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THE INDIAN JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES

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The Indian Association for English Studies

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(The views expressed in the articles are not of the Editor but of their respective writers.)

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EDITORIAL

It is a matter of great satisfaction that the decision to do away with the commercial publisher and to take over the publication of the Journal in the name of the Indian Association for English Studies has been a success on all fronts—financial, circulation and reader-response. Vol. XIX, the first to be published by the Association, has reached every corner of the country and six countries abroad. Efforts are being reintensified to expand its area of circulation and to make it truly representative of Indian opinion in the field of English studies.

For our foreign readers it may be interesting to know something about the link between the Indian Association for English Studies, All India English Teachers' Conference and the Journal. The Association holds the Conference annually at one of the University centres by invitation. Scholars of English throughout India prepare their research papers during the year and present them at the three-day Conference. Out of nearly 200 papers thus presented fifteen to twenty are selected for publication in the Journal. Papers not presented at the Conference but submitted direct to the Editor are given a fair representation among published articles on merit. Thus the claim made for the Journal that it truly represents Indian Scholarship in English is not ill-founded.

The Editorial policy emphasises the Indian point of view in the interpretation of literature in English. Articles like 'Matthew Arnold's Oriental Erudition' and 'West Wind blows through Malgudi' which appeared in Vol. XIX evoked considerable interest. In the present number too 'Tennyson's Interest in the Orient' and 'The Concept of Nature in Bhagvadgita' and Blake's Pickering-Manuscript Poems' have been included under the same policy. We also seek to focus attention on those aspects of literature in English which have some relevance to India. 'Schools and Schoolmasters in Dickens' will be found of interest in these days of mushroom growth of private and proprietory schools for the young in our country.

The Journal also places stress on original investigation in neglected

fields, and original and new interpretations of subjects not so neglected. It will not be difficult to recognise 'O' Neill's S. S. Glencairn Cycle as Religious Drama', 'D. H. Lawrances's Conception of Art', 'The Wisdom of Robert Frost' and 'W. B. Yeats on Poetic Drama' as articles coming under this category.

As the premier Journal of English Studies in the country, it recognises as one of its functions to introduce new subjects to its readers, which, though the centre of hectic interest in the West, have not reached us yet; or at least have not become commonly known. 'Derrida and the Theory of Deconstruction' is one such article designed to perform this function.

One of the three new projects announced in the last year's Editorial has got a start. We are presenting in this issue a few poems in English by our members. Depending on the reaction to this experiment, more space may be given in future to creative writing. The Literary Debate has not got a start yet, because no comments on the articles of the last issue were received. This lack of response carries an implicit comment which it is not for the Editor to elaborate. Also, no Research Note from any of the readers was received, although inquiries were made regarding its nature and intent. The Editor-in-Chief is, therefore, constrained to include a Research Note of his own with apologies for taking up the space which could have been utilised by any of the members.

Editor-in-Chief

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ROMANTIC POETRY AS A POETRY OF QUEST AND QUESTIONS

N. K. Pujahari

A reader at times forgets the obvious signs of a fundamental skeptical streak that runs through Romantic poetry and comes to the conclusion that the Romantic poets write basically a poetry of doctrine. Such an assumption of 'ism' leads the reader to two categories of error. In the first category the reader expects the poetry to communicate doctrine, and he makes it do so. He creates messages, for example, on reading Blake's '*The Tiger*', he feels the proper response must be to answer the questions in the poem. Again he thinks that Keats is telling us, "Beauty is truth, truth beauty" and it is Coleridge who urges, "He prayeth well, who loveth well". Such a reader creates a satisfaction about his assumption, assuming poetry to tell him things, whereas the reader in the second category of error comes to the poetry looking for a doctrine and does not proceed to create what is not there. When he sees that the poetry does not fulfil his expectation, he condemns it for not doing so. Such a reader condemns Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" for obscurity of language and phrasing. He expects Wordsworth to offer him doctrine and on failing to find it, he makes the poet the target of his criticism.

Such a problem springs from the fact that many readers aim at making a theory of Romanticism serve also for a theory of Romantic poetry—a service it cannot really perform. Romanticism has to do with a fundamental state of mind. One can think of it as the state of mind out of which Romantic poetry is generated, or as the state of mind toward which Romantic poetry moves. Therefore, Romantic poetry is not identical with the state of mind. So what is needed is to have a clear understanding of Romantic poetry. It is not so much a theory of Romanticism as a theory of Romantic poetry.

Romantic poetry is full of doctrinal elements like poetry of any other period. But it is important to think what part these elements play in the

poems. Some poems can be designed to communicate doctrine, convincing the reader of the truth, value, or usefulness of a given doctrine. In such cases doctrine plays the leading role in the poems. But doctrinal elements can also play a supporting role, promoting some end beyond themselves. The fact that the doctrinal elements play a supporting role in Romantic poetry, is often lost sight of by the readers. They look for its doctrine and often have a temptation to isolate passsages like—

"O fret not after knowledge"

(Keats)

"Gentleness, virtue, wisdom, and endurance
These are the seals of that most firm assurance
Which bars the pit over Destruction's strength"

(Shelley)

They totally forget that the speakers here are not Keats and Shelley but a thrush and a Demogorgon. The same is true of Wordsworth's oft quoted passage—"Knowing that Nature never did betray. The heart that loved her" in 'Tintern Abbey'. The readers forget what is going on in the poem in their quest for doctrines. Let us consider an oft-read little poem of Wordsworth, "Lines written in Early Spring". It offers us plenty of doctrine; we learn how much the heart must grieve over "what man has made of man", and how "every flower/Enjoys the air it breathes". This is where a reader looking for doctrine, finds Wordsworth's doctrin. But to understand thoroughly well we must look at the climax of the poem.

If this belief from heaven be sent
If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man ?

The poem thus closes with a question, and the emphasis is on 'If'. There is no resolution, no positive answer. We do not get a doctrinal position. The word 'If' rather creates a tension or disturbance in the mind. The poem thus forces questions like this upon us, and the questions expand, becoming a challenge to the bases of our own beliefs. Those who read this poem with false assumption, believe that romantic poetry must be telling them things, communicating doctrines. For such readers this poem becomes not question but statement.

Thus one of the most important points in reading romantic poetry is the question, the tension or disturbance created in the reader's mind. We must be always conscious for the 'If' and for all those elements which generate

the question. So Romantic poetry is a literature which asks rather than tells. It brings problems to light rather than solving them.

I am reminded of Descartes' 'Cogito, ergo sum'. Descartes adopts a tool of radical skepticism, submitting to question established beliefs, exposing them to the test of doubt A Romantic poet leads us to such a quest. He is first a questioner who asks and poses negative examples. He applies the test of doubt and confronts the world of established belief-structures with the skeptic's eye. Throughout the Romantic poetry we encounter an impulse to seek within, and search out a cartesian-like cogito. Thus Romantic poet often considers his work as 'experiment'. His poetry teaches by questioning the reader's pre-assumed answers. It guides by producing rather than relieving tension. It does not present the result of a quest, but instead forces the reader to experience the act of questing himself. Thus the delight that this poetry produces is that of a quest in process.

For further analysis we can speak of Romantic poetry as embodying two main movements. The first one is an attempt to disrupt a reader's equilibrium, to break down his sense of order and cast doubts upon the doctrines he holds when he comes to poetry. The effect is to gain a suspension of the reader's sense that the cosmos is solidly structured and that he has a good grasp of that structure. This movement makes the reader read for a serious consideration of the underlying world of unstructured data. The second movement takes the reader into an exploration of this data. He attempts to grasp not doctrine but the 'primal stuff' of experience with which one must deal in order to generate doctrine.

There are several ways in which the first movement works in disrupting the readers sense of order. The most important is the technique of direct question posed strikingly, posed to reverberate unanswered in the reader's mind. To establish this point let us consider Blake's 'Tiger', Wordsworth's 'Matthew', Keat's 'Nightingale' and Shelley's 'Mont Blanc'. The structure of these poems is such as to make the question spring from our mind in the final lines, rendering what came before as uncertain. Shelley's 'Mont Blanc' closes with a question :

> And what were thou, and earth, and stars, and sea,
> If to the human mind's imaginings
> Silence and solitude were vacancy ?

With such lines the intuitions just gained are not solid ground upon which one can build with confidence. The 'If ' again comes to the front and the reader finishes reading the poem not with a resolution and doctrine, but with

an unanswered question. This technique often operates less obviously. Instead of posing the question directly, the poetry runs in such a way as to force the reader himself to pose questions. Another subtle technique in this movement is to break down a reader's sense of certainty which the poetry builds and it actually produces a 'point' or 'answer', which, in fact, is no answer at all when closely examined.

Let us analyse Keats's "La Belle Dame Sans Merci". The poem opens with a question :—

"O what can ail thee, Knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering ?
The Sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

But when it closes it appears to offer an answer :

And this is why I sojourn here
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

The word 'this' is very confusing. It may be the effect of the knight's dream; having been warned, the knight has shaken himself off the merciless Dame's web. But when we think of the knight's present sad condition, it seems that he is still in the web. The mind of the reader still gets confused with various questions. He asks of himself : is there a web at all ? Was the dream that warned the knight a true one? The lines like "She looked at me as if she did love' and 'And sure in language strange she said' thicken our confusion. All we know of La Belle Dame are her physical actions; the intent is beyond our grasp. If dream is accepted as a source of gaining knowledge of the world outside the self, the intent can be known. Therefore Keats's 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' is a poem of possibility and tension—an exploration of the unanswerable questions.

Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" has also the similar technique of the first movement. It offers an answer which is not an answer. The readers often consider the Mariner's advice to the wedding-Guest—

"He Prayeth well, who loveth well"

as Coleridge's doctrine. It is nothing more than a set of directions for praying. It is as good as asking the patient to take medicine but leaving unresolved the question whether the medicine has any effect on the health. So the poet leaves the reader with questions and expanding possibilities.

The second movement in Romantic poetry is an attempt to grasp the experimental data that underlie the doctrinal constructs men imposes upon the cosmos. The reader passes on to this by the doctrines of the first movement, viewing answers with suspicions and thinking in terms of possibilities rather than of certainties. After breaking down the stability of what we 'know' the poetry moves toward an examination of the fundamental experience of which knowledge is generated. Like Descartes, the Romantic poet is led back to the realm of the mind's activity, where he does not find solid ground, but merely another question. He becomes a more stubborn questioner than Descartes. Thus the Romantic poetry seeks to offer us the basic data of mental activity rather than final statement about what "should be", or what "really is". Thus Wordsworth argues in the "Essay, Supplementary to the Preface" 1815.

> The appropriate business of poetry, her appropriate empolyment, her privilege, and her duty, is to treat of things not as they exist in themselves, but as they seem to exist to the senses, and to the passions.

Wordsworth's reference to sciences here is significant. In Romantic poetry, as in science, the quest for certainity leads back to the raw data of experience, the evidence about the way the mind operates.

Thus the major difficulty Romantic poetry presents to many readers is its open-endedness. It offers questions, exposes problems, uncovers data. It also casts doubts upon supposed certainties, and it suggests possible new directions for thought. It stirs the mind—but then it leaves the mind in that uneasy condition. Often a reader is tempted to push the poetry further in order to arrive at certainties, statements of doctrines. As suggested earlier, such temptation results in one of two errors: Either the reader creates his own poem, making it say things it deos not say; or the reader condemns the poetry for not saying things, or for not saying them clearly. The usual temptation in reading the Romantic Poetry is to ask; 'What is the poetry telling us' ? But usually the reader's question should rather be : What is the poetry asking us ? So the reader of Romantic Poetry must have a clear notion that the Romantic poet's desire, certainly, was to move toward a poetry of doctrine. But his greater desire was to know that his doctrine was well grounded, that it could make some claim to certainty. So the Romantic poet moves on a quest 'down-ward', doubting, asking questions, exploring data, searching for a solid ground.

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KEATS'S WASTE LAND : A STUDY OF LAMIA

Amiya Bhushan Sharma

It was Shelley who compared the 'mind in creation' with 'a fading coal which some invisible influence like an inconstant wind awakens to transitory brightness'[1]. Keats's mind in 1818-19 was very much like that and some of the poems that he wrote in this period are incomparably richer than other poems of his *ouevre*. Critics[2] have agreed that those poems are Keats's poems of experience, though not in exactly this world. Gittings[3] has examined them side by side with his letters and shown that these poems are born out of Keats's mistrust of Fanny Brawne and the love for Isabella Jones; but these ladies in Keats's life should be seen in the light of Tom's illness and his death in the immediate context and Keat's death haunted childhood and his relation with his mother in the remote past, in order to understand the nature of some of the poems of this period. This paper is an attempt to understand the quality of experience in *Lamia*, in the light of some of the recurrent images in Keats's works and a novel treatment of the theme of *La femme fatale*. Professor E. C. Pettet agrees thot '*Lamia* is a poem of Keats's experience in love. *Endymion*, in the main, of imaginative innocence[4] so does Ian Jack in the *Oxford History of English Literature* :

> The hero of *Lamia* discovers that he has been deceived in the very nature of his love, and dies of sorrow : the hero of *Isabella* is murdered by the brothers of the lady he loves, but is loyally mourned by her until she dies of grief : while the hero of *The Eve of St. Agnes* escapes with his lady from the castle in which she has been living in the midst of his enemies. It is easy to think of this last poem as representing Keats's hopes in love, of *Isabella* as a sort of second best, and of *Lamia* as the portrayal of his deepest fears; but while this sort of autobiographical interpretation is attractive, it need not be taken very seriously[5].

There is no doubt about that. Nevertheless an effort to see it in the biographical context is to shift the focus to the right place, at least so far as *Lamia* is concerned. Apollonius does not just represent 'analytical reason'[6] against imagination, a conclusion that appeals to Sir Maurice Bowra. To interpret *Lamia* just in the light of the following lines will be a gross misjudgment :

> Do not all charms fly
> At the mere touch of cold philosophy ?
> There was an awful rainbow once in heavens
> We knew her woof and texture ; she is given
> In the dull catalogue of common thing. (ll. 229-33)[7].

In fact the lines tell us more about a young man's discovery of truth, realization of the nature of sexual love, a realization that has so easily come to poets in the East. Tulsi Das in his hundred and eleventh letter of prayer to Lord Ram writes :

> Rabikar nīr basai ati darun makar rūp tehi māhin
> Badan-hīn so grasai charāchar, pān karan jē jāhin[8].

Lamia, the serpent has kinship with the bodiless crocodile of the mirage of life, for someone who chooses to quench his thirst in the things of the world. *Lamia*, although a poem in the European tradition at once universalizes itself —as many poems in the genre do not—in its quality of experience of the East that condemns the world as *bhava sagara* and flesh as despicable and painful, 'the fury and the mire of human veins'.

This realization colours the poem through and through. Fauns and sayrs are no longer benevolent powers but lustful monsters. Hermes, Maias's son, is lustfully looking around for a nymph for his sexual satisfaction. There is no longer the air of physical holiness, ritual purity and a suggestion of personal sacrifice in an act of union that we find on the one hand in *The Eve of St. Agnes* and on the other in a different context in *Paradise Lost* :

> Like Maia's son he stood,
> And shook his plumes, that heavenly fragrance filled
> The circuit wide straight knew him all the bands
> Of Angels under watch, and to his slate
> And to his message high in honour rise,
> For on some message high they gussed him bound. (BKV, ll. 285-90)[9]

Hermes has descended from Mount olympus with a purpose—not to warn Adam and Eve against an impending doom as in *Paradise Lost*, but to satisfy himself, not in an endeavour to keep the spring of life pure, but to pollute it

by metamorphosing a serpent into a woman who would bring doom and death upon a young man. The relationship between Hermes and Lamia, when they meet, is purely business like. Lamia will find out a nymph for Hermes, if the latter will transform the former into a woman. But there is no mutual trust—'but seal with oaths fair God'[10] says Lamia and Hermes swears by his serpent rod. The posture in which Hermes holds Lamia is compared with 'a stoop'd falcon' before 'he takes his prey"[11]. This posture is again suggested in the second part at two places. First, while Lycius and Lamia are exchanging complaints, the former :

> Answerd bending to her open eyes,
> Where he was mirror'd small in paradise. (ll. 46-47)

Lycius is compared a little later with Apollo after the Deucalion flood as he stood striking at the python. Here is no marriage of true minds. Lamia, Hermes and Lycius are like Lil, her lover in the pub and Albert in *The Waste Land*, strongly suggestive of the ugliness to which even marital relationship has degenerated. Lycius plans :

> How to entangle, trammel up and snare
> Your soul in mine, and labyrinth you there
> Like the hid scent in an unbudded rose ? (ll 52-54)

Lamia on her part, like the *belle dame sans merci* :

> ... without any show
> Of sorrow for her tender favourites woe,
> But rather, if her eyes could brighter be,
> With brighter eyes and slow amenity,
> Put her new lips to his, and gave afresh
> The life she had so tangled in her mesh. (ll. 290-95)

The knight-at-arms was warned by the kings and princes and was saved but condemned to live a withered life ; Lycius's marriage garments become his shroud.

A rose in this poem no longer suggests fragrance, fullness and voluptuousness. It is symbolic of a labyrinth, and a coil. Smell, a sure test of happiness in Keats's poetry is here a forecast of doom. A rose in *The Eve of St. Agnes* is as sensitive as a touch-me-not and would become a bud again if the bee enters it, suggestive of an uninterrupted sensual pleasure. A sudden thought is like a full blown rose, and Hyperion is received in his chamber :

> Like a rose in vermeil tint and shape
> In fragrance soft, and coolness to the eye,

That inlet to severe magnificence
Stood full blown for the God to enter in. (ll. 209-92)

In Lamia, there is no 'fragrance soft', and 'coolness to the eye'. Here is bargaining, fear, deceit, decay and death.

A drink in Keats in always a prelude to a transformation into something rich and strange. He would fade away with the nightingale into its cove of happiness after a draught of wine :

With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim. (ll. 17-20)

The emphasis on the third line is relevant. Through drink he wants to escape from this world, where men sit and hear each other groan. It is a means to sleep in the *Fall of Hyperion* :

And appetite
More yearning than on Earth I ever felt
Growing within, I ate deliciously;
And after not long, thirsted, for thereby
Stood a cool vessel of transparent juice
Sipp'd by the wander'd bee, the which I took,
And, pledging all the mertals of the world,
And all the dead whose names are in our lips.
Drank. That full draught is parent of my theme. (ll. 38-16).

This drink inspires sleep, from which he will rise into Moneta's sanctuary, 'that eternal domed monument' :

When sense of life return'd, I started up
As if with wings; but the fair trees were gone,
The mossy mound and arbour were no more :
I look'd around upon the carved sides
Of an old sanctuary with roof august,
Builded so high, it seem'd that filmed clouds
Might spread beneath, as O'er the stars of heaven
So old the place was, I remember'd none
The like upon the earth : what I had seen
Of gray cathedrals, buttress'd walls rent towers
The superanuations of sunk realms,
Or Nature's rock toil'd hard in waves and winds,

Seem'd but the faulture of decrepit things
To that eternal domed Monument. (ll. 58-71)

There is no transference into 'an old sanctuary with roof august' in *Lamia*. Here, 'good things of day begin to droop and drowse and night's black agents to their preys do rouse'[12]. Sleep is a device for avoiding reality, numbing one's senses to the inner voice, betrayal into unscrupulosity. It is opposed to the spirit of enquiry which must be kept away if sin is to be one's good :

O keep the dog far hence, that's friend to men,
Or with his nails he'll dig it up again
You hypocrite lecteur/—monsemblable/- monfrere'[13]. (ll. 74-76)

Lamia presents a heartless world of simulation, hypocrisy, degeneration and decay. She cannot stand Apollonius :

Old Apollonius—from him keep me hid
Lycius, perplex'd at words so blind and blank
Made close inquiry ; from whose touch she shrank
Feigning a sleep ; and he to the dull shade
Of deep sleep in a moment was betray'd. (ll. 101-5)

Drowsiness in the *Ode to Autumn* was a pleasant phase of life, a detour into anonymity, a means of survival of beauty :

Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while they hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers. (ll. 16-18)

It is a blinding curtain for the beauty of nature, a palour that steals over lovers' faces, a negation of light and life in *Lamia* :

For all this came a ruin : side by side
They were enthroned, in the even tide,
Upon a couch, near to a curtaining
Whose airy texture from a golden string,
Floated into the room, and let appear
Unveild'd the summer heaven, blue and clear,
Betwixt two marble shafts--there they reposed,
Where use had made it sweet, with eyelids closed
Saving a tythe which love still open kept
That they might see each other while they almost slept. (ll. 16-25)

Sleep is not a means to sweet dreams, but a black-out in which two characters may not see one another's dark and dreadful designs, their fearful acts. It is here a purveyor to Hades not Elysium.

Keats's choice of Gods—to spell it as Keats did—is a key to some of the secrets of the poem. Apollo, Hyperion, Jove and Hermes—characters in Keats's poems—are all associated with the sun. 'To Keats Apollo was more than a figure of speech or a literary allusion : he was becoming something very close to the God of his adoration[14]. In the epistle *To my Brother George* he tells him that in moments of depression he has sometimes feared :

> That I should never hear Apollo's song,
> Though feathery clouds were floating all along
> The purple west, and, two bright streaks between
> The golden lyre itself were dimly seen. (9-12)

The fear of Apollo's wrath is because he wore a laurel crown, sacred to the god, at Leigh Hunt's place. About this time he wrote to Benjamin Bailey :

> "... I put on no Laurels till I shall have finished *Endymion* and I hope Apollo is (not) angered at my having made a Mockery at him at Hunt's"[15].

His sonnet and one on Apollo show that his faith in him was real. He was Christian. In *Hyperion*, the goddess Clymense heard a 'golden melody' that has deeply moved her, and a voice crying :

> ... Apollo ! Young Apollo !
> The morning-bright Apollo ! Young Apollo ! (Bk. II, ll. 73-4)

Hermes' voice is no balm to hurt minds. He is a paled sun-god. He sits 'ever-smitten' in his throne on Mount Olympus and is 'burning in amorous heat'. He is symbolic of the reversal of values that has occurred in Keats's world.

Similarly fire no more suggests the fullness, grandeur and effulgence of a summer noon ; it is eerie in character, in *Lamia* :

> While yet he spoke they had arrived before
> A pillar'd porch, with lofty portal door,
> Where hung a silver lamp, whose phosphor glow
> Reflected in the slabbed steps below
> Mild as a star in water ; (I, 371-82)

Light here is suggestive of stars, and water and night suggest deluge and death by drowning. Darkness spreads in the poem with what G. Wilson Knight may like to call 'a tip-toe effect'[16]—suggestion of movement in things stationary. Keats yearned for experience and he always felt afraid he would not leave behind any work of value that may prepetuate his memory. About his poetry, he wrote to Bailey :

I am sometimes so very sceptical as to think poetry itself a mere Jack-a-lanthern to amuse whoever may chance to be struck with its brilliance[17].

Lamia definitely has 'ore'[18] in it. The splendour of light that we find in *Hyperion*, the Keatsian dispersal—, to borrow a phrase from John Jones[19]—at once suggests a mind, that holds the world in a vision of splendour :

He enter'd but he enter'd full of wrath ;
His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels
And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire,
That scar'd away the meek ethereal Hours
And made their dove wings tremble. On he flared
From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,
Through bowers of fragrant and enwreathed light,
And diamond-paved lustrous long arcades
Until he reach'd the great main cupola ;
There standing fierce beneath, he stamped his foot,
And from the basement deep to the high towers
Jarr'd his own golden region ; (Bk I, ll. 213-224)

In *Lamia* it is darkness that gradually spreads, not light, like molten lava. Here there are the verdure of forest, nymphs and fauns, elfs and Oberon, madrigals, bride and bridegroom, but they stand hauntingly like a relief for the tragedy that is being enacted. The glimmer of light in *Lamia* is like the Will-o-the-wisp in a marsh-land, and the fire on the emperor's pavement in *Byzantium* :

At midnight on the Emperor's pavement flit
Flames that no faggot feeds, nor steel has lit,
Nor storm disturbs, flames begotten of flame
Where flood-begotten spirits come
And all complexities of fury leave,
Dying into a dance
An agony of trance
An agony of flame that cannot singe a sleave[20]. (ll. 25-33)

The decoration for the marriage feast brings a shudder in Lamia's heart, there follows a hush of gloom. Light and grandeur here remind us of the opening of *A Game of Chess* :

The chair she sat on, like a burnished throne,
Glowed on the marble, where the glass
Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines

From which a golden cupidon peeped out
(Another hid his eyes behind his wing)
Doubled the flames of seven branched candelabra
Reflecting light upon the table as
The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it,
From satin cases poured in rich profusion (ll. 77-85)

The darkness, the choas, the regnession that follows the brilliant light, order and progress of such lines makes them more haunting in their tragic or rather nihilistic gloom. Keats's favourite urn is dusty and is lying neglected. The trumpet sounds retreat from love—leaves a 'buzzing sound in the head'—rather than victory over a world of 'hyena foemen and hot blooded lords'. Bells take up a degrading association with human passion.

The 'Persian mutes' in Book I are strangers, the outsiders, perhaps the voice of conscience, perhaps the ghosts of our follies, that pursue us. They are very much like the third man in *What the Thunder Said* (The Waste Land) :

Who is the third who walks always beside you ?
When I count there are only you and I
But when I look ahead up the white road
There is always another one walking beside you (ll. 359-62)

Besides, we find the 'muffled faces' (l. 361), the' 'temples lewd', mutters brewing in a distance, like a tempest and the fluttering sound at the lintel that suggests an uneasy conscience, a development with which human psyche can ill-adjust itself :

About the halls, and to and from the doors,
There was a noise of wings, till in short space
The glowing banquet-room shone with wide-arched grace
A haunting music, sole perhaps and lone
Supportress of the faery-roof, made moan
Throughout, as fearful the whole charm might fade. (ll. 119-24)

These lines remind us of the atmosphere in the following lines from *The Waste Land* :

What is that noise ; The wind under the door.
What is that noise now? What is the wind doing?
Nothing again nothing (ll. 117-20)

Apollonius's part in *Lamia* has been slightly altered from what Keats found in Philostratus. He is made into Lycius's friend and guide. This change is significant. He is not just a symbol of the 'analytical intellect'[21].

He is the innermost voice of our soul. He is the Upanishadic bird that does not peck the fruit but watches another do it. He is that element in man that can, if strengthened, make him into a god, raise him to a higher point on the ladder of being. He is Tiresias, the seer, who has no eyes, the painter of Tulsi that paints without pigment and without a hand :

Sunya bhitti par chitra rang nahin, tanu binu likhā chitērē.
Dhoyē mitai na marai bhiti dukha payia ehi tanu hērē[22].

He is that ancient 'purusha' within one that needs no feet to walk, nor palate to taste; eyes he does not need to see and without ears he hears the everlasting music. Apollonius sees and Lamia,—*Maya*—is resolved into its real being, into its true form of a snake. Did Apollonius want Lycius to awake ? Was Keats's 'atman deva' exhorting him, '*Jag piyari, ab kan sowai*[23] ? !

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17. *Letters*, Vol. I, no. 67, p. 242.
18. *Letters*. Vol. II no. 285, p. 322.
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    It is as if a picture inscribed with no colours on the wall of the void, by an artist quite devoid of bodily form. Washing will not erase it, one is filled with horror when one looks towards it, and *from it* one derives *only* sorrow.
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TENNYSON AND THE ORIENT

Gurdit Singh

The recurrence of Oriental themes in Tennyson's poetry is an expression of the poet's lifelong fidelity to ideals and of his nostalgic yearning for 'the days that are no more'. Living in an age of doubts and perplexities, the poet endeavoured to outsoar the contagion of contemporary life in search of a hospitable milieu. His passion for the past, marked by a sense of mystery that possessed him from his early childhood, and an intense love for the "Far-far-away" and the 'long-long-ago' naturally lured him to the East. He also fell under the spell of the great Orientalists like Sir William Jones whose *History of Nadir Shah* and translations of Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian poetry gave the spur to his Muse. His friend Jowett further stimulated his interest in Oriental subjects. Probably, Tennyson did not know the Oriental languages but he did exploit the best available secondry sources. Thus he studied with loving care Galland's *Arabian Nights*, C. E. Savary's *Letters on Egypt*, Elphinstone's *History of India*, A. Lyall's *Asiatic Studies*, and Blochmann's Translation of Abul-Fazl's *Ain-i-Akbari* which richly nourished his sensibility and enhanced for him the charm of the East. And he produced a bunch of Oriental poems which highlight an interesting aspect of his work and are, therefore, worthy of due critical attention.

Tennyson's Orientalism is co-existensive with his long creative career. The significant points in the poet's Eastern voyage, can be seen all along the way from "The Ganges" (1827), "Persia" (1827) and "The Expedition of Nadir Shah into Hindostan" (1827) through "The Defence of Lucknow" (1879) to "The Ancient Sage" (1885) and "Akbar's Dream" (1892). They show the drift and direction of the poet's mind and are a precious addition to the Tennyson canon. A close examination of the Oriental poems would show that while the early pieces celebrate physical exuberance and the manifold beauties of life and nature and the sense of mystery and adventure, the later

poems project the poet's search for the light of religious faith in the darkling plain of the Victorian era.

Among the highly romantic Oriental poems is "Written by an Exile of Bassorah" (1827). The poem is a daring drama of young lovers who live a fugitive life in Baghdad, away from the splendour and beauty of their country, to escape the wrath of the Persian King. Inspired by the story of "Noureddin and the Fair Persian" in the *Arabian Nights*, the poem articulates the hero Noureddin's homesickness. Since he has seduced the Fair Lady who was meant for the King's harem, he cannot get back to Basra, the land of his birth, with its beaming towers, its gleaming minaret and mosque, "and the broad vassal river that rolls at thy feet". Having surrendered his soul to "Almighty Love", the Basra refugee bids :

> Farewell to the days which so smoothly have glided with the
> maiden whose look was like Cama's young glance
> And the sheen of whose eyes was the load-star which guided
> My course on this earth through the storms of mischance !
>
> (ll. 25-28)

The poem is remarkable for its oriental flavouring and its evocation of a mood of wistful melancholy. Related in spirit to this poem is the piece entitled "LOVE (Almighty Love) (1827) wherein Tennyson dwells on the soul-enchanting sway of love, with all the inevitable agony and ecstasy. He invokes the universal might of the God of Love of the Indian and the Greek tradition, and then fuses the two in the last lines of the poem :

> Camdeo, or Cupid O be near,
> To listen, and to grant my prayer !

Abounding in exotic colour, the poem is Keatsian in its sensuous beauty. Professor Christopher Ricks suggests that the poem was inspired by Sir William Jones's translations of *Hymn to Bhavani* (goddess of fecundity) and "*Hymn to Camdeo* (God of Love) (The Poems of Tennyson, ed. Ricks p. 144). A more elaborately wrought poem which is highly Keatsian in texture is "Recollections of the Arabian Nights". It is an exquisite exercise in Orientalism, apart from its other concerns.

Tennyson's love of Persian poety finds eloquent expression in some of the lyrics of "The Princess" and "Maud" J. D. Yohannan thinks that the famous lyric "Come Into the Garden Maud" is inspired by Hafiz so far as its imagery is concerned (Tennyson and Persian Poetry" MLN, LVII (1942) Paden in his article "*Tennyson in Egypt*" (MLN, VIII 1943) also draws attention to this aspect. Getting a clue from Professor Paden's suggestive

title, it would, therefore, be more pertinent and rewarding to map out the course of *Tennyson in India.*

Thus, with due deference to the Indian tradition and the Tennyson canon, I should like to make an auspicious beginning with the poem entitled "The Ganges" (1827). Based on Sir William Jones's translation of "*Hymn to Ganga*" the poem bespeaks Tennyson's genuine love for the holiest of holy rivers. It opens with an invocation to the "Most glorious Ganga" whose "waves of spice", he believes "Bathed in old times the walls of Paradise". (L. 15) The poet recaptures "the memorable moments",

> What marvel that, in joyous musing, there
> The enraptured Brahmin pours his soul in prayer.
>
> (11.17-18)

It ends with a poem of praise no less glowing than the tributes of the devout Hindus :

> Hail ! ample-sheeted Ganga ! vast expanse !
> Over whose blue breast the bounding shallops dance,
> How vain the lyre that would attempt thy praise.
> How weak the hand ! how worthless are the lays.

What seems to have interested Tennyson most in India is certain events or personages. One such poem relates to a sad event of Indian history. Entitled "The expedition of Nadir Shah into Hindustan" it presents a gripping account of the bloodbath prepared by the last of the Persian conquerors of India.

The poet sensitively projects the reckless slaughter of the innocent in the wake of Nadir Shah's invasion. The horror and the pity of the scene is movingly depicted in the lines :

> Earth trembles beneath them, the dauntless and bold ;
> Oh, weep for thy children, thou region of gold ;
> For thy thousands are bowed to the dust of the plain,
> And all Delhi runs red with the blood of her slain.

The event of 1739 is imaginatively raconstructed with a considerable measure of human sympathy for the victims of the bloody invasion. Tennyson feels for India :

> The land like an Eden before them is fair,
> But behind them a wilderness dreary and bare
>
> (II 19-20)

The poem ends with the lines :

> Paint the picture of the ruin or all that was glorious and splendid
> The shrieks of the orphans, the lone widow's wail,
> The groans of the childless are loud on the gale;
> For the star of thy glory is blasted and wan,
> and withered the flower of thy fame, Hindostan !

(ll. 21-24)

Another historical event that catches Tennyson's attention is of contemporary relevance. Dealing with the siege of Lucknow during the Indian Mutiny, the poem like "The Charge of the Light Brigade" celebrates the saga of heroism and sacrifices of the British soldiers who fought against heavy odds but never gave in. They preferred death to disgrace in terms of a surrender or a defeat. Each British soldier fought against hundreds. Though the siege was lifted on September 25, 1857, Tennyson's poem on it, entitled "The Defence of Lucknow" was written 22 years after the event, in 1879. His account of the significant episode of the Mutiny was inspired by the eye-witness account of some of the survivors who met the poet. The poem presents a glowing version of the performance of the Britishers as also that of such soldiers and officers as were loyal to the Britishers. But it is rather prejudiced in favour of his own countrymen. It openly glorifies the white man's role in the siege. For, Tennyson genuinely believed that the Britishers were fighting for a cause and he was also committed to the idea of the British Empire which, he felt, could broaden into the Parliament of Man and the Federation of the World. His version of the siege and relief of Lucknow was bound to be partial to his own countrymen in that it was based on the exaggerated and highly sentimentalized accounts of the survivors of the siege who painted such a picture of the event and of their role in it as was flattering to them. The poem also demostrates Tennyson's parochial national bias though it is not as jarring or adhesive as the pieces elshwhere in Tennyson that are known for narrow nationalism, the bragging that there are no hearts like the English hearts. "Such hearts of Oak they may be". Such a note is pretty obvious in stanza IV, opening with the lines :

> Handful of men as we were English in heart and in limb,
> Strong with the strength of the race to command, to obey to endure.

(II 46-47)

There are passages in it that capture in the rhythmic beat of the verse the very spirit of the scene and testify to Tennyson's superb mastery of the medium :

Bullets would sing by our forehead, and bullets would rain at our feet
Fire from ten thousand at once of the rebels that girdled us round
Death from the heights of the mosque and the palace, and death in the ground
Mine, Yes, a mine ! Countermine ! down, down !, and creep through the hole
Keep the revolver in hand ! you can hear him the murderous mole.

Tennyson also wrote a brief memorial poem on the Lucknow events of the Mutiny. Entitled "Havelock", the poem celebrates and memorialises the hero of the Lucknow relief, General Sir Henry Havelock who died on 25th November, 1857 :

Bold Havelock marched,
Wrought with his hand and his head,
Marched and thought and fought,
Marched and fought himself dead.

(ll 9-12)

From a consideration of these poems, it would be pertinent to turn to the two great pieces "The Ancient Sage" which Tennyson wrote in 1885 and "Akbar" (1892). Both the poems evince Tennyson's intense commitment to the moral and religious values represented by the East. It was Jowett who gave the impulse to Tennyson for writing the two poems. They embody the views and values that were dearly cherished by the poet. "The Ancient Sage" is said to represent the thought of the Chinese philosopher Lao-Tza, but in fact, it embodies, truly and intensely, Tennyson's own philosophy and is, therefore, of vital significance. For, with Tennyson whatever be the subject his own personality is simply inescapably present. The poet himself testifies to the personal element in the most unambiguous terms when he says :

What "The Ancient Sage" says is not the philosophy of the Chinese philosopher Lao-Tza but it was written after reading his life and maxims. Tennyson says the passages about "Faith" and "the passion about the past" were more especially my own personal feelings (Mem ii, 319). Tennyson's son, Hallam Tennyson further supports this view. "My father considers this as one of his best later poems".

The poem presents a voyage in the realms of the spirit which the pilgrim soul undertakes, leading to a moment of self-discovery as the poet has it :

If thou would it hear the Nameless, and will dive
Into the Temple-cave of thine own self,

There brooding by the central altar, thou
Mayst learn the Nameless hath a voiee,
By which thou would abide if thou be wise.

(ll. 31-35)

Evidently, the poet is a spiritual voyager, questing for values in a world where they are most threatened. It is this spiritual quest that draws him to Akbar's Din-i-Ilahi, the universal religion, based on the unity of all faiths. Tennyson's deepest concern with the nagging religious problems, his impatience with a rigorous Calvinistic creed, offered him a fascinating and liberating answer in the liberal religious traditions of the East. Both his friend Jowett and his son Hallam testify to the poet's fondness for these two Oriental poems. Indeed, they do represent the crown and consummation of his Oriental voyage which begins on a note of romanticism and ends with the 'ascent of the mount of vision', to use his own words from "The Ancient Sage". It is true to Tennyson's vision of "Faith beyond the forms of Faith", seeking to establish the Kingdom of God upon earth :

To hunt the tiger of oppression out
From office, and to spread the Divine Faith
Like calming on all their stormy creeds,
And fill the hollows between wave and wave,
To nurse my children on the milk of Truth,
And alchemise old hates into the gold
Of Love, and make it current and beat back
The menacing poison of intolerant priests,
Those cobras ever setting their hoods—
One Allah. One Kalifa !

Tennyson's Orientalism provides us with moments of an ecstasy, however unmodern—

Music : our palace is awake, and morn
has lifted the dark eyelash of the Night
From off the rosy cheek of waking Day
from hymn to the sun. They sing it. Let us go.

THE CONCEPT OF NATURE IN THE BHAGAVADGITA AND WILLIAM BLAKE'S PICKERING-MANUSCRIPT POEMS

Charu Sheel Singh

I

Northrop Frye considers William Blake to be "the first of European Idealists able to link his own tradition of thought with the *Bhagavadgita*"[1]. Blake was familiar with Charles Wilkins's translation of the *Bhagavadgita*[2] and was so deeply influenced by it that in his exhibition of water-colour paintings 1809 in "A Descriptive Catalogue", he placed at number X, "The Bramins—A Drawing". Introducing the painting Blake wrote :

> The subject is, Mr. Wilkin translating the Geeta; an ideal design, suggested by the first publication of that part of the Hindoo Scriptures translated by Mr. Wilkin. I understand that my Costume is incorrect, but in this I plead the authority of the ancients, who often deviated from the Habits to preserve the Manners, as in the instance of Laocoon, who, though a priest, is represented naked[3].

The Gita has provided Blake with many of his concepts, images and symbols. S. Foster Damon was one of the earliest critics who pleaded for a study of Blake's poetry in the light of a tradition as established by the *Bhagavadgita*, the *Cabbala*, Jacob Boehme, Agrippa, Pythagoras and Plato. In his book[4] Damon has pointed out many more similarities between Blake and the Hindu ideas[5]. Succeeding scholarship on Blake, interestingly enough, has noted the impact of Hindu ideas in an attempt to elucidate his poetry and his mythological system.

Milton O. Percival, in his book, *William Blake's Circle of Destiny* (1938), thinks that Blake read *his* Bible in the light of the older writings of the world and not in the light of Christian orthodoxy. It should be recalled that

T. S. Eliot, as early as 1920, had placed Blake outside all tradition : "His philosophy, like his visions, like his insight, like his technique, was his own"[6].

Attempts have also been made to show that Blake inverted the ideals of the Gita while borrowing from the book[7]. Margaret Rudd thinks that Blake's concept of Nature bears a close resemblance to the oriental belief in the concept of *maya*[8]. Among the more recent studies of William Blake's poetry, Peter Fisher's book deserves special mention[9]. Fisher has dealt, in some detail, with Blake's concept of Nature as it emerges in his poetry. Morton D. Paley, in his book, *Energy and Imagination* (1970), has also noted similarities between Blake's ideas and the *Bhagavadgita*.

The Gita opens when its hero, Arjuna, caught in the web of Nature, abandons all action and refuses to fight against what he calls his near and dear ones. Krishna's teachings in the Gita are directed to set Arjuna free from the bondage of Nature. Keeping this end in view, Krishna revelas the character and characteristics of Nature or *Prakriti* and the world Arjuna has been placed in. The world of Nature and the world of spirit run parallel to each other, and, in fact advance the narrative structure of the Gita. Its hero, Arjuna, passes through a series of mental purgatorial trials which lead him from the cyclic world of ignorance and doubt to the world of revelation, knowledge, and self-identification.

William Blake's concept of Nature as it emerges in his poetry, particularly his Pickering-Manuscript poems, bears a close resemblance to the concept of Nature in the Gita. I shall, first, briefly outline the concept of Nature in the Gita ; then present Blake's concept of Nature with the help of an analysis of chosen poems from the Pickering-Manuscript, and finally, draw such conclusions as are warranted.

II

God declares in the Gita : "The great Brahm[10] is my womb. In it I place my foetus ; and from it is the production of all nature. The great Brahm is the womb of all those various forms which are conceived in every natural womb, and I am the father who soweth the seed".[11] Matter and spirit are the two eternal priciples in the Gita (13.19). Krishna is the Male while *Prakriti*, Nature, is the Female principle. At a proper conjunction of time, Krishna, the Male God, fertilizes his Female counterpart for the formation of the world. Nature is the source of all change. "The Almighty createth neither the powers nor the deeds of mankind, nor the application of the fruits of action : nature prevaileth"[12]. The action of Nature is cyclic. It

is a flux, throwing up individuals, destroying them, and reabsorbing them. "On the coming of that day, all things proceed from invisibility to visibility; so, on the approach of night, they are all dissolved away in that which is called *invisible*"[13].

When Nature becomes manifest, it differentiates itself into four gross elements: the sense, mind, soul and the ego (7.4; 13.5-6). The self in itself is inactive and when it conjoins to the human psychosomatic organism, it binds and subjects the human spirit it enfolds, to the transmigatory process. As such it is called *maya*. *Maya* is Nature, God's uncanny power, which deceives man and is hard to be transcended (7.14-15). But it is also the creative power of God.

Prakriti or Nature comprises three *gunas* or qualities: *Sattva*, goodness; *Rajas*, passion; and *Tamas*, darkness. Each of these qualities confines the incorruptible spirit in the body. The Gita declares that every man is powerless and is made to work by the constituents of Nature (3.5). The three constituent qualities form the composite character of being. There is no one, not even among the gods, who is free from their influence.

These three *gunas* are in equal proportion when Nature is in an unmanifest stage. When with God's contact, Nature becomes manifest, each of these *gunas* or qualities tries to dominate the others. Consequently, a man is known and distinguished by the quality that is dominant in him. All the three *gunas* are part of Nature and they are always at war with the self of man. As such, the struggle between the self of man and the three *gunas* may either raise man to God or confine him to the cyclic process of Nature. This, in Blake's terminology, would give us an apocalyptic vision of the world of innocence and a cyclic vision of the world of experience. The characteristics of each of these *gunas* may be noticed :

> The Satwa-Goon, because of its purity, is clear and free from defect, and intwineth the soul with sweet and pleasant consequences, and the fruit of wisdom. The Raja-Goon is of a possionate nature, arising from the effect of worldly thirst, and imprisoneth the soul with the consequences produced from action. The Tam-Goon is the offspring of ignorance, and the confounder of all the faculties of the mind; and it imprisoneth the soul with intoxication, sloth, and idleness. The Satwa-Goon prevaileth in felicity, the Raja in action, and the Tama' having possessed the soul, prevaileth in intoxication[14].

In every human being these three *gunas* are present in varying proportions, and they distinguish each man in the habits of food, sacrifice, faith and thinking. However, the Gita emphasizes the binding nature of these *gunas* which not only confine man to the world of Nature but seduce him into the belief that there is no God.

III

Blake wrote the Pickering-Manuscript poems about the year 1805 when he had already finished his first major poem *The Four Zoas*. This consideration presupposes certain conceptions which were well developed in Blake's mind by this time. The most dominating concept being the concept of Nature which finds expression in "The Golden Net", "The Crystal Cabinet", and "The Mental Traveller", the poems chosen from the Pickering-Manuscript for the present paper.

"The Golden Net" is a poem which concerns the enfoldment of the spirit into the phenomenal world of experience. There are three virgins, who, under the cover of their hollow virginity, seductively love a young man. The first virgin is clothed in "flames of fire"; the second is clothed in an "iron wire"; and the third is clothed in "tears and sighs". Collectively, all the three bear a net of golden twine for the young man. These three virgins hypocritically represent love and beauty—a representation which makes the young man weep. When the three virgins see the tears of the young man they begin to smile. Their smile is so treacherous that it not only beguiles the boy but the Heaven itself. The virgins lose no time is spreading their golden net over the the innocent soul and mind of the young man. The young man has lost his "morning" and reels under the perennial night of ignorance. At the end of the poem, the young man is found entreating all the three virgins for his release but no one knows whether the "morning" the young man has lost will ever come back.

According to the cosmogonical process in the Gita, "spirits" or "selves" are said to be the "minute parts" of God (15.7), and at the time of creation, when God copulates with Nature, these spirits or spiritual monads are enmeshed in a certain material clothing. In Blake's poem, the three virgins are not the three separate women, but the three *gunas* or qualities of Nature that collectively constitute the character of a single woman, i.e. Nature. If we look at their clothings, we shall find that they are Blake's version of the three qualities of Nature as described in the Gita:

> The one was Cloth'd in flames of fire,
> The other Cloth'd in iron wire

The other Cloth'd in tears and sighs
Dazling bright before my Eyes.

Blake must have been stimulated by this verse from the Gita :

> There are three Goon or qualities arising from Prakreetee or nature: Satwa truth, Raja passion, and Tama darkness; and each of them confineth the incorruptible spirit in the body[15].

This verse also sums up the central idea of Blake's poem. The virgin who is clothed in "flames of fire" represents the Satwa *guna* of the Gita which "because of its purity...intwineth the soul with sweet and pleasant consequences"[17]. Flames of fire are obviously the flames of purity and clarity of vision. But in spite of their purity and wisdom, these flames are the flames that burn the heart of man into the fires of generation and cyclic process. Hence their total effect is that of enfoldment and imprisonment of the spirit.

The "iron wire" of the second virgin is actually the wire of iron desires of the Rajasic man of the Gita. This man is a man of works which bind him to the stems of generation. The Gita describes him thus: "The zeal which is shown by hypocrisy, for the sake of reputation of sanctity, however, and respect, is said to be of the Raja-Goon; and it is inconstant and uncertain"[17]. In the present context, it is the virgin's love that is characterized by hypocrisy, inconstancy and uncertainty.

The woman who is clothed in "tears and sighs" is the basest of the three. She represents the tama *guna* of the Gita. Persons possessed of this *guna* exhibit zeal with a view to "injuring another"[18]. Blake's poem, then, viewed in the light of the Gita's philosophy, describes the process of how a spiritual monad is caught in Nature's web at the time of its birth. The virgins representing the three *gunas* await the coming of the spirit (which the young boy represents) in order to enfold it in their golden net.[19] The smile which beguiles the Heaven itself is Blake's version of the Gita's belief that no one in heaven or on earth is free from the influence of these *gunas*.

What Blake is suggesting in this poem is that the world of physical and material nature is a blind and callous world of delusions and phantoms and that a genuine enjoyment of love and beauty is hindered by the wild and untamed nature. Spiritual illumination, in conjunction with a Divine Reality, can control the "starry poles" of the nightmarish earth and mould man's relation with Nature into harmony.

"The Crystal Cabinet" is a cabinet of Mother-Nature containing the threefold qualities already described. The poet is caught by a maiden and locked while dancing. The cabinet is made of gold and pearl signifying

false attractiveness. There is another maiden resembling her, in fact, another of her appearances, and her threefold qualities generate in the poet a pleasant but "trembling fear". Seeing her smile, the poet advances to kiss her and is kissed in return. This initial kiss stimulates the poet to seize the "inmost form," probably to understand the nature of the cabinet and its keeper, the maiden. But no sooner does the poet advance to seize the inmost form, the cabinet breaks, and the poet dancing upon a wind is left a weeping babe.

In this poem, the threefold qualities of Nature exist not in the form of three virgins but in the form of a single maiden :

> Another Maiden like herself,
> Translucent, lovely, shining clear,
> Threefold each in the other clos'd
> O, what a pleasant trembling fear !

The very kiss of the poet enmeshes him into Nature's web and makes him incapable of understanding the nature of the world he has been caught in. The allurement that caused the poet to kiss the maiden also caused his fall into the phenomenal world of sensory experience. Hence the breaking of the crystal cabinet.

"The Mental Traveller" allegorically describes the life of man within the cyclic world of sensory experience. At the beginning of the poem a young boy is nailed to a rock. His head is bound down by iron thorns; his hands and feet are pierced and his heart cut by the woman who is supposed to nurse him. The boy naturally becomes old and the woman who thrives upon him becomes young. After the old age, the boy again becomes a bleeding youth and the woman who becomes a virgin bright is bound down this time by the boy for his delight. The boy plants himself in all her nerves and soon fades into an aged shadow. The female babe again springs from the fire and in her love the boy again grows young. The poem finally ends as it began, i. e. the boy is again nailed to the rock of generation by the woman.

This process of becoming young and old alternately is the recurring pattern and theme of the poem. This poem gives the fullest expression to the idea of *Purusha-Prakriti* relationship as described in the Gita by which is implied the journey of the spirit within the cyclic world of Nature. The journey is called "mental" because life in the phenomenal world consists of a series of psycho-physical revolutions against the onslaughts of a wild and self-devouring material. Nature which is ever changing her shape in Blake's poem by becoming old and then young equally. This process of cyclic birth,

growth, decay and renewal is symbolized in the Gita by the "womb" or the "revolving round" (16. 19), in which God hurls the embodied spirits.[20] Blake's poem ends in a vision of the indefinite, as the boy is again nailed to the rock of generation and thereby of transmigration.

IV

Nature in both Blake and the Gita is a female in the first instance; its delusive, hypocritical, seductive, impotent and binding nature is emphasized in Blake and the Gita alike. All the three poems of Blake discussed above describe and elaborate the relation of *Purusha* (spirit) with *Prakriti* (Nature). The threefold qualities that are described in the first two poems also constitute the character of the delusive women in "The Mental Traveller". The very fact of God being the creator of these qualities and spirits being a portion of Him, gives man an awareness of a higher world, a world where "Man is All Imagination. God is Man & exists in us and we in him.[21]

The creation of the world is not on *Prakriti's* own accord but willed by God. The relation that God bears to Nature on the basis of his will power should also be the basis of relationship between man and Nature. But".... when the will is in charge of the natural man, its control is reduced to domination, always a sterile and uncreative form of control."[22] This is precisely the state of the male counterpart in all the three of Blake's poems. Because of God's control over Nature in the Gita, Nature becomes his creative power also (7. 14).

In a letter to Dr. Trusler, Blake wrote : "....to the Eyes of the Man of Imagination, Nature is Imagination itself...."[23] In Blake's poems, because Nature is not the creative power of the male principle, and because the male counterpart fails to exercise the slightest amount of "control" over his female consort, Nature assumes looming proportions of her delusive and destructive activities. The spirit of man is, therefore, put and crushed into the mesmeric threefold dungeons of a hypocritical Nature-goddess, whose sole delight is in dominating and devouring her male counterpart in an attempt to pervert the vision of the spirit's original harmony on the threefold texture of man's belated body.

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THE WISDOM OF ROBERT FROST

Harihar Rath

Frost's faith, whether religious or otherwise, is imbued with a humanness. Thus, being more of a humanist than a theologian, it is a pointer that in the last analysis he is indeed a poet of man. Beginning with *A Boy's Will* down to *North of Boston*, and the other volumes of poetry that followed it, we see Frost exploring the possibilities of either man's relationship with external Nature or man's relationship with his own self, identifying the diverse forces and their interaction. It is only when we come to *A Masque of Reason*, published in 1954, and *A Masque of Mercy*, published two years after, that we see Frost for the first time grappling directly with the theme of man's relationship with God. With a wit and humour that link the two *Masques* with the Jonsonian tradition of organically integrating such basic elements of the genre within the dialogic conflict of the play, we find Frost stepping aside its convention of employing mythological characters, and presenting almost naked "prototypes of human or spiritual personalities, symbolic of established moral ideals, whose set speeches, like those by characters in medieval morality plays, subordinate the dramatic conflict and action wholly to an allegorical dialogue of ideas"[1]. The two *Masques*, however, should be rated as poems, as Frost indicated in his letter to Untermeyer[2].

The *Masque of Reason* begins with Job and Thyatira, his wife, awaking from sleep and looking at a strange and queer sight of God "caught in the branches" of The Christmas Tree, without being able to extricate Himself.[3] The irony is implicit. Like Adam who was expelled by God from Paradise, and was subsequently a victim to matter, so also God here had been entangled in matter. This is an ironic treatment of God, particularly in relation to man's devotion to Him, which, as we know, has degenerated into mere rituals in our organized system of religion. Thus, Frost is evidently satirizing the Old Testament concept of God's revelation in parodying it as only "a strange

light"[4]. A further irony is involved in the reference to God's throne which does not have the traditional regality associated with it, but is only a "prefabricated plywood flat". A secular touch is given to the sacred subject as God refers assertively to the role played by Job in changing the old, hackneyed relationship of God to man :

> My thanks are to you for releasing me
> From moral bondage to the human race.
> The only free will there at first was man's,
> Who could do good or evil as he chose.
> I had no choice but I must follow him
> With forfeits and rewards he understood—
> Unless I liked to suffer loss of worship.
> I had to prosper good and punish evil.
> You changed all that. You set me free to reign[5].

As Yvor Winters puts it, the correct perspective to which these lines need to be put lies in "the Fideistic tradition of New England Calvinism... "manifest" in more than one passage in Jonathan Edwards, as well as elsewhere"[6]. We find its presaging in the works of Donne, Dryden and Swift. The point that ought to be noted here is the extremely humanizing effect felt by God's reference to man's Adamic free will "Who could do good or evil as he chose"[7]. God's role is, thus, one of a wit whose comic spirit enables him to view man both in a detached and concerned manner. In fact, Thyatira, "Job's shrewd and sharp-tongued wife" provides a deep examination of God's relationship with man. With the spontaneity and fierceness of a domestic quarrel, Thyatira's argument and its gossipy touch reduces God to the position of a common man. God's remote abstraction and its religious sanction in orthodox Christianity are greatly exploded by the militant, emancipated and sophisticated social consciousness of Thyatira. Her complaint, comically counterpointed against Job's serious and deeply-felt protestation at God's injustices to man, aptly highlights how it has become increasingly difficult for man, with his Adamic free will, to accept injustice even if it were meted out by God. For example, Thyatira is more conscious of rights and privileges ("Witch-women's rights"[8]), and is all attention when Satan appears "like a sapphire wasp/That flickers mica wings"[9]. Thyatira is, thus, the eternal female, who, with her emotional and nonphilosophical nature, is quickly activated "to know the reason why" God has given a free rope to unjust events that, for no fault of man smite the human race from time to time :

All You can seem to do is lose Your temper
When reason-hungry mortals ask for reasons[10].

Thyatira's mock-serious banter as in the above lines is meant to supplant the serious theme manifest in the dialogue between Job and God. She rejects all philosophic abstractions that bring forth any universal reason to explain God's unsystematic, and rather unjust treatment of man. This may be highly disturbing to those who believe in the finality of the Mosaic Law based on the Judaic orthodoxy in the Old Testament. What Frost makes of this situation is to indicate that the meaningless and apparently irrational affliction to which Job has been subjected in spite of his unshakable faith in God has ultimately helped in making us able to evaluate "religious thought" in a new perspective. Frost would, therefore, make God acknowledge His indebtedness to Job in the following lines :

. . . I have no doubt
You realize by now the part you played
To stultify the Deuteronomist
And change the tenor of religious thought[11].

What should also be noted carefully is the "witty" reply given by God in furtherance of the stand taken by Him to justify His ways with man. That God was "just showing off to the Devil . . ." would also mean that "the Devil's . . . God's best inspiration"[12] which would also very well mean that insofar as man's relationship with God is concerned he cannot establish any "meaningful moral relationship" without involving himself both with good and evil "including evils inexplicable by human finite reason"[13]. This reminds us of the situation in which Adam fell after he was expelled from Paradise. Thereafter, Adam's lot was no less a "trial by existence" than that of Job's, calling for a hard struggle to endure all afflictions. The difference lay, however, in that Adam had an implicit faith in "life". It is Thyatira, if not Job, who gives such an obvious Adamic connotation to Job's sufferrings in the following lines :

Job says there's no such thing as Earth's be—
coming an easier place for man to save his soul in.
Except as a hard place to save his soul in,
A trial ground where he can try himself
And find out whether he is any good,
It would be meaningless. It might as well
Be Heaven at once and have it over with.

The tone here is not only dry in its irony and quizzicality, but also full of a playful bantering humour. What Thyatira believes in with a seriousness

underlying the evident humour is that whatever be man's pathway to truth, he must needs shape his destiny in this earth alone which is still his "fate". In this also one clearly deciphers a kind of skepticism about God's ways with man—something of a Faustian catechism of Mephistopheles in Thyatira's evaluation of God's unreason. The answer to this is, of course, given by Frost in his subsequent study of God's ways as we find in *A Masque of Mercy*. The theme therein not only exalts man's reverence for God's unforseen will, but also anticipates man's redemption through God's love that is possible in the face of a terrible, and perhaps a little too unmerited tragedy. However, this theme which obviously smacks of orthodox Christianity in the light of what we can commonly understand from the central features of the New Testament is, as usual, couched in a style of ironic punning and joke reminding us of a Yeats or a Shaw in their later phases. The raillery and mockery do also remind us of a Swiftian kind of parody with a touch of wildness, and perhaps something of "naughtiness". All this goes well with Frost when he chooses to play the role of a parodist while talking of religion in terms of man's failure to maintain a just standard of selflessnesss so much idealized by the main thrust of the Sermon on the Mount. His contention is that it takes love, or for that matter, Mercy to forgive such a failure. This is all the more necessary since God's injustice is inevitable. The lines that focus on this theme being in the figure of Christ as an Adamic phenomenon introducing a sort of "break with logic" :

> Christ came to introduce a break with logic
> That made all other outrage seem as child's play :
> The Mercy on the Sin against the Sermon.
> Strange no one ever thought of it before him.
> 'Twas lovely and its origin was love[15].

What should also be of help to man in the face of God's injustice, proved will in the event of Jonah's mission, is man's ability to rely on his own intrinsic "courage" however little it might be. Hence ". . . The Saddest thing in life/Is that the best thing in it should be courage"[16]. Therefore, Jesse Bel is "right" when she glorifies courage, for "courage is of the heart by derivation,/And great it is . . . , "though" . . . fear is of the soul"[17].

After Adam's expulsion from Paradise it was obvious that his destiny was cast in a course of uncertainty. Man to-day is a logical heir to this state of affairs. Frost exploits this theme in some of the severest lines in the *Masque of Mercy* which only appear noble as he, in spite of his Puck-like whimsy, coats the episode in a traditional religious language :

And I can see that the uncertainty
In which we act is a severity,
A cruelty, amounting to injustice
That nothing but God's mercy can assuage[18].

To add to this, there is also the possibility of our ultimate rejection by heaven, for "Our very best, our lives laid down like Jonah's,/Our lives laid down in war and peace, may not/Be found acceptable in Heaven's sight"[19]. The poem is, therefore, an invitation to recognize that no manner of salvation or grace "as defined in the Roman Catholic or the more conservative Protestant Churches"[20] can, in fact, help man fritfully. The best he can afford to do is to show up his best efforts in the face of life's uncertainty, acknowledging failure in himself and others as a sure factor. He would also do well to be merciful towards injustice done unto him and his fellow brothers as a positive step, as Brower says, "to right the wrong we will inevitably go on doing"[21]. This is undoubtedly a good way of salvation for all of us, but what must be emphasized is that man has to "go ahead" to "accomplishment" with the consolation available to him that "The utmost reward of daring is to dare"[22]. In the tradition of Adamism, anyone who is willing to live on the validity of such a postulate is indeed willing to accept "a scheme of uncertified possibilities which he trusts; willing to pay with his own person, if need be, for the realization of the ideals which he frames"[23].

This mood of acceptance of "a scheme of uncertified possibilities" is further explored in "Directive"—a poem that examines the value, valence and validity of turning back in time to reach a point of "wholeness beyond confusion". If most of Frost's poems hold fast to the tension of contrariety forming the basis of a unified vision, this poem appears almost as a testament to his final belief in the role of the poet's unambiguous and calm solemnity of tone. Rejecting, therefore, the traditional tone of Frostian "whimsy", the poem takes the reader much beyond any prescribed stoicism where "human identity" can hold its own bravely in the face of a world that is not only "too much with us", but also, as the poem succinctly puts it, "too much for us". It is worthwhile to note that the poem begins with the word "back", striking thereby the keynote to a process which would enable us to attain an existence that would save us from man's confusing, chaotic, and thing-ridden society. In fact, Frost, both in his poems and in his conversations, has shown a deep concern with the problem of going back to whatever one thinks to be the source in one's life[24]. Indeed such a preoccupation in Frost places him in a line of tradition in American Literature which veritably reveals that one such source may be the American wilderness itself. Down from Thoreau who

delved deep into a realization of this truth by a series of experimentations in his own life to Whitman's celebration of the great "I" against the backdrop of all that is "virgin" in land and forests, we have a series of characters, particularly in American fiction, such as Jake Barnes, Nick Adams and Ike McCaslin, to name only a few, who, cutting themselves free from all human entanglements and relationships discovered their lost identity in the very "darkness" of the wilderness. Frost, not unlike Melvile, had in himself a sense of terror so as not to push himself too far into this "darkness", lest, instead of discovering his lost identity, he would lose himself altogether. Hence, we discover a growing need to what we have already stated "the vantage point" between the all-devouring "darkness" of the wilderness and the world of human beings.

However, in this poem alone Frost seems to have thrown this deeply ingrained belief in the sanctity of the "metaphoric critique of the Golden Age idea"[25] which appears to be an offshoot of the American myth of wilderness. Such a myth is a positive reiteration of the Adamic belief that no matter how civilized, and, therefore, artificial, our century might be, there still lurks large the possibility of realizing Edenic bliss if only we would learn the art of substituting "a world of space for the continuum of time". Places, apart from circumstances and situations in human life can, of course, help overcome any deficiency in man to cope with the problem of this rather difficult substitution which obviously looks like a mystery in metaphysics. Frost's poem leads us on to such a place, and presents a situation where all "comes", provided they have the wisdom gained through worldly experience, can verily attain salvation by a realization of innocence, and an intimation of immortality. The particularities of this quest are brought into focus through the Grail legend and the image of water in the poem. Symbolically speaking, Frost gives a significant twist to the Grail legend as he goes out of the well-known areas of the myth in indicating that the hidden "goblet" is only a "broken" one saved from the children's playhouse. Appearing on the surface to be somewhat like another Frostian "whimsy", the metaphor, however, asserts beyond doubt that we can forever renew ourselves physically and spiritually if only we have the ability to bring the "attitude of play" to our adult life. This will not only keep the "whisper of death" away from the twentieth-century man which obsesses him often, but also act for him as a positive formative decision to serve as a final answer to his life's "in-load" of discord, disturbance and discomfort.

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ASPECTS OF MODERN INDIAN POETRY IN ENGLISH

Bijay Kumar Das

Professor V. K. Gokak, in his introduction to *The Golden Treasury of Indo-Anglian Verse* (1970) and in his *Studies in Indo-Anglian Poetry* (1972), traces the growth and progress of Indian poetry in English and showers praise on almost all the poets whom he includes in his anthology. To him Sarojini Naidu is the Yeats of India, and Sri Aurobindo a great innovator in the art of verification. He also classifies the Indian poets in English into two groups : 'neo-symbolists' and 'neo-modernists'. The neo-symbolists dive deeply into mysticism and the neo-modernists' vision is coloured by humanism. Prof. V. K. Gokak's tall claims for these poets are unfortunately not substantiated by their poetry. Three poets, Tagore, Sarojini, and Aurobindo are of some repute. But then, Tagore's *Gitanjali* is a transcreation in English; Sarojini imitates the Metaphysicals and Elzabeth Barret Browning; Aurobindo's poetry, is more of mysticism than of poetry. So, one almost suspects that Prof. Gokak's tall claim comes out of his nationality bias. Two poets, Prof. P. Lal and K. Raghavendra Rao, dismiss the old Indo-Anglian school of poetry, represented by Tagore, Sarojini and Aurobindo in their statement : "We claim that the phase of Indo-Anglian romanticism ended with Sarojini Naidu."[1] They affirm the necessity to poetry of "the private voice, especially because we live in an age that tends so easily to demonstrations of mass approval and hysteria. For this reason we celebrate the lyric form as the best suited for a capsule minded public".[2] This reaction is against the Indian poetry written in English before and during the nineteen-thirties.

Independence in India does not bring a change only in the socio-economic and political fields but in the field of literature as well. New movements in literature are the new uses of language. The new mind

requires the new voice, and the new voice is discovered by the writer's genius for intimately registering the idiom of his own world.

Poets like Dom Moraes, Nissim Ezekiel, P. Lal, R. Parthasarthy, A. K. Ramanujan, Shiv. K. Kumar, Kamala Das, Jayant Mahapatra, and Pritish Nandy have won recognition both in our country and abroad. They speak in a new voice, although they retain some of the themes consciously or otherwise, of the earlier poets. Their idiom, style, syntax speak of their freedom in handling the themes. Nineteen-sixties and Seventies, witness the birth and the development (into maturity if you will) of new poetry in India. Ezekiel's volumes of poems (particularly, *The Exact Name*, *Hymn in Darkness* (O. U. P. 1976), Prof. S. K. Kumar's *Articulate Silences* (1979), *Cobwebs in the Sun* (1974) and *Subterfuges* (O. U. P. 1978), A. K. Ramanujan's *The Striders*, R. Parthasarathy's *Rough Passage* (1975), Kamaladas's *Summer in Calcutta*, Jayant Mahapatra's *Again of Rites*, have given a new direction to the writing of poetry in English.

R. Parthasarathy visualising the direction of Indian poetry in English in future, talks of 'Indian reality' as the major pre-occupation of our poets. "Poems like 'Night of the Scorpion' and 'A River' by their visions of an everyday Indian reality expressed in an unobtrusive personal voice stood out in the reader's mind as signposts indicating the directions poetory in English was likely to take in future".[3]

The realities of life and being are stressed with definite accents by the modern poets. Nissim Ezekiel who has the advantage of viewing Indian poetry in English both as a native and a foreigner (because he is not of Indian origin) looks inward and detached—a combination making for a peculiar strength and validity. Ezekiel says :

> The Indian landscape sears my eyes
> I have become a part of it
> To be observed by foreigners.
> ... .
> ... .
> I have made my commitments now
> This is one : To stay where I am.
>
> (*Background Casually*)

The incipient romanticism and rapid narcissicism of the early Indian poetry in English are now discarded in favour of poetry as 'a criticism of life'. Recent Indian poetry in English tries hard to set its roots and develop its own artistic credo. It has successfully risen above, 'decadent romanticism',

and in the hands of such brilliant poets as Nissim Ezekiel, R. Parthasarthy and A. K. Ramanujan, it is acquiring new dimensions.

Modern hypocrisy has been satirized in their poems. Shiv K. Kumar in his poem, "Epitaph on an Indian politician," has given us a very daring portrayal of the Indian politician :

Vasectomized of all genital urges
for love and beauty
he often crossed floors
as his wife leaped across beds.

In 'An Introduction', Kamala Das concerns herself with the question of human dignity and identity. "Fit in" they said to all circumstances. Mrs. Das resents this. She is also critical of the society, which demanded of her to put on sarees as an Indian girl and be a wife, so that she was married before she could understand love and sex. Indian situations form a vital part of their poetry. S. K. Kumar's 'Karma', 'Renunciation' and Nissim Ezekiel's *Night of the Scorpion*, are tale-tell to this effect. Ezekiel also concerns himself with the dichotomy of man and his mind. In his poem *On Meeting a Pedant*, he says,

"Words, looks, gestures, everything betrays
The unquiet mind, the emptiness within."

It is this 'emptiness within' of the hollowmen, inhabiting the Waste Land, that catches the attention of not only Ezekiel but also of his contemporary Indo-Anglian poets. They are aware of the failures, the shallowness, the double-think and double-talk of the urban man.

No longer do these poets sing the glory of nature, but they now fathom its darkness. A very different kind of treatment is given to the river in A. K. Ramanujan's 'A River'. Instead of a traditional song of praise for the full river, Ramanujan gives us what he sees as the villagers' real experience. The river is beautiful when quiet in the summer, but when it floods, it causes suffering that is not at all poetic. His visitor to the village reports what really happens, in extremely simple language as the villagers would use. The poem ends with details about the twins which the woman would have borne, bringing the experience down to its simple and painful humanity.

Similarly rituals invoke severe criticism from these poets. In his poem *Jewish Wedding in Bombay* (JIWE Vol. 7 No. 1). Nissim Ezekiel digs at such kind of weddings. The ritual is performed mechanically. Ezekiel asks, 'Who knows how much belief we had ?' and the answer is implicit. His much publicised poem, 'Night of the Scorpion' evokes superstitious practices

we haven't still outgrown. As R. Parthasarthy has rightly suggested that 'It enacts an impressive ritual in which the mother's reaction, towards the end, to her own suffering ironically cancels out earlier responses, both primitive and sophisticated. The interrelationship between the domestic tragedy and the surrounding community is unobtrusively established.'[4]

The awareness of the contemporary situation is a key-note of modern poetry. Prof. S. K. Kumar's 'Cambridge Revisited', takes stock of the situation at Cambridge as it obtains at the present time, and describes the new generation there not as 'hollow men', but preoccupied with their external looks and dresses rather than with creative or critical concerns.

Love is one of the three permanent themes (the other two being life and death) of poetry, and for that matter, of literature. Love, occupies a central position in the realms of Indo-Anglian poetry of recent times. What is important is the daring portrayal of Love and Sex in their proper perspective. With frankness and openness unusual in the Indian context, Kamala Das expresses her need for love. There is hot blooded sincerity of feeling in her poems which reveal on a closer study, a greater complexity of moods, a wider dramatic range than the first impression suggests. What is overpowering about them is their sense of urgency. In 'Substitute,' she tells cynically what her experience of love turned out to be :

> After that love became a swivel door,
> When one went out, another came in.

The despair is infectious.

Nissim Ezekiel's *Passion Poems* highlights his views on love and sex. He refers to Sanskrit poets and mythology and holds them as his models. The words like 'Caressing', 'breasts', 'buttocks', 'hips' evoke a sense of sensuality. But Kumar uses sex as a possibility for transcending the limitations of existence as D. H. Lawrence does in fiction, and Tennessee Williams and Edward Albee do in drama.[5] In fact, his sex attitudes lead him to the cosmic attitude as in 'A Dark Mood'.

> How can we exchange nudities to night
> When the shells on the Ocean's bed
> are wailing for the dead ?
> The corpse this morning
> Slumped at the cross road
> Crying after a speeding Car-
> and the wood peckers
> hammering away at the phantasms.

Jayant Mahapatra explores the intricacies of human relationships, especially those of lovers, with a robust tenderness. Love offers a sort of relief from the uncertainties one has come to expect of life, probed rigorously, for instance in his poems like, 'Lost' and 'The Logic'. Ezekiel's 'Nudes' speaks of the physical and the spiritual being at bottom one and the same. Thus he says :

At first the difference
did not interest me at all :
Was she naked, was she nude ?
Unembarrassed ? Shameless ? Hardly.

This new realisation makes him to deal with sex as a subject matter for poetry, emphatically. We know that in order to accept art we have to affirm sensuality. And at a higher plane the physical and the spiritual merge and mingle. Soul and body are inseparable. Without the body, the soul cannot operate. So Ezekiel says :

Your body is the same, though,
Surviving all the loss,
This most unreal flesh
obstinately fills the soul.

For an artist nudity is not an invitation for sex, but an art for its own sake. So what we find in modern poetry is the daring portrayal of both love and sex in all its facts.

The parody of Indian English has become a mode of modern poetry. Two poets, Ezekiel and R. Parthasarathy excel in this mode. Ezekiel's "Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa, T. S." is a well known example. There is nothing 'English' in the poem--excepting the pidgin. We may as well call it 'Indish'. Parthasarathy's poem "Incident at Ahmedpore Station : A letter" (JIWe Vol. 6 No. 1 1978), based on a newspaper report, is another example of parodying Indian English.

Indian landscape, gets described in the modern Indo-Anglian Poetry. In Keki N. Daruwalla's poetry, the landscape of Northern India hills, plains and rivers is evoked in many poems, notably in 'The Ghaghra in Spate', where the "terror of the villagers at night as they fought the river" is recorded with compassion and understanding. Kumar's specifically Indian poems—'Indian Women', 'An Indian Mango Vendor', 'Kovalam Beach', 'Transcendental Meditation', and 'A Hindu to his cow' are some of the popular poems which describe the Indian landscape.

Modern Indo-Anglian poets share a kind of melancholy though not with-

out varying degrees. With some it is calmer and with others it is more nervy and pronounced. Disappointment is the key note of this melancholy, whether with the edgy complications of love, or with the insoluble problems of poetic composition. As Prof. William Walsh has rightly pointed out, Parthasarathy accepts disappointment with an irritable but unportesting glumness, a slightly morose recognition of the way things are'.[6] Frustration in love strikes a note of melancholy in Kamala Das's poetry. She remembers an affair with a man who took her love but could not give his :

.....Not knowing what
Else to do, I kiss your eyes, dear one,
your lips,
like.
Petals drying at the edges, the burnt cheeks and
The dry grass of your hair, and in stillness, I sense
The tug of time, I see you go away from me
And feel the loss of love I never once received.

The existential agony of the modern man remains S. K. Kumar's major concern althrough, where he finds his true voice, and the right timbre and style of an apocalyptic imagination. The tone of some of his poems is melancholic, as we find in "Midnight Musings".

The moment of despair
has no age
no discretion.
At fifty-two I see eucalyptus
thighs waiting to be bustled
by mere sunset.

But the 'moment of despair' is transitory and Kumar soon overcomes it.

The quest for cultural moorings is a preoccupation which the Indian poet in English writing to-day shares with Madhusudan Dutt.[7] In fact, the pervasive presence of this conscious 'Indianness' without any trace of romantic nostalgia or exotic quaintness sets contemporary Indo-English poetry apart from the imitative mediocrity of much of this poetry in the nineteenth century :

I must seek and will 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 creates of Oil, Weep
iron tears for winning what I should have lost,—

(Ramanujan's "Conventions of Despair")

I have made my commitments now.
This is one : to stay where I am.

(Nissim Ezekiel's "Background Casually"

Then why should I tread the Kafka beat
or the Waste Land
When Mother you are near at hand
one vast, sprawling defeat ?

(K. N. Daruwalla, "College II : Mother")

—I am Indian, very brown, born in
Malabar, I speak three languages, write in
Two, dream in one.

(Kamala Das, 'An Introduction')

This assertion, imbues Indian poetry in English with authenticity. These poets do not seem to find their bilingual context odd. But it is important to note that R. Parthasarathy's *Rough Passage*, is a departure. In a different way, it does embody the basic quest for roots, for as Parthasarathy puts it unequivocally :

How long can foreign poets
Provide the staple of your lines ?
Turn inward. Scrape the bottom of your past.

The reflection is, however, that the alternative of choosing one's own language for poetic creation is a course fraught with its own disenchanment.

The search for 'Self' is a major concern for some of the competent poets of our time. Ramanujan's 'Self-portrait' not only illustrates a concern with 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.

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.

('Self Potrait')

The manifestation of such a conception of the self makes it imperative that we acknowledge the significance of plurality of identity in Ramanujan's poetry.[8] Being phenomenal the self assumes a number of identities in time. Not only Ramanujan, but also quiet a few talented poets like Parthasarathy and Ezekiel in their own way seek the 'self'. R. Parthasarathy's *Rough Passage*, is in a way search for the 'self'. Similarly, using his poems as experiments, Ezekiel seeks to dive deep into the psyche, into his own Psyche :

I have seen the mask
And the secret behind the mask

('What Frightens Me')

After discussing the favourite themes of these poets, I would like to comment on the images they use in order to describe their daring and even sometimes, shocking experiences. Let us first examine S. K. Kumar's poetry. Kumar's imagery is the most distinctive feature of his poetry. His images, like his symbols are not always complex and never overdone. He prefers the concrete to the abstract. His naturalistic imagery stands out for its freshness as much as for its sharpness.

In the darkness
the canne leaves
are asses' ears
eavesdropping

('Cerebral Love')

or

A man should come to his woman whole—
not when the mind
is a perverted sunflower
turning face to darkness

('A Dark Mood')

Kamala Das's use of sexual imagery is no less daring than Kumar's. In *The Looking Glass*, she says,

Getting a man to love you is easy
Only be hones about your wants as

woman. .. ..
.. ..
.. .. Gift him all,
Gift him what makes you woman, the scent of
Long hair, the musk of sweat between the breasts,
The warm shock of your menstrual blood and all your
Endless female hungers.

Ezekiel in a different way treats sexual consummation as a medium of reaching the spiritual height. He talks of 'Patient Wings' as the requisite precondition for both consummation and sublimation. Thus he says :

"I am not sure of anything but this
The blood must leap before the spirit sings,
perpetual life is in the mutual kiss,
Profusion only comes with patint wings".

The juxtaposition of sexual imagery in S. K. Kumar's poetry surpasses all his contemporaties. The imagery may be compulsive but it lends a crisp edge to his poems, and often helps him in a better realization of his vision. For instance, the juxtaposition of 'Oped-thighed' with 'Closed-fists' in 'Kovalam Beach'.

P. Lal's imagery is mostly metaphorical :

"In a world of foot falls
Her silence is a lily."

To him Songs for a girl 'whose words are silence', would be 'like rain upon white birds'. These images and free flow of rhythm, convey the sense to the readers in unambiguous terms.

Ezekiel and Kumar, like Robert Frost have special fondness for metaphor. Ezekiel's 'Poet', 'Lover', 'Bird Watcher', and Kumar's 'To A Prostitute' work on metaphor at length, until it becomes part of the whole idea. In Ezekiel's poem, lovers, poets, bird watchers, gain by waiting. In fact, the waiting itself becomes a form of pursuit, a strategy. It is only then that the revelation occurs. The analogies, separately explored, now come together, and the metaphor used to suggest this fusion is light.

The images of Dom Moraes are modern and original. For instance :

'The eyes as blank as searchlights'.

('Words to a Dancer')

'Humped, elbows jerking in a skin of waves
Like giant women knitting'

('Sailing to England')

"Near a field of water ploughed by evening boats"

('Houndnotes')

Besides the structural images, the recurrent images of 'Water', 'blood' and 'flesh' are significant in these lines :

The Guardians with stone flesh : (*The Guardians*)
The stone worn smooth as flesh : (*Lanheri Hills*)
O take my angel in your sleeping flesh : (*Being Married*)
Her body wakened, clad in flesh of meadow : (*The Meadow*)
Rising, he stripped away the flesh of fever : (*Glitter of Pebbles*).

In his poem "A man Dreaming', Dom Moraes Writes,

The angel took him in hands of fire,
Plying wings above him like a giant dove,
Till be grown gentle and beyond desire
Locked in his tower of bones, yet still alive
Through terror and fire came to love.

The 'dove' is an emblem of innocence and gentleness symbolizing the Holy Spirit in Matthew iii 16. The spirit of God, descending like a dove and lighting upon the dreamer via positive awareness of religious symbols. 'Fire' and 'desire', 'dove and 'love' are simple recherche words befitting the theme of the poem. The fire obviously suggests the 'refiner's fire in the Bible. The profound aim of Dom Moraes is to evoke a religious response to discipline the modern chaos; like the king of Moz he is 'trying vaguely to conceive eternity'.

After discussing the positive aspects of modern Indo-Anglian poetry, I would like to focus light on its limitations. Let us consider how the kind of 'Indian reality' that R. Parthasarathy finds in the contemporary Indian poetry in English is somewhat limited. Like Pope, Dryden and other eighteenth century British poets, the Indian poets of English in our time are city poets. Rural people, which constitute nearly three-fourth of our country's population, are safely forgotten. The consciousness of these modern poets-is a consciousness largely shaped by the urban life style of the elite confined to the drawing rooms, Nissim Ezekiel's attempt at evoking the rural milieu in 'Night of the Scorpion' is that of a city-dweller. On the other hand, we find the 'Indian reality' much displayed in Indian novels in English, particularly in the works of Mulk Raj Anand.

Indian myth, which was amply played upon in the poetry of Tagore and Sri Aurobindo, seems to be lacking in the poetry of the contemporary poets. Kamala Das's attempt to mythisize Radha-Krishna legend, appears to have been unsuccessful. Some of the modern poets fail to realize the powerful

impact of myth. Take for instance, Adil Jussawalla's views on Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* : "To my mind.....'Savitri' a poem on the relation of the spirit to matter, unwinding like an interminable Sari through twelve books and about 2400 lines is one vast onion of a poem. The layers gradually fall away to reveal nothing'.[9]

Jussawalla questions a tradition which, in his view, is nothing but "a vagueness of thought, an absolute faith in the mystical, and a blind reliance in the heart.' Thus he fails to see the symbolic relevance of the mythological Savitri to the Indian Womanhood. His comparision of the poem to an onion, betrays his false sense of superiority. In fact, 'Savitri' has already been the subject of Ph. D. theses approved by professors Pinto, Spencer and White of Nottingham, Birmingham and Dublin ; so it has apparently established itself in the canon of English literature.

The rejection of the old idols (Sarojini, Tagore, Sri Aurobindo), by these new poets inevitably brought them under the influence of T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, the later Yeats, W. H. Auden, Wallace Stevens and Dylan Thomas. To borrow a phrase from H. M. Williams, I must say that the recent Indian poetry in English, is 'derivative', if not imitative.) Dom Moraes, writing in *Envoy* (a magazine founded by V. K. Krishna Menon to further Indo-British understanding) in November 1959, said that his early poetry was heavily influenced by the work of three modern poets, Eliot, Auden and Spencer (Specially Eliot, whom he used to read for three or four hours everyday). Eliot's influences upon Ezekiel and Kumar are discernible.

(Perhaps I could pause here to make a general comment on recent Indo-Anglian poetry, and the reader, I am sure will be able to judge its propriety even from the verses I have quoted so far. Modern Indian poetry in English is lucid, scrupulously honest in its effort to be accurate, calm and even deliberate. (The images like the images of Metaphysical English poetry, are far-fetched and some times merely learned. Its theme is varied and unfortunately its major concern is not love but sex. Virginity becomes significant only when it is consummated. But it is not clear whether the consummation leads to sublimation-and finally to divine illumination. Notwithstanding the foreign influence, as stated above, it has established an indentity of its own too distinct to be overlooked.

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SOME RENAISSANCE IMAGES OF MAN IN SHAKESPEARE

Alur Jankiram

Studies by Ruth Leila Anderson, Lily B. Campbell, Tillyard and Theodore Spencer in the first half of this century have enriched our understanding of Shakespeare's intellectual background, chiefly the Renaissance world-view and concept of man as pre-eminently rational. The concepts which these studies outlined were part of the Renaissance moral philosophy and were embodied in such works as Primaudaye's compilation *The French Academie*, Bk. II, (first English translation, 1586), Pierre Charron's *De La Sagesse* (English translation, 1607), Cicero's *De Officiis* and Sir John Devies' "Nosce Teipsum" (1599), to cite only a few of the numerous ethical works of the period. According to these authorities, man occupied a crucial place, by his specific virtue of reason, in the interrelated orders of cosmos, nature and the state. It was the rational faculty which distinguished man from the other lower orders of being, the animals and the plants : while the latter had only the sensitive and vegetative faculties, man had, besides the sensitive and vegetative powers, the rational faculty which was his distinction. He occupied a central or middle status in the created order because of his Protean character, of sharing certain qualities with the animals and plants *below* him, and certain other virtues, like the intellect and reason, with the angels *above*. No one has described this unique status of man better than Pico Della Mirandola whose oration, *On the Dignity of Man*, has come to be regarded as a classic illustration of the Renaissance optimistic view of man :

> "O supreme generosity of God the Father, O highest and most marvellous felicity of man ! To him it is granted to have whatever he chooses, to be whatever he wills..... whatever seeds each man cultivates will grow to maturity and bear in him their own

fruit. If they be vegetative, he will be like a plant. If sensitive, he will become brutish. If rational, he will grow into a heavenly being. If intellectual, he will be an angel and the son of God. And if, happy in the lot of no created thing, he withdraws into the center of his own unity, his spirit, made one with God, in the solitary darkness of God, who is set above all things, shall surpass them all. Who could not admire this our Chameleon ?[2]

Pico's statement is typical of the earlier Christian humanist position which laid equal emphasis on man's frailty and also his potentialities for greatness. However, certain later developments like Renaissance skepticism and Fideism tended to undermine (as Theodore Spencer and Robert Hoopes have noted)[3] the traditional humanistic faith in reason as the highest principle of life. Fideism, represented by Calvin and Luther, tended to over-emphasise Man's frailty by stating that man's rational faculties, in utter disarray as a result of original sin, are incapable of perceiving the higher truth or good without the aid of grace. Renaissance Skepticism, given a classic expression in Montaigne's "Apology for Raimond Sebonde" (1575), led a similar assault on reason by mocking at man's supposed pre-eminence in the creation. However, there was a rehabilitation of the classical-Christian concept of "right reason" : the earlier ontological harmony of nature, reason morality was restored, according to Robert Hoopes,[4] by Richard Hooker and Neo-stoic writers like Justus Lipsius (*De Constantia* 1594), Guillaume du Vair (*The Moral Philosophie of the Stoicks*, English translation 1958) and Joseph Hall (*Heaven upon Earth*).

Hooker, in particular, countered the Fideistic attacks on human reason by reaffirming that man is an intellectual being, and thus "in perfection of nature being made according to the likeness of his Maker resembleth him also in the manner of working."[5] By assimilating the claims of faith with those of reason, the laws of divine reason as revealed in the Scripture with those erected by human reason in history, Hooker restored human reason to its earlier pre-eminence. He countered the Calvinist stress on the depravity of reason and will by insisting that human reason, rectified and regenerated by faith, is capable of apprehending the highest principles of truth, and seeking the good above evil. Hooker's argument in general seems to imply that it is unreasonable to emphasise only man's frailty and to underrate reason's ability to participate in the laws of divine reason. Thus, in spite of certain counter-humanistic tendencies in the early seventeenth century, reason's supremacy in the realms of knowledge and action did not suffer any radical devaluation.

II

In the light of the foregoing description of certain Renaissance intellectual contexts, it may be quite rewarding to peer at a few images of man that Shakespeare has essayed in his plays. One feels curious to know whether the Christian-humanist view of man as a crucial figure placed in an orderly universe has inspired Shakespeare to say anything in his own inimitable manner. The only memorable statement that one can think of, and that seems to sum up the ethos of a whole epoch, is Hamlet's famous apostrophe to man :

> "What a piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving, how express and admirable in action, how like an angel in apprehension, how like a god... quintessence of and yet to me what is this dust !"[6]
>
> (II ii. 300 ff)

This apostrophe balances nicely the gradations of man's position in the universe.

Hamlet is equally aware, it seems, of man's admirable rational dignity as a 'paragon' of animals and also his creaturely aspect as a "quintessence of dust". However, elsewhere in the play, Hamlet reiterates the standard Christian-humanist notion of man as a rational being functioning above the vegetative levels of feeding and sleeping :

> What is a man
> If his chief good and market of his time.
> Be but to sleep and feed ? A beast, no more !
> Sure, he that made us with such large discourse,
> Looking before and after, gave us not
> That capability and god-like reason
> To fust in us unus'd.[7]
>
> (IV, iv, 33-39)

The "god-like" faculty reason has not been given to man, says Hamlet, to "fust in us unus'd" but to raise him above the creaturely level of a "beast". This awareness that man is more than a "beast" and "a passion's slave" helps him finally to achieve a measure of reasonableness in his identity by recognising that "there is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow.... the readiness is all !....." (V. ii. 211-14). Hamlet's reliance on Providence,[8] towards the close of the play, raises his final performance to a level above that of personal revenge. In terms of Sixteenth century beliefs

about man's relation to Providence, it was irrational for man to rely too much on fortune alone and quite rational to subordinate human enterprises and ends to the designs of Providence, a power higher than Fortune.[9] In itself, this is sufficient evidence of the fact that the play does not present a sardonic image of man's depravity, as some commentators seems to think. The experience of *Hamlet* suggests that man, for all the arrant ways of his reason's occasional pandering to will, is essentially a being of dignity and nobility. This impession is borne out by the heroic end of Hamlet, the martial honours with which his body is finally laid to rest. The play's close envisions Hamlet as a soldier at his post in the battle-field of life, an image equally applicable to man in general.

The impression that Hamlet's tragic end finally leaves on our minds is also made by other great tragic protagonists like Othello, Lear and Antony. Shakespeare displays considerable maturity and artistry in ensuring that his tragic figures do not go down with battered and disorderly souls but with a measure of inner equipoise and self-knowledge —a wisdom or ripeness that is the culmination of their journeyings through suffering and disaster. We know that Othello does not die merely as an executioner and strangler of his supposedly faithless wife but as a penitent man who has come to terms with himself, who has recovered the harmony of his earlier noble self before Iago set to work on him. We also know that the great Lear of the final scenes is a Lear who has recovered his true identity as father, King and Man:

> "Come let us away to prison.....
> .....and we'll wear out,
> In a wall'd prison, packs and sects of great ones.....'"
>
> (V. iii. 8-18)

He may crumble on the stage with hallucinatory visions of an absurd universe, which the dead Cordelia in his arms seems to point at : but Shakespeare allows him to die only after giving us glimpses of his final return to sanity and wisdom. In the same way, we find Antony too making a Roman exit from life, only after he has redeemed, to a certain extent, his personal heroism, after re-establishing the overlordship of his reason over his errant will in no uncertain terms. What is important to note is that battered though they all are in the battle of life, these tragic heroes embrace their inevitable doom only after achieving a measure of order and rehabilitation within the inner microcosmic worlds of their various selves. By achieving inner rehabilitation, partial though it may be, they seem to be confirming Shakespeare's agreement with the Renaissance view that man has infinite possibilities for greatness and redemption.

There are, in the whole corpus of Shakespeare's work, two characters who seem to have been conceived as positive instances of human potentiality for achieving greatness and wisdom. If at one end of the scale, Henry V is a partial embodiment of a successful overlordship of the inner and outer microcosmic worlds. Prospero at the other end seems to stand for the ultimate ideal of ripeness and wisdom.

In Henery V, we are given a description of the kind of exemplary order the reformed Prince Hal has been able to effect within his own nature. The Archbishop of Canterbury is not overstating the case when he speaks of the new Prince in these terms :

> Consideration like an angel came
> And whipped th' offending Adam out of him,
> Leaving his body as paradise
> T'envelope and contain celestial spirits.
> Never was such a sudden scholar made :
> Never came reformation in a flood,
> With such a heady currance, scouring faults;
>
> (*Henry V*. I. i. 28-34)

It is because Hal has purged himself of the "offending Adam" in him, of inner disorders that his flesh is heir to, that he comes to embody later the ideal of orderly kingship. He may not impress some of us today with his grandiose military campaigns; there is, however, no doubt that he seems to have been meant by Shakespeare to represent the Elizabethan ideal of a King who is a successful governor of both the outer and inner realms. When King Henry says :

> We are no tyrant, but a Christian King,
> Upto whose grade our passion is as subject
> As are our wretches fett'red in our prisons.
>
> (I. 2. 241-243)

he seems to speak with a measure of confidence and humility always part of his character. He is a Christian King, Shakespeare seems to be implying, not by virtue of his faith but even as a result of his rectified and chastened reason, the achieved grace of sovereignity over the lower passional elements in his own nature. The Renaissance commonpiace that order at the macrocosmic or state level is analogous to the inner microcosmic order underscores King Henry's comparison of the subjugation of passions to the fettering of "wretches" in prisons. Shakespeare has also given us the antithetical versions of this ideal psychological order in the form of discorderly tyrant-

figures like Richard III, Claudius and Macbeth. They bring disaster to the state because they suffer, at the moral level, from inner psychological insurrections which lead their passions and "violent" expeditions to "Outrun the pauser reason". (See *Macbeth*, II. 3. 110)

Prospero is, perhaps, the most satisfying and ideal summation of human greatness, of the inner order and tranquillity of a Christian stoical variety; he represents the wise man who feels impelled to take part with his "nobler reason" against the "fury" of his passions. In a play notable for its symbolic representation of gradations of being like Ariel and Caliban, he may be said to embody the rational soul in man as the Renaissance conceived it :[10]

> Though with their high wrongs
> I am struck to the quick
> Yet with my nobler reason 'gainst my fury
> Do I take part; the rarer action is
> In virtue than in vengeance.
>
> (V. i. 25-28)

He truly answers to Pierre Charron's description of the sage whose virtue is a judicious blend of inborn goodness with the achieved refinement of spirit and learning.[11] There is also in him a streak of wisdom of the kind that Charron, a Christian neo-stoic, describes elsewhere in his book :

> Wisdome is a regular managing of our soul, with measure and proportion; It is an equabilitie, and sweet harmonie of our judgments, wills, manners a constant health of our mind;.....[12]

It is worth noting how Prospero, the human counterpart of the divine dispensation of mercy, describes the gradual moral regeneration of his opponents in analogical and symbolic terms :

> The charm dissolves apace
> And as the morning steals upon the night,
> Melting the darkness, so their rising senses
> Begin to chase the ignorant fumes that mantle
> Their clearer reason.
>
> (V. i. 64-68)

The transformation of the courtiers from a guilt-ridden state to that of a "clearer reason" is compared to a transit from darkness to dawn, with the attendant dissolution of the "ignorant fumes" covering their bright rational faculty. Implied in the imagery of the language is Socratic dictum, refor-

mulated by Christian thinkers, that virtue is co-extensive with the light of knowledge and vice is the end-product of dark ignorance. A return to the state of virtue in natures not deeply dyed with vice is a return to the perceptions of a "clearer reason" unclouded by "ignorant fumes", in other words a passage from darkness to light.

In the course of the same speech, Prospero further elaborates, with a change of metaphor, the restorative process his superior power of forgiveness has been able to initiate in his adversaries :

> Their understanding
> Begins to swell, and the approaching tide
> Will shortly fill the *reasonable shore*
> That now lies foul and muddy.
>
> (V. i. 79-82)

The shore of the "reasonable" souls of the courtiers is now "foul and muddy" because of guilt ; it is washed clean (to follow the symbolic implications of the passage) by the regenerative waters of the incoming tide of consciousness. The suggestion seems to be that the change of the outer level of reality from a stormy to a clear weather has its parallel, at the psychological level, in a change from a state of inner turmoil to tranquillity and stillness. The storm has blown away and in the ensuing aftermath of the clear sky, the light of reason in the human microcosm should provide guidelines to upright behaviour. That seems to be the hope the poetic imagery of Prospero's speech is holding forth.

Prospero's eagerness to bring about a kind of seachange in his opponents underscores the value and significance of forgiveness as a rational and reformative principle—the major thematic concern of *The Tempest*. A spirit of forgiveness initiates repentance which is an inward process working mostly as a purification of the clouded human reason, variously described as surrounded by "ignorant fumes" or steeped in "foul and muddy waters". The imagery and symbolism of the two passages considered in this essay enhance the efficacy of mercy and forgiveness as a way of reforming the baser elements in man and of restoring him back to his essential human dignity.

It is not a coincidence that Prospero has generally been regarded as the ultimate man symbolising a higher level of wisdom and self-awareness. When he speaks the following memorable lines, which overuse has turned into a cliche :

> ..the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,

And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on; and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

(4. i. 153-58)

that have an undeniable authentic ring of equipoise and serenity, it is not strange that most readers feel tempted to associate the speaker's voice with that of Prospero's creator, Shakespeare himself. Prospero, more than any other dramatic personage, is the closest Renaissance approximation to the optimistic vision of human nature as expressed in Pico's oration on the dignity of man.

The two dramatis personae, Henry V and Prospero, breifly considered here, are sufficient evidence that Shakespeare not only inherited but even shared certain dominant notions of the age regarding human rationality and dignity and expressed them in plausible dramatic terms.

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6. I have followed, like Terence Hawkes, the Second Quarto's punctuation as the New Cambridge editors represent it. See also Hawkes's note: "Hamlet's Apprehension", *Modern Language Review*, LV, 2 (April 1960), pp. 238 ff.

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8. I have argued elsewhere that Hamlet's final submission to a Higher Will is of the archetypal mythic-heroic variety having its parallel in the Eastern hero Arjuna of the *Gita*. The dialectical conflict between the two kinds of honourcode is part of the dilemmas of the two heroes. (Cf. "Arjuna and Hamlet: Two Moral Dilemmas", *Philosophy East and West*, XVIII, 1 and 2 (Hawaii, 1968), 11-28.

In another article I have examined the parallel and contrast between Hamlet's self-identity and that of Orestes and Belleforest's Hambleth. ("Hamlet's Heroic Identity and Submission to Providence", *The Indian Journal of English Studies*, XI, (1970), 1-16.

9. Russell A. Frazer, *Shakespeare's Poetics, In Relation to King Lear* (London, 1962) has an impressive account, with documentation from emblem writers and Plutarch, of the Renaissance notions of Man's relations to Fortune and Providence; see ch. II, "Providence", pp. 17-29; pp. 46-60.

10. James E. Phillips : "*The Tempest* and the Renaissance Idea of Man" *Shakespeare Quarterly*, XV.2 (1964) 149-159, attempts an allegorical interpretation of Caliban as the vegetative soul, Arie as Imagination of the Sensitive soul, and Prospero as the representatives of the reasonable soul. The comparison of Prospero with Charron's sage, however, is my own point.

11. *Of Wisdom*, Bk. II, tr. Samson Lennard, (London: 1607), p. 264. I have followed here Lawrence Babb's dating of this English translation; see, *The Elizabethan Malady*, (East Lansing, 1951) p. 1.

12. *Ibid.*, Bk. I, p. 226.

SHAKESPEARE'S TREATMENT OF THE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP IN THE EARLY HISTORY PLAYS

S. C. Sood

Among the various human relationships we find in the plays of Shakespeare, the parent-child relationship is the one that is dramatised from the early comedies to the final plays and the treatment of this relationship in the plays of Shakespeare is not a stereotype but creative and progressive.

Titus Andronicus, though a play of Shakespeare's immature years, is considered as foreshadowing several of Shakespeare's mature tragedies.[1] In it Shakespeare treats the parent-child relationship in its diverse forms (e. g. the question of succession, daughter's marriage, parent-child conflict, and revenge), which the dramatist treats in several other plays.

If in *Titus* the parent-child relationship is treated for its own sake, in the early history plays it becomes a dramatic device, a tool in the hands of the dramatist. The treatment of this relationship in the Early Histories plays a decisive part in expressing and intensifying the dramatic theme and ideas, in delineation of characters, and in supplying the background and tenor of the play.

In *3HVI*, Act II Sc. v, Shakespeare interrupts the war scene at Towton to present an episode, 'A son that hath kill'd his father; and a father that hath kill'd his son', which has been said to repeat the theme of social disintegration 'among the commons'[2] and is, what E. M. W. Tillyard calls, 'the culminating expression of the horrors and wickedness of civil war'.[3] The treatment of the parent-child relationship in this 'morality tableau' is not the lone example of Shakespeare's use of this device as a dramatic tool. This episode is only one in a series where the treatment of this relationship and the destruction of the family, the minimal unit of civilized existence, have been used to serve the dramatist's larger purpose.

In the political world of the early history plays, all human relationships are based on and shaped by political expediency and pragmatism. The parent-child relationships are either corrupted or destroyed completely in this world, where under the civil war, all human actions are guided by petty quarrels and lust for power. The only sweet and natural parent-child relationship between Talbot and his young son, John Talbot, is destroyed and we see a father disowned by his daughter; a son disinherited by his father; and a mother slandered by her son. In this world, daughters are pawned or given as bribes and ransom to the conqueror or used as a commodity to secure political peace and even the sacrifice that mothers make for their children is not free from self-interest.

The unnaturalness of these relationships becomes more pronounced when it is analysed against the background of the intimate, inseparable and interdependent nature of the parent-child relationship depicted through the symbol of a prop, a staff or a crutch,[4] a running fountain,[5] and particularly the nature imagery (tree) so abundantly used by Shakespeare in these plays to reveal the true nature of this relationship. (Caroline F. E. Spurgeon notes, 'The Royal house is definitely thought of as a tree, with children and kinsfolk as branches, leaves, flowers or fruit.')[6]

In *IHVI* Shakespeare devotes almost two and a half scene to describe the intimate nature of the parent-child relationship between Lord Talbot and his young son, John Talbot, and the tragic end it comes to. In a brilliant variation upon history, Shakespeare so rearranges his source material as to make the domestic antagonisms of the English the sole cause for the glorious defeat and destruction of the hero and his equally heroic son near Bordeaux (historically in 1453). Shakespeare 'takes the non-cooperation of the dukes of York and Somerset in the Norman campaign of 1443 and makes it directly responsible for an invented failure to reinforce Talbot at the crucial battle ten years later. For the sake of increased poignancy, young Talbot is unhistorically made the old hero's only son.'[7] The father has not met his son 'This seven years' and he sends for him to tutor him 'in strategems of war' so that Talbot's name might be revived in him 'when sapless age and weak unable limbs/Should bring thy father to his drooping chair'. (*IHVI*, 4.5.1-5). 'The age of Talbot's son is deliberately lowered, and the style deliberately made more formal as fitting the more poetic emotion and treatment.'[8]

This episode depicting Talbot and his son stands in sharp contrast to Act V sc. iv which depicts the relationship between Joan and her peasant father. Quite unhistorically, Joan is portrayed not only as a sorceress, a whore, and a vixen of monstrous pretensions, but also as unnatural child who

denies her peasant father in a bid to save herself from the gallows. Joan, who denies her parentage to save her life, is shown immediately thereafter claiming protection under the law as a parent. This episode shows by contrast not only the character of the French Joan but also enhances the nature of the relationship between Talbot and his son, and reveals the true nature of the English family relationships shaped not by opportunism but love and mutual trust, and their slow and steady disintegration and degeneration during the civil war as dramatised in subsequent episodes treating this relationship.

If Joan denies her father, King Henry the Sixth disinherits his son, Edward, the Prince of Wales, in order to keep the crown on his head during his life time, and thus sows the seed of disintegration and destruction of the House of Lancaster. Shakespeare rearranges historical facts to make the disinheritance of the son an unnatural act and portray Henry as an unnatural father. *3HVI* opens with a parliamentary scene in London after the Yorkists' victory at St. Albans, with which *2HVI* ends, but historically the events are actually those of 1460. In fact, the Yorkists after their victory at the battle of Northampton in 1460 captured the king, escorted him back to London, summoned a Parliament to reverse the act of attainders of the previous year against York, his sons and the Neville earls making them legally guilty of treason and declaring their lands forfeit passed by the Parliament (later dubbed the Parliament of Devils) which met at Coventry in 1459. In Shakespeare's *3HVI* the Parliament is not summoned by the Yorkists nor is the King in their possession at the time. After their defeat at St. Albans at the end of *2HVI*, the Queen (Margaret of Anjou) along with the King and other Lancastrian supporters flee to Londan 'where you are loved,/And where this breach now in our fortunes made/ May readily be stopp'd.' (*2HVI*, 5.2.81-83). On arrival in the Parliament House in London, the King finds York occupying the chair of state. Thus, the Parliament in Shakespeare's opening scene of *3HVI* has both Yorkists' as well as Lancastrians' supporters, and the King, too, is free. In spite of these favourable circumstances in the play, the proposal to disinherit the Prince comes from Henry himself and not from the lords of the blood royal and the peerage as in history. As Shakespeare presents it, it is neither Henry's 'church-like humour' nor his desire to avoid blood-shed to save his people and the country, but mere cowardice when, unable to justify his title to the crown, he feels 'All will revolt from me, and turn to him' (*3HVI*, 1.1.151) that he pleads with York, 'Let me for this my life-time reign as king' and 'Enjoy the kingdom after my disease', and confirms the crown to York and his heirs in return that he may reign in quiet while he lives. (*3HVI*, 1.1.170).

The theme reaches its climax in *Richard III*. Richard of York shows utter disregard of all moral, social, family and personal obligations. He slanders his mother and wades through the blood of his kith and kin to reach the crown. It is his own mother, old Duchess of York, who invites Queen Elizableth to :

> Go with me,
> And in the breath of bitter words let's smother
> My damn'd son that thy two sweet sons smother'd.
>
> (*R-III*, 4.4.132-34).

She interrupts him while he is marching with drums and trumpts for battle with Richmond. While parents in Shakespeare give a piece of advice and blessings to sons on their departure,[9] the old Duchess of York curses her son (*R-III*, 4.4.183 ff), and it is the working of the mother's curse that haunts him and leads him to his death in the battle.

Andrew S. Cairncross rightly observes that Shakespeare is at some pains to select and emphasise and add to scenes of family "contention".[10] We can appreciate the dramatic significance of these scenes only if we keep in mind the Elizabethan's conception of chaos and order and their view of the naturalness of the parent-child relationship echoed by various characters in Shakespeare and 'probably drawn directly from a passage in Cicero's *De Finis* :'[11]

> Again, it is beld by the Stoics to be important to understand that nature creates in parents an affection for their children ; and parental affection is the germ of that social community of the human race to which we afterwards attain. This cannot but be clear in the first place from the conformation of the body and its members, which by themselves are enough to show that nature's scheme included the procreation of offspring. Yet it could not be consistent that nature should at once intend offspring to be born and make no provision for that offspring when born to be loved and cherished. Even in the lower animals the touch of nature (*vis naturae*) can be clearly discerned ; when we observe the labour that they spend on bearing and rearing their young, we seem to be listening to the actual voice of nature. Hence, as it is manifest that it is natural for us to shrink from pain, so it is clear that we derive from nature herself the impulse to love those to whom we have given birth.
>
> (III, xix, 62-63-trans. Rackham)

Shakespeare's view of the 'natural' parent-child relationship may have to be deduced, but his view of the 'un-natural' nature of this relationship is

expressed by various characters. Hamlet does not want to be 'un-natural', 'Let me be cruel, not unnatural' (*Ham.* 3.2.413) : parents' murder 'is a deed most unnatural' (*Mac.* 2.3.25) ; and Gloucester says of Lear, 'The king falls from the bias of nature ; there's father against the child', (1.2.121). It is in this context that Henry is an 'unnatural father' and the 'morality tableau' episode is unnatural. The episodes depict a world inhabited by men who have fallen below their station on the Chain of Being since the protection of the young ones is a natural instinct even in wild animals and birds. (*3HVI*, 2.2.13 ff and *Mac.* 4.2.8-11). It is a world without order and degree—a world of chaos in Ulysses's speech in *Troilus and Cressida*,

> Take but degree away, untune that string,
> And hark, what discord follows..
> And the rude son should strike his father dead,
>
> (1.3.109 ff).

In the early history plays, children become merely instruments of revenge and retribution. 'Historically,' as Peter Saccio observes, 'no one seems to have officially regarded York's position as dubious ; his lands were indeed held for a time by the crown, but only because York was a minor'.[12] But Shakespeare's York has been obscured, 'Deprived of honour and inheritance' ever since Henry of Monmouth first began to reign because his father was condemned to die for treason. The two scenes—Temple Garden scene and Mortimer-Plantagenet scene—which initiate the enmity between Yorkists and Lancastrians are entirely fictional and tend to develop as a revenge scene.

This theme of revenge and redress through heirs and children becomes a dramatic device to keep the plot going, and it gives unity to the plays and binds together various threads of the action.

Young Clifford's heart 'is turned to stone' at the sight of his father's body and he resolves, 'York not our old men spares ; No more will I their babes'. (*2HVI*, 5.2.51). He bears on his manly shoulders the body of father, 'As did Aeneas old Anchises bear', but there is complete reversal of the values, 'But then Aeneas bare a living load, Nothing so heavy as these woes of mine'. (*2HVI*, 5.2.64). In this world the merit of the children is measured by the greatness of their victim. 'Richard hath best deserved of all my sons', remarks York, when Richard throws down Somerset's head. (*3HVI*, 1.1.17).

King Henry excites the Earl of Northumberland and Clifford when he finds York occupying 'the chair of state', reminding them that their fathers were slain by York 'and you both have vowed revenge/On him, his sons, his favourites, and his friends'. (*3HVI*, 1.1.54). Clifford does not care whether

Henry's title to the crown is right or wrong. He vows to fight in Henry's defence just because his father was slain by York, 'May that ground gape and swallow me alive, /Where I shall kneel to him that slew my father.' (*3HVI*, 1.1.59). Clifford translates his threat into action when he meets Rutland coming along with his tutor. He stabs Rutland mercilessly in spite of the pleadings of his tutor. Shakespeare devotes one full scene to the murder of Rutland and the motive behind this murder is nothing but revenge for the death of his father.

The cruelty of Rutland's murder is accentuated when Margaret taunts, ridicules and tortures York and flourishes in his face a handkerchief dipped in Rutland's blood. When the news of York's torture and killing reaches his sons, Richard vows, 'Tears then for babes; blows and revenge for me.' (*3HVI*, 2.1.86).

Shakespeare deviates from historical facts in order to continue the theme of revenge and retribution. In Shakespeare the duke is killed not in battle but is stabbed by Clifford and Margaret after his capture. Shakespeare also brings into the battle York's youngest son, Richard, when historically Richard was younger to Rutland and hardly two at the time.

To suggest a doomed heritage, Shakespeare makes use of the killing of a child, which was thought of as the ultimate act of tyranny in a Christian society that well knew the story of Herod and the Innocents. As Queen Margaret says on the murder of Prince Edward, her son, 'They that stabb'd Caesar shed no blood at all,/ Did not offend, nor were not worthy blame,/ If this foul deed were by to equal it. He was a man : this, in respect, a child;/ And men never spend their fury on a child.' (*3HVI*, 5.5.53-57). The tutor advises Clifford in vain, 'Ah, Clifford, murder not this innocent child/ Lest thou be hated both of God and man'. The killing of Rutland by Clifford becomes a scene of great pathos, since Shakespeare unhistorically makes Rutland a child instead of seventeen-year-old soldier. Peter Saccio rightly observes that the chief episodes that Shakespeare elaborates to suggest a doomed heritage concern the murder of children.[13] In Act I of *3HVI* York's son Rutland is slaughtered at Wakefield and in Act V Prince Edward is even more savagely cut down after the battle at Tewkesbury. Richard III murders his nephews, two young princes, to reach the crown. In fact, 'Edward of Lancaster was not wantonly murdered after capture : he was killed, by whom no one knows, in the battle itself. Rutland, too, died in the battle and both were men in their late teens at the time, adult soldiers by medieval standards'.[14]

This wanton and merciless killing of children gives rise to curses pronounced by the parents upon the killers and their confederates which is yet another dramatic device used by the author to link various threads of the action, and, as Moulton has pointed out, it emphasizes the 'nemesis pattern of the plot'.[15]

In the political world of the early history plays, if the male child is there to carry on the struggle for power and he becomes merely an instrument of revenge and retribution, the female child is treated merely as a commodity to be pawned to secure political peace. Henry VIII is said to have maintained that daughters were useless except as pawns in the international chess game of dynastic marriages.

The Earl of Armagnac, 'near knit to Charles', proffers his only daughter to Henry VI with a large and sumptuous dowry, 'the sooner to effect and surer bind this knot of amity', between England and France. Margaret's father, Reignier, the King of Naples and Duke of Anjou and Maine, gives his consent to marry his daughter to King Henry VI.

> Upon condition that I may quietly
> Enjoy mine own, the country Maine and Anjou,
> Free from oppression or the yoke of war.

(*IHVI*, 5.3.153-56)

The institution of marriage, the basis of the family, is itself corrupted in this world. Marriages in this political world are contracted not for love but for political and material considerations. The daughter of the Earl of Armagnac is offered, and is to be accepted, as Queen of England, for securing political peace between the two warring countries, and Suffolk has his own axe to grind in recommending Margaret of Anjou to be Henry's queen,

> Margaret shall now be Queen, and rule the king;
> But I will rule both her, the King, and realm.

(*IHVI*, 5.4.107-8)

After Edward of York's victory at the battle of Towton, Warwick hastens to France to seek the hand of Lady Bona of France for Edward to strengthen Edward's title to the crown of England, and Queen Margaret is speaking the truth when she tells Lewis, 'His demand springs not from Edward's well-meant honest love; but from deceit bred by necessity'. (*3HVI*, 3.3.66-70). As soon as Warwick learns of Edward's marriage to Lady Grey, he joins hands with Queen Margaret to avenge this wrong. To show his firm loyalty to Henry, Warwick offers 'my eldest daughter and my joy' to Prince Edward

of Lancaster 'in holy wedlock bands'. Warwick's alliance with Queen Margaret is also bred by necessity.

> Not that I pity Henry's misery,
> But seek revenge on Edward's mockery.

(*2HVI*, 3.3.264-65)

These marriages, made for material and political considerations, become the root cause of contention between Edward of York and his brothers, Gloucester and Clarence, when, because of Elizabeth's elevation, her relatives, the Woodvilles, are able to sweep the aristocratic marriage market. Clarence falls out and leaves Edward to join Warwick against his brother and Warwick marries his younger daughter to Clarence to strengthen the ties.

The theme of political marriages is continued in *Richard III*, and the later history plays. Richard III tries to secure the crown by finishing the male heirs through murders and the female heirs through marriages. In *King John*, the people of Angiers suggest that Lady Blanche of Spain be offered in marriage to Lewis the Dauphin to conclude peace between England and France, and King John agrees to this arrangement to suppress Arthur's claim to the crown. In *Henry V*, the King of France offers his daughter, Katharine, to King Henry V to conclude peace with the victorious Henry. (5.2-324-25).

The arguments advanced by Suffolk in *IHVI* that should form the basis of the true marriages (5.4.48 ff) though quoted to serve his own purpose remain mere arguments in this political world where, in the matter of daughters' marriages, parents are guided by material and political considerations and act not as parents but as a seller or a capitalist investing his 'capital' in the most profitable way, but here is a subject that is treated in greater detail in several other plays and forms the basis of father-daughter conflicts presented therein.

In the treatment of the mother-son relationships, too, in the early history plays Shakespeare may be said to anticipate his later tragedies, *Hamlet* and *Coriolanus*. Save the unnatural relationship between Richard III and his mother, mother-son relationships in the early history plays appear on the surface to be quite natural, e. g. the relationship between Queen Margaret and her son, Edward of Lancaster, in *3HVI*, and between Arthur and his mother, Lady Constance, in *King John*. Only when we peep below the surface, do we realize the true nature of these relationships. In fact, by their own action, which is not prompted by motherly instincts, these mothers

unwittingly lead their sons headlong towards their destruction much as the mothers do in the tragedies.

Both Queen Margaret and Lady Constance struggle hard to secure the rights of their respective sons. There is much similarity between the two episodes and the mothers' concern for their sons' title to the crown of England and the subsequent struggle waged to achieve it. However, the struggle is not without self-interest. Arthur does not even show any interest in his claim, 'I am not worth this coil that's made for me', he says. What James L. Calderwood remarks about Lady Constance, 'Her self-interest is masked, not consciously perhaps, within the *cliche* of doting motherhood and Eleanor is probably close to the truth when she says, "Out insolent ! thy bastard shall be king/That thou mayst be a queen, and check the world !"[16], is equally true of Queen Margaret, who takes up arms on behalf of her son because she feels, as she tells Henry, 'Thou hast undone thy self, thy son, and me'. (*3HVI*, 1.1.232). It is she who dominates throughout the battles enlisting support for her son's cause and directing the war against the House of York, and we begin to feel that the son's title to the crown becomes only an excuse for the fulfilment of her own political ambition. One thinks of Cariolanus.

NOTES

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3. E. M. Tillyard, *Shakespeare' History Plays*, London, 1964, p. 189.
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5. *Mac.*, 2.3.96.
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8. See the Arden Edn. of *IHVI*, London, 1962, p. 99n.

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THE DECLINE OF SHAW'S LITERARY REPUTATION

S. R. Jalote

During the First World War there was a Shaw slump, followed by a resurgence. But after his death there has been a steady decline in his literary reputation. Usually, age helps to canonise a writer. Critics discover deeper meanings and overall patterns in his works. This so far has not happened to Shaw. Even in the early stage of his career there was a critical tendency to dismiss him as a man of superficial brilliance, without depth. Holbrook Jackson in 1907, in the preface to his book on Shaw, deplored what he called "the meagre acceptance of Shaw as a leader of thought". He felt that there were intelligent persons whose brains were worthy of a better cause than that of accepting a mistaken popular view of Shaw. He saw Shaw in the same relation to his time as he saw Swift and Carlyle to theirs, and found that Shaw's great contribution to the theatre was the introduction of philosophy in drama. C. E. Montague, a leading critic for the *Manchester Guardian*, wrote in his *Dramatic Values* in 1911, that Shaw's "serious thinking" was only ordinary but "his wit is genius"[1].

Shaw refers to his own literary reputation as it prevailed in his time :

> I was described as dignified old monkey throwing coco-nuts at the public in pure senile devilment. This is an amusing and graphic description of the effect I produce on the newspapers; but as a scientific criticism it is open to the matter-of-fact objection that a play is not a coco-nut nor I a monkey. Yet there is an analogy. A coco-nut is impossible without a suitable climate; and a play is impossible without a suitable civilization[2].

This decline was partly due to the attacks of influential writers of the new generation who made definitive statements about Shaw that were to influence a later generation of readers. W. B. Yeats condemned Shaw for superficiality.

Shaw had known Yeats since 1888; Yeats, who was then twenty three, wrote in a letter :

> Last night at Moris's I met Bernard Shaw, who is certainly very witty. But, like most people who have wit rather than humour, his mind is somewhat wanting in depth[3].

Yeats repeated periodically throughout his life this low estimation of Bernard Shaw. He wrote that he listened to *Arms and the Man* on the first night in 1894 "with admiration and hatred. It seemed to me inorganic, logical straightness and not the crooked road of life, yet I stood aghast before its energy.... Presently I had a nightmare that I was haunted by a sewing-machine, that clicked and shone, but the incredible thing was that the machine smiled, smiled perpetually. Yet I delighted in Shaw, the formidable man"[4]. When Yeats saw the production at the Court Theatre, London, he wrote to Lady Gregory on November 7, 1904 :

> I have seen Shaw's play; it acts very much better than one could have foreseen, but is immensely long. It begins at 2.30 and ends at 6. I don't really like it. It is fundamentally ugly and shapeless, but certainly keeps everybody amused[5].

In 1910 Yeats wrote to Lady Gregory :

> [Shaw] is a logician, and a logician is a fool when life, which is a thing of emotion, is in question; it is as if a watch were to try to understand a bullock[6].

With *The Apple Cart*, Shaw began to lose both his political sense and his dramatic skill. He had not presented in the play a fair balance of opposing forces, but had set a wise, considerate and thoughtful King on the one hand against a gang of fools and knaves who represent the cabinet on the other. W. B. Yeats wrote to Lady Gregory about *The Apple Cart* that he "hated the play. The second act was theatrical in the worst sense of the word in writing and in acting, and the theme was just rich enough to show up the superficiality of the treatment. It was the Shaw who writes letters to the papers and gives interviews, not the man who creates"[7]. "To the end of his life Yeats believed Shaw to be a 'watch'—that is a man who is constitutionally unable to grasp the nature of poetry because of a brilliant but mechanical intellect"[8].

John Galsworthy whom Shaw had persuaded to become a dramatist, wrote in his letter to R. H. Mottram in 1906 that Shaw was only "ephemeral" but his work was "serving a good contemporary purpose"[9]. In 1913

D. H. Lawrence wrote to Edward Garnett to say that he was "sick of the rather bony, bloodless drama we get nowadays—it is time for a reaction against Shaw and Galsworthy and Barker and Irishy (except Synge) people—the rule and measure mathematical folk"[10]. Henry James did not have a very good opinion of Shaw. He confessed to an American friend in 1910 :

> I do not think highly of Shaw. Wilde wrote a better play, I think, *Lady Windermere's Fan*. It is a distinctly good play, better than anything Shaw has written. Shaw has the sort of success that consists in being talked about, but I do not think him great[11].

T. S. Eliot, in "A Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry", wrote :

> .. for Shaw was a poet—until he was born, and the poet in Shaw was stillborn. Shaw has a great deal of poetry, but all stillborn; Shaw is dramatically precocious, and poetically less than immature. The best you can say for Shaw is that he seems not to have read all the popular handbooks on science that Mr. Wells and Bishop Barnes have read[12].

Eliot's attitude to Shaw was obviously influenced by dislike of his political opinions and of his personality. He thought Shaw intellectually meretricious and therefore on a low level artistically as well. In a review of *Mr. Shaw and 'The Maid'* (1925) by J. M. Robertson, Eliot wrote in the *Criterion* (April, 1926, vol. IV, 389) that there was a danger with *Saint Joan* of Shaw's "deluding the numberless crowd of sentimentally religious people who are incapable of following any argument to a conclusion. Such people will be misled until they can be made to understand that the potent ju-ju of the Life Force is a gross superstition ; and that (in particular) Mr. Shaw's *Saint Joan* is one of the most superstitious of the effigies which have been erected to that remarkable woman"[13]. In spite of this, Eliot confessed cautiously in *Poetry and Drama* (1951) that in his use of colloquial prose in the speeches of the knights in *Murder in the Cathedral*, "I may, for aught I know, have been slightly under the influence of *Saint Joan*". In the same lecture, he said that "our two greatest prose stylists in the drama—apart from Shakespeare and the other Elizabethans who mixed prose and verse in the same play—are, I believe, Congreve and Bernard Shaw"[14].

Pound wrote about Joyce and Shaw, "He (Joyce) has presented Ireland under British domination, a picture so veridic that a ninth rate coward like Shaw dare not even look it in the face". Elsewhere Pound refers to Shaw as "an intellectual cheesemite"[15]. George Orwell in his letter to Brenda Salkeld, 10 March, 1933, vehemently attacks Shaw :

> Have you seen any more of your friends who worship Bernard Shaw? Tell them that Shaw is Carlyle and water, that he ought to have been a quaker (cocoa and commercial dishonesty), that he has squandered what talents he may have had back in the '80s in inventing metaphysical reasons for behaving like a scoundrel, that he suffers from an inferiority complex towards Shakespeare, and that he is the critic, cultured critic[16].

Bonamy Dobree in his review of Shaw's *Collected Prefaces* refers to the decline in his literary reputation during the last two decades :

> If you ask haphazard acquaintances what they think of Mr. Shaw, they will almost certainly answer, irritatingly, with phonographic regularity, 'Oh, Shaw. Well, damned clever, of course—but then, of course, he isn't serious; of course he's an Irishman....' The bombardment of 'of courses' represents the Englishman's profound suspicion of the intellect. But what is most astonishing about this string is that the average man will end up with a remark which is, though he does not know it, of the flagrantly 'You're another' kind: he will say, 'Of course, he's irresponsible'[17].

Raymond Williams calls *Back to Methuselah*, "an adolescent fantasy", and remarks :

> Shaw's dynamic as a dramatist is surely weakening, and it seems impossible that it can as a major force, survive the period of which he was a victim[18].

The decline of Shaw's literary reputation is also due to the collapse of the post-Victorian world with its religion of evolution and human progress, and to the change in tastes and concerns in contemporary literature. With Wagner, Ibsen, Tolstoy, Wells and Shaw himself it did seem that the world might be entering a new intellectual era of evolutionism which might replace the bankrupt form of Christianity. It was a period in which modern Utopias were not thought absurd. A generation later the shattering effect of the two World Wars on such faith proved that human nature had not changed in 2,000 years. Since the early years of this century Man's loneliness had already been one of the main concerns of so many distinguished artists and writers, for instance Frank Kafka, Thomas Woolf, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Bertolt Brecht, Samuel Beckett, Eugene Ionesco, and Harold Pinter. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* George Orwell spoke of things to come with sardonic despair. He condemned totalitarianism and sterility of modern life.

T. S. Eliot in *The Family Reunion* deals specifically with the question of lack of communication between peopte, even among members of the same family. Discussing the "isolation of the human situation" Eliot observes :

> Loneliness is known as a frequent attitude in romantic poetry, and in the form of 'loneliness'...is a frequent attitude in contemporary lyrics known as 'the blues'. But in what sense is Man in general isolated, and from what? What is the 'human situation'? I can understand the isolation of the human situation as Plato's Diotima expounds it, or in the Christian sense of the separation of Man from God; but an isolation which is not a separation from anything in particular[19].

One can attempt to answer Eliot's question that the cause of man's loneliness is in the feeling of "cut-offness" and the modern notion of the anti-heroic which has gone to create a new intellectual atmosphere. The modern literature reflects the insecurities, the fears and anxieties of the modern mind, and the difficulties of existence in a world without fixed values. Consequently the decline of Shaw's literary reputation may be attributed to the change in literary taste and concerns in modern literary studies. There is in contemporary literature abundant evidence of negative attitude towards life depicting high degree of pessimism. In a civilised society most people can ignore the outside world for a great deal of time because it is the business of civilised society to protect its members. This explains why the most highly developed cultures produce literature characterized by a high degree of pessimism.

Thus we notice that Shaw's reputation began to decline almost as soon as it was established. The age was not ready or ripe for his optimistic evolutionism, and the only aspect of Shaw that was understood was his clever prose and the flamboyant personality. But Shaw and Wells were too preoccupied with their revolution to foresee that they were reaching a completely new public of intelligent readers. Their optimistic philosophy in itself was so momentous that they were justified to think that it would be the panacea for the present as well as the future. They were the men of the moment, and their moment looked like lasting for a long time. The educated public, hungry for ideas and information, bought the books of Shaw and Wells, and found them altogether more exciting than the works of old-fashioned novelists like Bennet and Galsworthy and Victorian writers such as Dickens, Thackeray, Trollope, George Eliot, Meredith, Hardy—who stuck to mirroring

the age and were not intellectuals inasmuch as they did not have any theses to expound and explicate.

Moreover, the doctrine of progress has no support in any of the main departments of human thought. We have more and more civilization—machinery and big towns—but man himself individually and as a community, has not appreciably evolved within the historic period. H. C. Duffin observes:

> The thesis is sound one. The highest point to which humanity could reach three thousand years ago—a Homer—has barely, if at all, been overtopped since; the lowest form, one degree above the brutes, may yet be found in our slums, differentiated only from its primitive prototype in its slightly more articulate speech, its less hygienic clothing and habitation, its less natural and profitable occupation[20].

Shaw was aware of the fact that history does not bear out the idea of progress. As regards politics, "since the dawn of history", says Shaw, "there has been no change in natural political capacity for the human species. The comedies of Aristophanes and the Bible are at hand to convince any one who doubts this"[21]. But Shaw cares little for the scientists who affirm that the world is not progressing. On the contrary in his preface to *Back to Methuselah* he observes :

> If you can turn a pedestrian into a cyclist, and a cyclist into a pianist or violinist, without the intervention of Circumstantial Selection, you can turn an amoeba into a man, or a man into a superman, without it[22].

Besides, the next generation was already knocking at the door. Yeats was too full of ideas. For James Joyce, literature should be akin to music; it should produce strange and powerful effects on the feelings, not on the intellect. In 1909, a twenty-four-year-old American poet, Ezra Pound, arrived in London, full of ideas about the nature of poetry that were closely akin to Joyce's. Pound was influenced by Hulme; so, in turn, was T. S. Eliot. Eliot agreed with Hulme that it was time for a new age of classicism and discipline; and as time went by, he also came to agree with him about religion. "These men were rising influences in the decade before the First World War, and there were many others : D. H. Lawrence, E. M. Forster, Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf, Whyndham Lewis, Aldous Huxley—most of them differing from the generation of Chesterton, Bennet and Wells by reason of a disciplined intellectualism. They were not

'simplifiers' in the way that Shaw and Wells seemed to be; their view of reality was subtle, complex, and tinged with pessimism"[23].

The main trouble with evolutionism was that it was rather too remote and Shaw added nothing to it, but took it ready-made where he could find it. H. G. Wells wrote to Shaw, "It is a pity you never had a sound dose of biology. Still, you do pretty well as you are"[24], Moreover, Shaw's philosophy was rendered out of tune in an age which wanted answer to the problem of evil. Whereas, Shaw's philosophy is optimistic, according to which the Life Force is not infallible: "it proceeds by trial and error; and its errors are called the Problem of Evil"[25]. Some of Shaw's ideas are already outmoded, partly because we have accepted them. Though Shaw cares nothing for style as such, it is for his style that future ages will read him. He is a master of prose and the greatest pamphleteer since Swift.

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HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA'S THE WINDOW : A STUDY*

K. Venkata Reddy

Greeted, some sixty years ago, by Sri Aurobindo as 'a poet of almost infinite possibilities', Harindranath Chattopadhyaya is hailed today as 'a Leftist high-gospeller'. This is not at all surprising for one who has made a close study of his social plays inasmuch as they abound in seeds of social protest and thoughts of revolution, heralding as they do the emergence of a significant working-class dramatist with innate potentialities.

Like Mulk Raj Anand in the field of Indian fiction in English, Harindranath has succeeded in bringing a kind of life to the Indian stage that was never there before. For the first time in the history of Indian drama in English, Harin has introduced working-class characters on the stage. No Indian dramatist in English had ever cut such large slices of the working-class life.

The window is one of the best of Harindranath's social plays—plays that lay bare the dramatist's acute awareness of the social problems around him. They are essentially products of an earnest and deep commitment to certain values of life. Like the plays of Arnold Wesker, they are warm, humane, sincere, passionate, compassionate, brave, honest, energetic, outspoken, full of enthusiasm, full of concern. The enthusiasm is largely enthusiasm for paving the way for an egalitarian society. The concern is mainly concern for the well-being of the worker.

The Window seeks to dramatise what happens in a workman's house one evening maturing into night. As the play opens, we find two children, Aju and Jyothi, enjoying the view of the sky, the clouds and the moon looking at them through the window of their house, interrupted now and then by the

taunts of their mother who is anxiously awaiting the return of her husband from the factory. The night falls and the children, after attempting in vain to light the lamp, go to bed receiving one mug of soup each. The conversation between Aju and Jyothi reveals the dramatist's psychological insight into the world of children as well as his intimate knowledge of the living conditions of the factory workers. We learn how their "poor Daddy" works "so hard all day.....like a machine" (p.9) how the arm of the daddy's friend "got caught in the machinery, and was crushed" (p.5) and how the children are to be satisfied only with a mug of hot soup" (p.13) during nights.

As the Workman's Wife is waiting for her husband, a neighbour comes with a request to lend her an earthen pot for the night. She learns from the Neighbour that all the workers are going to meet that night to decide something. From what transpires between the Workman's Wife and the Neighbour we get in closer touch with the sufferings of the slum-dwellers. The first casualty of slum life is health. The Workman's Wife seems to be suffering from tuberculosis as "her lungs are very painful" and she "spits blood" (p. 14). Hence her inability to help her husband "a little by going to work" (p. 14). The child of the Neighbour suffers from "whooping cough" and "has sores all over his body and his breath stinks like a sewer" (p. 17). The sufferings and feelings of agony and despair of the entire body of workmen seem to have been telescoped by the dramatist into the deeply moving voice of the Neighbour when she exclaims :

> I wonder why we were born to suffer—why we were born at all !—why some were born to rest and others to toil and weep. (p. 15).

This awful phenomenon is easily accounted for by the Workman's Wife. She says :

> The masters tell us that it is our 'Karma, a sort of fate you know—fate—the will of God. Yes, that's what we are always told (p. 15).

That 'Karma' is not 'the will of God' but only a lie concocted by the bourgeois society to gull the masses and exploit them is made clear a little by her own husband, the Worker, when he boldly comes out expressing that 'the law of Karma" is,

> the trickiest, cleverest law of all. It tells us that we are crushed and broken and hungry because of our past sins ! Damn them ! And we bend our heads before them. (p. 22)

The Worker has come home 'too tired to eat a morsel' of food. He also looks 'worried' because of a rumour afloat that,

'they are going to tax everything sooner or later'. (p. 21) A 'neighbour worker' now enters and says that 'the rumour is true'. At this the Worker's blood boils and he bursts forth with a challenge to the capitalists :

> They call us the dumb masses. We'll yet show them. Masses, indeed'. Let them but come into our dark, dingy cells and garrets and slums, and they will know that the mass is not one dumb, blind animal-power meant to be used by them for their own purpose. They will know that the mass is made up of men, women and children—each of them a unit, unique, full, grand'. Each with a heart that beats like a war-drum ready to sound the final swift march to Victory. (p. 24)

And, ironically enough, the very excesses of the capitalistic factory-owners who 'crush' the workers sow the seeds of revolt in their souls. This is made clear to us as the worker tells his wife :

> We must thank the tyrant for his tyranny ! No more shall we be slaves, bound to the wheel, crushed body and soul under heavy machinery that belongs to the few, we shall rise and strike and become masters of it. (p.25)

The rumour does come true as the Tar Man enters the house and simply starts tarring 'the window and the few broken panes' in order to prevent light which has been taxed. Only those who 'can pay for it' will get light and, as the Tar Man says,

> there's is a scale, you know, according to which you can purchase your daylight (p. 28)

The Workman's Wife apprehends that

> soon they will tax everything, our eyes, and our children's eyes. They will seal our mouths, too, perhaps, and tax even our dreams and our songs and our sobs and our laughters ! They will tax everything ! (p. 28)

Her fears work up to a climax when her husband immediately joins her with his own pathetic expression ;

> Why, woman ! they will tax your body, too perhaps, and then I shall have to pay each time I want to love you (p.29)

Even as the Workman's Wife wonders whether all this is true, 'the gong strikes seven outside in the city', But still everything is 'pitch dark' inside the house as the window panes have been tarred during the night. We hear 'restless movements ...all through the slums and garrets.' The Worker

now 'smashes the window panes' in protest against the taxing of light, and as we hear the sound of smashing window panes in the neighbourhood, he rushes out with words of glee :

> A challenge from us to them at last !
> Light, Light, in the worker's home....
> .....For ever (p. 31)

The curtain falls as

> a beautiful rose light streams in, ushering in a new and glorious life for Workers (p. 31)

The Window is essentially realistic. Harindranath makes the play realistic in texture, tone and temper by making the setting, incidents, characters and dialogue realistic. 'Dedicated to the brave textile workers of Parel, Bombay', *The Window* is an authentic, lacerating account of the slum life of the "poor, down-trodden creatures, pale, servile, weary workers" (p.26). The play gives us a peep, as it were, into the depths of misery and squalor of the working-class society—

> The flock,—the uncared—for, the untended....untaught, uncomforted, unfed. Squalid, ragged, broken—dwelling in dingy holes,-frightened. walking dead ones, tools, shadows—possessions of man, themselves possessing nothing—filth, degradation, disease—slow and rotting death.
>
> (pp. 10-11)

Written at a time when the Progressive Writers' Movement was gathering momentum in India and elsewhere, *The Window* seems to be a dramatization of a cardinal point of the movement's manifesto. Harin takes up a few striking situations, and through life-like characters—Worker, Workman's Wife, Neighbour, Tar Man, Aju and Jyothi—and intensely charged dialogues, drives home the excesses of the capitalist factory—owners which ultimately result in the very revolt of the workers.

The Window is a neatly constructed play, each situation leading to and anticipated by another. Furthermore, it strictly maintains all the three unities of time, place and action. The whole action takes place in the house of the worker. The play commences at 'dusk', works up to a climax with the appearance of the Tar Man and concludes with the rebellion of the workers at 'dawn'. There are no loose ends. All the incidents are closely interwoven into each other with the result that we have a perfectly unified action.

The Window is unified into an organic whole not only through a linear structure but also through a refrain—'everything breaks sooner or later'—which almost punctuates the play from the beginning to the end. When the Neighbour who comes to borrow an earthen pot says that her child tripped over their pot and broke it, the Workman's Wife philosophises :

> Ah ! sister ! everything breaks sooner or later (P. 13)

On learning this from his wife, the Worker takes recourse to the same philosophic attitude. He tells her :

> Glad you did, glad you did because everything breaks sooner than later—we all break—we are all broken every moment of our lives—damn me—damn you and—damn us all—poor earthen pots, cheap earthen pots ! (p. 20)

Again, to assuage his wife's apprehension of 'another law' that the capitalists are going to pass, the Worker falls back on the same dictum. He says :

> Let them try. Let them do their worst.
> Everything breaks sooner or later.
> Woman ! you are right ! (p. 23)

The woman proves to be 'right', as even the tyranny of the capitalists breaks at last when all the workers unitedly rebel against them. The Worker seems to be actually congratulating his prophetic wife when he most jubilantly remarks :

> Woman, you were right ! Everything breaks sooner or later (P.30)

The characters are convincing, successfully representing as they do the working-class of the day. The Worker, the Workman's Wife, the Neighbour, the Tar Man and the two children, Aju and Jyothi, are presented in their true colours. That the dramatist does not intend to individualize the characters is clear from the fact that they, except the two children, bear no names. None the less, they are life-like and human to the core, each with a heart that beats like a war-drum. The poor little children whose only joy is to cast a glance at the sky with its clouds and moon and stars—'their only box of toys', the vigorous and spirited Worker who returns home late in the night' a little drunk and tired and over-wrought' and who is prepared to spill even the last drop of his blood to safeguard his wife and children, and the innocent, generous and ailing Workman's Wife who terribly feels for her inability to help her husband 'a little by going to work', the poor Neighbour who wonders why people like her were born only to 'suffer', and who yet feels that 'one has to put up with it all', and the polite Tar Man who con-

siders his tar as 'black as sin' and feels for the kind of job he is constrained to undertake—come home to us and deeply move us. We feel for them.

Harindranath endeavours to overcome the limitations imposed on an Indian dramatist writing in English, especially in regard to the medium. Harin's poetic prose is essentially racy of the soil. It is eminently fitted to the situations and the speakers. It reflects the commonplace actuality of the language of characters who are drawn from low life. Let us take, for instance, the Worker's speech to his wife modulating from hope to despair :

> We shall rise and strike and become masters of it—and then ! LEISURE ! REST ! —machinery, the obedient slave of the millions ! good,—we shall not be graves any more. What ! hope ? freedom ? for us, even for us ? Poor down-trodden creatures ! pale, servile, weary workers ? Hunger ! were you smoke after all, to pass away so swiftly and you, O hardship ! —you, too a night-mare that is done ? Is it possible ? What am I saying ? Woman, am I gone mad ? What am I saying ? Shall we cease from hunger and slavery and disease ? (p. 26)

Uncommitted to any prior metrical pattern, Harin's prose rhythm permits the rhythms of live speech to be traced intimately, and it accommodates with less strain the masses of petty detail, the slang expressions, the allusions, oaths and colloquialisms, peculiar to the life of the working-class society.

Another virtue of the play is that it is eminently suited to the stage and is exquisitely actable unlike the majority of Indian plays in English. With its simple stage-setting- 'the interior of a workman's room' with 'a small window opening in the centre on to the sky and a door to the right' —a limited number of characters and with practically no shift of scene, *The Window* can easily be presented on the stage. Since the play bristles with action and moves quickly, and the dialogues given to the characters are crisp and forceful with that 'conversational ease', it could successfully be enacted on any simple, ordinary stage when it becomes much more alive than in cold print.

The Window is a brilliant satire against the atrocities of the capitalists who are 'too holy and too precious' to be seen by the workers. As the Worker tells his wife

> they are like gods we must never see, because, once we see them they cease to be gods and the whole truth is known (P.21)

Thus, maintaining a comfortable distance between themselves and the

workers, the capitalists indulge in excesses which find a detailed expression in the words of the Worker :

> they are out to crush us, wound us, maim us for life. The few, the few, TYRANTS ! 'who have bound us hand and foot to wheels, harnessed us like horses, who goad us on like sheep, who have put manacles on our limbs, who hope to witness our future generations step out of their mothers' wombs with heavy chains round their wrists, and fetters round their ankles. (pp. 23-24)

The dramatist aims his powerful satire not only against the excesses committed by the capitalists, but also against the callousness of God almost in the vein of Thomas Hardy. The Neighbour says to the workman's wife how they

> sing to God everyday and every night hoping and hoping always that He might some day hear our prayers and help us. (p.15)

But that 'some day' never seem to come to the poor workers though they sing hymns to God

> even when the back is breaking and the lips are parched and the bones are tired and the flesh is pale—sing hymns ! when the voice is dead-dead—when EVERYTHING is dead ! (p. 16)

Naturally they tend to question the very existence of God let alone doubting any help from Him. The Workman's Wife exclaims :

> O God ! are you really there, in the deep, dark sky ! Can you hear ? If you can't, are you deaf ? If you do, are you dumb ? My God ! who are you, God, God, God ! what are you ? If you are at all ? (p. 17)

The Worker, who just then enters, pitying her, answers her questions in much more poignant terms :

> Woman ! do you still call out to God ? Aren't you tired ? Don't you know He is hard, cruel, callous ? Don't you know He has no time to listen—to listen to us, sweating wretehes ? Don't you know that He has been bought up by the mill-owners, masters of machinery ? Why do you waste your time ? Why waste your poor lungs, my wife ? (pp. 17-18)

Very carefully chosen, the tittle of the play, *The Window*, is quite appropriate. Invested with a symbolic significance, the window serves in the play as a connecting link between the inmates of the workman's house and the sky thereby symbolising the communion between Man and Nature. The two little children, Aju and Jyothi, love the window as they can see

through it 'a lot of wonderful things." The Worker tells his wife that they love that window, don't they, poor little wretches that the only joy they have, the sky with its clouds and moon and stars–their only box of toy, (p. 19)

They enjoy 'the sky with its clouds and moon and stars' when the window is open, and when it is shut, they 'love to watch the night through the broken glass-pane.' The sky also seems to partake in their bliss. Jyothi tells Aju that

> When the sky smiles at us through the window, I feel so happy ! (P.7)

The children make these pleasant experiences into a song and sing :

> Window, Window ! you are such a dear,
> Because we can see the moon from here.
> When you are open we see the clouds pass,
> When you are shut we see them through the glass
> Window, Window, you are such a dear,
> Because you bring the moon so near ! (p. 12)

The window serves not only as an inlet for the sky to peep in but also as an outlet for man to escape from the mundane world. While showing the window to the Tar Man who has come to tar it in pursuance of the new law of taxation of light, the worker tells him :

> the window,—and a fine window, too for you to jump out of when you are tired of life (p. 27)

The play closes with the smashing of the tarred window panes by the Workers thereby suggesting that the working-class ultimately succeeded in getting over the tyrannical exploitation by the capitalists through an organised revolution.

Thus, *The Window* is realistic and satirical with a well-knit plot and life-like characters. The main faults of the play, however, are, the faults that would, perhaps, naturally accompany these virtues. It is a little too didactic. The playwright tends to let the social problem distract him from his characters' personal predicaments. This results not only in making the play sound a little too didactic but in reducing the characters to types. Also, like Wesker, Harindranath is prone to wordiness, ingenuousness and over-emotionality which seem to affect to some extent the artistic excellence of the play. All the same, we have in *The Window* a highly rewarding play.

* All the references are to Harindranath Chattopadhyaya's *Five Plays*. published by M/S. Shakti Kavyalayam, Madras, (1937).

O'NEILL'S S. S. GLENCAIRN CYCLE AS RELIGIOUS DRAMA

Buddhadev Panda

Eugene O'Neill made two very important statements in connection with his plays :

(i) Most modern plays are concerned with the relation between man and man, but that does not interest me at all. I am interested only in the relation between man and God[1]. (1930)

(ii) In all my plays sin is punished and redemption takes place[2]. (1946)

The two statements, taken together, not only point to the consistency of the author's thought but also leave no room for doubt that O'Neill thought of himself as a religious dramatist; for God, sin, punishment, and redemption can have no meaning except in the context of religion.

The aim of the present study is to examine O'Neill's *S. S. Glencairn* cycle for the purpose of discovering in what way the author shows man's relation to God, and to what end.

The cycle consists of four one-acters: *The Moon of the Caribbees*, *In the Zone*, *The Long Voyage Home*, and *Bound East for Cardiff*. The last play was written first, in 1914, and the first three, in 1917; but their logical order is the one in which we have mentioned them here. What makes the three separately conceived plays a unit is their common theme, namely man's relation to God. The God-power here is the sea, and mankind is represented by a group of sailors on board the *S. S. Glencairn*. "O'Neill...has provided a variety of racial types, a liberal sprinkling of Scandinavian and British seamen..., together with a sufficiency of other nationalities to suggest a microcosm on shipboard"[3]. Belonging to the Sea is shown as a virtue in all the four plays, and refractoriness, as black sin. But this is anticipation. We may turn to the plays themselves, which are like four pictures of the same thing, drawn as

though the artist were trying to assure himself that he has got the perspective right.

To the sea-governed world of *The Moon of the Caribbees* there comes a man Smitty, who has no allegiance to any god. The Donkeyman, who has already taken Smitty's measure, tells him, "Whatever set you goin' to sea? You ain't made for it"(467)[4]. When the Donkeyman finds that Smitty is troubled by the melancholy Negro chant coming from the shore, he makes a shrewd guess that the young man has had some disappointing love affair, and says, "An' she said she threw you over 'cause you was drunk, an' you said you was drunk 'cause she threw you over".(467) But this fugitive from love, who has sought refuge among sailors, takes no interest in the pleasures of sea life. Native girls bring contraband liquor—and themselves—to the ship. The sailors divide up these bounties of the sea. The singing, dancing, revelry, fighting, and knifing are all demonstrations of their gratitude to the sea. Only Smitty holds aloof, an unhappy outsider, unable to participate. The sea, with its characteristic bounty, offers him love as well as friendship which he spurns. For when the youngest and prettiest of the girls offers him love, he rebuffs her. Again, when in order to cheer him up, Cocky asks him not to be "ser dawhn in the marf"(456), Smitty snubs him. He does the same when the Donkeyman tries to be friendly with him : "I'll trouble you not to pry into my affairs, Donkeyman".(467) Smitty, of course, drinks; but drink to him is an anodyne and not something partaking of the sacramental—as it is to his brother sailors.

The religious nature of the play consists in the fact that Smitty breaks the law of the sea which is the God-power here. If he were not a sailor but someone else, say a passenger, the law of the sea would in no case apply to him. He came to the sea, an impure man, for he was guilty of sin for having offended the god of love. Now he commits another sin, this time against the sea-god, in not losing himself in the drift of the sea. The sea could cleanse him if only he would become its votary heart and soul. The other sailors have no "beastly memories"(466) as Smitty has, because they are a part of the sea. The Donkeyman, the 'philosopher' and man of experience in the play, suggests to Smitty that he should take one of the native girls since there are "No mem'ries jined with that". Smitty is really repelled and reacts in a most unsailor like way, "Shut up, Donk. You're disgusting"(468). The trouble with Smitty is that he follows the sea but will not behave as seamen do. His reaction to the Donkeyman's "wise" suggestion shows that he considers what his ship-mates do to be "wrong". He does not realize that people, who continue to fancy themselves as "gentlemen" after becoming

sailors, "has mem'ries when they hears music"(468), as the Donkeyman says. Their conversion is not complete. His present resistance to sea life—repulsing friendship, rejecting innocent love, mooning, "Thinking, and drinking to stop thinking"(468)—is tantamount to irreverence towards the Sea. Smitty has already been guilty of sin against another god, the god of love, for which he is now undergoing the penalty of "memories". If he resists the god of the sea—and he is doing it now—he will only be heading towards more penance.

We must understand Smitty's problem in these terms, for that is how O'Neill's imagination, which Raleigh describes as "partially archaic"[5], has shaped it. In the context of the play, it is Smitty's sexual chastity rather than the other sailors' promiscuity that is a sin. Bogard recognizes the amorality of what the seamen do:

> Drunkenness, mass fronication, near-murder are not seen as good or evil, for they are not reached by conscious or subconscious choice. The acts committed have in them the amorality of innocence and something of half-comprehended ritual observances to a God whose meanings and identity are mysterious[6].

In othor words, the sailors' is a pagan worship of a deity: they have lost their individualities and private wills in the sea. This, Smitty cannot do because he is too thoughtful, too introspective to be a part of anything.

The play shows Smitty's sin—lack of reverence for love as well as for the sea; and punishment—"beastly memories", isolation; but no redemption. We do not see him heading towards any realization of the truth about his position in the scheme of things, which is what redemption means in a religious situation involving man and a supernatural power.

Smitty appears again in the second play, *In the Zone*, where he is suspected of being a German spy hiding explosives in a tin box. When the box is opened, only some letters are found, in one of which Smitty's sweetheart rejects him once for all for his drunkenness.

The first play, we remember, did not make it clear whether his fiancee "threw Smitty over because he was drunk or whether he was drunk because she threw him over"[7]. The second play tears off the veil, and poor Smitty is finally revealed as a victim of the demon of compulsive alcoholism. The play modifies in some measure the picture of the hero that emerged from the previous play and also explains certain things which were obscure there. We understand, for example, the reason why Smitty could not love another woman; for it was not he who broke faith with his fiancee, but she who

gave him up because he was a hopeless alcoholic. Smitty's conduct on the whole becomes clearer in the light of what we learn of him at the end of this later play; he is, for instance, not a fugitive from love as we thought first, but a man who treasures the memory of the moman he loved and lost. It is clear, too, that Smitty is not guilty of any moral wrong. That behaviour issuing out of inebriation is not morally culpable, is recognized by Aristotle, for he writes in his *Ethics* (VIII.3, Oxf. transl.): "It is plain...that incontinent people must be said to be in a similar condition to men asleep, mad, or drunk". Besides absolving Smitty from moral blame, the later play throws new light on the problem of redemption as it affects him.

Aesthetically speaking, a consideration of the early play in the light of the later one is not justified. But if we are concerned with the problem confronting Smitty and with O'Neill's view of sin, punishment, and redemption, it is but proper to acknowledge that the theme of *The Moon of the Caribees* is modified by that of *In the Zone*. Alone, the early play suggests the possibility of Smitty's redemption in either of two ways—a return to love, or submerging of will and individuality in the sea. Taken together, the two plays imply that Smitty's redemption lies in a proper recognition and acceptance of his helplessness against the mighty power of the demon of drink and the *daimon* of the sea. And Smitty's "muffled sobbing"(532) is an indication that he has accepted his suffering. Together, the two plays leave in the mind the impression of a "man of feeling, a pensive figure with an acute consciousness, lonely and life-weary"[8],—who will never open his heart to anyone, but who will cry his heart out and drink himself to death.

Interpreted psychologically, Smitty's problem is not that he cannot belong either to love or to the sea, but that he cannot belong to himself. The two Smitty plays leave no room for doubt that he was drinking before he came in contact with his fiancee. Since drunkenness is a form of self-destructiveness, we shall not be wrong in surmising that Smitty hated himself, which is the same as saying that he hated life. The love that he thinks he felt and still feels for his fiancee belongs only to the conscious level of his mind, while, in fact, at bottom he is a necrophilia, though an unconscious one. We will have occasion to return to the problem of Smitty's necrophllia later, when we have finished examining the remaining two plays of the cycle. As touching his redemption, we might say that his stoic acceptance of suffering without any self-knowledge can hardly be called redemption. True redemption can come only when Smitty comes to realize that he does not belong to love *and* the sea, which symbolize life, but to death.

The third *Glencairn* play, *The Long Voyage Home*, tells the story of another sailor Olson's sin of apostasy against the sea and of punishment descending upon him like thunder-clap. Olson has quitted sea life and is waiting for a ship to take him home. The sea's retribution is swift: he is drugged in a water-front dive by a crimp, an unconscious agent of the sea, and shanghaied for service on the "worst ship dat sail to sea".(507) Before he realizes that he has been doped, Olson speaks of this ship thus: "I pity poor fellers make dat trip round Cape Stiff dis time year. I bet you some of dem never see port once again".(507) The last sentence implies apprehension of his own probable fate.

Considered in human terms, Olson's is no sin, for wanting to go home to see one's own mother and to farm one's paternal acres is not wrong. It is none-the-less a grievous sin in the eyes of the sea, to which Olson is bound as a votary to his god. We are bound to recall Christ's injunction to each one of his disciples as he gathered them: Go and sell all that thou hast and come and follow me. But there is no sight of redemption anywhere becuase Olson has not followed the injunction. Bogard rightly says: "Olson goes to his fate as a mere animal with no sense of what has brought him down"[9]. Owing to the lack of any tragic recognition on Olson's part, the play's total impression is one of incompleteness— if, that is, it is viewed as an independent play. But if the play is seen as the third act in a drama of four acts, its effect is one of suspense.

Of O'Neill's early works, *Bound East for Cardiff*, the last component of the four-part *Glencairn* cycle, is the most talked-about one-acter. We have an important note of the author on this play: "In it can be seen, or felt, the germ of the spirit, life-attitude, etc., of all my more important future work"[10]. The story of the play is slight: A common sailor, Yank, is dying in his bunk from injuries he received in a fall. The present problem before Yank is that he is afraid to die. There is something on his conscience ; be once killed a man. His friend, Driscoll, however, assures him that God will not punish Yank as he had killed the man in self-defence. Then the two friends fall to reminiscing about their seafaring experiences. Yank confides to his friend that for the last year or so he has been thinking of leaving sea life and settling down on a farm of his own. This is desertion, the punishment for which is death, and eventually Death appears before Yank in the form of a pretty lady dressed in black, and he dies in peace.

While only the malevolent aspect of the supernatural was apparent in *The Long Voyaga Home*, its benevolent side receives emphasis in *Bound East for*

Cardiff, at the end. Here, as in the preceding three plays, O'Neill equates the sea with God. The sea is not only an ominous presence but provides material for more than three-fourths of the play's dialogue. Yank, the sailor-primitive, has ambivalent feelings for the sea, which is as mysterious as a god to him. He thinks he hates it, while, without his conscious knowledge, he is fascinated by it. Like the other seamen, Yank complains about life at sea—"just one ship after another, hard work, small pay, and bum grub".(486) And Driscoll chimes in, with: "It's a hell av a life, the sea".(486) But words like these have something of a ritual in them; they mean no more than a "sailor's delight at finding something to grumble about"(481)—as O'Neill says in a stage direction. Sailors complain, and yet they stick to sea life.

The sea, which is a jealous god, does not tolerate recalcitrance in those who belong to it. Yank has been guilty of irreverence by merely thinking to quit sea life. None the less, sinning against one's god, whether in thought, word, or deed, must be punished. The sea's punishment descends upon Yank in the form of an accident. The finger of the sea-god is visible in Yank's fall, who "puts his leg over careless-like and misses the ladder and plumps straight down to the bottom".(479) Because Yank has lost interest in sea life, he does not give his mind to his legitimate duty. Thus his carelessness has its source in his 'sinful' thought of leaving the sea. The deity here works from *within*.

That this interpretation of Yank's relation to the sea is in perfect agreement with the author's intention is borne out by what happens towards the end of the play. Yank is telling his friend that it was his intention to quit the sea and "go to Canada or Argentine or some place to get a farm, just a small one, just enough to live on". When he is mid-way in this blasphemous talk against the sea, which has been like a mother to him, and when he is regretting that he made this trip at all, he sees fog in the forecastle and exclaims : "How'd all the fog git in here"?

Driscoll : Fog ?

Yank : Everything looks misty. (487)

Clearly, the fog is nowhere but in the mind of Yank. He does not understand that salvation for him, a sailor, lies in his belonging to the sea. But when Yank shares with his friend the reminiscences of their seafaring life together; when he acknowledges that the sea is "as good a place as any other"(489) to be buried in; when he acts up to the lesson he has learnt from the sea and asks his friend to divide his pay with the other crewmen and gives

him his watch for a keepsake; when he says, "I wish the stars was out, and the moon, too; I c'd lie out on deck and look at them, and it'd make it easier to go—somehow"(489); and when, finally, he asks his friend to buy "the biggest box of candy you c'n find in Cardiff"(489) for Fanny the barmaid who was once kind to him;—when Yank does all this, his temporary estrangement from his god, the sea, is annulled, his sin is wiped out, he is at one with God, life, and himself, and there is complete redemption. In his final moments, Yank witnesses an epiphany: the sea appears before him in the form of "A pretty lady dressed in black".(419) Thus death, of which Yank was afraid so much, is no more fearful; for, to him, death and the sea are one. The sea is in mourning because Yank's death is like the death of a son. Thus Yank belongs to the sea in death, as he did in life. His recalcitrance was but a fleeting affair. He finally returns in death to the sea which is his proper habitat.

The final redemption of Yank is a silent comment on the fate of the other two principal characters, whose stories are told in the first three parts of the *Glencairn* cycle: Smitty and Olson would have had redemption if they had realized their oneness with the sea. This is probable in Olson's case for his nature is like Yank's in its essence. Smitty's case is different. There is not even a remote possibility of his winning his way to redemption in *this life* at all, for he does not belong to life, but to death.

It was Skinner who first recognized that O'Neill's plays were "like parables"[11]. The playwright, much concerned with man's relation to God—that is, with "the impelling, inscrutable forces behind life"[12] as he himself said, needed a mythology of his own. He created it. What O'Neill does in the *Glencairn* plays puts us in mind of the Greek practice of personifying the forces of nature as well as qualities and emotions, and mythopoetic imagination has raised a power of *outside* nature, the sea, to godhead, so that it may do duty for Life, the depiction of which needs must be the concern of any creative writer. In the *Glencairn* plays, the sea, Life, and God are one and the same thing. The idea of equating Life's laws with God's laws is also Greek. We have Kitto's authority on this issue. He writes :

> It is an idea that we meet over and over again in Greek tragedy that when someone acts out of the fundamental necessities of human life, or in response to what even we can call our deepest and most sacred instincts, he is working with the gods, and the gods with him[13].

By way of conclusion let us now try to read the meaning of the four *Glencairn* parables. O'Neill seems to be implying this: Wisdom consists in

floating along the current of life and not in swimming against it; in spite of hardships and frustrations, life has lts own compensation—love and friendship, for instance; love in the widest sense—love for oneself, for others, for one's legitimate work, for nature both within and without—is the fundamental law of life; one who does not love life sins against the God of Life; redemption takes place only when the sinner acknowledges the sovereignty of life in thought, word, or deed. Bently, one of O'Neill's *staunchest* detractors, acknowledges that the above philosophy (the one we have independently discovered in the *Glencairn* parables) is at the core of 'all' O'Neill's plays. Apropos of *The Iceman Cometh*, one of the playwright's latest and maturest works, Bentley writes :

> Pessimistic or not, the play involves a system of thought, the same one, in fact, that has underlain all O'Neill's plays. O'Neill's formula (for perhaps it is less a system than a formula) is : all good forces are those of love and life, all bad forces are those of hate and death[14].

The *Glencairn* plays at least show that O'Neill's philosophy is a system and not a formula.

NOTES

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DEATH IN VENICE : A STUDY IN SYMBOLIC ACTION

Prafulla C. Kar

Human motives, says Kenneth Burke, are represented in symbolic actions and *Death in Venice* is a perfect example of it. Thomas Mann presents the theme of the artist, his environment and the inner working of his mind by employing a complex technique in which myth, allegory and reality are fused together in a harmonious process. *Tonio Kroger* focuses this theme directly ; *Death in Venice* presents it in symbolic terms. In order to understand Mann's intentions one has to study the various symbols which are integrated with the thematic development of the story.

Death in Venice does not start with Venice as the setting. It starts with Munich in a spring afternoon. Aschenbach, a writer of unusual decorum and sensibility, goes for an extended walk to dispel his mood of fatigue after a morning of hard work. This evening stroll has a great significance in the novel. It is a physical expression of the dominance of passion over self-discipline. Throughout the story Mann depicts the conflict between passion and artistic control in the person of Aschenbach. I emphasize the beginning of the story because here the process of decay in the writer starts.

Aschenbach imposed a kind of discipline in him by repressing all impulses. He had been living in the self-encapsulated world of his creation by rejecting all kinds of temptations to leave his home. Like Tennyson's Lady of Shallott he had been living in a cave of imagination without having any direct link with the outside world. His afternoon walk makes him see the world directly. Discipline and control which he had so tenaciously cultivated gave way to sensation and impulse, and he finally fell victim to several forces.

During his stoll he first encounters a stranger before a mortuary chapel. Mann vividly describes the chapel and the figure standing on its steps. The

chapel embodies Byzantine style and decorum. It is apparently an example of beauty and perfect form, but is, strangely enough, associated with the standing figure which merges with the architecture of the chapel. The man who stands on the steps of the chapel is a stranger to Aschenbach. He is one of the many strangers Aschenbach meets with in his subsequent journey. This stranger has a grotesque appearance : he is of medium height, has a snub-nosed face, deformed chin, exposed teeth and wrinkles on his brow. He also wears a straw hat. His whole appearance gives the suggestion of the process of dying. This deformed figure is no doubt a representation of the devil with whom Aschenbach makes a strange pact. He makes a kind of communication with the devil by gazing at him, a gesture which is returned by the latter. This communication takes place at the visual level, but the real bond with the devil is established later at Pola. Once the communication takes place the devil influences the protagonist psychically. Aschenbach feels an urge for distant scenes, a sort of temptation which he is too powerless to resist. Thus he falls into what Melville called the "power of blackness". This first meeting with the stranger paves the way for his subsequent psychic involvements with the sinister. Here the stranger represents the Satanic force, an emblamatic figure of death. Mann describes Aschenbach's thirst for travel in psychopathological terms like "seizere" and "hallucination".

After this strange kind of encounter with the stranger Aschenbach is faced with a terrible dilemma. Visual images crowd in his mind. Immediate psychic process sets in him. He sees a vision in which a world of primeval wilderness opens before him. He sees marshland, islands and morasses and dense forest. These images have obvious Freudian suggestions. They represent the subliminal and elemental passions within him, which he had repressed. This kind of vision and the images it unfolds appear in extended versions in different parts of the story. They imply Aschenbach's pyscho-logical confrontation with evil.

His journey to Venice is symbolic of his voyage to the underworld. At Pola where he takes a ship to Venice he meets a deformed sailor who conducts him to the ship. The sailor is another version of the death-figure he saw on the porch of the chapel. He makes some scrawls on the paper, strews bluish sand on it out of a box, thereafter letting the sand run off into an earthen vessel, folds the paper with bony yellow fingers, and writes on the outside. This document carefully and meticulously prepared suggets that Aschenbach makes an elaborate pact with the devil like that of Dr. Faustus. He metaphorically sells his soul to the devil.

Mann describes Aschenbach's early life to suggest his psychological deprivations. He had cultivated discipline by rejecting physical passions. He had created characters in his works which exhibited aristocratic self-command, but were eaten out within. The irony of his story stems from the fact that his depiction of biological decline of overburdened characters ultimately applies to him. Explicitly he renounces "sympathy with the abyss", but he himself falls into it.

The ship in which he sails for Venice is suggestive of death and decay. It is "obsolete, dingy, grimed with soot". The sailor, who has a grotesque appearance, speaks in a language bristling with irony and innuendoes. He calls Venice a "glorious city" and the voyage an excellent "choice". But in actuality Venice is pestilential city, ravaged by a kind of inner decay.

Aschenbach meets with a strange man inside the ship. He is with a group of young students who are probably making a holiday excursion to Venice. He looks young, but actually is very old. His deceptive appearance heightens the theme of appearance versus reality in the novel. All these characters Aschenbach meets with in the course of his voyage reflect, in distorting mirrors, his own emotional situation. The deception of the stranger's appearance mirrors Aschenbach's later endeavor to give a false coloring to his figure by hiding his old age by cosmetics.

The sea on which the ship glides becomes to Aschenbach a metaphor of emptiness. It also symbolically suggests elemental chaos and turbulence. In the vast expanse of the sea, time and space merge and become blurred with confusion. Immeasurable, inarticulate "space weakens our power to measure time as well; the time sense falters and grows dim"[1]. Aschenbach feels a premonition of death in the sea. He experiences space dissolving into time and the resultant emptiness. This annihilation of time-space distinction suggests the approach of death from all directions. Shadow figures watch death. The squall of "mistlike" rain also creates the atmosphere of death as in Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*.

After experiencing these mysterious forces in the sea he arrives in Venice and asks a gondolier to take him to the shore. Mann describes the gondola in the same suggestive way in which he described the ship. It is black as nothing else except a coffin. The comparison of the gondola to a coffin transforms it into a mythical boat and the gandolier to Charon, the mythical boatman, who, rows the passengers in the river Styx to the underworld. Here Aschenbach's identification with death becomes more explicit.

The atmosphere of Venice emits a foul smell, the smell of sirocco. It suggests something rotten and corrupt. Venice becomes an extended metaphor of disease and sickliness like Camus's plague—ridden city or Sartre's city of the flies. The gondolier wears a straw hat. As a matter of fact all the strangers Aschenbach meets put on straw hats and thus establish their oneness in diversity. It is interesting to observe that Aschenbach ultimately puts on a straw hat before his death making him one with the death-figures he encounters at various stages of his journey.

From his hotel he sees Tadzio, a Polish boy of extraordinary physical form. He falls in love with him and cherishes him. Tadzio represents to him perfection in form and style. He sees a godlike quality in him. He describes his beauty in anthropomorphic terms. Tadzio represents his ambivalence. Tadzio's pressence on the sea-shore is symbolic of the juxta-position of order with chaos. Tadzio himself combines both the elements. He is a symbol of order. But in him are hidden the symptoms of sickliness. When Aschenbach looks at him at close quarters he sees in him elements of death. He is, in a way, a mirror in which Aschenbach sees his own reflection.

Mann describes the atmosphere outside the hotel with excruciating vividness. Sultriness, all kinds of mixed smells like smells of oil, perfumery, cigarette smoke, and carbolic acid suggest death and decay. Aschenbach decides to leave Venice, but he has become so intimately a part of its environment that circumstances lead him to stay. Unforeseen and mysterious forces are at work. Once he is psychologically prepared to participate in the deathly atmosphere, circumstances accelerate the process. It is too late to change his mind.

Aschenbach's eating of overripe strawberries symbolically presents his association with death. Over-ripe and almost half-rotten, red strawberries may not evoke the suggestion of death immediately, but like Hamlet's sun breeding maggots in a dead dog these over-ripe fruits are the seat of foul germs that start the process of death from within.

The guitar player whom Aschenbach meets before the hotel is another Satanic figure, or another version of the Satan—figures which he met on different occasions. He has the same "snub-nosed" face and deformed appearance as other figures had. He creates a false atmosphere by hiding the fact that there is a plague in Venice. The government of Venice also hushes up the news. These things suggest the theme of appearance and reality in the

novel. When Aschenbach understands the fact of the existence of plague from the English tourist agent and its origin, he is reminded of the ghostly figure he saw on the chapel porch and the mystic inscriptions written on the wall. This unconscious association of the plague with mysterious stranger at the cemetery suggests the protagonist's intuitive realization of the coming of death to him. The place of the origin of the plague is also suggestive of death and life and elemental passion. Again sexual overtones are there in the description of the moist swamps. bamboo thickets, primeval island jungle, and the crouching of the tiger. These sexual suggestions mirror Aschenbach's perversion and his elemental passion for Tadzio. This perversion is death itself, a sort of metaphysical death of which the physical death is only an outward manifestation.

The most important symbolic description of death and sexual obsession is Aschenbach's dream before his death. The ritualistic murder and cannibalistic practices which the tribal people perform in the dream are suggestive of death and bestial passion in their harrowing violence. The dance of the people is a kind of cosmic death dance signifying total annihilation.

Despite all these tastes and smell of death, Aschenbach remains in a world of illusion. His frantic attempts to transform his physical appearance to something beautiful and strange emphasize again the theme of appearance and reality. His whole physical frame becomes "ripe strawberries". His desperate search for Tadzio in "narrow alleys" and "labyrinthine little streets" evokes the sense of his voyage in the underworld.

Aschenbach's meditation on Socrates's advice to Phaedrus philosophically states the theme of this novel. "But detachment, Phaedrus, and preoccupation with form lead to intoxication and desire; they may lead the noblest among us to frightful emotional excesses, which his own stern cult of the beautiful would make him the first to condemn"[2].

The most enigmatic symbol, as William York Tindall points out, is the image of the camera on a tripod stand at the edge of the water, apprently abandoned. It may obliquely suggest the artist as the function of both the camera and artist is to record external impressions, but such comparison is misleading. Yet somehow the image "corresponds to dying Aschenbach and concentrates the feeling of abandonment—not only his but that of society"[3]. Aschenbach's physical death, as I have stated earlier, is a manifestation of his philosophical death, or if I use an existentialist phrase, a "philosophical suicide".

Death in Venice presnts an eternal problem. The artist and his inner life

and the environment in which he operates are new to literature. The theme has inspired writers from Shakespeare's time to our day. Mann's exploration of this theme has something novel about it. The novelty lies in Mann's method. His language with its symbolic suggestions and evocative power makes the reading of this short novel a unique and moving experience.

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THE BRONTËS' FIGHT AGAINST 'SEXISM'

P. P. Sharma

In the context of the International Women's Year celebrated not long ago the world over, there seems to be a peculiar aptness in recalling to mind the almost heroic effort the three daughters of a clergyman made in a secluded Yorkshire village in the middle of the nineteenth century. Critics and commentators have been endlessly wondering as to how three frail consumptive girls living in a backwater could develop the strikingly emancipated attitude towards sex that characterizes in varying degrees the work of each. To put things in perspective, it would be helpful to see how some of our current notions commonly associated with the feminist movement were distinctly anticipated by the Brontë sisters. In this article, however, will be attempted a more limited task, that of showing that the sisters fought sexism in two different senses : first, the entrenched prejudice against the female sex, and second, "any arbitrary stereotyping of males or females on the basis of gender."[1]

The first interesting fact that one encounters in the account of their life from childhood on is the freedom with which they all turned to reading and writing. The massive juvenilia written in such a microscopic hand that scholars can read only with the aid of a magnifying glass is an eloquent testimony to their innate belief that the potential of a woman cannot be used up in mere household chores. From Mrs. Gaskell's pages one is familar with the figure of Emily kneading the dough in the Haworth kitchnett and reading a book propped against the fender. The sagas and legends in the creation of which they used to be so rapturously absorbed until late into the night, the day's work over, are clearly overlaid by a masculine bias, without any finicking effeminacy of any kind, so much so indeed that even the expert would be hard put to telling Branwell's hand from his sisters'.

The nom-de-plumes under which their books appeared–Currer, Ellis and Acton for Charlotte, Emily and Anne respectively were, appropriately enough, androgynous. Only recently has it been realized, and not yet quite realized, that men and women should be treated primarily as people and that not arbitrary assignment of jobs should be done on the basis of sex. The contemporaries of the Brontës, not so enlightened as they, however, thought differently. No less a man than Southey, on being approached by Charlotte for advice, wrote her such a stinker for presuming to trespass into the male territory. "Literature cannot be," pontificated the poet-laureate, "the business of a woman's life, and it ought not to be. The more she is engaged in her proper duties, the less leisure will she have for it, even as an accomplishment and a recreation."[2] That admonition, fortunately, did not produce the dampening effect that was intended.

What pandemonium greeted the publication of their works ! Here are some choice bouquets which they received : "Love in a kitchen is a favourite subject of the author of *Jane Eyre*."[3] G. H. Lewis, in whom she had confided, commented : "The grand function of woman is and must be maternity and this we regard not only as her distinctive characteristic and most enduring charm, but a high and holy office."[4] (This, by the way, called forth Charlotte's caustic retort : "I can be on my guard against my enemies but God deliver me from my friends."[5]) A biographer in search of material records his impression of the general hostility to them thus : "...if you mentioned the name of the Brontë in an average company the chances were in favour of your being met with an indignant snort from some one who protested that Charlotte's stories were a disgraceful libel upon the district, and that *Wuthering Heights* was a book so dreadful in its character that its author would only have met with her deserts had she been soundly whipped for writing it."[6] The cause of this animosity was that once their identity was known, people judged them more as women than as writers. Charlotte found it exasperating in the extreme that a literary critic should praise the book if written by a man and pronounce it odious if written by a woman. Her protest has a typically modernist ring in it : "To such critics I would say, 'To you I am neither man nor woman—I come before you as an author only. It is the sole standard by which you have a right to judge me'."[7]

Even Anne, the youngest and the quietest among them, could not forbear snubbing such critics as used double standards or demonstrated an unhealthy curiosity about the person behind the pen : "As to whether the name be real or fictitious, it cannot greatly signify to those who know him only by his works. As little, I should think, can it matter whether the writer so designated

is a man, or a woman.....If a book is a good one, it is so whatever the sex of the author may be."[8] This guessing game of the sex-obsessed critic reached its *reductio ad absurdum* when Emily was supplied with a lover of the name of Louis Parensell, which, curiously enough, turned out to be a misreading of "lover's Farewell", Charlotte's gloss on one of Emily's Poems.[9]

The question one would like to ask here is : Why should the reviewers of the Victorian era cut such fantastic capers ? The answer is ready at hand : the Brontës were rebelling against their milieu which was unmistakably male-dominated. What else could it be when the pious gathered in each family every day to sing hymns to inculcate not only humility but also servility in women. Sample this :

> "Ah, dire effect of female pride :
> How deep our mother's sin and wide,
> Through all her daughters spread ;
> Since first she plucked the mortal tree,
> Each woman would a goddess be
> In her Creator's stead".[10]

The Brontës in waging war against this kind of attitude naturally generated a lot of antagonism. They may be regarded as a paradigm in the English novel of those who arrive before their time. True, Blake, Shelley, Byron and other romantic poets had earlier adopted unconventional postures. But the bourgeois world of the novel had very little of the bohemian character about it. Now the Brontës were trying to give it that, with the result that the orthodox were filled with fear and dismay. The Brontës gave a serious jolt to the prevalent beliefs and assumptions among the Victorians as to what is and what is not proper for women.

The Brontë heroine is very different from the run-of-the-mill languishing female of the novel. Charlotte deprives her of her traditional share of good looks. She is deliberately made to appear plain, provincial and unprepossessing in order that the conception of a woman as an object of lust, a mere plaything or a sideboard ornament, may be effectively repudiated. None of them is shown like an ivy clinging to an oak, or conforming to the received view of what a girl should be like. For equality in marital relationship, there are few characters in the entire range of fictional literature comparable to Jane Eyre. This frail but indomitable women first flees from Rochester and later refuses St. John Rivers because both are domineering males and both pose a threat to her identity and integrity. To suggest that Jane decides not to marry Rochester because his first wife is still living sounds much too simple

and George Eliot's query as to why a woman, as rebellious as she, should have shown that kind of conservatism, remains unanswered. Although Charlotte causes Jane to attribute her decision to leave Thornfield once and for all to her conscience—perhaps it was a concession she had allowed to current ethical notions—the fact seems to be that Jane cannot reconcile herself to accepting an inferior position in her relationship with the wealthy Rochester. The idea of becoming the successor of the three poor girls with whom he had a liaison earlier is completely repugnant to her. She is convinced that "he would one day regard me with the same feeling which now in his mind desecrated their memory." The mad woman, therefore, may be regarded as "a projection of Jane."[11] Similarly, although St. John Rivers has certain good qualities, he is, nevertheless, anxious to establish his dominion over her. And to Jane's temperament submission of any sort is utterly foreign. When, finally, she returns to Rochester, it is she, rather than Rochester, who is the giver and protector. There has occurred such a thorough reversal in their fortunes.

Charlotte and Anne do not often typecast their women characters into traditional occupations or roles. Most of them venture out of home to make a living for themselves. The male ego, covering itself under the facade of solicitude, often tries to keep the women parasites. Charlotte has Crimsworth in *The Professor* say that he would like to act like the providence in respect of his beloved, feeding her and clothing her, as "God does the lilies of the field."[12] The greatest ambition of Francis and of Lucy Snowe in *Vilette* is to be installed in a seminary of their own. In like fashion, Agnes Grey, too, refuses to surrender her independence and keeps working under the most disheartening conditions. Helen in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* will not keep her head perennially bent in servitude to her depraved husband and will manage, as best she can, on her own.

There is no reason why certain characteristics like boldness, initiative, and assertiveness should not be praised in females, and conversely, qualities like gentleness, compassion, and sensitivity should not be praised in males. In fact this is what the authors are supposed to do to ensure equal treatment of the sexes.[13] The Brontë here is not all male any more than the Brontë heroine is all female. In *Shirley* this point becomes so apparent. The heroine is portrayed as handling successfully and competently a very streneous man-size job. Louis Moore, on the other hand, is obviously gifted with the sensibility and sensitivity of a woman, as is shown by his emotional outpourings in his diary. In contrast with them, we have Robert and Caroline—Helstone neither of whom is a "sympathetic" character. In both, Charlotte seems to be caricaturing the rigidly drawn stereotypes of man and woman.

She does not support the view that certain jobs are compatible with masculinity, others with feminity.

If one at all wished to talk of the difference between male and female in connection with *Wuthering Heights*, it could only be relevant to two groups of people : the Earnshaws and the Lyntons. These groups, as David Cecil has pointed out, respectively represent the principle of storm and the principle of calm.[14] The glory and the power of this novel is that it will for ever defy any single interpretation. However, what Emily does towards the end seems to be significant. Cathy manages to raise the uncouth and unlettered Hareton to her own level by a show of stern authority proper to an instructor. If Hareton makes a mistake he has been warned against earlier, Cathy threatens to pull his hair. Or, if his eyes impatiently wander from the page, they are recalled by a smart slap on the cheek. Surely, the war against the stereotypes based on sex has been carried to a point far and away from the Victorian's imagination.

The Brontës, it is only fair to concede, are not all of a piece. They were not doctrinaire and so, naturally, one discovers several inconsistencies (so much so, indeed, that one can make out a case for 'door-mat heroines'' in their works). But for their time, they had an astonishingly daring vision. Remember, the suffragist movement had not yet begun then and Gladstone had expressed his fear that the ballot box "would trespass upon their delicacy, their purity, their refinement, the elevation of their whole nature."[15] A critic, therefore, is not exaggerating when he sums up their achievement in these words : "The voice of free and insurgent woman first comes clearly into modern literature out of the Haworth parsonage."[16]

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SCHOOLS AND SCHOOLMASTERS IN DICKENS

Basudeo Sharma

That the novels of Charles Dickens have largely a social and educational background is supported by the large number of schools and schoolmasters that he has created in his novels. As there is no novel of Dickens without any child at its centre, *A Tale of Two Cities* being the solitary exception, so also a novel of Dickens without any school or schoolmaster in it is rarely to be found. School is the immediate object of concern and criticism in *Nicholas Nickelby*, *Dombey and Son* and *Hard Times*, and the school scenes are also very prominent in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, *David Copperfield* and *Our Mutual Friend*. Of over two dozen schools and shoolmasters in his books—more schools than any other novelist ever created—mention may be made of such of them as are very conspicuous :

1. Fagin and his School of young pickpockets.
2. Mr. Squeers and Dotheboys Hall.
3. Doctor Blimber's Establishment.
4. Mrs. Pipchin and her Infantine Boarding House.
5. Mr. Creakle and Salem House.
6. Mr. Pecksniff and his Architectural Boarding Institute.
7. Mr. Gradgrind and his Schoool of Fact.
8. Mr. Wopsle's great aunt's Evening School.
9. Mr. Bradley Headstone's Certificated Stipendary School.
10. Miss Twinkleton's Establishment.
11. Doctor Strong's Excellent Academy.
12. Betty Higden's Minding School.

In addition to these Schools, there are a number of other schools as are either incidentally mentioned, or fragmentarily drawn. Prominent among them are Mr. Marton's School, Ladies' Seminary of Miss Wackles, Miss Monflather's Boarding and Day Establishment, Mr. Cripples' Academy,

the Charity School, the Workhouse School, the Foundling Hospital School, and several others.

Fagin's school of young pickpockets in *Oliver Twist*, if a school at all, has an ominous significance for the nation where it exists. The real intention of Dickens in locating it at Fieldlane was to suggest that a place where no school could have been imagined, there existed a school such as Fagin's, and a kind of education was going on which needed a heart to realise its horror. Fagin's school is located at Fieldlane—a place hidden from the public eye, and overlooked by responsible people. A passing view of it may be had through the innocent vision of a child (Oliver) who was taken to it by Jack Dawkins :

"A dirtier or more wretched place he had never seen. The street was very narrow and muddy, and the air was impregnated with filthy odours. There were a good many small shops; but the only stock-in-trade appeared to be heaps of children, who, even at that time of night, were crawling in and out at the doors, or screaming from the inside"[1].

It is a school which has Fagin, a receiver of stolen goods, as its Dean, and the Artful Dodger and Charley Bates as its model pupils. Fagin's is a unique school; it has nothing to do with classics and grammar, no bothering about books at all. Here children were simply taught how they could be great men straightaway, if they had a will to be so and skill enough to move their fingers lightly. Here its Dean is shown giving practical lessons to Oliver, his new pal, in the light art of pickpocketting :

"Is my handkerchief hanging out of my pocket, my dear" said the Jew, stopping short.

"Yes, Sir", said Oliver.

"See if you can take it out, without my feeling it; as you saw them do, when we were at play this morning". .....

"Is it gone "? cried the Jew.

"Here it is, Sir", said Oliver, showing it in his hand.

"You're a clever boy, my dear", said the playful old gentlemen, patting Oliver on the hand approvingly.

"I never saw a sharper lad. Here's a shilling for you. If you go on, in this way, you'll be the greatest man of the time"[2].

Fagin's school is an ironical counterfoil to Bumble's starvation workhouse in *Oliver Twist*. Much of the satiric force in its portrayal lies in the difference between the two types of treatment that Oliver receives at these

two places. Oliver's reception at Fagin's quarter has so much warmth and familiarity in it as if he were the closest members of his family :

Dotheboys Hall of Mr. Squeers in *Nicholas Nickelby*, on the other hand, is the most abominable specimen of a school in Dickens. He claimed it to be a fair representation of the bloody Yorkshire Schools, especially one kept by William Shaw, which Dickens had an opportunity to see on a surprise visit to that place. Regarding the origin of this school Forster observes :

"He went down into Yorkshire with Mr. Hablot Brown to look up the cheap schools in that country to which public attention had been painfully drawn by a law case in the previous year ; which had before been notorious for cruelties committed in them, whereof he had heard as early as in his childish days ; and which he was bent upon destroying if he could.....He came back confirmed in his design, and in February set to work upon his first Chapter"[1].

The Yorkshire schools, like most of the institutions and practices Dickens attacked, were a scandal of long standing. Here illegitimate and unwanted children were sent on the plea of education, never to return. They charged little, were situated at far flung places in Yorkshire from where no child could ever dare to escape :

"At a time when travelling was slow and expensive, it was not easy for their families to visit them. This often made these schools the more attractive to their patrons, some of whom indeed, sent their boys to Yorkshire, with a quarter's fee in advance, and were never heard of again"[4].

But Dickens knew how to tell an unpleasant truth pleasntly. So, in the advertisement itself, made by Mr. Squeers in a London paper, he makes it clear why these schools were popular. Its attractive courses of studies and easy terms—'twenty guineas per annum, no extra, no vacations'—were a kind of bait to attract such parents and fake guardians as wanted to get rid of their fleshly encumbrances without any knowledge to the world :

"Education : At Mr. Wackford Squeer's Academy, Dotheboys Hall, at the delightful village of Dotheboys, near Greta Bridge in Yorkshire. Youth are boarded, clothed, booked, furnished with pocket money, provided with all necessaries, instructed in all languages, living and dead, mathematics, Orthography, Geometry, Astronomy, Trigonometry, the use of the globes, Algebra, single stick, (if required), Writing, Arithmetic, fortification, and every other branch of classical literature. Terms, Twenty guineas per annum. No extras. No vacations, and diet unparalleled"[5].

Dotheboys Hall was merely an apology for a School. There was none of the noise and clamour of a school here; none of its boisterous play, or hearty mirth. Passage after passage follows in the book which creates a sense of horror and nausea in the minds of readers at the horrible conditions prevailing there, which Nickleby had a chance to see from close quarters :

"Pale and haggard faces, lank and bony figures, children with the countenances of the old man, deformities with irons upon their limbs, boys of stunted growth, and others whose long meagre legs would hardly bear their stooping bodies, all crowded on view together.....on whom the sins of their frail parents had descended"[6].

And, amid this den, is placed Smike, the illegitimate son of Ralph Nickleby, bearing blows after stripes, and stripes after blows, morning, noon, and night. But, towards the end, as Dickens and his readers would have liked it, Mr. Squeers is exposed and brought to book, Dotheboys Hall is demolished, Smike is released, but the problem remains partly unsolved. Before closing the book Dickens paints a truly pathetic scene to suggest where the malady lay. Among the boarders of the demolished school, there were still a few children as knew no home other than that of Mr. Squeers :

"There were a few timid young children who, miserable as they had been, and many as were the tears they had shed in the wretched school, still knew no other home.....which made them weep when the bolder spirits fled"[7].

With Doctor Blimber's Establishment in *Dombey and Son*, we come to a new type of School in Dickens. Here children were neither starved nor beaten, but it was no better all the same. It was the target of Dicken's attack chiefly for the mental torture that it imposed upon its pupils.

"Doctor Blimber's Establishment was a great hothouse, in which there was a forcing apparatus incessantly at work. All the boys blew before their time.....Nature was of no consequenc at all. No matter what a young gentleman was intended to bear, Doctor Blimber made him bear to pattern, somehow or other"[8].

Its rich symbolical description is an index of the maturity that Dickens had gained in style. At Doctor Blimber's the torture was psychic, and hence 'hothouse' is the symbol for it. According to Forster, *Dombey and Son* is a good-natured exposure of the forcing system, and its fruits, as useful as the sterner revelation in *Nicholas Nickleby*. Here the very system is more at fault than the individual practising it. Doctor Blimber is less an individual than an agent of a system which regarded childhood as a tiresome stage of life and

hoped to pass it as hurriedly as possible. Mr. Dombey who wanted his only son, Paul, to be moulded into a true economic man like himself, and 'was impatient to advance into the future and to hurry over the intervening passage of his history' is here shown submitting his son to Doctor Blimber with this end in view :

"Ha ! said Doctor Blimber, shall we make a man of him?" "Do you hear, Paul"? added Mr. Dombey, Paul being silent.

"Shall we make a man of him"? repeated the Doctor.

"I had rather be a child", replied Paul.

"Indeed" ! said the Doctor, "Why"[9].

At this school, solemn and grave like a monastery—a forbidden place for all kinds of mirth and glee...is placed Paul, a bright and promising infant, to be made into a man as early as possible. But, with repeated doses of classics and grammar, day and night, he breaks down in a delirious state of mind :

"Mama is like you, Floy, I know her by the face. But tell them that the print upon the stairs at school is not divine enough. The light about the head is shining on me as I go[10] !

The comic genius of Dickens is at his best in *Dombey and Son*, and the school portion of the book reveals Dicken's abhorrence of the forcing system of education :

"Under the forcing system, a young gentleman usually took leave of his spirits in three weeks. He had all the cares of the world on his head in three months. He conceived bitter sentiments against his parents or guardians in four; he was an old misanthrope, in five ... and at the end of the first twelve months had arrived at the conclusion, from which he never afterwards departed, that all the fancies of the poets, and lessons of the sages, were a mere collection of words and grammar, and no other meaning in the world"[11].

The Infantine Boarding House of Mrs. Pipchin in *Dombey and Son* is a feminine counterpart of the school of Doctor Blimber. It is a kind of preparatory school which took care of a child from early years to his school-going age. It is from this school that Paul is taken to Doctor Blimber's Establishment at the advice of its famous directress. Mrs. Pipchin, too, was a follower of the forcing system of education, and the secret of her management was not to encourage a child's mind to develop and expand itself like a young flower, but to open it by force like an oyster :

"She was generally spoken of as a great manager of children: and the secret of her management was to given them everything that they didn't like, and nothing that they did....The Castle of this ogress and child-queller was in a steep bye-street at Brighton; where the soil was more than usually chalky, flinty and sterile"[12].

Here 'castle' is the symbol for the school and 'ogress' for its directress. The physical suggests the emotional : the celebrated Mr. Pipchin with her mottled face, like a bad marble, black dress, hard grey eyes, and the chalky, flinty, sterile soil of the place, are an embodiment of the sterility inherent in the system. Here Paul's encounter with her is recorded by Dickens with a fine sense of humour and satire :

"Well, Sir", said Mrs. Pipchin to Paul, "how do you think you shall like me"?

"I don't think I shall like you at all" replied Paul, "I want to go away. Thisn't my house".

"No. It's mine", retorted Mrs. Pipchin.

"It's a very nasty one", said Paul[13].

Though Paul in his first encounter renders her flat, yet the famous 'child-queller' knew where this little prodigy of the ambitious father could be cut to size :

"Upon the Doctor's door-steps one day, Paul stood with a fluttering heart....and Mrs. Pipchin hovered behind the victim, with her sable plumage and her hooked beak, like a bird of ill-omen"[14].

No less significant than any school in Dickens is the School of Fact in *Hard Times*. It is a typical Benthamatite school, with Mr. Gradgrind as its prophet, and Mr. Choakumchild as his disciple. Everything in this school corresponds to its system; and nothing is ever permitted to transgress or distort its pattern of factual proportion. The school building is a 'plain, monotonous vault' Choakumchild 'a boiling store of unassorted knowledge' and his pupils—Tom, Bitzer, Louis and Sissy—are mere fleshy stuff in his eyes to be shaped into useful human materials :

"Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts : nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, Sir"[15].

In the passage quoted above, the stress on principle, use of capital 'F' with facts, and its repetition five time in a short, single paragraph: the precise, balanced, and antithetical structure of sentences; and its beginning and end with Facts, give to it the authority of a gospel as it were.

In the first scene both Mr. Gradgrind and M. Choakumchild are shown filtering the fanciful minds of their pupils with purgatory doses of facts. Sissy Jupe is asked her name, and she calls herslf Sissy. She is hence rebuked by Mr. Gradgrind for her deviation from the track of facts :

"Who is that girl"?

"Sissy Jupe, Sir" explained number Twenty.

"Sissy is not a name", said Mr. Gradgrind, "Don't call yourself Sissy. Call yourself Cecilia"[16].

Hard Times, to quote F. R. Leavis, is 'a moral fable', and the characters in it have a deeper symbolical meaning. Mr. Gradgrind, for example, stands for utilitarianism, Mr. Choakumchild for diabolic knowledge, Sleary, the horsekeeper for love, and Sissy for 'wisdom of the babes and sucklings'. The fate of its pupils symbolises the futility of the utilitarian philosophy. Although educated in the school of Fact, Tom's descent into debt and bank robbery, and Louisa's elopement with Harthhouse, represent the defeat of its ideal. With Louisa's retort to her father the utter futility of the system is brutally exposed :

"All that I know is, your philosophy, and your teaching will not save me. Now, father, you have brought me to this. Save me by some other means" ![17].

Towards the end Mr. Gradgrind, to his utter shock and despair, finds 'the pride of his heart and the triumph of his system lying at his feet'. The collapse of the system symbolises the triumph of feeling over fact, of love over selfishness, of Carlyle and Ruskin over Bentham and Adam Smith.

The Dames' Schools in Dickens, though as many in number as the boys schools, are, with a few exceptions, fragmentarily drawn. They were so called for being run by elderly women. They were well attended, though teaching was very nominal there. For Dickens the humorist, the ignorance and physical infirmities of these female teachers was a good subject for caricature and laugther. Here is an account of such an evening school, run by Mr. Wopsle's great aunt, which Pip attended:

"The pupils ate apples and put straws down one another's backs, until

Mr. Wopsle's great aunt collected her energies, and made an indiscriminate totter at them with a birch-rod. After receiving the charge with every mark of derision, the pupils formed in line and buzzingly passed a ragged book from hand to hand....As soon as this volume began to circulate, Mr. Wopsle's great aunt fell into a state of coma, arising either from sleep or a rheumatic paraxysm. The pupils then entered among themselves upon a competitive examination on the subject of books, with the view of ascertaining who could tread the hardest npon whose toes''[18].

Here a point to mark is that most of the schools and schoolmasters in Dickens are bad schools and bad schoolmasters, noted for one kind of cruelty or the other. Doctor Strong's Academy in *David Copperfield* is the single and solitary example of a good school in Dickens, and it has been called a kind of wishfulfilment by Edgar Johnson :

"Doctor Strong's school at Canterbury, on the other hand, is..... the embodiment of all that passionate desire for educatin with which the little labouring hind in the blacking ware-house had so desperately wept as he felt crushed within his breast all his early hopes of growing to be a learned and distinguished man''[19].

Dickens had little interest in the famous public schools because they were a few in number. He was chiefly interested in the schools which were meant for the children of common people. He highlighted them in his novels for they touched the poor, and were utterly neglected. Most of the schools in his novels are private boarding schools, run by the selfish individuals, parish authorities, and charitable societies. Whereas some of them are noted for the physical cruelties practised there, others are to be condemned for the mental torture that they imposed upon theit pupils. The two types of schools and schoolmasters are, according to Dickens, eqully undesirable, and hence objects of his ridicule and laughter. The onomatopoeic names and descriptions given to them best speak out his mind. He thought they were 'murdering the innocent' and wrecking the very potential base of the nation, as Eugene in *Our Mutual Friend* remarks :

"Does it occur to you that the boys of Merry England will begin to deteriorate in an educational light if this lasts long''?[20].

Dickens wanted more schools and better schools. His concern for education was closely allied to his concern for preventing crime and social unrest in the country :

"It is not cold-blooded cruelty, but blockheaded ignorance against which

Dickens has to fight over the whole ground of education ... He knew that the vices of society could for the most part be traced to these bad beginnings. A leader in this as in many other directions, be taught his readers to think much of children just at the time when England had especial need of an educational awakening"[21].

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SUN-SET

N. Mohanty

(1)

That's how the wood-cutters went
into the woods and didn't return
and their women waited weeping
and shed vermillion, broke bangles
weeping; their children
grew afraid of the tigers
of the leaping darkness beyond the sun-set.

(2)

My granny swims in my eyes
and her stories of lone-kings
and half-deserted queens
seem to bear no end.
Our family album
under the wistful lantern
excites my pride and emotion;
My great-grand-father
swimming a race like fish;
my uncle
fighting a grim duel with the tiger;
our old family servant, Natabar
catching fishes in rapturous river;
my grand-father
sleeping crazily on quiet flowers
and my granny approaching slowly
weeping, halting and weeping.

(3)

I'm afraid of the sun-set
of the still voice of the night.
My time-trodden toys twinkle
their eyes; perhaps, they'd
sleep now drinking milk.

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THRILLER IN CONRAD'S HEART OF DARKNESS

M. Y. Khan

Let us first examine the salient features of the genre popularly known as 'thriller'. Many critics ask sardonically enough, "By what species of courtesy can we call thrillers literature ?"; while others grudgingly condescend to call thrillers, only cheap entertainment literature offering no serious criticism of life. Thrillers have also been stigmatized as immoral, and thriller writers have been branded as mercenaries. Thrillers are also criticized on the ground that the incidents and characters in them are far removed from reality and hence they are contemptuously dismissed as escapist literature inspired by wish-fulfilment. Thrillers, it is alleged, are mainly stories of action with little scope for characterization, written with a complete absence of any literary merit or style. Once the mystery is disclosed, the interest is lost, and re-reading is out of question. Lastly, critics debunk thrillers as an ephemeral and moribund form of fiction which has exhausted all possibilities of subject-matter and technique.

Fiction, like the Kingdom of Heaven, has many Mansions, and considered as a separate and distinct species of writing, the thriller possesses merit and affords pleasure. To look for the qualities of a Fielding in the thrillers is like demanding mangoes of the grape vine.

It seems to me that the thriller has a greater bearing on the art of the serious novel than many critics would willingly concede. The field of thriller literature, long viewed as uninteresting and barren, has gradually come to be recognized as of distinct artistic and literary importance, and is undergoing a a new and more favourable critical survey. Today the object of a few perceptive critics has been to outline its origins and influences : to trace its manifestations and its gradual rise, to estimate its real significance, and evaluate

its structure and characteristics to discover if it may be justified as something fundamental and authentic in fiction.

The thriller definitely reveals the quintessence of fiction. Its potentialities can never be questioned. It was the productive seed—the thriller—that gave rise to Conrad's immortal fiction. Its properties received artistic touches at his hands in his major novels and short stories. The thriller writer's stray suggestions and use of crude properties were all developed by Conrad and made to yield maximum results.

I think that the thriller comes of age in Conrad, growing from the cheap nightmare violence of the dime novels into powerful fiction—from a gripping tale into a story which probes deep into human souls. Conrad seems to preach the validity and worthiness of the thriller as an art. One may say that Conrad took the thriller tradition and stretched its dimensions into the moral field. In a non-formal sense. he is something of an innovator. He worked the outdoor-action-adventure field on a higher level or merit.

To demonstrate the relationship between the thriller and serious fiction, I propose to examine Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, and the first point I propose to take up is that of technique. Technique is simply a means to an end, a requisite skill for achieving something, a body of instrumentation. It has no entity of its own : an isolated technical device has no worth as such. Thus, while evaluating the technique of a novel we shall have to first discover what the novel is about or what the novelist wants to say in his novel. Percy Lubbock refers to this when he says : "A subject, one and whole, and irreducible- a novel cannot begin to take shape till it has this for its support."[1]

Now, what does Conrad intened to say in *Heart of Darkness* ? Walter Allen argues that our "universe is not merely indifferent to man, it is positively hostile to him. It will, given the opportunity, always strive to break him; and when it does this as in *Heart of Darkness*, it becomes the symbol of evil and calls out to the evil in men's hearts, to what Marlow calls the Irrational."[2] Albert J. Guerard thinks that "the story is not primarily about Kurtz or about the brutality of Belgian officials, but about Marlow its narrator."[3] It seems to D. C. R. A. Goonetilleke that Marlow "is mainly a vehicle through which Conrad conveys the entanglements of Western civilization and primitive culture."[4] C. B. Cox writes : "James Guetti's *The Limits of Metaphor* includes a brilliant analysis of *Heart of Darkness*. He points out that the title itself can be interpreted in two different ways. Heart of Darkness may suggest that the wilderness has a heart, which the reader, guided by Marlow, may discover. At the centre of existence we may find the

secret meaning of the pilgrimage. But Heart of Darkness may also imply that the real darkness is in the heart, and that as we journey from the known to the unknown, we are led towards an ultimate darkness, a condition of meaninglessness, which negates all civilized values..... As in *Lord Jim*, the quest is both a search for moral enlightenment and an investigation into the appropriateness of aesthetic forms."[5] Bernard C. Meyer says : "For Douglas Hewitt *Heart of Darkness* is a typical example of Conrad's ability to 'make an appeal at two different levels : the natural and the symbolical' (p. 14). Thus, when telling his audience of the effect upon him of the country and of Kurtz, Marlow says : 'It was the furthest....experience'. Conrad is alluding to a voyage 'both into the impenetrable darkness of Africa and into the darkness of Marlow's thoughts....We know that what Marlow finds in the heart of the African continent is a darkness which every man may be forced to meet within himself' (p. 26)."[6] Jocelyn Baines observes : "*Heart of Darkness*, with its tone of outraged humanism and its consciousness of evil.....Conrad's Congo experience devastatingly exposed the cleavage between human pretensions and practice, a consciousness of which underlies Conrad's philosophy of life."[7] F. R. Leavis, R. L. Megros, Philip Freund, Tonny Tanner, Raymond Williams, and many writers on this story have concentrated on the sense of moral outrage. One may say that a feeling of moral confrontation with evil is exhibited in this masterpiece.

Heart of Darkness is a moral fable. The work illustrates this concept. Regarding it, Arnold Kettle rightly points out : "Marlow, sailing up the Congo to penetrate the heart of darkness, is filled not only with horror, but with human indignation...The death of Kurtz,....is.....a dreadful, ironic warning to man's capacity to submit to evil, concretely associated in this case with colonial robbery."[8]

In *Heart of Darkness* Conrad's special moral vision is habitually implicated with the life of action. This novella represents the most daring attempt to make the thriller a vehicle for serious literary experimentation; and it stands at the headwaters of the contemporary serious thriller.

Ordinarily it is believed that within the compass of a thriller, there is little or no scope for characterization, for a thriller is regarded as a story of plot or action rather than of character. A close reading of *Heart of Darkness* in which this fictional form is powerfully alive has, however, revealed the fact that Conrad too adopts the same methods of character delineation employed by his compeers in other types of fiction. But whereas the methods are identical, the aims are different. In *Heart of Darkness* almost all means

of character portrayal are made subservient to the all-important object of action-cum-moral vision. The elements of the thriller (either a Gothic romance or a ghost story or a 'whodunit' or a spy novel)—cruelty, betrayal, pursuit and physical excitement —remain with Conrad means of contacting and communicating deeper moral perplexities. This complex configuration persists through the bulk of *Heart of Darkness*. The adjustments between the materials of a thriller and profound moral perplexities continue to be Conrad's characteristic preoccupation here. He is a highly modern writer in the best sense; that is, he uses the ingredients of the thriller to serve the serious novelist's unchanging purpose. Indeed, *Heart of Darkness* with its dramatic plotting and penetrating characterization has altered thrills into deeper kinds of moral perils.

The Gothic romance is one of the sub-categories of the thriller. The Gothic novelists contributed some vital components of Conrad's fiction. The spirit of Gothic romance and its setting, sloughed their gross husk and emerged transformed into the finer elements of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. No attempt has been made so for to bring out the actual process of transformation, or span the artistic distance between the finished product and its raw material. The intermediate stages of evolution have received no attention.

The contribution of the Gothic romance to Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* was not merely a sense of structure, but also a certain spirit of curiosity before the mystery of things. In structure the 'Gothic' method of dramatic suspense was made to blend with the spirit of realism. Conrad is indebted to the technique and devices of Gothic fiction : *Heart of Darkness* was patterned and modelled after the demoded species.

Conrad in *Heart of Darkness* harks back to the sources of terror, and once again revives the latent feelings of awe, wonder, and fear, relying in part on the terror-motif for their impressiveness. Also the streak of morbid-grotesque-the use of horrible and gruesome detail—lingers as an inheritance of Gothic in Conrad's fiction. The unpleasant and diseased realism of the Schauer-Romantiks, their veritable mania for the element of the gory, which had quickened the appetite for jaded sensation inspired the pathologic and ghastly in *Heart of Darkness*.

In this novella Conrad creates striking effects by utilizing the devices of Mrs. Radcliffe. He presents the amazing and terrible character of Kurtz. The picture of the dark Congo forest provides a background for the expression of tense human feelings. The shadow of Kurts's personality has a demonic

power. Conrad never trifles with emotion nor makes use of supernatural elements to heighten the tension. They present the terrors of actual reality and life.

Conrad shows an unmistakable resemblance to Mrs. Radcliffe and her technique. He has a deep interest in morbid psychology, and Kurtz illustrates the workings of the human brain under great emotional stress. Psychological interest produces a hypnotic effect, and creates in the readers a mood of awe-struck horror.

Conrad is 'Gothic' in his treatment of the mysterious. In *Heart of Darkness* he creates a mysterious atmosphere of foreboding and evokes the terrors of an invisible world, utilizing soul-quaking embodiments of mortal dread. The mystery of Death exerts a strong fascination over his mind. And he extends his art to the domain of physical horrors.

An avowed apostle of the morbid, Conrad raises terror to tragic heights, and produces dramatic and powerful effects by a rigid economy of effort without any extravagant or superfluous touches. The successfully diffused atmosphere of creepiness in *Heart of Darkness* is definitely inspired by Mrs. Radcliffe's deserted abbeys and the opening of Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer*. The outline of this work is distinct, the impressions swift and deep. Conrad adds 'psychology' to the old 'Gothic' raw material, and captures the airy, gossamer filaments of sensatiens by touching upon obscure feelings of psychic dread.

The dramatic way of characterization is to let the character gradually exhibit his qualities through his actions and speeches with, of course, the help of other characters and their actions and speeches. This is Conrad's way in *Heart of Darkness*. The Gothic novelists were the first to perceive and emphasize the dramatic method, and Conrad adopted it from them, as also the use of suspense in *Heart of Darkness*.

Underneath the paraphernalia of medieval castles and persecuted maidens, the core of Gothic is terror through incomprehension. It is this that Conrad has borrowed, and incorporated into the structure of his Congo tale. Here it would be worthwhile to point out that the chosen territory of the Gothic romance, later of the horror story and science fiction, is the fringe of the unknown.

In both the Gothic romance and *Heart of Darkness* the conception of the titanic in character is paralleled by the conception of the titanic in nature. The dark forest atmosphere tinged with prevailing misty melancholy, a

romantic richness of colour and a persistent suggestion of dim and sweeping vastness—all derive from Gothic settings.

Conrad's prose in *Heart of Darkness* is at times coloured with a morbid relish for the ghastly, and death's-head allusions; charnel-house metaphors, and fragments of cadavers are scattered throughout the novella. His vocabulary consists of quite a few words like 'ghosts', 'shades', 'tombs', and 'agony'—words often used in a Gothic romance.

The Gothic romance rises in a new splendour, lighted with new glories, rejuvenated and purified in *Heart of Darkness*. Although its old garments have been cast aside, the same spirit is reincarnate in a new form in this short novel. In it the Gothic romance remains a vital thing, a potential force. Conrad here draws on diverse materials, assembles the scattered hints, and shapes them with his characteristic method in order to put his theme across. It is, however, difficult to distinguish how far these transpositions into *Heart of Darkness* are deliberate, and how far an unconscious alchemy of memory.

The mark of the true thriller, as well as a good story, is its power to grip. A writer of true spy yarns, such as Fleming, has a remarkable talent for keeping the action moving fast and furiously; and his climaxes (until you get to know his plotting) are packed with suspense and surprise-melodramatic beyond belief. And the writer gives his customers plenty of mayhem and murder, sex and sadism. The distinction between the spy thriller and the fiction that employs its technical devices to deepen or sharpen an awareness of the risks and perplexities of existence in the moral sense can be effectively demonstrated by comparing the spy yarns of Fleming, le Carre, and Allan Prior with *Heart of Darkness*. The ingredients of the spy thriller are used by Conrad in his Congo tale as tools, not only for sustaining the reader's interest, but also for generating the ironies essential to his view of man's condition, and sharpening his awareness of character motivation.

Ghost stories are always highly dramatic and fear is the basic emotion in all weird fiction. Conrad in *Heart of Darkness* is a master of hints or suggestions, gloom, and weird lights. There are images of excruciating pain, convulsive throbs, and intervals of death-like, insupportable sickness. These horrors comprise a realistic, feverish dream of human existence. The narrative has a sombre, dreary power. And the incidents come in quick kaleidoscopic succession, like the disjointed phases of a delirium or nightmare. All this is deeply reminiscent of the ghost story, a sub-category of the thriller. However, the various ingredients of the ghost story made use of in *Heart of Darkness* are flavoured with a certain individuality.

Suspense underlies the atmosphere of uncertainty and foreboding in *Heart of Darkness*. Here suspense goes much deeper than the level of crime and adventure; it is transmuted into a sense of characters and circumstances. The quality of suspense and fear in many a passage in Conrad's Congo tale has all the immediacy of human involvement with death, violence and mystery, such as any thriller usually provides. But it is slightly in excess, the hysteria indicating that the unbearable suspense is very nearly a mystery of higher order.

Perhaps the one basic ingredient of the thriller which Conrad seems to have adopted in *Heart of Darkness* is the action of the man on the run, a fugitive hunted by his own sense of guilt. Kurtz is a fugitive all the time running away from life, love, and commitments.

Lastly, a patent thriller and a novella concerned with good and evil like *Heart of Darkness* share the same continuum of experience. Both begin in suspense and violence and end in questions concerning ultimate mysteries of existence. To conclude, Conrad employs the stock ingredients of the thriller in *Heart of Darkness* but uses a more intellectual and critical approach and theme. Conrad, a mainstream writer, has found in the structural techniques of the thriller a valuably solid core to shape his fiction round. The subject will bear more thorough investigation.

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THE BLASTING

Siddheshwar Pande

Come,
plant—dynamite in my veins,
dig deep into my heart,
and when all is done
make your generator work :

In a splendid view
of the successful blasting
watch through the smoke
my shattered self—
blown by the spark ;
hear the jazz of my cracking,
and dance
with the whirling pieces
of the crag.

Then, relaxed
in your joyful moments of creation
lift up your eyes
to the God's abode,
and pray
my wounds heal fast ;
Even rocky veins
with no sap nor blood in them,
do feel the smarting pain of blast.

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THE PATTERN OF HOPE AND FEAR IN MARKANDAYA'S NECTAR IN A SIEVE

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Coleridge's quotation "Work without hope draws nectar in a sieve/And hope without an object cannot live" points out to a basic pattern of hope and fear which by its rhythmic movements unites all the incidents of the novel and takes it to its inevitable conclusion. Rukmani talks about it in the middle of the novel :

> Hope and fear. Twin forces that tugged at us first in one direction and then in another, and which was the stronger no one could say. Of the latter we never spoke, but it was always with us. Fear, constant companion of the peasant. Hunger, ever at hand to jog his elbow should he relax. Despair, ready to engulf him should he falter. Fear, fear of the dark future; fear of the sharpness of hunger; fear of blackness of death.*

The pattern begins at Rukmani's own native place where her three elder sisters had taken all the dowry her parents could afford, leaving practically nothing for her, and, consequently, her hope of having a grand wedding is shaken. The announcement of her eldest brother that a village headman happens to be no longer a man of consequence makes Rukmani feel "frightened" that the absence of dowry and of her own beauty may mean a poor bridegroom who, finally, turns out to be Nathan—a tenant farmer far below her socio-economic standing. The dim prospect of a happy conjugal life arouses her fears but Rukmani sustains herself by consoling that her mother had done the best under the given circumstances.

It is this pattern of steadying of spirits after initial rise and fall, a near-equillibrium after extreme oscillations, like that of a needle on a weighing scale that swings to the right and the left a number of times before steadying

itself in between. The pattern works well not only in the whole novel but within chapters, and sometime within the same paragraph. The pattern we have seen in the foregoing paragraph is repeated on a larger scale immediately after Rukmani's marriage. Her sense of shame on feeling sick and the fear of living it down, the mud hut and the garland of dry mango leaves make her so nervous that she sinks down with a cramp in her leg. Realizing that her spirits are too low, and that she is frightened, Nathan injects a heavy dose of hope that within a few years they could buy a house such as her father had. The dose of hope steadies her spirits and she realizes : "It suits me quite well to live here" (p. 10).

Associated with the mud hut is the land on which her hope and happiness depend. Whenever Rukmani's spirits are drooping, Nathan raises them again by reminding her of the fertile land and its produce—and hence the help of nature as if the human agency has not been adequate to administer this periodic dose of hope and consolation in a life punctuated by fear and hopelessness. Thus the land merges into nature to become a concrete manifestation of some impersonal force to make her happy or miserable, to arouse hopes or fears as it wishes. Here the beautiful land, green fields and the ripening grains come handy to Nathan to console her : "Such harvests as this and you shall not want for anything" (p. 10). By feeding her with the hope of a rich harvest, he coaxes Rukmani out "into the sunlight" (p. 73).

To Rukmani whose concept of life is very simple and elemental, it does not require much to be happy :

> While the sun shines on you and the fields are green and beautiful to the eye, and your husband sees beauty in you which no one has seen before, and you have a good store of grain laid away for hard times, a roof over you and a sweet stirring in your body, what more can a woman ask for ? My heart sang and my feet were light as I went about my work, getting up at sunrise and going to sleep content. Peace and quiet were ours (p. 13).

Thus by repetition, Markandaya reinforces the pattern of hope and fear which is what life itself is. At both the places, it is Nathan who comes as a steadying agent, an equalizer. One cannot but feel him associated with Lord Krishna—the husband of Rukmani—who appears to play a similar role in steadying the agitated spirits of Arjun in the *Bhagvadgita*. Nathan's mere words pacify Rukmani so much that she feels happy to have married beneath her, for none could have had a finer man than him—a man of patience and telerance who is all praise for her little successes.

The image of Nathan as a man who comes to equalize the fluctuating spirits of Rukmani is stressed further in his act of cutting and burying a cobra which was a concrete manifestation of her fear and from which she had run "screeching with fear" (p. 18). Earlier to that his mere presence had made her "waters of panic receding" (p. 18). Touching the cobra was undesirable for a woman who, being pregnant, had within her a seed of hope and it was natural for her to run away from it in panic.

The mud hut along with the land had begun to objectify the happiness of the farmer couple but not for long. Soon fears assail them that the harvest may not be good due to the failure of rains. The sky becomes cruel, cloudless, calm, "deadly beautiful", unconcerned with human beings. The fears and hopes of others are voiced in two words "Perhaps tomorrow" and yet there are no rains. Nathan, however, still has "a faint spark of hope" (p. 76) which refuses to die. But the absence of rain kills the crops as well as their hopes. Sivaji threatens to give the land to some one else if the rent is not paid—the land that represents Nathan's life and home; it is everything. Its threatened deprivation fills him with fears and he asks : "Where would we go ? How would we live ?" (p. 77) They sell pots, vessels, trunk, clothes, pulses, chillies to save it because "if the land is gone our livelihood is gone, and we must thenceforth wander like jackals" (p. 78). This turns out to be true when much later he dies in the temple yearning in vain to be close to his soil.

When the drought mercilessly scorches everything, killing plants and shrivelling their hopes, the arrival of rains brings new hopes, sprouts the seeds and brings out tender shoots. Soon the planted seedlings grow into a thick green field which contains their future and hope.

But even at this juncture, there is no real steadying of spirits, no peace and satisfaction. There is still sometime before the paddy is harvested and still time for the hope and fear to play their game of hide-and-seek, building up a suspense so essential for a successful work of art. Rukmani's dried-fish stocks come to an end. The rice would not last beyond twenty four days. The hungry husband in a nightmare fears losing all paddy but his fears are dispelled by Rukmani. On top of it the fear of Kunthi exposing Nathan and implicating Rukmani makes them part with a little of rice, but when each one confesses and explains, the fear is lifted and for sometime peace descends over them.

The fears, however, loom large on the horizen, now in the form of tannery, threatening their land and all that it stands for—home and happiness

of the family. The tannery owners want to acquire the land which had been with Nathan for thirty years. Nathan voices his as well as his wife's fears, "Where are we to go ? What shall we do ?" (p. 135) Days of hopes as of fears are usual for those who are dependent on the changing moods of the land. But the land continues to represent hope, even when it yields nothing. Once it is taken away, Nathan's being becomes "full of the husks despair, dry, lifeless" (p. 136).

With the land gone, Nathan has to strike his roots elsewhere and in his quest for a new home, he decides to go to Murugan, hopeful of being welcome though no less fearful that he "cannot live except by the land," for he has no other knowledge or skill. Nathan and Rukmani leave the village with their belongings and money only to lose them on the way. Their quest for a new home with their son Murugan ends in failure. The only thing that sustains them at the temple on their way back is the hope of land with its green fields and the ripe, rustling paddy, with clear skies and the singing birds. Correspondingly, their fear of the city also grows; "Better to starve where we were bred than live here" (p. 168) becomes a cry of a frustrated, tortured soul. Their not having cartfare for the return journey and Rukmani's meagre earning by writing letters make them feel uneasy that they might remain stranded on the way. Added to these difficulties are Nathan's rheumatism and fever. At a time when their spirits are at their lowest ebb, their work at the stone quarry proves somewhat remunerative, reviving their hope. Nathan cries in jubilation, "We shall soon be home" (p. 176).

But Nathan has fever. Nature, far from consoling and bringing them happiness, brings only depression. It is the same nature which had brought them a sense of happiness in Chapters 1, 2 and 3, the same that had built up a wave of hope and fear afterwards, and had become finally a retarding force. The pattern of hope and fear which Markandaya had woven into the novel is quite operative now in the depiction of nature as if it represented some cosmic powers—constructive and destructive. Rukmani had expressed her view of nature :

> Nature is like a wild animal that you have trained to work for you. So long as you are vigilant and walk warily with thought and care, so long will it give you its aid; but look away for an instant, be heedless or forgetful and it has you by the throat (p. 43).

The incessant rains, the storm, lightning and thunder strike the coconut palms, destroy the fields, batter shoots and vines, and leave disaster and desolation. Dead dogs, cats and rats clutter the roadside. The drums of calamity

deprive her of her sleep by making her aware of "the mighty impotence of our human endeavour" (p. 47). She fears "a vast pervading doom" and her own disaster. Added to these are the fears of rise in prices and the threatened starvation of the family. The hope remains that the little rice they have purchased will last "until times are better" (p.47).

It is here that Kenny comes as a retarding force, interjecting a sense of realism and sanity, attempting to make holes unsuccessfully in their excessive faith and hope and their blindness to reality. There is something in Hinduism which makes a man look high with excessive faith in God even in the face of utter disaster. "Times are better, times are better," Kenny cries in utter despair. "Times will not be better for many months. Meanwhile you will suffer and die, you meek suffering fools." (p. 47). This proves to be a voice in wilderness because the couple remains unaffected. He could move them to an optimistic view of life, and not to the pessimistic. So much faith have they in God that the near-destruction of their paddy and their hard survival fail to make them disbelieve in God. With uplifted spirits they wait for the next sowing. The storm and rain may take all the harvest they had but not their dream—delightful, orderly and satisfying—the kind of dream of land Lennie and George had in Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, inaccesible, elusive, still better and more consoling than the scene of devastation.

At the temple, the rains, however, make Rukmani fear of an irreparable damage. It is the same rain that has defeated the "lion-hearted" Puli, the same that had put out the flare on top of the temple, the same that now put the light out of Nathan's eyes. At a time when Rukmani's heart is at its lowest ebb, there is no Kenny to lift it. Nathan had given a hint before his death, the hint of living in his children but that does not go far. If at all some equanimity is restored, some peace and satisfaction is provided, it is in reaching home and in hearing Selvam's words "We shall manage" (p. 189).

Associated with the land and nature are their sons in whom their hope and happiness lay. Markandaya shows her great artistic skill by incorporating the pattern of hope and fear not only in incidents but also in characters. The same hopes and fears that had raised the amplitude of the spirits of Nathan and Rukmani now become operative in their sons as generative and receptive forces—generative when they cause these feelings in others and receptive when they are at the receiving end. Arjun and Thambi arouse Nathan's hopes because under him they are trained in the technique of agriculture in which he had no master. But the tannery comes here too to objectify dangers, a disease to blight the hope. The sons work only once a

day on the land; for the rest they work at the tannery w here eventually they have trouble, when they demand and hope for more wages and get instead their lunch break curtailed. It was then that Rukmani realized the tannery to be a stone tossed into the calm lake of their lives. Her sons lose their jobs and cause economic difficulties to the parents. They go to Ceylon. The fear of the distant country, the fear of employers breaking their promise—all the fears that Rukmani harbours are dispelled by her sons so that the bigger fear that her sons might leave them arises. Then Murugan goes to the city and Selvam begins to work with Kenny at the hospital, neglecting the land. The hearts of the couple are anguished with the fears that they might not see their sons again, creating a tragic intensity approaching to that in J. M. Synge's *Riders to the Sea*. The worst fear comes when Raja's blood-smeared dead body is brought home and is intensified further by the callousness of the tannery men who come to tell her that she could claim no compensation for her son's death and that she might be better off with one mouth less to feed.

It is here once more that the land and sons merge together. Nathan had hoped too much from them—the land and the sons—and entertained fears about them, but had not anticipated as much disappointment as he had received. It is natural for Nathan to feel broken and drained of his strength when the children in whom he lives have forsaken him. Rukmani fears that Nathan might not be able to reap the harvest when the time comes but Nathan once more comes as a reassuring force and says, "When the time comes, the strength will be forthcoming, never fear" (p. 97). Rukmani still watches him with pride and fear, but the real sense of satisfaction and happiness comes only with the good harvest, concretized in the shining mounds of rice.

The same two-way play of hope and fear, like light and shadow, which had characterized the lives of Nathan, Rukmani and their sons, characterizes Ira too. The birth of a son instead of Ira would have sent Rukmani's spirits high on the crest of wave; not to have a child at all would have brought her spirits at their lowest troughs—hence a daughter is born which in India is a sign of happiness, but not an unadulterated one. It is a compromise between a son and her barrenness—a son who could have continued Nathan's line of working on the farm whereas the daughter would take a dowry and leave only a memory behind.

This sense of satisfaction when the amplitude of the wave of hope and fear had nearly died out does not last long and one notices the slow building up of the wave again. The birth of Ira was followed by a long gap of six

years—time enough for the wave of fear to build up—during which she experiences "a chill fear" that she might have become barren. This fear is strenghthened by her futile visit to the temple. It is her mother who boosts Rukmani's sinking morale by giving a stone lingam, symbolizing fertility, and a blessing, like that of a prophet, that she "will yet bear many sons" (p.22).

Once more one can see the wave of hope and fear building up—the hope of having a number of sons and the fear of being a barren woman. The building up of such a pattern is an artistic necessity at this place so that the sufferings and uncertainties that the mother undergoes could be repeated in the case of Ira, thus suggesting that such a fate is inevitable for an Indian woman, old or young, mother or daughter. The role of a retarding force is taken up again by Kenny who represents a voice of rationality and sanity among the credulous and superstitious ones. With his ministering the birth of the first son pleases all. The rejoicing is concretized by feast. The mounds of rice symbolize heaps of happiness. The excessive happiness is later balanced by the birth of other sons who bring their own problems and adversely affect their standard of living.

The marriage of Ira who is thirteen now brings its own hopes and fears. Five years after her marriage Ira has the fears about her barrenness worse than her own mother had. Rukmani faced it after the birth of one daughter, but Ira gave birth to nothing and as such is abandoned by her husband. The daughter accepts the reality without protest for that would leave in her "no more fear, no more necessity for lies and concealment" (p.54).

This is, as it were, a pattern within a pattern—a sort of inner rhythm that what happened to mother for a short time happens to the daughter also—the whole dreadful story repeating itself. But even here Rukmani considers the family to be in God's hands and hopes for the better. The thought of Kenny curing Ira, as he had cured her, revives her spirits a little and composes her disturbed feelings. Old Granny comes as a symbol of struggling humanity itself with vast reservoir of tolerance, showing like a beacon the immense potentialities of tolerance and thus giving hope and strength to Rukmani and to Ira how much it can suffer and endure. "Am I not alone, and do I not manage it ?" she asks.

Ira too might have managed but she saw herself and her brothers, particularly Kuti, hungry and had to resort to prostitution to earn money. Her ill-gotten money delays but cannot check Kuti's blindness and death. Then comes the fear that Ira might bring shame from an encounter and this is confirmed in the birth of Sacrabani. For Kenny there is no difference between

the children born in a wedlock and those born out of an encounter. For Rukmani the difference between hope and fear is the difference between her giving birth and Ira giving birth in an encounter. "There had been hope and expectation, perhaps some anxiety before each birth; they were natural feelings. But now fears came swarming about my head like the black flying ants after a storm, and I cowered from the beat of their wings" (p. 118). Once more Kenny and Old Granny serve as a retarding force of the wave and make Ira feel happy and satisfied.

Whereas their sons and daughters had led Nathan and Rukmani to unhappiness after arousing their hopes, Puli, who does not belong to them, gives them happiness after some fears. Here the process has been reversed. Much in contrast with Murugan who causes them disappointment, Puli gives them hope. It is he who had led them to Murugan's place as well as to the stone quarry and is it with him that Rukmani consoles herself after her husband's death by saying, "Yet I have no fears now. What is done is done, there can be no repining" (p. 7). A child who has no fingers but stumps has a lion's heart and gives her much more hope and comfort in her life than those who had aroused her legitimate expectations.

*Kamala Markandaya, *Nectar in a Sieve* (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1954), p. 83. Subsequent quotations are from this edition and the page numbers are given in parentheses.

D. H. LAWRENCE'S CONCEPTION OF ART

K. K. Sharma

Discarding the well-established dictums of "Art for art's sake" and "Art for life's sake", Lawrence believes in the doctrine of "Art for my sake". "I always say, my motto is 'Art for my sake' :

> If I *want* to write, I write-and If I don't want to, I won't. The difficulty is to find exactly the form one's passion—work is produced by passion with me, like kisses—is it wtth you ?—wants to take."[1]

Lawrence is convinced that the artist does not create a work of art for the sake of all men; he is mostly concerned with himself and the persons allied to him. He is at his best only when he expresses his own personal stuff. In a work, the personality of the artist should appear unobstructed and undisguised. The artist should express himself without self-consciousness, and should seem to say : "*I* am all. All othcr things are but radiation out from me."[2] As a matter of fact, a great piece of art is the record of the artist's own life history, his struggle inside himself. In a letter to J. M. Murry, Lawrence writes :

> "Be all things to all men". That isn't my ideal, it seems like my fate. But really, one *can* only be towards each person that which corresponds to him, more or less. And one might as well talk to a daisy by the path, as be one's further self with.....
>
> Yes, you *do* need to write your own personal stuff, otherwise you can't be yourself.....
>
> .. ..
>
> .. ..
>
> Don't say it's a prosy history, yours. The only history is a mere question of one's struggle inside oneself. But that is the joy

of it. One need neither discover America nor conquer nations, and yet one has as great a work as Columbus or Alexander, to do. So I flatter myself.[3]

Lawrence believes that in his work the artist embodies not only the struggle inside himself, but also his whole being. Unless he puts his soul into it, he cannot create anything really great. Art is the sincere expression of the union between body and spirit. If it is related only to body or only to soul, it becomes a lie; it should not be an over assertion of the one at the expense of the other. In the letter sent to Edward Garnett on 22 April, 1914, he remarked : "It (The Rainbow) is a big and beautiful work. Before, I could not get my soul into it. That was because of the struggle and the resistance between Frieda and me. Now you will find her and me in the novel, I think, and the work is of both of us."[4]

Art and Life

Lawrence holds that art is inalienable from life; it is born of life itself. "The business of art," says he, "is to reveal the relation between man and his circumambient universe, *at the living moment*. As mankind is always struggling in the toils of old relationships, art is always ahead of the 'times', which themselves are always for in the rear of the living moment."[5] The artist should not escape from life; rather. he should escape into life, for he has to depict truthfully the palpitating moments and the state of man as it is. No wonder Lawrence praises Shakespeare and Goethe because they enjoy both living and writing, while he disparages Thomas Mann for keeping himself only "to the work".[6] In an essay on Thomas Mann, Lawrence quotes the great German writer's remark to a Russian painter girl; "There is no artist anywhere but longs again, my love. for the common man."[7] Further, Lawrence observes : "But any young artist might say that. It is because the stress of life in a youngman, but particularly in an artist, is very strong..... But then there are the other artists, the more human, like Shakespeare and Goethe, who must give themselves to life as well as to art. And if these were afraid, or despised life, then with their surplus they would ferment and become rotten."[8]

Art helps man to understand life and to seek comfort in it. Lawrence attacks Mann because, owing to his troubled consciousness, he failed to portray the basic human life realistically and give the reader an adequate vision of man's place in the universe. Mann and Flaubert are not much concerned with the rhythm of life, while Shakespeare's plays enchantingly abound in it. Mann's introspective literature is rejected, for it depicts only

the author's egocentric self-analysis, and ignores the vital moral and social questions. Thus his vision, according to Lawrance, is unwholesome :

> Thomas Mann seems to me the last sick sufferer from the complaint of Flaubert. The latter stood away from life as from a leprosy. And Thomas Mann, like Flaubert, feels vaguely that he has in him something finer than ever physical life revealed. Physical iife is a disordered corruption, against whieh he can fight with only one weapon, his fine aesthetic sense, his feeling for beauty, for perfection, for a certain fitness which soothes him, and gives him an inner pleasure, however corrupt the stuff of life may be.....
>
> .....his work has none of the rhythm of a living thing, the rise of a poppy, then the after uplift of the bud, the shedding of the calyx and the spreading wide of the petals, the falling of the flower and the pride of the seed-head.....Even *Madame Bovary* seems to me dead in respect to the living rhythm of the whole work. While it is there in *Macbeth* life like itself.[9]

Lawrence's severe attack on Mann and his unreserved admiration for Shakespeare leads us to infer that in his opinion art must deal with real life and its rainbow of human relationships. The artist should approach and depict life without any preconceived notions or aims, because life itself has no permantly definit purpose : "But where is the point to life ? Where is the point to love ? Where, if it comes to the point, is the point to a bunch of violets ? There is no point. Life and love are life and love, and a bunch of violets is a bnnch of violets, and to drag in the idea of a point is to ruin everything. Live and let live, love and let love, flower and fade, and follow the natural curve, which flowers on, pointless."[10]

Further, Lawrence holds that art can be revitalised and revivified only when it is made to concern itself more and more with both man and woman, who are the real core of life. Art should not be merely mono-sexual, i. e. it should not be either purely masculine or purely feminine. As a matter of fact, it should mainly concentrate upon the intimacy between man and woman—the intermingling of male life and female life. It should not only explore and depict the profound and mysterious relationship between man and woman, but should also enable them to know and understand each other better. In the letter written to A. W. McLeod on 2 June, 1914, Lawrence observed :

> I think the only re-sourcing of art, revivifying it, is to make it more the joint work of man and woman. I think *the* one thing to do, is

> for men to have courage to draw nearer to women, expose themselves to them, and be altered by them : and for women to accept and admit men. That is the start—by bringing themselves together, men and women—revealing themselves each to the other, gaining great blind knowledge and suffering and joy, which it will take a big further lapse of civilisation to exploit and work out. Because the source of all life and knowledge is in man and woman, and the source of all living is in the interchange and the meeting and mingling of these two : man-life and woman-life, man-knowledge and woman-knowledge, man-being and woman-being.[11]

Naturally, Lawrence does not find anything wrong with sex and so-called obscenity in art; rather, he thinks that it is an intrinsic element of every great artistic creation. The reason he offers is that sex is inalienable from life, and art represents life. Hence the inseparability of sex from art. In a letter to Mark Gartler, he avers : "I believe there was something in Pompeian art, of this terrible and soul-tearing obscenity. But then, since obscenity is the truth of our passion to-day, it is the only stuff of art—or almost the only stuff."[12]

Lawrence opines that change is the law of life as well as of art, and the newness—viz, the breaking away from the old ways both in human relationships[13] and in art—always upsets most of the people. Whatever the form of art may be, whether poetry, or music, or painting, if it is strikingly new in its content and form, it is bound to shock many people. In the article, "Morality and the Novel", he writes :

> Obviously to read a really new novel will *always* hurt, to some extent. There will always be resistance. The same with new pictures, new music. You may judge of their reality by the fact that they do arouse a certain resistance, and compel, at length, a certain acquiesecence.[14]

A very fescinating thing in a great work of art is the expression of the antinomy between body and soul, between Love and Law, between the Flesh and the Spirit, between the Father and the son.[15] The artist should not only show the conflict between these two principles of the Flesh and the Spirit, but should also bring out a reconciliation between them. Lawrence illustrates it from the works of Aeschylus and Euripides. Aeschylus presents the two not only in everlasting conflict, but eternally reconciled as well, without establishing the supremacy of the one over the other. But with Euripides the case is different. Love and Law to him are endlessly in conflict

and are unequally matched, with the result that Love is always borne down. Notwithstanding this approach to these two principles of Love and Law, he depicts the reconciliation between the two also and this makes him such a great writer. In a word, it is the conjunction of the two which is behind every artistic creation.

The artist should not only endeavour to project his whole being into his work and to present life in its entirety, but should also strive to state the Absolute. Like Fra Angelico in the *Last Judgment*, he ought to be concerned with the whole conception of the existence of man—creation, good, evil, life, death, resurrection, the separation of good and evil, etc. As Lawrence says : "It is an Absolute we are all after, a statement of the whole scheme—the issue, the progress through time—and the return—making unchangeable eternity,"[16] But it is not an easy job for the artist to do. The way to present the "abstract-whole" is to relegate the object to a unit, and thereafter to convey a whole statement out of these units.[17] Art is not a direct expression of the concrete ; it is "indirect and ultimate."[18] The artist usually puts away all ordinary commonsense and works under the influence of the invisible world which is to him more true and real than the visible.

The Nature and Function of Art

Lawrence believes that the strange force within the artist, some mysterious power within him, is behind every artistic creation, and the artist has no choice but to submit to it with reverence. He has to struggle within his own soul in mystery, and this stirs up creative activity. Speaking of the unconscious human soul as the fountain-head of every artistic creativity, Lawrence affirms :

> The human soul itself is the source and well-head of creative activity. In the unconscious human soul the creative prompting issues first into the universe. Open the consciousness to this prompting, away with all your old sluice-gates, locks, dams, channels. No ideal on earth is anything more than an obstruction, in the end, to the creative issue of the Spontaneous soul.....
>
> Let each individual act spontaneously from the for ever incalculable prompting of the creative well-head within him.....Each being is, at his purest, a law into himself, single, unique, a Godhead, a fountain from the unknown.[19]

Artistic activity, though compelling and tortuous, is a highly religious experience. The artist, immersed in his work, seems to find himself in direct

communion with the Eternal. Lawrence frequently points to the close relationship between art and religion. For instance, in the essay, "Puritanism and the Arts", he demonstrates that a work of art is an expression of the religious truth comprehended emotionally by the artist. "An artist," says he, "*can* only create what he really religiously *feels* is truth, religious truth really *felt*, in the blood and the bones."[20] Again, the perusal of the book, *Art and Ritual*, leads Lawrence to realise that art, emanating from religiosity, is genuine and quite captivating.[21] He illustrates from his own work the inseparability of art from religious experience. When one of his friends pointed out to him that disagreeableness, vulgarity, Cockneyism and Frenchness spoiled his books, he felt it very much and considered it an insult to his "real being" as an artist :

> You see—you tell me I am half a French man and one eighth a Cockney. But that isn't it.....primarily I am a passionately religious man, and my novels must be written from the depth of my religious experience. That I must keep to, because I can only work like that. And my Cockneyism and commonness are only when the deep feeling doesn't find its way out, and a sort of jeer comes instead, and sentimentality, and purplism. But you should see the religious, earnest, suffering man in me first, and then the flippant or common things after....[22]

Lawrence avers that art is wholly spontaneous, for it is the product of an immediate impulse towards self-expression or communication and it decays and dies with the passing of the impulse. The artist is a man, and no man is by nature perfect nor can he easily attain to perfection. As such, art, which should be essentially spontaneous, is, like its creator, also imperfect, transient and limited. Since perfection is the outcome of knowing and of the conscientious and painstaking application of knowledge, it is alien to spontaneity. Accordingly, Lawrence rejects the great works of art and the permanent type of monuments, with all their perfection and everlastingness, as inhuman and "too much of a good thing". True to his conviction, of all the building materials, he likes adobe most because of its utmost plasticity and impermanence. He is happy to see that the permanent pyramids and mathematically accurate parthenons could not have been created in adobe. Likewise, he loves wood and admires the Etruscans because they erected wooden temples which could survive for long. Stone, with its imperishable solidity and its capacity to keep rigidly the pure geometrical forms, displeases him. Great buildings and truly finished works of art, in spite of their

exquisite beauty, generally sadden him. In music, he commends the folk-song, for it originates from immediate impulse and is a slight thing. The symphony makes him uncomfortable because it is something highly elaborate, deliberately worked out, and too "would-be"—to use his typical expression.

Lawrence's belief in the spontaneity of art is also evident from the fact that his writings emanate from the depth of his being and are not too "would-be". He would tussle away for years to get out "inhoate bits" from the underground of his consciousness. He would make them as spontaneous as possible, and would never consciously use his intellect to give them more than human perfection. This perhaps is the reason why he never corrected or patched what he had written. Whenever he was dissatisfied with what he had written, instead of filling, clipping, inserting or transposing, as most of the artists do, he usually rewrote it. For example, he rewrote completely his last novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, three times in three totally different forms. The same was the case with most of his novels. "In other words," as Aldous Huxley, his close friend and contemporary, remarks, "he gave the *daimon* another chance to say what it wanted to say.....He was determined that all he produced should spring directly from the mysterious, irrational source of power within him. The conscious intellect should never be allowed to come and impose, after the event, its abstract pattern of perfection."[23] When he was writing *The Sisters*, he was highly satisfied with it because it was progressing spontaneously.[24] In this respect, he is an antithesis of a conscientious artist like Henry James who does not believe in an absolutely spontaneous mode of creative writing without a definite pre-plan. While writing *The Sisters*, Lawrence realised this truth about artistic activity and remarked about it to Edward Garnett : "I write with every thing vague—plenty of fire underneath, but, like bulbs in the ground, only shadowy flowers that must be beaten and sustained, for another spring."[25]

Lawrence thinks that a work of art is not merely something beautiful in shape, but must explore and convey some powerful emotion or idea which should be intelligible to all those who wish to enjoy the work. Art is not just decoration, but is an emotional force. Lawrence expresses his conviction in the letter containing his observations on Ernest Collings's drawings : "Don't tell me it is me it is merely beautiful form and space-fillings : that means *tour de force*. The thing must be the expression of some strong emotion or idea. And I can't grasp it. You are not intelligible to me. And I want to understand. What do you want to convey ? I shall look at these drawings a hundred times, and try to find it. You don't use the human figure to express any individual emotion—not dramatically. Don't say it is just a

decorative use."[26] Not only this, the artist must fully know the human emotion he aims at communicating through his work. If he does not, he is bound to lapse into errors unless, of course, he is gifted with the pure instinct by which he can do things correctly even without knowing them. Discussing Ernest Collings's drawings in the letter written to him on 22 March, 1914, Lawrence observed :

> But I think, unless one is so pure by instinct that one does the right thing without knowing, then one *must* know what one is after. And I can't make out what you are after, however I try. You want to use the human body to express—what ?—something elementary in nature, something non-organic, or of the realm of physics—what ? What property of the human soul do you want to express ?—the mechanicalness of thought, as one of the natural forces ?—the natural torrent of youth ? What ? I think if there had been just a bit more intensity got into "Youth", that might have been very beautiful.[27]

According to Lawrence, art has two functions. In the first place, it aims at imparting the reader a profound emotional experience. Secondly, if expressed confidently and boldly, the artist's emotional experiences contain abundant practical wisdom and are very near to practical truth. In the article, "The Spirit of Place", Lawrence writes :

> Art has two great functions, First, it provides an emotional experience. And then, if we have the courage of our own feelings, it becomes a mine of practical truth. We have had the feelings *ad nauseam*. But we've never dared dig the actual truth out of them, the truth that concerns us, whether it concerns our grand children or not.[28]

Also, art to Lawrence embodies dramatised human experience, presenting before us the implications and possibilities of life. It enables us to know ourselves and the world we live in better, explaining to us what we are and what we could be. In addition, it sharpens man's sense of values and his sensibility, and makes him feel life as a rich experience. However, this does not imply that it offers remedies for human maladies. It only examines and reveals life in its varied aspects, and leaves man to find out solutions to his problems himself. Lawrence emphatically proclaims that "the business of art is never to solve, but only to declare."[29]

Art and the Whole Consciousness of Man

Lawrence rejects the presentation of only "mental concepts" in art.

The artist ought to approach, or look at, the world of substance intuitively; he should strive to impart the world of vision something other than optical or mechanical or purely intellectual. Lawrence extols Cezanne because he made a tremendous struggle to free himself from ready-made systems and to part with the mental concepts. He was a revolutionary and hence while saying to his models "Be an apple ! Be an apple !" he was substituting the prevalent way of consciousness—mental-visual consciousness—by another way—intuitive consciousness. By "Be an apple !", Cezanne means that if man becomes primarily an apple, there will come into being a new world of men, who will have very little to say, will sit still, be only physically there and be really non-moral. Cezanne really brought about a revolution in art by making it focus on the artist's intuitive awareness of the world.[30]

A genuine work of art is based on both the known and the unknown world. Cezanne's portrait of his wife is a remarkable piece of art because it is inclusive of both the known aspects of the model—the body, even her familiar sex, the fronts of the model which the eye sees and the mind feels satisfied with—and the unknown aspects which we do not see and which are grasped only with the help of intuition and instinct. If the artist's masterpiece examines and depicts only the known side of life, it brings to us just boredom, and no revelation.[31] Cezanne, as Lawrence points out, always endeavoured to keep himself away from mental consciousness and to go "beyond the apple". In him we find a continuous conflict between the artist's mind and his intuition and instinct. Cezanne's earlier pictures failed because they were the outcome of the workings of his mental consciousness, and were far from the working of his living "Provencal body". Consequently, there was in them a definite discrepancy between his idea of what he intended to create and his intuitive awareness of what he could create.[32] Thus, the conflict between his mind and his intuition and instinct marred the intrinsic worth of his earlier creations. What he had to learn to become a great artist was honesty to himself, that is, the capacity to present in a work the whole consciousness of a man, mental as well as intuitional.

This brings us close to Lawrence's explicit and firm conviction that life of body is the fountain-head of real feelings—genuine sensations and emotions felt instinctively and impulsively—which are absolutely different from mental feelings. Emotional experiences become real only when they are related to physical life. Man's emotional life is divided into mental and real feelings, and hence a work of art should inevitably be the outcome of the fusion of the two.[33] Indifferent to true sensations, the modern man, preoccupied with

mental consciousness, does not feel or possess them. Thus he is weary, and leads an impoverished life. In his famous essay, "Apropos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*", Lawrence points out the distinction between the mental feelings and the real feelings, and emphasizes the value of the latter for life and art :

> The body's life is the life of sensations and emotions. The body feels real hunger, real thirst, real joy in the sun or the snow, real anger, real sorrow, real love, real tenderness, real warmth, real passion, real hate, real grief. All the emotions belong to the body, and are only recognised by the mind. We may hear the most sorrowful piece of news, and only feel a mental excitement. Then, hours after, perhaps in sleep, the awareness may reach the bodily centres, and true grief wrings the heart.
>
> How different they are, mental feelings, and real feelings. Today, many people live and die without having had any real feelings—though they have had a "rich emotional life" apparently, having showed strong mental feeling. But it is all counterfeit.[34]

The point, discussed in the preceding two paragraphs, leads us logically to Lawrence's conviction that the great artist always intends to reveal the importance of the concrete in human experience, along with the abstract. Lawrence is averse to abstract intellectualizations, and discards all that is conventional, deliberate and fixed in life. In his view, too much knowledge reduces man's sense of wonder and leads him to abstract intellectualizations. He seems to object to every kind of abstract art. He vehemently criticizes the cubists and futurists because of their deliberate predilection for science as evinced by their adoration of the abstract form and the machine-world.[35] In short, what he emphasizes is that art should not be dominated either by the mental consciousness or by the intuitive awareness; it should be a spontaneous expression of the entire consciousness of man—mental, intuitive, instinctive, etc. :

> Any creative act occupies the whole consciousness of a man. This is true of the great discoveries of science as well as of art. The truly great discoveries of science and real works of art are made by the whole consciousness of man working together in unison and oneness : instinct, intuition, mind, intellect all fused into one complete consciousness, and grasping what we may call a complete truth, or a complete vision, a complete revelation in sound. A discovery, artistic or otherwise, may be more or less intuitional, more or less mental : but intuition will have entered into it, and

mind will have entered too. The whole consciousness is concerned in every case.[36]

Isms in Art

There is scarcely any aspect of art on which Lawrence has not expressed his views. In the age in which he lived, controversies about the various 'isms' in art were quite common. Naturally, he could not keep himself aloof from them. As early as in 1909, he made the following observations on "impressionism" and "dogmatism" :

> ....I admit your accusation of impressionism and dogmatism. Suddenly, in a world full of tones and tints and shadows I see a colour and it vibrates on my retina. I dip a brush in it and say, "See, *that's* the colour !" So it is, so it isn't....[37]

Also, he gives vent to his views on futurism and cubism. He likes them because they aim at purging emotions of the old forms and sentimantalities, and he urges the artists to be honest and stick to what is in them. The futurists and cubists want to deny every scrap of tradition and experince which is absurd. He likes them, but does not believe in them because they take a purely intellectual or scientific line. Thus their art is not art, but a scientific presentation of certain mental or physical states. In a word, their artistic works are highly pseudo-scientific, intentional and self-conscious.[38] Lawrence does wholly not approve of futurism in art. Consequently, commenting on his book, *Wedding Ring*, he remarks in a tone of dissatisfaction : "I think the book is a bit futuristic—quite unconsciously so."[39]

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1. *The Letters of D. H. Lawrance*, ed. Aldous Huxley (London : William Heinemann Ltd., 1956), p. 86.
2. *The Collected Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, ed. Harry T. Moore (London: Heinemann, 1965), Vol. I, p. 302.
3. *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, pp. 186-87.
4. *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, p. 189.
5. "Morality and the Novel", *D. H. Lawrence : A Selection from Phoenix*, (Penguin Books, 1971), p. 175. (Italics added)
6. "German Books : Thomas Mann", *D. H. Lawrence : A Selection from Phoenix*, p. 279.
7. "German Books : Thomas Mann", *D. H. Lawrence : A Selection from Phoenix*, p. 278.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 282-83.

10. D. H. Lawrence, "Do Women Change?", *Assorted Articles*, (London : Martin Secker, 1930), pp. 48-9.
11. *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, pp. 48-9.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 368.
13. Lawrance maintains that a new relationship inevitably disturbs and hurts people. "Morality and the Novel", *D. H. Lawrence: A Selection from Phoenix*, p. 179.
14. *D. H. Lawrence: A Selection from Phoenix*, p. 180.
15. "From Study of Thomas Hardy", *D. H. Lnwrence : A Selection from Phoenix*, p. 213.
16. *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, p. 216.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*, p. 254.
19. "Preface to *All Things are Possible*", *D. H. Lawrence : Selected Literary Criticism*, ed. Anthony Beal (London: Heinemann, 1967), p. 244.
20. "Puritanism and the Arts", *D. H. Lawrence : Selected Literary Criticism*, p. 65.
21. *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, p. 149.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 190-91.
23. "Introduction", *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence* p. xvii.
24. *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, p. 118.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 183.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 184-86.
28. *Studies in Classic American Literature*, (Penguin Books, 1971), p. 461.
29. *Phoenix : The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence*, p. 461.
30. Appropos of this see *Sex, Literatnre and Censorship*, ed. Harry T. Moore [London : *William Heinemann Ltd., 1955*], pp. 184-85.
31. Speaking of Cezanne's masterpiece, Lawrence, says : "It is the appleyness of the portrait of Cenzanne's wife that makes it so permanently interesting : the appleyness, which carries with it also the feeling of knowing the other side as well, the side you don't see, the hidden side of the moon". (*Sex, Literature and Censorship*, p. 186).
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 171-77.
33. In this connection, Lawrence writes to Henry Savage: "I think one has as it were to fuse one's physical and mental self right down to produce good art". (*The Collected Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, I, p. 251).
34. *Sex, Literature and Censorship*, p. 232.
35. In a letter to A. W. McLeod, Lawrence comments on the cubists and futurists thus : They want to deny every scrap of tradition and experience, which is silly....I agree with them about the weary sickness of pedantry and tradition and inertness, but I don't agree with them as to the cure and escape. (*The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, p. 196).
36. "Introduction to His Paintings", *Sex, Literature and Censorship*, p. 178.
37. *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, p. 2.
38. *Ibid.*, pp. 195-97.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 197.

W. B. YEATS ON POETIC DRAMA

Alka Gupta

Eliot's essay on Poetic drama stands like a wall to hinder the vision of the student from going beyond. We are so convinced of the ponti fical utterances of Eliot that, in modern criticism at least, his voice is taken as oracular, and "when Sir Oracle speaks, let nobody open his lips". In the atmosphere created by this attitude we are prone to forget that Yeats has expressed his views on poetic drama in a much more elaborate fashion than Eliot. The obstacle to the recognition of Yeats as the premier theorist of poetic drama is the fact that his writings on drama lie scattered in so many places, and no student of his cared to gather them together and present them in a systematised form. This is what the present paper seeks to do within its necessary limitations.

Our plan will be to focus attention on Yeats' intense interest in poetry and in drama separately, and then to show how they converged to produce some of the best poetic drama in English in modern times; and, therewithal, some revealing observations in the theory of poetic drama. We shall only glance over the first, making the latter our main concern.

To enlarge upon Yeats' interest in poetry may sound like stressing the obvious, because his stature as a poet is a sufficient guarantee of it, but interest in poetry as such is not what is meant here. Poetry has many ingredients such as imagery, ideas, symbols, metaphors, and the power of words. The aspect of poetry which is most relevant to drama is the quality and power of words and their rhythm which raise common speech to an uncommon height, and Yeats was interested exactly in this aspect of poetry. Talking about George Moore in 1897, he says :

> "I had read no book of his, nor would, had he not insisted, for my sympathies were narrow. I cared for nothing but poetry, or prose that shared its intensity."[1]

Again, in the rehearsal of *Countess Cathleen*, a young actress named Miss Whitty who was to play the title role and who impressed everybody tremendously, so much so that every one who watched the rehearsal testified that Miss Whitty "brought tears to my eyes because she had tears in her voice", was not approved by Yeats because "she has no sense of rhythm whatever" although "she acts admirably".[2] Yeats did not care so much for the quality of acting as for the correct rhythm of speech.

There are scores of observations lying scattered in his occasional writings which testify to his attaching special value in poetry to intensity of thought, fecling, emotion, and to the music and rhythm of speech. The greatest enemy of poetry in general, and of poetry in drama in particular is rhetoric, and Yeats testifies to his having made a virtue of his "struggle with Victorian rhetoric" in the early part of his career.[3]

For Yeats the poetry of words does not mean something romantic, or otherworldly, or created with conscious artistry, but something that is natural to the character and the occasion. Quoting Sainte-Beuve twice to the effect that "there is nothing immortal in literature except style", he comments :

> "I do not mean by style words with an air of literature about them, what is ordinarily called eloquent writing. The speeches of Falstaff are as perfect in their style as the soliloquies of Hamlet. One must be able to make a king of Faery or an old coutryman or a modern lover speak that language which is his and nobody else's, and *speak it with so much emotional subtlety* that the hearer may find it hard to know whether it is the thought or the word that has moved him, or whether these could be separated at all."[4]

and further :

> "....if we are not in love with words it will lack the delicate movement of living speech that is the chief garment of life."[5]

There are many such observations found strewn in the writings of Yeats which show not only his interest in poetry in a general way, but specialised interest in certain aspects of poetry which, it will be superfluous to point out, have vital relevance to drama. It is not possible to gather them all together in a short paper, and therefore, taking the quotations reproduced above as indicators, we shall proceed to bring out his interest in drama. In his dateless diary, *The Bounty of Sweden*, he tells us how when a Journalist showed him a printed paragraph which said that the Nobel Prize for the year might be awarded either to Herr Mann, the famous German novelist, or to William

Butler Yeats, he tried to dismiss the haunting idea from his mind, and reflected :

> "Herr Mann has many readers, is a famous novelist with his fixed place in the world, and, said I to myself, well fitted for such an honour; whereas I am *but a writer of ylays* which are acted by players with a literary mind for a few evenings, and I have altered them so many times that I doubt the value of every passage."[6]

Apart from its modesty, real or assumed, the passage is significant as a self evaluation by Yeats of his own creative achievement. At the apex of his creative career when the Swedish Academy and the literary world in general thought of him as a likely candidate for the Nobel Prize, Yeats thought of himself not as a poet but as a "writer of plays". Play writing was an imperative with him as much for creative as for other reasons. His involvement in the Irish Renaissance, which he thought could be possible only by reviving ancient Irish history, mythology and folk-lore, made him realise :

> "The truth is that the Irish people are at that precise stage of their history when imagination, shaped by many stirring events, desires dramatic expression. One has only to listen to a recitation of Raftery's* *Argument with Death* at some country Feis to understand this. When Death makes a good point, or Raftery a good point, the audience applaud delightedly, and applaud, not as London audience would, some verbal dexterity, some piece of smartness, but the movement of a simple and fundamental comedy."[7]

Yeats felt that the only way to arouse his dormant people was to make them acquainted with their old history and mythology, and he knew that this could be done best by dramatising them, because the Irish people were illiterate, and their natal instinct was dramatic :

> "A relation of mine has just written me a letter, in which he says : 'It is natural to an Irishman to write plays; he has an inborn love of dialogue and sound about him, of a dialogue as lively, gallant and passionate as in the time of great Eliza"[8]

Quoting from the letter with obvious approbation, Yeats proceeds to mark the difference between the Enghishman's taste in dialogue and the Irishman's. The Englishman's dialogue has something amateurish in it, "it is never spontaneous. Compare it with an Irishman's, above all a poor Irishman's reckless abandonment and naturalness..."

The need for the dramatisation of whatever material is presented to such a people is quite obvious; and now the question is : what kind of dramatisation,

what kind of play ? Yeats's line of argument through which he arrives at an answer to such a question is interesting. He is clear about one thing that the Irish Renaissance is a return to the people, and, therefore :

> "The play that is to give them a quite natural pleasure should tell them either of their own life, or of that life of poetry where every-man can see his own image, because there alone does human nature escape from arbitrary conditions."

Realistic plays of society will have two disadvantages.. Drawing-room plays are written and acted for the people who live in drawing–rooms, but Irish people do not live in drawing-rooms. Besides, drawing-room plays will require realistic acting, and realistic actors, as soon as they will be trained, will "drift away to wealthy English theatres." What, then, is the way to produce plays that would interest Irish poor and retain the trained actors with the Irish theatres ? Yeats's solution to this dual problem is :

> "If, on the other hand, we busy ourselves with poetry and the countryman, two things which have always mixed with one another in life as on the stage, we may recover, in the course of years, a lost art which, being an imitation of nothing English, may bring to our actors a secure fame and a sufficient livelihood."[9]

It has been noted by Yeats's critics, particularly those of his drama, that Yeats, besides being an inspired poet, was also a shrewd businessman. At every stage in this argument his practical sense is obvious. Irish Renaissance can come to fruition only by reviving the history and mythology of the country for the people. This revival will be achieved best by dramatising Irish history and legend because the natural instinct of the Irish people is dramatic. Drama should not aim at realism like the drawing-room plays of society which are presented in London theatres, because, firstly, Irish life will not support it, and secondly, its unnatural, laboured dialogue carried on by conscious effort to excel will not appeal to the Irish people who have a natural gift for the most effortless and zestful dialogue in actual life. Besides, there would be the problem of retaining the trained actors in Ireland. And hence the necessity not only for drama, but poetic drama. There are other advantages of poetic drama too. Drama, when wedded to poetry, makes the importance of actors recede into insignificance and solves the problem of getting and retaining actors with appropriate talent :

> "I want to put old stories into verse, and if I put them into dramatic verse it will matter less to me henceforward who plays them than what they play, and how they play. I hope to get our Heroic

Age into verse, and to solve some problems of the speaking of verse to musical notes."[10]

Discussion of poetic drama in any context brings Shakespeare to the mind, but according to Yeats it is an influence that has to be combatted :

"At the present moment, Shakespeare being the only great dramatist known to Irish writers has made them cast their work too much on the English model."[11]

And why should Shakespeare's influence be combatted ? For the first and most obvious reason, because no great literature was ever born by simply imitating another literary convention, particularly if that convention comes from a country the literary and culturural traditions of which are quite different. For the second reason, because Shakespear has too much of luxuriance, which at a time when the nation needs discipline may prove injurious to the national interest. There are other dramatic traditions which are congenial to the conditions of Ireland :

"It is no great labour to know the best dramatic literature, for there is very little of it. We Irish must know it all, for we have, I think, far greater need of the severe discipline of French and Scandinavian drama than of Shakespeare's luxuriance."[12]

And for a practical reason too Yeats objects to Shakespeare, because there are too frequent changes of scene in Shakespearian drama. This might have been all right for Shakespeare's time when there were no painted scenes and no attempt to create stage illusions, and it may be all right for the present day English stage which is rich and can afford it; but it is not suited at all to the Irish conditions where theatres are poor and drawing-room society plays are not the need of the time. To these must be added the fundamental distinction between English sense of dialogue and the Irish instinct. In spite of all the naturalness of Shakesperian dialogue, it cannot be denied that Shakespeare quite often strains for effects which are purely verbal. There is an artificiality in English dialogue, and much of it is hinged on clever use of words. Contrary to this the Irish people have an abandonment, a zest in their dialogue which has little to do with the deft use of words. It proceeds from instinct and not from artistry. He, therefore, prescribes :

"Let us learn construction from the masters, and dialogue from ourselves."[13]

In thinking of the drama and the Irish dramatic movement, Yeats makes many reservations. It must come direct from the lives of the people, it must be poetic, and although it was to be thought of as the most effective medium

for awakening the people from their torpor, it must not be thought of as a mere instrument of a political end but must be taken in the spirit of joy that comes from the mere act of artistic creation :

> "This movement should be important even to those who are not especially interested in the Theatre, for it may be a morning cock-crow to that impartial meditation about character and destiny we call the artistic life in a country, where everbody... has thought the arts useless unless they have helped some kind of political action, and has, therefore, lacked the pure joy that only comes out of things that have never been indented to any cause. The play is which mere propaganda shows its leanness more obviously than a propagandist poem or essay, for dramatic writing is so full of the stuff of daily life that a little falsehood, put in that the moral may come right at the end, contradicts our experience."[14]

So far we have considered Yeats's positive approach to poetic drama. He had a negative approach as well, and that was through his revulsion to realistic drama. Yeats had absolutely no doubt in his mind that the craze for surface realism had come with the over-riding wave of science, and will recede as the flood of science that seems to suround life in the present recedes, or as by its extravagant advance it makes even the surface realitities of life unimitable :

> "The scientific movement is ebbing a little everywhere, and here in Ireland it has never been in flood at all. And I am cretain that everywhere literature will return once more to its old extravagant fantastical expression, for in literature, unlike science, there are no discoveries, and it is always the old that returns. Everything in Ireland urges us to this return, and it may be that we shall be the first to recover after fifty years of mistake."[15]

It was in this context that he hailed Symbolism as "return to imagination" and as welcome force to liberate the creative faculty form the grip of realism and naturalism. Symbolism placed him above the necessity of mere imitation of the material details of life. Symbolism could go better with poetic drama than with realistic drama in prose. Looking out for support in good authorities, he found it in Goethe who had said : "Art is art because it is not nature". To this thesis he made his own contribution that art should symbolise not observation but experience. In other words, he gave an inner orientation to symbolism, because observation is external while experience is internal :

"The greatest art symbolises not those things that we have observed as those things that we have experienced, and when, the imaginary artist or lover or hero moves us most deeply, it is the moment when he awakens within us for an instant our own sanctity, our own desire."[16]

Modern realistic theatre pays more attention to the audience out of purely commercial considerations, than to the subject or the genuine forces of passion and will which animate the subject. "The life it depicts is the life of middle classes of great cities, a life where all is display and hurry, passion without emotion and emotion without intellect."[17] This is the demand of the audience and the realistic dramatist caters to that demand. Dramatists of older times when drama was more imaginative and poetical, based their plays upon or rather evolved them from "will breaking itself upon will and passion upon passion."[18]

Yeats points out that one great drawback of the realistic theatre is that "the dramatic situations had all been squeezed dry generations ago"[19]. There is little left that has not already been exploited :

> "Every artist necessarily imitates those who have worked in the same form before him, and when the pre-occupation has been with the same life, he almost always, consciously or unconsciously, borrows more than the form, and it is this borrowing—affecting thought, language, all the vehicles of expression—which brings about the most of what we call decadence."[20]

The curtain is bound to rise on what has had success with the audience a hundred times before, and now perhaps it is un-endurable. "A race or a nation or a phase of life has but a few dramatic themes, and that when these have been once written well, they must afterwards be written less well, until one gets at last but soulless reflections of man's skill".[21] The later imitations of or variations on a situation or turn in dialogue gradually produce less and less exciting effects and thus many bad plays ensue, which, becoming part of the convention, create a revulsion against the convention itself.[22]

Another disadvantage of realistic drama is that its realism is time-bound. As the mode of life and fashion and idiom of dialogue change with time, what was realistic once remains no more so, because that which it imitated has itself vanished from the scene. Poetic drama on the other hand is no slave to time. Yeats hoped that his work as a playwright would redirect his audience to some source of imaginative coherence—the Anima Mundi, the Common Memory—and that the players and the spectators would commune

in a symbolic dance that would mysteriously achieve the ideal condition of a unified culture.[23] And then drama will not be at the mercy of the caprice of ever-changing modes and morals of life.

Yeats's justification of poetic drama is very much the same as T. S. Eliot's, who once said : "the human soul in intense emotion strives to express itself in verse. The tendency, at any rate, of prose drama is to emphasise the ephemeral and superficial; if we want to get at the permanent and the universal, we have to express ourselves in verse."[24] Somerset Maugham holds the same view on the subject and has accused Shaw of a disservice to drama in bringing it down to the level of prose.[25] The obvious aim of referring to these names is to show that Yeats was not unique in visualising the return of poetic drama, but that he had thought of the issue in all its aspects before others took it up.

Having argued in favour of poetic drama as against realistic prose drama, Yeats comes to the inevitable question of suitable subject. Realistic drama had the middle class society and the drawing room as its quarry for subjects; Yeats, thinking particularly in the context of the Irish dramatic movement, discovered an inexhaustible source in remote Irish history, Irish legend and Irish mythology. They may appear to be of limited appeal to the Irish people only, but as Yeats understood them, they were charged with a profounder meaning.

He had condemned modern realistic drama because it was meant for the middle class of great cities, a species of humanity wich was conspicuous by its absence in his expected audience. Poetic drama which dealt with the lives of the heroes, demi-gods and gods was capable of appealing to and arousing the imagination of all classes of society. In a way, he seems to have taken his cue from the Greek tragedians who drew their plots from the favourite stories of Thebes, and in doing so he strove to bring back the theatre of Shakespear and Sophocles—one for its universal appeal and the other for reviving ancient national legends.

There were other reasons too, reasons grounded in principles of art rather then in expediency. He had all along laid stress on imagination, and heroic legends of the past were the creations of folk-imagination. In his essay on 'The Subject matter of Poetic Drama', Yeats quotes a sentence from The Marriage of Heaven and Hell :

"The best wine is the oldest, the best water is the newest" and explains that by 'water' is meant experience, immediate sensation, and by 'wine', emotion. "Emotion becomes intoxicating and delightful after it has been

enriched by the memory of old emotion."[26] Thus all arguments of Yeats converge on one point, and that is that material taken from ancient times must always be preferred for the purpose of drama to that which is contemporary and hence cannot evoke any past memories. Even among old themes, those with a religious aroma are still more to be preferred :

> "Religious subject matter, if it is ancient, is more suitable than the recent and contemporary themes of material strife. The more religious the subject matter of an art...the more ancient will be the emotion that it arouses and the circumstances that it calls up before one's eyes."[27]

Irish legends were, in Yeats's way of interpreting them, specially charged with symbolic meaning, and that is another reason why they appealed to him so much as material for the creation of drama of the special kind he had in mind. In Paris, Yeats saw the performance of Count Villiers de L'Isle's symbolist play *Axel*, and it exercised a good deal of influence on his thinking. His own play *The Shadowy Waters* was written under the influence of Count Villiers but *The Shadowy Waters* failed because it sought to combine two disparate things—an orthodox conventional plot, and symbolic imagery, which would not go together. Symbolism becomes legitimate and necessary when one has to body forth something which moves beyond the senses. It becomes successful when one's words are subtle and complex and stand exonerated from servility to rhetoric. Irish myths and legends were fabricated of the symbolic expression of the mysterious play of life forces not available to the senses. Could not this symbolic meaning arrested in them be released on the stage and be made available to the audience, who might not be gifted with such a perception of their own ? This is what Yeats was striving to explain through his dramatic theory, and to achieve in his plays.

In fact, the French symbolist theory could not satisfy Yeats, because it was too far removed from life, too remote from reality to square with the subject matter of Yeats's plays. The vital, imaginative symbolism for Yeats would be that in which historic figures of ancient legend might become symbols of the deep imaginative life of mankind. The kind of reality that French symbolism sought an expression for, was different from the kind of reality that Yeats wanted to dramatise. Yeats was concerned with awakening the conscience of his Irish compatriots who had fallen into the slough of degradation, and quickening something dormant in their minds with the magic touch of Irish folk-lore. The process as to how this could be possible has been explained by one of the sympathetic critics of Yeats :

"To a child, the giant, the captured maiden are real inhabitants of an intensely real world, only partially detached from his own waking one. The adult is separated from this world, but these figures exist in his dream life, symbolising desires and struggles in the depth of his mind, just as these had symbolised the desires and struggles of the race life in the past."[28]

To what extent this explanation gives an inkling into the actual method of Yeats, it is difficult to say. On close scrutiny it would appear that the first statement in the explanation is not congruous with the second. The distinction suggested at first is between child mind and adult mind, and it suddenly changes into the distinction between the waking life of the adult and his dream life, suggesting that in the dream state the adult becomes a child again, which, perhaps, is psychologically not true. The question for us to decide is whether Yeats wants to induce dream state or the state of infancy, both of the individual and of the race, and it is a difficult question to decide.

Another critic, F. A. C. Wilson, points out :

Yeats had a mystique of the theatre also. Part of his interest in the theatre was an interest in mass emotion, and it seemed to him the dramatist's duty to direct emotion to the proper end. The great Indian critic, Anand Coomarswami, in the Manual of Eastern Stage-craft, which was in Yeats's possession, informed him in his Speculations as to what that end might be: 'The essential characteristic of the aesthetic emotion is a timeless delight, akin to that of Bramhswadan, (the mystical union)"[29]

The figures of ancient legend are timeless; and if the dramatist succeeds in producing that aesthetic emotion, there would be established a mystical union between those legendary figures and the audience under the effect of that aesthetic emotion.

Neither of these two explanations seems to be completely satisfying. The disparity between the two parts of the first has been pointed out. Concerning Wilson's explanation, one feels tempted to say that it is too metaphysical or mystical and compels us to revise our whole concept regarding the purpose of drama. As Lucas pointed out in the context of Catharsis in tragedy that the theatre is not a clinic, will it be too impertinent to object to Wilson's theory by pointing out that the theatre is not a Quakers' Meeting House or a Masonic Lodge ?

Sometimes, when the explanation of a phenomenon is quite simple and obvious, people are put on the wrong track by their own ingenuity. The simple

and straightforward explanation seems to be that Yeats, while trying to re-create Irish legends in a dramatic form, sojourned from this world into the world of those mythical personages that exist in the imagination only; and in doing so he takes the audience, or at least part of the audience who are capable of the same imaginative flight, along with him into the world of those myths and legends. Of course, it will be too optimistic to credit the whole audience with this capability; but once a part of the audience have been thus transported, the rest is a matter infection. It is common experience that we aid each other in aesthetic perception. Once this transportation has taken place, the audience acquire a new perspective of looking at contemporary life from the viewpoint of the heroic past, and from this perspective the sordidness of contemporary life becomes accentuated, producing an awakening and restlessness.

At the purely aesthetic level, bordering on the mystical, Yeats's aim in drama was to create immobile ecstasy, a state of trance in which the audience can shed off the pressure of the self, (something like the cosmonauts emerging from the pull of gravity and attaining weightlessness) and receding into a more vital life. But the attainment of the purely aesthetic level was not the whole purpose of Yeats. He wanted his audience to attain to a state of trance all right, but he also wanted them to keep life in this world steadily in view, of course, looked at not from the wonted viewpoint but from the viewpoint of the world of the legendary past, in attaining which the trance-like state was only a stepping-stone. Obviously, a symbolism conceived after the French school could not be of much use to him. He had to conceive a symbolism of his own and work it out from its sources in Irish myth and legend in which it was inherent.

In view of the limitation of space we can just glance at another vital influence in Yeats's concept of poetic drama, viz. Japanese Nō. This is an independent subject which requires an entire paper, but a few fundamental facts about it can be mentioned here to show Yeats's indebtedness to it for his theory of poetic drama. The subjects treated by Nō dramatists are legendary and also derived from literary sources, but they are not meant to be unreal, although they are distanced and seen in perspective against life as a whole. The writers of these plays put emphasis on emotion rather than action, but they wished to purify emotions from their temporal and terrestrial qualities and leave behind only the timeless and the universal.

Yeats knew Nō plays only through translation, and he studied them with the help of a Japanese dancer. In his note on the first performance of *At the Hawk's Well*, Yeats acknowledged, "I have now found my first model in the

Nō stage of aristocratic Japan."[30] He spoke of Japanese drama as being able "to recede from this into some more powerful life"[31]. In fact, through the example of Nō plays he came to realise that the aim of poetic dramatist should be to set his audience free from the bondage of self so that they may attain to a more powerful and imaginative life. In *The Cutting of the Agate* he says :

> "The art which interests me, while seeming to separate from the world and us, a group of figures, images, symbols, enables us to pass for a few minutes into a deep mind that had otherwise been too subtle for habitation."

On the technical side he took two hints from the Japanese Nō, the use of dance and the use of the mask. The mask may appear something odd to western audience, but to Yeats the mask was anti-self, "a being in all things opposite to natural state[31]. This is particularly interesting because of Yeats's doctrine of the mask in his poetry as well.

Yeats was all for poetic drama as against realistic prose drama, but he also knew the limits to which poetry would be congenial and helpful to drama and beyond which it will not be endured. About *Maeve*, a play by George Moore, which was to aceompany *The Heather Field*, Yeats was apprehensive, because "we thought it too poetical, too remote from natural life to draw the crowd."[32] A second reservation he made was against profanation of drama on the strength of poetry by romanticising it to the limits of sensuality. For Yeats, art, purity and sanctity went together. Referring to a play of George Moore's in which the hero repeates his kiss without a dramatic justification, Yeats observes :

> "Nor could charming verses make amends for that second kiss in which there was profanation, and for that abounding black bottle. Did not M. Tribulat Bonhomet discover that one spot of ink would kill a swan ?"[33]

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33.

CHILD

I. K. Sharma

Time gone is not time lost.
It is there like a child
playing with toys in the upper room ;
it is not an aged father
with a loose beard coughing next door.

The child expands the cells,
quickens the flow of blood,
charges every act with a smile
and signals : dream, dance, and fly.

I once tried to stifle the child
and shut the door,
but it came to the proscenium
through the navel.

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JACQUES DERRIDA AND THE THEORY OF DECONSTRUCTION

Sankaran Ravindran

(After New Criticism and Structuralism, the latest development in the technique of literary criticism is Deconstruction, conceived by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida. It presents a view of the task of literary criticism in such terms as to make some people apprehensive and exclaim : The barbarian is again knocking at the door. The ground for the apprehension is that according to Deconstruction, no work of literature whatsoever has been able to express exactly what it wanted to say, and therefore, the critic's business is to deconstruct and re-create them, taking their words as not the outward form of their meaning but only as 'the trace of a quest'. Thus Deconstructionists are like a demolition squad. It is reported that once after a lecture of Kenneth Burke's a bright and bold student went up to him and protested, "Mr. Burke, you are breaking up words in a way that, I am afraid, you may never be able to put them together again." One feels tempted to say the same of the Deconstructionists. Whatever its merits, since this is the latest in literary criticism, and since it may not be familiar to our readers, the Journal takes the privilege to introduce it to them. The Editor)

Deconstruction is the most significant post Structuralist movement in literary criticism, the most controversial as well. Perhaps, no theory of literary criticism has aroused so much fascination and created so much aversion as deconstruction has done in recent years. On the one hand, some of the stalwarts in criticism, like J. Hillis Miller, Paul de Man, Geoffrey Hartman, Harold Bloom are theoretical and practical pioneers of deconstruction though their style and ardour do vary ; on the other hand, a vast number of scholarly

critics who are in the main stream of traditional criticism dismiss deconstruction as absurd, diabolical, and monstrous. No intellectual center in Europe and America is free from the controversy over the value of this new theory in criticism.

Is deconstruction really monstrous ? If it is, how and why ? If it is not, why this panic ? These questions can be answered only after an understanding and evaluation of the basic concepts of deconstruction. The right place to begin the understanding is *Of Grammatology*, the Bible of deconstruction, a seminal work by Jaques Derrida, the French philosopher and critic.

An investigation into Derrida and his theory of deconstruction confronts, I believe, two major obstacles. The first is constituted by Derrida's own bewildering style, new terminologies, and concepts. The second is the gamut of critical opinions that, despite the illumination they provide for some of the difficult concepts that Derrida has shaped, are inadequate interpretations or subtle misinterpretations. I will document some of those critical comments before I begin my own description and evaluation of the concepts of deconstruction. This scheme has a dual purpose : first, to impress that, though we might not have heard of deconstruction in our part of the world, Derrida's theory is a much discussed doctririne in the west, and, secondly, to demonstrate that this theory which is capable of engaging an array of such distinguished critical minds cannot be a mere fad.

M. H. Abrams argues that the most distinctive part of Derridian theory is that ". . . he shifts his inquiry from language to ecriture, the written or printed text; and the second that he conceives the text in an extraordinarily limited fashion'. Not only does Abrams simplify Derrida's position as a deconstructionist by equating him with other French structuralists but also he considerably distorts it in attempting to define some of the key words in deconstructive criticism such as "writing" (ecriture) and "text". Abrams's statement implies that for Derrida "writing" is the printed or the written text and that the text is extraordinarily limited. I will demonstrate through my evaluation of and comments on Derrida that Abrams's assumptions are misinterpretations.

Another commentator on Derrida is Newton Garver, who argues that Derrida is one of the philosophers of language who emphasizes the superiority of rhetoric over logic :

Derrida falls squarely within the movement which regards the role

of the utterance of actual discourse as the essence of language and meaning, and which, therefore, regards logic as derivative from the rhetorical consideration.[2]

Garver's arguments that Derrida shifts the importance from logic to rhetoric finds support from J. Hillis Miller, who states that "Deconstruction is an investigation of what is implied by this inheritance of figure, concept, and narrative in one another. Deconstruction is therefore a rhetorical discipline."[3] Murray Krieger believes that Derrida is a "critical structuralist who . . . outdoes structuralism, and perhaps undoes as well" and that his "assault is a newer form of that oldest attack on the poet as myth-maker by Plato. . . ."[4] Frederic Jameson argues that Derrida's thought denies itself the illusion of having passed beyond metaphysics and of having escaped from the old model into something new and unexplored.[5]

These comments, though valuable in the process of an investigation into deconstruction, can be misleading if taken as the last words on this critical theory. To group Derrida with other philosophers of language who believe that logic is derived from rhetoric is to foreclose the possibility of grasping the novelty of his thoughts. To equate Derrida with Plato and argue that he is repeating the old quarrel with myth is an inadequate representation of Derrida's position. To argue that Derrida simply shifts the importance from "speech" to "writing" and, hence, encloses the text in a chamber is a misrepresentation.

Although I accept the value of the critical opinions that I have documented above, I believe that deconstrnction needs many more fresh analyses. The attempt of any critic, who tries to analyse this theory, need not be to define what exactly deconstruction is because such a complex and abstruse theory eludes definitions. On the contrary, one can try to explain the basic terms that Derrida shapes to demolish traditional criticism and facilitate the act of deconstruction. That will be my major task in this paper. However, after describing and analysing the Derridian terminologies, I do intend to give my answer to the question how deconstruction can reorient literary criticism. In the final stages of my analysis, I will demonstrate that what is called absurd is not absurd and that deconstruction has spiritual connotations.

"Writing" and "speech" are the pivotal words in *Of Grammatology*. The traditional concept of language upholds the superiority of speech over writing. The spoken word, ***phone***, is non-exterior and self-effacing. Therefore, as a signifier it extinguishes itself in the process of signifying the signified. The written word, according to traditional concept of language, is a graphic

representation of the spoken word; in that respect it is the signifier of the spoken word. *Thus the written word is the signifier of the signifier and is secondary to the spoken word.* The written word can do nothing other than representing the spoken word, while the spoken word is itself a signifier.

The traditional arguments that have assigned to the written word a secondary place and to the spoken word the primary place are metaphysical and even theological.[6] Derrida proceeds to demonstrate how these arguments have been conditioned by metaphysics. Logos, in Western metaphysics, is the divine will that became manifest as the Word of God. Although the understanding of logos may differ from one another in the Greek, Jewish, and Christian beliefs, it is the other name for God's understanding. Logos can manifest itself only as voice. Commenting on the metaphysical background of the spoken word and the written word, Derrida writes :

> . . . God's understanding is the other name for logos as self-presence. The logos can be infinite and self-present, it can be *produced as auto-affection*, only through voice : an order of the signifier by which the subject takes from itself to itself, does not borrow outside of itself the signifier that it emits and that affects it at the same time. Such is at least the experience...of the voice.[7]

Therefore, argues Derrida, the traditional concepts of speech and writing are "logocentric," another important term in Derrida, which means that which is metaphysically oriented or theologically oriented.[8] To be more precise, the concepts of speech and writing have been shaped, conditioned, and governed by metaphysics. This logocentrism is also a "phonocentrism," the proximity of voice to the transcendental reality.[9] In Derrida's theory, phonocentrism and logocentrism are the two different terms that represent one phenomenon : the metaphysical genesis of the concept of speech and writing.

Another term that deconstruction introduces is "graphocentrism." This term needs explanation before I get into the core of Derrida' theory. Writing is graphic. A grapheme, according to traditional concept, is a pure signifier, which means that a unit of writing has no relevance other than simply representing a voice. Therefore, graphocentrism can mean the shift in importance from speech to writing. It is a reversal of the traditional concept of the superiority of speech or the spoken word over the writing or the written word. There are critics who observe that Derrida is effecting a shift from logocentrism to graphocentrism.[10] And that is not an innocent observation. The implication of that observation has to be commented on before

I begin the next stage of my exposition. I think the best way to make it clear is to attempt a simplification through an analogy. If logos, speech, and writing can represent God's presence, soul, and body respectively, it can be understood that the emphasis on speech is the emphasis on the soul. Likewise, the emphasis on writing is the emphasis on the body. If deconstruction is graphocentric, which means that it shifts the importance from speech to writing, from the soul to the body, it is a denial of the soul, and its proximity to God. Then, is it not a lapse into mere carnality ? Is is not the disappearence of God ? Doesn't it mean that deconstruction is nihilistic ? The answer to these questions is "yes", but only if this is all that Derrida says and this is all that deconstruction means. I will come back to these questions after examining Derrida's other deconstructive terminologies.

After having shown the philosophic and theologic foundation of the traditional concept of writing, Derrida examines the claims of linguistics on language. In fact, Derrida is reacting to Saussure's theory that the sign is a unity of the signifier and the signified. Modern linguistics that is based on the signifier-signified concept and structuralism that is indebted to that concept often claim to have made the study of language and the act of criticism scientific disciplines. Derrida shows that this claim is false because the signifier-signified concept of language that linguistics has handed down to us is another version of the traditional concept of speech and writing. Exposing the interrelation between metaphysics and linguistics, Derrida observes :

> The notion of the sign always implies within itself the distinction between signifier and signified, even if. . . they are distinguished simply as the two faces of one and the same leaf. This notion remains therefore within the heritage of that logocentrism which is also phonocentrism : absolute proximity of voice and being, of voice and the meaning of being and the ideality of meaning (*OG*, pp. 11-12).

Therefore, the system of language that linguistics is said to have made scientific and that structuralism has enthusiastically borrowed as a model for criticism is the same old logocentric-phonocentric concept that is the product of metaphysics.

It is clear that Derrida has grouped metaphysics, linguistics, and structuralism into one category. All the three disciplines have expelled writing as secondary, as something that exists only to represent the voice that it embodies, the voice that reveals the meaning. Derrida calls this concept of writing the

"vulgar concept." He dismisses this vulgar concept that has hitherto guided our understanding of language and the act of criticism through making us believe that everything derives and gives meaning only when related to an idea which in turn has to be related to another idea and so on; and these ideas will converge in the idea of a transcendental being. Thus, the criticism of a poem is the discovery of a meaning it carries. That meaning is an idea or a concept which, if further traced back, will converge in the idea of the transcendental being which is the essence of all ideas and concepts. So, there is a totality behind all fragmentation. That totality or the totalizing principle is the transcendental being. Derrida's attempt is to liberate language and criticism from this totalizing and totalitarian influence of metaphysics. He effects this process of liberation through shaping new terminologies that can demolish the old concepts of language and criticism and usher in a novel understanding of language which, in turn, results in the theory of criticism called deconstruction.

The new concept of writing that Derrida has shaped is based on three very complex words : "differance," "trace," and "archewriting." I will explain each of these terms, as much as possible within the limitation of this paper, and demonstrate how these terms lead to the act of deconstruction. Differance denotes two actions : differing and deferring.[11] Differing is the one not being the other. It is spatial. Deferring is something being delayed or postponed. It is temporal. Each sign, says Derrida, performs this double function : differing and deferring. Therefore, the structure of the sign is conditioned by differing and deferring, not by the signifier and the signified. In other words, the structure of the sign is differance which means that a sign is something that is not like another sign and something that is not the sign. For example, we distinguish the word "three" from "tree" both in speech and writing. They differ from each other and reveal the identity. In fact, every sign differs from every other sign. This difference is one of the two forces of each sign. The other force of the sign is its power of deferment, the capacity to postpone. Therefore, a sign is something that is not there. For example, the word "rose" in a poem begins to reveal meaning only when we realize that it is not the flower which we see in reality. It has to be something else; what it is has to be discovered. Therefore, the half of the sign is what it is not and the other half is what is not there. These two forces inhabit each sign. It follows that the sign has to disappear to give meaning. That means, each sign is half adequate and half inadequate, because it does not convey the idea perfectly, but it has to be used under necessity since no more adequate sign is available. No sign is fully adequate. And therefore every sign is

written "under erasure", "sous rature," a term that Derrida coins to express the inadequacy of the sign. It is written and yet crossed out, and both the sign and the mark of crossing (erasure) are visible like this : ~~express~~, that I have to write the sign "express" because a more adequate sign is not available to me, and even if one is available, it is inadequate. This is the fate of every sign, particularly in creative writing. In more familiar words, it is something like Shelley's portraiture of himself like a cloud that is its own knell. No poet was fully satisfied with the sign that came handy to him. That is the secret of the painter sighing for the colours of the rainbow, the sculptor pining after the figure that his mallet and chisel can never fully reveal out of the block of marble or granite. He sees it there but can never fully discover it. This is the home truth of all creative art which Bridges expressed in his lines :

> . . . pining vision dim, forbidden hopes profound,
> No dying cadence nor long sigh can sound
> For all our arts.

It follows that the very word sign is a realm of disunity, not unity as linguistics has claimed. The sign has no fixed meaning. Its meaning is contextual. All that a sign can do is to send us in search of what it is lacking, and remind us of what it is not. The sign, therefore, is a "trace." It is not the visible or the sensible graphic representation of a voice. The sign is the beginning of a movement, a wandering, a trace. The trace, to quote Derrida's own terse expression,

> . . . is not more natural (it is not the mark, the natural sign, or the index in the Husserlian sense) than cultural, not more physical than spychic, biological than spiritual. It is that starting from which a becoming-unmotivated of the sign, and with it all ulterior oppositions between *physis* and its other is possible (*OG*, p. 48).

Writing, in the Western tradition, says Derrida, has so far been believed to be "the letter," "the sensible inscription," and "the body and matter" external to the logos. Now, with the advent of "differance" and "trace" writing is none of those things nor their opposites. Attempting to define writing, Derrida states that writing ".. is inscription in general, whether it is literal or not and even if what it distributes in space is alien to the order of the voice...." (*OG*, p. 9).[12] Cinematography, choreography, music, and sculpture are writing in this sense. "One might also speak," says Derrida, "of athletic writing, and, with even greater certainty, of military or political in view of the techniques that govern those domains of today" (*OG*, p. 9).

Language itself is a writing (*OG*, p. 8). Commenting on Derrida's

concept of writing, Gayatri Spivak states that it is "something that carries within itself the trace of a perennial alterity; the structure of the psyche, the structure of the sign. To this structure Derrida gives the name writing."[13] Illuminating the concept of writing, Spivak states :

> 'Writing' then is the name of the structure always already inhabited by the trace. This is a broader concept than the empirical concept of writing, which denotes an emprical system of notation on the material substance (*OG*. p. xxxix).

Differentiating this concept of writing from the traditional concept of writing (the vulgar concept of writing), Derrida calls it "arche-writing." This arche-writing functions in the graphic and the nongraphic expressions. Writing is the name of any structure that carries trace. It can be a portrait, a wall-post, a proper name, a gesture, a spoken word, a written word, or anything that sets the awareness or the consciousness into movement.

What Derrida has done is a demystification of our understanding of language. He implies that neither the written word nor the spoken word carries any mystery. What we were told about the hierarchical superiority of speech over writing and about the proximity of the spoken word to the Presence of God are mere fabrications. Derrida's attempt is to demythify our understanding of language. Therefore deconstruction begins with the demystification as well as the demythification of the traditional concepts of language.

Now that our understanding of language had changed, what can be the fate of criticism ? The answer begins with the assumption that literature is one form of writing. A poem or a story or any piece of literature is a structure of traces. Each trace is *difference*. The critic who endeavours to discover the meaning of a word in a poem or of the entire poem can do only one thing : substitute one word with another, or indulge in a play with words. So far the critic of a work of art used to emerge with a concept, which could be related to another concept, which could be related to yet anothe concept, and so on. If we follow these concepts backward, we can see that they all converge in the metaphysics of scriptures. Therefore, so far every work of art was a "book," a sacred thing, because its meaning could be, in fact, should be, related to the concept of Origin, Truth, Ultimate reality, and so on. But with the advent of deconstruction, there are no books; there are only texts. Criticism is a participation in the endless activities of the words of the texts. In that respect, there cannot be any demarcation between criticism and creation. Both come under the title : a play with words.

Don't these comments imply that all that has been written is fiction, whether in prose or poetry ? I believe that deconstruction implies that. This includes our sacred books also ! Then, what about the concept of God, Origin, Truth and other innumerable concepts that are related to these terms. Derrida's answer can be that these concepts are mere figments of human imagination. However, Derrida does not deny the existence of God or Truth. All that he suggests is that, it seems to me, God or Truth or Ultimate Reality is not comprehensible through words, written or spoken. The realm of God or Truth may be a forbidden realm for man. He can only imagine it or, at the most, can have faint sense of it. But definitely he can feel the absence of the Supreme. That sense of absence and a longing for the presence mark the beginning of the search, the trace. It follows that Derrida definitely dethrones religions from the domain of literature, but he does not dethrone God. Therefore, it is left to the religious convictions of the readers of Derrida to decide whether he is diabolical or not.

Finally, I have to come back to the question of criticism. Criticism, from the deconstructive angle, has so far been controlled by metaphysics which controlled the idea of language also. The mystic element of language was the metaphysical aspect of it. Deconstruction attempts to demystify the myth of language by exposing the metaphysical foundation of our understanding of language.[14] Deconstruction, therefore, urges, in the words of David Allison, "...that the whole problem and history of language must be entirely rethought."[15] The result of the rethought is the conclusion that language is "writing," one of the expressions of arche-writing. This means, all that a critic can do is to partake in the forces of differance and move along the trace. The possible way for the deconstructive critic to criticise a text is to use the rhetorical, etymological, and figurative analyses and emerge with newer interpretations.[16]

In the traditional concept of language the spoken words is the embodiment of the idea, and the written sign of or it is the visible, outward dress of the spoken word. But according to Derrida, in spite of the 'difference' (difference+deference) that the writer makes between one word and another, he can never express his meaning accurately and exactly; He must always mean more than and something different from what he indicate through writing (ecriture). The critic, therefore, is to take the words of the poet or writer not as outward, visible garb of his meaning but merely as 'trace' or indicator of his meaning. Remember, every word used by an author is to be taken as under erasure. The critic taking his cue from the 'trace', must go

out on a quest of a closer approximation to the real meaning of his author. He must re-create the poem—according to his own apprehension. No critic will of course, be able to claim that he has reached the true meaning of the poet, and that is why criticism must be an endless quest.

Derrida gives no model to the critic. Man needs models to understand anything. Deconstruction tries to destroy all existing models of understanding and supplies none. Therefore deconstructive writing creates great bewilderment. In common sense language, the business of criticism, according to deconstruction, is to conceive avery word and every verbal construct an signs under erasure. The text is only a trace for a quest for another text. The text is not the final expression of the meaning of the writer. Each text has pre-texts. Thus each text is situated in between the texts before them and the texts that followed them. Literary criticism becomes an indefinite and endless pursuit. It is a movement forward and backward from the text. Thus to understand or to criticise a poem by W. B. Yeats, the critic has to have a knowledge of the authors and works that influced Yeats and the authors and works that have thrown light on Yeats. So criticism becomes a participation in the movements of the signs under erasure. The business of the critic is to deconstruct an existing construct and then to reconstruct it so as to liberate it from the concepts of metaphysics.

NOTES

1. M. H. Abrams, "The Deconstructive Angel", *Critical Inquiry*, 3 (1977), 428.
2. Newton Garver, Preface, *Speeeh and Phenomena* (Evaston : Northwestern Univ. Press, 1973), p. xxii. Commenting on the place of logic and rhetoric in the philosophy of language, Garver states : "In the history of Western philosophy, the philosophy of language,—including a great deal of its metaphysics—has invariably on the two movements in the last part of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century, Garver observes : "The first movement was naturally a reinforcement of the philosophy of language based on logic; but the subsequent movement has been an overthrow of that tradition, the overthrow which Derrida speaks of as the closure of metaphysics" (Preface, p. xii).
3. J. Hillis Miller, "The Critic as Host", *Critical Inquiry*, 3 (1977), 41.
4. Murry Krieger, *Theory of Criticism* (Baltimore and London : Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1972), pp. 220-213.

5. Frederic Jameson, *The Prison House of Language* (Princeton, N. J. : Princeton Univ. Press. 1972), p. 176.

6. "The system of language associated with phonetic alphabetic writing is that within which logocentric metaphysics, determining the sense of being as presence, has been produced. This logocentrism, this *epoch* of the full speech, has always placed in parenthesis, *suspended*, and supressed for essential reasons all free reflections on the origin and the status of writing...." [Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore and London : John Hopkins Univ. Press, 1974), p. 43]. Quotations are identified using the form *OG*.

7. Commenting on the metaphysical background of the signifier-signified concept, Derrida writes : "The difference between signified and signifier belongs in a profound and implicit way to the totality of the great epoch covered by the history of metaphysics, and in a more explicit and more systematically articulated way to the narrower epoch Christian Creationism and infinitism when these appropriate the reasons of Greek conceptuality" (*OG*, p. 13).

8. Logocentrism can be identified with metaphysics, both are expressions of the desire for the signified. Logocentrism finds all meaning in Logos, the word which reflects the Divine mind.

9. Phonocentrism is the rejection of writing as a mere technique that serves as only a signifier of the voice.

10. "This move is from what he calls the closed 'logocentric' model of the traditional or 'classical' views of language (which, he maintains, is based on the illusion of a Platonic or Christian Transcendent being or presence serving as the origin and guarantor of meanings) to what I shall call his own graphocentric model, in which the sole presences are marks-on-blanks" (M. H. Abrams, "The Deconstructive Angel", p. 429).

11. The key to the argument of difference is, says Murray Krieger, a play on the French verb *differer*, which means both "to differ" and "to defer". Based on this distinction between the simultaneously present entities seen in contrast (deffering) and similar entities, one present and the other absent, separated by a temporal gap (deferring). There are a few deceptions in differance : the "a" is not heard though seen, the term does not exist as a word, and hence it serves only to help remember the word from which it varies, and it does not exist as a concept because it differs from itself. To denote the variation from the word it has varied, differance moves from itself (*Theory of Criticism*, pp. 228, 231).

12. On writing and trace, Derrida states : "Writing is one of the representatives of the trace in general; it is not the trace itself" (*OG*, p. 167). "What the thought of the trace has already taught is that it could not be simply submitted to the onto-phenomenological question of essence. The trace *is nothing*, is not an entity, it exceeds the question What is? and contingently makes it possible" (*OG*, p. 65).

13. Gayatri Chakravorthy Spivak: Preface, *Of Grammatology* by Jacques Derrida (Baltimore and London : Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1974), p. xxxix.

14. J. Hillis Miller's observation on language reflects a deconstructionist position : "Language is from the start fictive, illusory, displaced from any direct reference to things as they are. The human condition is to be caught up in a web of word, which weaves and reweaves for men through the centuries the tapestry of myths, concepts, and metaphorical analogies, in short, the whole system of occidental metaphysics" ["Tradition and Difference," *Diacritics*, 2, 4 (1972), 11].

15. David Allison : Introduction to *Speech and Phenomena*, p. xxxvii-viii.

16. J. Hillis Miller : "The Critic as Host," in *Deconstruction and Criticism*, by Harold Bloom et al (New York : The Seabury Press, 1979), p. 251.

A RESEARCH NOTE

'TIMELY UTTERANCE' IN WORDSWORTH'S 'IMMORTALITY ODE'

Naresh Chandra

Wordsworth's 'Ode on Intimations of Immortality' is one of those poems of his which have angaged the attention of many critics and commentators. Its real subject, its purpose, its true meaning, its place in the poet's works have all been discussed at length, and yet one feels there is room for fresh interpretations. One of the puzzles set by the poem for its interpreters is the phrase 'timely utterance' which occurs in line 5 of stanza III :

> Now while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
> And while the young lambs bound
> As to the tabor's sound,
> To me alone there came a thought of grief :
> A *timely utterance* gave that thought relief,
> And I again am strong :

What was this 'timely utterance' that renovated the poet's faith in his moment of dejection ? Various conjectures have been made by the critics. Lionel Trilling in his well known essay on the Ode refers to the interpretations of Dean Sperry (which is the interpretation of many other critics), and for this particular phrase he refers to Garrod's conjecture that this timely utterance was "My heart leaps up when I behold", and rejecting it, advances his own that it was the poem 'Resolution and Independence'. And what is Trilling's ground for this conjecture ? To quote from his essay :

> "But I should like to suggest that the utterance was something else. In line 43, Wordsworth says, 'Oh evil day ! if I were sullen', and the word 'sullen' leaps out at us as a striking and carefully chosen word. Now there is one poem in which Wordsworth says that he was sullen ; it is 'Resolution and Independence' ".

Now, in 'Resolution and Independence', as any reader can see it for himself, the word 'sullen' does not occur anywhere, and it is most surprising that such an eminent and meticulous critic who illumines any thing that he touches, should have made such a lapse. Words of the same category do occur in the poem, e. g. 'dejection', 'Dim sadness' in stanza IV, and 'the fear that kills',

> 'And hope that is unwilling to be fed;
> Cold, pain, and labour, and all fleshly ills'

in stanza XVII; but nowhere does the word 'sullen' occur. Perhaps Trilling was relying on his memory and did not have the text of 'Resolution and Independence' before him when he was writing his essay on 'Immortality Ode'.

But my purpose is not to point out the lapses of the great. I have a fundamental difference with the interpretations of Garrod and Trilling. While they look for an external identifiation for the 'timely utterance' ('The Rainbow' according to Garrod, and 'Resolution and Independence' according to Trilling), I find the 'timely utterance' in the Ode itself, and in the very same stanza in which this phrase occurs. To establish my point I'll have to quote the relevant portion of the stanza :

> A *timely utterance* gave that thought relief,
> And I again am strong :
> The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;
> No more shall my grief the seasons wrong;
> ... .
> Thou Child of Joy,
> Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts,
> thou happy Shepherd-boy.

and evoke into action the visual and aural imagination of the reader. The poet in the midst of a joyous Nature is troubled by 'dejection', 'dim sadness' and such other depressing feelings because of the awareness of some perplexing change within himself, when suddenly a shepherd-boy tending sheep in another part of the wood, sings out spontaneously with joy. The sound of his song revives that self of the poet which he feared had died. This is simple psychological mechanism of vicarious feeling, i. e. feeling through others by substituting ourselves in their places. It is common experience that we become children to all intent and purpose when we mingle with children, or even watch them, at their play. We recapture the past which we otherwise think has gone out of our reach. As the shepherd-boy sings

out, the poet is wafted back to his younger days on the current of the song. A continuity is established with his past, and he gets a reassurance that the sense of loss at the realisation 'That there hath past away a glory from the earth' need not be a parpetual one, and that there is a channel through which either he can go back to his past, or he can recall his past to himself. There is every reason, therefore, to invoke benediction on the shepherd-boy and his spontaneous song. The capitalisation in 'Child of Joy' and 'Shepherd-boy' is not without its significance. I, therefore, hold that we do not have to look outside the Ode to identify the 'timely utterance' : it is there in the Ode itself.

A PRISONER IS MORE FREE

O. P. Bhatnagar

Like hippies helping themselves to hashish
When slaves look upon themselves as martyrs
Reality becomes an illusion
Dream-caged for the sport of the enfleshed satyrs.
In a convex glamour of concavity
Confusing adultery with revolt
Courage is perfumed with a corruption
That slaves love to prostitute conscience
Like sea returning upon itself in naked folds.
So used to expecting less
How could one live with more !
Freedom can't be donned like cavaliers their swagger
And Lady Godiva her role.
The self-enslaving slaves are ruled by glad ghosts
Rising from the nightmares of confident passivity
Destroying both identity and protest from the soul.
Fear can't be overcome by any aesthetic of paints
Like fire extinguished by looking away from flames :
Conquerors can't be blamed for corruption but slaves
Who refuse to be normal like saints.
That being determines consciousness
Is a lie irresistible to rainbow truths :
But, can the righteous acts of misfits change
The mirrored reflection of fractured roots ?
When slavery is loved as rhetoric to survive
Rendering both Cervantes and Dostoevsky futile
Conceits of cowards need no therapist
Nor freedom a Marx or a Gandhi to revive.
Slavery needs no walls
Nor freedom a door to unlock.
Identity is an image which resistance may seam
A prisoner is more free than those
Who have no freedom even to dream.

O. P. Bhatnagar has so far four volumes of verse to his credit : *Thought Poems*, *Feeling Fossils*, *Angles of Retreat*, and *Oneric Visions*; was one of the delegates to the Fourth World Congress of Poets, Seoul, Korea, 1979. Teaches English at Vidarbha Mahavidyalaya, Maharashtra.

REVIEW ARTICLE

THE SELF IN THE POETRY OF T. S. ELIOT

Shiva M. Pandeya

I

A. D. Moody's book *Thomas Stearns Eliot : Poet* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1979; xv and 365 pages) is a study of the self in T. S. Eliot's Poetry. The author assumes that Eliot's poetry is made up of "what the man lived through' and that the "poet we come to know in it is an elected self, a personality deliberately fashioned in the medium of language, and whose only real existence is in the poetry".(xi) Eliot's plays, too, are examined for the perspective they provide on the journey of the poetic self. At the end of the book there are three appendices : about the text of Eliot's poems, the drafts of *The Waste Land*, and his Christian and political preoccupations between the wars.

The author explores the elected poetic self in the five parts of the book, which correspond to his division of Eliot's literary career into five stages : 1905-1912, during which Eliot establishes his early originality ; 1912-1922, the period of personal crisis which affected his poetry of the time ; 1922-1930, when he fashions his transcendent poetic self ; 1931-1939, when the transcendent self is perfected ; 1939-1945, when he writes the patriotic quartets, in which the self becomes the protagonist of an ideal English and European culture. Eliot's poetic self is approached by Moody in the light of some of the background materials of Eliot's poetry : biograpical information, sources of the poems, influences, and, most importantly, some of Eliot's metaphysical and critical ideas. The author takes pains to cite from some of the hitherto unpublished writings of T. S. Eliot, which do not add anything significant to what is already in print.

The earlier parts of the book are brilliant in their exciting and competent analysis of the poetic self, but the later parts are uneven and often wrong-

headed. This may, perhaps, be due to Moody's own critical predilections and lack of sympathy with the later Eliot: "I concur with the younger Eliot who was primarily a poet, against the older Eliot who, speaking rather as a prudent moralist, recommended that the Christian readers 'scrutinize their reading with ethical and theological standards".(xiii) One can doubt Moody's implicit assumption that the younger Eliot lacked a marked ethical and religious sensibility. Moody's preference for the lyrical rather than the moral and satirical even in the poetry of the younger Eliot is a further evidence of his parochial critical standards.

Eliot's concept of personality and self and many of his critical ideas, as Moody rightly assumes, are grounded in metaphysics and religious mysticism. As a matter of fact, this metaphysics he acquired very early in his life and continued to build upon it as he grew older. Some of the relevant assumptions of this metaphysics can be summarized very briefly here. This will enable us to see Moody's handling of the subject in some perspective.

II

The mind of a man, according to the metaphysics close to Eliot's heart, is a receptacle of innumerable impressions (good, bad, and indifferent) received in the course of his entire sentient life. The actions he performs (good, bad, and indifferent) leave a latent deposit of impressions in the mind as an effect. These impressions sink to the subconscious and, thence, to the subliminal levels of the mind. They remain there and find occasions to express themselves as emotions and feelings. Operating as automatic natural energy from the abysmal depths of the cave of the mind, these impressions impel a man's choices, behaviour, and actions, which, in turn, leave a further deposit of impressions as an effect. Thus is a man, caught in the chain of causation, inexorably impelled, through innumerable deaths and re-births from moment to moment, into the one-directional movement of life, from a past without beginning to a future without end.

Over against this lower self, the lower, material nature of man, is his higher, spiritual self, which is variously defined as the energy of the intellect, the knower of the known, the hearer of the hearing of the heard, the seer of the seeing of the seen, and so on. A correlation of this immutable seer and the object of sight, etc., is the cause of impression being made on the mind, which undergoes countless mutations and metamorphoses. When the self, under delusion (a habitual state), seems to unite with the impressions, it gives rise to a sense of personality and ego-consciosness and causes objects to be experienced by the self.

The self, however, is capable of standing apart from the flux and mutations even while caught by them. It is capable of peering into the dark abysmal contents of its own mind, undertaking a detached aesthetic contemplation of the impressions, experiencing them with understanding and discrimination, and thereby coming to terms with them. This rather mystical process of restricting the fluctuations of the mind, its mutations and metamorphoses, leads to the state of self-identity, "Thou Art That". The state of liberation from the impressions, however, is temporary; for fresh impressions accumulate and re-form themselves soon. Hence the need to re-make oneself as the lower self undergoes mutations, dies and is reborn, from moment, to moment, affecting the destiny of the higher self.

From his own sense of personality and a single created-mind the practiser or the poet creates minds, onefold or manifold, for the sake of experience and liberation of the self. The poetics grounded in this metaphysics defines imagination as that special impression of the mind which has taken the form of a poetic seed. Through the created minds and characters the self experiences the subconscious and subliminal impressions and thereby transcends and escapes them. When the transcendent self has been perfected, it has already transcended and escaped all social and religious beliefs, including devotion to God; it abides grounded in itself, "Alone with the Alone".

In any "immediate experience" of objects the two levels of impressions, subconscious and subliminal (called basic emotions and floating feelings respectively in poetics), enter and get fused. Going blindly through experience binds the self; a detached aesthetic contemplation of it, with understanding and discrimination, leads to the freedom of the self. The poetic process, as Eliot has pointed out, differs from the mystical process in that it is not completed until it terminates in the making of the poem. And when the poet's wrestle with the words has ended, he hands over the poem, finally, to the reader.

III

I find it a great merit of Moody's book that it unerringly puts its fingers on some of the essential metaphysics in which Eliot is grounded. It does so while tracing the growth of Eliot's mind and the influence of Laforgue, Bergson, and Bradley. "For Eliot", writes Moody, "being a poet meant always to be incorporating the past into a present self....The mind in his poetry is composed of all that memory could recover and imagination order...."(1) Until the very end of his life, Moody believes, Eliot remained

the philosopher he had been. For philosophy "trained him to be the detached critic of his own sensuous and emotional life. As such it contributed to his development as a poet, first by confirming the primary value of immediate experience and then by enabling him to be its conscions master".(7)

As for Eliot's formal conversion to Christianity, it "did not make for any radical change in his poetry, but enforced its natural development".(12) Moody sees Laforgue as Eliot's master in the "art of cosmic detachment, an art which contrives to stand outside the inescapable... . Somehow the poet must place himself simultaneously within and above his experience... ."(19) Laforgue helped stimulate the "transformation of Eliot's poetic personality". This influence is seen in *Spleen* onwards in the early poetry. In *Preludes* the "fidelity to things as they impinge upon the senses is not for him a way of immersing in experince: it is rather a way of mastering it in the mind".(24)

The influence of Bergsonism is traced by Moody in the third *Prelude*. Bergson, like Eliot, considered "the soul constituted of its memory-images; he characterised the passive state of the mind as one in which life was like a ciné-film, a fixed sequence of flickering clichés; and he opposed to that the act of intuition, or the immediate consciousness of life-in-process which placed the mind within the absolute".(27) Bergsonism in *Prelude* III and IV and *Rhapsody on a Windy Night* is used as a cure for romanticism. The hallucinatory vision in *Rhapsody* is on the Bergsonian plane of dream, which is matched by images of memory.

Bradley's influence on Eliot is handled so as to yield valuable metaphysical insights into the self in Eliot's poetry. Moody draws on Eliot's doctoral thesis, now published as *Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley*, Eliot finds Bradley's philosophy "concerned with the self that is composed in the mind as it experiences and knows".(73) Moody isolates from Eliot's account the three stages in the process of knowledge and experience. The first stage is the initial one, in which the self is not self-conscious; but simply experiences its world as an immediate reality; and exists simply in its immediate experience".(73) The second stage marks the advance of self-consciousness and "its world breaks down into separated objects: 'by the failure of any experience to be merely immediate, by its lack of harmony and cohesion, we find ourselves as conscious souls in a world of objects'."(73)

The life of the conscious soul is a "painful struggle to reintegrate the world: to unify what has been dissociated; and to return to the state of immediate experience".(74) The third stage consists of a recovery of whole-

ness and unity of being, the Absolute. Eliot finds fault with Bradley in that the latter's universe is "only by an act af faith unified". Eliot's own metaphysical position in the matter is that the unity of being, the Absolute, or harmony and complete simplicity must be found in a recovery of immediate experience in order to be made actual and real.

IV

The terms used in *Knowledge and Experience* to elucidate the development of the self, according to Moody, apply exactly to the poetic personality in *Poems, 1920*. In *The Waste Land* Eliot tries to transmute his personal and private agonies into something universal and impersonal. Moody looks upon this poem as a *rite de passage*, which is intended to initiate the self into a higher state of existence through trial and purgation. But he considers Eliot's poem to be a rite intended "for the dying and the dead .. . There is no impulse towards a renewal of human love and no energy is generated for that.... the heroism of *The Waste Land* is of the kind which would end the human world, not give new life to it".(111)

This is an erroneous conclusion even though Moody's analysis of the verbal personality and the self's knowledge and experience is interesting and insightful. The error seems partly due to a failure to interpret correctly the death-and-rebirth motive in the poem: for the death of the egocentric self is the rebirth of the higher self, which alone is capable of love, whether human or divine. This failure affects Moody's interpretation and judgment in regard to the fifth section of the poem. The Upanishadic ending is, actually, a prayer for the pacification of the threefold fever—unrestrained desire, anger, and greed, which cause the human predicament at individual and social levels. The ending is very closely connected with the message of the thunder and the fire sermon. The negative material of the poem suggests the positive, if only by implication and hints.

One finds it hard to accept some of the other interpretations and judgments of Moody, too, in regard to Eliot's later poetry. Take, for instance, his interpretation of the following lines from *The Dry Salvages* :

> 'On whatever sphere of being
> The mind of a man may be intent
> At the time of death'– that is the one action
> (And the time of death is every moment)
> Which shall fructify in the lives of others :
> And do not think of the fruit of action.

In his attempt to interpret the passage, Moody focuses on the statement "the one action ... which shall fructify in the lives of others", and quotes a line that comes later in the poem, "At nightfall, in the rigging and the aerial". The "aerial" reminds him of Ariel in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and the spirits of the wind and air. These, in turn, help Moody recall the "angels and messengers of the Lord". Angels remind him of "angelus" and annunciation: "In IV 'angelus' recalls, from its use in the Catholic devotion, the angel's annunciation to Mary that she would conceive and bring forth the Word of God as the fruit of her womb. An analogy with that is surely implicit in the urging to conceive the supreme sphere of being as the one action which shall fructify in the lives of others. That is to speak, one begins to understand, of Incarnation".(231) This is criticism by free association.

If this interpretation of the passage quoted above is not dismissed out of hand as fanciful and far-fetched, a number of questions will have to be answered. Was the Word of God, which fructified the womb of Mary, intended at the time of someone's death? If so, at the time of whose death? By whom was it intended? And was the time of his death every moment? Again, if, as Moody would have us understand, Eliot is speaking of the Incarnation of Jesus as the fruit of "the one action", is he also asking us to reject that fruit, Jesus Christ? For Eliot's passage says : "And do not think of the fruit of action".

To show that Eliot is not talking of Krishna's teaching so much as of the Virgin's Womb, Moody also quotes from *The Bhagavad-Gita*: "On whatever sphere of being the mind of a man may be intent at the time of death, thither will he go./Therefore meditate always on me". Moody seems to be wholly unaware of a question staring him in the face from Krishna's words he has himself quoted : if at the time of death, why *always*? Consequently, he is unaware of any connections between this question and Eliot's "And the time of death is every moment" though he fancifully makes ready connections with the Virgin's womb.

Although Moody's handling of Eliot's metaphysics in his later poetry has several weak spots, his book is thought-provoking and, I repeat, insightful and perceptive. Such errors as there are, are consequent upon his difficult subject, the metaphysics of Eliot. Moody's book will be read with great profit by the serious readers of T. S. Eliot.

DELHI

R. Parthasarathy

Short of wringing its neck,
I try every trick of phrase
to cosmetize the blank page :

it refuses to improve. Now,
I prefer to brazen speech.
Knock the metaphor out of it.

A Brahminy kite preserves
the afternoon, as I write this.
Near things distract me—

this lickspittle town,
its back street putrid with empire :
Qutb and Purana-Qila,

scrap of paper blown about me
day after day (their distant
tongue rasps my verse)—

throw dust in the eyes. Will
Indraprastha rise again ? The Yamuna
has forever covered its spoors.

Life, at forty-five,
is a breath of fresh air.
The children are grown up.

Their eyes hone
my nights : I soften to the touch.
The wife keeps house.

From afar shapes the poems
till they become familiar as prayer.
To be oneself, strike no postures,

on rare occasions stumble upon
the blessing of simplicity—
I couldn't ask for more.

(R. Partnasarthy, indisputably in the first rank of Indian poets writing in English today, has published one volume of verse, *Rough Passage* and is well represented in *Ten Twentieth-Century English Poets*, both published by Oxford University Press of which be is the Chief Literary Editor at its Delhi Office).

METAMORPHOSIS INTO AN I. A. S. OFFICER

Vasant A. Shahane

My chest is an uneven table
My tummy is a heap of undisposed files
Marked 'To-day'.

My nose is a twittering buzzer
Chhii ! Shhii ! Chink ! Shhink !
It transports the peon in and out
Like a trained chimpanzee in a circus
In search of anacin.

From my tight-collared neck hangs
a Tricolor terelene bunting of welcome
For the white khaddar-clad Deputy Minister.

My brain is a worn-out ledger
of an insolvent banker
Where I grope for records and numbers.
I jumble the cosmic design
By mixing up birth records
Of babies and buffaloes,
Of family planning and small-pox.

My tongue is a limpid red tape
Inwardly licking before colorful ribbons.
From my ark-like mouth issues Indian ink
Used for mimeographing my masterpieces
Bulky, pregnant and ominous
To be delivered of the Gestetner machine
Consolations of impotence, nightmares of Parishads,
Abortions of district planning.

When I am transferred, speak of me
At the Farewell Party
As one who is not so dark a daemon
Trying to be sub-human,
A brownish tadpole
Wishing to be a yellowish frog
Yet a colorless cog
In the red-tapish machine.

V. A. Shahane is Professor of English at Osmania University, Hyderabad. Has published several critical studies of Indian and English writers and writes occasional verse).

BOOK REVIEWS

IMAGINATION IN COLERIDGE ed. John Spencer Hill, London : Macmillan, 1978, xviii+232 pages. £ 8.95.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CRITICAL TRADITION FROM PATER TO YEATS by Brijraj Singh, New Delhi : Macmillan, 1978, viii+147 pages. Rs. 40.

THE POETRY OF W. B. YEATS : MYTH AS METAPHOR by Ashok Bhargava, New Delhi : Arnold-Heinemann, 1979, vi+260 pages. Rs. 50.

The three works under review (the latter two doctoral dissertations, at Yale & Manchester respectively) contribute towards a scholarly mosaic of the Symbolist Imagination. Hill's compilation fulfils the long-standing need for a source-book for Coleridge on the Imagination. It comprises fiftyone extracts from the whole range of Coleridge's writings from 1795 to 1834 (including seven poems in part or whole). The shortest are scraps from the *Notebooks*, the longest is a selection of over forty pages from *Biographia Literaria*. Each extract is annotated fully, even to the point of overscrupulosity; supplemented by a long extract from Wordsworth's Preface to *Poems* (1815), and an exemplary bibliography.

Hill's Introduction traces the development of Coleridges theory of the creative Imagination. His dissatisfaction with the purely materialistic, mechanical and associative denotation of Imagination in the 18th century empirical tradition led to "his recognition of perception as integrative, poetic, and necessarily correlative with feeling, and his understanding that the poetic Imagination grows out of a seamless bond between perception, memory, association, feeling, intellect, and a sense of language as being in some way autonomous. "Coleridge's meeting with Wordsworth and his determination to investigate the seminal principles of Wordsworth's art, in

1795, crystallized his presentiments of the new theory, and the first clear formulations appeared in a series of letters to William Sotheby dating from mid-1802. Hill's exposition of this "maturative process" adds to the value of a book likely to prove indispensable to students and teachers of Coleridge, although it is to be hoped that the expediency and thoroughness of his handy-work will not dissuade readers from more extended and uncharted excursions into Coleridge.

In tracing the roots of Symbolist doctrine of the Imagination to Kant and Coleridge, Ellmann and Feidelson remark that "though not all romantics are symbolists, the symbolist is a kind of romantic". For Brijraj Singh the aestheticism of Walter Pater, Lionel Johnson and Arthur Symons provides the link to the apotheosis of the Imagination in Yeats's theory of the symbol. In such a line of descent James strikes one as being rather the odd man out. Dr. Singh marshalls the critical opinions of his chosen set of five—not one of whom can be called primarily a critic—around three hazardously nebulous terms : Life, Art, Morality. In spite of Singh's persuasive argument for the coexistence in Pater of a humanistic Dr. Jekyll alongside the more familiar Art-for-Art's-sake Mr. Hyde, James is the only 'critic' really concerned with morality. Further it is difficult to see how an account of the development of these writers' opinions on Life, Art and Morality can combine with an evaluation of their critical writings to postulate the 'development of a 'tradition'. Approximate contemporaneity or chronological overlap, mutual acquaintance (remote rather than familiar), and partial co-incidence of themes and concerns is the nearest that the motley come towards a development of any sort of a 'tradition'. And then, pace the long-current and fashionable esteem in which the Yeats-Symbolism mode has been held, it seems odd that any critical tradition should find its culmination in as incidental, obscurrantist and self-absorbed a critic as Yeats. Irrespective of whether one takes an anti-mythkitty stance a la Winters or a la Larkin, and irrespective of what one thinks of Yeats as a poet, it is difficult to see any English critical tradition culminating in Yeats the *critic*. Perhaps one is tilting merely at the windmill of a misnomer : but it does seem a mistitled thesis. The above misgivings do not detract from the book's merit of urging attention to the long-neglected Pater, and I hope I shall not seem niggardly in remarking that the work possesses a dual virtue dissertations notoriously lack : lucid brevity.

The disappointment of Bhargava's able thesis-work may be indicated through Yvor Winters' back-handed compliment to another Yeats-critic : "Mr X is a split-personality : on the one hand he is a careful scholar and on

the other hand he is a critic with neither talent nor training. In this he resembles most of the literary scholars with whose work I am acquainted. His book is very helpful notwithstanding.". Dr. Bhargava is not a critic at all, but only a scholar—I refrain from saying 'merely', but it does seem a pity that a scholarly exposition of the role of myth in Yeats's poetry should provide so little opportunity for the demonstration of any *critical* awareness of the relative merits and demerits of the poems and indeed the whole corpus and mode being described. Perhaps it is vulgar and unreasonable to expect in a work of this nature the sort of criticism which makes enough elbow-room for itself to step back the more clearly to see the object one has assiduously been glued to, albeit short-sightedly. The book is likely to be 'very helpful, notwithstanding'.

Reviewed by
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INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH, editor, Krishna Nandan Sinha, New Delhi : Heritage Publishers, 1979. 237 pp. Rs. 60/- or $ 12.00.

The Indo-English writer today seems to have left behind the many fundamentalist issues surrounding his choice of English, but serious doubts about the quality of his writing persist. The reasons are many and vary with each writer and genre. The two signs of hope on the scene are the quantity of writing that continues to appear each year and the increasing seriousness and professionalism that mark the criticism of this writing. In the past two years, there have been many collections of essays on the subject and a few critical studies, and there is some indication that a new framework is emerging in which we may meaningfully discuss Indo-English literature. Krishna Nandan Sinha's *Indian Writing in English* is another such collection and it is a modest step, I believe, in the direction of isolating and focussing on a few critical issues.

Indian Writing in English contains 23 essays on various aspects of Indo-English writing. The coverage is vast ; there are eassys on Nissim Ezekiel, Raja Rao, Swami Vivekanand, Manmohan Ghose, Sarojini Naidu, Kamla Das, Mulk Raj Anand, Sri Aurobindo, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, R. K.

Narayan and Jawaharlal Nehru, besides two interviews, one statement by Mulk Raj Anand and five general essays on the subject. Most of the contributors (14 out of 23) teach at various colleges and universities in Bihar, which is as it should be, because the collection is primarily a gathering of presentations made at a UGC sponsored seminar at the University of Bihar in January 1977.

It would perhaps have been better to open the collection with Amalendu Bose's sharp and brief comments on Indo-English writing in general than with the all-too-familiar story in Mulk Raj Anand's own words of how he came to be a writer. The younger Indo-English writers would, however, do well to heed Anand's call to respond to *felt experience* instead of leaning heavily on books and dictionaries. Bose, in the course of his nine-page essay, traverses some already trodden ground but also raises issues of continuing concern. Indo-English literature is widely seen today as an Indian literature rather than as an extension of English literature, but its tradition is still a ticklish question. To own up to the Indo-English writing of the last century and early twentieth century is embarrassing enough, but to confine one self to this thin and pale tradition would be suicidal. Many Indo-English writers have wandered across to English helplessly because English is the only language they know or know well enough to express themselves in. As Nissim Ezekiel puts it, "To write poetry in English because one cannot write it in any other language is surely not a despicable decision." On the contrary, it opens up a window on the vast body of world literature written directly in or translated into English, making it possible for the Indo-English writer to look for shared interest and to define his own tradition in a creative eclecticism. At the same time, Indo-English writers, especially those who are fully or partially bilingual, can draw actively upon the rich resources of Indian languages and literatures. Amalendu Bose has rightly stressed the Indianness of Indo-English poets in dealing with issues of language and tradition. In relation to evaluation, Bose suggests that the Indo-English writing will be judged both in relation to Indian literatures in regional languages as in relation to other world literatures in English.

The other pieces in Sinha's collection that deserve special mention include John B. Beston's most interesting and intelligent interview with Nissim Ezekiel. Ezekiel's down-to-earth good sense contrasts sharply with Raja Rao's otherworldly woolliness in the latter's interview with Shiv Niranjan. Raja Rao's talk about his *guru* (who is he ?), about *shradha* and *sadhna*, and his "humble" claims that he has discovered the Truth, add very

little to our understanding of *Kanthapura* and *The Serpent and the Rope*, two important works of Indo-English fiction. In contrast, a definite Ezekiel world begins to emege when we learn about his Bombay commitments, his Jewish origins, his childhood experience, his interest in translations, his attitude to religion and skepticism or his choice of youthfulness over wisdom if forced to choose : "Youthfulness means vitality, freshness, a capacity to renew one's existence." Anisur Rahman's essay on Nissim Ezekiel's plays is sane and solid and underscores the interrelatedness of Ezekiel's creative work as a whole. Vasant A. Shahane's essay is a competent discussion of style and technique in Ruth Prawer Jhabvala's fiction. Sisirkumar Ghose draws our attention to the continuing relevance of Sri Aurobindo's *Psychology of Social Development*: spiritual or soul factor must extend to society beyond the individual's otherworldly aims. Quite unlike his usual attempts at synthesis that bristle with ideas, allusions and classical phrases, this essay by Ghose is a straightforward and lucid attempt to convey some Aurobindian intimations of an Emersonian Oversoul. Om Prakash Grewal's keen analysis of Kamala Das's poetry has general relevance to the limitation of Indo-English literature. Grewal hopes that Indo-English writers can "break the prison-walls built by their middle-class egoism and extend the range of their sympathies." By far the best essay in the volume is Ujjal Kumar Dutt's "The Lyrical Poetry of Manmohan Ghose" which demonstrates the range and sensitivity of the best in scholarship. Through close analysis and careful comparison, Dutt shows that Manmohan Ghose is not wanting by contemporary standards alone; he is not "interesting enough when judged even by the standards of the 1890s.. Manmohan's mode and his achievement were too personal to be of any use to others." And Dutt goes on to conclude, "Suffering may have consumed Manmohan's life but he failed to consume suffering into poetry."

With nine essays devoted exclusively to poets, poetry seems to have received more than its due share of attention in this volume. But it is in poetry that quantity seems to triumph over quality so palpably on the Indo-English literary scene. Is this lack of lustre attributable to a paucity of felt experience, a general timidity, or a relative absence of self-criticism ? There is some validity in the complaint that Indian critics give more time to fifth-rate poets published abroad and allow Indo-English poetry to die of neglect, but the poets themselves are equally to blame. They seem unable to engage in meaningful dialogue and are unwilling to learn, obsessed as they often are with quixotic ideas of diction or *vers libre* or "Indianness" without any ease or transcendence. The attempt to limn Indian landscape or situations *concretely* with ironic or satiric intent is a welcome new development and will, one

hopes, allow Indo-English poetry to move away from the abstract, the cereberal and the bookish, modes that have dominated so far.

There are many examples in the volume of authorial or editorial failure, besides the printing errors that are much too frequent indeed. The authors of "New Voices : Animadverions on Recent Indo-English Poetry" obviously mean *All About H. Hatterr* when they refer to G. B. Desani's *Hali* on p. 116. The editor seems to have forgotten to delete footnotes numbered 15 to 20 in Veena Rani Prasad's "Sarojini Naidu's Lyrical Mode" after having edited out the last few paragraphs of the essay (p. 108). There are numerous other problems in syntax and expression throughout the volume. For example, Harimohan Prasad talks of the "obeisance" paid by Radhakrishnan, Humayun Kabir and Mulk Raj Anand to Nehru as a writer (p. 228). Prasad also illustrates a common danger in the criticism of Indo-English literature : the danger of running away with comparisons. In his three-page essay, Prasad mentions as many as 27 authors (some more than once) in relation to Nehru ! In Premnath Sahay's readable essay on "Nehru's Prose Style," a related danger is illustrated when Sahay compares Nehru with both Lawrence and Joyce, but borrows both his examples from James Reevess *The Critical Sense*. Finally, the index is rather sketchy and lopsided—while inane and irrelevant items such as "cryptomaniac," "emotion of multitude" and "Insights and outsights, search for" are piously indexed, most Indo-English authors (including some who receive sufficient attention in the volume) are simply left out.

Despite these reservations, *Indian Writing in English* is a welcome addition to the fast-growing scholarship on Indo-English literature. The editor's hope that this volume may serve as a supplement to *Critical Essays on Indian Writing in English* edited by M. K. Naik, *et al*, has been fulfilled to some extent, but I wonder if most essays included in the volume demonstrate his belief that "criticism is in the ultimate analysis an act of creation, costing not less than everything".

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LITERARY SOCIOLOGY AND PRACTICAL CRITICISM by Jeffery L. Sammons. (Bloomington : Indiana Universlty Press. 1977).

THE SOCIOLOGY OF LITERATURE : ed. Janet Routh and Janet Wolff. Sociological Review Monographs (Univ. of Keele, 1977).

Of late there has been a considerable spurt in books and monographs on sociology of literature. Part of the reason is a general upsurge in what Robert Nisbett would call the sociological consciousness, and also the wide scholarly interest in the philosophy of Marxism. Sammons' is a book that takes into account the fundamental assumptions of the social theories of literature and development of interest in popular arts. It takes its point of departure from the current German, French and Eastern European scholarship and seeks to apply it to the social concerns of Anglo-American critical theory. Some of the assumptions behind the European sociology of literature, such as the class orientation of art (Goldman and Lukacs), the writer as producer (Macherey and Benjamin) the hermeneutical basis of the writer's craft (Gadamer) and the mediation of social and literary levels are only now being brought to critical attention in the Anglo-American tradition and are provoking exciting controversy. Sammons takes careful note of these and analyses their usefulness for purposes of practical criticism.

Professor Sammons' thesis is that 'literary sociology, far from dissolving literature into something extraneous to it, actually defends the integrity of literature'! This is a welcome relief from the reductionist aesthetics of the French Structuralism in which the social values of literature remain problematic. Indeed by adopting what he calls 'pluralism of method', Sammons has been able to probe the feasibility and methodological difficulty of the sociological approach to literature from various angles. It also enables him to focus on alternative viewpoints and test their viability in the direction of practical critisism.

Since the current debate on the subject of sociology of literature has been sharpened by the Marxist conceptions of praxis, it is not surprising that Sammons gives considerable attention to some of the Marxist premises on the subject. He is particularly good on Adorno, Benjamin and Lukacs. Of course, they do not represent the orthodox Marxist tradition. Yet they have thrown much illuminating light on the problems of literary sociology without compromising the status of literature as art.

It is not that Sammons accepts the sociological theories unhesitatingly. His is a critical approach in the real sense of the term and he is at his best when reconciling diversities of points of view. His chapter headings, based

on a broadly abstract set of categories such as Homology, Value, Endurance etc., engage concepts rather than particular seciologists of literature.

This makes for an appraisal of theory and allows Sammons to evaluate the various aspects of his problem without leaning heavily on any one critic.

In a work that is more an exploration of the concept of sociology of literature it is not possible to treat the various assumptions with equal intensity. Naturally, Sammons has not been able to analyse everything connected with his subject in as much detail as one would have liked him to. For one thing he is rather perfunctory on the relationship of high and popular art, a subject that has been analysed by sociologists of culture in recent times; in this respect one would like to recall the Frankfurt School's studies of the 'Culture Industry'. Nevertheless, Sammons is more amenable to the qualities of popular literature than would the Leavises be, to suggest only one instance. Besides, Sammons' book shows a wide range of reading and his grounding in Germanic studies helps him to bring to the English-speaking reader an area which was until today a fallow territory. All in all, a useful book.

The *Sociological Review* monographs also bear witness to the fact that sociology of literature is now catching up with other academic disciplines in English universities. We are familiar with the work of Raymond Williams, Terry Eagleton and other younger British Marxists who have written purposefully in this area. With the founding of journals like *Literature and History and Ideology and Consciousness*, to say nothing of the support that the *New Left Review* has been lending to the revival of interest in the sociological studies of literature, British universities have shown a decidedly more enlightened interest in this subject. There has been much discussion of these problems in the working-papers of the Institute of Contemporary Studies at Birmingham, as well as in studies of the novel by Diana Spearman and John Orr. It is therefore natural that most of the theoretical discussions in Monograph 25 should centre on the Marxist aesthetics (three essays out of a total of 12, excluding separate essays on Sartre and Lukacs). Of the three essays on Marxism and literature, I think Alan Swingewood's is the best, definitely an improvement on his earlier *The Sociology of Literature* (1970). Terry Eagleton's is trenchant and polemical, as is everything else by this most incisive of Marxist critics in Britain today. Orris essay on Lukacs follows the predictable course and does not make any major new points.

What gives this selection a freshness not to be seen in the early British Marxist appraisals of literature is the way many critics engage themselves in

a combative dialogue with other critical ideologies such as structuralism and hermeneutics. Janet Wolff's adaptation of Gadamer and his hermeneutic theories is a welcome new method of using philosophical hermenautics as a viable sociology of literature through association with Goldmann's theory of mediation. Similarly John Rutherford's study of structuralism offers insights of different kind.

Monograph number 26 (edited by Diana Laurenson) presents practical applications on the theoretical positions developed in the other volume. I would single out Lovell on Jane Austen, Eagleton on Conrad, Frankenberg on the Brontës as representative of the more scholarly critiques in this selection.

These critiques not only raise the questions that sociologists of literature have always raised, but they also tackle the question of form from a sociological angle. Though none of the discussions on form approaches the sharpness of Frederic Jameson's discussion of dialectical criticism in *Marxism and Form* (1971), yet it is heartening to see sociology of literature coming to terms with literary form in its own right, something that we don't find in critics like Arnold Kettle and even Raymond Williams.

These books are different from the earlier studies like Malcolm Bradbury's untheoretical *Social Background of Modern English Literature* and similar works. But they are still in the process of highlighting the main issues in the sociology of literature. One thing they manage to establish with some assertiveness is that without the historical insights provided by Marxism it is not possible to evolve a comprehensive soeiology of literature. Even so one nagging question remains: how can a sociology of literature combine insights into the nature of literary content with an understanding of the purely formal aspects of literary works. True, we now have convincing insights into ideology and its relation to the nature of reality portrayed at various historical periods: yet it is premature to say that the discipline of the sociology of literature has arrived. There is still a long way to go. In his recent conversations on Literature and Politics, Raymond Williams showed a true awareness of this and suggested that it would be better to see form as evolving out of the inevitability of the content. But suggestive though this argument is, it still begs too many questions. However the dialogue has started and we have authoritative new voices speaking. The very fact that there are sharp-divergencies is a proof of the health of the discipline.

Reviewed by M. L. Raina
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& P. Pathak, Wadia College, Poona

PROFESSING POETRY by John Wain, (London : Macmillan, 1977). Pp. x+396. £ 6.95.

One of the more curious phenomena of the English academic establishment is the Oxford Professorship of Poetry. The incumbent is not appointed in any of the recognised ways that govern academic selections, like an interview, or a consideration of his publications, or his record as a teacher or poet. Rather, he is elected—and not by those who may be judged fittest to choose him, but all M. A.'s of Oxford who happen to be in town on the day of the election and care to vote. The incumbent's only responsibilities, besides giving three lectures a year, are to help judge the Newdigate Prize poems, and deliver the Greween Oration in alternate years. Most incumbents do not even reside in Oxford, and come in for only a few days at a time to fulfil their nominal obligations. It would seem, then, that the Oxford Chair is a mere sinecure, a carry-over from an earlier age of ritual and tradition, a surviving fossil.

In actual fact, the Oxford Professorship is among the highest honours that an academic or creative writer can aspire to.

What gives the post its unique prestige is the stature of many of the people who have occupied the Chair during the last two hundred years. There have, it is true, been undistinguished occupants, people whose election was stage-managed, or who were voted in on the basis of unacademic considerations. But we have only to think of Thomas Warton, Matthew Arnold, W. H. Auden and Robert Graves to realise that Oxford M. A.'s are capable of choosing wisely on occasions. In 1973 they again chose wisely by electing John Wain to the post ; and if anyone was inclined to doubt their wisdom then, Wain's book *Professing Poetry* should be enough to dispel these doubts.

Though the Professor of Poetry is under no obligation to publish his lectures, some of the most eminent have, in fact, published theirs—again the names of Arnold, Bradley and Auden come to mind. These lectures have been, sometimes, the final critical word on a subject for a generation, or profound and perennial contributions to the spirit of man in its search for sweetness and light, or a review of the art of poetry by a distinguished practitioner. But they have always existed in a vacuum. They have told us what the Professor thought of his subject, but not what he thought of the professorship itself, of the business of standing for election, getting elected, of his contacts with students and other poets during his tenure, and of the work he did when

not professing poetry. Indeed, one of the most interesting aspects of John Wain's book is that, apart from giving us nine of the lectures he delivered during his tenure, it seeks to fill in the gaps that his predecessors did not consider worth plugging. This makes the book more than a mere collection of lectures: it makes it a dramatic, warm and personal testament as well. The book gives us a glimpse of the energetic and active literary scene at Oxford, and tells us not only what John Wain said, did and wrote between 1973 and 77, but also what other poets said, did and wrote during this period. It thus becomes a poet's-eye-view of the history of English poetry in our times, a history in which Wain is deeply involved, and for the shaping of which he is responsible in no small measure.

The letures first John Wain gave, as all other Oxford Professors of Poetry give, fifteen lectures during his tenure, of which he wrote down only nine, and they are printed in this book for the first time. Each year, he decided, he would give one lecture on a general theme, one on a contemporary poet whose work he values, and one would be in the nature of a free-wheeling lecture on any theme or topic to which his mood or interest directed him. Thus the three general lectures in *Professing Poetry* are on "Alternative Poetry", "On the Breaking of Forms", and "Poetry and Social Criticism". The contemporary poets discussed are Auden, Philip Larkin and William Empson; and the free-wheeling thoughts light on Emily Dickinson, the first night of *Comus*, and Edward and Helen Thomas. The lectures are uneven in quality. All of them are written with engagement, elegance, wit, verve, and a deep concern for the value of poetry. But some are definitely thin. The one on Emily Dickinson is literate and kindly—perhaps too kindly (Wain refers to the poetess throughout as "Miss Emily")—but doesn't ultimately say anything about her life or work that we didn't already know. Similarly, "Reflections on the First Night of *Comus*", though it makes for excellent reading, as no doubt it must have made for excellent listening, is too dependent on Barbara Breasted's essay "*Comus* and the Castlehaven Scandal" (*Milton Studies*, III, 1971) to be much value to those who know the essay. But it has the merit of directing the attention of those who don't know the essay to what is, perhaps, one of the best accounts of the background to *Comus* in recent years.

The three general lectures contain much that is sane and sound. But perhaps because it is the Oxford Professor of Poetry speaking, one expects to be given, if not a profound insight into, then at least a grand statement on the nature of poetry; and not getting that, one feels rather let down. In

"Alternative Poetry", which is perhaps the most ambitious and wide-ranging of the three, Wain considers first the power and fascination of Gaelic mythology, and then discusses in some detail the reasons that accounted for the success of James MacPherson's literary forgeries and frauds in the eighteenth century. The precise relationship of MacPherson's *Fingal* to the literary taste of the day is studied for what it teaches us about the way in which a genuine new poetry arrives on the scene, drawing from tradition and yet altering it. This, Wain maintains, is the way in which the new poetry of Eliot, Pound and others arrived in the second decade of this century; and this is not the way in which the new poetry of our own generation has burst upon us, rudely insisting on the outmodedness of *all* tradition. Wain's conclusion is that the poetry of our generation, by wilfully rejecting tradition, is aiming at the wrong thing; thus an account of a chapter in the literary history of the eighteenth century is, by contrast, made to illuminate the condition of our own time.

So far, so good. My cavil is that when, at the end of the lecture, we ponder over what has been said, it turns out that the values Wain is upholding are those that, a generation or so ago, were the common shibboleths of the English-speaking world: tradition and a sense of literary continuum. Not that there is anything wrong with maintaining these values—I subscribe to them myself, though it is rather amusing to see Wain, one of the "angry young men" of my boyhood, upholding these values in middle age. What makes me rather dissatisfied is that one expected something maybe a bit more momentous, a bit less obviously upheld, something maybe a bit less commonly known or thought of, from the Oxford Professor. One expected a grander statement, with a capital S, perhaps, in place of a rather low-keyed reaffirmation of the value of tradition.

The same criticism can be made, with perhaps greater justification, of the other two general lectures, "On the Breaking of Forms" and "Poetry and Social Criticism". They aren't provocative or profound enough, and say that which is sound, but has been said before. Wain is much better on the poetry of his cantemporaries, and writes with sympathy, understanding and insight that comes from being himself a practising poet. He opens up new vistas, sheds light on dark corners, is not above confessing bafflement at times, and constantly sends us back to the poets themselves with heightened keenness for their work. He is never pedagogical or categorical, and never condescending. He has thrilled to the work of Auden, Empson and Larkin, and makes available to us all the resources of his very engaging personality in such

a way that we not only share his thrill for these poets but also warm ot him. Indeed, one reason we thrill to these poets is because he has felt the thrill; and we thrill so much to him that we want also to experience the thrill he has felt. I have not read too many other critics who make you like an author not only because the author is good, but because they themselves are so good.

If these lectures contained nothing but quotations from the authors that Wain discusses, they would still be valuable. For he has read deeply in their works, and an unerring tact leads him to all the right quotations from works which have long been familiar, as well as those that are little known. In the case of Auden, especially, Wain quotes at length from earlier drafts of the poems which the author subsequently revised, with the result that the earlier versions are hard to come by; this gives Wain's essay an added importance in the canon of Auden criticism. But his commentary and judgement are valuable too. He points out, in Auden's case, the way in which the later poems are not a refutation of his earlier stances but grow out of them, so that the poet's work forms a continuum. He also points out what so many critics have missed, *viz.* the schoolboy element of fun, in-jokes and charade in much of Auden's poetry; surely to miss this element is to misread him. If Wain's essay on Auden is in any way unsatisfactory, it is so only to the extent that Auden's is too vast a poetic career to be gripped firmly in the compass of just one lecture. The works of Larkin and Empson, though not less complex and rewarding, are more capable of being covered in the course of a lecture each, Larkin's because he is still writing, and Empson's because his *oeuvre* consists of just two volumes of poetry. With them Wain comes into his own.

He points out the variety of verse forms that Larkin is master of, and writes with a poet's knowledge of the effects that Larkin is enabled to create through these forms. He takes into account Larkin's achievement as a novelist in *Jill*, and uses that work to illuminate the poet's abiding images and concerns. The best part of the lecture, indeed, is where he discusses these concerns: "Larkin takes a situation we have all experienced, and by his luminous meditation and sharply lyrical language makes us possess it in its fullness....Ordinary life, Toad-land, is a touching dream. And also a dazzling vision. And intensely sad. And an empyrean where stones shine like gold above each sodden grave. This is the Larkinian imperative..." Not only is an important point made, but the phrase "luminous meditation" gives it memorability. It does what Wain notes as a characteristic effect of Larkin in another passage: a light is turned on *within* a person's consciousness, so that it is suddenly illuminated from inside.

On Empson, Wain is better still. Empson is a difficult poet, and Wain's lecture forms as good an introduction to him as a fine judgement on his work. For one thing, Wain brings to bear on an understanding of Empson's poetry Empson's critical writing as well, not just *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, as is perhaps to be expected, but also, and rather more surprisingly, *Some Versions of Pastoral* and *Milton's God*. For another, he knows that Empson is difficult, and therefore leads the reader to him through the most efficacious of methods, a paraphrase directed at the question: what does the poem mean ? And because Wain is not afraid of confessing that some of Empson baffles him, we never get the impression that we are being taken by the hand. There is no condescension shown to the reader: rather, Wain invites the reader to join him in the difficult, but exciting pursuit of true judgement.

What emerges is, as in Auden's case, the insight that the themes of Empson's second volume of verse, far from being a departure from those of the first, are really a development. For at all times Empson is concerned with the delicate and tense equilibrium that obtains in all life and, indeed, makes all life possible. The idea is explored through recondite imagery, often drawn from botany and entomology, and so handled that the poems acquire a remarkable range of meaning that strikes us on first reading an Empson poem is not cancelled out or even modified on subsequent readings; what happens, rather, is that the images begin to point in other directions, till further meanings are found, overlaid on the first, and all of them co-exist in the mind, adding to each other instead of destroying each other. In a word, Empson's method is analogical, and Wain not only demonstrates this through an analysis of a number of poems, but also shrewdly links Empson's use of this method to his reading of seventeenth-century poetry on the one hand, and his interest in anthropology, developed partly as a result of reading *The Golden Bough*, and partly through his experiences in China and Japan, on the other.

Wain praises Empson for his tautness, wit, memorability and fine precision, as is perhaps to be expected; but the remark that Empson is at his best as a love poet seems surprising till Wain brings his evidence forward. Then, through an analysis of "Arachne" and "Success" (both excellent poems), he is not only able to establish his point but also put full significance into his remark that Empson is one of the greatest English poets of this century. It is not thus that he has generally been seen: I should imagine that only one or two people know his poetry for every ten who are familiar

with his criticism. Wain's lecture should help to make more accessible a poet whose full worth has yet to be recognised by the vast majority of poetry readers.

My favourite lecture, however, is the last, where Wain makes an excursion into biography to describe the sad and poignant life of Edward Thomas, and his wife Helen's love for him, so movingly and unforgettably described in her book *World Without End*. The facts that Wain deals with are available to all, and Edward Thomas's poetry has beeu before the public long enough for readers to know parts of it well. What makes the lecture such an extraordinary performance, then, is not any new light that Wain sheds on his subject, but the sympathy and understanding with which he treats him. Once again, in Wain's pages, Thomas comes alive, proud, stubborn, talented, bowed down with care, and intensely unhappy. Once again his wife's love for him is celebrated, and once again the tragedy of the man who couldn't love, and that of the wife who loved too well, is gone through. At the most intense moments Wain wisely refrains from telling the story himself, but chooses appropriate quotations from the works of his protagonists to describe their lives. "Edward Thomas and Helen Thomas" is a perfect rounding off of the lecture series, which moves from broad issues to the work, and finally the lives, of writers. Poetry is important, poems are important, but the men who write them are important, too; and in the last lecture Wain pays fitting tribute to a good poet and a fine, though unhappy man.

If *Professing Poetry* printed only the lectures I have discussed, it would be a valuable book, though hardly of the calibre of, say, Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy* or *Oxford Leetures on Poetry*. But, as has already been suggested, a good deal of the value of the book lies in the narrative, descriptive and reflective links between the lectures. In them Wain talks about his decision of standing for election to the Chair, his feelings on how he regarded his job. More importantly, he talks about the poets he met, and those whose work he read. A number of names, some better known than the others, occur : Peter Levi, Sally Purcell, Avril Bruten, Andrew Harvey, Jill Haas, David Winzar, Isabella Fey. They are all practising poets, and in each case Wain quotes specimens of their work and tells us a little bit about them. *Professing Poetry* thus becomes a kind of an introduction to the work of some of the poets writing in England today. And this is surely as it should be. For one who professes poetry should not merely talk about the work of the dead: he should be involved in, and committed to the work of his contemporaries, particularly students, who are just beginning their poetic career.

This is what Wain does. He quotes from the work of two of the winners of the Newdigate Prize, and when, after doing so, says that yet another poet has been launched, we can't help feeling that the Professor's kindly interest and encouragement are responsible in no small degree for this launching.

The man who can talk wisely and well about poets, dead and living, and can encourage young poets in their writing, deserves much. But a professing poet is, above all, a poet himself. Wain ends his book with some poems that he wrote while holding the Chair of Poetry. They are all taut, disciplined and economical in expression, but the two that I like best are "Furry Bundles : Homage and Pity for Louis Wain" and "At Jowett's Grave." It would take too long to discuss them in depth; only a few points can be made here. The poet does not admire Jowett, and sees the irony implicit in the unpretentious grave in the unpretentious graveyard where Jowett, teacher of those who founded an empire, lies. His majestic imperiousness is contrasted to the small lives and small amusements of the average Englishman; he had no sympathy for them, but ironically it is they who survive while he is dead; ironically, too, the unpretentiousness of his grave is more a symbol of their lives than of his high, but now wrecked ideals. One may, therefore, be justified in seeing Jowett as a comic failure, even as we take delight in seeing the mighty fall. And yet there is heroism in the situation too. Not pity—Jowett was too big and too strong for that. But he is a "candidate for elegy" in the sheer strength and massiveness that even in death, the poet imagines, cling to him : "He is still there, strong in six feet of earth/in the embrace of earth, the nearness of water,/the cheerful stubbornness of springing weeds—/still not apologising, never explaining." A complex judgement has been passed on the life and achievements of a complex figure, a judgement that encompasses also a consideration of other, bigger issues like the founding of the British Empire and the nature of provincial English life.

"Furry Bundles" uses a variety of verse forms. There are long lines of free verse, rhymed couplets, taut triplets in unrhymed verse, and, occasionally, a tight nursery rhyme scheme; interspersed within the poem, and forming part of it, are prose quotations from critics and reviewers. The effect is kaleidoscopic, and this is part of the total "meaning" of the poem. The protagonist is described mockingly, ironically and yet enviously, till finally, when the point of his nervous breakdown is reached, the tone changes to one of spine-chilling, surreal horror, which is further enhanced by the nursery rhymes which now acquire a violent, demoniacal proportion. Ultimately this poem, as the one on Jowett, is not about the fate of an individual,

an interesting "case-history", but opens out into an account of the revengefulness of truth. The more you suppress the truth in the interests of economics, or politics, or respectability and the desire not to upset the apple-cart, the more savagely and bizarrely will it round upon you at last. This poem, as so much else in John Wain, becomes, at the end, an eloquent plea for freedom and truth.

Freedom and truth : these are the values that shine most clearly through *Professing Poetry*. There is a total and passionate commitment to the belief that poetry has value, that its value can be realised best only in a free society, and that this value cannot be jeopardised or compromised, but deserves, in the present age perhaps more than in any other, to be defended with integrity and pride. John Wain's own writing is sufficient proof, if proof were needed, of the civilising and humanising value of poetry. So long as people like him continue to "profess" poetry, its future is assured.

Reviewed by
Brijraj Singh
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T. S. ELIOT'S THEORY OF POETRY by Rajnath, A study of the changing critical ideas in the Development of his Prose and Poetry. Atlantic Highlands, N. J. : Humanities Press; New Delhi : Arnold-Heinemann, 1980. Price Rs. 55.00.

Rajnath's book obviously seeks to meet the complaint voiced by Eliot himself : I am accustomed to critics tracing the rise and decline of my creative powers from poem to poem and play to play. But when it comes to my critical essays the criticism of *them* seems to assume that I wrote them all at once, and that it was designed to take its place in an orderly structure.' The development in Eliot's writings, critical and creative, the author has rightly attributed to his conversion to Christianity in 1927, which gave a new orientation to his sensibility and changed the complexion of his later works altogether.

We may now come to closer grips with the work, but before doing so it will be fair to sum up the general impression the book is capable of leaving on

the mind of the careful reader. In this respect, I, for one, have no hesitation in describing this book as a very perceptive, lucid and illuminating study of those areas in Eliot criticism which have caused greatest confusion to his students and critics. But the fact remains that a study in the development of a critic, involving shifts in critical positions and opinions, however perceptive and illuminating it may be, cannot entirely dissipate that ambiguity which is inseparable from such a process. To take one example : in chapter three the author, while discussing Eliot's concept of tradition, takes occasion to observe : "in his later works Eliot does not give up his theory of literary tradition but includes in it the Christian tradition" (P. 63) True, but literary tradition and Christian 'Orthodoxy' are strange bedfellows, hard to reconcile, and Eliot's own confession, in *After Strange Gods*, is a pointer to this fact : "I do not repudiate what I wrote in that essay any more fully than I should expect to do after such a lapse of time. The problem, naturally, does not seem to me so simple as it seemed then, nor could I treat it now as a purely literary one." (Quoted, p. 65).

This brings us to the most vital part of the book, the chapter on 'Impersonality', which the author has split up into the following six parts, to facilitate a searching and lucid analysis of the concept :

Personality	(1)	Criticized in the early essays.
,,	(2)	Criticized in the later essays.
,,	(3)	Appreciated throughout.
Impersonality	(1)	Appreciated in the early essays.
,,	(2)	Appreciated in the later essays.
,,	(3)	Criticized throughout.

The treatment is thorough, learned and convincing, and I personally feel that it is this part of the book to which students of Eliot will return again and again.

In the closing chapters the focus of attention is ostensibly, 'Dissociatian of Sensibility', but the real centre of interest is the source of influence on Eliot's later poetry and the consideration of the chief figures behind his Christian and mystic poems—Herbert, Dante, St. Augustine and St. John of the Cross.

In the last part of the 'Conclusion', however, the author claims that of the three critical concepts discussed in the book, the theory of the, "Dissociation of Sensibility' has the soundest footing". If the author means to say that Eliot deserves credit for advancing a new and original theory, he will have few supporters, because 'unified sensibility', as he himself admits, has

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been, by common consent, the very *sine qua non* of great poetry in all ages. Moreover, the 'Dissociation of Sensibility' which Eliot has associated with a particular period, has really been a recurrent phenomenon in the history of poetry, and, I venture to say, that his own poetry suffers from it; for, with all his talk of emotion in poetry generally, he seems to have a distrust of emotion (the ordinary human emotion) in his poems and even in his plays, with the sole exception of *The Elder Statesman*, which was composed after his second marriage. These remarks, however, do not detract from my final estimate of the book as a study of Eliot Criticism which will be found to be indispensable by scholars and students alike.

Reviewed by V. Rai
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THE CONCEPT OF INDIAN LITERATURE. V. K. Gokak. Munshiram Manoharlal. 1979. pp. 275. Rs. 75/-.

For the most part as students of literature we have been either Anglophile or regionalist. Now there is a craze and felt need for World or Comparative Literature. Responding to the need, and the larger perspective, Professor Gokak, an old hand, provides necessary guidelines and corrective by way of a Concept of Indian Literature. Without such a concept, or experience, the new Indian and comparative courses will but miss their rationale. An Oxford First, a legendary teacher of English, Director of the Central Institute of Advanced Study, Professor Gokak is obviously not innocent of world literature. But he is more catholic than submissive (to whatever comes from outside). His strong point is his rootedness; in his case this has led him to Sri Aurobindo as the model, a point that comes out inevitably, in matters great and small. For instance, the manner in which he gives Charles William's phrase, "fully conscious" a fully Aurobindean turn. In brief, he knows the malady of the West without being eager to be infected.

The book is divided into six parts : A World Background for the study of Indian Literature; The Concept of Indian Literature; Some Aspects of Ancient and Mediaeval Indian Literature; Modern Indian Literature; A Regional Perspective for the Study of Indian Literature; The Study of Indian Literature. The very repetitions in the title makes one a little sceptical. Not only is there much overlapping; all the chapters are not of equal merit.

The whole thing looks like an anthology of essays, written at different times and for different occasions. It is not always an even terrain.

Taking his cue from Eliot, that there may be a tradition in time as well as a contemporaneity in eternity, he moves on to a wider area than Eliot's. That is, beyond Eliot's confinement in the European scene (not wholly true, as Gokak himself points out). His categories are wider, more universal, because, perhaps, Indian. Looking upon literature, variously, as the autobiography of civilization, as evolving. be it *a la* Marx, M. N. Roy, John Drinkwater or Sri Aurobindo, Gokak admits a total awareness and cross fertilisation without sacrifice of the native element, The awareness itself is not a stereotype, but, down time the refreshing river, full of change, of which the book gives brief surveys. But, perhaps, the best two chapters are on "World Poetry and the Modern Consciousness" and "World Poetry and the New Poetic Consciousness", concerns close to his heart and on which he has something to say. Of course not everybody will accept his idea of the modern or the new poetic consciousness. Both these essays draw open and ample support from Nolini Kanta Gupta's *Poets and Mystics*. For his importance, Nolini Kanta, a profound, cosmopolitan 'rasika' of life and literature, is too little known and the Professor has done a service by drawing attention to the work of this elder of the tribe.

Some of the other sections and chapters are thinner, somewhat in the familiar manner of the Sahitya Akademi manuals. (Professor Gokak is now the Akademi's Vice-President.) The presence of too many generalisations, and absence of textual analysis, tend to weaken the argument. It is when he comes to situations near his heart and mind, and of which he has intimate experience, that he seems to strike fire. As when he reacts sharply to Stephen Spender's ignorant, superior stance at the Tokyo P. E. N. conference. Gokak rebuts, rightly : "A hundred years of the Indian Renaissance cannot be dismissed with a phrase." Wish others had his courage and conviction. Elsewhere, in full panoply, he makes a fighting confession of faith : "Mysticism is supposed to be a simplification and denial of life. But an unenlightened obsession with the present can be a worse obscuration of the mind."

However, the chapter on "Western Thought and Indian Aesthetics" could have been more substantial. And why no mention of Krishna Chaitanya ? The one on "Tagore's Influence on Modern Indian Poetry" is, again, mostly, or mainly, a catalogue. But, always willing to pay respect where respect is due, he does not forget the tribute-laden Radhakrishnan but,

far more neglected, the editor of *Triveni*, the honest crusader, K. R. Rau. For obvious reasons the chapter on Kannada literature breathes a sense of greater reality. When he translates the likeminded 16th-century Ratnakara he is at his best. The poet Divija is pure Gokak.

His heavily idealistic "cardinal ideas" will and perhaps ought to be disputed. The concepts of world and Indian literature need to be constantly revalued. The audience response to his genuinely antique cast of mind is likely to be ambivalent (as this reviewer found out in a Bangalore seminar). Still, in spite of the rhetoric, his argument holds : "Finally, the question may be asked : why must a work of art, conceived and written by an Indian writer, be Indian at all ? The answer is that it has to be Indian because it has to be truly universal and greet its compeers in the domain of world literature." Exiles at home, or abroad, will never make it—not in the long run, anyway. Their own areas of darkness will swallow them up.

That Professor Gokak has taken up the orientation of our literary studies in earnest comes out in the comprehensive syllabus or bibliography he has drawn up in Appendix III. Without agreeing to all the titles included, or the reason for their inclusion, one must admire his seriousness and commitment to the cause. A debate could easily, and fruitfully, develop round many of his suggestions. Will the UGC or/and Sahitya Akademi take up the task ? All in all, he has certainly made "a good effort which paves the way for a serious study of Indian literature" as well as literature. He has made "a gesture which can prove to the cultural and educational world that we are alive and circumspect". Basically modest, he only wants his "ideas to be tested". Even so, as he says, a beginning could be made. The direction of our literary studies will depend on a national consensus on the issues so honestly and eloquently emphasised by one who is at once poet, teacher, critic, novelist, deeply concerned with creativity in a truly Indian and universal context and perspective. Actually, he has helped to bring into being a new type of rasika, arbiter elegantiae, to whom nothing human (or divine) is alien.

Reviewed by
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MYSTICISM IN ENGLISH POETRY By Visvanath Chatterjee. Progressive Publishers, 1980. pp. 136. Rs. 25.00.

Meant to update and supplement Caroline Spurgeon's wellknown, earlier study, *Mysticism in English Literature*, the present work has merits of its own. Though in a sense sketchy, as Chatterjee himself admits, it reveals an enviable range and draws freely upon literatures other than English, especially Indian, not only from the ancient storehouse but also from Tagore and Sri Aurobindo. The canvas is huge without being confusing. (Chatterjee is not Rajneesh, who says : "Confusion is my method" !)

In some ways the Introduction seems more meaty than the historical portions. If only he had cared to work out a theory or some critical criterion the material might have been more focussed. Permitting himself, *a la* Schweitzer, a rather generous view of mysticism ("any profound view of the world"), Chatterjee is however quick to draw its relation with the creative act and even poetic theories, particularly among the romantics who were often mystics *manques*. Of course "the glorious mystical tradition" of which he speaks is an enthusiast's language. And yet Chatterjee's well-known chosen illustrations, backed by wise, independent comments, almost convince the sceptic. He does give the History of English Poetry a new look. Students will lap it up. His judgments are often impartial and striking. Courageously, he places Vaughan higher than the twentieth-century darling, John Donne. Some of his opinions are more open to question. Hopkins, for instance. Hopkins is so frequently re-enacting his conversion that one almost begins to doubt. Also to compare Blake's Prophecies with Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* is rather bold.

From Plato, Christ, Plotinus, Dante, the medieval and metaphysical poets, through the romantic, Victorian and the Modern crowd (often "misbegotten strange gods"), he is able to show the continuity of 'the burden of the mystery' theme, It is a committed, convincing defence. After all, as Plato, Plotinus, Eckhart and others have demonstrated, men are never more truly alive than when they turn to the primal mystery of being and existence. In some ways, the mystical is also the more mature and authentic. Einstein's confession agrees with the foundations of the Indian world-view. As the Germans say, India is the high school of mysticism. And the school has not closed down. Along with the poetry of the earth the poetry of mysticism is never dead. Its resurrection even amidst unpromising situations, is a hopful sign. However, a small point perhaps, the *Oxford Book of Mystical Verse*, to which Chatterjee too gives the ritual salaam, has always seemed to me more

verse than mystical. In any case, the prose writers, from the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* to William Law (and William James) seem to have *understood* the phenomena better. Why and how ?

Never a fanatic, Chatterjee is honest enough to admit that Shakespeare does not show "any marked mystical tendencies". Here, one thought, was an occasion to issues and explore fresh criteria, at least enlarge upon distinctions. Without these one may be tempted to go in for easy equations, for instance, on p. 101, between Tennyson and Sri Aurobindo. The poetic mystic Parnassus has its slopes and gradations, and no two mystics are quite alike. Also, is mystical insight or experience only a matter of 'imagination' ?

Leaving such questions apart, Chatterjee has shown a happy knack for choosing good lines, some familiar, others less so. Their ensemble, makes a moving mosaic. Many of the lines reverberate and create strange patterns of their own. Of course the Romantics get more attention. But here also a summing up, a critical auditing would have helped one to understand the experiment and the achievement ; also to discriminate, which is essential.

As Chatterjee has shown, the Victorian poets, the whipping boys of so-called modern criticism, were part of the mainstream, which flows even in today's waste land. But was Yeats really mystical ? As much as A. E. ? The wounds of Absence are not one but many and the doctor has to attend to nuances which need not divide.

A broad and competent survey, a pleasing introduction to a profound subject. Whether Jerusalem is built on England's green and pleasant land or not, the sword shall not sleep. Chatterjee has given the whole matter a mild finish for which the educated Indo-British should be grateful.

Reviewed by
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I, Naresh Chandra, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

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Naresh Chandra
Editor-in-Chief

The Readers are requested to send in their comments on the articles appearing in this issue to give a start to the already announced

LITERARY DEBATE