THE INDIAN JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES

Vol. XVIII

1978 – 79

SOMAIYA PUBLICATIONS PVT. LTD.

THE INDIAN JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES

Vol. XVIII

The Official Organ of
The Indian Association for English Studies

1978-79

SOMAIYA PUBLICATIONS PVT. LTD.
BOMBAY ◆ NEW DELHI

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PRINTED IN INDIA
BY N. S. RAY, THE BOOK CENTRE LIMITED, 103, TWENTY-NINTH ROAD, BOMBAY-400 022 AND PUBLISHED BY G. S. KOSHE, SOMAIYA PUBLICATIONS PVT. LTD., 172 MUMBAI MARATHI GRANTHASANGRAHALAYA MARG, DADAR, BOMBAY-400 014.

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From the outset Othello is no less the great general than the lover of his wife, and both are vital to the tragedy. A tragic hero, however much he is an individual, is also in some way more than himself. He is Man, the human spirit face to face with inexorable doom. In Shakespeare he is nearly always a king or the son of a king, with a people's fate involved with his own. Even Romeo and Juliet by their deaths end the feud between two great houses, so that the play finishes on a note of reconciliation merely beyond the personal level. In our democratic age we recognise that representative quality more readily in the private than the public man. Othello the husband is more frighteningly close to us, for marriage is within the common man's experience, and even the depth of love between him and Desdemona cannot save theirs from catastrophe. But this is not the whole of it. Othello's fall is great because he is great in himself, not because he is a common man tripped up by a common failing.

Is he a man irrationally jealous? The question is asked in the play, and variously answered by different characters. Emilia says he is, but army life with Iago for a husband has taught her that all men are jealous, with or without good reason. Desdemona, speaking as if she knew him very well, thinks the sun where he was born drew all such humours from him.* Iago, who understands people very well in the politician's sense of understanding how to manipulate them, says he is "of a free and open nature," but is sure of his own power to rouse jealousy in him; as we see that he does, by cunning strategy and not without the devil's own luck. Othello himself, in that moment before death which for nearly all Shakespeare's tragic heroes is the moment of clarity, calls himself

> One not easily jealous, but being wrought
> Perplexed in the extreme.

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* The "double time" in *Othello* has been too often discussed to be treated over again; but here and in some other places Desdemona seems to have known Othello longer and more closely than the rapid action of the plot makes possible. Nor, within the stage time, could Cassio have become her lover. Such points are much more obvious to a reader than to a spectator without a text.

To say that he was not a jealous man is not to say he was incapable of jealousy; it is an impulse natural to humans and to a good many other animals when a rival wins what they want, and it can be indulged or restrained. But to let it grow to excess, into an obsession demanding to be justified, is a kind of psychological disorder. Shakespeare seems to have been interested in the trait, for he made two or three studies of it. There is Master Ford in *The Merry Wives*, Leontes in *A Winter's Tale*, Claudio in *Much Ado*, who in some ways is Othello's nearest analogy. Both are soldiers with distinguished war records, but conscious that the rough life of the army has not trained them in the graces expected at court; both are in love. At least, Claudio reiterates, almost as if he had to convince himself, that Hero attracted him before he left for the war; at the same time, before trying to win her he makes sure that she is to inherit a fortune. Too diffident to do his own wooing he gratefully accepts Don Pedro's offer to act as proxy, yet after agreeing to this, his suspicions flare up at the very first hint that Don Pedro is making too good an impression on Hero. When that misunderstanding is cleared up he falls no less easily into Don John's next, more carefully planned snare, and grasps at the evidence that Hero is unchaste. A bolder lover might have confronted her then and there (of course to the ruin of the plot), a more chivalrous one would surely have gone privately to Leonato and arranged with him some excuse to cancel the wedding with the minimum public scandal. Not Claudio: he stages the most humiliating possible exposure of Hero, calls her a rotten orange, and marches out in self-righteous triumph; after which, apparently unmoved by the report of her death, he has not even the decency to get himself posted somewhere else but stays on with Don Pedro who is Leonato's guest. When Hero's character is vindicated posthumously as he thinks, he generously accepts her father's forgiveness almost as if it were his due, with a becoming ritual of penance, and accepts too the hand of her hitherto unheard-of cousin who is said to be her living image (and one may surmise will succeed to her inheritance). It would sound like hasty work by an immature playwright with an eye for nothing but melodrama, but for the presence in the same play of Beatrice and Benedick so brilliantly alive, not to mention Dogberry and Verges demonstrating that even the smartest criminal may be frustrated by the

more pride in owing his eminence in Venice to service, not to pedigree. He is no fortune-hunter:

> For know, Iago,
> But that I love the gentle Desdemona,
> I would not my unhoused free condition
> Put into circumscription and confine
> For the sea's worth.

And at the suggestion that he should go into hiding from Brabantio's anger —

> Not I, I must be found.

None of this is bragging. When the search party turns out not to be Brabantio's men but his own, with a summons from the Senate to undertake the immediate defence of Cyprus against a Turkish invasion he answers promptly, delaying only to take hasty leave of his newly-married wife. When Brabantio's men arrive threatening murder he answers with the courtesy of absolute fearlessness:

> Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust 'em;
> Good signior, you shall more command with years
> Than with your weapons.

They obey. He is a man whose sheer personality compels his enemies to obey him. If you compare Othello's instant soldierly reaction to the situation with the Senator Brabantio's, whose only thought is that the emergency offers him a chance to air his own wrongs, you see at once why Othello was indispensable in a crisis.

His quality as a commander is shown again, more practically, in the drunken riot (II.3). The situation is tricky. The Cypriots, who appear to have been living tranquilly under Montano's competent governorship, suddenly learn that a Turkish fleet is approaching bent on invasion — and in that small island with nowhere to escape to, the panic is easy to imagine. With Othello's arrival the island comes immediately under military rule, but in the same moment the wreck of the Turkish fleet removes the

need for that rule. Othello announces a public holiday to celebrate both the miraculous deliverance and his own wedding: all that keyed-up tension must have some kind of outlet, so let everyone get jovially drunk in general fraternisation. It could easily take a more sinister turn, for nobody likes military rule, and if they do not fraternise a small thing could rouse the civilian population against this now unnecessary garrison newly quartered on the town. Any politically sophisticated spectator would see this, and Iago points it out to the less alert when he tells Roderigo to provoke Cassio to a quarrel, "for out of that will I cause those of Cyprus to mutiny."

The plan not only works but — as in the later scene when Bianca waving the incriminating handkerchief arrives, pat on cue, to complete the delusion of Othello — Iago has the devil's own luck. He could plan the brawl between Roderigo and Cassio, captain of the guard, dangerous enough in itself, but not even his cunning could have contrived that Cassio should attack the civil governor of the island. He could, though, make the most of it. Set the alarum bell booming; start the rumours; have a few young hooligans primed to cry "Mutiny!" — and within hours the whole island would be in uproar.

Othello was roused, and sized up the whole situation like lightning. He parted the combatants; threatened death to the first man who used a weapon; then, "Silence that dreadful bell". Then he put to them the seriousness of the offence —

> What, in a town of war,
> Yet wild, the people's hearts brimful of fear,
> To manage private and domestic quarrel,
> In night, and on the court and guard of safety!

— and demanded the facts. The moment he was satisfied that Montano was not at fault he treated him with the utmost courtesy, arranged for his wound to be attended to, demoted Cassio on the spot, gave orders for the restoration of order. All this, including a barely controlled outburst of anger, took him forty lines of verse; after which he escorted the startled Desdemona back to bed. The least trace of partiality, nervousness, even hesitation could have had the whole island in arms, letting off against the garrison the feeling they had worked up for the Turks.

But he was impersonal, just, and utterly fearless.

This is Othello the man of action, the leader who trusts himself and can command even his opponents. He is never like that again, from the moment Iago plants the first seed of doubt about Desdemona in his mind to the last scene, when, the crime committed and the full truth made known, he once more has a sword in his hand, faces an angry assembly with complete self-possession and passes judgment on himself.

Yet the doubt, so utterly groundless, should never have got into his mind. Even Iago could not have put it there if something in Othello had not been receptive, and it seems to me that the poetry reveals that hidden fissure. All his life Othello had been single-mindedly in love with war, that exacting mistress who had made him what he was; now, with a commitment he knew was no less deep, he was in love with Desdemona. Could a man serve two mistresses and remain true to both?

That the question had been troubling him is implicit in the words to Iago, already quoted:

> But that I love the gentle Desdemona,
> I would not my unhoused free condition
> Put into circumscription and confine
> For the sea's worth.

In that unhoused free condition he could take sexual pleasure where he found it, soldier-like, without offering or asking fidelity — as Iago surmised when he suspected him with Emilia. But more important, it kept him instantly ready for the life of his choice, the life of action.

It need not have troubled him, for as his first uninfluenced judgment told him, Desdemona of all women would never have divided his loyalties. Under her quiet submissiveness to her father her dreams were not of social triumph but of heroic endurance. "She would that heaven had made her such a man." Othello told the Senate in describing their courtship, and she confirmed it in her simple statement, "that I did love the Moor to live with him."

She could have been a soldier's wife, proud of taking second place to his vocation. Her unself-centred devotion is apparent in the very way she lost the handkerchief. It was his first present

to her, and as Emilia said, in his absence she would fondle and speak to it as a token of his love — but when he was there, with a headache, the handkerchief became nothing but the readiest bandage to hand, and when it proved inadequate she dropped it without a thought. It was himself she cared for, rather than his love for her. And later, when (in III.4) she was shattered by his rage over its loss, you can see her training herself not to be the silly kind of woman who can't believe her husband upset by anything but herself. When state affairs exasperate him, surely it is part of her job to be the shock-absorber on whom he can work off his irritation. Emilia knew better, and perhaps any woman would have felt in her bones that this was real anger directed, however undeservedly, against herself — unless like Desdemona she was altogether too determined to live up to an impossible ideal of self-effacement. In a way it was the complement of Othello's determination not to let love deflect him from his honour as a soldier. At their reunion he had greeted her as "My fair warrior", and her self-reproach here, "unhandsome warrior as I am," reflects her pride in the title.

Before the Senate, when Othello endorsed her request to go with him to Cyprus, his language was needlessly vehement:

> And heaven defend your good souls that you think
> I will your serious and great business scant,
> For she is with me. No, when light wing'd toys
> Of feather'd Cupid seel with wanton dulness
> My speculative and offic'd instruments,
> Let housewives make a skillet of my helm...

Who in that assembly has dropped a hint of any such fear? It comes from no mind but his own. So there had been a conflict in it. And Iago was standing by to take note of it — just as he took note of Brabantio's parting shot —

> She has deceived her father, may do thee

— and echoed it later to disturb Othello's trust.

He was there again at their reunion after the voyage, to hear the very different language of Othello's greeting:

> If it were now to die,
> 'Twere now to be most happy, for I fear
> My soul hath her content so absolute
> That not another comfort like to this
> Succeeds in unknown fate.

This is the language of a love very far from light winged toys and feathered Cupid; but there is a premonition in it, which comes from his own mind, for it has no echo in Desdemona's undoubting reply. It sounds again, though I think unconsciously, in his exclamation after her first intercession for Cassio:

> Excellent wretch! perdition catch my soul
> But I do love thee! and when I love thee not,
> Chaos is come again.

Iago had hardly yet begun to work on Othello, but again he was there to witness the encounter, perhaps to catch in Othello's tone a shade of indulgent impatience at her importunity (for he meant to restore Cassio to office, but not till his own judgment saw the right moment).

Those words may be said in different ways: I suggest that they should express confidence more than anxiety, for Othello and Desdemona have just begun their life together. In them is his clearest recognition that the depth of his love has put him in her power, but there is no fear in it, because the discovery that he can trust another person so absolutely is an exhilarating new dimension of life. His choice of phrase is clairvoyant — "When I love thee not," instead of "When thou lovest me not."

Iago had listened to Othello often enough to sense the inner conflict between his devotion to the life of war, with which all his self-respect was inextricably bound up, and his love for Desdemona. He set to work with terrifying speed and sureness to demolish that trust before it had time to become more than intuition. The whole central part of the play from the beginning of Act III to the end of IV.1., where Othello strikes his wife in the presence of Lodovico, the envoy from Venice, is a continuous scene happening before the eyes of the audience, and throughout it Desdemona herself has no idea what is the matter. All she can see is that Othello is transformed. The audience alone,

in a kind of unholy league with Iago, follow the process step by step.

Iago delights in explaining his technique to the audience in soliloquy. Poisonous hints, he says, must have time to operate. When Othello goes to dinner they are only floating speculations, and the sight of Desdemona is almost enough to counteract them. "If she be false, O then heaven mocks itself." By the time he returns they have sunk in, have fused with concerns Iago did not need to insert since they were already in his mind, have undergone something like a chemical change and become that bitter cry, "Othello's occupation's gone!"

Even more than the loss of Desdemona, what mattered to him was the loss of the heroic self-possession he had gloried in. His fearlessness, courtesy and self-restraint, his quick judgment in action, power of command, indifference to physical comfort — all his great qualities were learnt from his singleminded devotion to the ideals of war. At the back of his mind he felt that he risked them all in giving himself so utterly to the love of a woman, for unless he could trust her absolutely he would never be single-minded again. In actual fact there was no such risk with Desdemona, but he knew there could be, and Iago playing on his ignorance made him feel there must be.

After that passionate outburst the warrior in Othello never speaks again till the end, but from that moment to the last scene he passes under Iago's power almost as if he were being hypnotised, with only here and there a feeble struggle to assert his true self. It is rather striking that although the plot from now on concerns the fate of Desdemona, it is Othello's fall from greatness that the other characters see. Except in the privacy of her talks with Emilia, Desdemona keeps her sufferings hidden but even when she cannot they get no attention. For instance, when in III.iv Cassio learns that in pleading his cause she has met a sharp rebuff, it does not occur to him to express regret for being the cause of it; and Iago, playing his part as the bluff, good-natured soldier, says:-

> Can he be angry? I have seen the cannon,
> When it hath blown his ranks into the air;
> And like the devil, from his very arm
> Puff'd his own brother, and can he be angry?

Again, in IV.i. Othello in Lodovico's presence strikes and insults his wife, who endures it without a protest. To the audience, knowing what is behind it as nobody on the stage does, except Iago, it is a moment of almost unbearable pity and admiration for Desdemona. But Lodovico, reflecting on it afterwards, is hardly aware of her as a sentient human being: to him she is the evidence of Othello's incredible transformation:-

> Is this the noble Moor whom our full senate
> Call all-in-all sufficient? is this the noble nature
> Whom passion could not shake? whose solid virtue
> The shot of accident, nor dart of chance,
> Could neither graze, nor pierce?

Because he loved her not, chaos had come again. Played by a great actor the loss of control would be apparent not only in Othello's action but in his posture, muscular and facial movements, the tones of his voice. And it was necessary to keep the audience reminded that the great man whom the Senate trusted and Desdemona loved had indeed been the real Othello.

He was close to the borderline of madness, as Desdemona saw when she woke that night to find him standing over her with murder in his eyes, but though deluded he was sane enough to grasp fact. The conclusive proof of his wife's guilt had been that handkerchief, over which after she had denied losing it he had actually seen Bianca quarrelling with Cassio. When Emilia, at the cost of her life, confessed that she herself had given it to Iago, Othello knew that he had been mistaken. A madman, whose inner certitude is more to him than any objective fact, would either not have accepted the statement or would have instantly invented and believed some other proof of Desdemona's unfaithfulness. Uplifted as Othello had been in his assurance of rightness, it took devastating sanity to understand that the facts convicted him of plain murder.

While the tragedy was happening the business of the state went on: it always does. Emilia's cries brought Montano and Gratiano to the scene, with the ubiquitous Iago in train, and in due course the chief envoy, Ludovico, arrived. Horrified as they were, these men did not forget that they represented the authority of the Venetian Senate, and must pass judgment and take action. Neither

did Othello. He found the one thing more that was needed to restore him to his true self — a sword. With that in hand he was again the great Othello to whom the sword was poetry and honour, who had no need to use it for everyone (except Iago) to defer to him. Coolly he listened to the evidence that had accumulated to make the whole picture clear, heard Lodovico, not without due courtesy, place him under provisional arrest, then summed up and passed judgment on himself — for failure in his responsibility to Venice.

> And say besides, that in Aleppo once,
> Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk
> Beat a Venetian and traduc'd the state,
> I took by the throat the circumcised dog
> And smote him — thus.

What had happened between Desdemona and himself was a private matter, and it was only after he had carried out his own capital sentence on the public servant that he could give himself up to it, with no way but this,

> Killing myself, to die upon a kiss.

Desdemona is dead, Othello dead, Emilia dead. Iago's plot has succeeded more triumphantly than he could have hoped, and his last words in the play are a refusal to explain his malice. It is true that he is in chains under threat of torture, but he is alive. One is left perhaps hoping that he will die, but not quite able to believe that so much concentrated wickedness can succumb to a human court of law.

So many words have been spent without agreement on the enigma of Iago that it looks as if Shakespeare meant him to remain an enigma. And yet he wrote for the stage, and the actor must know — whether or not the author knows — how he intends the audience to understand the words he is delivering.

Some points about Iago are unmistakable. Every character in the play thinks him "honest", good-natured, everybody's friend, not clever but gifted with a down-to-earth commonsense; everyone, that is, except possibly Roderigo to whom he brags of his smartness, but Roderigo is too much of a fool to be put on guard

till too late. Only the audience, watching from their different world, know from the start that he is cunning and evil. He talks most of the time in blunt prose. To Othello he uses respectful blank verse, but till he is sure of his ascendancy over Othello even his verse is prosy. And all his talk is reductive, as if with all his good nature the finer perceptions are left out of his make-up; he can understand none but the coarsest pleasures and the lowest motives for action. But when he is alone a change comes over him and he slips into poetry like a man reverting to his native language. The poetry is at times superb and is full of intelligence, but only the audience hear it. It is intelligence learnt from the powers of darkness, among whom he seems more at home than with mortal men: like them he delights in evil as a fine art for its own sake.

> I have't; it is engendered: Hell and night
> Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.
>
> 'Tis here, but yet confus'd;
> Knavery's plain face is never seen till us'd.
>
> Divinity of Hell!
> When devils will their blackest sins put on,
> They do suggest at first with heavenly shows
> As I do now.

Cunning as his plots are, they succeed beyond their cunning, for at every turn some malign chance comes to his aid. He could make Cassio quarrelsome-drunk and set on Roderigo to bait him, but chance contrived the fight with Montano that secured Cassio's disgrace. He could urge Emilia to get hold of that handkerchief but it was by chance that Desdemona dropped it at the right moment and that Bianca arrived with it in her hand, to confirm the suspicion he had planted in Othello's mind. Or was it chance?

It is possible to act Iago convincingly as an agent of evil, taking for granted the existence of such beings. I have seen it done by a talented Bengali student who, not belonging to the Department of English, had never heard of motiveless malignity or any of the other thousand and one diagnoses, but who had an ear for the rhythms and cadences of language. To the disgraced Cassio he was a bluff comrade, at once deflating and cheering him with

"You, or any man living, may be drunk at some time." Alone, with the poetry to bring out subtle inflections in his voice, he seemed to grow inches taller and to be aware of a different order of beings. At the end when Othello lunged at him shouting, "If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee," his derisive answer as he dodged aside, "I bleed, sir, but not killed," left us in doubt whether he was or only aspired to be a citizen of Hell.

It is also possible to present him as the character M. R. Ridley sees, the aggrieved soldier whose malice at the outset extends only to scoring off his successful rival for promotion and the chief whose natural superiority he envied, who was trapped by a depth of passion he had not imagined in Othello into plotting murder on murder to save his own skin. The drawback is that it leaves Iago's poetry unaccounted for. It is hard to believe that out of mere negligence Shakespeare allowed a limited egoist to murmur to himself.

> Not poppy nor mandragora,
> Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
> Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
> Which thou owedst yesterday.

But it fits in better with our modern assumptions about the psychology of crime, and we like to think that Shakespeare's inspired insight into human nature confirms our own. As indeed it sometimes can. Watch Edmund in *King Lear*, standing by in respectful silence while Gloucester sniggers to Kent over the good sport of his begetting; deprived of natural rights by human law, sentenced before birth to be nothing but a vulgar joke, he would be expected by anyone with even a slight knowledge of the psychology of crime to grow up anti-social.

No such explanation is offered of Iago. He is there because the story requires an evil genius; how he came to be evil may perhaps belong to another story but is no part of this one. It does, however, suggest a general theory of evil, orthodox in Shakespeare's time but less readily accepted in our own which Shakespeare here and elsewhere appears to use for a starting-point, without necessarily trying to propagate it. He simply takes it for granted. There are forces of darkness in the world, stronger than the human soul, who will prey upon it if they can; only, to give them entrance there must be some weakness like a fifth columnist

within the soul to unlock the gate. The introspective Hamlet was aware of this when he told Horatio to watch Claudius in the "play" scene for signs of guilt,—If there were none,

> It is a damned ghost that we have seen,
> And my imaginations are as foul
> As Vulcan's stithy.

Hating his uncle enough to wish him dead, he feared that the ghost might be a devil taking advantage of his hatred to lure him into murder. Macbeth was easy prey for the witches, because without actually planning to usurp it he had dreamed of possessing the crown of Scotland, whereas Banquo who cherished no such dream was immune. The inlet into Othello's soul was his secret fear that love and honour would divide him: Iago saw that grain of self-distrust and worked on it till it became suspicion of Desdemona. It is true that without that grain the suspicion could never have taken hold, but the emphasis is on Iago's cunning more than on Othello's fault or folly; his transformation is a kind of possession.

What saves *The Tragedy of Othello* from being a complete victory of evil over good? —for though the devil seems to have won, the effect of the play is not to send the audience home feeling altogether suicidal. The only answer I can find is the sense of some intrinsic greatness in the human spirit that survives defeat. It has nothing to do with recompense in an after-life: the story ends with Desdemona murdered and Othello dead by his own hand, too late enlightened, and this is Iago's work. Yet his success does not diminish the values they embodied. Othello the high-souled has been reduced to something hardly human, obsessed with images of violence and lust, but he recovers from the bad dream, and dies open-eyed in full possession of himself. Desdemona, even when he kills her, knows that this is not the real man; her last words, "Commend me to my kind lord. O! farewell," are a message across death to tell him so.

This is the essence of tragedy, to present life at its stark worst, stripped of all adventitious supports of luck and success, with all its mischances, cross-purposes and degradations, ending as it must in the ultimate defeat of death, and still to convince us that to be human is a worthwhile destiny; and this is why the ancients called it the most difficult of all the forms of poetry.

ORDER AMIDST CHAOS: THE COSMOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF JONSON'S BARTHOLOMEW FAIR

RENU JUNEJA

TODAY it takes no great courage to suggest that a true insight into Jonson's comedies can be achieved only when, for the moment, we make our perspective coincide with Jonson's perspective and look at his world, as it were, through his eyes. Further, that we recognize that however unique Jonson's world view may be, it cannot be disassociated from the world view of his generation. The mental constructs of Jonson's age provide a legitimate starting ground for an exploration into a Jonsonian comedy.

As a result of the valuable work of Hardin Craig, Arthur Lovejoy, E.M.W. Tillyard and others, students of Renaissance literature are now familiar with the Elizabethan assumption about the cosmos and the world order.[1] We understand how the hierarchical division of human beings was, for Jonson and his contemporaries, but a fraction of a magnitude of hierarchies which gave conceptual order and coherence to a variegated universe. The concept of the world order which the Elizabethans and the Jacobeans inherited from the Middle Ages pictured the created universe as a great Chain of Being. Visualized in all concreteness, this chain which stretched from God's throne to the meanest of inanimate objects, assigning every object to a divinely ordained place along the ladder, was to the Elizabethans an expression of the plenitude of God's creation, of its (the Universe's) unfaltering order, and its ultimate unity. A violation of degree could, however, reduce the harmony and order to a chaotic disorder. Simultaneously, the world was conceived as a series of planes of being, interconnected by a vast and complicated system of correspondences. Thus, a disorder in the universe or the macrocosm could be related to or reflected in the body politic, and in man or the microcosm. The disruption of this cosmic law or order could be caused by disregard for hierarchy, as well as by sin and unreason, and harmony would be restored only when the discordant elements had been purged.

Briefly reviewed, these were some of the traditional concepts that Jonson shared with his contemporaries. Jonson lived during a period when many ideas which had long been taken as fundamental were either beginning to lose their hold on the minds of the thoughtful, or were at least undergoing a new scrutiny. But the image, to use C. S. Lewis' phrase, had not been discarded.[2] Some of the ideas were, perhaps, no longer a matter of religious faith and strict theological belief, but they continued to operate as poetic metaphors. Whether Jonson actually believed in the existence of an actual chain is to me an irrelevant question. Does he, in the body of his work, show an awareness of it as an image or a concept is after all the material concern. Unless one is sure of this one may easily be accused of putting the cart before the horse, of starting with preconceptions that determine the evidence.

Though Jonsonian critics often refer to the cosmological implications of his imagery, we still lack substantiation of how within a given play the implicit framework of such traditional ideas controls our judgement of character and action and, above all, how even when Jonson excludes normative characters and affirmative endings characteristic of Shakespearian comedy, such concepts serve as indirect points of reference, thus simultaneously sharpening his ironic vision and saving it from stark nihilism.[3] This technique is characteristic of Jonson's mature comedies, and *Bartholomew Fair*, the most complex of all his plays, also provides the most crucial evidence. In the Induction to *Bartholomew Fair*, Jonson makes a deliberate, ironic reference to the metaphor of the Great Chain. The stage keeper speaks of the author's refusal to provide a "wel-educated Ape" to jump "over the *Chaine*, for the King of England" (17-18).[4] The stage keeper is the spokesman for the ironic poet who, this seems a reasonable assumption, is caustically referring to the human apes he does provide (the characters in the play) who do, metaphorically, attempt to jump the Chain of Being. In Jonson's play, of course, in the attempt to move up the chain, human beings actually descend lower, because what motivates them is not spiritual aspiration but a desire for sensual gratification.

In *Bartholomew Fair*, Jonson carries the technique of inversion he had exploited in *The Alchemist*, *Epicoene* and *Volpone* to a breathlessly successful extreme. The perverse art of Subtle in *The Alchemist*, the blurring of the sexes in *Epicoene*, and the

dehumanization of the central characters as well as the suspect morality of the judges in *Volpone* culminate in the splendid chaos of the Fair. The world of the Fair is a world of misrule where authority and order are flouted in what critics of Jonson, adopting the vocabulary of C. L. Barber, have termed the spirit of saturnalian license.[5] Whether the Fair can justifiably be viewed as an image of the traditional saturnalia must, I think, be debated; nevertheless the Fair, which forms both the structural and the thematic centre of the play, does indeed function as a symbol of disorder.

Though we move to the Fair only in the second act, the four major causes of disorder are established early in the first act. These are: human inadequacy (specifically, deficient intellect), the stripping of human attributes (reduction of human beings to the level of animals or inanimate objects), unreason (madness), and discord (disruption of harmony through noise). The first few scenes introduce us to Littlewit and Bartholomew Cokes, two characters most easily identified as foolish gulls. Littlewit's attempts to qualify as a wit "place" him as inexorably as his name. His temperamental garrulity is made worse by deliberately adopted coy mannerisms. He punctuates every sentence with his wife's name when he talks to her, an idiosyncracy easily perceived and parodied by Quarlous. Cokes is described by his tutor as being no better than a child: "He [Cokes] would name you all the *Signes* over, as he went, aloud: and where he spi'd a *Parrot*, or a *Monkey*, there hee was pitch'd, with all the little long-coats about him, male and female; no getting him away!" (I. iv. 113-116). He speaks in the rhythms of childhood; his vocabulary is limited; and his sentence construction is of the simplest kind. His disconnected sentences reveal his inability to think coherently; indeed, as Barish has pointed out, he is given to the kind of tautological explanations one associates with infants learning to think.[6] The lack of wit and discrimination revealed here threaten the stability of the social order. That Littlewit is a responsible official and Cokes is to be married to the only clear-sighted person in the play, merely heighten this sense of an imminent imbalance.

Human degeneration into something akin to bestiality is another cause (or symptom) of moral chaos; and the spectre of human decay is raised by Quarlous when he warns Winwife that

in marrying Purecraft he will be "currying a carkasse, that thou hast bound thy selfe to alive" (I. iii. 69-70). In Act I. scene ii, Littlewit tells Winwife that he (Winwife) will not be able to marry Purecraft because he is not mad enough. In the topsy turvy world which the Fair represents, madness is the "right" (right in the sense of most likely to succeed) course, and significantly, Quarlous gains the widow only when he masquerades as a madman. Finally, the references to noise reinforce the concept of disharmony which results from the dislocation of the natural world order. To live with a Puritan, says Quarlous, is to wilfully subject oneself to auditory tortures: "Dost thou ever thinke to bring thine eares or stomack, to the patience of a drie *grace*, as long as thy Tablecloth? and droan'd out by thy sonne, here, that might be thy father;) till all the meat o' thy board has forgot, it was that day i' the Kitchin?" (I. iii. 87-91).

We move into the world of the Fair with the symbolic action of the Justice disrobing and disguising himself. In this world of misrule, the traditional hierarchies no longer function; and justice, the highest human virtue, is no longer operative because the judge has abandoned the dignity of his office to masquerade as a fool and a madman. Overdo, the guardian of the commonwealth, is doubly ineffective at the Fair. Earlier he had been a "foole in the habite of a Justice;" at the Fair he is twice removed from the true conception of his office, for now he is also the foolish justice in the "habit of a foole" (II. i. 8-9).

The Fair epitomizes a world where the centre has shifted away from the normal representatives of law and order (and so, by implication, from the natural law of Hooker) to a pig-woman who makes her booth the den of thievery, lechery and all other kinds of vices. Ursula's "bower" where you may eat "your Pigge in state" (II. v. 41) has replaced the stately mansions of a prince or a high official. The booth is a place where there is no regard for order. Mistress Overdo protests at the booth: "What Meane you? are you Rebells? Gentlemen? shall I send out a *Serjeant* at *Armes*, or writ o' Rebellion against you? I'le commit you . . . for a Riot, upon my Justice-hood" (IV. iv. 148-151). She is, however, effectively silenced by Wasp's "shite o' your hood" (IV. iv. 152), and the rioters carry on their disorderly revels. The ineffectiveness of authority is further revealed in the attempts of the watch to confine the unruly elements; each time they venture, they are

singularly unsuccessful, and even the men they succeed in confining into the stocks manage to escape. Troubleall wanders all over the scene asking for a warrant; he is indeed a madman if he expects to find moral sanction in the chaos of the Bartholomew Fair.

The cynical exploiters of weaknesses, as well as their victims, are continually associated with the animal world, thus suggesting the collapse of degree. Significantly, all of Jonson's mature comedies, where the positive order is merely implicit and often elusive, rely on animal images to suggest human corruption. Ursula is the "mother o' the Pigs," "some walking Sow of tallow" and a "poore Whale" that Quarlous would "kill . . . and make oyle of" (II. v. 75, 79, 129-130). The stinging, caustic tutor of Cokes is a wasp, just as the psuedo-poet and the seller of ballads is a nightingale. Wasp, indeed, is a parody of the guardian angel or the attendant spirit of Elizabethan theology (the wasp has wings), rescuing (in the case attempting to rescue) human beings from pitfalls and aberrations. His total incapacity to save Cokes from being cheated is a measure of his buzzing inefficiency. Knockem talks of human beings as if they were horses, and this is emblematic of the dehumanization which the world of the Fair involves. Mooncalf is associated with fleas and weasels. Wasp goes looking for Cokes at "*Eagle*, and the blacke *Wolfe*, and the *Bull* with the five legges, and two pizzles . . . And at the *dogges* that daunce the *Morrice*, and the *Hare* o' the *Taber*" (V. iv. 84-87), for he cannot conceive of Cokes consorting with rational human beings.

Ursula's booth, that sooty, sweaty, grimy hole, is the trap that draws the characters so that they may fulfill their animal desires. The booth ministers to all calls of nature, be it hunger, or thirst, or sex, or even the need to relieve oneself. *Volpone* had dramatized a gold-centred world. *Bartholomew Fair* dramatizes a pig-centred world. The pig-woman is the unmoving mover of the Fair — massive, heavy and immobile (she has to be carried around in a chair), she nevertheless attracts all the outsiders to the Fair. Critical attempts to elevate Ursula to some kind of benevolent fertility goddess are surely misguided and do violence to the dramatist's intentions.[7] The modern reader may find her earthiness and verbal energy attractive but Jonson's contemporaries, even while enjoying her lustiness, would never

doubt that her influence on fellow human beings was reprehensible. Even before we see her, we begin to feel her influence. Win's desire to eat the pig brings Littlewit, Purecraft, Busy, Quarlous, and Winwife to the Fair. In fact, Busy arrives at the Fair sniffing after the roast pig "like a hound" (II. ii 80, stage direction). During his preaching, the only time his attention is distracted from his orations is when Dame Purecraft says that Win has fallen "into her fit of longing again." "For more pig?" asks Busy eagerly, "there is no more, is there?" (III. vi. 39-41).

Once every one is assembled at Smithfield, the license of the Fair frees them from hypocritical allegiance to the higher virtues. Win discovers what a dull thing it is to be a virtuous wife, and widow Purecraft reveals that her devotion to religion is merely a cover for her avaricious practices. Before he arrives at the Fair, Quarlous ridicules Winwife's "exercise in widow-hunting (I. ii. 63); in a long speech he points out all the evils of marrying an old woman for her money. Once at the Fair, however, Quarlous decides that he will marry the Puritan widow for precisely the reasons he had presented as being unworthy of a gentleman and a wit to Winwife. "Why should not I marry this sixe thousand pound, now I think on't?" he reflects, "and a good trade too, that shee has beside, ha?" The world of the Fair has revealed to Quarlous his true motives: "It is money that I want, why should I not marry the money, when 'tis offer'd mee?" (V.ii. 80-82).

If on one level the Fair is associated with animals and animal desires (the Fair transforms the erstwhile respectable housewives to bawds), on another level it is flooded with inanimate objects. The wares at various booths, the toys, the puppets all reflect and mirror a debasement of human values and artistic worth. When we first hear of Busy, he is on his way to becoming an animal. Overpowered by the hysteria of inspiration, he "breaks his buttons, and cracks his seames at every saying he sobs out" (I.ii. 72-73), and so reduces himself to the level of the very beast (pig) he craves. We see him finally haranguing the inanimate puppets as if they were live human beings. He has lost his ability to differentiate between the animate and the inanimate; he has lost judgement and reason; and when he is put down in argument by an inanimate puppet, we see most clearly his loss of place and authority as a human being. The confinement of Busy, Wasp

and Overdo in the stocks brings together the two themes of animality and inanimation. Caught in the cruel gaiters of the stocks, man is virtually impotent, as he is also immobile, fixed, and by implication, inanimate.

Men aspire to move up higher in the hierarchy, but because they ignore the co-relation between innerworth and outer standing, they actually descend lower. As we have seen, Busy journeys down the scale of being. He moves from spirituality (albeit hypocritical) to carnal appetite (symbolized by his greedy devouring of the pig) to impotence (symbolized by his confinement in the stocks). At the heart of one of the central actions stands Bartholomew Cokes; the simple-minded creature who has not even learned to think. He identifies himself with the Fair ("I call it my Fayre because of Bartholmew: you know my name is Bartholmew" — I. v. 65-66), and so emphasizes the intimate relationship between an incoherent mind and the disorder of the Fair. As he moves through the Fair, Cokes quickly descends down the chain of being. To be specific, in Act II Cokes loses his change purse, in Act III his major purse, and these incidents represent his inability to handle himself successfully as a social being. In Act IV, he loses his coat, hat, and parcels; he is quickly being divested of the outer signs of manhood. And finally, in Act V, we see him surrounded by puppets, most at ease now, like a child amidst his favourite toys; he has reached his true level. While the descent of most other characters in the play is not so schematic, we do see in them a progressive inability to handle themselves as rational human beings. A man like Littlewit, for instance, may retain what little reason he possesses, but as his intellectual grasp to begin with is so limited and his mind so plodding, the final flowering of his wit is most appropriately his vulgarization of *Hero and Leander* — a travesty of art.

The theatre of action in *Bartholomew Fair* is not only the state or the social order, but also the little world of man. The disorder in the macrocosm is related to (or caused by) the disorder in the microcosm. Thus, the overthrow of justice and authority in the world of *Bartholomew Fair* flows from the overthrow of reason in the mind of man. According to Renaissance ethics and psychology, reason and understanding are the highest faculties man possesses; they lift him to the angelic orders, and their loss implies a degeneration to the level of the animals. A glaring example

of such a degeneration is Busy whose puritan zeal and fanaticism distort reason and warp rational perspectives. Busy in his tempestuous orations is totally incapable of a logical, coherent argument; instead we have a meaningless barrage of repetitive phrases. When he does rationalize, the argument is so specious, and conducted from such false premises that it only reveals his irrationality. "Verily, for the disease of longing," he argues, "It is a disease, a carnall disease, or appetite, incident to women: and as it is carnall, and incident, it is naturall, very naturall" (II. vi. 48-50). All the gimmicks of logical argumentation are employed to prove that a pig may be eaten at the Fair, because "the place is not much, not very much . . . . so it be eaten with a reformed mouth" (I.vi. 72-74). Despite the aura of cogent logic, his words make little sense, as indeed they should not for religious zeal has overthrown his reason. Wasp, too, is incapable of a successful use of language, and his incoherence is symptomatic of an undisciplined mind. "Speech," wrote Jonson in the *Discoveries*, "is the only benefit man hath to expresse his excelencie of mind above other creatures. It is the Instrument of *Society*" (1881-1883). "Language most shewes a man: speake that I may see thee. It springs out of the most retired, the inmost parts of us, and is the Image of the Parent of it, the mind. No glasse renders a mans forme, or likenesse, so true as his speech" (*Discoveries*, 2031-2035).

Alcohol, which blurs reason, often causes a thinking man to behave like an unthinking animal. Stained and sprinkled with a cup or two, Quarlous remembers nothing that he "eyther discourse(s) or doe(s) "—" at those times I forfeit all to forget-fulnesse" (I.iii. 19-20). Mistress Overdo, when in her cups, hàs to be carried around in a chair, and quite unable to participate in human activity, she sits down and goes to sleep (V.iv. 33). Madness symbolizes even a greater alienation from the natural order. In Jonson, madness signifies man's total incapacity to exercise his reason, a capacity which alone distinguishes him from the rest of creation. Madness is the result of discord within man, a lack of harmony within his little world, and as a symbol it subsumes all the acts of irrationality which lead men to jeapordize their place. Thus distorted reason leads eventually to madness. This is dramatized in widow Purecraft's attempts to marry a madman. She even goes to Bedlam inquiring for a gentleman madman. It is thematically appropriate, therefore, that the Justice

should adopt the guise of a madman in the disordered world of the Fair. The dominant symptom of Troubleall's madness is his obsession with the idea of sanctity. Jonson is here exploiting the Elizabethan convention of reason in madness (Shakespeare uses it in *King Lear*), but he ironically underscores the futility of this search by making the judge, whose authority is sought, cloak himself as a madman. Indeed, this opposition of sense and nonsense is one of the major themes of the play, and the booth of the pig-woman is associated not only with animal appetite, but also with unreason. In Act IV, the denizens of Ursula's booth play a game of vapors, "which is nonsense. Everyman to oppose the last man that spoke: whether it concern'd him, or no" (IV.iv. stage direction on p. 97). The senseless quarrelling of the puppets in the last act is but another image of this irrational contradiction.

The game of vapors and the quarrelling of the puppets are instances of discord, and as such they represent the extreme opposite of the musical metaphor employed by the Elizabethans to image the harmony prevailing in an ordered universe. Untuned and jarring noises thus become manifestations of violation of degree. Jonson's Fair is a true Babel, one vast din where people attempt to shout each other down. The scene at the Fair opens with Leatherhead and Trash vying with each other in loud sales talk. Once at the Fair, Busy lifts up his loud pompous voice in orations against the profanities of the Fair. Purecraft tries to silence Busy after Leatherhead has threatened to have him put in the stocks, but Busy continues to thunder. He reaches the peak of his oratory in his denunciation of the puppet play. Leatherhead, as the puppet master, tries to stop him but the sermon rolls on until, finally, the puppet Dionysius' "treble creaking" overcomes Busy's "base" noise. In the loud uproar of the Fair, on one side there are the apocalyptic mouthings of Busy, on the other Overdo's excited denunciations of the Fair, and all around there are the shrill outbursts of the other noisesome characters, culminating finally in the pandemonium of the puppet's quarrel. Grace is the only grace in this clamour; her soft-spoken reasonableness, her reticence and understanding thus fulfil a normative function in the play. She is, however, only a minor character, a woman with little control over her destiny. She cannot balance out the disruptive forces of the Fair, and so it seems that the din of the Fair almost overpowers her.

The movement of Jonson's play is from reason (albeit limited) to bestiality to unreason to a metaphorical identification with the inanimate. The locus of he action first shifts from the social and relatively normal London to the disorder of the Fair. In the Fair itself, we move from Ursula's booth, the symbol of animal appetites, to the puppet booth, where almost nightmarishly the inanimate puppets strike their master and subdue Busy. The final, cumulative impression of the Fair, then, is of an "upside down world."[8]

As I mentioned earlier, after Barber's analysis of Shakespearian comedy, it has become fashionable to invoke the license of comedy, to perceive the inversions within comic plays as temporary releases from the tyranny of law and order — the cathartic saturnalia of festive misrule. In *Bartholomew Fair*, Jonson may, to some extent, have used the image of festive misrule, but he makes little of the therapeutic value of misrule. Helped by the license of the Fair, people do arrive at a deeper knowledge of their true selves, and the denizens of the Fair (those who belong to it) are in some ways the least vicious. But the ending, which in festive comedy is always a reaffirmation of order now strengthened through this lapse into disorder, does not substantiate the curative value of inversions. There is partial recovery in Overdo's realization of his humanity (that he is "but Adam, Flesh and blood" — V.vi. 96-97), but he remains ineffectual as a judge even at the end, silenced as he is by his wife's embarrassing sickness. The characters who flourish are those who deliberately embrace the disorder of the Fair. The natives of the fairground cheat the visitors; Quarlous succeeds by symbolically embracing madness; and Winwife triumphs by relying on a madman's unreasoned and arbitrary decision. With the assistance of Quarlous, Overdo does manage to temporarily quell the emormites of the Fair, though humiliation is the only punishment meted out to the offenders. There may be a promise of order in Overdo's invitation to all the characters to join the festivities at his house. However, at the close of the play, there is no strong sense of order emerging from the disorder of the Fair: we have only moved away from chaos; we have not conquered it. There is no getting away from the feeling that the world of Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* is an unredeemed world which cannot be set right by simple festive formulas, and that we must see the disorder not as a festive

inversion but as a foreboding perversion. Perhaps, no truly satiric (or ironic) comedy can successfully incorporate (without seriously altering it) the formula of festive misrule.

And yet, though Jonson is preoccupied with the inversions, the play does demonstrate a firm sense of the cosmological order as it was envisaged in the Great Chain of Being. All notions of value derive from or are closely related to the inherited framework of ideas. The metaphysical uncertainty which beset the seventeenth-century and gradually demolished all notions of an ordered cosmos is absent from Jonson's dramatic work. The contrast with the modern artist most fully illuminates Jonson's position. The lack of any visible pattern in the twentieth-century experience of life has forced some artists either to deliberately resurrect (even when they and their readers can no longer believe in them) older myths, or to fashion new ones, and thereby lend a temporary and precarious order to a disordered universe. Other artists have felt that only chance art (that is, unpatterned, unstructured art) is, if they value their integrity as artists, the appropriate response to the chaos of modern life. Thus Leonard B. Meyer says that we may be at the end of an era — a point where "teleological art" (painting with design, literature with plot and character) is giving way to "antiteleological" art. "For these radical empiricists, *the Renaissance is over.*"[9] Jonson's art stands at the other pole from any such movement, for even though disintegration of an older cosmology had set in while Jonson was still writing, the Renaissance in this sense was never over for him.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. See Earnest Cassirer, ed. *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1942); Hardin Craig, *The Enchanted Glass: The Elizabethan Mind in Literature* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1936); Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (Camb.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1936); and E.M.W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (New York: Macmillan, 1944).

2. C. S. Lewis, The Discarded Image: *An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (Camb.; Camb. Univ. Press, 1964).

3. See Alvin J. Kernan's excellent introduction to *Ben Jonson: Volpone* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1962). Other critics who have made references to these traditional ideas in Jonsonian comedy include Jackson I. Cope, *"Bartholomew Fair* as Blasphemy," *RenD*, vol 8 (1965), pp. 127-152; Alan C. Dessen, *Jonson's Moral Comedy*," (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1971); C. G. Thayer, *Ben Jonson: Studies in the Plays* (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1963); and Eugene M. Waith, "Things as They Are and the World of Absolutes," Elizabethan Theatre IV, ed. G. R. Hibbard (Conn.: Shoestring Press, 1974).

4. All references to the text are from the eleven volume edition of Ben Jonson's works by C. H. Herford and Percy and Evelyn Simpson, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925-1952).

5. C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and its Relation to Social Custom* (Princeton; Princeton Univ. Press, 1965).

The critical opinion on this issue is, admittedly, divergent. Among those who regard the play as a comedy distinguished by a mellow, friendly tone are E. A. Horsman ed., *Bartholomew Fair* (London: Methuen, 1960), p. xiii; M. C. Bradbrook, *The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy* (Berkley: Univ. of California Press, 1956), p. 146; and Jonas A. Barish, *Ben Jonson and the Language of Prose Comedy* (Camb., Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1960), pp. 222, 225. However, Dessen, *Jonson's Moral Comedy*, regards the play as a dark vision of "enormities" which can no longer be controlled by justice, religion, or education (p. 148). Cope "*Bartholomew Fair* as Blasphemy") speaks of the "seething chaos of a fair," but argues that Jonson holds out hope that salvation can be obtained through a concord of flesh and blood living together. Joel H. Kaplan, "Dramatic and Moral Energy in Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*," *RenD*, n.s. vol. 3 (Ill.: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1970), pp. 137-156, concedes the corruption and depravity of Smithfield, but argues that these are part of an overall process of revitalization. J. A. Bryant's interpretation in *The Compassionate Satirist: Ben Jonson and His Imperfect World* (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1972), p. 135 is similar. According to him, given the corruption of the fair, Jonson presents an imperfect world, but, nevertheless, a world more conducive to faith and hope than to despair.

6. Barish, *The Language of Prose Comedy*, p. 227.

7. Thayer writes of Ursula: "She seems to be earth itself, the Great Mother, Demeter, and Eve, a great Goddess" (p. 133). While Bryant writes that she is "the supreme bawd, mother and queen, friend to most and enemy only of those who like the Downrights and Surlys of Jonson's other plays persist in a denial of their involvement in her humanity" (p. 141), not every critic views Ursula so sympathetically. Cope, for instance, sees her as "the very champion of discord" (pp. 143-146). However, all attest to her power. Thus, in his introduction to the play, Eugene M. Waith writes: "No comedy of Jonson's exudes more of the 'life force' which Bernard Shaw so admired. Old Ursula . . . .is the perfect emblem of this force" (*Ben Jonson: Bartholomew Fair*, New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1963, p. 4). Perhaps, as Bryant admits, it is hard to label Ursula, and as in the case of Falstaff, a disturbing ambiguity remains (fn. 15, p. 189).

8. Ian Donaldson, *The World Upside Down: Comedy from Jonson to* Fielding (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), analyzes the upside down world of Jonson's *Epicoene* and *Bartholomew Fair*.

9. Leonard B. Meyer, "The End of the Renaissance?" *The Hudson Review*, 16 (1963), p. 186.

THE PLAYS OF OTWAY: A BIO-CRITICAL APPROACH

BHUPENDRA NATH SEAL

IN the Restoration age distinguished actors and actresses made their debut on the English stage; and Mrs. Elizabeth Barry was the first who won celebrity both for her superior acting and charm. Apart from the fact that Mrs. Barry took part in the female roles in most of Otway's plays, she had definitely a significant influence on 'poor' Otway's brief but effective dramatic career. A bio-critical approach is not, of course, indispensable for an interpretative study of any great writer; and we cannot but agree with T. S. Eliot when he says, "The more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates."[1] Yet it is also true that we can appreciate an author's works more comprehensively if we seek to interpure tthem with reference o his life and psychology. The use of biographical knowledge seems to be specially relevant for the interpretation and appreciation of Otway's works. These words of David Daiches may sum up our critical method: "For interpretation if not assessment of a work biographical knowledge is often useful and sometimes most valuable."[2]

Before acting in Otway's tragedies Mrs. Barry had already appeared in the Earl of Orrery's play, *Mustapha*. But she attained her fame when she succeeded in the small role of Draxilla, a character in Otway's first play, *Alcibiades*. The play was produced at the Duke's theatre at Dorset Garden in September, 1675. Otway was already attracted to Mrs. Barry in London where he was trying to build his career as an actor. But it was from the time of the performance of *Alcibiades* that his passion for Mrs. Barry deepened. As J. C. Ghosh points out: "With the performance of his first play, *Alcibiades*, at the Duke's Theatre in 1675, is connected the patretic story of Otway's unrealized passion for Mrs. Elizabeth Barry who played the part of Draxilla in it."[3] The wanton actress swayed more to John Wilmot, the second Earl of Rochester, and became his mistress. For seven long years Otway endured the pain; and his passion consumed him bit by bit. Throughout these years, Mrs. Barry was the author's idol

both in life and in drama. He desired her awake and asleep. Six love-letters of Otway, addressed to Mrs. Barry, as his 'tyrant', were published posthumously in a collection. These letters are the 'keys', with which Otway unlocked his heart. It would be relevant here to quote portions from his first letter to his 'tyrant' which, like all the other letters, contains his heart-wringing cry:

> I Endure too much Torment to be silent, and have endur'd it too long not to make the severest Complaint. I love you, I dote on you; Desire makes me mad, when I am near you, and Despair, when I am from you. Sure, of all Miseries, Love is to me the most intolerable: it haunts me in my Sleep, perplexes me when waking; every melancholy Thought makes my Fears more powerful, and every delightful one makes my Wishes more unruly. In all other Uneasie Chances of a Man's Life, there is an immediate Recourse to some kind of Succour or another; in Wants we apply ourselves to our Friends, in Sickness to Physicians; but love, the sum, the total of all Misfortunes, must be endured with Silence.... You only can, with that healing Cordial, Love, asswage and calm my Torments; pity the Man then that would be proud to dye for you, and cannot live without you. (Letter I).

All these love-letters help us to plumb the depths of Otway's attachment. The injury sustained by him was too deep to be ever calmed. This tragic experience remained with him for the rest of his life as a persistent awareness. It seems probable that this experience was at the root of his whole conception and coloured his tragic vision. Dr. Johnson, taking possibly the cue for his phrase from Sidney, has rightly said: "Otway looked at his own breast and wrote". The theme of Otway's tragedies is rooted in love; and his love-letters to Mrs. Barry tend to reveal the real motive forces behind his creations.

As we read Otway's love-letters we get a clue to the transformation of his love theme as introduced in the first tragedy *Alcibiades* and the succeeding tragedies: *Don Carlos, The Orphan* and *Venice Preserved*. The later tragedies are more Otwavian in the sense that they recapture the note of suffering as expressed in the letters. In *Alcibiades* Otway extols the noble love of

Timandra which is contrasted with the lustful jealousy of the Queen. Here the development of the plot hinges on the interaction between Timandra's noble love for Alcibiades and the Queen's lustful passion for him. In no way can we link the passion of Alcibiades in this tragedy with Otway's agonizing confessions expressed in the love-letters.

In the next tragedy, *Don Carlos*, the transformation of Otway's love-theme is conspicuous. The passionate utterances of Carlos seem to have their roots in Otway's love-hungry soul. Robbed of his own lady, who belonged to the second Earl of Rochester, Otway found in the life of Don Carlos a congenial subject. In this play Carlos' own father, the King of Spain, destroys all hopes of Carlos by marrying the same woman who was Carlos's fiancée. Like Otway Carlos is an ardent lover, generous and impulsive; and his words often breathe the 'poor' author's own sentiments. We are inclined to say that Otway certainly looked to his heart when he made Carlos confess to the Queen:

> Ah can your cruel heart so soon resign
> All sense of these sad sufferings of mine?
> To your more just remembrance, if you can,
> Recall how fate seem'd kindly to ordain,
> That once you should be mine; which I believ'd,
> Though now, alas! I find I was deceiv'd.
> (Act II, i, 231-236)

Otway's sense of deprivation of love was too keen in him as the cruel actress became the mistress of the Earl of Rochester. He wrote in his letter:

> I lov'd you early; and no sooner had I beheld that soft bewitching Face of yours, but I felt in my heart the very Foundation of my Peace give way: but when you became another's I must confess that I did then rebel.
> (Letter 1)

The Queen as she appears in Otway's tragedy is more a typical Otwavian heroine than a character of Saint-Réal to whom Otway was indebted for his story of *Don Carlos*. To any reader of the love-letters the Queen as she is presented in this tragedy seems

to replace the woman for whom the author waited in vain. So in the cry of Carlos Otway's own voice is heard:

> Stay, Madam, though you nothing more can give,
> Than just enough to keep a wretch alive,
> At least remember how I've lov'd.
> (Act II, i, 281-283)

Carlos has seen love's crooked ways. In this he is none but the prototype of Otway who was a sad victim of his love for the cruel actress.

> Thus long I wander'd in Loves crooked way,
> By hope's deluding Meteor, led astray
> For e're I've half the dang'rous desert crost,
> The glimm'ring light's gone out, and I am lost.
> (Act III, i, 515-518)

Of all Otway's heroes we particularly think of Carlos whose fate as a lover is similar to that of Otway. Otway's peace also was ruined as his woman was a 'rival's possession'.

Mrs. Barry influenced Otway both for evil and for good. She killed his spirit and caused his tragic waste. But she made him an artist by stirring his creative urge. The comment of Bonamy Dobree on the Otway-Barry relation also bears this out: "Unable or unwilling to forbid approaches, she (Mrs. Barry) kept the unfortunate Otway in a state of suspense which drove him to distraction. This was the central experience which determined his outlook and his mentality; it made him the poet he was, though in destroying the man it may have stifled a still greater poet."[4] Otway found in her his inspiration for Monimia (*The Orphan*) and Belvidera (*Venice Preserved*). The unparalleled pathetic power, as seen in the portrayal of these two female characters, sprang indeed from his suffering soul. Mrs. Barry played these two roles and her superb acting largely contributed to her fame. The words of Castalio in *The Orphan*, irrespective of the context, invite an enquiry into the psychology of Otway who was deceived by the frail actress. In fact both Castalio and Polydore are prototypes of Otway. Castalio, locked out on the marriage night, falls a victim to Polydore's trick and is unable to enter into

Monimia's chamber. He thinks Monimia frail and hurls insults on womankind, 'the inconstant sex', in a Hamlet-like vein of misogyny:

> Woman, the Fountain of all Humane Frailty!
> What mighty Ills have not been done by Woman!
> Who was't betrayed the Capitol? A Woman,
> Who lost Mark Anthony the World? A Woman.
> Who was the cause of a long ten years War,
> And laid at last Old-Troy in Ashes? Woman.
> Destructive, damnable, deceitful Woman!
>
> (Act III, i, 580-586)

Otway was himself a victim of woman's frailty. He wrote in his letter how he was disappointed when the heartless actress did not keep her appointment. The following lines of his love-letter not only echo the sentiments of Castalio but also explain the theme as introduced in the play. The frail actress's breach of trust led him to curse womankind:

> You were pleased to send me word you would meet me in the Mall this Evening, and give me further satisfaction in the Matter you were so unkind to charge me with: I was there, but found you not; and therefore beg of you, as you ever would wish your self to be eased of the highest Torment it were possible for your Nature to be sensible of, to let me see you some time tomorrow, and send me word, by this Bearer, where, and at what Hour, you will be so just as either to acquit or condemn me; that I may, hereafter, for your sake, either bless all your bewitching Sex, or as often as I henceforth think of you, curse Womankind for ever.
>
> (Letter VI)

Polydore (in *The Orphan*) too is no other than Otway when he charges Monimia of vanity.

> Intolerable Vanity! Your Sex
> Was never in the right; y're alwayes false,
> Or silly.
>
> (Act I, i, 340-342)

The thought of the vanity of woman was constantly in Otway's mind. He wrote in his letter:

> Oh, thou Tormenter! Could I think it were Jealousie, how should I humble my self to be justify'd, but I cannot bear the thought of being made a Property either of another Man's good Fortune or the Vanity of a Woman that designs nothing but to plague me.
>
> (Letter V)

Otway's love-letter also explains Polydore's sudden rise to violence — an aspect of his character which is not satisfactorily explained by any earlier critic. It is actually love that makes Polydore violent. This feeling as expressed in Otway's letter:

> I have consulted too my very self, and find how careless Nature was in framing me; seasoned me hastily with all the most violent Inclinations and Desires . . . .
>
> (Letter II)

It would be relevant here to relate a few more lines of his letter to this context:

> Every melancholy Thought makes my Fears more powerful; and every delightful one makes my Wishes more unruly . . . . Generally with Wine or Conversation I diverted or appeas'd the Daemon that possess'd me.
>
> (Letter I)

(Incidentally it may be pointed out that Otway's portrayal of Polydore's violent personality is correct. Such violence in the behaviour of lovers has been depicted by the modern psychological novelist D. H. Lawrence. Otway's concentration on the psychological states of his lover shows his modernity. Otway was himself a passionate lover; his 'violent inclinations and desires' were all caused by his unrealized passion).

Venice Preserved is also full of distinct echoes that are enriched by our memory of Otway's love-letters. Out of Otway's suffering soul is created lovely Belvidera; and Jaffeir too is very much like the sensitive author who bore the pangs of fruitless courtship

for seven long years. Unable to find peace in life Otway sought it vicariously in drama. Commenting on the pathetic story of Otway's own life, Louis I. Bredvold says: "His (Otway's) greater feminine characters, which reveal such sensitive understanding, were probably influenced to some extent by his idealization of the actress Mrs. Barry, whom he loved hopelessly, and who acted in his plays with a tenderness she scorned to bestow upon the author in real life."[5] What heart-rending sorrows have been expressed in the following lines of his letter:

> I cannot so much as look on you without Confusion; Wishes and Fears rise up in War within me, and work a curs'd Distraction through my Soul, that must, I am sure, in time, have wretched Consequences: You only can, with that healing Cordial, Love, asswage and calm my Torments.
>
> (Letter I)

Without reference to any context these words could well be said by Jaffeir to Belvidera in whom Otway's 'tyrant' has been idealized. The following utterance of Jaffeir to Belvidera at once reminds us of the above lines of Otway's letter:

> Oh Belvidera! I'm the wretchedst creature
> E'r crawl'd on earth; now if thou hast Vertue, help me,
> Take me into thy Armes, and speak the words of peace
> To my divided Soul, that wars within me,
> And raises every Sense to my confusion;
> By Heav'n I am tottering on the very brink
> Of Peace; and thou art all the hold I've left.
>
> (Act IV, i, 403-409)

Jaffeir at the end of the play is seen to break his sacred oath to overthrow the Senators. He betrays the fellow conspirators, even his dear friend, Priuli. Persuaded by Belvidera he discloses to the Senate the cospiracy against the State. Jaffeir does this only to please Belvidera. Jaffeir, however, hesitates before betraying his 'truth, virtue, constancy and friends'. But he completely surrenders to love as Belvidera urges him.

> Belvidera: Hast thou a friend more dear than Belvidera?

Jaffeir: No; th'art my Soul it self; wealth, friendship, honour,
All present joys, and earnest of all future,
Are summ'd up in thee.
(Act IV, i, 79-82)

It is highly significant that the entire theme of *Venice Preserved* seems to be based on the following lines of Otway's letter, written to Mrs. Barry. These lines contain the thematic creed illustrated in the play:

> I love you with that tenderness of Spirit, that purity of Truth, and that sincerity of Heart, that I could sacrifice the nearest Friends or Interests I have on Earth, barely but to please you.
>
> (Letter I)

After reading these lines of Otway's letter we are at once led to think of Jaffeir, who has a smack of Otway, as he renounces all his friends and interests on earth only to please Belvidera. Rightly has Roden Noel thought of Otway one with his characters: "The character of Castalio is similar to that of Jaffeir, Carlos and of Otway himself, judging from what we know of his relations with Mrs. Barry."[6] Otway, like his heroes, loved not wisely but too well. The following words of Don Carlos, spoken of the Queen, seem to echo the voice of Otway whose destiny was ruled by Mrs. Barry:

> She is the star that rules my destiny.[7]
>
> (Act IV, i, 530)

Thus biographical history is of great significance for the interpretation and assessment of Otway's plays. The love-letters, which can be described in Goethe's phrase as 'fragments of a great confession', explain Otway's motives in character creations. The biographical truths that they contain cohere harmoniously with the thematic creed of his tragedies. Otway was young when he wrote the tragedies. He also died very young. But the memory of his tragic sufferings flashed between the two levels of his mind and created haunting undertones as he wrote. We are naturally

reminded of the words of F. L. Lucas: "Tragedy, then, is simply one fruit of the human instinct to tell stories, to reproduce and recast experience. And since experience is often sad, so are its copies."[8] It can therefore be claimed that the bio-critical approach, which has been hitherto unknown in connexion with Otway, can be a successful attempt to evaluate his dramatic art. It is true that art is not a mere replica of personal experience. But it is, no doubt, related to the 'luminous halo' that surrounds the dramatist from the beginning of his creative consciousness to the end.

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SHERIDAN'S PRESENTATION OF FAULKLAND

B. S. PATHANIA

SPEAKING of *The Rivals*, several critics refer to Sheridan's surrender to the popular taste of his day for so-called sentimental comedy which (as, for example, Richard Steele's *The Conscious Lovers* or William Whitehead's *The School for Lovers*) portrayed virtuous characters whose distresses were productive of heartstirring emotions and whose conduct was supposed to be edifying. While they acknowledge that the Lydia-Jack plot of *The Rivals* is quite gay and unsentimental, they point out that the Julia-Faulkland story makes the play open to charges of sentimentalism. Bernbaum,[1] for example, remarks that Julia, instead of protesting against Faulkland's sentimental attitude to life, admires him for his tenderness and reforms him by her gentleness. Thorndike points out that "the emotional refinements of Faulkland and Julia are quite in the style of sentimental drama and equally dull".[2] Professor Kaul observes that "the problem of sentimentality looms large within the play, in the shape of Julia and her lover, Faulkland".[3] Nettleton[4] and Boas[5] also seem to feel that Sheridan was bowing to the taste of his day for sentimental comedy. The fact, however, is that the Julia-Faulkland situation is used for laughter; it enhances rather than lessens the total anti-sentimental effect of the play. This is particularly clear from Sheridan's presentation of Faulkland in whom a familiar theatrical type has been used to achieve a different tone.

The contemporary periodicals commented upon the sentimentalism of Faulkland and Julia. *The Town and Country Magazine* (18 January 1775) called them "the most *outré* sentimental ones that ever appeared upon the stage".[6] According to John Bernard,[7] Sheridan intended these characters to soothe the sentimentalists and they were received in a most favourable manner. The critic writing for the *Morning Chronicle* (27 January 1775) admired Faulkland's "exquisite refinement in his disposition" and Julia's "noble simplicity, tenderness, and candour".[8] He seems to have thought that Sheridan meant the scenes between these lovers to be taken seriously. As far as I know, Sheridan has not

divulged his intention in presenting these characters who are certainly sentimental. But it is not difficult to see that it is satirical and that Faulkland in particular is made a figure of fun. This reveals Sheridan's impatience with the traditional sentimental hero, excessively grave and highly moral, like Bevil Jr. in *The Conscious Lovers* or Sir John Dorilant in *The School for Lovers*.

The Lydia Julia dialogue in Act I, Scene ii tends to suggest that Julia is attached to Faulkland mainly because he once rescued her from drowning. This gratitude seems to have blinded her to his faults. Her generous apology for his faults is too tortuous to be convincing: "Unused to the fopperies of love, he is negligent of the little duties expected from a lover — but being unhackneyed in the passion, his affection is ardent and sincere. . . . Yet, though his pride calls for this full return, his humility makes him undervalue those qualities in him, which would entitle him to it; and not feeling why he should be loved to the degree he wishes, he still suspects that he is not loved enough. . . ." Lydia really fails to understand how Julia can continue being a slave to one ever plagued with causeless jealousy.

In Act II, Scene i, one cannot help laughing at Faulkland's patently absurd apprehension that some shower of rain, some rude blast of wind, the heat of the noon, or the evening dews could endanger Julia's life. When he learns that she is quite well and already in Bath, he exclaims, ". . . nothing on earth can give me a moment's uneasiness" (25). But soon there is considerable fun at his expense. He becomes increasingly ridiculous in his mounting unease and dismay at Acres' description of Julia's behaviour in the country — her high spirits, gay singing and country dancing. He thinks of male lewdness lurking behind innocent pleasures (Sheridan has given here a satirical portrait of the Rake's antithesis). As Faulkland leaves after protesting against Julia's "violent, robust, unfeeling health" (27), Jack Absolute ironically quotes "nothing on earth could give him a moment's uneasiness". Faulkland's absurd jealousy stands out in sharp relief against the attitude of Jack and Acres.

In an absurdly sentimental soliloquy (III, ii) Faulkland admits that he is always "ungenerously fretful and madly capricious" (45). What makes him unhappy is his suspicion that Julia has not been evidently unhappy during his short absence. This is confirmed soon after he meets her. "For such is my temper, Julia, that I

should regard every mirthful moment in your absence as a treason to constancy: the mutual tear that steals down the cheek of parting lovers is a compact that no smile shall live there till they meet again" (46). But such utterances have a satirical or comic intent; they become a burlesque of the "sentiment". Faulkland is only a wet blanket, ridiculous in his anxiety to be assured that Julia sang without mirth, and that she thought of Faulkland while dancing. Julia herself seems to find his fretful temper unbearable (47). As she makes her tearful exit, Faulkland exclaims, "... when I distress her so again, may I lose her for ever! and be linked instead to some antique virago, whose gnawing passions, and long hoarded spleen, shall make me curse my folly half the day and all the night" (49).

When Faulkland tells Jack (IV, iii) that he longs to be reconciled to Julia whom he has offended by his bad temper, he replies, "By heavens! Faulkland, you don't deserve her" (78). But when she sends Faulkland a letter, asking him to see her immediately, he scents some kind of indelicacy in her haste to forgive him. "Women", says he, "should never sue for reconciliation: that should always come from *us*" (79). Jack justly reproaches him as "a captious sceptic in love, a slave to fretfulness and whim", and adds that he "is a subject more fit for ridicule than compassion" (79). This is indeed a most appropriate observation. The moral and refined heroes of sentimental comedy arouse our compassion in their sorrow. Faulkland's distress, however, is funny; it is "a subject more fit for ridicule than compassion". His misery is shown as nothing more than a monstrous self-indulgence of a man "determined on disappointment, and enamoured with suspicion".[10]

Faulkland plans an entirely unnecessary test of Julia's sincerity. He speaks to her (V, i) of an imaginary misfortune, obliging him to flee from England. Convinced of her total devotion to him, he feels sorry for the useless device to throw away all his doubts. But she objects to this shabby trick with fully justified firmness. Before leaving she tells him how his bad temper has so far prevented the performance of their solemn engagement. Much like Honeywood in Goldsmith's *The Good-Natur'd Man*, Faulkland curses his stupidity which has nearly deprived him for ever of his love: "She's gone! — for ever! ... O fool! — dolt! — barbarian!" (83). He may thank his lucky stars he is finally

forgiven by Julia with her characteristic generosity.

It is thus clear that in Faulkland Sheridan has rather made the sentimental hero an object of ridicule than admiration. In an interesting article Bloch[11] draws attention to similar attempts made before Faulkland appeared on the stage. Few playwrights, however, possess Sheridan's ability to treat a sentimentalist like Faulkland in a spirit of genuine comedy. It is well to remember what Sir Nigel Playfair wrote in a letter to *Times Literary Supplement* (10 January 1929): "In my production of a year or two ago Faulkland, as played by Mr. Claude Rains, uncut, not only was acclaimed by practically every critic as the outstanding feature of the performance, but his scenes drew from the audience such laughter as honestly I have seldom heard in the theatre". In all probability, this is just what Sheridan intended. In his Prologue, he defies the authority of the sentimental Muse; in Faulkland, he ridicules her absurdities.

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THE ENDING OF *GREAT EXPECTATIONS*

AMRITJIT SINGH

The ending of *Great Expectations* has been a matter of controversy since the first serialized publication of the novel in Dickens' *All the Year Round* (1860-61). It is widely known that before the last instalment of the novel was sent to the press, Dickens rewrote the ending, presumably at the instance of his friend, Edward Bulwer Lytton. In the original ending, Pip and Estella meet accidentally in Piccadilly, where Pip is taking a walk with the young Pip, the child of Joe and Biddy, and Estella is passing by in her carriage. Pip has been visiting with Joe and Biddy, but is otherwise a partner in Herbert's business firm in the East. Estella has since married a Shropshire doctor, who had treated her first husband, Drummle, in his last illness. She has apparently been mellowed by experience, particularly by her unhappy married life with Drummle. The following extract gives the last few lines of the novel as originally planned by Dickens:

> . . . the lady and I looked sadly enough on one another. "I am greatly changed, I know; but I thought you would like to shake hands with Estella too, Pip. Lift up that pretty child and let me kiss it!" (She supposed the child, I think, to be my child.) I was very glad afterwards to have had the interview; for, in her face and in her voice, and in her touch, she gave me the assurance, that suffering had been stronger than Miss Havisham's teaching, and given her a heart to understand what my heart used to be.[1]

In the changed ending, Estella having been brutally treated by Drummle and a widow, meets Pip coincidentally in the "cleared space" where Satis House used to stand. "The freshness of her beauty was indeed gone, but its indescribable majesty and its indescribable charm remained" (p. 491). In the "moon-blanch'd" night, Estella talks about her plans to let Satis House grounds "be built on," and confides to Pip that her suffering has "taught me to understand what your heart used to be." She expects Pip

to allow them to "continue friends apart." Pip, however, concludes that "in all the broad expanse of tranquil light they [the evening mists] showed to me, I saw no shadow of another parting from her" (p. 493).

Setting other matters aside for the moment, we might agree that both the endings are quite Dickensian. It is clear that in opening the ending to a possibility of marriage between Pip and Estella, Dickens did not resort to "the ready-mades and reach-me-downs of the ragshop in which Romance keeps its stock of 'happy endings' to misfit all stories."[2] This is not to suggest that Dickens cannot be accused of giving in to the popular convention of "marriage-bells" at the end of his stories. Many of his novels, including *David Copperfield* and *Bleak House*, conjure the illusory phantom of "And they lived happily ever after" at the end. But it seems very unlikely that Dickens would have changed the ending of his most consciously organized novel at the mere suggestion of a friend, or as a concession to his readers.[3] Bernard Shaw, who published *Great Expectations* in 1937 in a limited edition with the original ending and a long preface, agrees that "Dickens must have felt there was something wrong with this [the original] ending, and Bulwer's objection confirmed his doubt."[4] Thus, the question to decide is not which of these two endings is more the product of Dickens' natural genius, but, instead, to see and decide for ourselves which of the endings fits better with the mood and intention of what has gone before in *Great Expectations*.

The first Dickens critic to discuss the question was Dickens' friend and biographer, John Forster. He regretted that Dickens had changed the original ending at Bulwer's suggestion, and found the first ending "more consistent with the drift, as well as natural working out, of the tale."[5] Since then and more particularly since the publication of Shaw's essay, critical opinion has so predominantly been in favour of the original ending that one might easily be bullied into agreement. Different critics have argued along different lines to show how the original ending was more in keeping with the general mood and tone of the book. But having looked through a greater part of critical writing on the subject, I cannot help feeling that if the fact that Dickens first wrote the book with a different ending had been withheld from public notice, much of the ink spilt on this controversy would have been

saved for another use. Very few people seem to grudge the conventional "happy" endings in other Dickens novels; but when they come to *Great Expectations,* they feel that by reverting (as they see it) to the accepted convention, Dickens has missed his *one* chance of being an artist, with an almost modern sense of structure and design. They have based their claims for Dickens on many readings — and more misreadings — of the book.

In this essay, for the sake of convenience and clarity, we will first consider Bernard Shaw *vis-à-vis* the ending of *Great Expectations* before dealing with other "voices" on the subject. In fact, Shaw anticipated many of the later critics, and in answering his criticism, we would have dealt with a considerable part of the available critical opinion on the subject.

Bernard Shaw — in his Shavian manner — makes the sixteen-page preface to his edition of *Great Expectations* an excuse for talking about Dickens in general and his other books. It is no surprise then that *Great Expectations* takes only about one-third of his essay. Shaw regards *Great Expectations* as a very serious book, "all-of-one piece and consistently truthful," quite unlike Dickens' early work. He finds Pip's world "a melancholy place, and his conduct, good or bad, always hopeless." Unfortunately, "Dickens wrote two endings, and made a mess of both." In fact, apart from its ending, Shaw believes the story of *Great Expectations* to be "the most compactly perfect" of Dickens' novels. But it is the "manufactured" happy ending — smacking of Dickens' early works — that upsets Shaw more. Shaw thinks that in rewriting the ending, Dickens gave a fine artistic touch of substituting "a perfectly congruous and beautifully touching scene and hour and atmosphere" for the Piccadilly scene in the first ending. Dickens also gained by abolishing the Shropshire doctor and leaving out the little boy. But he ruined the whole thing by presenting Pip and Estella as reunited lovers. "It is too serious a book to be a trivially happy one. Its beginning is unhappy; its middle is unhappy; and the conventional happy ending is an outrage on it." It also appears that Shaw does not really grudge Pip a possibility of happiness, but for him "the notion that he could ever have been happy with Estella: indeed that anyone could ever have been happy with Estella, is positively unpleasant." If Pip, after meeting with Estella, Shaw continues "had said, 'Since that parting I have been able to think of her without the

old unhappiness, but I have never tried to see her again, and I know I never shall,' he would have been left with at least the prospect of a bearable life."

Shaw, it seems, here judges Dickens by the latter-day standards of realism, and expects the psychology of events and characters in a work of fiction to be strictly in consonance with the actual circumstances of human life. For him, the first ending, in which Estella "just says how d'y'do to Pip and kisses the little boy before they both pass out of one another's lives" is quite "*true to nature*" (italics mine), even though marred by Pip's pious hope that suffering has given Estella a heart to understand "what my heart used to be." To Shaw, it does not greatly matter whether Shakespeare's Benedick and Beatrice can look forward to "a very delightful union," because they have none of 'the *reality* of Pip and Estella" (italics mine). But if we carry further the implications of such an approach to *Great Expectations*, the book will soon start falling apart. For example, it is quite incredible, by the criteria of psychological realism, that "Estella turns out exactly as Miss Havisham intended, and then blames her patron for her lack of feeling."[6] The fact remains that *Great Expectations* is not as "all-of-one piece and consistently truthful" as Shaw and other critics have made it out to be. It is true that Dickens has managed to impose a structural design over the incredible range of scene and motif that the book represents. John H. Hagan has persuasively demonstrated the symmetry of this design; not only are the book's three large sections of virtually equal length, but also each subdivision in the first stage of Pip's expectations is balanced, fulfilled and completed by the corresponding section in the third stage.[7] Like other serialized novels by Dickens, *Great Expectations* grew in writing beyond its first conception. It is also probably true, as Humphrey House has said, that "this novel never became rank, it never got out of hand."[8] Yet, the unrealized character of Orlick, the melodramatic scenes like Pip's getting into and out of Orlick's trap, the death struggle in the Thames River between Magwitch and Compeyson, or the over-subtle irony by which Estella is shown to be Magwitch's daughter, must be counted as glaring exceptions to the otherwise "reminiscent, psychologically inquiring, morally penetrating tone"[9] of the book. Of course, one expects the interest of most readers today to centre on the human and psychological implications of Pip's progress

towards self-realization. But in following the tale, we tend to put our "imaginative faith" in the book's not so few unlikely scenes and characters. Like many individual plays of Shakespeare, *Great Expectations* creates its own conventions as it develops, and in accepting them, we escape seeing the part for the whole. *Great Expectations* therefore might be read consistently as a fairy tale or a moral fable, but attempts to read it as a work of psychological realism are likely to disappoint us. Even as a kind of moral fable, it cannot be read as merely a satire on contemporary society. As R. George Thomas points out, the novelist

> appears to have taken great pains to remove his story from the area of contemporary observation — if not of possible living memory — and so to concentrate any social criticism implicit in his tale against the more timeless defects in human society, which arise when moral values and social aspirations have gone astray.[10]

Shaw's comment on the character of Estella again betrays the fallacious nature of his argument against the changed ending of *Great Expectations*. Nobody need quarrel with Shaw's description of Estella as "a born tormentor" — before she is transformed by her sad experiences. Only Shaw cannot accept what he calls the "final sugary suggestion of Estella redeemed by Bentley's thrashings and waste of her money." In fact, Shaw's reading of Estella's character and its link with his defence of Dickens' first ending are interestingly paralleled by his own handling (and its defence) of the triangle situation in *Pygmalion*. At the end of the Shaw play, Eliza, fully in control of her transformed self, does not marry her "creator," Professor Higgins, but Mr. Frederick Eynsford Hill, a young gentleman of no description, and even less money. Eliza declares that if "he's [Mr. Hill] weak and poor and wants me, may be he'd make me happier than my betters that bully me and don't want me."[11] Shaw could not agree with her more, and defended his "true sequel" as "patent to anyone with a sense of human nature in general, and of feminine instinct in particular."[12] He cannot expect Professor Higgins to do better than always "treat a duchess as if she was a flower girl."[13] Shaw uses similar standards of "human nature" in determining why

Estella will never be anything other than "a born tormentor." But there is an important difference between Higgins and Estella. Higgins is portrayed as aloof, eccentric, academic, but his whimsicality, unlike, say Miss Havisham's, has not grown out of any tragic circumstances. His language laboratory is just the place where he belongs. In creating a lady out of the raw materials that is Eliza, he has been surprised not only by Eliza's human awakening, but also by his own need to confess, "And I have grown accustomed to your voice and appearance. I like them rather.[14] But Pygmalion's falling in love with his Galatea is not an experience in any sense paralleled by the depth and proportion of Estella's discovery, through pain and suffering, that she has a heart that can feel and sympathise. In fact, later in his epilogue to *Pygmalion*, Shaw shows his awareness of another possibility with regard to Higgins and Eliza which has important bearings on the Estella case. In describing the life at 27A Wimpole Street, after Eliza and her husband come to live there, Bernard Shaw has the following to say:

> He [Higgins] storms and bullies and derides: but she stands up to him so ruthlessly that the Colonel has to ask her from time to time to be kinder to Higgins; and it is the only request of his that brings a mulish expression into her face. Nothing but some emergency or calamity great enough to break down all likes and dislikes, and throw them both back to their common humanity . . . will ever alter this.[15]

Thus, once we grant the convention that fictional characters can develop or change under the pressure of "some emergency or calamity," the transformed, mellowed Estella becomes as acceptable a "reality" as Estella the tormentor.

This does not, however, exhaust the Shavian appreciation of *Great Expectations* and its ending. The most important point in Shaw's commentary relates to his reading of *Great Expectations* as a "tragedy," as so melancholy a book that any happy ending would be an outrage on it. But as it is, the "happy" ending is not so happy, nor is the rest of the book so utterly melancholy. It is true that the book is about "a snob's progress," and as House says, "the novel's greatest achievement is to make it sympathetic."[16] As Edgar Johnson puts it,

> His [Pip's] return to a life of modest usefulness is a repudiation of the ideal of living by the sweat of someone else's brow. And Dickens's analysis of the frivolity, falseness, emptiness, loss of honor, loss of manhood, and sense of futility that the acceptance of that ideal imposed upon Pip is a measure of the rottenness and corruption he now found in a society dominated by it.[17]

But in the midst of all his falseness and frivolity, Pip's relentless self-criticism, and our trust in him as a reasonably honest interpreter of the personal actions that he records are symbols of the hope that is implicit in the whole conception of the book. Christopher Ricks hits the nail exactly on the head when he says:

> We do not, in the ordinary way, have much difficulty in liking someone who tells us how bad he has been, and we are perhaps less sympathetic to someone who talks about his good deeds. . . . Most of the time Dickens gets exactly the right tone for Pip — open but not abased, willing to admit faults, but not positively enjoying it.[18]

Similar signs of hope — Christian hope, if you like — are also indicated in the nature of self-realization reached by Miss Havisham and Magwitch before they die.

A more recent variation on Shaw's reading of the book as "a melancholy book" has been to pronounce the ending "inconsistent" with the theme of Pip's disillusionment with his great expectations. John Butt and Kathleen Tillotson speak for a host of other critics, when they say, "It was at least more appropriate that Pip, who had lost Magwitch's money, should also lose his daughter, than that he should marry her in the end."[19] The book as it stands does contain both these losses, and the shadow of the bitter irony that both the money and the girl derive from Magwitch looms over the final meeting between Pip and Estella. All Pip's expectations have already come a cropper. The inner evolution that makes Pip accept the warmint "as an animal of the same species as himself or Miss Havisham,"[20] his extravagances as a "gentleman," his arrest and consequent delirium, his finally unambiguous

respect for the simple but abundant humanity of Joe, his defeat at winning for himself the relatively romantic consolation of Biddy's love — all amount to an impressive stripping of illusion, a Lear-like catharsis, only in a lower key. He is fully reconciled to his losses. He works "pretty hard for a sufficient living," and therefore, does well. Estella, too, has been long enough in the crucible of experience to become a convincing figure in the final scene. Born of Molly and Magwitch and brought up by Miss Havisham to wreak her perverse vengeance on the male of the species, Estella has had — as Dickens would have us believe — no heart to feel, to sympathise, to relate. Her humanity and her need for fellowship have lately been aroused by her tortured life with "a compound of pride, avarice, brutality and meanness" (p. 491). One cannot help wishing that Dickens had prepared us a little more for Estella's evolution. One of the book's earliest readers was baffled by "the speed with which the heroine, after getting married, reclaimed and widowed, [was] in a page or two again made love to, and remarried by the hero."[21] But it will be hard to prefer the original ending on any such grounds. R. George Thomas has already settled the score by charging that

> the original, discarded ending does not develop organically out of Pip's narrative. Subsequent events are hastily telescoped together and presented in a manner that is quite external to the mood of the entire tale.[22]

In fact, we must admit graciously that neither of the endings is without its share of the innumerable instances of artificial telescoping of events found in all Dickens' novels. But, as Dorothy Van Ghent has reminded us, "the apparent coincidences in Dickens actually obey a causal order — not of physical mechanics but of moral dynamics."[23]

The ultimate question about the ending, then, is essentially one of the "moral dynamics" of the book, and its pertinent relevance to the human significance of the moral fable. It does not have to cohere with the rest of the story according to any conception of psychological realism, nor need we expect it to carry the burden of seeing Pip through an utterly negative disenchantment with his great expectations. His expectations have been ruined enough already, and by providing the possibility for the fulfillment of

"a slighter and more natural hope"[21] in the life of Pip, Dickens has given the ending more harmony with the restrained tone and controlled beauty of the whole book than any that has so far been discovered for the original ending by "tragedy" critics.

The question that might however concern us here — especially in connection with modern readers — is the difficulty in accepting the now unfashionable "happy" endings. As Monroe Engel points out, "There is a tendency to consider the conventional unhappy ending serious, the conventional happy ending frivolous. The distinction is questionable however; and it is certain that the creation of a credible happiness is more difficult."[25] In the face of this difficulty, many writers, not excluding Dickens, have taken the easy alternative, and manufactured most faceless "happy" endings for many of their otherwise complex stories. But in *Great Expectations*, it appears, Dickens has done an excellent job of a happy ending. The original ending is "merely more *probable*,"[26] or as Shaw would put it, more "true to nature." But the second ending is more appropriate to the meaning of the fable, and certainly more in consonance with Dickens' world-view. There is no gaiety or exuberance about the coincidental meeting of Pip and Estella in the last scene. The "shadow" of their sad and varied experiences hangs over their desire for love and security in each other. Their happiness is a "muted happiness;" it is a "reconciliation to knowledge."[27] Both Pip and Estella have paled, but grown "sadder and wiser." Pip has learned, to borrow the words of Edgar Johnson, that "the system of . . . society and its grandiose material dreams . . . involve a cheapening, a distortion, a denial of human values."[28] He has learned the humility to see in Magwitch "a much better man than I had been to Joe." He has come out of the narrow cell of self, and observed the hitherto unseen signs of "cheerful industry and readiness" in Herbert. Above all, he has moved away from parasitism, to seek fulfillment in the sweat of his own brow. The ruined garden, with an echo of Milton,[29] leaves Pip and Estella some measure of hope. With their reclaimed desire for fellowship, and with more confidence in one another, they are ready to meet the hazards of the tragi-comic joke that is life, to seek small doses of fulfillment in a twilight world, to tame and be tamed by experience. For all we know, they might have "yet another disillusionment in store"[30] for them.

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THE RELIGIOUS QUEST IN SOME NOVELS OF CHARLES MORGAN

B. G. KULKARNI

THE Fountain, the best of the Morgan menagerie, was published in 1932 and was a great success. He has produced a complete line of masterpieces, artistically admirable, of profound significance and of great and varied narrative power. The reviews of the individual novels have been generous and penetrating: 'A great novel and a beautiful one, strangely profound, wise, courageous and beautiful' 'probably the most distinguishing living master of English prose.' He was one of the few novelists in the 1930's, like Graham Greene and H. E. Bates, who stood out by the force of his individual vision and interpretation of life. He takes a fresh interest in the things of the spirit and his grave, quiet, very carefully written books have insisted that man does not live by bread alone.

But the achievement of Morgan has been pushed into oblivion and this neglect is astonishing and deplorable. This paper has no pretensions to research in the commonly accepted sense. It is a sort of personal evaluation of some of his novels: *Portrait in a Mirror* (1929), *The Fountain*, *The Judge's Story* (1947), *The* River Line (1949), prompted by the feeling that Morgan has been denied the wider recognition he deserves. Miss Clemence Dane, in a radio-talk, boldly gave it as her opinion that Morgan is the greatest novelist since Hardy; Hardy handed on the torch of the great novel, to Conrad, so Conrad handed it on to Morgan. The novelists like Bennett, Wells, Kipling and Galsworthy have occasionally attained Morgan's level. *The Fountain* has been vehemently attacked by critics: 'works problems of art and morality with a relaxed dexterity that is not always convincing'.[1] According to Edwin Muir *The Fountain* became a best-seller by demonstrating that mysticism was compatible with good form 'It is a deliberate sentimentalization of the reality and the style engendered by this attitude, for all its careful craftsmanship, is just as much diluted Pater as Thornton Wilder is diluted Anatole France'.[2] For W. W. Robson Morgan's work is a by-word for

spurious art, applying a lofty tone to banal adulteries. He has been represented as a dilettante, an effete aesthete. My efforts will be directed towards proving that he was neither: he was a mystic philosopher. His is a religious quest akin to that of D. H. Lawrence, Aldous Huxley and Graham Greene. His work puts him into the company of Barrie, Conrad, E. M. Forster and Priestley.

Three things interested Morgan above all others: art, love and death, three aspects of the same impulse, the impulse to recreate oneself. The novels grow and develop out of this soil. 'In love, in comtemplation (the mystic contemplation that issues in art), and in death, man hears and understands the language of the gods; these are three ecstasies that are one ecstasy.' These three ecstasies are, for Morgan, different manifestations of the religious quest inherent in his novels.

As a Platonist, Morgan's conception of literature is 'the creative revelation of the ideal activity at work in human life.' His world is idealized because he believed that the ideal is the real. He is a romantic-realist, his aim being not realism but reality. Morgan tells us through the mouth of Nigel Frew in *Portrait in a Mirror*: "An artist's work in more than a highly organised view of truths already accessible, he is not an interpreter of the common stock but a bringer of new truths .... the artist fully apprehends his gods and sees with their eyes *their* reality."[3] The imaginative approach finds its clearest manifestation in the contemplative ideal which lies at the root of so many of his characters: Nigel Frew, Lewis Alison, Narwitz, Heron, Judge Gaskony in his garret. The practical result of the practice of contemplation is the building of the citadel of a tranquil soul. Lewis Alison desires, if it be but for an instant, to be as the gods are, to be invulnerable, to be still; this desire is flawless, consistent with man's longing for rest and with his eagerness for life — it is indeed the only reconciler of them and it implies a supremacy even over dreams. Here is Nigel: 'It was for me as if Clare and I dwelt already in a world within the world. I think I tasted then a little of the peace that à Kempis promises to the single hearted'. The mystic contemplation is an outcome of art which is the spearhead of Morgan's faith. Sanity has a firm grip on life, but it does not know what it holds; art alone can show that. Art is 'a form of experience nearer to reality than life's own.' The

function of the artist is that of providing contact with this more real world behind the forms of the apparent one. Imagination, the sense of art, is the evidence of God — the Kingdom of God within you. All his characters try to break through to that larger life, that life of the spirit to which there is no index. The miraculous powers of art are known to Nigel Frew: 'She asked me if this did not mean that I was striving to bring to a portrait the knowledge and understanding which could belong only to God. But so I understood portraiture, I said, and indeed all art.' Thus the world that Morgan constructs for us is a beautiful world, built of material that must delight the aesthetic sensibilities in innumerable ways. The motive of each novel is a conception of great spiritual beauty: Nigel Frew's passion of painting, Alison's contemplative dream, Judge Gaskony's unaggressive integrity. The spirit is clarified, the heart is uplifted. Morgan writes like a poet depicting the drama of life not as contemporary eyes see it but as he himself tentatively understands it, or guesses at its essential truth, in the light of eternity. The lasting impression left by the world of his creation is one of truth and beauty. At the beginning of *The Fountain* Morgan gives the following lines as the basic key to his novel:

> "From outward forms to win
> The passion and the life, whose fountains are within."
> Coleridge: "Dejection."

In the volume of essays 'Liberties of the Mind', he very forcefully argues the case for romanticism. Intrinsic romanticism is a condition of the whole man. It is one of the ways in which religion may be expressed, an instrument of the spirit. We find in Morgan's novels this religious instrument of the spirit, this intense experience of life, this very vision of profound reality. It has been pointed out as a weakness of Morgan that 'the style (does not) spring from a courageous grappling with the contradictions of living reality. It is the devitalized, academic writing of a man deliberately seeking refuge from the more inconvenient problems of his world. The problems they attempt to solve are relegated to an abstract philosophical world that has little or no contact with the world as it exists outside the author's mind.'[4] But he does not belong to the set of writers who believe that the novel is pri-

manly a form of social activity alone, rather than an isolated art-form obeying its own laws. It is believed that the purpose of the 'most vital novel' is, and always has been, to change mankind. Morgan would undertake to change or educate differently. The idea of Robert Bridges about Culture and Education for the Common People would have been very much Morgan's dream 'Every man is born with a desire of Beauty or of Good. The purpose of education is to draw out this inborn love of Beauty. And it is the Basis of our Religion. The whole business of education is to recognize the superiority of spiritual things over material.' Here is Plato explaining the ideal life: 'This life, my dear Socrates, if any life at all is worth living, is the life that a man should live, in the contemplation of absolute Beauty.'*

This great overriding miracle of Beauty shines in all the novels of Morgan. Beauty — of nature and art, of the human spirit and of woman — is the symbol of the divine in life and it leads Lewis Alison, Nigel Frew and Gaskony like a star. *Portrait in a Mirror* shows a young artist seeing the world as beauty and yearning to interpret it through his art; Alison is in search of a central peace of the spirit. This is the very essence of Morgan's quest for religion.

II

It is very difficult to talk about Morgan's philosophy. Yet, there can always be found an idea on which each of his novels is based. Such basic idea is conceived, not in abstract, but as a human situation through his imagination giving ground and substance to his fiction: the idea of a deeper Platonic reality, the vision of a greater life to be entered by achieving a certain stillness of soul, a form of religion with Morgan — whence by wonder, by contemplation, art and love we see into the life of things. Morgan understands the universe in this wise. The basic themes of his novels under our consideration could be summed up as follows: *Portrait in a Mirror* — the conflict of art and love; *The Fountain* — contemplation and love; *The Judge's Story* — the contemplative life as a defence against evil; *The River Line* — stillness of soul in a world of violence. These basic themes dovetail with Morgan's idea of Religion. The whole system of thought that permeates the Morgan world is religious if by religion we mean a sense of God,

a living relationship with the unseen, a spiritual vision of man and the universe. All Morgan characters live by the sense of God in one form or another, whether it arise from art, imagination, peace or love. It is imagination and humility that lead Alison and Narwitz to accept that 'to put oneself in the second place is the whole significance of life.' Alison carries this idea further by asking what is to be put before oneself, in the first place. The Christian answer is God; Alison suggests Art or God; Narwitz asserts confidently that 'Death is the answer'. Artistic imagination is the key that fits most of the many doors opening on the unseen world of reality. Coleridge expounded the supreme creative power of imagination which enables the poet to grasp the unity of life and the nature of God. Morgan began by showing, in *The Portrait in a Mirror*, a belief in a high vision of visual art. Art is the most profound of all the intimations of immortality. This is the mystical element 'the country of the soul' that Morgan's novels deal with.

Another aspect of the religious quest of Morgan is his favourite question — Who am I? Who are you? — an inquiry drawn directly from Plato. It is somewhat naively asked by Nigel as he reflects upon the love that is springing up between him and Clare: 'But who is who and who am I that in our mutual love I should see the origin of love and a beginning of the world?' The exploration of the significance of this question comes in *The Judge's Story*, the wisest and most satisfying of the novels. Both Severidge and Gaskony are found confronting the problem. This exposition of the mystery of personality is discussed at length between Gaskony and Vivien. He brings her, by a Socratic interrogation, to realize that there is a principle of individuality — an essence without which you would not be — 'An absolute you is an Absolute Beauty' which is the answer to the question, Who am I, an idea that is always 'alive in you, deeper than thought, deeper than feeling, the very spring of instinct and intuition, the original, the unsilenceable whisper of the soul.' From yet another point *The Judge's Story* is religious in the Morgan like manner. Severidge is the very personification of evil — the Devil incarnate. The novel seems to be deliberately written to show Morgan's appreciation of the power and nataure of evil in the civilized world. The story shows good and evil evenly balanced, with evil only just failing to destroy good. In the modern

world evil on a large scale can be exercised by an evil-minded person who has either political or financial power in his hands. The man Severidge is presented with every suggestion of a Satanic personality, and his temptations constitute the substance of the novel. *The River Line* shows a man obsessed by a sense of guilt and finding deliverance in a strange and difficult love which is another redeeming aspect of Morgan's quest for religion.

III

Morgan's novels, especially the ones under study, are bursting at the seams with psychological and philosophical implications. *Portrait in a Mirror* is a representation of the mystery of art and ends as a study of lust. In *The Fountain* even the dream of the contemplative life breaks up under the pressure of sex-impulse. It is romantic love involving violent desire that is characteristic of Morgan and it is associated with a mystical conception of sex. It is this kind of love that is exemplified in Alison and Julie, Nigel and Clare. 'Men see their god through women, and have no peace but at the breast and no imagination of rebirth but in the similitude of a womb. If a man consent to be nourished of woman, he, like a flower, is rooted and held.' This love is neither flippant nor profane. Morgan's moral values are based on a belief that life should be lived abundantly, completely beautifully, without codes or inhibitions, yet with a sacred respect for it. A man's love for a woman, though one of the expressions of it be carnal, may be the very air in which his soul grows. Socrates argued that thought was best when it took leave of the body and had no bodily sense or desire. A true philosopher must have a firm belief that only after death might he find wisdom in its purity, 'to live as nearly as he can in a state of death.' Lewis Alison has selected a middle way, the balance of the soul and the body. It is in his exploitation of the mysticism of sex that Morgan has some kinship with D. H. Lawrence. It is explained succintly in the challenge to Venus: 'Raised to the degree of ecstasy physical passion shared is an emptying away of time and circumstance, a self-abandonment to a plane of consciousness where other selves lie in wait. No one emerges from it unchanged.' There is no surprise more magical than the surprise of being loved; it is God's finger on man's shoulder. There is no peace

equivalent to the peace of loving. Love is not a swerving from purpose, but an enrichment and a balancing of it, 'stillness of soul' (reminding us of Wordsworth's 'happy stillness of the mind'), 'Magic', 'peace' are other names for a search of an inner impulse that assumes the nature of religion. Here Morgan is a peer of Aldous Huxley who says: 'To be in love is to have achieved a state of being in which it becomes possible to have direct intution of the essentially lovely, of the ultimate reality.' Lewis Alison's love for Julie is not sacrilegious, but the fulfilment of his aim: 'I felt as nature must feel in the first death of winter'. And here is Nigel Frew: 'I had been ready for love as the earth in sowing-time is ready for seed.' Love is almost sacred and religious for Morgan: 'To be loved is to be made familiar with the spirits of nature things, so that what was once a dead or impersonal beauty — a tree, a river, a hill, to be observed, admired and forgotten — becomes a part of life beyond forgetting. We seem to have been born but in the moment of our discovery of love, and to be running out anew from the arms of God, a part of his first creation.' D. H. Lawrence singles out the sensual passions and mysteries and calls them 'equally sacred with the spiritual mysteries and passions.' 'And then she lay lapped in a new womb, a new throbbing of life all around her. And she loved the man, loved him with all the depths of her body and her body's splendid soul . . . .' (The first *Lady Chatterley*).

The act of love involves the nourishing, sacred flow of life, between man and woman. That is what Lawrence believed, that love is a religious experience, a communion of the blood which brings renewed vitality. So very akin is the the union of Lewis and Julie: "He too became silent, possessed by a happiness so great, and so different from any happiness that he had before experienced or imagined, even in his thoughts of her, that there seemed to be a spirit crying within him: I am born! I am alive! I have come out of the darkness! Lawrence tried to restore the 'naturalness' of a humanily which recognized its subservience to the 'creative mystery' and opposed all restraints on the sexual life — religious, moral or merely social. Sexual desire was not just 'normal' but a uniquely precious thing. He oppossed both the romantic idealization of sex and its opposite pole of sniggering lewdness. These poles were connected by an axis — the mistaken dualism of body and soul. For the unitary individuals Lawrence

dreamed of, sexual desire would be neither repressed nor sublimated, because it would no longer be a base passion. Morgan seems to share the same opinion; sex is a religious experience, a birth of a new life: 'her desire had been the spirit's unending desire to be remade.' 'She raised her eyes, wide and shining with tears. They were filled with supplication and surrender, not to him personally, but to the new life in her that he represented — Desire remained without the terror and anger of desire. Delight shone there, but with a clear, tranquil brillance. But of all her joys the greatest at this time was the discovery of tranquillity within passion itself.'

This mystic treatment of love is a part of Morgan's philosophy, an aspect of the religious impulse that is uppermost in his novels. Love is not an individual resurrection but a rejuvenation and a sacred sanctuary from where he can aspire to the higher things of the spirit. Nigel Frew traces the origin of life in love and in woman: 'Her face is turned to me and her throat . . . . This seems an eternal face, the face of woman fearful of her desire yet with courage to fulfil it, of woman compelled whose own will is her compulsion — such a face as the Serpent may have seen when Eve yielded — Her body is a sapling bent in the night by a wind. Her beauty is a tempest which sweeps the soul of its identity — These are her breath, her form, her movement, but she is not. These are my hands and my lips dried by fear, but I am not.'

IV

Like contemplation and love, death is one of the aspects of the impulse to recreate one self. Narwitz is the great exponent of this ideal: three deaths that give entrance to life. Death is the common term, the type of all three achievements, the symbol of a new life: 'I think genius is the power to die. In love, in poetry — but to die' 'We are in exile. We have not the genius to die and be reborn. If the genius of death fail us while we live, if we can't seize any of the opportunities of transcendence, then death itself will accomplish what we cannot, end wooing us with the resurrection.' Narwitz valorous lives through it and even in death, surmounts it, 'Death is the answer. A man who ceases to regard it as something outside himself and draws it into his consciousness and assimilates the idea of it is completely changed. He is in all

truth born again.' His desire for death was an eagerness for that perfection of the contemplative life which was almost within reach. His own death is the most moving and poignant scene dexterously pictured: "She did not stir, nor Lewis at her side. And he cried aloud and said in his own language: 'Into thy hands, I commend my spirit,' and when he had spoken thus, he gave up the ghost." Heron when he died was incredulous but was not weighed down or darkened.

Thus, we move a step nearer to the heart of the Morganic mystery, a religious quest, when we consider love, contemplation and art in his novels.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *The Present Age* (After 1920): David Daiches, p. 297.
2. *The Novel Today*: Philip Henderson, p. 142.
3. *Portrait in a Mirror* (1929): Charles Morgan, pp. 43-44.
4. *The Novel Today*: Philip Henderson, p. 142.
5. *Plato's Symposium*' — Translated by Robert Bridges.

INDIAN MYTHS IN THE WORKS OF HERMAN MELVILLE

MOHAMED ELIAS

THROUGHOUT a long and eventful literary career Herman Melville took a remarkably consistent interest in Indian myths. In *Typee* the very first book he wrote in 1846 the young novelist made an adulatory reference to William Jones, the famous Indologist.[1] Half a century later, and shortly before his death, Melville expressed a wish to attain Nirvana in a poem entitled "Buddha."[2] The novels, stories, sketches and poems he wrote in the inter-regnum reflect the growing interest of the author in Indic lore. But Melville was more of a creative artist than an accurate scholar. Consequently his treatment of the ideas and images he borrowed from ancient Indian literature was subject to the compulsions of his creative genius. Inevitably there were some distortions and mix-ups. But the student of Melville's literary art might be justified in investigating these errors as sources of information on the direction in which the author's imagination tended to swerve in search of virbrant fiction with which to rejuvenate arcane facts.

The first literary critic to comment on this aspect of Melville's writing seems to have been Howard Vincent. In 1949 this critic made certain observations in *The Trying-Out of Moby Dick* which drew attention to two passages where Melville had tried to associate his great white whale with the fish avatar of Vishnu.[3] In the first of these passages, which occurs in the Chapter entitled "Of the Monstrous Pictures of Whales," Moby Dick is compared with a portrait on the walls of the Elephanta caves in Bombay which according to Melville, depicts "the incarnation of Vishnu in the form of Leviathan, learnedly known as the Matse Avatar."[4] However, there is no Portrait of the Matsya Avatar at Elephanta. Nor is the error attributable to any of the literary sources Melville might have consulted before he wrote *Moby Dick*. But among the several books on Indology published before 1851, and available in the libraries to which the author had access, Vincent

found a book by Thomas Maurice which was entitled *Indian Antiquities*. Intriguingly enough, both Maurice and Melville erred alike in mispelling the name of the avatar as "Matse" instead of "Matsya." Furthermore, Maurice's book contained an account of the Elephanta caves as well as that of the ten avatars. The confusion made by Melville might therefore have been due to "hasty reading" (p. 280).

The line of investigation opened up by Vincent was pursued in 1956 by James Baird in *Ishmael*. From the vantage point of Jungian psychology, this critic takes the view that Melville's "error in placing the fish (whate) in the 'primal' caves of Elephanta comes about not only through haste in studying the source but also through his obsession with the whale as the first incarnation of deity."[5] Viewed in this perspective there does seem to be a logic behind the apparently erroneous yoking of Moby Dick and the Matsya Avatar to the Elephanta caves. It is not surprising therefore that by 1970 H. B. Kulkarni should have found enough material to assert in his monograph, *Moby Dick: A Hindu Avatar*, that Melville knew what he was doing when he fabricated his own myth of the Elephanta icon: "The deliberate jumbling up of facts to produce a desirable conglomerate of multiple myths and symbols appears to be the method of construction in his narrative art."[6] Thus artistic expedience rather than ignorance or carelessness would seem to be the cause of Melville's resort to fiction where the facts were regarded by the author to be rather inadequate "to give a transcendent symbolism to *Moby Dick*."[7]

Another aspect of Melville's treatment of Indian myths which has sometimes disturbed critics more than the seeming ignorance or carelessness is the tone of irreverence. This is somewhat blatant in the second Vishnu passage in *Moby Dick* which occurs in the Chapter entitled "The Honour and Glory of Whaling." Here he attempts by verbal clowning to present Vishnu not only as a fish but a fisherman as well:

> When Bramha, or the God of Gods, saith the Shaster, resolved to recreate the world after one of its periodical dissolutions, he gave birth to Vishnoo, to preside over the work; but the Vedas, or mystical books, whose perusal would seem to have been indispensable to Vishnoo before the creation, and which therefore must have contained

> something in the shape of practical hints to young architects, these Vedas were lying at the bottom of the waters; so Vishnoo became incarnate in a whale, and sounding down in him to the uttermost depths, rescued the sacred volumes. Was not this Vishnoo a whaleman, then? even as a man who rides a horse is called a horseman? (p. 306)

The notion of Brahma giving birth to Vishnu and asking him to create the world may be a deft way of circumventing a labyrinthine explanation of the intricacies of Hindu theology, but the sleight of hand by which Vishnu is turned into a whaleman, and the tongue-in-cheek humour with which the Vedas are described as a manual of architecture, seem to be gratuitously in bad taste.

There is however an explanation for Melville's posture as a cultural chauvinist. In a highly thought-provoking book, *Melville's Quarrel with God*, Lawrence Thompson had created something of a stir back in 1952 by describing the novelist as a radical thinker who sought to avoid all outright confrontations with Calvinistic heresy hunters by taking care to disguise his heretical views with the help of "a complex variety of stylistic and structural methods."[8] He did this by selecting for his stories plots that would present his blasphemous ideas. "The way in which he chose to present these plots was not uniform; but he ingeniously arranged to pretend in the telling, that no matter how much he indulged in occasional religious doubts and questionings, his ultimate goal was to praise and honor the orthodox Christian viewpoint." By employing sarcasm, satire and irony he managed to create the illusion that his views were consistent with orthodox beliefs. The direction in which these illusory views ran was however "exactly opposite from the anti-Christian direction of the story itself, the plot itself" (p. 7). It is therefore necessary to adopt a very cautious attitude in attempting to formulate a verdict on what might appear to be Melville's penchant for ridiculing Hindu gods.

The significance of ridicule in Melville's literary strategy is further complicated by his resort to ridicule as a rhetorical device. Pointing this out in 1963, Bruce Franklin wrote in *The Wake of the Gods: Melville's Mythology* that the author adopted the

attitude of a scoffer in order to overrule the "fishy myths" of Hindus, Philistines. Hebrews, Greeks and Christians, in preference for the Egyptian myth of the struggle between Osiris and Typhon which "forms the basic part of the conception of Ahab's struggle with Moby Dick."[9] But this critic does not question the fact that Melville took the Hindu myths about the avatars of Vishnu and made use of them in his works, even as early as *Mardi*. Indeed he insists that Melville must have read William Jones because the Indologist's theory about Hindu gods and avatars "precisely locates *Mardi's* mythology in its chronological and intellectual setting, and thus defines what is perhaps the most important structural principle of the book" (p. 19). It is true that the methods of the comparative mythologists, and the enthusiasm of Emerson and other Transcendentalists for Oriental scriptures, appear to have contributed their share to the synthetic mythology of *Mardi* which seeks to suggest that all the gods of the world are avatars of each other. Franklin has also argued that the masquerades of the protagonist in *The Confidence-Man* are based on the forms assumed by the ten avatars, and suggested that what Melville was attempting to do was to demonstrate that "In this universe man's Savior-Manco Capac, Vishnu, Christ, Apollo, the Buddhist's Buddha — is embodied in the Confidence Man, who is also man's Destroyer — Satan, Siva, the Hindu's Buddha. Melville's mythology converts all gods into the Confidence Man" (p. 187).

Obviously Melville was a nonconformist in his attitude to all myths, Christian or pagan. Hindu myths were no exception. There is therefore little ground for Chandrasekharan's contention, set forth in a recent paper entitled "Melville and the 'Dark Hindu Half of Nature," that Melville was deliberately ridiculing Hindu gods and blackening the image of Hinduism.[10] It is true that in *Moby Dick* there is an Indian sailor who watches gathering clouds in the turbulent sky, and exclaims to his colleagues: "By Brahma! boys, it'll be douse sail soon. The sky-born, high-tide Ganges turned to wind! Thou showest thy black brow, Seeva!" (p. 152). Elsewhere Ahab, having seen a dying whale turn its face first towards the sun and then away from it, concludes that the warmth and light provided by the sun are destined to be denied at the time when they are most needed. He expresses the lesson to be drawn from this incident in the following words:

> Oh, thou dark Hindoo half of nature, who of drowned bones hast builded thy separate throne somewhere in the heart of these unverdured seas; thou art an infidel, thou queen, and too truly speakest to me in the wide-slaughtering Typhoon, and the hushed burial of its after calm.... Yet dost thou, darker half, rock me with a prouder, if a darker faith. All thy unnamable imminglings float beneath me here; I am buoyed by breaths of once living things, exhaled as air, but water now." (p. 409)

Far from being attempts to identify Hinduism with blackness and darkness, these passages seem to embody in an imagistic form the tortured feelings of the author who refused to give in to the easy optimism of his contemporaries and insisted on getting to the truth, however unpalatable it might be. As Melville discovered, 'To trail the geneologies of these high mortal miseries, carries us at last among the sourceless primogenitures of the gods; so that, in the face of all the glad, hay-making suns, and soft-cymballing, round harvest-moons, we must needs give in to this: that the gods themselves are not for ever glad. The ineffable, sad birthmark in the brow of man, is but the stamp of sorrow in the signers." (p. 386).

It would seem therefore that what attracted Melville to Indian myths was their honest willingness to face the harsh realities of the human predicament, coupled with their very antiquity, their dark depth into the obscure profundities of the timeless past that was a completely black mystery to modern man. Like Ahab, Melville could feel certain intimations of this mystery which he sought to reach through the symbolic medium of the deep-diving whale. Similarly, the tortoise or the Koorma Avatar was another vehicle he employed for the same purpose. Describing the giant tortoises he had seen in the Galapagos Islands, Melville writes in *The Piazza Tales* that they reminded him of what he had read about "the identical tortoises whereon the Hindu plants this total sphere."[11] Their symbolic significance appeals to Melville's imagination and he states: "With them I lost myself in volcanic mazes; brushed away endless boughs or rotting thickets; till finally in a dream, I found myself sitting crosslegged upon the foremost, a Brahmin similarly mounted upon either side, forming a tripod of foreheads which upholds the universal cope" (p. 58).

This dream, with exploration as its motif, is clearly indicative of the earnestness with which Melville was attempting to use his knowledge of Indian mythology. But the extent of this knowledge might still fall short of academic accuracy since the tortoise in Hindu mythology has a somewhat different part than Melville assigns to it. Indeed it is Vishnu who incarnates himself as a tortoise and holds Mt. Mandara on his back while the gods churn the ocean to produce a divine drink soma that confers strength and immortality, the ambrosia or nectar of the Greek gods."[13] But Melville's concern is to use the myth as a vehicle for symbolic exploration. This is evident in the strange vision of the American author plunging into what must be regarded as the chaos of the subconscious, and finding himself assisted by the Koorma Avatar, and Brahmin gurus, to bear the burden of the world.

The use that Melville made of the *Ramayana* is just as revealing of the process of selection and adaptation which operated in his wide-ranging eclecticism. As is well known, the epic is full of a stirring account of the tyranny of Ravana, a great demon, whose oppression had become intolerable to mankind. This led to Vishnu's wrath, and his decision to be born as a man in order to subdue Ravana. Rama was thus an incarnation of Vishnu, an avatar. He battled with Ravana and destroyed the demon. But Rama himself was not aware of his divine origin. The epic portrays him sometimes (Bks. ii-vi) as human, and at other times (Bks. i, vii) as divine. It is this poignant feeling of a lost immortal bewildered by the meanness of his mundane destiny that attracted Melville's attention, and provoked him to write the following lines in his narrative poem, *Clarel*:

> That Rama whom the Indian sung—
> A god he was, but knew it not;
> Hence vainly puzzled at the wrong
> Misplacing him in the human lot.
> Curtailment of his right he bare
> Rather than wrangle; but no less
> Was taunted for his tameness there.
> A fugitive without redress,
> He never the Holy Spirit grieved,
> Nor the divine in him bereaved,

Though what that was he might not guess."

In the lines that follow Melville wonders at the fate of many other Ramas of this world. Perhaps there are those who lead lonely lives, and "Like Rama are discredited — Like him, in outlawry abide?" (I, xxxii, 14-15, p. 107). He suggests that such people do exist since life and fable reflect each other. After giving an extended description of the moral integrity which distinguishes such persons from the common run of humanity Melville becomes more cautious and ends the canto, "Of Rama" on a note of ambiguity: "Was ever earth-born wight like this? / Ay — in the verse, may be, he is" (I, xxxii.55-56, p. 109).

Possibly Melville was unwilling to identify himself as the paragon he has been describing. But there is little to doubt that he was thinking of anyone else. As Bezanson has pointed out in his extremely informative and cogent introduction, "*Clarel* is a personal poem. The filaments of self spread through it everywhere, so much so that one feels Melville welcomed it as a chance for sorting out some old entanglements in his own history" (p. lxxxiv). This is done in the poem through several configurations, among which the self-projection of the author in the image of Rolfe stands out. "Rolfe has experienced Pacific adventures such as young Melville experienced and then translated into *Typee* and *Omoo;* yet it is interesting that Rolfe paints them with the hues of the older Melville's Mediterranean *Journal*. The general contours of Rolfe's appearance, manner, speech, and mind bear surprising resemblance to the outward image of Melville that letters and autobiographical data of the period 1845-1851 suggest" (p. lxxxv). The self-portrait is however meant to be a secret one, and the hints are carefully and fragmentarily scattered. But the discerning reader will not miss them, for example, in the canto entitled "Of Rama" which embodies "a cryptic self-fantasy on a major scale in which Rolfe is likened to one of the incarnations of Vishnu, who was born a god though he knew it not" (p. lxxxvi). There are thus good reasons to assume that Melville was thinking of himself when he wrote in *Clarel* about the "Rama-like character" (p. 580).

This use of the Rama myth for the purpose of a symbolic self-exploration is, moreover, consistent with Melville's earlier attempts to exploit the myths about the fish and tortoise in-

carnations. The attempts to plumb the depths of human sorrow by means of the whale who is a link with the dark Hindu half of inundated nature, and the symbolic probe at the very foundations of the universe, mounted on the Vedic tortoise and led by Brahmin guides, are thus preludes to the assumption of a Rama-like role as part of the attempt at self-realization. The aim is ultimately to hold the mirror up and see the artist's self-image in the shape of an avatar, a god-like person who is at odds with the mundane world around him. By envisioning himself as a divinely invested artist-avatar and rationalizing over the fate of this sensitive outsider who is treated as a maladjusted outcast by human society, Melville was performing a ritual of vindicating his own failure in a world not yet ready to receive one like him.

The attitude of resignation to failure is further emphasized in *Clarel* by reference to the fate of yet another avatar, Buddha:

> How Buddha pined!
> Pierced with the sense of all we hear,
> Not only ills by fate assigned
> But misrule of our selfish mind,
> Fain would the tender sage repair,
> . . . Buddha but in a name survives —
> A name, a rite.
>
> (IV. xviii. 152-56, 158-59; p. 470)

It is significant that this comment on the failure of Buddhism follows as a corollary to remarks on the analogous failure of Christianity:

> Despite professions, outward shows —
> So far as working practice goes,
> More minds with shrewd Voltaire have part
> Than now own Jesus in the heart.
>
> (IV. xviii. 146-49; p. 470)

The identity of Melville's images of Christ and Buddha is strongly suggested in one more significant reference. This occurs earlier in the poem, and is occasioned by the sight of Christian pilgrims

visiting Christ's tomb in Palestine. To Clarel's mind it brings visions of other pilgrims, including Buddhists, who cross the Himalayas to visit the shrines "Of Buddha, the Mongolian Fo/ Or Indian Saviour" (I. v. 204-05; p. 23). This symbolic juxtaposition of Benares and Bethlehem is indeed characteristic of the eclectic and psychophysical geography which serves as the background for the author's explorations in comparative religion and mythology. It is typical of the dynamic nature of the geo-cultural symbolism in *Clarel*, and in Melville's works as a whole.

In the symbolic geography of Melville's mind cultural frontiers were flexible enough to accommodate ideas and images of diverse heterogeneity. Consequently the scholarly inaccuracies which characterize his handling of Indian myths can be valuable hints to the literary critic investigating the provenance of eclecticism in nineteenth century American literature.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *Typee* (1846; rpt. London: Humphrey Milford, 1924), p. 281. The reference occurs in connection with certain comments on the intricacy of the language used by the South Sea islanders. The Typee dialect, according to Melville, is so hard to decipher that it would have reduced to despair even the great linguist, "Sir William Jones himself."

2. Published in Timoleon (1891); rpt. *Collected Poems of Herman Melville*, ed. Howard P. Vincent (Chicago: Hendricks House, 1947), p. 232. The text is introduced with an epigraph from James, IV 14: "For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away." The poem itself is brief enough to justify quoting in full:

> Swooning swim to less and less,
> Aspirant to nothingness!
> Sobs of the worlds, and dole of kind,
> That dumb endurers be—
> Nirvana! absorb us in your skies,
> Annul us into thee.

As indicated by the epigraph, Melville seems to be attempting to reconcile the wisdom of the East and of the West by suggesting an identity between Buddha's quest for Nirvana and James the Apostle's vision of life as a passing vapour. Neither this comparison nor the notion of Nirvana adumbrated by Melville may stand critical scrutiny, but this does not detract from the value of the poem as evidence of the author's lifelong interest in Indology.

3. See Howard P. Vincent, *The Trying-Out of Moby Dick* (1949; rpt.

Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1965), pp. 278-280. For a concise account of the original myth itself see V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, *The Matsya Purana: A Study* (Madras: University of Madras, 1935), pp. 3-4.

4. *Moby Dick*, ed. Harrison Hayford and Hershel Parker (1851; rpt. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1967), p. 225. All further references in the paper are to this edition.

5. James Baird, *Ishmael* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1956), p. 325.

6. H. B. Kulkarni, *Moby Dick: A Hindu Avatar* (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1970), p. 64.

7. John T. Reid, *Indian Influences in American Literature and Thought* (New Delhi: Indian Council for Cultural Relations, 1965), p. 55.

8. Lawrence Thompson, *Melville's Quarrel with God* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1952), p. 6.

9. H. Bruce Franklin, *The Wake of the Gods: Melville's Mythology* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1963), p. 71.

10. See K. R. Chandrasekharan, "Melville and the 'Dark Hindoo Half of Nature,'" *Asian Response to American Literature*, ed. C. D. Narasimhaiah (Delhi: Vikas Publications, 1972), 195-200. See also Chandrasekharan's review of Kulkarni's *Moby Dick: A Hindu Avatar*, in *Reviews in American Studies*, 5 (Hyderabad, January 1974), 55-59; and P. S. Sastri, "A Reply to K. R. Chandrasekharan on Melville," *Ibid*, 6 (June 1974), 97-98. Sastri is quite categorical in asserting that "Melville . . . is not ridiculing Vishnu. As one living in the Puritanic society, Melville had to be guarded in his expression. This forced Melville to take to irony. If Melville is ridiculing the whole concept of *Matsya Avatar*, he must be ridiculing the entire quest in the novel . . . . Melville had much sense . . . The reference to *Matsya Avatar* is not given in a mocking way. Melville was reacting to the Hindu texts in a way different from that of Emerson."

11. *The Complete Stories of Herman Melville*, ed. Jay Leda (New York: Random House, 1949), p. 54. According to Leda, Melville had planned to write "a work to be entitled *Tortoises, or Tortoise Hunting*, to be ready for the press in January, 1854" (p. 457). Instead of the book however a series of sketches about Melville's experiences in the island of tortoises, the Galapagos, appeared in *Putnam's Monthly* under the title "The Encantadas; or, Enchanted Isles, by Salvator R. Tarnmoor." Eventually the sketches were included in *The Piazza Tales* (1856).

12. Herbert Spencer Robinson and Knox Wilson, *Myths and Legends of All Nations* (1950; rpt. New York: Bantam Books, 1961), p. 52. See also Vyasa Bhagawan, *Srimad Bhagawatam*, ed. Swami Srikrishnadas Achyutha (Madurai: Srikrishnadas, 1976), pp. 174-75.

13. *Clarel: A Poem and Pilgrimage in the Holy Land*, ed. Walter E. Bezanson (1876; rpt. New York: Henricks House, 1960), I xxxii, 1-11; p. 107. All further references in the paper are to this edition.

AFFIRMATION IN "THE GAMBLER, THE NUN, AND THE RADIO"

J. N. SHARMA

It is one of the striking ironies of Hemingway criticism that a story so excellent and so crucial to the Hemingway canon as "The Gambler, the Nun and the Radio" has suffered from steady critical neglect since its first appearance in 1933.[1] And it is even more curious that most critics who do briefly refer to it, find it bleakly pessimistic and declare Mr. Frazer to be the central character in the story. They root evidence for this pessimism in Mr. Frazer's failure to find mental peace or physical relief in the various palliatives he tries, the chief being the radio. Writing soon after the story was published, Edmund Wilson felt that "the disquiet of the Hemingway of the twenties had been ... undruggable — that is, in his books themselves, he had tried to express it not drug it, had given it an appeasement in art, but now there sets in, in the Hemingway of the thirties, what seems to be a deliberate self-drugging. The situation is indicated objectively in 'The Gambler, the Nun, and the Radio,' one of the short stories of 1933, in which everything from daily bread to 'a belief in any new form of government' is characterized as 'the opium of the people' by an empty-hearted patient in a hospital."[2] Others, like Leo Gurko, even trace this pessimism to the Mexican gambler's "bad luck all the time and in all things."[3] For Paul C. Rodgers, Jr., the story is "considerably bleaker and darker than 'A Clean, Well Lighted Place" and even when bread is available "there still can be no real or permanent relief for the people. Whatever one's level of awareness, life means privation, frustration, pain. The very stuff of life is only a crutch."[4] I wish to suggest in this essay that these readings, which are largely representational, are mistaken in their interpretation of Hemingway's thematic intentions and that Cayetano Ruiz, the Mexican gambler, and not Mr. Frazer, is the central character in the story and that it is he who represents Hemingway's vision of life and meaning, and that this vision, in the ultimate analysis, is one

more of affirmation than of despair.

But it is not difficult to see why Mr. Frazer has so long passed as the thematic centre. First, his name figures much more frequently in the story than Cayetano's. Second, in a story that begins with a generalized reference to the other characters through their nationalities ("the Mexican," "the Russian"), Mr. Frazer is the first character to be mentioned by name. Third, he not only remains directly and recurrently in focus throughout, but the story ends with him. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, one of the elements in the title of the story and a significant symbol in it, the radio, is associated with Mr. Frazer. Between them, Mr. Frazer and the radio take up a great deal of space in the story. But in a complex fictional construct, it is not the quantity of words devoted to a character or the apparent focal point that should necessarily determine who represents the story's meaning. The test, I think, should be two-fold. We should ask who engages most the author's creative energies and on whom (given the oblique rhetorical and structural strategies in a complex work of fiction), the *real* focus of the story stays. And, in this case, we should also ask who represents the values embodied by the heroes of Hemingway's major novels and stories.

If the theme of the story, as most critics believe, is the need for some kind of opium to kill the pain and suffering characterizing the human condition and if religion and the radio are two such forms of opium used in the story, it is important to see that in this story, as throughout his fiction, Hemingway makes a distinction between those who need such opium to survive through life and those who confront pain solely with the aid of their inner resources. The distinction in "The Gambler, the Nun, and the Radio" for example, is between religion used uncomprehendingly, almost fatuously, as a mechanical prop, as the Nun uses it (turning it on when the football team's fate hangs in the balance and turning it off when the team has won) and faith which stems from a man's inner strength, from his native toughness, from placing reliance on oneself. Of the three major characters in the novel, Sister Cecilia, representing religion, is good-natured and wishes everybody well but she has neither enough faith in herself nor in God.[5] She is essentially weak. Her prayers are said mechanically and for every trivial cause. She cannot hear the game or the radio because she would be "too excited" and confesses

that on an earlier occasion

> The world series nearly finished me. When the Athletics were at bat I was praying right out loud: 'Oh, Lord, direct their batting eyes! Oh, Lord, may he hit one! Oh, Lord, may he hit safely!' Then when they filled the bases in the third game, you remember, it was too much for me. 'Oh, Lord, may he hit it out of the lot! Oh, Lord may he drive it clean over the fence!' Then you know when the Cardinals would come to bat it was simply dreadful. 'Oh, Lord, may they not see it! Oh, Lord, don't let them even catch a glimpse of it. Oh, Lord, may they fan!' And this game is even worse. It's Notre Dame. Our Lady. No, I'll be in the chapel. For Our Lady. They're playing for Our Lady. I wish you'd write something sometime for Our Lady. You could do it. You know you could do it, Mr. Frazer. (p. 393)[6]

As in this case, she not only prays for "a shot out of the lot or a drive clean over the fence," she prays for the opposite side to blunder. And throughout the current game she shuttles back and forth between the chapel and Mr. Frazer's room. This is how strong her faith is, and it is naively lavished on the sublimities of baseball. Her sole ambition in life has been to be a saint. But as her conversation with Mr. Frazer shows, she not only lacks the firm faith that it takes to attain sainthood; she is clearly not the stuff saints are made of. Her whole talk about becoming a saint is girlish, immature and feeble-minded:

> That's what I want to be. A saint. Ever since I was a little girl I've wanted to be a saint. When I was a girl I thought if I renounced the world and went into the convent I would be a saint. That was what I wanted to be and that was what I thought I had to do to be one. I expected I would be a saint. I was absolutely sure I would be one. For just a moment I thought I was one. I was so happy and it seemed so simple and easy. When I awoke in the morning I expected I would be a saint, but I wasn't I've never become one. I want so to be one. *All I want is to be a saint. That is all I've ever wanted. And this morning I feel as though I might be one. Oh, I hope I will get to be one* [italics mine]. (pp. 398-99).

By contrast, Santiago's prayers in *The Old Man and the Sea* are informed by much greater self-awareness, realism, and intensity. They are the prayers of a man who may not be a man of religion, but who turns to religion only when the stakes are really high and then too, only after he has exhausted his own resources. His piety, though not conventional or full-time, is authentic and it is expended solemnly.

As the nun needs her version of religion, so Mr. Frazer must have his private ward to cry without feeling unmanly, as also his radio to escape not only his pain but, more importantly, his incapacity to bear pain. His nerves go bad even when he is in small trouble. He is in hospital only with a broken leg this time, but his nerves are going bad as they have before:

> His nerves had become tricky and he disliked seeing people while he was in this condition. His nerves went bad at the end of five weeks, and while he was pleased they lasted that long yet he resented being forced to make the same experiment when he already knew the answer. Mr. Frazer had been through this all before. (p. 398)

Mr. Frazer too, like the Nun, has his opium. He can't bear his hurt and loneliness, so he clings to the radio all night to escape his anguish. As with Jake Barnes, Frederic Henry, and the old waiter and the old man in "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place," night is the worst time for him and it gets worse as the night advances. That is why Seattle, which stays on from two in the morning onwards, is his favourite radio station: "Mr. Frazer grew very fond of Seattle, Washington" (p. 398). It is this station that keeps him company through the night and takes his mind off his pain and loneliness. His reflection that everything — religion, music, patriotism, drinking, radio, gambling, ambition, bread — is an opium for somebody or the other is a measure of his personal experience of the anguish of life and of his inadequacy to stand up to it. And incapable of the strength that can do without opium, he merely recognizes that most men are not self-sufficient.

Cayetano, on the other hand, has attained that self-sufficiency. Gambling for him is not an opium, though he likes it and indulges in it freely. He does not use gambling as a means of escape. He is "a professional gambler." His humility, carried to

the point of insistent self-deprecation, has misled critics into believing that his strength is not authentic: that he too has only made an adjustment with life, and that this adjustment is a sign of weakness in him.[7] This mistaken view suggests a failure to see that Cayetano's self-deprecation is the humility of the strong man who has absolute faith in himself, who has become invulnerable to pain, and has learnt to be considerate to the suffering of others. His self-deprecation is a noble gesture of sympathy to preserve and respect the dignity of other men — such as Mr. Frazer — who are not strong like him. He has learnt to accept bravely what life deals out to him because he has enough faith in himself to know that nothing can really matter since his endurance is equal to life's worst accidents. On discovering that his leg has been permanently paralyzed, he coolly says: "I have no great use for the leg. I am all right with the leg or not. I will be able to circulate" (p. 402). Strange words! But not coming from someone who does not utter a sound when brought to the hospital with two balls in the abdomen, while the Russian with one in the thigh is howling ceaselessly. Not strange, coming from someone who would not disclose his attacker's name to save him from trouble; someone who has attained the profound understanding of human nature and the sympathy and compassion for it that it takes to forgive one's would-be destroyer. But Cayetano can afford such sympathy and compassion because he has earned the wisdom that can discern the senselessness — beyond the viciousness or evil — of the attack. At one point in the story, he good-humouredly remarks that "As musicians I think they [the three Mexican musicians] are fatal," but when Mr. Frazer asks him about his attacker, Cayetano placidly says: "Another fool. I won thirty-eight dollars from him at cards. That is not to kill about" (p. 400). He can light-heartedly but genuinely dismiss the vicious attack on him as an act of folly and bungling no worse than the bungling musical talents of the three Mexican musicians. He is not bothered by the possible consequences for him of the attack: his concern is rather with the incongruity and absurdity of the attacker's action.

Cayetano's heroism is also suggested through a reference to the rodeo rider with a broken back and the carpenter with broken wrists and ankles. They will both recover and settle down to a near-normal existence — the rodeo rider as a worker in leather

and cane chairs and the carpenter in his trade. Having mentioned these two, Hemingway unobtrusively slips in the lone sentence: "There was Cayetano Ruiz, a small town gambler with a paralyzed leg" (p. 402). Characteristically, Hemingway makes no comment on Cayetano's situation, on what the future holds for him. But by placing his sentence right after a mention of the much lesser suffering of the rodeo rider, the carpenter, and the farm boy, who will all be rehabilitated in some way, he uses tone and syntax to suggest by contrast that Cayetano is beyond rehabilitation. No matter how low-key the mode of suggestion, the bleakness of Cayetano's situation is fully driven home to the reader, and it is against this bleakness that Hemingway would have us assess his serene courage and self-possession. It's not that Cayetano is devoid of emotion but his emotion is not cheap and it is not directed at himself. There is pity in him for the Russian because he got wounded needlessly, but there is not even the faintest trace of self-pity. Unmindful of his own pain he is concerned only about his attacker and the Russian. He shows his deep concern for the safety of the former and sticks to the code by stubbornly refusing to give away his identity to the police detective. And when asked who shot the Russian, he instantly replies: "Poor Russian. He was on the floor with his head enveloped in his arms. He started to give cries when they shoot him and he is giving cries ever since. Poor Russian" (p. 389). It is not that Cayetano himself is not in pain; he only considers his own pain less important because he knows he can bear it. But he knows that the Russian's pain really matters because the Russian, as his ceaseless crying shows, can't bear it. Suffering matters as a real thing only in proportion to one's capacity to bear it. One who can kill somebody for having lost thirty-eight dollars to him is too weak to take the consequences of arrest and punishment.

Cayetano has all the self-restraint of the true Code Hero. When Mr. Frazer interprets to him the detective's advice, "He says you should denounce him [the attacker]", Cayetano simply says: "Thank you. You are of the great translators. I speak English, but badly. I understand it all right. How did you break your leg?" (p. 389). Cayetano deftly ignores the detective's advice as if it had never been given and with a sly irony (lost on Mr. Frazer) which comes only from perfect self-control, he compliments him

on interpreting what did not really need to be interpreted. Then he promptly directs the conversation away from himself and the attacker by turning it to Mr. Frazer.

Cayetano is not merely strong. He knows he is. From the moment he is brought into the hospital, everybody is sure he is going to die, but he himself is sure he is not. When the detective asks the interpreter (Mr. Frazer) to urge Cayetano to tell the truth, Cayetano sharply, even before the interpreter can translate it for him, says, "Na, but tell him that I feel very sick and would prefer not to talk so much" (p. 388). Cayetano's "Na" is ambiguous. It could either mean that he is saying "No" to the detective's suggestion that he should tell the truth or to his prediction that he is going to die. But there are two good reasons why we should take his "Na" to mean the latter. First, Cayetano never says that he won't tell the truth. Indeed it would be foolish for him to make such an admission; second, the detective's certainty that Cayetano will die is expressed in the last part of the sentence. So logically Cayetano's "Na would appear to be a response to what has been said last.

Decency, consideration for others (important attributes of the Code Hero) are Cayetano's qualities too. Even in intense pain he himself admits it only once in the whole story (and then too without self-pity or a sense of weakness): "For a while I was crazy with it in the belly. I thought the pain alone would kill me" (p. 400). But he never even makes a sound. When Mr. Frazer marvels at it, Cayetano promptly disowns any credit for it: "So many people in the ward" (p. 400). He says this not to be thought considerate, but merely to protest obliquely that he is not so brave that he does not need to cry.

Wilson, the hunter in "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," says: 'Doesn't do to talk too much about all this. Talk the whole thing away. No pleasure in anything if you mouth it up too much.'[8] Cayetano hardly ever talks about his own problems and when he is forced into doing it, he deftly turns the conversation away to others. At all times, he is either quiet or extremely terse in his speech, exemplifying, like Jake Barnes, Santiago and several other Code heroes, Delamore Schwartz' definition of the Code:

> It [the Code] extends its requirements into the region of

manners and courage, and one must speak in clipped tones, avoid pretentious phrases, condense emotion into a few explicatives or deliberately suppress it — noble, to borrow a pun from William Carlos Williams, collections no bull.

Like the Code hero Cayetano is lonely as well as silent about his loneliness and suffering. The Mexican musicians say he has no friend at all :

"Could you not send friends of Cayetano to see him?" Frazer asked,
"He has no friends."
"Every man has friends."
"This one, no."
"What does he do?"
"He is a card-player."
"Is he good?"
"I believe it." (pp. 395-96)

He knows his leg is paralyzed and yet his "Eyes are laughing" (p. 399). His ambitions in life, ironically, are far more simple than Sister Cecilia's ambition of attaining sainthood. And unlike the nun's impatience in not having become a saint so far and her final despair, "Now it seems impossible" (p. 399), he is not impatient either about his past or present, but with a quiet and strong dignity says that he will "continue to wait for it [his bad luck] to change." Like Jake, the Italian Major in "In Another Country," and Santiago he keeps up his hope, no matter how long and how persistently bad luck dogs his steps. Though usually a winner at cards, he eventually always loses his winnings. But he does not give up. Giving up won't do for the Code hero that he is.

Besides the strength and courage, his "grace under pressure," revealed by how he conducts himself in the moment of crisis, the norms of wisdom articulated by Mr. Frazer (though he does not explicitly apply them to Cayetano) reinforce the reading that Cayetano is the thematic centre of the story because he is the one that embodies true wisdom as opposed to bookish knowledge. Though he is a weak man himself, Mr. Frazer's concept of knowledge is in line with Hemingway's. At one point Mr. Frazer says: "I respect those who have faith even though they are ignorant" (p. 397). And after his extended opium meditation in

which he dismisses everything — religion, economics, patriotism, alcohol, ambition, bread — he finally dismisses even education as an opium. When the thin Mexican suggests that to wean people away from these forms of opium, they should be "rescued from ignorance" (he means, given true education), Mr. Frazer retorts "Do not talk nonsense. Education is an opium of the people." And when the Mexican asks him, "You do not believe in education?" Mr. Frazer says, "No" "In knowledge, yes" (p. 403). Knowledge without education, faith despite ignorance in the sense of not knowing books is precisely what Cayetano has. Mr. Frazer has his definitions right but he cannot apply them in his own encounter with life. Cayetano is a simple, uncomplicated man, Mr. Frazer is a writer — a bookish, sophisticated, complicated man. Earl Rovit identifies the "tutor" (his term for the Code hero) as a much simpler man than the "tyro" (the uninitiated Hemingway hero).[9] Cayetano's, strength comes also from his simplicity whereas Mr. Frazer's inner uncertainties result from his tendency to think too much.

Finally, it is important to note that Hemingway first called this story, "Give Us a Prescription, Doctor,"[10] but soon after gave it the present title. It is quite reasonable to assume that while initially he perceived despair outweighing hope in the world of this story, he quickly recognised that though the hospital and its inhabitants represented pain and suffering, it was the manly courage and endurance of Cayetano that gave the story its ultimate meaning. And so he appropriately changed the despairing first title to the present one in which the three principal characters are simply placed on par and the choice of the thematic centre is left to the reader.

It is a commonplace of Hemingway criticism that the world of his novels and stories is a world of anxieties, wounds and suffering. All his major novels and stories — from *The Sun Also Rises* to *The Old Man and the Sea* — project a world in which a Jake Barnes, a Frederick Henry, the old waiter, and a Santiago are faced with overwhelming odds. But what makes the writer's vision bleak or affirmative in these fictions is not the nature or number of these problems and the anguish they can cause. It is rather the capacity of at least one character, the Code hero, to endure and survive these problems with a determination, like Cayetano's, to wait for his "luck to change," and his persever-

ance in the act of living with his wounds and frustrations. Cayetano's suffering is equal to the suffering of some of the prime Code heroes in Hemingway; so is his capacity to take it like a man. It was Hemingway's own stance, too, during his experience in a hospital, on which this story is believed to have been based.[9] And it is the stance of the Code hero that represents Hemingway's vision — in this case Cayetano's — not the depressed opium meditation of the "empty-hearted" Mr. Frazer or the frivolously desperate recourse to religion by the Nun.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. In the forty-five years since the story was published, only two essays have been devoted to this story: Paul C. Rodgers, Jr., "Levels of Irony in Hemingway's 'The Gambler, the Nun, and the Radio,'" *Studies in Short Fiction*, 7, No. 3 (summer 1970), pp. 439-49; and Edward Stone, "Hemingway's Mr. Frazer: From Revolution to Radio," *Journal of Modern Literature*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (March 1971), pp. 375-88. In his book-length study, *Hemingway's Heroes*, Delbert E. Wylder mentions neither the story nor Cayetano. And Earl Rovit in his *Ernest Hemingway* (New Haven: College and University Press, 1963) gives no more than a few scattered lines to the story.

2. Edmund Wilson, "Hemingway: Gauge of Morale" *The Wound and the Bow* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965), pp. 185-86. It is surprising that though Wilson recognises the opium meditation as that of an *"empty-hearted patient"* (italics mine), he still bases his reading of the story largely on this meditation.

3. Leo Gurko, *Ernest Hemingway and the Pursuit of Heroism* (New York: Crowell, 1968), p. 176.

4. Rodgers, p. 440.

5. William Barrett, "Winner Take Nothing," in *Time of Need: Forms of Imagination in the 20th Century* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1972), p. 92. I find it difficult to agree with Barrett when he finds Sister Cecilia "a convincing and attractive example of genuine religious faith."

6. Ernest Hemingway, *The First Forty-nine Stories* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1962).

7. Joseph DeFalco, *The Hero in Hemingway's Short Stories* (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1963), p. 214.

8. Ernest Hemingway, *The First Forty-nine Stories*, p. 37.

9. Rovit, p. 70.

10. Carlos Baker, *Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story* (New York: Scribner's, 1969), p. 238.

11. Carlos Baker, *Ernest Hemingway: The Writer as Artist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972) p. 141, f.n. 14.

THE DRAMA OF CONFRONTATION: A STUDY OF EDWARD ALBEE

SHANTA ACHARYA

MAJOR American playwrights have been preoccupied with the conflict between illusion and reality: the multiple illusions of *The Iceman Cometh;* the social-economic illusion of the *Death of a Salesman;* the romantic illusion of *The Glass Menagerie.* Each of these plays makes some significant statement about the condition of man. The dialogue between illusion and reality continues in a new context in the plays of Edward Albee, who burst upon the off-Broadway scene with *The Zoo Story* in 1960 and has established himself as one of the major influences in the contemporary American theatre. His play *The American Dream* is an "examination of the American scene, an attack on the substitution of artificial for real values in our society. . . ."[1]

To Albee, the realization of the absurdity of the human condition is a necessary step towards understanding the freedom and responsibilities of man. And it is only through the confrontation of illusion that its relevance can be destroyed. To the drama of confrontation illusion becomes a denial of identity. The need to confront reality, expressed either through direct exhortation or through a simple reenactment is expressed in the drama of Edward Albee. The facile illusions of a success society are rejected as firmly as is the naivete of perfectible man. To Albee reality lies primarily in the admission of human limitations and the recognition of human possibilities.

It is interesting to note that major American writers reveal the inadequacy of the American Dream — that faith in the inevitability and value of success which Horatio Alger had propounded. With the advent of industrialisation, the city has become a powerful symbol of power, efficiency and success. But just as the latter-day Greeks and the imperial Romans felt deracinated in their great cities, so to modern man the city spells confusion and despair. To Eliot it was the "unreal city".[2] The United States has become, in J. K. Galbraith's phrase, "an affluent society".

And the problems that concern most Americans are the problems relating to their own identity. This happens to be one of the recurring themes in modern American drama, where modern urban realities are examined, where the absurdity of social institutions and conventions are laid bare. Robert S. Wallace views *The Zoo Story* as an attack on "the fictions which North American society has developed to escape the alienation and discord which he views are modern urban realities".[3] This dissection of the values of urban society is a powerful theme in modern American drama because, in the ultimate analysis, the fate of mankind is social.

Like Miller's, Albee's plays best represent a "well-defined expression of profound social needs which transcend any particular form of society or any particular historic moment".[4] Thus, the problems posed by the urban world which Albee as well as Miller reflects present the predicament of the common man in the American social structure. With a widening of our vision we see that these problems acquire universal significance. No man is an island; and this social responsibility of an individual is stressed in all literature that is great. In the words of Miller:

> All plays we call great . . . are ultimately involved with some aspect of a single problem. It is this: How may a man make of the outside world a home? How, and in what ways must he struggle, what must he strive to change and overcome within himself and outside himself if he is to find the safety, the surrounding of love, the ease of soul, the sense of identity and honour?[5]

In recent American writing the "alienation-identity-suffering theme"[6] predominates. It has been noticed that the central theme of the modern repertoire is the alienation of man — not only a social alienation, but also an individual, metaphysical alienation. Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* is concerned, as the title implies, with the town, the family as a timeless, stable entity in this larger context. In *U.S.A.* Dos Passos catches the fluid quality of American life. F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* describes the poignant disillusionment of people who had lived by the dream of wealth and glamour. Miller's plays are also grounded in the contemporary American society. His characters are usually

broken by social pressure like Willy Loman in the *Death of a Salesman*, while Tennessee Williams' characters break within a society that stifles their best impulses — Tom in *The Glass Menagerie* and Blanché Dubois in *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

The setting of Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* — the Wingfield Apartment — symbolizes a fundamentally "enslaved section of American society". The image of a cage is suggested in the description of those "hive-like conglomerations of cellular living-units" as one "interfused mass of automatism".[7] Man's identity is lost and his stature diminished. In O' Neill's *The Hairy Ape* the image of the cage keeps returning in every scene of the play. Similarly, the Salesman's house in Miller's *Death of a Salesman* is as much of a character in the play as the house of the Mannon's had been in *Mourning Becomes Electra* or the farmhouse in *Desire Under the Elms*. The walls within which Willy Loman is a prisoner are less tangible than any of brick and stone; and yet by keeping us visually aware of those physical walls, Miller suggests the metaphysical walls as well. *The Zoo Story* of Albee establishes the image of the zoo, in the course of the play, as a valid image for man, who has come to accept isolation as the norm of life.

The purpose of compiling these examples is to point to man's predicament in society today, in the modern, urban milieu. All these writers make an intensified examination of the self under crisis. The 'self' here is no longer the tragic protagonist of ancient times scaling metaphysical heights. Here is a 'self' beaten and hounded; enclosed in a cage; acquiring the posture of Neanderthal man; shrunken in stature and heroic possibilities. People appear smaller today because society has become so immense, says Saul Bellow, thus making it the pertinent function of the modern writer "to determine our proper size and the importance of our deeds".[8] Consequently a high premium is placed on the value of human relationships.

Albee believed that a playwright must make some statement about the condition of man. Albee makes his statement about man from *The Zoo Story* to *Box-Mao-Box* where he dramatizes different facets of the human condition. It is interesting to remember that Albee began with a feeling of social responsibility. He felt that it was one of the primary responsibilities of a playwright to show the people how they are and what their time is

like in the hope that, perhaps, they will change it. His first play *The Zoo Story* (1959) is a savage indictment of the American way of life. The setting of the play exemplifies certain basic facts about Albee's art and intentions:

> It is Central Park; a Sunday afternoon in summer; the present. There are two park benches, one facing towards either side of the stage; they both face the audience. Behind them; foliage, trees, sky.[9]

This setting is significant. The playwright attains objectivity by using such a distancing effect which is crucial to the dramatic effect desired. The park symbolizes urbanity. But the universal backdrop is the 'sky'. A bare stage and an unhindered horizon are impressive in the sense that they reflect something of the expansive vision of the play. Thus, take for example, the setting of O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape*:

> The effect sought after is a cramped space in the bowels of a ship, imprisoned by white steel. The lines of bunks, the uprights supporting them, cross each other like the steel framework of a cage.[10]

Similarly in Miller's *Death of a Salesman* "We are aware of towering, angular shapes" (D. S., P. 130) behind the salesman's house and surrounding it on all sides. Miller also tells us that "An air of the dream clings to the place, a dream rising out of reality" (D.S., P. 130). The ambivalence between dream and reality, which leads to the ultimate destruction of Wifly, is the central core of the play.

To Albee, as to Karl Jaspers, "modern society has detached itself from fundamentals and has created a new system of values by which the pursuit of material wealth and technological efficiency have come to replace basic human needs". These new values "console man with the feeling that he is progressing, but make him neglect or deny fundamental forces of his inner life which are then turned into forces of destruction".[11] Tom Wingfield in *The Glass Menagerie* significantly states that "these huge buildings are always burning with the slow and implacable fires of human desperation" (G.M. P. 233). Here then is an image of

man fighting, struggling and finally being destroyed, like Willy Loman, in the inescapable American situation. Jerry's function in *The Zoo Story* is literally to 'save' Peter from those accelerating forces of destruction that spell imminent danger to mankind. Jerry brings Peter back into a genuine and human relationship with his fellowmen. Here then is Albee's attempt to define the 'identity' of man in society as well as the responsibilities that he cannot escape as a mature individual. To Albee, therefore, the genuine justification of life lies in a readiness not only to confront reality, but also to reestablish the importance of human relationships.

Albee does not stop at just exposing the problems, the follies and foibles of modern urban society. But just as Sartre acknowledges the need to confront despair, so Albee acknowledges the need to confront reality. Both Miller and Albee use the theatre most clearly "as a means of knowing".[12] Although Miller's plays remain "social", in that his metaphysical concern is never entirely divorced from his concern with the community of men, the mood is one of affirmation built on confrontation. So also with Albee; but with a difference. Albee is fully aware of the vision of the European absurdists. Nevertheless, he is also struck by the inadequacy of their vision. He gives a genuine alternative both to illusion and despair which are modern urban realities.

Camus suggests that man "deprived of illusions . . . feels a stranger".[13] Albee's contention is that absurdity springs from a continued adherence to illusion. Albee's target of attack is the absurdity of illusion rather than the absurdity of reality. And this illusion is the myth of the American dream. Precisely because of this, Albee's concern is primarily man — man not in the 'void', but in active relationship with the surroundings. And it is this human concern in his plays that matters most; and which also gains functional significance in the contemporary world.

When *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* was screened, people flocked to see it primarily because it was an image of their own fears, hopes and frustrations in a language which they understood. Albee was also to capture the American idiom—the language men used in the urban set-up. Thus, while the critics try to establish, in a language that seems difficult, that Albee is up-in-arms against the establishment, that his plays "attack the very foundations of American optimism",[14] or that he lashes out furi-

ously against the inhuman complacency of the American Dream, Albee does so in a language that any American will understand:

> George: You disgust me on principle, and you're a smug son of a bitch personally, but I'm trying to give you a survival kit. DO YOU HEAR ME?[15]

George, who represents the voice of Albee, is disgusted with the smugness of the establishment. This voice is like the blasting of dynamite shaking us out of our world of illusions and make-believe. And having awaken us out of our sleep he presents us with a "survival kit", with his thesis:

> George: (after a silence) I've tried to . . . tried to reach you . . . to
> Nick (Contemptuously): . . . Make contact?
> George: Yes.
> Nick (still) . . . communicate?
> George: Yes. Exactly. (V. W. p. 73).

All Albee's plays are centred on that "momentous enlightenment" which leads to "a real companionship, founded on truth and purged of all falsehood".[16] A basically affirmative response to the human situation is reflected in his plays where bourgeois standards are blasted in ridicule and where the fierce undercurrents of personal relationships are critically examined.

The Zoo Story defines the life which man has created for himself as a "solitary free passage" (Z. S. p. 176) characterized by indifference towards others. Isolation, which is a direct concomitant of this attitude towards life, is established in the course of the play by the image of the zoo that dominates the play. Isolation, for Albee, is not the norm of human existence. Man is himself responsible for it, directly or indirectly; he contributes to the creation of such a condition. This for Albee is absurd; and he strikes out beyond the absurd when he emphasizes the need to make contact, to emerge from these self-imposed cages of convention and false values so that one individual consciousness may impinge on another. This act he defines as love which admits of immense possibilities open to man for communication. Just as Miller seeks to alleviate the anxiety of our lives today —

the anxiety that, according to him, springs from the "law of success" (C. P. p. 35) in a fiercely, competitive world — by supplanting it with the "system of love" (C. P. p. 36), so for Albee love is a mode of release for us who are condemned to solitary confinement within our skins all our lives by an indifferent God — the success-oriented society of the modern urban world. Here is again an example of "the death of the old God — and the failure of Science and materialism"[17] to provide a new meaning to life. The self, in Albee, is seen as a barrier between the individual and humanity. This self is not naked, "unaccomodated man"[18], but the self clothed beneath layers of illusion. And Albee's contention is that modern, urban social values perpetuate these illusions under whose weight the common man totters on the verge of destruction. His purpose is to lead man to a more meaningful relationship with men by striking against the mask of illusions. Like *The American Dream*, Albee's plays are an "examination of the American scene, an attack on the substitution of artificial for real values in our society" (A. D. pp. 53-54).

Peter in *The Zoo Story* lives in the vacuity of such a flimsy society, but is pathetically unware of it. This for Albee is absurd, because Peter is cut off from the true knowledge of the reality of his situation. Peter accepts the illusion of harmony and happiness that his life style seemingly supports. He has allowed himself to be emasculated by the establishment. This is suggested in Peter's inability to give his wife a son. The order and apparent harmony of Peter's life is blasted by Jerry to dislocate Peter into a meaningful understanding of reality. Peter has no individuating characteristics: he is "neither fat nor gaunt, neither handsome nor homely" (Z. S. p. 158); like any other nondescript American. Here is no longer the "divine average"[19] that Whitman dreamt of. And the book that Peter reads symbolises a facet of his personality that prefers a vicarious experiencing of reality to a direct confrontation with it. It is precisely because of this intellectual and emotional inertia that Peter has been alienated from others. Jerry desires to impose upon Peter the dire necessity of human contact. Albee's onslaught against the increasing mechanisation creeping into human relationship is revealed in Peter's relationship with his wife. This lack of vital understanding in sexual relationships is aptly stated by one of Miller's characters:

> Happy: The only trouble is, it gets like bowling or something. I just keep knockin' them over and it does not mean anything . . . (D. S. p. 140).

Similarly Jerry's single-night dates with the "pretty little ladies" (Z. S. p. 167) do not mean anything. Jerry makes a heroic attempt to draw Peter out of his shell and establish his position as a 'man' among men, to make a home out of the outer world. He thus endeavours to banish Peter's solitude that springs from his adherence to illusions. From *The Zoo Story* to *A Delicate Balance* Albee continues his indictment of a society which relies on illusion to survive and which is incapable of realising that the inevitable result of this is a loss of identity and a "gradual . . . demise of intensity, the private preoccupation, the substitutions".[20]

This solitude of Peter is far from creative. It is "neither plenitude nor vacancy".[20] And succumbing to this solitude is debelitating, because it severs man's vital relationship with men. Albee thereby stresses the inadequacy of illusion and solitude. In *The Zoo Story*, Jerry's West Side Apartment is inhabited by a "coloured queen" who never bothers Jerry and who "never brings anyone up to his room"; then there is a Puerto Rican family whose members are strangers to Jerry; and there is "also somebody else living there" but Jerry does not even know who it is (Z. S. pp. 164-65). This reinforces the image of the zoo and emphasizes the existence of barriers that separate one individual consciousness from another. Albee would agree with Saul Bellow's Henderson when he says that "it's love that makes reality reality",[22] although it is clear that his love is primarily a human concern for others. Albee is concerned with modern society that has inverted its values and placed success above the necessity to reestablish real contact between human beings.

To Albee abstractions, like the American Dream, prevent an individual's direct relationship with actuality. This dream is "the law of success which says that a failure in society and in business has no right to live. Unlike the law against incest, the law of success is not administered by statute or church, but it is very nearly as powerful in its grip on men (C.P. p. 35). This vicious grip of The American Dream on men's mind acts like a narcotic. It is deadening — and all America is caught in its deathly stupor. Thus George verbalizes their dilemma:

George: I'm numbed enough . . . and I don't mean by liquor, . . . a gradual, over-the-years going to sleep of the brain cells — I'm numbed enough, now, to be able to take you when we are alone. I don't listen to you . . . or when I *do* listen to you, I sift everything, I bring everything down to reflex response, so I don't really *hear* you . . . but you've moved bag and baggages into your own fantasy world now, and you've started playing variations on your own distortions . . . (V. W. p. 93).

It is this fantasy world that Albee attacks, because the watch-word of this success society is "non-involvement", which leads to isolation and indifference. This indifference or intellectual and emotional callousness is unflowering and deathly. Peter complains to Jerry: "I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ANY MORE" and refuses to "understand" Jerry.

Peter: "I DON'T UNDERSTAND" (Z. S. p. 177).

Honey does not "want to know anything" and Nick preserves his "scientific detachment in the face of . . . life" (V. W. p. 64). Albee vehemently opposes such an escapist mentality that suggests a negative and nihilistic approach to the problems of man. *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* has been branded by some critics as a persistent escape into morbid fantasy. On the contrary, Albee's intention is to blast the persistence of such illusions. He insists on the need to face Virginia Woolf, and the play ends on a note of acceptance:

George (Puts his hand gently on her shoulder: she puts her head back; and sings to her, very softly):

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf
Virginia Woolf
Virginia Woolf,
Martha: I . . . am . . . George . . .
George: Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf . . .
Martha: I . . . am . . . George . . . I . . . am . . .
(George nods slowly.)
(Silence: tableau) (V. W. p. 140).

Virginia Woolf is a very complex symbol, and the last lines of the play exemplify Albee's anti-absurdist faith that there is a great need for society to abandon its complete faith in abstractions — like the American Dream — and accept reality, just as Martha and George face the reality of their situation. The image of Virginia Woolf is reinforced by the creation of the myth of a dream-child. The existence of this child symbolises the existence of the world of illusions and make-believe, accepted by both of them as a defence against an impotent reality. The impotent world of Peter finds a correspondent echo in the world of Nick and Honey. Their world is impotent because it is based on illusion. In the section *Fun and Games* this illusion acquires layers of significance and symbolic meaning. The games that they play are loaded comments on the social life of today, on the man-woman relationship. Alan Schnieder, the play's Broadway Director, has expressed his views about the play in a language that sums up Albee's faith: "Is Albee not rather dedicated to smashing that rosy view, shocking us with the truth of our present-day behaviour and thought, striving to purge us into an actual confrontation with reality?"[23] And this is what is precisely enacted in the play. Albee's main characters progress from "humiliation" to "humility",[24] from illusion to truth. Both Jerry and George illustrate this. Thus, George, who at first clings to the world of illusions, acknowledges his complicity in perpetuating this illusion. This is, as it were, the turning point of the play, for accepting the responsibility of one's own sin leads to the knowledge of truth. This knowledge leads to liberation. In *Fun and Games* George 'recognises' himself:

> George: . . . There are very few things in this world that I am sure of . . . but the one thing in this whole stinking world that I am sure of is my partnership, my chromosomological partnership in the . . . creation of our . . . blond-eyed, blue-haired . . . son (V. W. p. 49).

This is the shock of recognition that leads to a greater understanding of life. Albee's comment on *The American Dream* that it is an attack against the fiction that "everything in this shipping land of ours is peachy keen . . ." is also true of *Virginia Woolf*. But George does not cling to this illusion. He systematically

blasts it.

Albee's satiric barbs are aimed against phoney social institutions and conventions. His setting is urban; his world is society. He conceives of man, not in a metaphysical holocaust, but in relation with men, in society. He implies that societal forces play a very active and major part in the life of men. It is almost a psychological process of modulation and control — how societal pressures influence individuals. George and Martha are symbols of humanity desperately clinging to a dream — the American dream. Albee's purpose here is to blast this myth, and he does so in three distinct stages: Fun and Games; Walpurgisnacht and The Exorcism. This is almost ritualistic, like the purging of evil spirits from a vitiated society. This is done finally in the killing or destruction of the dream-child :

Martha: He IS OUR CHILD!
George: AND I HAVE KILLED HIM!
Martha: NO!
George: YES!
(Long silence) (V. W. p. 137)

A sense of peace descends with the clearing of the mist:

George: Requiescat in pace.

The boisterous "fun and games" mellow into a mature understanding of the "rule" of the game.

George: (Softly) It will be dawn soon . . . (V. W. p. 138).

Alongwith the sense of quietude goes tenderness. For the first time in the play we come across emotions refined by experience. Albee's plays are a queer mixture of opposing emotions that stand out in contrast in the larger pattern of the play: "neither kindness nor cruelty by themselves, independent of each other, creates any effect beyond themselves; and I have learned that the two combined, together, at the same time, are the teaching emotion" (Z. S. p. 176). These two opposing sets of emotions keep the texture of the play taut. It creates tension that gives the play a certain maturity. At the end of each play a sense of peace is felt.

This springs from the acceptance of reality. But this lasting sense of peace, this sense of having reached home at last, has to be sought actively. The protagonists in Albee's plays are highly fallible men, but they confront reality with a degree of consciousness, fortitude and passion which reaffirms the human capacity to feel and to act. Man's passivity, the image of man as a victim as in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* is replaced by an active confrontation of reality, which is not necessarily absurd. While Willy Loman in *The Death of a Salesman* remains only a potential, that potential is realized in Albee's heroes. Even Biff Loman in *Death of a Salesman* comes to a greater awareness of reality through its acceptance. For Albee it is this confrontation of reality that leads one to its final acceptance.

The problems of modern man trapped in the midst of a success society that upholds false ideals are of universal significance. It is this predicament of man as a victim that has attracted the attention of modern American writers. So far then have we travelled from the Greek concept of Fate to the modern thinker's analysis of man as a victim of a 'fate' created by social values. Arthur Miller, speaking of his own plays, wrote: "I aimed to make a play with the veritable countenance of life. To make one the many, as in life, so that 'society' is a power and a mystery of custom and inside the man and surrounding him, as the fish is in the sea and the sea inside the fish . . ." (C. P. p. 30).

The same is also true of the plays of Albee where the dichotomy between illusion and truth is clearly defined. The image of the city that harbours such atrocious illusions is therefore fundamental to them. With the steady march of intellect, science, technology and progress, the threat of the increasing mechanization of man looms large.

While America scaled the peak of success in scientific achievements, conquest of space, technological efficiency and economic progress in the 60's, its living theatre lashed out sharply at the deadening of human values in a constricted society which placed success and achievement above communication and the human warmth of understanding. Albee's plays are timely utterances on the predicament of man in the urbanized world of today. So here is an unacknowledged legislator of the American way of life doing a lot of rethinking and reorientation of the social values of life. The past half century has established the image of man as a

passive creation of environment and family-created psychological drives. Literature is a ceaseless flux of overthrowing one determinism to make way for another more faithful to life's changing relationships. Albee's drama opens up vistas of new relationships between man and men.

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EXPERIENCE AND ESCAPE IN PATANJALI'S METAPHYSICS AND T. S. ELIOT'S THEORY OF THE CREATIVE PROCESS

SHIVA M. PANDEYA

T. S. ELIOT[1] studied Patañjali's metaphysics at Harvard University under the guidance of his teacher James Houghton Woods, who defines it as "that type of emotional thinking which culminates in a supersensuous object of aesthetic contemplation."[2] In this description the phrase "emotional thinking" refers to the nature and process of meditation, and "a supersensuous object of aesthetic contemplation" to the Self (Atman), the very end of this process. But before the end is achieved, the emotional thinking concentrates on the "sensuous objects" of aesthetic contemplation. And modern poetics in general, and Eliot's critical theory in particular, uses such phrases as "emotive thinking," "emotive thought," "a sensuous apprehension of thought," etc. Emotional thinking has now come to distinguish poetry from other verbal discourses that are not poetry.

In Patañjali the "emotional thinking" or "asthetic contemplation" is a technique of meditation which has a supersensuous object in view, i.e. the Self; but before that end is attained, the process is concerned with experiencing the latent deposit of the effects of karma and thereby escaping them. "Experience" and "escape" constitute the twofold aim of meditation, culminating in the purification and isolation of the Self, i.e. its isolation from the fluctuations of the mind-stuff which becloud it. It is through the process of meditation and aesthetic contemplation that the practiser, the yogin, attains to a realization of the Self.

In *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* (1948) Eliot, while discussing the third dimension of tradition, i.e. influences from abroad, acknowledges the influence of Indian thought and sensibility on his own poetry: "In the literature of Asia is great poetry. There is also profound wisdom and some very difficult metaphysics; but at the moment I am only concerned with poetry . . . . Long ago I studied the ancient Indian languages, and while I was chiefly interested at that time in philosophy, I read

a little poetry too; and I know that my own poetry shows the influence of Indian thought and sensibility."[3] This influence of Indian thought and sensibility makes Eliot's talent seem alien to the English tradition. Consider, for example, George Williamson's view of Eliot: "From the contrariety of his effects, the reader might be justified in concluding that his talent is alien to the English tradition."[4]

Northrop Frye clearly identifies this alien strain in Eliot's talent as Indian:

> Thus what started as a nineteenth-century idealist's problem about how far we can "know reality" ends as a kind of mystical primer. In the Indian philosophy which Eliot next studied, the ego is a product of an automatic natural energy, called *karma*, which expresses itself as desire, and involves one in suffering. Over against this is a consciousness of a self beyond mind and body, a self which is not a separate ego but identical with a total self (Atman). The end of the process, summed up in the phrase "Thou art That," is an objectivity which achieves self-identification, a paradoxical union very like that of the poetical process in Eliot.[5]

Northrop Frye offers a valuable insight by likening "the poetic process in T. S. Eliot" to the mystic's meditative process in Patañjali, which leads the practiser to self-identification or selfhood or isolation of the self from the impurities of the mind-stuff.

Eliot studied Indian poetry and philosophy at a formative period of his life; some of the Indian thought which gave him illumination got deeply rooted in his thinking and guided him not only in making the act of composing poetry a technique of meditation but also in formulating his theory of creative process. What this paper aims to do is to annotate, in a limited area, the insight of Northrop Frye quoted above.

I shall briefly outline some of the cardinal points in Patañjali's metaphysics, with special reference to "experience" and "escape", and elucidate Eliot's theory or creative process in the light of these ideas. For the purposes of citation I shall use Eliot's teacher James Woods's edition of *The Yoga-System of Patañjali*, which contains Patañjali's sutras, Vyasa's commentary, and Vacaspati

Mishra's explanations and of which W. B. Yeats has written this: "It is the standard edition, final, impeccable in scholastic eyes, even in the eyes of a famous poet and student of Sanskrit [i.e. T. S. Eliot], who used it as a dictionary."[6]

The yoga-system of Patañjali is grounded in the metaphysics of the sankhya-system, according to which a "correlation" of the spiritual self (purusa) and the material nature (prakrti) gives rise to consciousness. The ego, mind, and the senses, which constitute consciousness, are an evolute of nature and in a state of constant fluctuation and mutation. On the other hand, the absolute energy of intellect (citi-sakti), which is an attribute of the spiritual self, is immutable and changeless. The ego is an agent of action and undergoes mutation; and hence it is different from the self and its çiti-sakti (*ahankāra karttā, na purusah*). The self is the seer or witness-self, which is beyond mutation and action.

Nature, whose evolutes are the ego, mind, and senses, has three constituent aspects or gunas: *sattva, rajas,* and *tamas. Sattva* has a disposition to vividness, serenity, lightness, and joy; *rajas* to activity, pain, and grief; and *tamas* to inertia, heaviness, covering, dejection, etc. They interact on each other and cause fluctuations of the mind-stuff. The ego lurks in the mind and the senses; and dominated by *rajas* and *tamas*, it arises in the *sattva* of the mind-stuff with an appetitive drive towards the objects of the senses.

The mind where the ego lurks, is the regulator of the senses; and it is constantly agitated by fluctuations caused by the interaction between the three constituent aspects. Thus is man impelled into action and attachment to sense-objects which leave a latent deposit of karma as impressions in the mind. This latent deposit consists of the subconscious impressions (vasanas) and the subliminal-impressions (samskāras), which seek their fruition and by whose force man is impelled into cycles of death-and-rebirth.

Now, yoga is the technique for restricting the fluctuations of the mind stuff, so that the self may be liberated by experiencing the latent deposit of karma in a state of concentration (samādhi). As long as the fluctuations of the mind-stuff are unrestricted, the self remains defiled in its reflection in the mind.

There are three terms in the yoga-system which have special

significance for Eliot's theory of creative process: the individual self, the mind-stuff, and the object of sight and other senses. The self is immutable and has something divine about it, the mind-stuff is subject to fluctuations, and both the self and the objects of the senses are reflected in the mind. The self is the seer and the mind is the mirror-like medium in which both the seer and the objects of sight, etc. are reflected. This correlation of the seer and the object of sight, etc. is the cause of the feelings of pleasure and pain, feelings which becloud the self and are, therefore, to be escaped by being experienced in meditation and concentration.

The function of the mind-stuff is to help the self in experiencing the latent impressions and deposits of the karma, and thereby escaping them. The following passage from Patañjali has been echoed in Eliot's theory of the creative process.

> Although diversified by absolutely countless subconscious impressions, this same mind-stuff exists for the sake of another [i.e. Self], for the sake of the experience and the release of another; not for its own sake. Because like a house its nature is to work as a combination. The mind-stuff must act as a combiner (for the self) and not for its own sake. Pleasurable mind-stuff is not for the pleasure of (the mind-stuff). The mind-stuff of thought is not for the thought (of the mind-stuff). But both of these two kinds exist for the sake of another. And that very Self which has its purpose in the two purposes of experience and liberation is this 'other'. . . . But that particular other which is the Self does not act as a combination.'

The mind-stuff, which is a receptacle for countless subconscious impressions, is also the combiner of these impressions for the twofold purpose of their being experienced and escaped by the self. This mind-stuff has been variously described in the yoga-system as a magnet, a crystal, or a mirror (images echoed in Eliot's theory): "The mind-stuff is like a magnet; and, as an object suitable to be seen (by the Self as Witness), it gives its aid (to the Self) by the mere fact of being near it, and thus the relation between it and the Self is that between property (svam) and proprietor (svāmin)."[8] Again, "when by reason of nearness to each other, the difference between (the colour) of China-rose

and of the crystal (vase), or analogously, between the thinking substance and the Self, does not come to consciousness (a-bheda-grahe), then the individual by wrongly attributing the fluctuations of the thinking-substance to the Self, recognizes (wrongly) that he is tranquil, or pained, or infatuated."[9]

Meditation, when it achieves concentration, leads to discriminative discernment, which is a means of attaining escape. When the discernment is uprisen, it is accompanied by seven-fold insight:

> 1. The thing to be escaped has been thought out; nor need (the yogin) think it out again. 2. The reasons for the thing to be escaped have dwindled away; nor need they dwindle away again. 3. The escape is directly perceived by the concentration of restriction; (nor need anything beyond this be discovered). 4. The means of escape in the form of discriminative discernment has been cultivated; (nor need anything beyond this be cultivated). So this is the four-fold final release (vimukti), belonging to insight, which may be effected. But the final release of the mind-stuff is three-fold (as follows). 5. The authority of the thinking-substance is ended. 6. The aspects (guna), like rocks fallen from the top of the mountain peak, without support of their own accord, incline towards dissolution and come with this (thinking-substance) to rest. And when these aspects are quite dissolved they do not cause growth again, because there is no impelling cause. 7. In this stage the Self has passed out of relation with the aspects (guna), and, enlightened by himself and nothing more, is stainless and isolated.

In this course of his practice of concentration the yogin attains many supernormal powers; these, too, are to be used for a twofold purpose of experience and escape. These powers may be understood as the supernormal powers of the imagination. One of these supernormal powers is the ability to create mind-stuffs and personalities out of one's own sense-of-personality (asmitā). The following passage from Patañjali is echoed in Eliot's theory:

> Created mind-stuffs may result from the sense-of-personality and from this alone.

> Assuming nothing more than the sense-of-personality as the cause of mind-stuff, (the yogin) makes created mind-stuffs. As a result of this, (the bodies) have (separate) mind-stuffs . . . . Each body so long as it lives is evidently inseparably connected with an individual mind-stuff . . . . And the same holds good in the case of bodies (created by the yogin) . . . .
>
> While there is a variety of actions, the mind-stuff which impels the many is one.
>
> . . . The yogin makes a single mind-stuff which impels all the mind-stuffs. From this (mind-stuff) the variety of actions is obtained . . . . On this point there is a Purāna passage: "By virtue of his authoritative power the Içvara, though one, becomes many. Then being many he becomes one. And from him also proceed all these variations of the central organ. The Yogiçvara makes the bodies one-fold or two-fold or three-fold or manifold and again unmakes them. With some he may partake of objects, with others he may practise fierce austerities. All these again he may draw in, as the sun draws in the multitude of rays."[19]

The important thing in this passage is that the yogin creates many personalities from his own sense of personality; through them he experiences the latent impressions lying in the receptacle of his mind-stuff, and thereby escapes them, i.e. becomes liberated from them. Again, the two aspects of the mind should be noted here: one is the mind-stuff as the receptacle of impressions which he will have to suffer or experience or burn in seeded concentration, and the other is the mind in its creative aspect. The relation between the two is that the creative mind creates personages out of the impressions that lie in the mind which is the receptacle. Actually, it is the same mind in its two aspects; but the yogin is capable of discriminating between the mind that suffers and the mind that creates.

Further, the mind which creates is itself a created mind-stuff; i.e. created through the techniques of concentration, it becomes endowed with supernormal powers. It is only when the yogin has recreated or remade himself that he is able to create many out of his own latent tendencies for the two-fold purpose of experience and escape; there is no escape or liberation (*mukti*) without experience (*bhoga*) of the latent tendencies. The "mind-stuff which

impels the many" is a product of attaining discrimination between the Seer, the object-of-sight, etc., and the mirror-like mind in which the other two are reflected. The remaking of the mind involves the yogin's progress from a state of undifferentiated-consciousness (*avidya*) through discriminative discernment (*viveka-khyati*) to insight (*prajña*).

We have seen that in Patañjali's yoga-system concentration is a technique of experiencing and thereby escaping, in a state of concentration (*samadhi*), vàsanas and samskaras, subconscious and subliminal feelings and impressions, which are the binding effects of karma. Now it remains to show that the process of the yogin's meditation and the creative process in Eliot's theory are identical.

There are obvious differences between the two, which must be noted at the outset. The poetic process is a further continuation of the process of meditation and is not completed, as Eliot has himself noted, until the process terminates in the making of the poem or play in its final form. Again, while the yogin, like the Yogiçvara, can create beings out of his own sense-of-personality (asmita) and then unmake them; the poet, after he has created characters in a play as a finished product, cannot unmake them: they live through centuries in a verbal mode in others' consciousness.

At the back of Eliot's theory of creative process, however, lie many of the points in Patañjali's system: e.g. the conception of the mind as a medium, a magnet, a crystal, a receptacle in which very varied impressions combine for the experience and release of the self.

According to Eliot, the poet has "not a personality to express but a particular medium, which is only a medium and not a personality, in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways."[11] He considers the mind of the mature poet to be "a more finely perfected medium in which special, or very varied, feelings are at liberty to enter into new combinations."[12] The function of the mind as a combiner leads to a process of depersonalization of the very personal feelings and impressions.

In "Tradition and the Individual Talent" Eliot quotes Aristotle to the effect that the mind is something more divine and impassable (*o de nous isos theioteron ti chai apathes estin*). But he halts, as he puts it, "at the frontier of metaphysics or my-

creates a vital character, is a sort of give-and-take."[21] That is, the author too experiences the fruition of his own tendencies through the created character and thereby finds escape or release from them:

> The author may put into that character, besides its other attributes, some trait of his own, some strength or weakness, some tendency to violence or to indecision, some eccentricity even, that he has found in himself, Something perhaps never realized in his own life, something of which those who know him best may be unaware, something not restricted in transmission to characters of the same temperament, the same age, and, least of all, of the same sex. Some bit of himself that the author gives to a character may be the germ from which the life of that character starts.[22]

We have only to substitute "yogin" for "author" in the passage just quoted to be able to see that it may well be an explanation of Patañjali's yoga-sùtra iv. 4: "Created mind-stuffs may result from the sense-of-personality and from this alone."

And also consider this: "On the other hand," writes Eliot, "a character which succeeds in interesting its author may elicit from the author latent potentialities of his own being."[23] This is true even when the author is representing a historical personage or, like Shakespeare, reworking on some pre-existing material. He has to fuse a part of his own personality with that character in order to make him live, make him vital.

And just as the personages created by the yogin of Patañjali influence their creator, so also is the author in Eliot's theory influenced by the characters he creates. "I believe," writes Eliot, "that the author imparts something of himself to his characters, but I also believe that he is influenced by the characters he creates."[24] In what way do the created characters influence their creator? Obviously, by offering him an experience (*bhoga*) of, and thereby an escape (*vimukti*) from, the "latent potentialities of his own being," to use Eliot's own phrase, or the "latent deposits of the effects of karma," to use a phrase from Patañjali.

Thus viewed in the light of Patañjali's metaphysics, Eliot's theory of creative process seems to me to make sense, and such passages as the following become intelligible:

> Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion: it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. But, of course, only those who have personality and emotion know what it means to want to escape from these things.[25]

Eliot's impersonal theory of creative process is, in fact, a theory of "depersonalization" through experience and escape in Patañjali's sense. It is not "impersonal" in any other sense. And his entire body of poetry itself may even be viewed as a technique of meditation with its two-fold end in view, experience and escape. And this, again, in Patañjali's sense.

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THE SELF IN RAMANUJAN'S POETRY

CHIRANTAN KULSHRESTHA

COMMENTING on the dominant resonances of A. K. Ramanujan's poetry, R. Parthasarathy observes that:

> "In no other poet before Ramanujan is there his scrupulous concern with language. He has been able to forge . . . an oblique, elliptical style all his own. . . . It is an attempt, I believe, to turn language into an artifact."[1]

In Parthasarathy's view, such a poetic use of language is particularly striking because in Indo-Anglian poetry, with a few well-known exceptions, "it has not been possible to extend the resources of the English language or even to indianize it, although it is used with distinction for literary purposes."[2]

It is not my intention to cite examples from Ramanujan's poetry to illustrate the finer points made with considerable precision and intelligence by Parthasarathy. Nor is it my purpose to contest any minor matter on which I might happen to disagree with him. I wish to argue, in what may be regarded theoretically as an extension of his essay, that the cultivation and enrichment of a distinctive personal idiom is not a process that takes place in a vacuum, but is symptomatic of a poet's active concern with the dynamics of his sensibility, the precious tones, movements, and distinctions of his own being as individual and artist. Delmore Schwartz, in a seminal study of the nature of modern poetry, pointed out that a poet's exploitation of unsuspected preserves of language was inevitably a function of his self-absorption.[3] "Because," said Schwartz:

> This private life of his sensibility is the chief subject available to him, it becomes increasingly necessary to have recourse to new and special uses of language. The more the poet has cultivated his own sensibility, the more unique and special has his subject, and thus his method become.[4]

Let me, however, return from the general truth of Schwartz's remark, which applies to all modern poetry, and direct attention to the particular subtleties of what may be called the Indo-Anglian predicament. The relationship between the self and language, which is undeniably crucial to the creative process, affects the sensibility of the Indo-Anglian poet in two possible ways. First: the linguistic medium that he employs for poetic purposes tends to set him apart from the community of Indian writers in other languages; as a result, the idiom of Indo-Anglian poetry and the general creative activity and speech-rhythms of the artistic community in India often appear to move in opposite directions, entering at best into a tenuous relationship with one another. It is true that English continues to be used as a language of commerce and academic discourse by a large section of the Indian people, but such uses of English are very often a source of considerable distress to the artist and the only creative use to which he may conceivably put it is by parodying it. This should serve to explain, partly, the motivations behind Nissim Ezekiel's parodies of Indian English in poems such as "Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T. S."[6] and Ramanujan's use of covert irony in a poem like "Some Indian Uses of History on a Rainy Day."[6]

Second: if the choice of English thus separates the Indo-Anglian poet from the community of poets in other languages, it could hardly be said to bring him any closer, in matters of sensibility, to writers in other English-speaking countries. With them he shares an alphabet, but not the revitalizing resources of a rich cultural tradition and heritage that may lend his poetry the halo of myth and romance, the flavour of cherished theologies, even the effects resulting from a dramatic juxtaposition of one slice of historical time with another. The awareness of this absence imposes severe strains on the capacity of the Indo-Anglian poet. It causes strange spiritual rumblings and disturbances and often evokes powerful feelings of nostalgia for a rich literary past in the poet's own mother-tongue.[7]

It must, however, be recognized that not all Indo-Anglian poets are victims of the linguistic isolation resulting from their adoption of English as a medium of creative expression. In three of our more competent poets — A. K. Ramanujan, Kamala Das, and R. Parthasarathy — there is an attempt to reach over to the state of creative freedom that comes to the artist when he is

perfectly relaxed in the intricacies of his own language and can even convey their emotional and intellectual equivalents appropriately in the grammatical and syntactical contexts of another language.[8] Ramanujan, Parthasarathy, and Kamala Das are, therefore, also poets whose work evokes favourable responses among critics in their own languages. Their verse provides interesting and potentially rewarding, if not always rich and sustained, blends of significations which contribute substantially to the poetic mannerisms. In Ramanujan's case, poetry is inevitably a product of the intersection of, what he calls, his outer and inner forms: "English and my disciplines (linguistics, anthropology) give me my 'outer' forms — linguistic, metrical, logical and other such ways of shaping experience; and my first thirty years in India, my frequent visits and fieldtrips, my personal and professional preoccupations with Kannada, Tamil, the classics and folklore give me my substance, my 'inner' forms, images and symbols. They are continuous with each other, and I can no longer tell what comes from where."[9]

I wish to suggest that the linguistic and cultural determinants of a poet's imagination — what Ramanujan calls the inner and outer forms — are primarily responsible for his characteristic solipsism, his concern with the working of his psyche, his view of interpersonal relationship, his nostalgia for the lost time of childhood, the presences of parents, grandparents, ancestral homes, and his choice of highly personal symbols. If Ramanujan, as Parthasarathy rightly points out, has been alone among his peers in cultivating a uniquely personal poetic idiom, it follows that his involvement with the problem of self-definition has perhaps been more serious and intense, more artistically viable, than that of others. The point can be made with greater cogency and pertinency by isolating the prominent features of some of Ramanujan's more representative poems. Consider, for instance, "Self-Portrait":

I resemble everyone
but myself, and sometimes see
in shop-windows,
    despite the well-known laws
    of optics,
the portrait of a stranger,
date unknown,

often signed in a corner
by my father. (*SP*, p. 9)

This poem is so deceptive in its neat directness that it can easily be supposed to reflect a basically insufficient and uncertain self, susceptible to influences from outside, and, consequently, alien to its own viewer. Another way of reading the poem — a way that seeks to make it seminal to an understanding of Ramanujan's poetry — is to place it in the context of Yeats' statement that, unlike the man of the Renaissance and the Middle Ages who looked at the mask to imitate Christ or some classical hero, the modern man looks at the mirror to discover and become himself. The different attitudes he assumes towards himself and Reality are, therefore, the different identities or points of view that figure in his life.[10]

Viewed in this manner, "Self-Portrait" not only illustrates, in Yeats' sense, a modern concern with the self but also provides the matrix within which a discussion of the self in Ramanujan's poetry becomes relevant. The poem dramatises a self whose essential passivity allows it to resemble others over an indeterminate stretch of time. This identification is important because it lends the self the freedom to share different identities and attitudes, each of them real in feeling and "mysterious" in apprehension (windows defy the laws of optics to reveal a stranger's face). Also subtly suggested is the problematic compulsion of being what one is, one's father's son, absurdly destined to assume an identity attached to oneself by forces beyond one's control and made always to feel the ineluctable pressure of one's past, of relations dead and alive. The tension dormant in "Self-Portrait" between the compulsion to be what one is and to retain, at the same time, one's passivity characterises much of Ramanujan's poetry. The conflict achieves an intense expression in "Conventions of Despair" where the passive self, conscious of its religious and cultural roots and longing to define itself solely in terms of their mythic particulars, rejects the fashionable cliches of contemporary experience that derive from the postures of marginality, alienation, toughness, and pacifism, and chooses to find:

my particular hell only in my hindu mind:
must translate and turn

till I blister and roast
for certain lives to come, 'eye-deep,'
in those Boiling Crates of Oil . . . (*SP*, p. 12).

The resolve to return to the hell "in my hindu mind" does not always recur in other poems: what the poem indicates, instead, is a state of mind faithfully recording a complex of feelings in a given context. A changed context calls for another order of sensibility giving rise to a different, though equally sensitive, tone and state of mind. "Instead of a Farewell," a very different poem from "Conventions of Despair," accepts, in a non-religious and personal sense, the possibility of some constancy in the self by refusing to bid farewell "to this part of me/that turns and returns/with a different partner" because:

how can I say farewell
when farewells are made
only for people who stay
and only for people
who go away?[11]

The manifestation of such a conception of the self makes it imperative that we acknowledge the significance of the plurality of identity in Ramanujan's poetry. Being phenomenal the self assumes a number of identities in time. Some of these are even mutually incongruous, but all gain validity from the heightening of feeling in particular situations. It would be rash to conclude that such a relativity of identities is a symptom of fickle or abnormal psychic behaviour; on the other hand, it may indicate the self's craving for constancy and stability in flux. As Bergson affirms, change is necessary for the self to *endure* since "a psychic state which remains the same so long as it is not replaced by the following state does not *endure* either."[12] Theologian John S. Dunne, likewise, believes that the shift from attitude to attitude, state to state, identity to identity points to the "mystery" of the self: "the search from person to person involved in the process of passing over from standpoint to standpoint reveals each person as inexhaustible, incapable of being reduced to a single standpoint or to any sum of standpoints."[13] In Ramanujan's poetry *passivity* becomes an essential pre-condition for suggesting the

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inexhaustible potential of the self: it is a positive state of being which allows the self the necessary freedom and transparence to manipulate subjective and linear time, use personae, bring the equations of one's relationships into a vivid focus by interacting memory and time, and even observe itself as an object.[14] As a poetic device it helps to design the framework or the "theatre" within which the identities of the self may be presented in their entirety of feeling and complexity. An important characteristic of this "theatre" is the presence in it of all time: events, recalled and juxtaposed through the method of association, are constantly viewed against shifts in time till a particular attitude of the self towards experience begins to crystallize. Another characteristic, which needs to be noted, is Ramanujan's use of the narrative mode to render the nuances of particular experiences: his method generally involves the introduction of the specifics of an experience through a plain or meditative statement which grows into an image dramatising as well as recounting an event through visual and auditory details. It is possible to hazard the inference that Ramanujan's adoption of such a method of poetic composition derives from his affinity with the Tamil poets of the first three centuries A.D. who sought to poeticize inner experience by exploiting the proprieties of drama as well as real life. This strategy, Ramanujan points out in his "Afterword" to the translations of classical Tamil love poems included in *The Interior Landscape*, helps to "depersonalize" poetry and turn it into "a kind of second language."[15] Thus, the authentic voice of the poet, his true "language" so to speak, does not solely depend upon the tongue in which he chooses to express himself:

> "The landscapes, the personae, the appropriate moods, all become a language within language. Like a native speaker, he makes 'infinite use of finite means,' to say with familiar words what has never been said before; he can say exactly what he wants to, without even being aware of the ground-rules of his grammar."[16]

It is perhaps a perception of this quality that is responsible for the virtues that Parthasarathy singles out for praise in Ramanujan's poetry — the achievement of unexpected effects by employing familiar speech-rhythms, cliches, and slang.[17]

Ramanujan's method is put to striking advantage in "Small-scale Reflections on a Great House." A meditative, musing tone and the deft repetition of a common phrase ("lost long ago") lead the reader to realise that the self has gradually become the "theatre" in which the history of the ancient house is presented:

> Sometimes I think that nothing
> that ever comes into this house
> goes out. Things come in everyday
> to lose themselves among other things
> lost long ago among
> other things lost long ago . . .

(*SP*, p. 40)

Each of the things "lost long ago" revives in the speaker's memory an event which is recounted in terms of its haunting pathos and a near-absurd complexity. Thus is built up a strange and bizarre catalogue of things that come into the house from outside to stay for ever and the things that go out but inevitably return: stray cows, library books, neighbours' dishes, servants, phonographs, inherited epilepsies, sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, letters, ideas, beggar songs, widowed daughters, and nephews killed in the war. The memory of these things and the circumstances of their arrival and return provide a certain intensity to the self, drawing it compulsively backward within the precints of the house like all other things accumulated over the years. The torture of recall confirms the clutching and unceasing hold of the decaying house on the speaker's consciousness, proving the abiding wisdom of the Kannada poet Basavanna (A.D. 1106-1167/68) who, in Ramanujan's luminous translation, poignantly reiterates, through rhythm and idea, the urgency experienced by the *maneya maga* (legitimate heir of the house) to forge relations in a world of disrelations:

> Don't make me hear all day
> 'Whose man, whose man, whose man is this?'
> Let me hear, 'This man is mine, mine,
> this man is mine.'
> O lord of the meeting rivers,

make me feel I'm a son
of the house.[18]

Another view of the self's attempt to seek fulfilment in relationships can be found in "Love Poem for a Wife: I." The speaker's nostalgia for the wife's "unshared childhood" springs from the desire to overcome the alienation that "keeps us apart/at the end of years." But the criss-cross of each other's memories, the enactment of the drama of another's past in one's own consciousness, only serves to accentuate the narrow limits in which the relationship appears to survive with its explosive insecurities and tensions. The intended progression of the theme is covertly sabotaged as the self's attempt to divine the causes of emotional separation threatens to turn into a drag-out fight with subtle insinuations involving family matters and relations on both sides (my family album — your ancestral house; your father — my father; your brother — my sister-in-law; source of my sheep-mouth look in the wedding picture of my parents — your love-affair, etc.) The poem ends with the problematic uncertainty with which it begins, implying that the speaker's longing to enter another life by trying to share its past is fraught with bitterness and disillusionment. The ironic twist with which the poem concludes seems to confirm the stasis underlying the relationship as also the persisting acrimony and suspicion that have been responsible for the speaker's own emotional aridity:

Probably
only the Egyptians had it right:
their kings had sisters for queens
to continue the incests
of childhood into marriage.
Or we should do as well-meaning
hindus did,
betroth us before birth,
forestalling separate horoscopes
and mothers' first periods,
and wed us in the oral cradle
and carry marriage back into
the namelessness of childhoods.

(*SP*, p. 27).

The alienation resulting from the gap between the persona and the real self is exposed by Ramanujan in his three Hindoo poems. These poems highlight the self-deception of the Hindoo whose outward placidity thinly disguises the violent agitations he experiences at moments of crisis. The first of these poems, "The Hindoo: he doesn't Hurt a Fly or a Spider either,"[19] dramatises the speaker's feelings of castration at two levels by running personal and mythic time into one another. The sprightly opening lines, whose lighthearted, almost jovial, tone depends upon alliterative end-of-line and internal rhyming (why-fly, spider-either, Who's Who — can you, etc.), lead, through a method of association mockingly enacting the Hindu cycle of rebirths, to the image of the Great Grandfather, "that still man,/untimely witness," whose frustrating sexual experience becomes an analogue of the speaker's own situation. The result is an eruption of sexual jealousy and mental-violence ill-concealed by the calm assumed by the persona:

> watching as only husbands will
>
> a suspense of nets vibrate
> under wife and enemy
>
> with every move of hand or thigh:
> watching, watching, like some
>
> spider-lover a pair
> of his Borneo specimens mate
>
> in murder, make love with hate,
> or simply stalk a local fly.

(*SP*, p. 24).

The other two Hindoo poems employ a parallel frame of self-revelation. The Hindoo who "reads his GITA and is calm at all events" is shaken in his equipoise when confronted with the knowledge of primitive evil in innocence ("on a little boy's face/ the pre-historic yellow eyes of a goat"[20]). The third poem, "The Hindoo: the Only Risk," entails the recognition that a total acceptance of the presumptions of persona leads to a denial of the dictates of one's heart, of what one really is:

At the bottom of all this bottomless
enterprise to keep simple the heart's given beat,

the only risk is heartlessness.

The Hindu poems attest, through a developing process of implication, that the persona or the mask cannot provide any consistent armour to the self because it can never fully cope with the variety and depth of inner life brought into interplay in one's encounter with Reality. The mask may be looked at only to discover one's self, to become aware that one needn't be troubled by what one is. A tentative and hesitant, though unmistakably affirmative, groping towards the "real self" can be perceived in "Prayers to Lord Murugan." Possessing "Twelve etched arrowheads/for eyes and six unforeseen/faces" and yet "not embarrassed" (*SP*, p. 51), Murugan, the ancient Dravidian god of fertility, joy, youth, beauty, war, and love, becomes, for the poet, an ironic symbol of the comprehensiveness required by an individual to cope with the complex exigencies of Reality. At another related level, the awesome figure of the god appears to underscore the necessity of coming to terms with oneself and one's finitude in a world gone stale with appearances and stereotypes. The eleven prayers that constitute the poem accentuate this necessity by deliberately interfusing images drawn from a tribal life, which is simple and closely tuned to the rhythm of nature (red flower, fish in open waters, litter of six new pigs, etc.), and an urban life, which is mechanical, parasitical, and cluttered by slogans and pretensions (blueprint city, Rajahs photographed with tigers shot by sycophants, small print lost in headlines, etc.). The aspiration for inner truth is fulfilled, for the most part, with the recognition that authentic existence requires no external stimuli for sustenance. The concluding prayer, therefore, appropriately absolves the speaker of any further need of prayer:

Lord of lost travellers,
find us. Hunt us
down.

Lord of answers,
cure us at once
of prayers. (*SP*, p. 56).

The serenity and silence of these lines contrast sharply with the excited, almost feverish, pitch of voice and movement of images with which the god is sought to be invoked in the opening prayer (garlands turning like chariotwheels, glinting beaks, burning banners, etc.). What is impossible to miss in the dialectic affecting this transition is the finer sense acquired by diction, images, rhymes, and other devices while capturing the nuances attending the self's search for definition and stability. That such an effort inevitably develops into an adequate "language of self-analysis" bespeaks the achievement of a poet whose virtuosity is sometimes equalled but rarely excelled in contemporary Indo-Anglian poetry.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. R. Parthasarathy, "How It Strikes a Contemporary: The Poetry of A. K. Ramanujan," *The Literary Criterion*, Vol. XII, No. 2 & 3, (1976), pp. 195-196

2. *Ibid.*, p. 195.

3. *Selected Essays of Delmore Schwartz*, eds. Donald A. Dike & David H. Zucker (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 10-11.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

5. *Ten Twentieth Century Indian Poets*, ed. R. Parthasarathy (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 37-38.

6. A. K. Ramanujan, *Selected Poems* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 31-32. All further references to poems from this collection will be given in parenthesis.

7. "English in India is a nowhere language; spatially, it does not belong anywhere, and so its poet, as one who would make his habitation in the language of his most vital speech, necessarily grasps himself as exiled. And those who have not raised or sunk their voices to consciousness of exile, everywhere bespeak it by virtue of the tongue they use," Meena Alexander, "Exiled By A Dead Script," *The Journal of Indian Writing in English*, 5, No. 2 (July 1977), pp. 1-2.

8. "One has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought-movement that looks maltreated in an alien language. I use the word 'alien,' yet English is not really an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make-up — like Sanskrit

of Persian was before — but not of our emotional make-up," Raja Rao, "Author's Foreword," *Kanthapura* (New York: New Directions, 1967), p. vii.

9. Quoted in *Ten Twentieth Century Indian* Poets, pp. 95-96.

10. W. B. Yeats, *Per Amica Silentia Lunae* (London: Macmillan, 1918), p. 26.

11. A. K. Ramanujan, *The Striders* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 20.

12. Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. Arthur Mitchell (New York: Macmillan, 1939, pp. 1-7.

13. John S. Dunne, *A Search for God in Time and Memory* (London: Macmillan, 1967), p. 7.

14. "In India . . . the ideal of psychological wholeness or 'maturity' . . . is quite compatible with an ego which is relatively passive and less differentiated," Sudhir Kakar, *The Inner World: A Psychoanalytic Study of Childhood and Society in India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 6.

15 A. K. Ramanujan, *The Interior Landscape* (London: Peter Owen, 1970), pp. 114-115.

16. *Ibid.*

17. "How It Strikes a Contemporary: The Poetry of A. K. Ramanujan," pp. 195-196.

18. A. K. Ramanujan, *Speaking of Siva* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 1973), p. 70, also p. 190.

19. A. K. Ramanujan, *Relations* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 23.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

BOOK REVIEW

I. SHELLEY

Dharni Dhar Baskiyar: *The Inextinguishable Flame: Shelley's Poetic and Creative Practice* (Salzburg, Institut für Englische Sprache and Literatur, 1977), pp. 343. Price not mentioned.

THE attention of literary scholars has taken a fresh turn towards the English Romantic poets after several decades of fashionable denigration, especially of Shelley and Keats. Dr. D. D. Baskiyar's monograph, *The Inextinguishable Flame: Shelley's Poetic and Creative Practice*, has very properly been included in the series of 'Romantic Reassessment' volumes edited ably by Dr James Hogg under the direction of the distinguished scholar, Professor Erwin A. Sturzl.

Dr Baskiyar's study is based on, apart from Shelley's own writings, almost an all-inclusive study of Shelley-criticism whether in the form of books or articles published in journals. Dr Baskiyar's bibliography mentions a number of secondary and tertiary sources testifying to his wide and exact reading. He has consulted not only such important sources as the Shelley-Society Papers, the Keats-Shelley Memorial Bulletins, the Keats-Shelley Journal, the P.M.L.A., the Philological Quarterly, Studies in Philology, J.E.G.P., R.E.S. &c, but also some relevant journals such as the *TLS*, the *Guardian*, the *Times*. In the list of the principal editions of Shelley's works we have the Julian edition (1929) from which the author has extracted his illustrations. It seems to me that since the Julian edition running to ten volumes is not commonly available and unlikely to be in the possession of the users of this book who will certainly not run to Calcutta's National Library or London's British Museum to check up the extracts, the author and the publisher should have converted the Julian edition references of Dr Baskiyar's original dissertation to the texts as they occur in Hutchinson's widely-trusted edition (O.U.P., 1960) or Neville Rogers's edition (O.U.P., 1972). Dr Baskiyar's study is indubitably a work of careful scholarship and impressive literary sensibility, a study of Shelley that should, by virtue of its data, arguments, analyses and evaluation, esta-

blish itself as an authoritative work for decades until (which seems most unlikely) factual discoveries compulsively modify critical postures and estimates.

Dr Baskiyar has divided his material into eight segments. In the Introductory chapter, he presents a survey of the developing trends in Shelley-criticism and outlines the themes of the seven chapters that follow. Baskiyar states his main argument thus:

> To Shelley poetry was inseparably linked with life . . . it presented a vision of life seen through a vista of eternal beauty and truth. An effort has also been made to show that there was a correspondence between his theory of poetry and his practice as a poet. This has required detailed interpretations of *Prometheus Unbound* and *The Cenci* — the two central poetical works of the poet.

With his main argument is linked Shelley's Concept of Inspiration. And this belief in inspiration, a part of Shelley's ultimate belief in the divine power of the imagination, is a characteristic element of Indian Aesthetics.

At this point, I may suggest that though there is no fool-proof evidence about it, it is quite possible that Shelley had some idea of the Indian Idea of Creative Art. As Dr. S. R. Swaminathan has argued, an argument accepted in the *TLS*. 26 Dec., 1958, p. 751, and as my presentation of the matter goes in my essay 'The Wind from the East' in *Image of India, in Western Creative Writing*, ed. M. K. Naik *et al* (Macmillan India, 1968, pp. 34-60). there is a strong possibility that Shelley who had read Edward Moor's *Hindu Pantheon* and Miss Sydney Owenson's *The Missionary*, had also read Charles Wilkin's translation of the *Gita* — a translation known to Coleridge — and had become familiar with the concept of Divine Immanence.

Başkiyar's thesis about Shelley's belief in the divine power of Imagination seems to me a pre-eminently plausible proposition:

> When Shelley has deliberated on the Imagination as a creative agent, a synthesizing power and an inextinguishable light, he turns his discussion to the most significant point of his theory — the transcendental powers of this faculty. To Wordsworth and Coleridge, Imagination is the link between Man

> and Nature, and a means of exploring the mysteries of this active universe. It has unifying power . . . Shelley's theory is more comprehensive than theirs. If his emphasis on the metaphysical nature of imagination is great, it is greater on its significance as a vital force in improving the world. Nowhere else in the history of English poetry, not even in Wordsworth's and Coleridge's theory, has this faculty been exalted to such a height. (p. 100).

Dr Baskiyar's analyses and assertions are far more convincing than M. T. Solve's and Earl J. Schulze's studies of Shelley's Poetics.

In choosing to highlight *Prometheus Unbound* and *The Cenci*, Dr. Baskiyar has no doubt justifiably laid stress on the two most ambitious works of Shelley. Ambitious, yes; 'striking illustration of Shelley's theory of poetry' (p. 24) — that too is acceptable. But I for one would plump for ten readings of each of the lyrics — "Ode to the West Wind," "Euganean Hills," "Ode to Liberty", "To a Skylark," "Letter to Maria Gisborne", "When the lamp is shattered," "Stanzas written in Dejection near Naples," "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty", "Ariel to Miranda," and the long lyrical poems. *Alastor, Adonais, Epipsychidion* — for one reading each of *Prometheus Unbound* and *The Cenci*. The Shelleyism of Shelley rests squarely on the lyrics, however powerful as compositions the dramas may be, and the validity of any over-all estimate of Shelley's creative genius must rest firmly on his flawless and inimitable lyrics. Baskiyar is fully aware of the supra-material (and therefore fundamentally sonal, musical) nature of Art; knowing this, he rightly draws our attention to the views shared in common between Tasso and Shelley: *Non merita nome di creatore, se non Iddio ed il Poeta.* God and the Poet, are the two creators, the M.E. 'makars'; and therefore there is divinity in the poetic creation equally as there is poetry in the divine creation.

This study of Shelley, I find, is a distinguished contribution to Shelley-criticism in particular and Poetics in general. Since the publication of Amiya Kumar Sen's valuable book, *Studies in Shelley* (Calcutta University, 1936), Dr Baskiyar's monograph is the best evaluation of Shelley presented by an Indian scholar.

AMALENDU BOSE

II. THE NOVEL

Mark Spilka, Ed. *Towards a Poetics of Fiction.* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1977). xi+359 pages.

Brain Wicker: *The Story-Shaped World.* (London: Athlone Press, 1975). 230 pages.

David Lodge: *The Modes of Modern Writing.* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977). xvi+279 pages.

Bruce Bassoff: *Toward Loving.* (Columbia, S. C: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1975). x+179 pages.

Alan Spiegel: *Fiction and the Camera Eye.* (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1976) xvi+203 pages.

Geoffrey Wagner: *The Novel and the Cinema.* (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 1975). 394 pages.

C. H. Peake: *James Joyce : The Citizen and the Artist.* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977). x+369 pages.

FICTION criticism, as Mark Spilka notes in the preface to his anthology, is a growth industry, and is expanding in various directions. It was to chart these directions that *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* appeared in 1967. The present anthology assembles some of the more significant essays of the last decade appearing in that journal and provides an occasion for stock-taking. What the journal succeeded in registering was a bewildering variety of criticism generated by the innovations in fiction and the attendant earnestness of discussion. Not only do we have here a whole range of meditations on the 'poetics' of fiction, but we are also brought face to face with the uncertain ontological status of the novel. If the essays prove anything, they prove the elusiveness of the form as well as its refusal to mould into any particular set of interpretations. The first section, 'Towards a Poetics of Fiction' explores the advantages and pitfalls of single concepts of fiction criticism such as genre (Scholes), language (Lodge), structure (Bradbury), narrative (Hardy), history (Kermode) and time (Hutchens). It concludes with Walter Reed's much-needed cautionary essay suggesting that these approaches are purely approximations towards a 'poetics' and need not be regarded as definitive. He wants us 'to leave aside the question of a poetics of the novel' and look more closely at the way 'novels place

themselves in literary and extra-literary history (p. 74). Reed's caution awakens us to the danger of a portable poetics of a genre which has over the centuries combined history, psychology and social comment with the impulse towards narration. It is precisely in its chameleon character that the fascination of the novel lies. Lawrence knew this long before the theorizers arrived on the scene. When he talked of the inter-relatedness of a novel's parts, he was presenting what has been a clear evidence of the novel's multiform nature to the great practitioners of the craft. That the novel is of a dependent character has been showed by writers in the present anthology who seek connections of the form with history (Raleigh), pastoral (Moynahan), social ethos (Williams) and language (Stewart and Bersani). These connections prove beyond doubt that we cannot find an all-weather definition of the genre. We are faced here with the situation Saussure faced in the heterogeneity of languages (*language*), and in an infinity of *paroles* refusing to be classified into a *langue*. Perhaps we can follow Barthes's clue and look for various 'storeys', instead of a taxonomical definition.

What makes this anthology doubly engaging is the revaluations of some of the classics of fiction criticism, such as Watt's *Rise of the Novel* and Booth's *Rhetoric of Fiction* by the authors themselves, and the reappraisals of famous controversies, such as the 'Mr. Bennett-Mrs. Brown' one. Add to these the essays on Lukacs and Leavis as the moralists of fiction criticism and one has an idea of the very broad scope of this book. *Towards a Poetics of Fiction* is a first-rate anthology and would generate discussion for many years to come.

Brian Wicker's elaborate theoretical framework raises many interesting questions about the relationship of the novel to reality. He takes his departure from Barbara Hardy's essay in Spilka's collection which suggests that narrative is not simply a structure of events in a novel, but is integral to the human consciousness. 'Narrative', says Wicker, 'is not only a unique instrument of describing certain kinds of truths about the external world, it is also . . . important in explaining what happens inside oneself' (p. 46). Wicker is restating a thesis advanced earlier by Kermode that fiction is a way of making sense of the world. He sees a definite connection between 'narrative rhetoric' and 'religious

belief' (p. 44), inasmuch as both are founded 'upon stories'. The thesis owes a good deal to the structuralist studies of language and narrative, and enables Wicker to explore the linguistic/semantic bases of the rhetorical and metaphysical strategies that fiction and religion share. He carefully employs the metaphor/analogy distinction as modified in Jakobson's metaphor/metonymy contrast to analyse the narrative structures of fiction and some Biblical texts. Drawing upon Aristotle and the structuralists, Wicker analyses the ways in which a linguistic device like metaphor involves metaphysical dimensions. This makes the concept of the novelist as God plausible, not, however, in the sense of God writing the World as his book, but in terms of Stephen Daedalus when he spoke of the artist as a lord of creation. If metaphor involves both a metaphysics and a world-view, as Wicker seems to suggest, then Robbe-Grillett's claim of writing a non-metaphoric fiction is another way of finding meaning, even though this may lead to meaninglessness (as it does in *Jealousy*).

Wicker does not see 'metaphor' and 'narrative' as fixed categories. In his practical criticism of Joyce, Lawrence, Beckett and the Biblical texts he shows the variations these terms go through. Wicker's criticism of the novelists is more sensitive than his theory of the novel in which too many issues are raised and left unclarified. There is also some opacity about Wicker's prose which forbids understanding of his conceptual points, notwithstanding his diagrammatic supplementations. But these objections do not obscure the importance of Wicker's argument. His is a probing study and its provocative arguments deserve close attention.

Metaphor and metonymy are again the key terms in David Lodge's exciting new book on the modes of modern writing. He sees the polarity of realistic and non-realistic literature in terms of Jakobson's distinction, thereby making a far better use of Jakobson than Wicker does. Lodge is among the very few contemporary English critics (barring Kermode) who have successfully applied the insights of the linguistic/structuralist traditions to problems of literary criticism. The metaphor/metonymy contrast helps him to confront the fundamental questions of literary aesthetics, beginning with the status of literature as a discourse and leading on to the poetics of modernism and realism in the novel, film and drama. Lodge's is the only book that I know that ranges

over all the major art forms of our time. He first re-examines the assumptions about literature in current critical theory and faces the question of foregrounding and the degrees of mimetic and formal autonomy in literature. There is a sanity about his style which makes his criticism eminently readable, even when one tends to disagree with his argument (as I would with his notion of the novel as a purely linguistic structure). Lodge succeeds in giving flesh to abstract concepts and making them relevant to the discussion of individual novels, poems, and films. There is also in this book an ungrudging willingness to go beyond the neat critical formulations and to see just how neat these are. In the second section he probes deeper the metaphor/metonymy distinction and sees the nuances where pure theory overlaps other areas. The result is a satisfying treatment to a level of criticism where theory becomes no *a priori* consideration, even while it remains the prime mover of the inquiry. Lodge's readings of Forster, Stein, Greene, Larkin, Joyce, Hemingway and the Thirties poetry are among the acutest in recent criticism, and yield substantial dividends in terms of critical understanding and enjoyment. Commanding a wide range of material, Lodge displays a meticulousness very rare among academic critics, a meticulousness which his earlier seminal works have led us to expect from this gifted novelist and critic.

Toward Loving has a long introductory section devoted to a critical review of contemporary fiction theory and its relevance to the practice of Henry Green. The book is a welcome addition to the slim body of Green criticism, particularly now that there are clear signs of a Green revival. The merit of Bassoff's book is in the breadth of its purview. This helps him to provide a better account of Green's singular and at times idiosyncratic techniques. Henry Green has remained something of an enigma among the contemporary novelists, and part of the reason for this is Green's own reticence, both as artist and apologist of the novel. Bassoff succeeds in explaining this 'epistemological reticence' (Green himself called it obliqueness), and relates it to some of the well-known theoretical positions of the European contemporaries. In Green, Bassoff claims, structure is not all, nor is Green's use of language designed, as Robbe-Grillet's is, to drain reality of all human meaning. Placing his novelist among

the European avant-gardists (Bassoff invokes the Formalist tradition of defamiliarization), Bassoff draws upon Green's own distinction between the novelist and the journalist to signify his particular manner. The primary interest of the theoretical section of Bassoff's book is to guide us through Green's silent appropriation of the contemporary tradition of the novel and to estimate his place. Obviously the emphasis falls on Green's handling of language in his novels — a subject Bassoff talks about with authority. On this count alone one can make a claim for Green as a major stylist.

Having said this, however, one must not be oblivious of the general thinness of Bassoff's theoretical argument. By taking on the entire gamut of theory Bassoff diffuses his attention with no tangible gain to his practical analysis which, for the most part, is sensible and rewarding. For when he analyses the novels, particularly the central book in the Green canon, *Loving*, we do not feel the strain of theory on his criticism. This is why one senses a gulf between the theoretical and the analytical parts of the book. But this does not mean that there isn't good criticism here. There is, and that is why the thinness of Bassoff's theoretical section need not bother us much.

The relationship of the novel to other art forms has been the subject of investigation before. Alan Spiegel and Geoffrey Wagner have now enriched our understanding of what they both designate the two most modern of art forms, the novel and the film. Both critics are at home in their fields of study and trace the antecedents of the novel and the cinema in an attempt to establish their kinship from the nineteenth century, if not from an earlier period. Of the two Spiegel is more theoretical and, as a result, more daringly speculative. Isolating the principal element of the novel as 'concretized form', he proceeds to show how this element has been systematically incorporated in the evolution of the film. 'Concretized form', says Spiegel, 'is a way of transcribing the narrative, not as a story that is told, but as an action that is portrayed and presented, that seems to reveal itself to the reader apart from the overt mediations of the author' (p. 6). It is this that cinematic and fictional narratives have in common. Spiegel particularly singles out the modernist novelists like Conrad, Flaubert, Dickens and Hemingway and investigates their

significant variations of the common element.

In tracing the evolution of the cinematic form in the novel, Spiegel notices two major shifts in the novelistic rendering of the external world: the merging of the observer and the thing observed, and the presentation of the discontinuous, fragmented and incarcerated field of vision (p. 82). These shifts are the cinematic variations on the shifting point of view and the disappearing narrator, for the novelist also manouvres his strategies as a camera does. Thus we see Virginia Woolf's forte in 'vision without focus' (p. 49), of Conrad in 'two different levels of cognition' (p. 63), of Dickens in 'the movement of the eye that is fully present at every given scene' (p. 35), of Balzac in 'holding all visual perspectives simultaneously', of the New Novel in cultivating 'microscopic inspections of existential moments' (p. 125). Applying similar principles of narrative form to the film, Spiegel manages to say some lively things about the films of Godard, Renoir, Truffaut and Eisenstein. He also examines film theory and analyses some representative films to see their interrelationships with fiction in a manner that presents the most rewarding inter-disciplinary approach to the two art forms (see pp. 98, 160 in particular).

Geoffrey Wagner adopts more or less the same approach but his book has its own direction and purpose. For one thing, he does not dwell exclusively or even largely on theory. He discusses more films than Spiegel does, and has a very helpful section on the relation of art and photography with its bearing on the aesthetics of the cinema. The principal thrust of Wagner's book is on the adaptation of fiction for the screen and the consequent transformations in technique (pp. 219-31). The principle of transformation is to change the recitative mode (in the sense of having happened, as Fernandez says in *Messages*) of the novel to the permanent present of the film. Taking his cue from Bela Balzas's thesis, Wagner proposes three ways (transposition, commentary, analogy) of cinematic adaptation of fiction, depending upon the degree of interference by the screen in the original fictional work. Wagner's treatments of fictional classics and their screen adaptations have more than a passing significance: they show the possibilities of the two modes within a mutual accommodation of the narrative thread. That he chooses from a large repertoire of novels-turned-films shows his sweep of reference and depth of

perception. I found Wagner's comments on *Lord Jim, Wuthering Heights, Death in Venice* and a score of other films particularly enlightening, for it is these films that offer the most challenge to a talented director (witness Joseph Strick's wrestle with *Ulysses.*)

The theoretical sections of Wagner's book, though lacking in Spiegel's versatility and merit, nevertheless offer interesting discussions of the psychology of the cinema as well as the norms of narration in the film and the novel. But they do not seem to me to add much to what is already known on these subjects to a keen student of the cinema.

Both Spiegel and Wagner refer to Joyce as eminently relevant to the discussion of the film as a narrative medium and both have touched upon the cinematic qualities of his fiction. Joyce's interest in Eisenstein has provided enough grist to the Joyce industry (as much as his mention of the elaborate symbolic framework of *Ulysses* to Gilbert). It is, therefore, a relief to come to Peake's study of Joyce without having to stop at labyrinthine mazes of symbolism and myth. He has written a highly sensible and, importantly, a highly intelligible book which shuns the obfuscating theory-mongering of much Joyce criticism and offers an orderly development of Joyce's narrative art from *Dubliners* to *Finnegans Wake*, the maturing of Joyce's technical skills and the forming of his unique moral vision. Peake situates Joyce between the poles of art and society (the subtitle of the book) and, with excellent commentary on the texts, shows his fluctuations between these poles. Peake makes judicious use of Joyce's own critical prose and letters to support his unorthodox readings. Thus one of the most satisfying discussions of the *Portrait* in years uses Stephen's aesthetic to comment on the shape of the book itself. On *Ulysses* too Peake has some ground-breaking observations to make : he does not believe that Bloom (citizen) and Stephen (artist) are exclusive opposites (p. 332), but he shows them mediating their positions to a mutual expansion of significance. Similarly he finds in *Finnegans Wake* the 'fantastic dramatizations' of Bloom's unconscious as they appear earlier in the Circe episode of *Ulysses.* Peake's open-mindedness and curiosity make Joyce a readable (as distinguished from a 'readerly' writer of the structuralists) novelist. Written in a direct, persuasive and jargon-free style, this book should find its place among

standard critical reading like Kenner's, Goldberg's and Goldmann's. Peake has put both the lay reader and the Joycean initiate into his permanent debt.

MOTILAL RAINA

S. C. Harrex, *The Fire and the Offering: The English Language Novel of India* 1935-1970, Vol. 1, Writers Workshop, Calcutta, 1977, p. 261, Rs. 40.

The critical perceptions of a cultural outsider concerning a particular literature may sometimes reveal a jaundiced or half-baked view of reality for lack of ideological and emotional empathy. But so remarkable is Harrex's imaginative participation in the life of the mind and spirit of India that his critical voice carries a stamp of authenticity and reveals a genuine desire to understand what is essentially a product of cultural diversity and philosophical complexity. At the same time he gives expression to his awareness of the dangers and pitfalls attendant on the "enthusiasm attaching to first discoveries". This makes him avoid taking liberties with a "disciplined value judgment." His engagement with the Indian novel in English, which chiefly takes place on a cultural bridge, pulsates with passion and commitment, coupled with the desired virtue of scholarly detachment. His critical stance may be placed somewhere between the liberal-humanist attitude of F. R. Leavis, Lionel Trilling and William Walsh and the critical-Marxist approach of Lucien Goldmann, Georg Lukacs and Raymond Williams.

Harrex's analysis and discussion of the issues and problems relating to the English-language novel of India are marked by a clear understanding of their nature. He says that since Indian writing in English has "emerged out of a confusion of cultural contexts", an "appreciation of Indian cultural and social backgrounds is necessary to an understanding of Indian fiction." He also pleads in a Leavisite vein for the "need of responsible criticism" and "integrity of critical standards". "Dealing with the vexatious question of terminology, he says that it indicates "the difficulty of describing accurately the complex blending of Indian and English elements within the sensibility not merely of one writer but within the 'Indo-Anglian' group as a whole." In this context, his examination of the question of 'Indianness' of the

Indian novel in English shows him accepting the criteria of "inwardness", "sensibility", "values" and the "deeper life of vision." Besides this, he relates the problem of Indianness to the question of style which, according to him, is a fundamental test of a writer's originality and of his "Englishness or Indianness, Americanness or Africanness, as the case may be." He has a word of praise for those writers of India who write creatively in English in order "to render language with a sensitivity which genuinely evokes those currents and nuances of Indian life that are his sources of vision."

Outlining the scope of the modern Indian novel in English, Harrex places it within its two broad streams: the novel of social commitment and the novel representing the "indigenous traditional understanding of life" which leans rather heavily on the metaphysical and the mystical. It will, however, be an oversimplification to regard the latter as the more genuinely Indian while dismissing the former as merely propagandistic and unIndian. When Harrex claims literary superiority for novelists like Raja Rao and R. K. Narayan on the ground that their characters impress as "distinctive Indians rather than as sociological symbols", it is difficult to accept the implied suggestion that metaphysical symbolism is more distinctly Indian and artistic than the sociological one.

Harrex's interpretation of the major Indian novels in English is comparatively free from the inhibiting grip of a critical conservatism. He is able to locate the core of meaning in each novel to a large extent. He perceives, for instance, in Abbas's *Inqilab* the idea that "true tradition and real progress are not incompatible"; in Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges* he finds an attempt to "recreate India's crisis of nationhood in cinematic novelese"; in Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* he sees the expression of the idea that "it is through love, not intellectualised ideology that salvation is possible"; in Raja Rao he discovers "a bold attempt to Hinduise, or Brahminise, the Western secular novel"; while he chooses to call the novels of R. K. Narayan "comedies of *karma*."

The question of literary influence forms an interesting part of Harrex's discussion, particularly when he examines the impact of T. S. Eliot on writers like B. Rajan, Ahmed Ali, Attia Hossain and K. N. Sinha. He insists that while evaluating the measure

of influence on a writer, the critic must distinguish between "imitation without assimilation and assimilation without imitation", and also determine "a writer's masticating prowess when chewing his master's cud." With a sharp understanding of the relationship between society and philosophy, Harrex observes in his commentary on Rajan's *The Dark Dancer* that the "basis of Rajan's philosophical mysticism is to be found in the effects of social phenomena."

Harrex devotes considerable space to the discussion of the fiction of Mulk Raj Anand, one of the three pillars of Indian fiction in English. Anand's prolificacy has resulted in "some sturdy merits and maiming defects." Harrex avers that in Anand's fiction, "India's cultural dichotomy is examined in some of its major phases of conflict." He is quite near the truth when he says that "the very magnitude of Anand's humanistic aspiration inevitably led to some failures through over-reaching", to "uneven performances" and "lapse into the cliches and banality of pamphleteering prose and into the tendentious rhetoric of ideological spokesmen" like Shankar in the *Private Life of an Indian Prince*. Having made this trenchant observation, however, he goes on to give due credit to Anand for his achievement as a literary pioneer and for his social realism. Through Bakha, the central character in *Untouchable*, Anand conveys the idea that "there is no virtue or primal grandeur in illiteracy, squalor, the humility of sweeping literally for thrown-down bread and left-overs, and in being, however well-built a child of nature, a prey to abuse, disease and premature death." But one of the besetting sins of Anand's fiction, Harrex holds, is that he "did not always heed his artistic conscience"; in his novels "moral vigour is reflected more in passionate protest than artistic implications."

It must be said, however, to the credit of Anand that if he could not make his propaganda artistic enough, he could at least infuse his readers with righteous anger against the exploitation of man by man. While R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao seem to have succeeded in making their metaphysical propaganda artistic, Anand is more concerned with living up to the ideals of his art than with the mere act of writing in an ivory tower to please his vanity.

BHAGWAT S. GOYAL

III. E. M. FORSTER

P. N. Furbank. *E. M. Forster: A Life* (London: Seeker & Warburg, 1977, 1978) 2 Volumes. xvi+272 & xx+348 (Vol. 1 also published in an Indian edition by Arnold-Heinemann, New Delhi 1978).

G. K. Das. *E. M. Forster's India* (London: Macmillan, 1977) xx+170 pages.

P. N. FURBANK'S authorised biography of Forster is impressive in its attempt to marshal many significant details of his life and mould them into a readable work. The first volume records the details of Morgan's childhood, school days and early youth. It "effectively asserts" that he was a delicate, effeminate boy, excessively coddled by his mother and terribly attached to her. At Kent House his initial loneliness, his early friendships with boys, his unhealthy sexual taboos and his first homosexual experience with a much older man who persuaded him to masturbate him are elaborately described. Similarly the fourth chapter, which deals with Cambridge, draws a vivid picture of his social and intellectual circle there including the "Apostles" then greatly inspired by G. E. Moore. At the same time, it has kept the focus on Forster's homosexual friends. This volume provides us valuable information on Forster's close acquaintances in early life like Syed Ross Masood, G. Lowes Dickinson, Countess Vo Armim and H. O. Meredith, but it does not do justice to the Bloomsbury group.

The second volume is equally substantial in its massing of details from Forster's life. Thus the fourth chapter entitled "The Maharaja's Secretary" is as impressive as the section in the first volume "Adrift in India", in its elaborate portrayal of the people he met, the places he visited, the events he saw, and his reactions to them. Similarly his later quarrel with Lord Fanel over the country house he lost and his subsequent feeling of homelessness receive a thorough treatment. Furbank also does full justice to Forster's long and distinguished career as a journalist.'

When dealing with Forster's intimate personal relationships, the earlier chapter on *Maurice* naturally focusses on his homo-

sexuality. The second volume further develops the subject with a detailed picture of his life with the Egyptian bus-conductor Mohammed El Adl and also describes in detail his homosexual affair with a barber in Dewas.

As Furbank goes on to talk of Forster's friendship with Isherwood, another homosexual writer, he tells us about other literary friendships of his, but chiefly writers like Andrew and T. E. Lawrence whose sexual inclinations were similar. In fact the only heterosexual writer with whom Forster's relationship is presented at some length in the second volume is D. H. Lawrence.

Given the biographer's stress on his subject's homosexuality, it is only to be expected that he will refrain from highlighting the significant women in Forster's life. But Furbank neglects their role to an extent that should not be permissible in a fair biography. Though he concedes that Florence Barger was in love with Morgan, he refuses to describe the relationship at any length. He also frequently talks of Forster's misogyny but rarely substantiates it with specific instances. Forster's erotic fantasies could have provided Furbank with enough food to deal psychoanalytically with this problem; unfortunately Furbank does not see it this way in spite of the fact that his excessive stress on Forster's abnormal attachment to his mother raises the possibility of an Oedipal situation.

Dealing with the intellectual side of Forster's life, the biographer tells us what we need to know of his beliefs and convictions. When he takes up Forster's career as a writer, he describes the process of creation of each work, records in detail its public and private reaction and also shows how the piece mirrored certain events in the latter's life. But surprisingly he does not comment on the literary quality of the work. The book makes no attempt to come close to a critical biography or to the old-fashioned "life and work". Moreover, Furbank, when concluding that certain scenes in the novels are based on actual incidents in the novelist's life, fails to provide us concrete evidence on which his conclusions should be based. Thus when talking of Forster's reaction to his first homosexual experience with the old man, he says: "It became a model for Adela's vengeful and confused behaviour after she imagines herself molested by Aziz" (p. 38). However, he does not try to prove the validity of his statement. For a reader it is interesting to know the originals of Lucy Honey-

church, Charlotte and Miss Lavish, but he should also be convinced that the supposed sources are authentic.

The problem of authenticity becomes pertinent because Furbank depends heavily on his memory of conversations with his subject and his only record is his own diary. Many of his important conclusions are simply not supported by any quotation from Forster's letters or diaries.

Although several interesting anecdotes are recorded, the book on the whole, like many academic biographies, lacks colour. It is a far cry from Furbank to Boswell or Strachey.

G. K. Das who was familiar with Furbank's investigations has based some of his conclusions on the latter's findings. His book, also aided by an excellent bibliography, emerges as a piece of impressive biographical and historical scholarship. Attempting a study of the chronological development of Forster in his attitude towards India, he gives evidence of painstaking work and wide reading. Thus in his second chapter entitled, "Unrealities in Dewas: A view of Princely India", he refutes convincingly Dr. Gopal's notion that Forster was a supporter of the Indian princes. In the third chapter, he is equally good in analysing Forster's criticism of the utilitarian, the evangelical, the Burkean and the Platonic ideals of the British Empire. Earlier, he describes also Forster's attitude towards our religions and the glories of the Indian civilization on the one hand, and the country's present backwardness on the other.

Das's detailed description of the situation at the time of the Amritsar massacre serves a useful purpose in enlightening the reader about the troubled political situation at "Chandrapore" in *A Passage to India*. Also in the fifth chapter, he gives evidence of scholarship in his analyses of a number of early Twentieth Century Anglo-Indian novels and memoirs including the contemporary *Abdication* (1922) by Candler and *Dismiss* (1923) by Brown which he compares with *A Passage to India*. However, many of his own commentaries on Forster's novel seem intended for laymen only. Though he makes some fine comments on the picture of India in this novel, his chapter does not significantly contribute to our understanding of the novel as a work of art.

In fact, the major shortcoming of the book is that it does not enhance our awareness of the aesthetic quality of any of Forster's

creative works. Though Dr. Das tells us all about Forster's India, he does not provide any original commentary on the works themselves. The book is more informative than critical.

PRASHANT K. SINHA

IV. HEMINGWAY

Scott Donaldson, *By Force of Will: The Life and Art of Ernest Hemingway*, (Penguin Books: Harmondsworth, 1978).

Elementary text-books of anatomy illustrate the bodily systems by means of a set of plastic transparencies, each transparency containing within an outline of the body a simplified representation of only one system. When these are superimposed, nervous upon circulatory upon digestive upon reproductive, one acquires a powerful if vague notion of how complex their interdependent coexistence within the same body must be, and of the inadequacy of any such illustrative set in evoking the reality.

In publishing Scott Donaldson's book (Viking Press, 1977) under their imprint, Penguin Books have provided just such a set of transparencies on Hemingway. The author attempts "to construct a mosaic of his mind and personality, of the sort of man he was" (p. xi) by assembling his thoughts and opinions on the following topics: Fame, Money, Sport, Politics, War, Love, Sex, Friendship, Religion, Art, Mastery, Death. This results in a set of schematized and disjunct essays without continuity. Since all the essays cover what is essentially the same ground from a variety of angles, interpretative coherence is sacrificed. The effect of partial overlap created whenever biographical anecdotes retailed under one topic recur subsequently can be rather tiresome. Although the discussion within each topic is strung loosely along a chronological framework, the sequence accomodates literary and biographical details, plot-summaries, character-sketches, gossip, anecdotes and speculation with equal and disconcerting facility. The book is neither genuine biography nor literary criticism, but a muddling porridge. Relying heavily on past work on Hemingway (especially Carlos Baker's), it makes no claims to originality. It would be virtually superfluous, except as a sheer assemblage: expedient as a source of ready-reference

whenever (if ever) one might wish to know Hemingway's opinion on — say, bullfighting, or homosexuals, or Faulkner, or whatever.

As a biographer of a distinctive stylist, Professor Donaldson comes off indifferently, as one can find several stylistic gaucheries in the book notably (and this is only a sampling) on pp. 207, 60, 187).

R. PATKE

V. ANAND

Saros Cowasjee, *So Many Freedoms: A Study of the Major Fiction of Mulk Raj Anand* (New Delhi, O.U.P., 1977). 205 pages.

COWASJEE begins with an assertion in the preface that his aim in the book is to understand Anand primarily as an artist and to ascertain whether his novels are documentaries, ideological tracts, or the profound exploration of a socio-historical imagination. The outcome of this close look at narratives from *Untouchable* (1935) to *Confessions of a Lover* (1976) is that, despite a few blemishes here and there, Anand emerges as a pioneering Indo-Anglian trying to grapple with the actualities of the Indian cultural experience. While he says that Anand is a "controversial novelist", an "enigmatic personality", or "an angry old man", he also acknowledges that the *Private Life of an Indian Prince* (1953) is his "finest work". Far from being overawed by the novelist's ardent allusions to Marx, Tolstoy, Ruskin and Gandhi, Cowasjee refuses to be "cheated by Anand's generalisations or take undue interest in Anand's definitions" and prefers to examine their applications in his actual artistic endeavours. He further discovers that in spite of "contradictions and confusions in his writings, his (Anand's) record remains impressive" (p. 15), and that his reputation "as one of the foremost Indian novelists is secure" (p. 35).

Divided into five chapters, the book offers a chronological view of Anand's fiction. While referring to his biography Cowasjee narrates, for instance, Anand's exposure to social and political influences in his early life, his role in the Civil Disobedience and his latest attempt to evolve a "startling new theory of opening more brain cells through *yoga* for intenser consciousness"

(p. 11). Anand may say that the Vedanta cannot replace International Socialism, yet he does "no tub-thumping for Moscow"; in fact he feels deeply hurt at being decried by the Bombay group of the Progressive Writers' Association. When Cowasjee remarks that after 1953 there is a waning of Anand's creative energies, he attributes it partly to his disillusionment with his erstwhile radical admirers. Also it is because of tactical silence on his part, especially when the late Mr. Nehru chose to patronize him as the cultural field officer of India. There is a measure of truth in Cowasjee's suspicion that Anand's failure to "censure" the government makes his novels like *The Road* (1961) and *Death of a Hero* (1963) dismal flops as compared to his earlier works like *Untouchable* and *Coolie* (1936).

Cowasjee looks upon Anand as essentially a political novelist, an expositor like Orwell, who succeeds only as a passionate defender of social and political justice. Where Anand tempers this concern with the imperatives of art, the result is impressive; when he fails to integrate the two aspects, his writing verges on propaganda. That is what he detects in the conclusion of *The Old Woman and the Cow* (1960): "I can think of no novel of the sixties by a respectable writer which has more overt propaganda than one encounters in the last fifty pages of this book" (p. 159). This incisive comment on Anand's art characterises Cowasjee's assessment of the autobiographical narratives which, despite considerable rehash and self-glorification, reflect the novelist's "genius in exploring the human mind" (P. 188).

Cowasjee is a perceptive investigator of Anand's creative world with little interest in the autonomy of different critical concepts. His is essentially a study devoted to the "is-ness" of Anand and, although he presents parallels between Anand and certain other Indian and European artists, he seldom deviates from the precision of focus on Anand's novels. What I find occasionally disconcerting in this work of extraordinary value are Cowasjee's sweeping observations. For example, when he cites Anand's allegiance to the soil, he forgets about T. S. Pillai's Kerala and remarks: "And no Indian writer has given us a better feel of the smells and the colours of India" (p. 5). Similarly when he applauds Anand's ability to "identify himself with childhood (p. 4), he completely writes off artists like Wordsworth and Whitman who vividly recreated this experience before the coming of

Anand. Besides this prescriptive view, I have my reservations regarding Cowasjee's extensive survey of the Indian political scene on the merger of the princely states. The *Private Life* could have been examined, perhaps more cogently, without a long prologue of history and politics.

D. R. SHARMA

VI. T. S. ELIOT

A. D. Moody (ed): *The Waste Land in Different Voices.* (London: Edward Arnold, 1974); xi+237 pages.

Derek Traversi: *T. S. Eliot: The Longer Poems,* (London: The Bodley Head, 1976), 238 pages.

David Newton-De Molina (ed): *The Literary Criticism of T. S. Eliot: New Essays,* (London: Athlone Press, 1977). vi+216 pages.

MR. MOODY'S collection commemorates the fiftieth year of *The Waste Land.* It differs from a similar commemorative enterprise (edited by A. Walton Litz, 1973) in bringing together a rather less distinguished set of academics, who, notwithstanding the title of the collection, range widely, extending the scope of the discussion well beyond *The Waste Land,* taking up issues which are of abiding interest without being central to our understanding of the poem.

Three of the contributors (including the editor) offer straightforward exegeses; D. W. Harding's commentary on the final section, 'What The Thunder Said' starts off by taking into account the personal stresses under which Eliot (and Pound) put together the poem. This recourse to the sort of biographical information Eliot so vigorously tried to suppress is one symptom of a shift in critical emphasis. The editor and Richard Drain take up a position similar to Harding's. Biographical insights are of use not as temptations to psychoanalysis but in emphasizing the personal and subjective element without confusing it with the poem's larger impact. However, Mr Moody's larger thesis seems to lack conviction. He discovers an element of hope and regenerative power latent throughout the poem, underlying and implicit even in the despair and emotional emptiness. But to asseverate — as Mr. Moody does — that the latter half of Part V is 'a return, a

flowing back from the deep source of self towards wholeness and reintegration' is to confound the mere hope or desire with the state itself. The painful abnegation and renunciation of *Ash Wednesday* would have been unnecessary had such a thesis been true. 'These fragments I have shored against my ruin' is a hopeless cry of despair; not waving but drowning. The final intoning of 'Shantih' hearkens to what has been lost.

Professor Rajan, in a highly selfconscious style (reminding one of Hugh Kenner at his most mannered), takes up the larger theme of continuity and coherence in Eliot's work; in particular, his concern as poet, with 'the language of the tribe'. There is scarcely anything in *The Waste Land* to support the thesis directly, and the essay would have read more comfortably prefacing a collection on the *Quartets*. This inability to stick to the poem supposedly under discussion is seen at its worst in Kathleen Nott's contribution on 'Ideology and Poetry'. Resuming a tone and argument familiar from *The Emperor's Clothes* (1953), she does not find it necessary to refer to Eliot's verse at all. A more venial kind of evasion and digression is exhibited in the essays devoted to the tracing of analogues, conjectural echoes, possible derivations and probable parallels in the essays by J. S. Cunningham, Nicole Ward and Bernard Harris. The digging up of correspondences is an absorbing pursuit analogous to the trip in Cavafy's 'Ithaca' or Auden's 'Atlantis'. The pleasure consists in and is concluded by getting there. Only after one has got there does one realize that the getting there was the point and that what follows after having got there is pointless.

The one essay which transcends this category and its marginal pleasures is A.C. Charity's long and well-documented criticism of the 'Dantean Recognitions' in Eliot's verse. He undertakes to demonstrate that though Eliot's affinity for Dante was intuitive, deep and life-long, it was subjective, limited and almost blinkered when it came to the crucial significance for Dante of the esoteric traditions of vernacular love poetry, and their application to his encounter with Beatrice. Mr Charity argues (pace Frank Kermode and L. C. Knights) that Eliot's 1929 essay on Dante 'for all its virtues' is on occasion disingenuous, misleading, muddled. . . .' Mr. Charity performs a salutary function (and one long overdue) in demonstrating Eliot's limited comprehension of Dante. Specifically, his analysis of Eliot's imitation of Dante, in

'Little Gidding', confirms not only the immense difficulty Eliot experienced in transposing elements of the Dantean rhythm, metre and general effect into English verse, but his very partial success in the venture. The lines have for too long floated untouched on a general flood of critical approbation.

Along with Mr. Charity's contribution, the essays by Denis Donoghue and Donald Davie form the indispensable portion of the collection, on par with an exemplary piece of interpretation from Litz's collection such as Kenner's essay on *The Waste Land* as an 'Urban Apocalypse'. Donoghue isolates the peculiar emotive properties of the verse of *The Waste Land*, relating this to the general position Eliot had developed on 'feeling' and 'sensation' in his study of F. H. Bradley. Far more than Rajan's essay, Donoghue establishes the nature of the continuity of concern for viability of language in poetry without oversimplifying the crucial differences in the nature of the linguistic self-introspection in *The Waste Land* and *Four Quartets*. Davie appears in the book as poet rather than critic or teacher, thus adding a dimension academic compilations ordinarily lack.

Professor Traversi's incursion into paraphrase forms a singular contrast with criticism as excellent and many-faceted as that by Kenner or by Charity, Donoghue and Davie. He isolates *The Waste Land*, *Ash Wednesday* and *Four Quartets* in the belief "that the longer poem, or sequence of poems, as distinct from the shorter pieces or the plays . . . constitute the form towards which Eliot's talents were naturally directed." The audience he seems to have in mind is probably one consisting of students. He interprets his obligation very narrowly as one requiring an extended and continuous paraphrase of the three works, with occasional incursions into annotation of the source-hunting type or into unconvincing defences of Eliot's rhythmic misadventures. His discussion of *The Waste Land* is the least excusable part of the book. It seems foolhardy to go on to assert that the poem's "aim was to convey, beyond one man's personal intuition, nothing less than the state of civilization". One reason why Professor Traversi so singularly fails to tackle the aspect of form is his neglect of the painfully halting, uncertain and self-doubting manner in which Eliot habitually strung together, tacked or glued random and miscellaneous bits of verse into a poem. A good

deal of the little he has to say on the form of the *Quartets* is rendered obsolete by Dame Helen Gardner's recent (1978) authoritative study of the process of composition and revision. This is not Professor Traversi's fault. But his failure to use Valerie Eliot's facsimile and transcript of *The Waste Land* (1971) reveals the very limited conception he has of his own duties. Consider his discussion of 'Datta, Dayadhvam, Damyata': He is clearly ignorant of the sequence of Prajapati's injunction in the *Upanishads* (as Rajan and Harding, in the earlier book are not) and is thus unable to say anything on the reasons for Eliot's changed sequence. He assumes (wrongly) that Eliot's is the only and 'natural' sequence. His 'explanation' of the *Quartets* lapses into rhythmic flaccidity, ventures no further than an axiomatic equation of spiritual exhaustion with rhythmic flatness. Such a causal postulate is simple-minded, and does not work with Eliot's early verse; nor does it accommodate the obvious possibility that the nature of Eliot's quasiphilosophical material and the problems of generating rhythmic variety within continuity involved a deliberate recourse to a sort of discursive 'low-profile'.

The set of newly commissioned essays edited by Newton-De Molina succeeds to a remarkable degree in its attempt at a reappraisal of Eliot's contributions to criticism, his place in the English critical tradition, and the relationship between the verse and the criticism. The topics chosen by the nine contributors closely parallel topics covered in *Eliot in Perspective* (edited by Graham Martin, 1970), and a comparison might be of use.

The oldest contributor, F. W. Bateson continues and expands the argument of his 1970 essay, 'The Poetry of Learning'. Now Bateson stakes out a more tendentious and ambitious claim. He regards Eliot 'as an interesting, even good minor poet (more American than English) who was a major literary critic (an English critic and of the stature of Johnson, Coleridge and Arnold).' Bateson takes the biographical approach (mentioned above in Moody's essay) considerably further by speculating about the impact of Jean Verdinal's death and the collapse of Eliot's first marriage on the criticism and verse. He regards the 1921 nervous breakdown preceding *The Waste Land* as the climacteric of Eliot's life. Bateson elaborates on a similar biographical watershed in Wordsworth's life, and proceeds to comment

on significant coincidences. The essay is deliberately provocative, and its grandly simplistic dismissals need not be accepted. Its attempted debunking of the posturing in Eliot, and its determination not to confuse grain with chaff can only be prophylactic. Bateson's dismissal of the later criticism is rejected by Graham Hough. He pleads for the not-yet-fully-appreciated significance of some of the later essays, namely 'Poetry and Drama' and 'The Three Voices of Poetry'. Unlike Bateson, Hough accepts Eliot's own belief that his criticism was a product of his thinking and reading towards the creation of an idiom for his verse. Hough points out that there is more to the relationship than this.

Denis Donoghue's stern analysis of Eliot's failure with the *Criterion* complements and qualifies the more non-committal essay on the same topic by John Peter in Graham Martin's 1970 symposium. Eliot's determination to widen his and his journal's scope from literature to society, culture, politics and religion was a willed effort not in keeping with Eliot's natural aptitudes. Time and again Eliot and his journal withdrew into 'perspectivism'. If the Spanish Civil War provoked an act of commitment from a Cornford and a gesture of commitment from an Auden, from Eliot it only educed a lecture on what Krishna said. With his religious conversion Eliot switched over from 'tradition' to the orthodoxy of dogma. Maurras and *L'Action Francaise* provided the connection between politics and religion. C. K. Stead's essay (parallel to Ian Gregor's essay in Graham Martin) notes the extent of shared sympathies and concerns underlying Eliot's professed dislike of Arnold. W. W. Robson, in a commentary on *The Use of Poetry and The Use of Criticism*, confirms the equivocal debt to Arnold. Samuel Hynes enumerates Eliot's trials and tribulations in this role. Eliot ended up claiming to find satisfaction only in books congenial to his religion. Fortunately, Eliot's dramatic criticism was not unduly hampered by his religion since the criteria for judgement had to be more narrowly technical. R. Peacock's essay offers a convenient conspectus of the range and depth of Eliot's obsession with verse-drama, but it rarely rises above paraphrase, and the level of analysis is a trifle pedestrain in comparison with most of the other contributors. Katharine Worth's essay in Graham Martin is slightly more illuminating.

William Righter provides a cogently argued analysis of Eliot in the guise of 'the philosophical critic'. Roger Sharrock, on

'Eliot's Tone' (analogous to John Chalker in Graham Martin) promises detailed stylistic analysis but soon gets side-tracked into saying his say on Eliot in general, and the analysis of Eliot's tone gets bogged down in 'tone-poems' and 'tonality'. However, these are minor disatisfactions. The standard of criticism is very high and the scrutiny to which Eliot is subjected is very rough and not always flattering. The result is — what else could it be? — a strengthening of Eliot's status, but also a better understanding of his short-comings and failures.

R. PATKE

VII CRITICISM

The English Critical Tradition: Volumes One and Two, edited by S. Ramaswami and V. S. Seturaman. Macmillan, 1977-78. Rs. 23.75 and 32.50.

THE four volumes of the World's Classics English Critical Essays with the two volumes of the American Critical Essays in the same series contain among them 131 selections running to a total of 2,650 pages. The volumes under review have a total of 65 pieces running to 974 pages. But Sidney's *Apologie for Poetrie* which runs to 54 pages in the World's Classics takes only 46 pages in the Macmillan edition, and Wordsworth's *Preface to the Lyrical Ballads* occupies respectively 39 and 28 pages in the two publications. While the World's Classics volumes, even if all of them are readily available, will cost a small fortune, the Macmillan volumes are together just a little over Rs. 56.

This is a deliberately philistine buyer's-approach to the two volumes. Books have unfortunately become a luxury even to the scholar and the academic, and reviews completely unconcerned with pages and prices will not fulfil their prime purpose — which is to take the reader from themselves to the things they talk about. A reviewer is only a middleman, the priest at the temple.

Is literary criticism itself, like most books nowadays, a luxury one can dispense with? The editors in their preface invoke Professor Garrod:

> Professor Garrod said once that literary criticism was literature suggested by a book. How truly Garrod stresses the central

quality of literary criticism that it is the fruit of the voyage of a mind through not so very strange seas, and not quite alone, adventuring zestfully among the world's great masterpieces!

Exclamatory criticism puts one off even from a Coleridge, Hazlitt or De Quincey, and when the Professor's statement has to be reinforced with allusions to *The Prelude* and to Anatole France, one becomes suspicious and possibly hypercritical. In the hands of a Bradley or Raleigh or C. S. Lewis literary criticism does indeed become literature. But whether this is true of the great mob of critics writing with unease is questionable. That style in itself is also not enough is proved by the present rating of Pater, not likely to be reversed, whom the editors nevertheless regard as "the greatest exemplar of creative criticism" (Volume One p. xxviii).

The volumes contain not only the best English and American literary criticism from before Sidney to Northrop Frye: the pearls are strung on a single thread, the English Critical *Tradition*. The introduction running to 41 pages is a masterly summing up of the entire English and American canon from this point of view. Dryden was perhaps the first of the English critics to insist on genealogy:

> Milton was the poetical son of Spenser . . . Spenser more than once insinuates, that the soul of Chaucer was transfused into his body . . . . (if I may be permitted to say it of myself) I found I had a soul congenial to his [Chaucer's]

—a tendency Swift parodied in his *Battle of the Books* where, confronted by Virgil and on the point of being run through by him,

> Dryden in a long harangue soothed up the good Ancient, called him father, and by a large deduction of genealogies, made it plainly appear that they were nearly related.

But Dryden's genealogies, *pace* Swift, were discoveries rather than inventions, and when the editors in their preface connect Coleridge and Cleanth Brooks, Sidney and Northrop Frye, they deserve the fullest credit for not only being aware of, but also

demonstrating, the critical tradition.

That this tradition goes back to many centuries earlier than the 16th, although the word "English" will not embrace it, is borne out by the appendices with their large and valuable extracts from Plato, Aristotle, Horace, Longinus, Castelvetro and Mazzoni. The inclusion of Sri Aurobindo, Ananda Coomaraswamy and Rabindranath Tagore does not seem to be particularly appropriate in the context of an English Critical Tradition, but should flatter the Indian ego. The appendices are a sort of bonus, indeed a bonanza. Whoever looks a gift horse in the mouth, particularly when the horse is not only gift but gifted?

Volume Two contains an errata running to two and half pages, but alas, quite a few fishes have escaped this careful net. The next edition of Volume One should rectify the confusion between Ascham and Wilson on page ix of the Preface (lines 13 and 14 from the bottom). There are 178 pages of extremely useful notes to the selections, and also bibliographies general as well as for individual authors.

The editors are however better as critics than humorists:

> When he [Cowley] quotes approvingly Bentley's reply to Cobb, 'Pindar was a bold fellow, but thou art an impudent one', we see the relevance of the observation to modern practitioners of free verse (Volume One p. xvi).

This is no more than many of these practitioners deserve. Not everybody may seriously mind a snide reference to F. R. Leavis:

> T. S. Eliot can be, like his Sancho Panza, F. R. Leavis, rather clumsy in his use of English (Volume Two, p. 594).

But

> Wilson hits not over-gently at the notorious loquacity of the female sex. Shakespeare's Desdemona, for example, couldn't be stopped from speaking a little even after she had been strangled to death! (Volume One p. 416)

takes one's own breath away when one recalls what it was she said, and how singularly unloquacious she is under the most terrible provocations as when Othello strikes her in public. When

Milton's references to Urania in *Paradise Lost* are described in terms of "celestial patronesses indulging in nocturnal affairs with their chosen literary darlings here below" one can only ponder how much Sigmund Freud has to answer for when our very academics, presumably by training if not temperament sage and serious, cannot spare even a Milton their knowing leer. The *Ramayana* does not appear without its *Srimad* (to the confusion of the foreign reader) — which is as if an Englishman or an American should always talk and write of The Holy Bible instead of just the Bible. But Desdemona and Milton are fair game.

P. S. SUNDARAM

Essays in Criticism and Comparative Poetics by K. Viswanatham, Andhra University Press, pp. 714, Rs. 60.

Essays and Studies — Festchrift in honour of Prof. (sic) K. Viswanatham, edited by Prof. (sic) G. V. L. N. Sharma. Triveni Publishers. Machilipatnam. Rs. 50.

The Journal of English Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Warangal. Annual subscription, Rs. 5 to teachers of English, Rs. 10 to others.

PROFESSOR K. Viswanatham honoured by the second of these volumes is his own worst enemy. Having taught English for "thirty-one long years" (p. v) he surely knows the proverb that good wine needs no bush. But he plants a forest of trees around his book which is sure to put off a sensitive reader and make him suspect the quality of goods that need so excessive an advertisement. Does a Senior Professor of one of our older universities require to produce "chits" from all over the world to induce the common reader to have a look at what he has to say? Is it exactly in good taste to quote passages from personal letters, one of which is not even from the V.I.P. himself, but his wife on his behalf? These questions are relevant as we have a right to expect the highest standards from Professors of our universities.

In an interesting and well-documented essay on "Psittacism or the *Times* on the Ph.D.", Professor Viswanatham suggests :

> Let every university teacher submit to a clause in the contract that he would hand over to the university before retirement a Ms copy of his lifelong research failing which he forfeits his P.F. [Provident Fund]; there is sufficient time to gather scholarship. One book is enough (p. 641).

It would seem that the *Essays in Criticism and Comparative Poetics* is the Professor's one book by which he is willing to be judged. He has written others, e.g. *India in English Fiction,* and is currently engaged in a study of Myth, Fable and Archetype. But these essays are a record of his scholarship and teaching of over three decades. It is a record of which anyone can be proud.

Only, quite a few of them are not essays at all but lecture notes, memoranda with much repetition, and references to authors and passages such as would occur to one who has a class to teach and enthuse. And also perhaps "impress" with the names and opinions of various critics who have dealt with the subject?

Professor Viswanatham's learning is both wide and deep and nearly all his quotations are relevant and appropriate. That he is a thoughtful man is evident from what he has to say on Donne and Dante, Eliot and Lorca, Tragedy and the Sanskrit Drama. To say this is not to agree with him, or with Quiller-Couch for that matter, that *The Tempest* is a better play than *King Lear.* There are depths in Shakespeare not even suspected by Kalidasa. But they are present in our epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata,* something which has been overlooked by Professor Viswanatham.

The Professor "walked on air or levitated from the chair where I sat when I wrote [sic. Mistake for 'read'?] in 'Keats' Quintuplets' that the sad heart of Ruth was not from the Bible but from a poem of Wordsworth" (p. xi). I am afraid an honest re-reading of Wordsworth's "Ruth" and the Bible will bring him back to earth. "The Bible Ruth", says Professor Viswanatham

> is neither sad nor sick for home nor in tears though amid the alien corn nor is there a mention of nightingale (sic) in the 'Book of Ruth' (p. 122).

But are nightingales mentioned in Wordsworth's "Ruth"? or corn? Is there any suggestion that Wordsworth's Ruth had gone

off to a different country? At least "alien" and "corn" are common to the Biblical Ruth and Keats'. The only thing common to the Ruths of Wordsworth and Keats is the name. Even sadness is not common to them unless we assume gratuitously that Keats carried in his mind the first line of the poem — "When Ruth was left half desolate" — which has nothing to do with the tragedy of her marriage or any alien corn but the loss of her mother when she was less than seven years old. Had Keats written "Through the mad heart of Ruth", to invoke Wordsworth would be excusable even if not completely justified: but not as the two poems stand.

This is an instance where the Professor's gusto should have been checked. His language too is not always what one would expect, as when he writes

> That is why Carlyle refers to the one smiting word in Dante that delivers the goods (p. 291).

Keats' advice to Shelley, "Curb your magnanimity and be more of an artist" would seem to apply eminently to the learned Professor.

The festschrift contains an appreciation of the "Professor with a difference" by A. G. K. Murty and seventeen papers by friends and admirers among whom are Professor Geoffrey Bullough, Professor Wilson Knight and Professor V. K. Gokak. Bullough's paper "The Wanderer in Scott's Novels" is useful in drawing our attention to a one-time wizard who has ceased to have any magic for the "modern" reader. It also emphasizes the influence of *Gil Blas* and the picaresque on generations of story-tellers. Life, says Chesterton somewhere, may be thought of either as a battle as in the *Iliad*, or as a journey as in the *Odyssey*. But even where the culmination is a battle, as not only in the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* but also the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, a journey is involved, and often much wandering. Like Fielding and Smollett before him, and Dickens after him, Scott is often content to send his hero or even heroine on a long trail. He loved travel himself.

Professor Wilson Knight writes a couple of pages on the Taj Mahal and the filial ingratitude which like Lear's was the Iot of Shahjahan's last days. Professor Gokak writes four pages on

the "Autobiography of a Yogi", Paramahamsa Yogananda, and the resurrection of Shri Yukteswar, his master.

After these excursions into tourism, Indian history and the astral plane, the mere student of literature and language is relieved to return to Sir Thomas Browne (J. Srihari Rao), Emerson (Z. P. Thundy), Melville (N. Krishna Rao), Mark Twain (Amritjit Singh), Hemingway (E. Nageswara Rao), Indo-Angliana — Jhabvala (V. A. Sahane), Kushwant Singh (S. S. Prabhakara Rao), the East-West Encounter (L. S. R. Krishna Sastry) — and the teaching of English in our colleges (H. N. L. Sastri). The new American verse is savoured by one who is proud of not being a pedagogue, I. V. Chalapati Rao. Three papers, on Secondary Roots in Sanskrit (P. Sriramamurti), Anandavardhana (K. Subrahmanian), and Eliot, Northrop Frye and Mammata (S. M. Pandeya) do justice to Professor Viswanatham's own wide range of interest in the Sanskrit language and comparative poetics. The editor Professor G. V. L. N. Sarma has a paper on "Classical Elements in Technical Terminology".

Professor Sarma is also the editor of *The Journal of English Studies* published by the Department of English of the Regional Engineering College, Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Warangal. Appearing twice a year, in April and in November, the journal while concerned with the problems of language teaching especially in technical institutions, does *not* confine itself to mere language teaching. Well produced and well edited it is modestly priced.

P. S. SUNDARAM

Ihab Hassan, *Paracriticisms* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975) xvii+184 pages.

In *Paracriticisms* Ihab Hassan attempts a kind of speculative leap into the possibilities of criticisms through a method that owes its strength to his acquaintance with the inward transactions of philosophical meditations as well as contemporary fiction. Defining "paracriticism" as a means to recover "the art of multivocation," Hassan steers clear of conceptual jargon in order to arrive at a lucid and highly intuitive understanding of the nature and directions of the critical process. Such self-reflective

strategies, in their turn, help to illuminate Hassan's anxiety to ascertain that criticism performs a role that *should* always be seminal to it: it should, in other words, learn more about playful discontinuity so that it may become itself *less* than the sum of its parts. By keeping this aim in view, criticism, Hassan believes, would fulfil a desirable humanistic function—that of enabling man to dream himself onward. The book's epigraph, drawn from Nietzsche, gives full credence to this view: "The world does not revolve around those who invent new upheavals but around those who invent new values; it revolves in silence."

The playful discontinuities Hassan indulges in are refreshingly untainted by any ideological or doctrinaire assertions. In fact, his criticism of other critics, at most times, is understaken in such a sympathetic spirit that even the most crucial disagreements appear to be redeemed by good sense and easy humour. By thus cutting across a welter of existing critical concepts and opinions, the book offers a liberal but searching "paracritical meditation" on the inscapes of literature, criticism, and cognate areas of thought within the specific contexts of modernism and post-modernism. One may make special mention of how the study of Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* helps to unveil the being of the novel at the same time as it subjects post-modern consciousness to a trenchant and fruitful analysis.

Alert, agile, and immensely sane, Hassan's book prompts the reader to reconsider basic issues in modern criticism without trapping him in any dogmatic formulations. A must for every student of modern and contemporary literature.

CHIRANTAN KULSHRESTHA

VIII. SEMIOTICS

Ladislav Matejka & Irwin R. Titunik, (ed.): *Semiotics of Art: Prague School Contributions.* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1976.) xxi; + 298 pages.

Umberto Eco.: *A Theory of Semiotics.* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1976.) xi; +354 pages.

THE study of literature in India has been traditionally hospitable

to a close reading of the strangely different language (*Vakrokti*) of the text and comprehensive doctrine of signification (*sabdasakti*). At the same time one must ruefully note that the present-day Indian academic and intellectual (they are not always the same person) is very myopic — the West for him is the Anglo-Saxon West and the Indian tradition for him is the one made available through modern Indological researches. The Indian teacher of English literature will do well therefore to heed these voices from Czechoslovakia and Italy instead of dutifully copying the Anglo-Saxon sneers at "linguistic criticism" and philosophizing about literature, and to bring to bear on the issues they raise what the Indian tradition has to offer in these areas. The experience will improve his digestion and blood-circulation. The rest of this all too brief review is to be no more than an appetizer.

The two books under review represent two interesting soundings in these agitated cross-currents of linguistics, semiotics and language-oriented literary criticism. *Semiotics of Art* is a reader sampling the Prague School pronouncements on art whether visual, verbal or theatrical. (There is even an article on the Film among these pieces which are mostly translations from Czech originals and date from 1933-44, 1963, 1973). This is rounded off with a postscript by the senior editor presenting a historical overview. *A Theory of Semiotics* explores the possibility and utility of a unified theory of signification and communication. It is a revised and expanded version of the Italian original. Drawing upon the varying traditions of Sanssurian linguistics and Levi-Straussian anthropology, it brings to the fore the twin notions of sign-function within a code of signification and of sign-production making communication possible. Communication anchors the formal code into the social matrix.

Jan Mukarovsky presents a program for the objective study of art in his essay "Art as Semiotic Fact" (1934), with which the collection *Semiotics of Art* opens. "Every work of art is an autonomous sign composed of: (1) an artifact functioning as perceivable signifier; (2) an aesthetic object which is registered in the collective consciousness and which functions as 'signification'; (3) a relationship to a thing signified (. . . not to any distinct existent — since we are talking about an autonomous sign — but to the total context of social phenomena, science, philosophy, religion, politics, and so on, of any given milieu)." Thus, the audible

or legible text of the poem is the signifier. That which is common to subjective states of mind aroused in the readers of any particular community gives the poem proper. Poems may differ in the degree of freedom they permit to the reader to play around this core. Any pleasure that accrues is accessory. The semiotic link with the total context confers on art the power to characterize or represent 'the age', though the history of art is by no means the history of culture. The umbilical cord mustn't turn into the strangling rope.

Lest all this seem terribly abstract, consider Lubomir Dolezel's "A scheme of narrative time" (1973) which applies some of these ideas to the handling of time in prose fiction, specifically Milan Kundera's novel *The Joke* (the original Czech, Prague 1967; English translation, New York, 1969). Through the processes of selection and reshaping Kundera transforms the forty years' story into an action spread over two episodes separated by an interlude and preceded by a prehistory. The story-telling time spread over so many pages is reduced to narrator time — in this case to an intermediate degree between its total elimination with a passive 'outsider' for a narrator and running commentary by an 'insider' or at least a 'ringsider'. Finally, the plot-time runs in this novel in a direction opposed to action times; it emerges from the four characters telling the story right in the middle of the second episode and recalling the past in dove-tailed but non-overlapping segments. This essay is a refreshing departure from vague manifestoes for a poetics of the novel and naive identification of fictional time with historical time.

Eco's book revolves round the idea of the 'sign-function' which bears the same relation to the physical occurrence (signal) and to the content element that Mukarovsky's 'signification' bears to the perceivable artifact and to the thing signified. Sign-functions are realized every time its two terms are brought together either in exercise of a code or often additionally by virtue of the text and the context. Such a realization occurs even when there is an act of lying. Chapters one and two develop a theory of codes. The complementary chapter 3 proposes a theory of sign-production in so far as it concerns semiotics. Every time a sign-function is realized, (a) labour is expended by the parties concerned, (b) the signal and the thing signified may come to be immediately or mediately related, (c) expression and content may be homoge-

neous or heterogeneous, and (d) the coding may be maximal or minimal (and so dependent on contextual aids).

Of special interest to a student of literature would be the pages on the inventive mode of sign-labour (245-76), and the rhetorical mode of maximized coding (276-98). Coming at the close of the book they should provide the needed incentive for undertaking the sign-labour of working one's way through the abstract but rewarding discussion that takes one from basic and simple notions to complex and advanced ones. Is that too much to expect from the scions of Abhinavagupta?

But there is also another reward — and this applies equally to the first book. It consists in the resolution of the intolerable dilemma faced by the humanist — choosing between a rigorous but arid formalism and a 'wet' but loose-joined concern for the social context of language and of art.

ASHOK KELKAR

IX. MARXISM

Raymond Williams: *Marxism and Literature* (London: O. U. P. 1977).

THIS book is a considerable disappointment. Raymond Williams' contributions to cultural criticism have so deservedly been praised that a comprehensive effort on his part to deal systematically with Marxism and Literature would surely be an event — at least in the English-speaking world where critics make a virtue of their ignorance of theory. The deficit in theory, so characteristic of the English tradition, was radically challenged by the upsurge of student activism in the sixties and its concomitant for a theoretical understanding of the meaning of revolutionary practice. In a charmingly written introduction to this book Williams traces his intellectual development from instinctive leftist loyalties in the thirties (natural to someone from a working class background), reservations about orthodox Marxism and then to the chrome and platinum fascination of the New Left. This has led to grievous misunderstandings.

Williams organises his book in three parts. In the first part he discusses four "basic concepts" (culture, language, literature

and ideology). This itself is puzzling. Without any attempt at methodological justification, Williams simply expects the reader to accept his categorisation. The obiter dicta continue. In the second part Williams moves on to ten "key concepts of Marxist cultural theory" like base and superstructure, productive forces, reflection etc. In the third part he extends the discussion by dealing with ten more concepts on topics in literary theory like signs, forms, genres etc., in order to substantiate his position "which can briefly be described as cultural materialism: a theory of the specificities of material cultural and literary production within historical materialism". (p. 5). This sounds promising, but soon one starts wondering about Williams' understanding of materialism. The problem is that Williams avoids concretisation of his debate with the Marxist tradition, refers cryptically and negatively to "a development" or "an adaptation" of Marxism instead of squarely telling us what or who he is referring to. This is irritating because Williams is quite simply wrong about many key questions in Marxist cultural theory. To give only two examples. "Reflection" is not a passive concept. On the contrary it is a profoundly active epistemological concept explaining the relationship between consciousness and objective reality. And Art, as one form of the appropriation of reality, is part of this epistemological framework. It is an error to suggest that reflection theory ignores "the actual work on material — in a final sense, the material social process — which is the making of any art work. By projecting and alienating this material process to 'reflection' the social and material character of artistic activity . . . was suppressed."

Similarly, Williams errs in supposing that the "concept of tradition has been radically neglected in Marxist cultural thought" (p. 115) One has only to read Marx, Engels and Lenin to realise that the discussion on tradition is central to Marxist aesthetics and that the relationship between contemporary writing and the appropriation of tradition is a crucial concern of Marxist cultural theory.

Such misunderstandings are symptomatic of a basic deficiency in Williams' understanding of dialectical and historical materialism. This becomes obvious in his remarks on "production" and the rejection of the base-superstructure relationship which is replaced by an all pervading notion of "practices" which include everything from factory labour to the composition of music.

Williams' task is to look at all these productive activities without assuming in advance that only some of them are important or basic.

The point here is that the epochal and politically relevant discovery of Marx and Engels was to show that in the totality of social relations it is the material relations of production which determine ideological relationships. The significance was not just theoretical satisfaction. Profound consequences for revolutionary practice followed. By suggesting correctly that since everything is produced we should examine every relationship afresh, Williams throws overboard Marx' insight that "the mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general." Further, it is extraordinary that Williams ignores some of the most significant developments in contemporary Marxists aesthetics where the production and reception of literature in society are studied. In these investigations the concept of production becomes concrete. In Williams one almost feels that "production" is an ontological tag universally applicable and suitably abstract.

Williams' failure stems from a methodological mistake in the book. Marxist method demands an historical critique in the process of which a new position is demarcated. Instead of a sense of history, Williams, in this book, only gives evidence of a sense of semantics. In his *Keywords* (1976) Williams showed how an active exercise in the semantic analysis of the vocabulary of culture and society is very helpful in clarifying our usage. By proceeding from one semantic clarification to another Williams does not build up an argument. We remain with vignettes, some of them interesting no doubt; but an extended version of *Keywords* is no substitute for a historical critique.

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