpose. In the absence of this spirit, the universe becomes a blind alley, unsure of its destiny, groping in the dark, buffeted by chance and corroded by evil. Cuthman expresses the anguish of man at this calamity that at once overwhelms and perplexes:

> How can I keep
> Pace with a pain that comes in my head so fast?
> . . . . . .
> What sin brought in the strain, the ominous knock,
> The gaping seam?
> . . . . . .
> Father, if you are standing by to help me—
> Help me to cry.

Though Fry thus shows complete awareness of the destructive turmoil of the contemporary universe, he does not waste his energy in fruitless fulminations against it. His faith in man's ultimate salvation through a determined and energetic application of religion gives him the answer to all moral and social predicaments. In Fry, faith does not remain a private creed intended for the spiritual elevation of the individual; it becomes an instrument for the continual regeneration of mankind. The chorus of 'The people of South England' asks:

> How is your faith now, Cuthman?

Your faith that the warm world hatched,
That spread its unaccustomed colour
Up on the rock, game and *detached?*

Does faith come in handy only when the going is good? Is it just a product of 'the warm world', unable to light up the path amid encircling gloom?

Is God still in the air
Now that the Sun is down?
They are afraid in the city,
Sleepless in the town

Cold on the roads
Desperate by the river.

Cuthman's voice rings out, loud and clear. Leaving 'the entangling weed and the eddying water' behind, he prays to be given the strength to fulfil his mission:

Grant this, O God, that I may grow to my father
As he grew to Thy Son, and be his son
Now and for always.

What is Cuthman's mission? Building a church? Yes, because religion, to Fry, represents the principle that the world will always be in need of to keep itself on an even keel. When his Cornish neighbour says to him, 'Your mother is sick', the young shepherd at once knows that civilization itself is sick. Endowed with insight that comes from faith, he knows what ails his mother; he understands what afflicts human civilization. As Cuthman takes his mother about until he reaches the village of Steyning, his mission is unfolded—the mission of escorting human civilization safely through obstacles to the haven of religious affirmation and spiritual tranquillity. (That a couple of miracles are introduced to hasten the denouement does not materially affect the point.)

The *Boy with a Cart* is in reality a prototype of man with faith—faith in the principle of man's deliverance from evil through closeness to God. The play unfolds the story of man's

pilgrimage from the uncertain grounds of a rootless existence torn by fear and doubt to a spiritually satisfying level of consciousness. It is not just *going*. It is *taking* the sick mother along, for we owe it to civilization to rid it of its 'sickness' and keep it in tune with the divine will.

> Stone over stone, Cuthman has spoken out
> His faith to his mother. She has been comforted
> A little; begins to believe in her son

and again

> His mother was chasing fears
> Until daylight. 'What is rustling in the grass?
> What shakes in the tree? What is hiding in
> The shadow?' And Cuthman said, 'God is there.
> God is waiting with us.'

In Fry's intensely religious world of faith and fulfilment, Cuthman is depicted throughout as the ideal man. 'There's one thing that I'll not see any man destroy; there's one fire in me that no man shall put out.' Noble in resolve, brave at heart, Cuthman knows the mystery of life and death and the universe:

> There under the bare walls of our labour
> Death and life were knotted in one strength
> Indivisible as root and sky.

With all its stress on faith and harmony, *The Boy with a Cart* is essentially a contemporary play, reflecting the contemporary man's predicament. Cuthman may be sure of the ground he stands on. But will society at large be able to catch the glint of the young shepherd's faith and see its path in the light of a vision that is larger than life?

> And what of us who upon Cuthman's world
> Have grafted progress without lock or ratchet?
> What of us who have to catch up, always
> To catch up with the high-powered car, or with
> The unbalanced budget, to cope with competition

To weather the sudden thunder of the uneasy
Frontier?

Lost in the rough and tumble of a mechanistic existence, man may still be aware of something beyond himself and his surroundings.

Between
Our birth and death we may touch understanding
As a moth brushes a window with its wing

and therein, Fry would say, lies all our hope.

AMIS'S *TAKE A GIRL LIKE YOU*

By G. J. Chinneswararao

'It happens that in our phase of civility,' writes Frank Kermode in *The Sense of an Ending*, 'the novel is the central form of literary art.'[1] There is John Wain who holds the opposite view: 'When we turn our attention to the contemporary novel, the first thing we notice is that this is a form in evident decline.'[2] He should know what he is talking about, being one of the foremost practitioners of the craft of fiction today. The older novelists still remain important because of their marvellous grasp of inner reality and use of significant form. It is true, however, that the novelist's concept of the hero has become altered. This transfiguration has occurred on the level of consciousness: he has become more inner-directed. Writers of the angry 1950s have reversed the pattern of the traditional hero. John Osborne, John Wain and Kingsley Amis have launched, what Colin Wilson calls, 'the new cult of the "ordinary" chap'.[3] The novel itself has ceased to be regarded as a mere imaginative construct.

In *Take a Girl Like You* Amis resorts to the Richardsonian formula of 'procrastinated rape'. In *Clarissa* the handsome rake Lovelace, having been repulsed by Clarissa Harlowe, abducts and rapes her when she is drugged. Afterwards she refuses to marry him in spite of his protestations of love, and, in the end, dies of mortification. Lovelace himself is killed in a duel by one of her kinsmen. The novelist ties up neatly all the knots towards the close by punishing evil and implicitly upholding virtue. Lovelace and Clarissa have their opposite numbers in Patrick Standish and Jenny Bunn in Amis's novel. Jenny stands a long siege of her virginity but is eventually seduced by Patrick when she is drunk. Unlike in Richardson's novel, the travail of the romantic agonist comes to an end with Jenny's final acquiescence. The elaborate exchanges between Patrick and Jenny on the virtue of chastity underscore the moral-aesthetic polarity in the structure of the novel. Patrick is Amis's paradigmatic hero who makes a metaphysical assault on the

maiden's holy of holies—virginity. He hectors Jenny for her *ideé fixe* about pre-marital chastity:

> it's the kind with the old idea of girls being virgins when they get married behind it. Well, that was perfectly sensible in the days when there wasn't any birth control and they thought they could tell when a girl wasn't a virgin. Nowadays they know they can't and so everything's changed. You're not running any risk at all. But you've had that kind of upbringing and that's why you feel like this. (*Take a Girl Like You*, Penguin, p. 63)

He has nothing against prurience but at the same time is 'conscientious about (*a*) being nice to women, (*b*) work and duty' (p. 134). This ambivalence is accentuated by his refusal to assert himself through sexual abandon; 'to think of himself as a lamb-gobbling wolf, capable of leaping into any fold that took his fancy, hardly squared with the facts' (p. 134). Of all the characters in the novel only two remain chaste, Jenny and Graham. Graham has his own ideas about polite society which is why he avoids the Ivy Bush set-up frequented by Patrick, and upbraids him for his designs on Jenny, though he himself is not unaware of her charms: 'She's a decent wee girl, Standish, and that's her attraction for me. She's the steady kind, not flighty or feather-brained like so many of them today' (p. 132). He takes himself too seriously and that cramps his style. He divides mankind into two classes, the attractive and the unattractive, and the barrier between them is never down. Apparently no substantive union is possible between a man like him and Jenny because he is on the wrong side of the fence.

The College Secretary Charlton is a different kettle of fish. A sexual hypocrite, he hides his machinations and chicanery behind a facade of shabby gentility. There is no love lost between him and Patrick. He lectures to Patrick about the importance of the position of schoolmaster who should set an example to the community, and threatens to report him to the Head if he does not behave. But Charlton is the one who fornicates with Sheila, the Head's daughter, while Patrick turns down an open invitation from her out of a sense of loyalty to

her father. Not only that: he goes out of his way to help her in her predicament which puts him one up against Charlton. At least Patrick would not injure anyone knowingly. Dick Thompson in whose house Jenny has her digs is a pathetic figure. He goes wining and wenching which, as his wife Martha tells Jenny, is all 'part of the marriage and no-children thing' (p. 198). Julian Ormerod typifies the decadence and dissipation of life in Southern England. He has no moral compunctions about incontinence nor does he bother to be seen to have any. This licentiousness reaches its climax in Lord Edgerstoune, an old man past sixty, with sex on mind most of his waking life. Characteristically he draws an analogy between the sexual impulse and a battery: 'We liked to know in advance what the effect was going to be when we put the battery in a torch and pressed the button. Well, now. When I put my arm round Nancy's waist and give her a little kiss on the ear, or something like that, I'm testing for a tingling, that's all. Seeing if there's any juice left.' (p. 242)

Patrick is haunted by a feeling of guilt about his lechery unlike the other characters. After his meeting with Lord Edgerstoune he is set to thinking about Jenny:

> I'm sorry, I know I'm a bastard, but I'm trying not to be. But you know all that. That's your job, isn't it? You may not be much good at anything else but you're scholarship standard on that one. But I'm not trying to get credit with you by saying I know I'm a bastard. Nor by saying I'm not trying to get credit. Nor by saying I'm not trying to by saying...trying...you know what I mean. Nor by saying that. Nor by saying that. (pp. 243-4)

This faintly amusing verbal repetition is a strategy of language Amis employs for the rendering of Patrick's consciousness which moves through a 'regressive series' of doubt and uncertainty. His infatuation with Jenny is not a whit lessened by his affairs with other women. His affair with Anna la Page is abruptly ended after his initial encounter with Jenny. Patrick and Jenny do not see eye to eye on the one thing which matters to them most. He cannot understand her code of honour, and she is convinced that every one of the male persuasion is conspiring

to lay siege to her most 'precious treasure'. Her own love life is undermined by her horrible experience with the lesbian Anna.

Patrick and Jenny live in a state of dynamic tension. Patrick reflects ruefully:

> She was a good person, a factor which as a convinced moralist, he imagined he set a high value upon, but to be prevented from, instead of voluntarily deciding against, altering from what she was and should go on being had no relish of salvation in it. (pp. 272-3)

She tells him that she is not a very religious person; only she does not believe in 'this free-and-easy way of going'. In spite of indulging in his passions he retains his ethical sanity. He also realizes that his week-end debauch in London is not pleasurable at all. The strip-clubs he finds to be unexciting and the night spent with the demi-mondaigne leaves him feeling guilty. His amour with Wendy is brief but important. It estranges Jenny and prepares him for a final showdown with her. Obviously he cannot carry on for too long the way he does and revolts against conventional morality in his effort to put her to rights:

> These ideas of yours. Jolly sound in 1880 and everything... There's a chance the man you marry'll be just like me in every way, only you won't like him much. Because there's just one thing missing from your scheme of things: the right kind of man. There's the kind that wouldn't dream of laying a finger on you until marriage, and there's the kind you like. What's the use of a chap who's very respectful and decent and all that, oh, he wouldn't dream of offering you any disrespect, sooner die—what's the use of that if you don't want him to? Do you think you could marry Graham, for instance? (p. 159)

The seduction of Jenny does not entirely alienate Patrick from the reader; for in that moment of consummation the 'whole gigantic moral and social flux' disappears, and he is only aware of a sense of togetherness. If what has happened is reprehensible, Jenny herself is not angry except for the way it has

happened. It is not too unwelcome either. In fact Patrick has no other way out of his impasse. The novelist comes down heavily on the side of the protagonist in making Jenny realize that 'a lot of the time she had been pursuing not what was right but what she wanted' (p. 317). And no moral stigma is attached to the deed itself. The novel ends on a note of regret however:

> 'Well, those old Bible-class ideas have certainly taken a knocking, haven't they?'
>
> 'They were bound to, you know, darling, with a girl like you. It was inevitable.'
>
> 'Oh yes, I expect it was. But I can't help feeling it's rather a pity.' (p. 317)

David Lodge finds the conclusion unsatisfactory since it solves none of the moral issues involved leaving ' a sour after-taste, a lingering echo of discords.'[4] But the sexual ethic in Amis's novel does not postulate the inviolability of continence. Amis is closer to Fielding than Richardson in his treatment of sexual aberrations. He does not believe in hyphenated categories of good and evil so that promiscuity could be condignly punished and vice versa. Walter Allen is nearer the mark when he says that every action of Patrick is followed by concomitant suffering and,

> It is a moral seriousness much like Fielding's.... The Amis hero can be described as Fielding does Tom Jones... his life is 'a constant struggle between honour and inclination'.[5]

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction*, New York, 1967, p. 128.
2. John Wain, 'The Conflicting Forms in Contemporary English Literature' (II), *Critical Quarterly*, Vol. IV, No. 2 (Summer, 1962), p. 101.
3. Colin Wilson, *The Age of Defeat*, London, 1959, p. 71.
4. David Lodge, *Language of Fiction*, London, 1967, p. 259.
5. Walter Allen, *Tradition and Dream*, Penguin Books, 1965, p. 302.

AN AUSTRALIAN 'DOLL'S HOUSE': RAY LAWLER'S *SUMMER OF THE SEVENTEENTH DOLL*[1]

By S. Ramaswamy

Reviewing the London production of Ray Lawler's *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* in 1957, Kenneth Tynan wrote—'One of Her Majesty's subjects turned up with a play about working people who were neither "grim" nor "funny", neither sentimentalised nor patronised, neither used to point a social moral nor derided as quaint and improbable clowns. . . . The play that pulled off the feet is *The Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, and if Ray Lawler, its Australian author, is aware of the magnitude of his achievement, I shall be the most astonished critic in London. . . .'[2]

The scope of this essay is rather limited. The 'magnitude' of Ray Lawler's 'achievement' is not expatiated upon here but a brief comment is made on the theme of the play. The title might suggest a comparison with Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. However, apart from the basic resemblance that just as Nora's 'home' had only the appearance of a happy home for eight summers and in reality was only a 'doll's house' and here Nancy and Olive realize after sixteen summers that their 'lay-offs' in their house was only mistaking 'a doll's house' for a real one, there are no similarities between the two plays. The title is chosen mainly with the intention of taking advantage of the established significance of the expression 'a doll's house'. Besides, the seventeen dolls—particularly the seventeenth doll—play an important part in the play reinforcing at every stage the idea that this place referred to as the 'lay-off' was for these simple, unsophisticated cane-cutters a safe harbour and a place of refuge every summer until the fateful seventeenth summer when this house crumbles on their heads like a house of cards but with a considerably weightier impact. The result is an uncommon dramatic experience.

The theme of the play is the recognition of 'the enemy, time, in us all'[3]—to use Tennessee Williams' expression. Youth is a stuff that will not last and when the 'sweet bird of youth' has

fled, the necessity to come to terms with the advent of one's middle age and accepting the consequent inevitable changes is the central theme of *The Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*. Barney and Roo come to this realization the hard way in this play. As Emma puts it at the end of the play, 'you and Barney are two of a pair. Only the time he spent chasin' wimmen, you put in being top dog! Well, that's all very fine and a lot of fun while it lasts, but last is one thing it just don't do. There's a time for sowing and a time for reaping—and reapin' is what you're doing now.' (p. 112-13) After sixteen summers, suddenly in the seventeenth summer, Barney and Roo realize that they are not young any more and that they must learn to move away from the limelight and make room for the younger generation. The effective dramatization of this none-too-easy-to-accept human predicament is what has made Ray Lawler one of the most significant playwrights of our time.

The stage direction at the beginning of the play reads—'...the house of the play is situated in Carlton, a now scruffy but once fashionable suburb of Melbourne...the main scene of the action is the interior of the house...the main decorative features are the souvenirs brought down by Roo on past visits. The most notable of these are sixteen kewpie dolls, wearing tinsel head-dresses and elaborately fuzzy skirts, attached to thin black canes shaped like walking-sticks. These peep coyly from behind pictures, flower in twos and threes from vases, and are crossed over the mantelpiece.' (pp. 5-6). The sixteen dolls indicate the sixteen seasons Barney and Roo have come down to this place and every time they came down, Roo had brought a doll to Olive. The doll is something special to Olive—

OLIVE: (*She moves away to pick up the seventeenth doll from rocking-chair, and stands stroking it tenderly.*) Prettier than ever—you know I think they take more trouble with them than they used to. There's more tinsel and—and they're dressed better.

ROO: They're just the same as they always was.

OLIVE: (*protectively*) No, they're not. Someone's taking special care. Other times they've been pretty but

this one's beautiful. You can see. (*She holds the doll almost as if it were a baby and says suddenly*) You know why I like the dolls more than anything else you've brought down?

(*He shakes his head.*)

Well, the birds and coral and—and butterflies and stuff—all that you got 'coz I wanted to know what it was like up there. But the dolls—they're something you thought of by yourself. So they're special!

(*He grunts, embarrassed. She fluffs out doll's skirts.*)

(pp. 39-40)

Roo is 'embarrassed' because this seventeenth doll has not been brought by him but by Barney for him. This season had been very bad for Roo. Actually he had walked out after his professional superiority had not merely been challenged by a younger man but he had been routed in a competition and he is broke. He is not merely broke financially but he is a broken man. Young Dowd is more than a match for him and it is extremely difficult for Roo to concede—'Dowd did a better job than me because he's a better man than I am' (p. 100). Barney has forced him not merely to realize it for himself but to speak it out and so Roo takes his revenge by forcing Barney to face facts and reminding him that he was also no longer the champion in his field—'And Nancy—after seventeen years, you couldn't even hold Nancy!' Nancy's walking out on Barney and getting married to a Harry and young Dowd defeating Roo professionally and being ready to take over as leader have the same effect on Barney and Roo. Each of them tries to evade the truth that he is no longer in top condition and that middle age is beginning to force him to play second fiddle. The humiliation that Roo feels when he is forced to shake hands with Dowd and the humiliation that Barney suffers as a result of Nancy leaving him are similar. The climax comes at the end of Act Two when Barney, 'Angry beyond measure, he seizes the nearest object to his hand. It is the vase containing, among others, the seventeenth doll. This he swings at Roo's head, but the big man rips it from his hands and throws it away into the centre of the room,

smashing vase and scattering dolls. Olive gives a strangled cry and Bubba rushes towards her. There is a sudden silence. Olive sinks to her knees and picks up the seventeenth doll, holds it close.' (p. 102). This smashing of the doll marks the turning-point and Olive starts noticing how the character of the 'lay-off' has undergone a complete change since the beginning of the seventeenth summer. The change has been indicated in the play by Lawler in a number of different ways. The sixteen earlier summers had made the 'lay-off' quite famous in fact. Dowd says, 'Oh, of course I've never been here, it's just the reputation that's been built up among the boys. I reckon you could say it's almost famous up north... Size is nothin'. It's the other things—like all the fun they're supposed to have here. I just can't see it.' (p. 91). Neither can Pearl, the newcomer, substitute Nancy. Olive is aggressive in her praise of the 'lay-off' to Pearl before Barney and Roo arrive—'Compared to all the marriages I know what I got is...five months of heaven every year. And it's the same for them. Seven months they spend up there killin' themselves in the cane season, and then they come down here to live a little. That's what the lay-off is. Not just playing around and spending a lot of money, but a time for livin'. You think I haven't sized that up against what other women have? I laugh at them every time they try to tell me. Even waiting for Roo to come back is more exciting than anything they've got.' (pp. 18-19). And yet, at the end of the play, Olive tells Roo that she simply couldn't make Pearl believe that they had glorious times there. She cannot forget the look of disbelief that Pearl gave her just before leaving—'You, Barney, the whole damned season. Even Pearl, the way she looked at me.... It was all true, everythin' I told her was true, an'—an' she didn't see any of it.' (p. 122). Thus the changed times are not noticed by Dowd and Pearl but Olive is most keenly conscious of them. When Dowd makes a joke about the dolls, Bubba tells him, 'You shouldn't have said that about the dolls. They mean something to Olive and Roo, it's—it's hard to explain. You wouldn't understand it.' (p. 92). That is why the dashing of the doll to the ground at the end of Act Two is very significant to the theme of the play in addition to being a very 'dramatic' way to bring down the Second Act

curtain. The stage-direction at the beginning of Act Three makes the point about the dolls quite clear. It reads—'The room has been tidied of all the tropical souvenirs and dolls to a neatness that gives it an oddly deserted look' (p. 102). Olive hasn't put the dolls back because, as she tells Roo later, 'I was mad at you' (p. 123), though in the beginning Olive protests—'Oh, it's not just because you gave them to me. I took 'em down to dust, and those birds and butterflies, they just fell to pieces. You couldn't even touch them. Then the rest of it—well, some of the dolls were broken, and the shells looked so silly on their own, I just couldn't put them back' (p. 108) and when Roo promises to get her some new dolls because she liked dolls, she replies—'I used to like a lot of things I ain't seen much of lately. A bit of a joke and a laugh for instance. If I can do without that, I won't miss a few bloomin'—decorations' (p. 108). Here we clearly see that the dolls are not just dolls but they stand for something deeper and that's the reason why Emma's testimony later is significant—'Middle of the night Olive sat here on the floor, huggin' this and howling. A grown-up woman howling over a silly old kewpie doll. That's Olive for yer!' (p. 113). We realize that it is not just a 'silly old kewpie doll' for Roo either. The seventeenth doll, which is taken out of its holding place by Emma and tossed on to the table, is picked up by Roo and he smooths its fuzzy skirts. Right at the end of the play the significance of the doll is made quite clear.—'Roo, breathing heavily, picks up the doll. Barney, knowing he has failed, carries on in a desperate rising tone, but backing away from the wrath he senses is to come.... He breaks off as Roo, in a baffled insensate rage, begins to beat the doll down again on the piano, smashing and tearing at it until it is nothing but a litter of broken cane, tisnel and celluloid. Only when it is in this state does it drop from his hands, leaving one torn thread of silk caught between his fingers.... Something breaks deep down within him, but there is no movement in his body, he is far too inarticulate for the release of tears. After a pause, Barney with a wisdom that momentarily transcends his usual shallow self, comes in slowly to put his hands on the big man's shoulders.... Roo comes out of his collapse and the thread of silk between his fingers takes his attention. Rises, starting

at it in a helpless sort of anguished misery, then opens his fingers to let it flutter down to the rest of the mess on the floor.' (pp. 127-8). Thus we see that the dolls have been used very purposefully in the *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* to reinforce the theme of the change—change for the worse that is inevitable with advancing age. If we compare the description of Barney and Roo as given by Olive at the beginning of the play, with their description in the last lines of the play, we see the change that has come over them. Olive reminisces —'Nancy used to say it was how they'd walk into the pub as if they owned it—even just in the way they walked you could spot it. All round would be the regulars—soft city blokes having their drinks and their little arguments, and then in would come Roo and Barney. They wouldn't say anything—they didn't have to—there'd just be the two of them walkin' in, then a kind of wait for a second or two, and quiet. After that, without a word, the regulars'd stand aside to let 'em through, just as if they was a—a coupla kings. She always reckoned they made the rest of the mob look like a bunch of skinned rabbits' (p. 20) and yet, ironically enough, it is Nancy who sees before anybody else does that this is not going to last and she quits the 'lay-off' to marry and settle down. In the last lines of the play Roo 'looks across at Barney, and in this brief meeting of eyes there is no bravado or questing hope, it is a completely open acknowledgement of what they have lost.' (p. 128). What they have lost is their youth and time is their enemy. Emma is absolutely right in her analysis of the situation—

ROO: . . . Who's to blame for messin' up the whole thing?
EMMA: You're kiddin', aren't yer?
ROO: No, fair dinkum, I want to know.
EMMA: Well, I'll be blowed! (*she looks at him in astonishment*) How long did you think these lay-off seasons were gunna last—for ever? They're not for keeps, you know; these are just—seasons.
ROO: I know, but whose fault was it we come a cropper?
EMMA: Nobody's fault, yer melon!
ROO: Don't be silly, it must be somebody's. . . .
EMMA: (*exasperated*) Why must it? All that's happened is

you've gone as far as you can go. You'n' Barney'n' Olive you're too old for it any more.

ROO: Old?

EMMA: That's it—old! Take a look in the mirror.

ROO: Nobody tells me I'm old. I'm as good a man now as ever I was.

EMMA: Are yer? Then who the hell was that bloke Barney brought here last night? A mirage or somethin'?

ROO: (*Stubbornly*) I ain't old! Old is—what you are, and —and—(*He gropes for a name and the only one he eventually finds is a shock to him*)—Tony Moreno. (*After a moment he turns to survey his face questioningly in the mirror over the mantel. It is the action of doubt. From here on Roo is at the mercy of an entirely different conception of himself.*)

EMMA: I didn't mean you was up for the pension. But you ain't seventeen any more, either.

(p. 111)

Kenneth Tynan, in his review, has said—'Mr. Lawler has been strangely described as the Australian Tennessee Williams. The comparison is just only in that both writers deal with people who live in a hot climate and speak rawly and freely about their emotions. But where Mr. Williams concerns himself with odd men out, Mr. Lawler concerns himself with even men in.'[4] Without going into a discussion of this statement, and without attempting to compare the two dramatists—it is outside the scope of this essay—it might be mentioned in passing that Williams' *Sweet Bird of Youth* deals with the theme that has been dealt with by Lawler in *The Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* and the final appeal of Chance could have been made by Barney and Roo—'I don't ask for your pity, but just for your understanding—not even that—no. Just for your recognition of me in you, and the enemy, time, in us all.'[5]

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Ray Lawler, *The Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, Fontana Books, 1959. The page numbers in this essay refer to this edition.
2. Kenneth Tynan, *Curtains*, New York, 1961, p. 179.
3. Tennessee Williams, *Sweet Bird of Youth*, Signet Book, p. 124.
4. Tynan, op. cit. p. 180.
5. Williams, op. cit. p. 124.

THE LOVE ETHIC IN A PERMISSIVE SOCIETY: A LITERARY VIEWPOINT

By B. Das

When Yeats in *The Second Coming* visualized a life in which there was no centre, making things fall apart, he was thinking of an image that has haunted all artists concerned with the organic unity of life with its essential health. It is an image that is strongly opposed to the horrifying and constricting feeling that is aroused by the contemplation of the technologico-Benthamite society that Dr. Leavis has evoked in a recent lecture, or the disunited, disintegrated, incoherent society that Ortega Y Gasset has called up in his discussion of a mass civilization organized by mass men. It is not our purpose here to examine to what extent these assumptions are valid as universal counters. There may be, from the point of view of the strictest sociological methodology, some exaggeration in these assumptions but our object here is to examine if the relation between society and literature has been directed and affected by the changes that have appeared in the body of literature during the last two decades, especially since the emergence of a permissive society in which manners and morals have registered sweeping changes. It will be sufficient here to look at the literary scene, to note how certain serious changes have crept into the very texture of contemporary literature, which, for our purpose here, may be confined to fiction. In poetry and drama too, and in the latter especially, such effects are visible quite prominently. But since the relationship between society and life is depicted in a wide range in fiction it ought, perhaps, to be easier to look at the type of fiction that is being produced today, and if such fiction, whether serious or trivial, owing to its easy accessibility through mass media, influences the reading public both overtly and covertly, it may be necessary for the literary critic to be concerned with it in a manner that was not perhaps called for a few years ago.

This concern is due to various causes, political, social, economic and psychological. It is not necessary to deal with these

causes *in extenso*. Any sensitive person is today aware of the deluge of destructive and debilitating forces of life, and 'modernism', therefore, ought to be a capacity to respond to them intelligently and critically without being overwhelmed by them. The literary scene itself is a sufficient indictment of the plight of our culture which has no roots that sink deep enough to make life meaningful in any wide context. As civilization grows on the debris of a Hiroshima or a Belsen or on the nightmares of totalitarianism, mass murders, genocides and narcotics, or as the spectre of the super-bomb or of racial and other forms of violence and disorder continues to haunt us, the human mind gets more and more distracted, making aesthetic contemplation extremely difficult. Stephen Spender thought that the destructive element had lost its literary significance perhaps because the existentialist doctrine of marginal situations was replaced by extreme situations in which the power of the creative imagination faced a challenge. It was unlike the challenge that had been faced by western civilization when the principle of Logos was propounded by Aristotle to curb the life of instincts and emotions, producing a stultifying or desiccating effect on the personality. Historians, sociologists and thinkers like Sorokin, Mumford, Hannah Arendt, Paul Goodman and Herbert Marcuse have looked at this problem, alarming as it is, to understand its different aspects and, like Freud in his analysis in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, they have all felt that there is no centrality in modern culture, which, because of its increasing preoccupation with secularism and the material values of life, has even failed to appreciate the need of such a centrality, or even serenity. One may think of the different epithets used to describe the predicament of modern man—anxiety, alienation, loneliness, absurdity—and that 'man' is now either 'dangling', 'invisible', 'ginger' or 'one-dimensional'—epithets that aptly reveal his fragmentariness or his complete atomization and his passiveness in consequence.

This process of atomization or alienation is a long-drawn one and the 'condition of man', to use Lewis Mumford's phrase, had been visualized by quite a few artists and thinkers in the 19th century, among whom one could name Buckhardt, Tolstoy, Durkheim or Proudhon. Durkheim spoke of a condition of 'anomie', that is the lack of a meaningful and structur-

alized social life which drives the individual to follow increasingly a restless movement, a planless self-development, an aim of living which has no criterion of value and the experience of the futility of endless pursuit, of a state in which the individual finds himself abandoned, isolated and demoralized. In *The Conduct of Life*, Mumford has a similar view to offer:

> In the end, such a civilisation can produce only a mass man: incapable of choice, incapable of spontaneous, self-directed activities...ultimately such a society produces only two groups of men: the conditioners and the conditioned; the active and the passive barbarians.[1]

Mumford's words almost echo those of Paul Goodman in *Growing up Absurd*. According to Goodman this absurdity is due to the withering of all traditional sanctions like religion, morality and nature and the substitution for them of a mechanistic universe and a behaviouristic image of man. This is a picture of the 'Nil' or 'Nothingness' that Baudelaire and many other modern writers have been terrified by. In the world of Samuel Becket, for example, the heroes or anti-heroes contemplate all human activities as absurd and Death itself becomes a process of annihilation or extinction in *Malone Dies*.

This process of dehumanization has had its repercussion on all aspects of life, perhaps nowhere more pronouncedly than on the personal life of man. Personal life has been the basis of all the different social ties that man devised to give meaning and significance to his feelings and passions. But when all his most intimate and private feelings were atomized into sensations in the wake of a civilization that reduced man himself into an automaton, 'Paralysed force, gesture without motion',[2] the perceptual element from those experiences vanished leaving him, as Allen Tate tells us,[3] as a bundle of instincts or drives or complexes, metaphors that clearly indicate his subservience to a scientific and mechanistic view of life and to the dissolution of traditional loyalties.

This view of life has, therefore, sought to explain interpersonal and intra-personal relationships in a manner that would have been unintelligible to the medieval or Renaissance man. Hence when Martin Buber tries to analyse this relation-

ship from a mystical viewpoint as the I-Thou relationship as against the I-It relationship that an age of materialism, sensationalism and violence can only depict, he too becomes unintelligible to us. It is an attitude bolstered up by a philosophy of objectivity, of the phenomenon as an end as, for example, in Meinong and Husserl.

A scientific explanation of the inscrutable experiences of man reduces all their beauty and mystery to nullity or nothingness and the wallowing in sensations becomes the *sine qua non* of what Sorokin calls a sensate culture.

Discussing the poetry of Eliot, I. A. Richards remarks that he finds in it a 'persistent concern with sex, the problem of our generation, as religion was the problem of the last.'[4] In all of Eliot's poetry the theme of sex and love is ubiquitous. It is, however, in *The Waste Land* that the typically modern attitude to love as a sexual activity or physiological process is displayed. The fate of the typist girl, the heirs of city directors, the Rhine daughters and even the vision of Tiresias, culminate in the reduction of all love into absurdity—'On Margate sands / I can connect / Nothing with nothing.'[5] It is a vision of despair and takes into consideration the crisis of our culture—a crisis that has deeply affected all major modern writers. Eliot was not alone in noticing the dominance of this basic force in human existence; some of his contemporaries like Lawrence, Joyce and Huxley had noticed it too. For Eliot, however, the contrast between the ideal and real, between the real Cleopatra and her modern counterpart, takes us to the theme of blasted fertility, the pills that bring about premature old age and physical decay to Phil's wife. This is the reduction of love to lust, the fire that can be controlled by the other fire of asceticism of St. Augustine and Buddha. In the *Four Quartets*, after the burning, there is a vision of the rose of love in the tradition of Dante although that Christian-mystical vision remains on the abstract-symbolic plane unlike the realistic depiction of the theme, say, in *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*.

To connect Dante with the modern age is to realize the gap that has come between the medieval and the modern age with all the implications of the march of civilization from an essentially theological to an essentially secular way of life or from an organic to a disintegrated or disorientated community.

The repercussions of this progress of civilization and society were felt by many other contemporaries of Eliot all of whom were deeply concerned with the desiccation of love, the disappearance of all warmth and feeling from it and its transformation into a mere physical act devoid of any lasting or memorable quality.

This transformation was due, among other things, to the change in the attitude to life itself in a civilization that was increasingly controlled by science and technology, by a utilitarian and pragmatic view of life, by a growing adherence to realism. The impact of realism on European civilization can perhaps be traced back to the 17th century but it is not until the 18th century that a realistic attitude to life is in substantial evidence—an evidence that gradually acquires strength as the scientific and industrial revolution backed up by the discoveries in the new branches of knowledge begins to alter men's beliefs, making the near more acceptable than the far and the rendering of the verifiable sensory perception, the basis of truth. The contrast between the actual and the ideal which can be seen, for example, in the history of sensibility in the English novel in, say, Richardson, and the reliance upon social realism in Dickens or Galsworthy, affects the narrative mode and the technique of characterization. The perceptual mode, therefore, begins to differ from the imaginative mode which can be established by a reference to the change in the depiction of the theme of love in English literature from the medieval to the modern age of permissiveness—a change that registers the impact of the growth and development of civilization on life.

For the medieval writers believing in the multiple interpretations of a literary work, the theme of love, for example, in Dante or Petrarch or Chaucer, reveals how an integrated personality was capable of telescoping levels of reality and projecting the abstract and the concrete together. Thus Dante's love for Beatrice, Petrarch's for Laura or Palamon's for Arcite is an amalgamation of the concrete and the abstract and in the scale of human values it can slide from the lowest to the highest points. The whole philosophy of courtly love embraced within it concepts that were the emanations of a type of mind that could assimilate contrary modes of experience, the sensual

and the Platonic, the adulterous and the chaste, so that when Beatrice is seen in Paradise, the immortal longings of Dante become assuaged on another level. In Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, or *Othello*, or Middleton's *The Changeling*, or Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, the tradition of love retains its medieval aspect while the new attitude of the Renaissance penetrates into it. The way of a man with a maid becomes identified not only with Orlando's courtship of Rosalind or Miranda's vision of love in a brave new world, but also with the physical passion that buttresses against it rendering the whole subject complex and many-faceted. The tradition of courtly love was based upon a relationship that was outside the institution of marriage and was seldom consummated. In *The Knight's Tale* or in *Troilus and Criseyde*, the conventions of that love are such as to arouse a sense of utter disbelief in the contemporary reader, although there is nothing absolutely incredible about it. The sighs, tremors, longings that the lovers give expression to point to a suffering that heightens the beauty of that love which becomes an end in itself. The Knights of the Round Table in Malory or, for that matter, the Knights in *The Faerie Queene*, remind us of a world in which a value system obtained that transformed love into a mystical adoration endowing it with nuances which C. S. Lewis has discussed at length in *The Allegory of Love*. Whether we subscribe to the prescriptions of Andreas Capellanus or not, there is no denying the fact that in the medieval or even in Renaissance literature there is a great importance attached to Eros, i.e. Love which is Platonic or spiritual as against Venus which is sex. The whole corpus of Renaissance and Jacobean literature shows the cross-currents of different types of love, beginning with the romantic-idealistic as in *The Tempest* or *Prothalamion* and ending with the realistic-cynical as in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* or *The Duchess of Malfi*. We might even cite *Venus and Adonis* or *Lucrece* or *Hero and Leander* as illustrations of a realistic approach to the theme. But this realism is finally transcended by an idealism, a love-ethic that is very complex and rich in nature.

It is because of the continuation of the older traditions that the experience of this passion is measured against certain norms of value that continue till the 18th century when, however, the changes that are noticed in, for example, *Dangerous Liaisons*

or *Moll Flanders*, are to be thought of as experimental in nature. The realism that we notice in Restoration Drama is an outcome of a philosophy of life that accepts licentiousness as in *The Memoirs of Grammont* to be a part of life or as inseparable from truth. But this realism does not destroy all belief in the possibilities of the redeeming power of love, and the affair of Tom Jones with Lady Bellaston is countered by his passion for Sophie Western. It is later in the romantic poetry of Shelley and Keats or in the novels of Scott that the return to an earlier mode is once again noticed. The difference between Smollett and Scott is, however, a pointer to the imperceptible changes in the mode of perception, in the attitude to values. The most salacious scenes in 18th century literature remind us of the robust, gay, spontaneous and natural attitude to sex that we associate with Chaucer, with the Wife of Bath, for example. But when Shelley's Platonism transforms love into 'the desire of the moth for the star', the warm, palpable human experience is substituted by an abstraction. This abstraction imperceptibly creeps into the modern age in which science has lent a helping hand, making the Shelleyan refinements the gross and crude assumptions of an inhuman way of life.

It is against this inhuman way of life that D. H. Lawrence revolted so violently. To Lawrence the change of sex into a Sandow-exerciser or the whole concept of sex-in-the-head was a symptom of a deep-seated malaise in our civilization. In trying to revive the sense of mystery in sex, he wished to distinguish between love as a physiological process and love as a mystery. Lawrence, like Baudelaire or Blake, knew the satanic power of modern science, the gigantic destructive force of 'ennui' and the reduction of that inexplicable experience of life, love, into an ephemeral sensation. In all his works Lawrence diagnosed this malaise, and ranging over the whole world, he examined different types of civilization, the primitive and the modern, to arrive at a system of values that would prevent the trivialities and artificialities of modern life from deadening the sensitiveness of the individual struggling against mass civilization. Lawrence fulminated against the trends of permissiveness, against the Byrons and Cassanovas who were responsible for so much of tittle-tattle about love and sex in society. This trend, in his opinion expressed in his letters,

essays and fiction, was a sign of spiritual decay. In spite of all his protest, the trend continued as diamond came to be explained scientifically as carbon in the wake of the philosophy of Naturalism. In accordance with it, all nature is an agglomeration of the scientific laws which can be unravelled by observation and experiment. There is, therefore, nothing like an inscrutable mystery in nature, the so-called *natura naturans*; the numinous is an illusion. Love being a mere biological process ought to be explicable in a scientific manner. The pervasive influence of such a philosophy in spite of the protests registered from time to time by philosophers and artists has conditioned the outlook of modern man more strongly than any other form of philosophy. This influence can be noticed in the interpretations of the word 'pleasure', which in Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, and in modern parlance has come to be identified with the indulgence of the appetites or sensual gratification. It is a purely physical emphasis and it divorces the pleasures of love from any other meaning. Bentham's interpretation of the pleasures of poetry and pushpin is well-known. The element of sublimity that, for example, becomes triumphant in Dante's or Shakespeare's treatment of love, fades into the background in the 19th century when Zola or Jules and Edmond Goncourt regard love as a sort of animal passion which subdues man's moral and spiritual nature. In *Germinal* or *Nana* or *Germinie Lacerteux*, love becomes a degraded and degrading passion, responsible for a fierce encounter between man and woman in which there is no beauty or delicacy. Even Stendhal who is a much greater artist portrays this theme in physical terms of encounter and conflict which bring out the dark, concealed instincts in man. But Stendhal's characters, like Julien Sorel, Mlle. de la Mole, Mathilde can work out their destiny because they still believe in the validity of their feelings and emotions. It is still a heroic stance. Such an attitude is also revealed by the characters of Hardy or Conrad. Notwithstanding the impact of the scientific attitude, these writers believe in the force of love; it has a transforming power, capable of revealing both the grandeur and sordidness in human character through suffering or joy. But when Remy de Gourmon in his *Physique de l' Amour* tells us that love is only a physical process or an instinct and that there is no difference between

the male and the female or that there is no male or female role, his attitude robs the theme of all its subtle spiritual nuances. We are being prepared for the treatises of biologists, psychologists, anthropologists and physicians who dominate the 'weltanschaung' of the present age of longing or Aquarius. It is perhaps a longing for a sense of values that has vanished leaving the imagination atrophied. It is, therefore, not surprising that an imaginative writer like Lawrence should be horrified by the symptoms of an unhealthy or unnatural attitude to love and try to distinguish between love and sex. This transformation of a natural instinct into an unnatural exercise characterizes the attitudes of a host of modern writers. In his novels Lawrence experimented with the possible forms of human relationship always stressing the spiritual element in it, so that whether tragic or joyous, the experience always reveals the depths of human personality, almost Dostoevskeyan in intensity. The course and effect of the relationship of phenomena as he tells us in *Fantasia of the Unconscious* was unacceptable to him as it was not the whole truth. The physical experience of love to him was untellable and when we think of the scenes he presents in *Women in Love* or *The Rainbow*, we realize his essentially spiritual concern, or his abhorrence of the scientific explanation of such a vital, life-creating force. Sex and love are not identical, although they go together. But such realization of a genius like Lawrence was not possible in a society which was becoming more and more subjected to the scientific attitude—a society that smarted under the laws of a material civilization that seemed to be threatening all that was valuable, beautiful and enduring in man's life. These laws imposed restrictions on all types of society. As Malinowski has shown, even in primitive societies such laws exist but they do not operate with a mask of hypocrisy. The attitude of the primitive or tribal man to love and sex is unsophisticated and unselfconscious; his behaviour patterns operate under a system of positive beliefs whereas in the modern society repression opens the flood-gates of permissiveness, the result being a direct conflict between overt and covert behaviour. It is the psychological aberration arising from repression that Freud seized upon in his study of love in relation to modern society. To him repression of the sexual instinct was a necessity for the

preservation of civilization. Free gratification of instinctual needs is incompatible with civilized society. The libido has to be sublimated by deflection into socially useful activities. In other words, the reality principle has to transcend the pleasure principle if culture has to be sustained. In Freud's analysis it is finally a conflict between the life and death instincts and if civilization is to be preserved, the life instinct has to dominate. Western civilization has exhibited this duality since the time of Aristotle, and with the advent of Christianity the whole attitude to love and sex underwent a sweeping change. The struggle between Eros and the Death instinct becomes a part of the cyclical process of culture, of its creation and destruction, of repression and the return of the repressed. This dynamic is released and organized by the historical conditions under which mankind develops. Under these conditions civilization begins with a systematic repression of primary instincts, those of sex and aggression or destruction. In this process if Eros loses ground, the death instinct dominates and in a world where the philosophy of aggression or violence becomes paramount, it is but natural that the value of love will be lost or will be transmogrified into unadulterated sex. In the history of western civilization, Crane Brinton rightly notices the strengthening of rationality after the seventeenth century as human reason triumphs with nature and truth in order to transform the mode of experience to master objects. Nature becomes an external object to be conquered and the lower instincts and the ego experience each existential condition as an obstacle that has to be overcome. The old Aristotelian concept of Logos as the essence of being has to overcome all becoming, a subject-object conflict that flows through western civilization culminating in Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, according to which the highest form of reason is the transparent unity of subject and object. But this unity has seldom been achieved. The individual's struggle against the laws of civilization, therefore, becomes a struggle against objective reason. Under these conditions lasting inter-personal relation on which civilization depends presupposes that an objective approach to reason will not suffice. The inhibition of the sex instinct, if regarded merely as a mastering of an object, will create difficulties. The refinement of sexuality into love, as

C. S. Lewis tells us in *Four Types of Love*, becomes possible when love can be distinguished from libidinous urges or instincts. As Herbert Marcuse observes in *Eros and Civilization*, 'Precisely in his gratification, and especially in his sexual gratification, man was to be a higher being committed to higher values; sexuality was to be dignified by love.'[6] The value of love is perpetuated in certain social institutions like marriage but the objectification of the body with the erosion of values attached to the institution of marriage brought about by the withering of religious sanctions gives rise to attitudes which are non-repressive in nature. Thus by the time we get Zola's *Nana* or Huysman's *La Bâs*, this process of objectification owing to the impact of science and technology has already set in. The impulse to anatomize the body, to observe the physiological processes of love-making, has come to dominate the minds of writers since then. Hence when detailed descriptions of adultery or seduction are presented in literature we are to suppose that it is nature at work.

This process of a reinterpretation of nature continues with each further advancement in science and technology so that the common man's mind is conditioned by attitudes generated by those developments. The Victorian poets could still think of love as a most wonderful experience of human life. Tennyson, Browning and even Rossetti accept love as the best of human passions. They may, however, be contrasted with Swinburne. There might have been a good deal of prudery in Tennyson or Trollope, but even Emma Bovary's adultery is still described in a language that, unlike Zola's or even Maupassant's, preserves an element of decorum. To the Victorian audience similarly, despite the revelations of their sexual mores in a recent novel like *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, love is a great fulfilment, it gives life a meaning and significance. This is a tacit assumption and would not perhaps have been less important than any such assumption about religion or morality. Endowed with an imaginative approach it can glow with colours that blunt the edges of pure factuality or objectivity even in the most realistic writers—a point that Freud makes out in his analysis of the dialectic of love and death. The urge to accord the passion a prime place in human affairs means that in the complex of all other human activities, political,

social, economic or scientific, it has been evaluated from different angles. This is all the more significant because it is in this very age that the biological concept of love becomes paramount and changes love into sex or a stark fact of human existence. A belief in the supremacy of this passion generates a whole code of behaviour because the individual as he grows up from childhood to youth comes to strive for it in accordance with the customs and mores that determine this supremacy. If Hester Prynne of *The Scarlet Letter* is punished for adultery or if Naggie Tulliver experiences love in unhappy circumstances, or if David Copperfield is thrilled by the presence of Dora Spenlow, the attitude to love in all these authors is part of an ethos in which love was not to be equated with sex only and in which freedom or promiscuity was judged from a moral point of view. Such an attitude gave weight and substance to the experience making it memorable. But in course of the later 19th and the 20th century this attitude was altered to an incredible extent. The scientific interpretation of this experience as an objective fact by means of verification and experiment dispelled the aura of spiritual or mystical or even emotional significance it had since the time of Ovid or Catullus, notwithstanding the inhibiting fiats of the church fathers. This is a very significant development in the history of western culture and to contemplate it is to be aware of the gradual fading of the notion that the elevation of love to a dominant position in society was due to the subordination of the rational or intellectual interpretation to the emotional or imaginative. It was realized that this illusion was the source of many errors in social behaviour. On the other hand it was also felt that if the illusion could be replaced by a strictly factual notion, the various taboos and restraints that were needed for maintaining that attitude would be unnecessary. The observations of psychologists on the causes of neurosis—the repression of sexual instincts—seem to have helped in accelerating this process so that by the first two decades of the present century, the romantic conception had been replaced by the scientific or realistic one. If Lawrence was trying to recapture the romantic-mystical conception, Aldous Huxley was proclaiming the opposite one. In *Antic Hay* and *Those Barren Leaves*, love becomes a physiological joke, the sweating of palm to palm. Huxley

takes delight in stripping the veil of romantic love, in presenting men and women who regard love as a sort of entertainment that is akin to any indoor game like a game of chess minus of course the tragic implications that such a game had, say, in *Women Beware Women* in an earlier age. In *Ulysses*, however, the interpretation of Mrs. Bloom's fantasies takes us in another direction. Her fantasies are somewhat different from those of the numerous women whom we encounter in contemporary fiction. They have a symbolic function because of the large dimension with which she herself is endowed. As Penelope or Cybele, she exhausts the whole range of erotic experience. The account of it, therefore, becomes an amoral treatment when the physical descriptions or the descriptions of her real and imaginary encounters rise to a crescendo in her dream. The real and the ideal combine in her stream of consciousness to arouse a sense of pity and sympathy for her. This is, however, natural in an unnatural way—distinct from the free and natural expression of such an instinct in a savage society or the naturalness with which the Wife of Bath gives expression to her experiences with her different lovers. The experiences of Justine in the novel of Marquis de Sade may be compared with those of Mrs. Bloom. Hers is also an unusual or unnatural sort of experience; flagellation is not enjoyed by an ordinary person nor beating of a wife by a husband. But there is a substantial difference between the attitudes of the two women pointing to the increase of self-consciousness. For Justine, it is a question of her identity; not so, for the Wife of Bath. These diverse attitudes to love are part of an overall view of nature, of what is natural and can be understood in relation to a value system. But in Mrs. Bloom's attitude one fails to perceive one, although in Joyce there is an intense moral realism. This change in the attitude of the modern man has been well summed up by J. W. Krutch:

> Nature, then, has imposed a certain rigid selection upon us. Grudgingly, perhaps, she has permitted us to be aware of certain of her activities, and has bid us to do what we may by way of contemplating or elaborating them until they seem to become not, as to her all things are, merely the means by which life is kept going but ends

> to be enjoyed or valued in themselves. Within the limits which she has set we have, moreover, made certain choices of our own. Certain of the available conscious processes have seemed to us more suitable than others for this contemplation or elaboration, and we have devoted ourselves to them, leaving the others merely upon the fringe of awareness. Thus we made mere animal combativeness into chivalry, surrounded lair-making with all the associations which belong to the idea of home, and created a sense of the presence of God out of the fears for our security; but the greatest and most elaborate of our creations was love, and the process by which it is stripped of its meaning is a process by which man is dehumanized and life is made to sink back to a level nearer that of the animal, for whom life is a phenomenon in which there is no meaning except the biological urge.[7]

The last sentence might well have come from Sartre or Camus. The existential hero Mathieu in *Iron in the Soul* accepts love in the modern sense of love-making. He is like Eliot's Sweeney to whom birth, death and copulation are the essence of life. What, however, is significant for our purpose is the distance covered by the word 'love' since the utterance of Donne, 'For God's sake hold your tongue, / And let me love.' When Donne wrote his lines the modern permissive society was yet to appear in the wake of the two Kinsey Reports and the numerous other books of the same kind, all attempting to view love as a sexual activity, that is a physiological phenomenon that could be clinically examined and explained. Love has no longer any of the frills and veils of romance, idealism or spirituality. It is equivalent to love-making that is a mere sexual activity. Kinsey's reports, although meant for the professional reader, the medical man, the sociologist and the serious adult, were in fact read by thousands of people both mature and immature. They assumed that a scientific, detached view of the subject had been attempted in recording the views of a set of American men and women. There were revelations about their sex life, some shocking, some funny, some grotesque, some revolting. After the publication of the first report in 1960 a whole cultural revolution seems to have taken place as it

were in the western world. If the laws of love and marriage were designed to impose restrictions on the inherent promiscuous tendencies in human beings or their inherent libertinism they were to be done away with for the sake of modern emancipation. Literature which incorporates these social mores is an intellectual discipline which seeks to explore reality and in course of this exploration, it unravels the different facets of the human personality or self. If the portrait of the self is to be credible then its varying nature has to be revealed faithfully. But in a culture dominated by the discoveries of modern sciences like Physics, Biology and Psychology, the self becomes a flux and its portrayal, therefore, becomes an impossible task. If one accepts this premise, the ramblings of Marion Bloom's subconscious self are as valid as those of the fully awake Princess Casamassima or of a modern protagonist like Moses Herzog. The self arouses enormous curiosity because we no longer believe in any fixed dimensions for it and hence the truth about it is an endless search in a universe which is no longer deterministic. The Kinsey Reports or Van de Velde's book, *Ideal Marriage* or Eustace Chesser's *How to Make a Success of Your Marriage* exhibits a curiosity that is quite different from that which characterized Restoration literature. It is an attempt to deal with love as a fact that is capable of being tested in a laboratory and today such experiments are being conducted with human pairs. This creates a piquant situation for the youth who take to the technique as a socialized more. As they grow up, they find that sex becomes an ephemeral sensation like marijuana or hasish or L.S.D. It offers a momentary escape from a life of boredom and aridity as opium had done for Baudelaire. Lacking in a sense of belonging in a world whose meaning is lost on them, they go in search of all types of sensations—and since sensations are transitory, none of them has a long satisfying effect. It is not for nothing that there is such a plethora of books and journals dealing with love and sex, each one competing with the other to be more candid, more uninhibited. Thus sex in social life becomes a subject of all the numerous experiments that are discussed in these manuals in the same way as a scientist approaches his hypothesis from different points of view to test its validity. In human relationship, however, as Berdyaev has observed, the experi-

ments may not lead to a definite goal since no single hypothesis will be applicable universally as there can be no homogeneity in the sampling. These experiments have obviously resulted in bizarre and grotesque practices in the pursuit of the forbidden and the taboo; since as an open society imperceptibly changes into a permissive society, the very structure of the society is attacked as being outmoded. The contemporary writer, therefore, feels that in order to cater for the needs of such a society it must be depicted in the work. Hence the Beat Generation or the Angry Young Men for whom the Establishment is a symbol of all that is reactionary, old-fashioned and outworn. The Hipster would like to keep pace with the jet-set or the Jazz age and widen the generation gap by destroying all that smacks of the traditional society. As Norman Mailer states: 'Whatever proves to be alive for one's writing—love, violence, drugs, sex, loss, family, work, death, defeat, victory or something unimportant to anyone else—comes from those few moments which reach the psychic cross-roads and there become a nucleus of new imagination.'[8]

Mailer's view can be compared with Rousseau's in the *New Eloise* or with the condition of the romantic ego as described by Jacques Barzun. It is a case of untrammelled individualism, of absurd irresponsibility and sense of social anarchy. The old-world values of love and sex and the denigrating effects of this permissive social order on them have been discussed with frightening effect by Paul Goodman in *Growing up Absurd*. Talking about the 'Social Animal' he says:

> Everyone agrees that an important condition for the troubles of growing up is the troubles between the parents at home, brutal quarrels and drunkenness, coldness, one or the other or both parents getting away as often as possible and being withdrawn while present, marriages breaking up.
>
> ...I do not think the public spokesmen are serious. For powerful and well-known modern reasons, the institution of marriage itself, as we have known it for several hundred years, cannot work simply any longer, and it is very often the direct cause of intense suffering. Urbanism, the economic independence of women, contraception, relaxing

> the inhibitions against unmarried and extramarital sexuality, these are inevitable.... Nor do we have any other formula for secure sex companionship, and bringing up children.... When time, clothes, opinions, and goals become so regulated that people cannot feel they cannot be 'themselves' or create something new, they grow bold and look for fringes and margins, loopholes, holes in the wall or they just run.[9]

It is the psychology of Rabbit Angstrom in *Rabbit Run*, that of Kerouac in *On the Road* and of numerous other characters in the literature of the last two decades. When Wilhelm Reich wrote *The Sexual Revolution* in the 1940's he could not perhaps anticipate the scene that is described in *The Sexual Wilderness* of Vance Packard published in 1968. Since the modern man believes in statistics, Packard has collected enough of them from all over the world to show how the 'revolution' has changed western culture into a wilderness where the response of man to woman or man to man or woman to woman has become as mechanical as that described in a popular best seller by Jacqueline Susan, *The Love Machine*. When the science of cybernetics demonstrates that man is an intricate computer, it is not surprising that love should be computerized or that harmony in marriages should be predicted by a computer.

We have indeed come a long way since Chaucer's Palamon and Arcite or Hardy's Bathsheba or Gautier's Mlle. Maupin. The cult of love for its own sake implies a philosophy of hedonism incorporating a view of society that is positive, and it enables the writer and the reader to have a frame of reference for value judgements. But in a society as anarchic as that described by Vance Packard even the Roman bacchanalia would be an innocent affair, since in this society the very function of society, namely, to adumbrate a code of manners and morals has ceased to be. In such circumstances the meaning of love will vary from individual to individual and all of them would exhibit in common an utter disregard of conformity to any code of conduct. If fiction is to be regarded as an exploration of reality on the social level, that level ought to have some semblance of stability. But if social reality is itself a flux, then all appearances are mistaken for reality and the novelist gropes

in vain to understand in which direction to focus his attention. It becomes, therefore, extremely difficult for him to observe how the individual behaves in relation to society and to record what Henry James called a point of view. This point of view can emerge when there is a certitude about any point, either external or internal. But when both the points—the external universe of the physical sciences or the internal universe of the psyche—are indefinable and unrecognizable, the only reality is an atom of sensation in the cognitive process. As Jaspers says, it is the consequence of a mental development that has led to Nothingness. An acceptable point of view, therefore, is an illusion in these circumstances. Without a point of view the writer, however, cannot discriminate between the valuable and the spurious and hence the very function of a work of art, to give us pleasure by revealing to us new dimensions of reality, by making the familiar unfamiliar, is either distorted or defeated. The work of art under such conditions can only fall back upon the sensation of novelty and novelty in the case of a theme like love means a permutation and combination of the different processes and techniques set forth in the sex manuals. A novel like John Updike's *Couples*, in spite of its seriousness, exhibits just this attitude to life amongst ten couples in the town of Tarbox. It is a common experience to notice in the low-brow or even middle-brow books a recourse to these methods in order to arouse the immature mind's curiosity—what Lawrence would have dubbed as dirty—to boost sales. In an age of mass literacy this type of fiction becomes a challenge to discrimination, and if Marshall Mcluhan's theory of the medium being the message has any validity or if Richard Hoggart's thesis that literacy is not education is valid, then the pernicious effect of this kind of literature on the common reader can be well imagined. For such a reader the printed page has a positive force. It will be too much to expect him to follow the dictum of Vahinger that a literary work deals with illusion only and that it is a make-believe world of 'As If'.

In a permissive society the distinction between art and pornography disappears with the publication of books like *The Perfumed Garden, The Golden Lotus, Fanny Hill, The Rosy Crucifixion, The Naked Lunch, The Soft Machine, Advertisements for Myself, The Naked and the Dead, The Ginger Man, Lolita, The*

Group, *Giovanni's Room*, *Another Country*, *Myra Breckenridge*, *Losers All*, *The Lady of the Flowers*, *Geraldine Bradshaw*, *Room at the Top*, *The Alexandrian Quartet*, *Love Story*, on the one hand and *The Valley of the Dolls*, *Portnoy's Complaint*, *Peyton Place*, *The Tight White Collar* and numerous such other books which coincide with films like 'Seduced and Abandoned', 'I Am Curious' and even plays like *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* *Baby Doll* or *Oh, Calcutta.* In these latter works what we are offered is the picture of a permissive society that throws to the four winds all conventional mores and codes to exhibit the sense of liberation from bondage—the kind of liberation that is also available from drugs and dopes.

The titles of the books given above are not selective. They belong to two categories—the sensational and the serious. What is intended here is to suggest the common denomination in them, namely, a permissive society in which the characters are mere stereotypes reacting to the ordinary stimulus-response psychology or trying to alter consciousness by all sorts of experiments with and upon themselves for the sake of novelty. As the characters are mere abstractions as in the paintings, say, of Paul Klee their reactions to life fail to register any coherent impression regarding their understanding of life itself. Bewildered, frustrated, disillusioned, these characters are not content with adultery and fornication. Their pathetic bravado takes them in search of as many kinds of strange and unfamiliar experiences as they can possibly gather, e.g. homosexuality in *Giovanni's Room*, or *Catcher in the Rye*, inter-racial love in *Another Country*, lesbianism in *The Group*, transvestism in *Myra Breckenridge*, voyeurism in *The Voyeur*, narcissism in *Room at the Top* or incest in *Peyton Place*. It is not that such themes had not been explored before, say, in Greek and Roman literatures or Elizabethan and Jacobean literatures. There is, however, a fundamental difference between the attitudes of those writers and those of our age.

In order to appraise these attitudes it will be desirable to classify writers like Moravia, Jules Romains, Henry Miller, Jean Genet and Lawrence Durrell in the category of serious writers who being confronted with the angst of alienation and dispossession, explore the possibilities of personal relationships through love which is exposed through sex. Thus Romains in

The Body's Rapture tries to burrow into the mystique of love, and the description of acts of love-making in the book reminds us of Lawrence. On the other hand, when the conviction of the writer is shaky and he attempts to handle such a delicate and tender theme there is a great risk of becoming sentimental or artificial as in James Gould Cozzens's *By Love Possessed*, in which Arthur Winner who has lost his wife, is shown as having an affair with Clarissa:

> His as much as hers, the supple and undulous back hollowing at the pull of his hands to a compliant curve; his as much as hers, her occupied participative hips, her obediently divided embracing knees, her parts in moist manipulative reception. Then, hers as much as his, the breath got hastily in common; the thumping, one on another, of the hurried two hearts, the mutual heat of pumped bloods, the start of their uniting sweats. Grown, growing gaining scope, hers then no less than his, the thorough-going deepening, widening work of their connexion; and his no less than hers, the tempo slowed in concert to engineer a tremulous joint containment and continuance...in spasms, unstayable succeeding spasms, contracting on contraction on contraction—hers! Hers, too; hers, hers, hers![10]

The metaphors used here are very much restrained compared to those in the works of lesser writers and yet 'thumping', 'pumped', 'connexion', 'engineer' are metaphors from mechanics; they reduce the whole performance to a mechanical act. In spite of all the manipulation of the rhythm, the effect is banal and disappointing. In the popular fiction today such scenes are numerous. Love-making, devoid of any sense of permanence, becomes as casual an affair as changing one's shirts by characters who are no more memorable than the dummies in tailors' shop-windows.

But even this writing is highly respectable compared to that of Norman Mailer in 'The Time of Her Life' published in *Advertisements for Myself* or *Why Are We in Vietnam?* The influence of Wilhelm Reich on him is pronounced enough to impel him to shed all inhibitions to make love-making as free

an enterprise as possible and regard free sex as the final goal of human life. In describing the sex act, Mailer seems to be obsessed with certain facts about a woman's experience but he forgets that this over-emphasis, or the use of four-lettered words as in *The Naked and the Dead* or *Why Are We in Vietnam?* changes the texture of the narration either to burlesque or fantasy and as Geoffery Gorer rightly pointed out in 'The Erotic Myth in America' (*Partisan Review*, July-August, 1950), such writing becomes a substitute gratification of a secret collective wish. This kind of writing does not even depict a sense of annoyance and anger against a decadent society which comes out in the works of Henry Miller or even Gunter Grass in a novel like *The Tin Drum* in the character of the dwarf, Oskar, nor is it a genuine attempt at revealing the mystery that is centred in the experience as in Lawrence Durrell in whom sensuality is differentiated from sexuality. On the other hand, the general tenor of most of the descriptions of love affairs in modern fiction is sado-masochistic. One may hold out a defence of them by saying that in a society where violence and instability are so common it is futile to expect a sense of beauty or serenity in love affairs. And yet Durrell who in *The Black Book* almost competes with Norman Mailer can write as memorably as follows in a scene between Nessim and Justine:

> He felt her on top of him, and in the plunge of her loins he felt the desire to add to him—to fecundate his actions; and to fructify through these fatality-bearing instruments of his power, to give life to those death-burdening struggles of a truly barren woman. Her face was expressionless like a mask of Siva. It was neither ugly nor beautiful, but naked as power itself. It seemed coeval (this love) with the Faustian love of saints who had mastered the chilly art of seminal stoppage in order the more clearly to recognize themselves—for its blue fires conveyed not heat but cold to the body. But will and mind burned up as if they had been dipped in quicklime. It was a true sensuality with nothing of the civilized poisons about it to make it anodyne, palatable to a human society constructed upon a romantic ideal of truth. Was it the love for that?[11]

The passage does not contain those harsh and dehumanizing images of machines. The references to 'Siva', 'Faust', 'blue fires' raises the scene to a mythopoeic or archetypal level. But this kind of writing is unusual since behind it is a whole philosophy of love that Durrell has propounded. It is a natural, pagan approach to sensuality but there is a spontaneity and vibrancy in the experience that prevents it from being degraded or defiled or being a symptom of mental or psychic sickness. This attitude can be compared with that of Carson Mc Cullers in *The Ballad of Sad Cafe* in which she says that love is a joint experience between two persons and that the lover feels in his soul that his love is a solitary thing. If love is an anodyne for this loneliness, it requires a whole art which John Bayley has discussed in *The Character of Love*. On the other hand, the modern writer by turning love into a science has made it a source of a deeper anguish, an unquenchable thirst, a will-o'-the-wisp, because the pleasure of love, to quote Eliot, has been turned into a cheery automatism. The modern writer cannot, like Baudelaire, understand that the sexual act as evil is less dignified and meaningful than the use of Kruschen Salts. It is for this reason that a writer like Graham Greene who subscribes to the Christian doctrine of sin fails to register a permanent impression because the opposition of sex and religion is involved in a question of belief that in the absence of established religion or a subscription to religious beliefs does not grip the mind of the characters or even readers for whom promiscuity is like the use of Kruschen Salts.

When Eliot castigated D. H. Lawrence in *After Strange Gods*, he did not perhaps imagine the extent and nature of that sickness in a permissive society. Permeated with 'the soul's loneliness and the body's clamouring', to use a phrase from Herbert Gold, the body's clamouring as distinct from the body's rapture grows more and more raucous making a loathsome whining in William Burrough's *The Naked Lunch* which is a pot-pourri of all types of bizarre experiences and perversions making it difficult for any reader to judge whether the society he inhabits is not in one of the circles of Dante's hell. This is how it goes:

A horde of lust-mad American women rush in. Dripping

> cunts, from farm and dude ranch, factory, brothel, country club, penthouse and suburb, motel and yacht and cocktail bar, strip off riding clothes, ski togs, evening dresses, levis tea gowns, print dresses, slacks, bathing suits and kimonos. They scream and yipe and houl, leap on the guests like bitch dogs in heat with rabies. They claw at the hanged boys shrieking: 'You fairy! you bastard! Fuck me! Fuck me! Fuck me!'[12]

The Furies in Greek tragedy could not have been more ferocious or frightening. Lawrence did not imagine these creatures when in outlining his new philosophy of sex in a society dominated by science and technology he wrote:

> Now sex and beauty are one thing, like flame and fire. If you hate sex you hate beauty. If you love beauty, you have a reverence for sex. Of course you can love old, dead beauty and hate sex. But to love living beauty you must have a reverence for sex.[13]

This reverence is almost an impossibility in the present age. The barren love that Eliot had envisioned in *The Waste Land* as typical of his age has been turned into a nightmare in the literature of a permissive age making a value judgement an extremely difficult performance. It is, indeed, an overall scene of mere titillation of the senses that cannot satisfy for long or fill one with a sense of beauty or a sense of the sharp immediacy of living reality. Hence for the modern reader in a permissive society, the discrimination between the real and the illusory, between love and lust, is an urgent task for with it is associated the survival of the serious novel in our age.

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Essential T. S. Eliot by H. L. Sharma, S. Chand & Co. (Pvt.) Ltd., New Delhi, 1971.

The Essential T. S. Eliot by H. L. Sharma is the by-product of his doctoral studies. In the book Dr. Sharma attempts to 'give a critical analysis of the mind and work of T. S. Eliot in all its essential facets' (Preface). Naturally that claim impels one to study the book with attention and interest. The book, however, is principally, almost wholly, except for one chapter, a study of Eliot's criticism. The concluding chapter on Eliot's creative output is sketchy and unilluminative. 'The Waste Land' is a profoundly ironical poem. It is irony of the highest order, the movement occurring on the triple plane of memory, actuality, desire. Memory of the positive past, actuality of the impotent present and abortive longing for values—in the intense simultaneity of these three awarenesses is clinched the irony. All the principal images and symbols have this ironic bearing —a bearing that, in its unobtrusive insistence, generates the poem's peculiar agony of contemplation. One looks in vain for such kind of perception in Dr. Sharma's assessment of the poem.

The rest of the book deals with Eliot's evolution as a critic phase by phase. There is a chapter on the history of English criticism up to Eliot in a nutshell. There is a chapter on other contemporary critics and another on Eliot's influence on contemporary criticism besides four chapters on Eliot's criticism proper.

This study of Eliot's criticism is fairly exhaustive and painstakingly close to the text. It has the meticulousness and method of a doctoral dissertation. All the highlights of Eliot's criticism are properly focussed. Eliot's theory of impersonality, dissociation of sensibility, theory of tradition vis-a-vis individual talent, objective-correlative, auditory imagination and the later moral and theological bias of the critic, his views on culture, on Christian Society, on poetic drama, on sociological stress in literature—all these are properly interpreted. But the whole book is just interpretation, elucidation, not analytic, discrimina-

tory and comparative evaluation. In other words, the author does not appear to weigh and analyse Eliot against other critics, backwards and forwards, in a critical evaluation of the salient aspects of the complex phenomenon of art. Perhaps a better approach would have been to take the major counters (mentioned above) of Eliot's criticism and treat them separately and treat them steadily in the light of Eliot's own developing views on those problems and the views of other major critics in history on the same problems, each problem in a consummate critical nexus, for instance, wit and its implied issue, conceit. A thorough critical analysis of the concept of wit and the function of wit inclusive of Eliot's own view and that before and after could constitute an exciting and illuminating investigation. Such topic-wise treatment would have obviated such juxtaposition of themes as Milton's and Byron's poetry and culture and poetic drama in a length of six pages (117-23). It would have also avoided some repetitions. A passage from 'Religion and Literature' is quoted twice (page 70 and page 76). The theory of impersonality of art, objective-correlative, auditory imagination, etc. could receive like treatment. That way Eliot's own shifts of position, e.g. impersonality vis-a-vis personality in art, would receive sharper, more composite and more critical focus. Not that Eliot shifted his stances radically. Critical velleity or vacillation is no index of great criticism. And Eliot's criticism is remarkable for consistency, tenacity, dynamism, never stagnancy. It postulates development, extension, not contradiction or divisiveness; for even when Eliot is upholding personality in art in his essay on Yeats, Eliot is not really contradicting his earlier stance on 'extinction of personality'. For Yeats personality in his poetry is never Shelleyan or Byronic. In early Yeats, the romantic Yeats, personality is ironically self-critical, and in the mature Yeats personality is transmuted. Personality as self-involved, self-perpetrating limitation is not Eliot's credo. It is the transmuted or transcended personality that is Yeats's achievement and Eliot's advocacy. And this is no far cry from the principle of perpetual extinction of personality. Eliot's later concern for moral and theological values and sociological stresses is rather an extension, an annexe of his earlier criticism, than its negation or nullification. The second essay on Milton, despite

Desmond MacCarthy and Leavis, is not so much a recantation, as a reassessment of Milton's poetry in a changed perspective; specifically, an exploration into the possible advantages of Milton's excellence, limited though, to the poets of the fifties.

Eliot's later criticism is ampler in awareness, capacious, may be somewhat dogmatic in tone—in pronouncements like '... poetry as certainly has something to do with morals, and with religion and with politics perhaps, though we cannot say what' —may be elaborately assertive, even slightly garrulous at places, which defects, however, are amply mitigated by Eliot's condour, confessions and humility. His earlier criticism combating for the autotelic value of art shocks one into recognition —in the twenties and thirties it did—by its crispness, economy, terseness; by its audacity and unorthodoxy. All the mosaic phrases like 'objective-correlative', 'extinction of personality', 'dissociation of sensibility', characterized by perception, precision and power, are the crop of this phase of acute intellectual agility. And both constitute one 'unified sensibility' or, as Kenneth Hugh said, 'one continuous poem'. Eliot's criticism like his poetry has the load of suffered thought behind it; hence its perceptiveness, persuasiveness and grace.

Eliot himself, influenced by French critics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and Ezra Pound, influenced contemporary criticism considerably. The homages cited by Dr. Sharma on his death are ample evidence of that. And Dr. Sharma deserves praise for his painstaking endeavour. His summarisings are well-done, e.g. his synopsis of the traits of New Criticism (p. 179-81). His points of view, however, are almost always quotations from other critics which is rather unfortunate. And his style though not manifest at length anywhere—for a treatise which moves mostly on the axle of interpretation and elucidation does not provide much scope for revelation of personal style—cries for improvement. Profuse sprinkling of commas in sentences all over the text is not required by the genius of the English language. And a writer specializing in criticism may reasonably be expected to wield a more analytic and critical vocabulary and idiom. Besides, for a critic who is so ardently concerned with Eliot's critical 'oeuvre', a study of the applicability of Eliot's criticism to his own poetry would have been a profitable pursuit. And 'T. S. Eliot—The

Essential Critic' would have been a more apposite title for the book.

The printer's devil is there, a thing quite congenial to Indian publishing, e.g. Bradbrook is spent Brad Brook at several places. But thanks to S. Chand & Co. the devils do not jump about much. Bibliography and indexing are good.

H. P. MOHANTY

Quiet Violence by Sitakanta Mahapatra, Writers' Workshop, Calcutta, 1970. 59 pp.

The paradoxical title of the book—*Quiet Violence*—points to the modernism in the sensibility of Sitakanta Mahapatra—one of the most well-read and intelligent of the younger generation of Oriya poets. The acuteness of his intelligence is reflected in the manner in which he reacts to modern life, bewildering and frustrating to any sensitive person. In the post-Independence era the cross-currents of life in this country have produced attitudes that are critically focussed on a kind of alien vision. During a transition from a static to a dynamic phase of civilization, problems are thrown up plunging poets into anguish and their poetry reflects it in the tone of voice and the impulse to wrestle with expression. The influence of poets like Eliot, Auden, Mayakovsky or even the French Symbolists is perceptible in a number of modern poets writing in the Indian languages—an influence that is not to be mistaken for mere imitation if we remember the problems inherent in the tradition of Indian poetry. A number of young Oriya poets have studied English and European literature. With their education and awareness of the jagged edges of modern life they have been searching for an expression that will adequately communicate their experience. Sitakanta Mahapatra's distinction lies in a deep understanding of the meaningless or multi-dimensional meaning of contemporary life. From that angle he is perhaps the most metaphysical of the modern Oriya poets. But metaphysics does not render his poetry dealing with the themes of love, death,

mutability and time abstract or didactic. The quest for meaning takes him into many a crooked corner of existence, either time-bound or free. In these poems we feel the presence of a personality that is perpetually dissatisfied with the elusive nature of reality.

It is the variety of moods generated by the variety of themes that gives complexity to his poetry—a complexity that prevents him from losing sight of reality at any point. The urbanity of lines like—

> The sun dragged itself from bed,
> And the sea melted
> Into my cup of tea,
> The familiar landscape burned
> In awful insularity. ('The Mist')

can be appreciated by a reference to the title of the poem, 'The Mist', in which a traditional theme—and tradition here is intimately associated with the native culture—has been examined through a symbol which in its turn is subjected to the play of wit and irony. In 'The House' there is, however, a simple, direct retrospection after exhibiting a delicate perceptiveness as in

> And the noiseless, soft, indifferent floating
> Of the kites against the sky's blue;

But this retrospection is not mere nostalgia. The pathos of

> My mother is not here
> Her eyes are stars in the sky.

is buttressed by the vivid group of concrete particulars and the controlled rhythm of

> Today all the desolation and tears
> Of the empty sky are hidden
> Under the coffin of the ribs.

The contemplation of human destiny—a preoccupation with Mahapatra in all his poetry—links him with the matrix of

myth in the sense of Lévi-Strauss or Malinowski—as in

> The mammoth crowd
> Of echoes and shadows converge on
> Blue surge of the cold moon:
> Streets of Bethlehem never grow amply
> Lanes of Kapilavastu never revisited.
>
> ('A Half-Forgotten Grief')

or in 'The Song of Jara the Hunter' in which the cycle of human history is enacted in the death of Krishna. The contemplation of such themes poses questions that have baffled the human mind in all ages. The procession of human history takes him to Hastina, Indraprastha, Magadha, Troy, Alexandria ('To the Alas-Kanya') and Bodhgaya, Lumbini, Kushinara ('The Other Time'). In this history is blended the temporal and the eternal so that the narcissistic maiden becomes a symbol of the inscrutable feminine mystery as the Grecian Urn had teased Keats out of his thoughts. To 'Clarify myself to myself' is possible only when feelings crystallize into thoughts lifting veil after veil from over the mystery that is human existence. But Mahapatra does not contemplate existence *a la* the existentialists. He probes into the consciousness witnessing there the comedy of the march of the jelly-fish to the state of *homo sapiens*. In this act the irony emerges strikingly in 'the deliverance / Of my half-ton soul to the tree outside', but this irony is never self-denigrating. On the contrary, the ironical mode enables him to perceive the subtle nuances of existence, some of them disarmingly simple as in the acecdote of Hadu Sahu ('The Other Time') or as in

> The bare trees, falling leaves, and silent mountains
> are to me like the pale, lonely face
> of the grandfather.
> And the sick, flat-chested children who
> play on the road
> Lead me to think of stale, stagnant water
> in the drains
> (and worm-eaten flowers on pale mornings.)
>
> ('Reflection')

The poet who can detach himself from 'The glaring lights, the rat-race in the streets' has to discipline his sensibility by listening to 'the music of time'.

The poems, therefore, show the violence that is perpetuated in the poet's memory and consciousness but it ultimately is chastened and subdued by a habit of mind that is adult. The poems have been translated by different persons including Mahapatra himself. Since the word 'transcreation' is used for them, it implies 'changes' or 'modifications' in course of the rendering. The flavour of the original poems has been sought to be preserved as far as possible. It is, however, in the rhythm and the cadence that the parallels with the originals have at times registered certain differences.

What is arresting in these poems is the quality of refinement so perceptible in the sensibility—a quality that does not bewilder the poet on any occasion for such bewilderment is apt to issue when the present is juxtaposed with the past and life is contemplated in range and depth, a task that can be accomplished either with a churlish bravado or a lachrymose self-pity. Neither of those extremes affects Mahapatra's poetry because of his capacity to fuse feelings with thoughts and in the process to render the themes adroitly.

B. Das