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Henry James as an Art Critic

R. K. Kaul

Henry James's taste in art was omnivorous. From his early childhood his eye was trained to appreciate the masters of all the schools. There are hardly any exclusions but there are unmistakable discriminations. By studying his preferences it is possible to draw some tentative conclusions about his taste in art.

James's familiarity with the painters of Europe and America ranged over at least four centuries i. e., from Botticelli (1445–1510) to John Sargent (1856–1925). His knowledge was not confined to the highways of Europen art. He wrote with equal assurance about the nineteenth century French landscape painters of Fontainebleau, called the Barbizon School, and the English landscape painters led by John Crome (1769-1821), called the Norwich School. The names of painters, sculptors, architects and decorative artists occur not only in the reviews of art exhibitions and galleries but also in some crucial scenes in the novels. A painting by the Italian Mannerist painter Bronzino (1503–72) serves to make a point about Milly Theale in *The Wings of the Dove* (I, xi). The parallel between the portrait of the lady and the heiress of the ages is "portentous". Another painting, this one by an obscure nineteenth century French painter called Lambinet (1815–78), serves an almost equally crucial function in *The Ambassadors* (XI, iii).

The most notable omission from his list of artists that is likely to strike the modern reader is that of the generation which succeeded the Barbizon School in France i. e., Cezanne, Monet, Manet, Pissarro, Renoir and Van Gogh, some of whom are called the Impressionists. His artistic taste was as conservative as his taste in literature. This exclusion is understandable, as is his failure to appreciate Baudelaire and the Symbolists. It is idle to expect him to have responded to the Impressionists with the sympathy and understanding with which we respond to them today, nearly a century later.[1] The only Impressionist

painter whom James took notice of was Whistler and of him too the notice was unfavourable on the whole.

But from what James does include within his compass it appears that his appreciation was fairly catholic. I shall not devote much space to discuss James's response to the universally acknowledged masters such as Leonardo (1452-1519), Raphael (1483-1520) and Titian (1490-1519), or Velasquez (1599-1660) and Rembrandt (1606-69). So far as these are concerned successive generations have only confirmed the esteem in which they were held in their own times, although different ages have pointed to different aspects of their excellence. What James says of them, therefore, does not throw any light on his own preferences in painting.

James was eclectic enough to admire painters as diverse as Watteau (1684-1721), the French classical painter, and Turner (1775-1851), the English romantic painter, yet discriminating enough to prefer the former to Fragonard (1732-1806). Similarly he did not rate the seventeenth century Flemish painter Rubens (1577-1640) very highly but he insisted on his superiority to Jacob Jordaens (1593-1678).

The scope of this paper is limited. I have based my formulations on James's observations on the Italian art of the Renaissance. Occasional references to nineteenth century paintings are made to clarify James's observations on Renaissance art. What James says about this art, however, has wider implications, pertaining not only to his taste in art but also to his own creative work. These could be examined in a more comprehensive study.

Among the painters of the Italian Renaissance James's personal preference was for the Venetians, especially Titian (1487-1576), Tintoretto (1518-94) and Veronese (1528-88). Now the Venetian painters of the Renaissance were distinguished from their contemporaries of other cities in certain respects summed up concisely by Berenson :

> The Venetians as a school were from the first endowed with exquisite tact in their use of colour. Seldom cold and rarely too warm, their colouring never seems an afterthought, as in many of the Florentine painters, nor is it always suggesting paint, as in some of the Veronese masters[2] .... the better Venetian paintings present such harmony of intention and execution as distinguishes the highest achievements of genuine poets.[3]

James's preference was conditioned by the fact that he frequently visited the famous art galleries himself instead of relying on reprints and reproductions. The brilliance of the colours in Titian's paintings and their sensuous quality may have led him to prefer Titian and his

followers to the ethereal quality of Raphael's paintings, although he never questioned their excellence.

Wolfflin in his *Principles of Art History*[4] examines the movement from the sixteenth century to the seventeenth century in Italian art under five heads. The most important development was from the linear to the "painterly"[5] i. e., "from the development of lines as the path of vision and guide of the eye" to "the gradual depreciation of line" (p. 14). By way of amplification he adds :

> The great contrast between linear and painterly style corresponds to radically different interests in the world In the former case, it is the solid figure, in the latter, the changing appearances; in the former the enduring form, measurable, finite; in the latter, the movement, the form in function; in the former, the thing itself; in the latter, the thing in its relations (p 27).

Wolfflin contrasts two nude figures, both drawings, one by the sixteenth century German artist Durer (1471-1528), the other by the seventeenth century Dutch painter Rembrandt (1606-69) and states, "the impression in Durer is based on tactile, in Rembrandt on visual values" (p. 32).

Now if we keep this distinction in mind we shall be able to see why James's trained eye preferred the Venetian painters to the Florentines. While the appeal of Botticelli (1445-1510) and Leonardo (1452-1519), the Florentines, is linear, that of the Venetians, such as Carpaccio (d. 1523), Titian, Tintoretto, Bassanio (1518-92) and others is painterly. James does not mention Giorgione (1476-1510) by name but the lyricism of the Venetians must have appealed to James who looked for the Keats-like quality in painting. The parallel between Keats's account of Bacchus and his pards and Titian's painting *Bacchus and Ariadne* (1522) is too obvious to be repeated at this date. In the purist idiom, however, we should say that although James did not underrate the tactile values he rated the visual values more highly. He admired the composition of a painting whose individual figures or objects were related to one another so as to form an organic whole. In his critical essays he frequently talks of "foreshortening". For example, in his review of Henry Harland's *Comedies and Errors* (1898) he complimented the author for generalising the "impression" of a complexity or continuity. The rare performance, according to James, includes simplifying, "foreshortening" and reducing to a particular perspective (p. 100).[6] The consistency of perspective would make Titian in his view preferable to Raphael. Such a preference would accord with his position as a critic of fiction. It will be recalled that he inisisted on a consistent "point of view" in narration.

this untutored genius is setting out consciously to emulate the example of Michelangelo. Without employing Neo-platonic terminology he announces that he cares only for the beauty of type :

> It's against the taste of the day, I know; we've really lost the faculty to understand beauty in the large ideal way . . . . But I don't hesitate to proclaim it . . . . I mean to go in for big things; that's my notion of my art. I mean to do things that will be simple and sublime . . . . Excuse me if I brag a little; all those Italian fellows in the Renaissance used to brag.[13] (p. 116)

The titles of his works of sculpture are revealing. He embarks on his creative adventure with the figures of Adam and Eve. He considers the possibility of the Jewish prophet David as the next subject of his sculpture. His presumption is boundless. He means to "make a ripping Christ" (p. 115), carefully qualifying his proposal with the assertion that his conception would be Hellenic rather than Hebraic. In another prophetic statement he announces, "I mean to do the Morning; I mean to do the Night . . . . " (p. 118).

To be more specific, the great fresco on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel (The Vatican, 1508-12) is the source of Roderick's choice of Adam and Eve. Michelangelo's sculpture of *David* (Accademia, Florence, 1501-4) is the model of Roderick's projected work. The wish to do the Morning, the Night and other elements of nature (p. 118) is obviously inspired by Michelangelo's recumbent statues in the Medici Tombs (Florence, 1527-34). Earlier in the discussion he claims that his reaction against a mere "passive enjoyment of grandeur" (p. 85) was set off by looking at Michelangelo's *Moses* (San Pietro in Vincoli, Rome, 1515-16).

Roderick's somewhat simplistic notions of Michelangelo's art are corrected by the better informed Madame Grandoni. While Roderick asserts, "My figures shall make no contortions . . ." Madame Grandoni retorts, "I'm. sure there are contortions enough in Michael Angelo." (p. 118)

Roderick is not sophisticated enough to realize the incompatibility of his admiration for simplicity and Michelangelo at one and the same time. The *Moses* especially with two horns issuing out of his forehead is very far from exemplifying the creed of simple sublimity that Roderick professes.

There is no reason to suppose that the creator of Roderick Hudson was himself as naive as the protagonist of the novel. Henry James, on the contrary, was as penetrating at least as Madame Grandoni. He

must have known that Michelangelo's artistic sensibility was complex rather than simple, serpentine rather than straightforward.

If in spite of this awareness James admired Michelangelo it would not be unfair to conclude that James had a partiality for what we call mannerist art.

III

We may now proceed to consider James's enthusiam for Tintoretto and Veronese. I suggest that we shall understand James's appreciation of Renaissance art better if we approach it through the nineteenth century. Of all the nineteenth century artists James admired Turner and Delacroix most of all. Turner's pigments, he claimed ;

> seemed dissolved in the unconscious fluid of a faculty . . .akin to deep-welling spiritual emotion. Imagination is the common name for it . . .[14]

If in Turner he recognised something Wordsworthian, in Delacroix he saw something akin to Shelley :

> if we were to seek for a literary correlative for that sadly imperfect Delacroix near by, we should find it in some fragment of Shelley (p. 47). He had an imagination which urged and inflamed him, and never allowed him to rest in the common and the conventional. He was a great colourist and a great composer (p. 184).

In another review he said that Delacroix

> had in a high degree what the French call *la fougue* (i. e., fire, mettle, spirit)—the grand sweep and energy of execution (p. 201).

To the modern viewer paintings such as "The Execution of the Doge Marino Faliero," "Combat between the Giaour and the Pasha," "Greece Expiring on the Ruins of Missolonghi," "The Death of Sardanapalus" and "The Bride of Abydos" are more likely to appear Byronic than Shelleyan,[15] but then we know from James's Preface to *The Aspern Papers* that James was in the habit of interchanging the names of these poets.[16]

What is more significant, however, is his insistence on the parallel between Delacroix and Tintoretto. James asserts that :

> like his brothers in art, Turner and Tintoretto . . . (Delacroix) can be described only by seeming paradoxes and contradictions. As with Tintoretto you can fancy him one of the slightest of colourists, till you begin to conceive he is one of the greatest (p. 48). Like Tintoretto, he must be judged as a whole; like Tintoretto, too, he must be judged with the imagination (p. 184).

James was a great admirer of Tintoretto's art. It should be noted, however, that he admired Tintoretto rather as Johnson admired Shakespeare. Both James and Johnson professed respect for the unity of action. Shakespeare and Tintoretto created great works of art in defiance of the principle of unity. But instead of condemning the artist James admired him more for his success. In the "Preface" to *The Tragic Muse* James states :

> . . . I had a mortal horror of two stories, two pictures, in one . . . One *had* on occasion seen two pictures in one; were there not for instance certain sublime Tintorettos at Venice, a measureless Crucifixion in especial, which showed without loss of authority half a dozen actions separately taking place ? Yes, that might be, but there had surely been nevertheless a mighty pictorial fusion, so that the virtue of composition had somehow thereby come all mysteriously to its own (pp. 83–84).

The fusion of half a dozen actions by Tintoretto is contrasted with the large loose baggy monsters of Thackeray, Dumas and Tolstoi where there is no such fusion.

Tintoretto's art is generally characterized as mannerist. John Steer in *A Concise History af Venetian Painting*[18] states that Tintoretto painted in a climate of taste in which style as such was beginning to be appreciated for its own sake. About the cycle of painted scenes in the Scuola di S. Rocco he says :

> The compositions are Mannerist in their boldness and asymmetry, for Tintoretto makes use of dramatically broken vistas and sudden jumps into space. The figures, painted in shining snails' trails of paint, emerge from the warm ground as luminous wraiths rather than substantial forms (p. 158).

If James's admiration for Tintoretto illustrates his partiality for boldness and asymmetry, his fondness for Veronese illustrates another feature of his mannerist taste. He was above all a painter of sumptuous feasts and splendid decorations as revealed in the *Feast at the House of Levi* and *Marriage at Cana.*

James in *The Wings of the Dove* places Milly Theale in a Veronese setting. Susan Shepherd informs Merton Densher that Milly, who has rented the Palazzo Leporelli in Venice, is

> lodged for the first time as she ought, from her type to be: and doing it—I mean bringing out all the glory of the place—makes her happy. It's a Veronese picture, as near as can be . . . (VIII, 28).

"The effect of the place, the beauty of the scene . . ." "the golden grace of high rooms, chambers of art in themselves . . ." with "Milly, let loose . . . in a wonderful white dress . . ." altogether make a perfect Veronese picture.

According to John Steer the compositions of Veronese in their scale :

> their grand, rather fanciful architecture, their crowded effects and richness of detail belong to the tradition of decorative painting . . . In a religious context their expansive hedonism . . . is something new. The secularization of religious art could scarcely go further (p. 162).

Veronese then uses religious themes to create a secular effect. James's characters treat objects of art, even pieces of furniture (vide *The Spoils of Poynton*) with religious awe.

It will be recalled that George Stransom, the protagonist of "The Altar of the Dead" has improvised his own "religion of the Dead" which answers his "love of great offices, of a solemn and splendid ritual; for no shrine could be more bedecked and no ceremonial more stately than those to which his worship was attached."[19] In other words, Stransom, like his creator, needs solemn and splendid ritual and ceremony rather than faith in God for the satisfaction of his spiritual hunger. It would be fair to conclude that there is a mannerist streak in James's aesthetic temper, although his taste was too eclectic to be classified as exclusively mannerist or baroque.

IV

James's admiration for the art of Veronese raises another question which relates to his religious belief. As is well-known, Veronese, like many other painters admired by James, created his art in a Roman Catholic milieu. He was patronised by princes of the Church. He decorated numerous churches and represented the martyrdom of saints in his own work. How far could James sympathize with an art which is so deeply rooted in the Roman Church ?

Robert L. Gale in his article on "Religious Imagery in Henry James's Fiction," after analysing some 16,000 tropes concludes that

"James's images involving Catholicism, while almost uniformly respectful, remain general and at most only colorfully dramatic."[20]

With all his love of candles, stained glass, incense and Counter-Reformation art, Henry James clearly found the ethos of Roman Catholic society unacceptable. In *The Portrait of a Lady*, when Rosier calls on Isabel at the Palazzo Roccanera, his immediate response has an ambivalence characteristic of his creator, "a palace by Roman measure, but a dungeon to poor Rosier's apprehensive mind" (Chap. 36). Pansy is immured in a kind of domestic fortress :

> a pile which bore a stern old Roman name . . . which was mentioned in "Murray" . . . which had frescoes by Caravaggio (1573-1610) . . . But Rosier was haunted by the conviction that at picturesque periods young girls had been shut up there to keep them from their true loves, and then, under the threat of being thrown into convents, had been forced into unholy marriages (p. 301).[21]

Such cruelty was by no means confined to seventeenth century Rome. James in *The American* (1877) had already portrayed such "picturesque" cruelty in Catholic France of more recent times.

Gilbert Osmond does not profess Roman Chatholicism, nevetheless he sends his daughter to a convent. He holds the view that "The convent is a great institution" (Chap. 50). Isabel is not impressed because "The old Protestant tradition had never faded from Isabel's imagination." The Convent strikes her as a "well-appointed prison" (Chap. 52). When Madame Catherine leads Isabel through several corridors we are informed, "All these departments were solid and bare, light and clean, so thought Isabel, are the great penal establishments."

It would appear that the art of Veronese and other Italian painters of the Renaissance evoked in James a feeling akin to the religious without stirring up any Roman Catholic or even Christian sentiment which gave birth to it. The ambivalence of Henry James towards Italian i. e., Roman Catholic art was characteristic of his generation. It was part of a much wider transformation of sensibility. While religion itself was losing hold over the Western mind, religious sentiment was gradually being transferred to art, music and literature. Arnold was presumably speaking for his generation when he announced that "most of what now passes with us for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry." At the same time there was an attempt to introduce aesthetically satisfying ritual in the Church of England by the leaders of the Oxford Movement. At least one theologian goes to the

extent of blaming the Oxford Movement itself for teaching people to think less of preaching than of sacraments and services of the church.[22]

In defence of Henry James and his generation one can say that their ambivalence reflected a confusion inherent in the Renaissance sensibility itself. About Veronese's most celebrated painting i. e. *Marriage at Cana* the art Critic W. M. Rossetti said :

> It is impossible to look at this picture without astonishment. The only point of view from which it fails is that of the New Testament narrative; for there is no relation between the Galilean wedding and Veronese's court-banquet.[23]

Although this discrepancy is most conspicuous in James's favourite painter Veronese it is by no means peculiar to him. For example, it is difficult to tell whether the little naked boys with wings in the paintings are cupids or angels. Erwin Panofsky in his *Studies in Iconology* informs us that :

> the familiar Renaissance type of Cupid, the nude 'blind bow-boy', came into being as a little monster, created for admonitory purposes.
>
> However, this little monster was so similar to the nude *putti* who around the same time began to invade Trecento art in a purely decorative capacity . . . that a fusion was almost inevitable.[24]

The figures who aim darts at Galatea (1511) in Raphael's representation of the Greek myth[25] turn into angels in Raphael's numerous representations of the Madonna.[26] The only difference is that the angels have no bows and arrows. And Raphael, more than any other artist, represents the essence of the High Renaissance. The only other painter who could claim such a central place is Titian. His angels, like Raphael's, are indistinguishable from his cupids. James's response to Renaissance art then was not based on any radical misunderstanding of its nature. Most of his deviations from pure classicism were an integral part of that very complex phenomenon called the Renaissance.

Rajasthan University,
Jaipur.

Notes

1. It has been pointed out that the village scene which reminds Strether of Lambinet is described as if it were an Impressionist painting. See John L. Sweeney, *The Painter's Eye* (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 1956), pp. 28-29. This book is a source of invaluable information on the subject of this article. I gratefully acknowledge my debt to it.
2. For example Altichiero (1330–95) and Pissanello (1395–1455).
3. *Italian Painters of the Renaissance* (New York : Meridian Books, 1957), p. 3.
4. Trans. M. D. Hottinger (New York ; Dover Publications, 1950).
5. Translation of the German "malerisch".
6. *Theory of Fiction*, ed. James E. Miller (Lincoln : University of Nebraska Press, 1972).
7. *Mannerism*, (Penguin, 1967), p. 22.
8. (Routedge and Kegan Paul, 1951), I. 322–25. According to another historian the names of architects began to be recorded much earlier i. e., in the thirteenth century. See Nikolaus Pevsner, *An Outline of European Architecture* (Penguin, 1945), p. 47.
9. (Charlotteville : University Press of Virginia, 1970), p. 89.
10. (New York : Doubleday and Co., 1955).
11. i. e., The Biblioteca Laurenziana, Florence. The commission for the Library was given in 1524 and left incomplete in 1534.
12. Erwin Panofsky qualifies the view of Wylie Sypher without rejecting it altogether: "Michaelangelo's architectural style cannot be classified under the headings of 'Renaissance,' 'Baroque,' or 'Mannerism,' but must be considered as constituting a 'Stylistic period by itself'. Only in the buildings of his Florentine period (1517–34) is it possible—in accord with the observations made by Walter Friedlaender with regard to the sculptures and drawings of these years—to observe a (none too essential) influence of the Mannerist current." See *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (Harmondsworth : Peregrine, 1970), pp.275–76 n.
13. Page numbers which follow quotations from *Roderick Hudson* refer to the New York edition (Scribner's, 1907).
14. *The Painter's Eye*, p.72. See note 1 above.
15. Eric Newton, *Eugene Delacroix* (London : Longmans, 1950), p. 11.

16. *The Art of the Novel*, ed. R. P. Blackmur (New York : Scribner's, 1962), pp. 161–65.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 83–84.
18. (New York : Praeger, 1970).
19. *The Short Stories of Henry James*, ed. Clifton Fadiman (New York : The Modern Library, 1945), p. 321.
20. See *Modern Fiction Studies*, III, i (Spring 1957), 68.
21. *The Portrait of a Lady*, ed. Leon Edel (Boston : The Riverside Press, Cambridge, 1956).
22. Dean Church quoted by Kenneth Clark, *The Gothic Revival* (Penguin, 1964), p. 136.
23. See *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1911, s. v. "Paul Veronese".
24. (New York : Harper and Row, 1962), p. 121.
25. Fresco, Villa Farnesini, Rome.
26. e. g., in the Sistine Madonna, 1613.

TILL THE SOIL

Oh, child,
till the soil
from sunrise
to sunset.
Wind will
throw the seed in,
rain will drench it down,
the sky will give it a roof,
the sun will suckle it with light.
and night embalm it.

Oh, child,
till the soil,
till the soil:
the seed will grow a root,
God's hand will touch its leaf,
and bless it with a bloom.

43/B Nandaram Sen Street
Calcutta

—**Subhas Saha**

MACHINES ON STRIKE

The Brewer went out of order, again,
so soon within a fortnight.

There was first a chattering, a stutter,
then a big clang, and — silence.

The huddled–up clothes blinked out their wetness
and compounded messiness.

The mechanic came in his Commodore,
tapped and twitched, and made it go.

It was the turn of the dishwasher next,
a cling-clogging and a clot.

It provoked another visitation,
some quick pawing, and a push.

Such breakdowns come, not as single trials,
but in battle formations.

The telly went blank, the mixer struck work,
the grinder ground to a halt.

The cassette–player was up to its tricks
and gave the eeriest sounds.

The car, of course, had its uncanny ways,
and grew psychic all at once.

I called for a college of technicians
and ran through all my savings.

In solos and doubles and aggregates
they treated the sick machines.

The Brewer presently went wrong once more
and the motor was replaced.

Now was the witching time for the Bush Fridge,
and it too went the same way.

Even the table-lamp joined the strikers,
and the oven played it cool.

And yet once more my old Brewer went phut,
with all the linen intact.

I fretted and phoned and fumed and bemoaned
my fate among the machines.

—K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar

In Defence of *Cantos*

Thakur Guruprasad

> If we never write anything save what is already understood, the field of understanding will never be extended. One demands the right, now and again, to write for a few people with special interests and whose curiosity reaches into greater detail.
>
> —*Canto* XCVI[1]

The *Cantos*, easily sustaining the claim to be the life-work[2] of Ezra Pound (1885-1972), have become, in a sense, something of an embarrassment to the champions of the poet. As Hugh Kenner has pointed out, the poem suffers from a peculiar ironic fate: "an immensely topical poem has become archaic without ever having been contemporary."[3] Much of the blame for this, however, might lie at the poet's door itself. For one thing, it has come to be considered a very difficult poem to read for the common reader of today, what with its fragmented and jumbled narrative, polyglot texture full of generous sprinklings of passages from Greek, Latin, Italian and some other European languages, not to speak of Chinese ideograms making up the body of the text. The poem is an extreme instance of 'learned' poetry of our century, and is studded with a large number of allusions to the works and names of the great, and not so great, from all times and in almost any Western or Oriental language, many of the references so obscure that they are the despair of annotators. In spite of a great deal of explicatory activity in the last quarter century coming in the wake of scholarly and critical recognition of the importance of Pound and the *Cantos* in literary history,[4] the text is far from satisfactorily explicated enough for graduate students to dare run their teeth into it. Indeed, some of the more enthusiastic explicators have only added to the forbidding complexity, frightening away even sincere seekers after the exact meaning, and many an ordinary reader may feel quite

justified in wondering why one should make all that effort: is it really worth it?

As a matter of fact, there is a considerable cross-section even among leading Pound scholars and critics that tends to write off this literary Dreadnought of our century as too obscure and obscurantist to be considered an indispensable core reading in XX century poetry. Noel Stock flatly concludes[5] that the *Cantos* is not a poem, but only notes toward a poem: a collection of fragments of varying quality; and dispels the myth of a major poem which has plagued sympathetic Pound scholars such as Hugh Kenner,[6] Donald Davie,[7] and George Dekker.[8] In fact, the exterior of the *Cantos* is so disappointing that even Allen Tate, who was among the chief campaigners working to rehabilitate the literary reputation of Pound during his St. Elizabeth's days, and was a force behind the nomination of Pound for the Bollingen Prize for the poem. wistfully wrote that "the work for which I helped give the Bollingen Prize is formless, eccentric, and personal. The *Cantos* . . . are . . . 'about nothing at all,"[9] after having sadly remarked that they are "talk, talk, talk; not by anyone in particular to anyone else in particular; they are just rambling talk."[10]

Yet, one must say that such denigration of the *Cantos* misses the point at least as much as the star-gazing admiration of the initiates and select experts. A balanced view must accept them as a masterp ece with an assured place among the classics of XX century poetry in the English language, though at the same time it has to admit that it is one of the most difficult. The focus of appreciation, therefore, must be directed to two points; understanding of the basis for the features constituting its difficult*ness*, and assessment of the worthwhileness of the effort to go through the dark, uncertain, difficult roads to explication. The present paper aims at a modest defence of the *Cantos* on these lines.

II

The mainsprings of difficult*ness* in the *Cantos* can be summed up under four heads: its deliberately fragmented structure, its overwhelming polyglottism, inaccuracies and irregularities in the treatment of sources, and obscurity and obscurantism. We will take them up, one by one, in the following discussion, pointing out the factors behind them with a view to understanding why they are there in the poem-sometimes, how they make the poem what it is.

The *Cantos* has a sprawling, structure deliberately fragmented. This poem can be said to have been built on a structure of discontinuities.

There are 117 cantos in the poem as we have it, and the end seems to have come simply because the poet who wrote the cantos has eventually breathed his last. The Aristotelian requirement of a beginning, a middle, and an end does not apply to this poem in any way. One can say at the outset that fragmentation was a theoretical *sine qua non* for this Poundian epic. It represents the acme of the application of a poetics of discountinuity, something that has now come to be recognised as an aspect of the portrait of the age.[11]

Nearer home, it springs, as Hugh Kenner has put it, from Pound's allegiance to the 'aesthetic of glimpses,'[12] belonging to the Pound era – a phenomenon he calls up in his book through the striking image of the Muse in Tatters in a telling title-phrase. The age was full of theorists and practitioners of literary art made up of fragments – Joyce and his 'epiphanies', and Pound himself coming out with his doctrine of Vorticism, believing that the poetic image is "a radiant node or cluster, a Vortex from which, and through which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing."[13] In the background was also the Symbolist practice of lifting words out of 'usage'. Pound paralleled it by lifting 'words out of history'.[14] An oft-mentioned example is "Arunculaia'[15] (Canto IV) which is just a proper name,[16] lifted out of context to strike the reader dumb with admiration and incomprehension; another is 'ANAXIFORMINGES', 17 the word adjacent to it in the canto, which is just little nore than an exotic word cried out by the poet in ecstasy. With such practices, Pound was initiating a 'New Method in Scholarship', as the editor's note said while publishing a series of 12 articles by Pound under the title, "I Gather the Limbs of Osiris" in the *New Age* (1912).[18] This new method was the method of the 'luminous detail'.[19] Poems were to be made of such details, which govern knowledge as the switchboard governs the electric circuit.

The heuristic device of subject rhyme is yet another theoretical basis of fragmented form in this poem. As Hugh Kenner has pointed out, the Pound Era subscribed to a theory of homeomorphic structure, "that all ways of telling the same story are homeomorphic,"[20] and that "vertices have analogous structures,"[21] and so Pound's story of the death of civilization in our time could be expressed luminously in terms of Homer's *nekuia*[22] as reduced by Divus in 1538. So he felt that his poem would cohere on account of parallelism of occurrences: the Italian new birth of c. 1500 A.D. juxtaposed with the birth of a new nation in America c. 1770, the rhyming of such heroic subjects as Sordello, Malatesta, Kung (Confucius), Adams, Jefferson and Mussolini; or the topics of usury (interest-bearing idle money that is debt) and sexual

perversion. Such a theory of creativity has topical support in such contemporary activities as Buckminster Fuller's vector analysis theory, and Eisenstein's cinematographic technique of blended snapshots (montage), the Gestalt and the linguistic theory of transformations. Pound was operating at the intellectual wave length of the *avant-garde* as he wove out the *Cantos*, and the difficult*ness* can be said to be a product of its compulsions.

The polyglottism of the *Cantos* is, again, fairly understandable. When Pound commenced writing poerty in Europe, the educated European was still a fair polyglot. People preferred to read Dante bilingually. It is in this sense that one understands Pound's description of himself as "the last American living the tragedy of Europe."[23] Pound himself, besides his readings in Greek and Latin in his student days, acquired a good many European languages as he moved from Philadelphia to London to Paris to Italy, and all these acquired languages crept into the *Cantos*. What is more, he read, with varying degrees of proficiency, from sources in different languages, Western as well as Oriental—Chinese, on top of it all—, and under allegiance of the Vorticist faith that "one art does not attempt what another can do better,"[24] decided to keep the 'luminous details' in the original. The truth is, as Hugh Kenner put it in his earlier book, that the "central experience" of the *Cantos* is "periplum, the voyage of discovery among facts."[25] 'Luminous details' in different languages and literatures are also facts.

It was a further refinement of the Vorticist faith, in a bid to go for closer accuracy, the "Ching Ming" principle,[26] that Pound started incorporating Chinese characters into the text of the *Cantos*.[27] The practical difficulty during his long stay at the madhouse of St. Elizabeth's (1946-58), that he had not much scholarly equipment with him as he was working on his Chinese sources for the Rock-drill cantos, and this theory might well have combined to lead him to put in long chunks of Chinese ideograms, and urging him to put more trust in the scholarship of posterity in those days of stark despair. The common response to this polylingual phenomenon—"why doesn't he write in plain English"—springs from a lack of appreciation of Poundian values. Pound was a staunch believer in the value of education in the humanities, and greatly opposed to the narrowing specialization in the English Departments for the cultural myopia it obviously causes. Very late in the day, he advised in Canto XCIX to esteem sanity in curricula, and to study the classics.

And Pound did not subsribe to this view as an elitist; he regarded

it a scholarly aspect of democratic culture. Kenner recounts the anecdote[29] that, when Dame Edith Hamilton met Pound in St. Elizabeth's and commented on his inconvenient practice of polyglot excesses, some such dialogue ensued :

Dame Hamiltom : "That is not very democratic, I'm afraid. That is aristocratic, like you, Mr. Pound."

Ezra Pound : "But it is democratic as long as it provides that one may have the opportunity to learn enough to read that letter."

The third main source of difficult*ness* in the *Cantos* is the good number of inaccuracies creeping into Pound's uses of extracts from foreign languages and literatures. It is somewhat ironic that the work of the propounder of the "Ching Ming" principle should suffer from such lapses. But physical circumstances conspired with Pound's theoretical beliefs to bring this about. As for the inaccuracies in his treatment of his Greek sources, on the theoretical plane his new method of scholarship may be responsible. As Kenner has pointed out in his admirable book,[30] Pound went to Greek, not with his attention geared on syntax but on diction. Naturally, therefore, inaccuracies in detail while lifting words and phrases out of their context, in later cantos from memory only, not surprisingly were entailed. It was further compounded by Pound's latent adherences to the aesthetes' poetics. In an early bit of advice to the candidates for the title of poet, Pound had written:

> Let the cnndidate fill his mind with the finest cadences he can discover preferably in a foreign language, so that the meaning of the words may be less likely to divert his attention from the movement; e.g., Saxon charms, Hebridean Folk Songs, the verse of Dante, and the lyrics of Shakespeare—if he can dissociate the vocabulary from the cadences.[31]

This deliberate effort to keep meaning and cadence separate while exposing the poet's faculties to a foreign phrase is, again, less likely to contribute to accuracy of quoted allusion. It leads to strange perceptions, as the one that saw the connection between Calypso and eucalyptus to such unpredictable end that Pound associated Pisa in 1944 with Calypso land in ancient Greek legend, and when he was arrested there by the victorious American forces as one of the enemy camp, he quickly gathered a eucalyptus pip, put it in his pocket, and kept it

all along in his days of gruelling ordeal of captivity and incarceration as precious memento! So the story goes.[32]

This theoretical outlook was adequately compounded by the circumstances of his life during the composition of the *Cantos*. Hugh Kenner informs us[33] that Pound suffered from defective vision, and his lifelong presbyopia may be held responsible for his notorious misreadings of Greek texts; he was 'gifted' with imperfect perception of the print; Then, he composed the bulk of the *Cantos* during captivity and incarceration following the defeat of Mussolini. Exotic allusions in the Pisan cantos were made entirely from memory. Since about 1950 Pound's eyes failed. All these physical circumstances are to be held responsible for the incidence of inaccuracies in allusion.

Lastly, the difficult*ness* emanating from obscurity and obscurantism is also attributable to the dual causes of theory and circumstance. A great deal of it springs from Pound's poetics of the epic, which he defines as "a poem including history"[34] in contradistinction to a poem about history. So his poem goes on like a decades-long vortex, like the whole penumbra of literary and other history, without head or tail, metamorphos providing the Gestalt seed. The poet's fancy has rolled and ransacked the annals of history without regard to chronological order, from Renaissance Italy to modern Europe, from the Bank of England to the ancient Chinese principles of administration, from ancient Greece to contemporary France, from Provence to Anglo-Saxon, in a manner quite staggering to the ordinary reader proficient in the English language alone. To the fury of such theoretical commitment was added fuel when in later days, Pound in the madhouse, falling back on his own overtaxed memory and the scant resource of the pocket-size book of Chinese text he had smuggled in, wrote the Pisan cantos and the Rock-Drill sequence.

III

As for the question whether it is worthwhile to make all the marathon efforts to explore the myriads of sources, and to make all the efforts needed to decipher obscure expressions and allusions from various difficult foreign languages, the answer has to be: yes, to the best of one's capacity. For two reasons: that Pound sincerely thought he was creating great art out of his experience while writing this poem, and, secondly, it *is* great poetry. Pound's endeavours were all very sincere in the cause of poetry as he saw it, wherever they led him—no matter if to inaccurate recollections, to incorrect renderings of little-known

exotic gems, or free and sometimes seemingly irresponsible translations from Provencal, Chinese and other works, apart from difficult, fragmentary and obscurantist incorporations. T.S. Eliot tried to absolve Pound of all sins on this score way back in 1928, by asserting that

> "Pound is often most "original" in the right sense, when he is most "archeological" in the ordinary sense. . . . If one can really penetrate the life of another age, one is penetrating the life of one's own. . . (Pound) sees them (Provencal and Italian poetry) as contemporary with himself, that is to say, he has grasped certain things in Provence and Italy which are permanent in human nature.[35]

Behind all of Pound's predictable and unpredictable ploys adopted in the *Cantos*, there was but one underlying principle: put into the words of Grace Schulman, "to gain a lucid perspective on current circumstance."[36] There is a 'high seriousness' about all the seeming chaos of the texture of the *Cantos* that has been variously termed by critics in an attempt to describe meaning—even one, Hugh Kenner, calling the "central experience" of this poem a "periplum, the voyage of discovery among facts"[37] at one moment of lucid illumination, and calling its theme "the coming and going of vortices in time's river"[38] at another—the "high seriousness" that, Matthew Arnold claimed, comes from "absolute sincerity", and which is the hallmark of "classic" poetry.[39] It cannot be denied that the *Cantos* is a classic of XX century literature, a unique and unprecedented 'criticism of life', in its interpretation of the economics of 'usura' throughout world history that has led to the holocausts of the two world wars of our century. Pound's passionate condemnation of *usura* has such an absolute sincerity that Arnold would undoubtably qualify it for "classic" poetry. In order to come at such poetry, any effort is worth the making.

The apparent formlessness of the *Cantos* has to be dismissed in the realization that it is a culmination of the prestigious tradition of the organic form in poetics—from Coleridge to Emerson to Whitman and Pound. As Rosenthal has so lucidly explained their formal structure, "the successive cantos and layers of cantos must be viewed not so much schematically as experientially. . . each group of cantos. . . a new phase of the poem, like each of the annual rings of a living tree."[40]

Ezra Pound made little of the charge of obscurity in such structure by playfully relating a children's anecdote, when his interviewer asked him if he was 'more or less stuck', making the experiment of the *Cantos*. Pound rejoined:

> . . . Do you know the story: "What are you drawing, Johnny?"
> "God."
> "But nobody knows what he looks like."
> "They will, when I get through."[41]

Implicit in this repartee is Pound's valid claim that he had attempted in the *Cantos* something as great as trying to draw God. If he had failed, no one was more aware than Pound himself of his failure, and Pound's humility and his regret over what his life's work looked like, seen from the angle of its shortcomings, at any rate, makes the severest critic melt, and forgive all. At the nadir of his self—criticism, Pound had moments of recapitulation when he thought about how he had tried to write paradise, and how miserably he had failed. No critic of Pound could be as critical as he himself, as is borne out from these famous lines from Canto LXXXI, where Pound condemns himself in a highly lyrical mood:

> Pull down thy vanity
> Thou art a beaten dog beneath the hail,
> A swollen magpie in a fitful sun
> Half black half white
> Nor knowest'ou wing from tail[42]

The last lines of the *Cantos* are very poignant as far as they have captured the sense of the immensity of the task undertaken, and the sense of regret for the failure.

> That I lost my center
> fighting the world.
> The dreams clash
> and are shattered–
> and that I tried to make a paradiso
> terrestre.[43]

But in the very next movement of the mind in Canto LXXXI the mood changes, and he asserts the magnanimity of the design, and explains:

> But to have done instead of not doing
> this is not vanity
>
> * * *
>
> Here error is all in the not done,
> all in the diffidence that faltered . . . .[44]

In Canto CXVI, we find yet another such moment of rationalization:

But the beauty is not in the madness
Tho' my errors and wrecks lie about me.
And I am not a demigod,
I cannot make it cohere.

* * * *

. . . it coheres all right
even if my notes do not cohere.[45]

One has to take the question of meaning and coherence in the *Cantos* a bit philosophically, and with a grain of salt, and not let too narrow convictions come in the way of apprehension. Amiya Chakravarty relates[46] how, once during the St. Elizabeth's days, he asked Pound "whether poetry, his poetry, should yield a "meaning"." "what is the 'meaning' of a cherry tree ?" he retorted. "What is it ?," asked Chakravarty. "A cherry tree," he said.

Underlying Pound's reply is a respectable theory of poetry, well put in the *Ars Poettca* of Archibald MacLeish:

A poem should not mean
But be.[47]

As for the coherence, the logic of Poundian coherence bringing disparate objects together in the *Cantos* is well put in Pound's repartee recounted by Amiya Chakravarty,[48] once again:

> As to the "incongruity of things that did not seem to belong together. . , he winked (with a faint smile this time) and asked, "what is the link between a lion and a rose?" I did not know. "They both exist," he said. Therefore, I knew, they could as well exist in his verse.

The reader of the *Cantos* must take such things in his stride, as compliment to

The bearded Ulysses, bound to the burning mast
(that) Turns his head shoreward, tears the wax out of his ear,
Breaks from the ropes that bind him and at last
Hears sea and sirens, and the weeping spheres.[49]

University of Garhwal
Shrinagar

Notes

1. *The Cantos of Ezra Pound* (Faber Paperbacks, 1975), p. 659. Hereafter cited as *Cantos.*

2. According to Pound himself (see Donald Hall, "Ezra Pound, an Interview," in Writers at Work: *The Paris Review* Interviews, Second Series, edited by George Plimpton, Introduction by Van Wyck Brook (New York: The Viking Press, 1963), quoted, *Fzra Pound : A Collection of Criticism*, edited by Grace Schulman (McGraw-Hill Paperbacks, McGraw-Hill Co,, 1974), p. 47) the *Cantos* began in 1904, and it remained far from finished at Pound's death in 1972. The last installment left by him was *Drafts and Fragments of Cantos CX-CXVII* (1969). In the absence of any thing better, *The Cantos* (Faber Paperbacks, 1975) running into 802 pages of bare text, can be taken as the definitive text of the poem.

3. Hugh Kenner, *The Pound Era* (London: Faber, 1972), p. 415. Hereafter cited as *The Pound Era.*

4. No serious discussion of the *Cantos* commenced before the 1950's when the controversy over the Pisan cantos heated up while Pound was being held up in the lunatic asylum of St. Elizabeth's The first sign of formal recognition of its greatness came with the award of the Bollingen Prize in 1948. As the controversy raged, appreciative recognition picked up, and prizes and awards were showered on the poet, and he was eventually released from the madhouse: Harriet Monroe Award (1962), Academy of American Poets Award (1968). He instantly became on release a literary celebrity and reigned supreme till he died on November 1, 1972, a quiet death in Venice. A measure of this recognition of the greatness of the *Cantos* is a big spurt in book-length studies of the poem since 1948. Some of the notable ones, in chronological order, are: Harold Watts, *Ezra Pound and the Cantos* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1952), Lewis Leary, ed., *Motive and Method in the Cantos of Ezra Pound* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954). *Annotated Index to the Cantos of Ezra Pound*, eds. John Edwards and William Vasse (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1957) (Glosses Cantos 1-84). Clark Emery, *Ideas into Action: A study of Pound's Cantos* (Coral Gablesl Fla, 1958). M, L. Rosenthal, *A Primer of Ezra Pound* (New York: Macmillan, 1960). George Dekker, *Sailing for Knowledge : the Cantos of Ezra Pound* (London: Routledge, 1963). Noel Stock, *Reading the Cantos: Study of Meaning in Ezra Pound* (Minerva Press 1966). Walter Baumann, *The Rose in the Steel Dust: An Examination of the Cantos of Ezra Pound* (Frank Verlag, Bern 1967). Daniel Pearlman, *The Bark of Time: On the Unity of Pound's Cantos* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), and George Kearns. *Guide to Ezra Pound's Selected Cantos* (New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 1981). Since 1972, *Paideuma: A Journal devoted to Pound Scholarship*, ed. Caroll F. Terrel, Orono, Maine, has been coming out.

5. In his book, *Reading the Cantos, A Study of Meaning in Ezra Pound.*

6. His notable contributions to Pound criticism are *The Poetry of Ezra Pound* (1957) and *The Pound Era* (1972).

7. *Ezra Pound: Poet as Sculptor* (1964).
8. *Sailing after Knowledge: The Cantos of Ezra Pound* (1963).
9. Allen Tate, "Ezra Pound," in *The Man of Letters in the Modern World* (New York: Meridian Books, 1955), p. 264.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 258.
11. Discontinuity has been described as a distinguishing trait of 'modernism' or 'Dionysianism' in 20th century poetry. To take an off-hand example, Spears has devoted over 15 pages to the analysis of this trait in the first chapter of his book on the subject. See Monroe K. Spears. *Dionysus and the City; Modernism in Twentieth Century Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 20-34.
12. Hugh Kenner, *The Pound Era*, p. 71.
13. Pound called the thing later by yet another name, *paideuma*, under the influence of the German anthropologist, Leo Frobenius,
14. Kenner, *The Pound Era*, p. 146.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 143.
16. *Cantos*, p. 13. Name of the bride in a wedding song by Catullus.
17. According to the *Annotated Index to the Cantos*, it is a unique epithet occuring in Pindar's Olympian ode.
18. Kenner, *The Pound Era*, p. 150.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 252.
20. *Ibid*,, p. 32.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 376.
22. *Nekuia* is a tale of visiting the dead, which archaic bards rendered audible through somewhat different words every time they recited it. Thus Pound was only beginning a *Nekuia* as he wrote the first canto on the *motif* of Homer's story of Odysseus visiting the dead in the land of Circe.
23. Donald Hall, "Ezra Pound, an interview, "The *Paris Review* Interviews, Second Series, edited by George Plimpton (New York: The Viking Press, 1963) quoted *Ezra Pound : A Collection of Criticism* edited by Grace Schulman (McGraw-Hill Paperbacks, 1974), p. 35.
24. Kenner, *The Pound Era*, p. 428.
25. Kenner, *The Poetry of Ezra Pound* (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1958), p. 803.
26. "Ching Ming" are two Chinese characters, occuring at the end of Canto LI. They have been translated into English as "Call things by their right names."
27. Chinese ideograms started appearing in bulk in the text of the *Cantos* from Canto LI onwards. *The Rock-Drill Cantos* (LXXXV-XCV) have them in a sizable strength and at one stage rumour had it that Pound was going to round up the *Cantos* with Canto CXVII, a solid block of ideograms.

28. *Cantos*, p. 711.
29. Kenner, *The Pound Era*, p. 527.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
31. Ezra Pound, "A Few Don'ts, "*Poetry*, I, 6(March, 1913), Quoted, Schulman, *loc. cit.*, pp, 13-14.
32. Kenner, *The Pound Era*, p. 172.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 264-65.
34. Donald Hall, "Ezra Pound," quoted, Schulman, *loc. cit.* p. 33.
35. T.S. Eliot, "Introduction to *Selected Poems of Ezra Pound*," (London: Faber & Gwyer Ltd., 1928), quoted, Schulman, *loc. cit* pp. 79-80.
36. Schulman, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
37. Kenner, *The Poetry of Ezra Pound*, p. 103.
38. Kenner, *The Pound Era*, p. 360.
39. Matthew Arnold, "The study of Poetry," in his *Fssays in Criticism*, Second Series, See *The Portable Matthew Arnold*, edited by Lionel Trilling (New York: The Viking Press, 1949, 1966), pp, 317, 318 and 326.
40. Rosenthal, *op.cit.*, quoted, Schulman, *loc, cit*. pp. 126 and 127.
44, Donald Hall, "Ezra Pound, An Interview," quoted, Schulman, *loc. cit.*, p. 33.
42. *Cantos*, p. 521.
43. *Ibid*, p. 302.
44. *Ibid.*, pp. 521-22.
45. *Ibid*,, pp. 795-96 and 767.
46. Amiya Chakravarty, "A Note on Ezra Pound," *Indian Journal of American Studies*, II, 2 (December, 1972), p. 82.
47. See *American Poetry and Prose*, edited by Norman Forester *et. al.*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1957, 1970), Vol. III, p, 136.
48. See *Indian Journal of American Studies*, II, 2 (December, 1972), p. 83.
49. George Baker, "To Ezra Pound on his Birthday 1972," *Indian Journal of American Studies*, II, 2 (December, 1972), p. 1.

The Spiritual Thriller: A Study of Graham Greene's *The Ministry of Fear*

L. Adinarayana

> His mother smiled at him in a scared way but let him talk: he was the master of the dream now. He said, "I'm wanted for a murder I didn't do. People want to kill me because I know too much. I'm hiding underground, and up above the Germans are methodically smashing London to bits all round me. . . It sounds like a thriller, doesn't it, but the thrillers are life-like—more life like than you are. . . You used to laugh at the books Miss Savage read—about spies and murders, and violence, and wild motor-car chases, but, dear, that's real life; it's what we have all made of the world since you died. I'm your little Arthur who wouldn't hurt a beetle and I'm a murderer too".[1]

A close study of the above passage affords a convenient perspective to view the predicament of Arthur Rowe, the hero of *The Ministry of Fear*, a novel written by Graham Greene in 1943. The passage forms a part of the second of the three dreams described by the narrator in Chapter 5, "Between Sleeping and Waking", of Book One, "The Unhappy Man". Greene uses a narrative device which is almost Jamesian in dramatising the consciousness of the central character by making the character reveal his predicament. There are three kinds of dreams described in this chapter. In the first one, Rowe dreams that he is back in his childhood trying to convince his mother that he has murdered his wife. But his mother wouldn't believe him. Rowc feels it terribly important to convince her. If she is convinced she can do something about it. He desperately wants a reassuring word from her. But all his efforts fail to make her take his words seriously. She dismisses it as a nasty dream. Rowe wakes up and finds himself in the dim, lurid, underground place. He is driven again to convince his mother of his sense of criminality. Then starts the second dream which Rowe half-manipulates to express his sense of urgency to communicate his predicament to his mother. This 'dream' combines the qualities of both dream

and wakeful state. While the manipulation of detail brings it closer to a wakeful state, it retains a dream-like quality because Rowe's mother, who died long ago, is made to come alive before him. Rowe's intense desire to confide in a person from whom he can expect understanding and some assurance is brought into focus. The dream also reveals his desire to escape the horror of his present adult life to a period of innocence. It spotlights not only his predicament but the predicament of the time in which he lives and the striking contrast it bears to the time of his innocent childhood. Life now sounds like a thriller, and thrillers are life-like. Spies, murders, and violence, which are the familiar components of a thriller, have become the conditions of existence. The world of his mother's time appeared free from such thrillers. They were only found in books and laughed at. Arthur Rowe, who couldn't hurt a beetle, is now a murderer. The Germans are methodically smashing London to pieces. Rowe is filled with horror to realise the helplessness of a child who is inevitably drawn from innocence to guilt The mother in the dream remarks that it is like a madhouse. But Rowe knows that the madhouse was much better: everybody was kind and reasonable to him there. This cannot be said of the life in the present.

The dream then goes on to project Rowe's memory of an incident which occurred in his childhood. While he was playing in a haystack; he saw a dog catching a rat. The dog made playful rushes at the rat which tried to crawl away with a broken back. Rowe couldn't bear the sight of the rat's pain. He struck the rat over and over again with a cricket bat. This incident was watched by his nurse, who wondered how Rowe, who wouldn't hurt a fly, had done such a thing. All the time Hilfe watched him with exhilaration. None of them guessed that Rowe was possessed by a horrible and horrifying emotion of pity. This part of the dream brings into focus Rowe's pity which has been the cause of his guilt. It has also a surrealist quality in that it brings in Hilfe, who is described as watching the cruel act with exhilaration. The third dream is a pure one reflecting the unfulfilled aspirations of the innocent Rowe, ending in a nightmarish reference to the mercy-killing of his wife.

The scene is laid in an underground tunnel in London during the Blitz. Besides Arthur Rowe, there are many people who have come there to seek shelter from the enemy air raids. They are accustomed to sleep underground. They accept the situation caused by the war and are used to the nightly raids, the destruction the enemy planes have wrought, and the sense of danger generated by the war. They have

taken to the dug-out as the only refuge from the insecurity created by the senseless war. When Rowe wakes from the third dream, he hears the siren sounding the "All Clear". But nobody in the dug-out moves to go home. The underground life has become a part of their life. The narrator remarks, "This was the world *they* knew". (p. 75)

But Arthur Rowe is different from the others in that he is caught in an inner battle. He tries to escape not only from the Fifth Columnists headed by Hilfe, who have implicated Rowe in a contrived, make-believe murder, but also from his sense of guilt that has come to possess him after killing his own wife out of pity. He is angry for being involved in a murder which he has not committed. It is ironical that he, who has been set free after a brief period of confinement in a madhouse for killing his wife, should now be pursued for a crime which is not guilty of. His condition is characterised by an oppressive loneliness. The loneliness operates on two levels. After the so-called mercy-killing of his wife he has been rendered companionless and forced to lead a solitary life. There is no one to trust : the few friends he had have turned their backs on him. On another level, he is haunted by the realisation that the pity, which was his inability to bear the pain of his suffering wife, drove him to murder her. Haunted by a guilt-stricken conscience, he tries to escape from the terror of this adult experience into childhood innocence. His predicament is such that he has to fight on two fronts simultaneously : to escape detection by the police he comes underground; to escape from the horror of life, he takes refuge in the world of dream. In this ironic situation, he is mystified by the two dimensions of his dilemma. If he breaks one mystery, he can solve the other.

There is an ironic similarity between Rowe's loneliness and the ravaged landscape of London which bears a look of desolation. Rowe is a ruin moving with familiarity among the ruins of London. On his way to the Free Mothers from Rennit to investigate the mystery surrounding the cake, Rowe walks through the bombed streets and becomes conscious of the affinity. He has become a part of the destructive present; the sense of alienation from the peaceful past is complete. He had always associated the past with "the long week-ends in the country, the laughter up lanes in the evenings, the swallows gathering on the telegraph wires, peace". (p. 39) If peace has been displaced by destruction in the outer world, the peace of his inner life was destroyed when the sense of guilt gnawed his entrails. He feels it an impertinence on the part of his pursuers to have attempted to kill him who at one blow had succeeded in destroying beauty, goodness and peace.

This perspective he has of the relation the outer world bears on his situation enlarges the dimensions of his predicament. He is like a bit of stone among the other stones. He is protectively coloured like a leopard. He gloated with pride over the feeling that the whole world's criminality was his. But the mere sight of a woman's bag or a face on an elevator going up sapped all his pride and brought home to him the stupidity of his act. Then he was filled with remorse and bitter self-criticism. He would hear a voice admonishing, "You say you killed for pity; why don't you have pity on yourself?" (p. 40) This awareness of the stupidity of his pity and the folly of his act intensify his remorse.

In the chapter "Out of Touch", Rowe begins to analyse his situation. He resents Willi, who treated murder as a joke. He scents certain companionship in Anna who had not only warned him of his danger but hadn't treated murder as a joke and had talked of death as something that mattered. He wants to record all the happenings and then report them to the police. "Something had got to be done; he wasn't going to remain permanently in hiding for a crime which he hadn't committed, while the real criminals got away with—whatever they were trying to get away with". (p. 78) He is filled with despair. In his youth he had dreamed of many things. He imagined himself capable of extraordinary heroism and endurance. In those days everything seemed possible. But now that part of his brain which daydreamed has dried up. He is no longer capable of sacrifice, courage and virtue. "He is aware of the loss; the world had dropped a dimension and become paper-thin. He wanted to dream, but all he could practise was despair." (p. 81) There is a recognition of loss of values in the outer world corresponding to his own moral degeneration. Like him the world has lost a dimension. This recognition is further fortified by the insight he gets into the state of the world when he reads a part of a passage in the Roman missal kept for display in an auction room. "Let not man prevail". (p. 83) The truth of the appeal chimes like music. In spite of the appeal, man has prevailed in this world. The world is ravaged not only by evil but even by virtues like courage, endurance and pity. "... we are trapped and betrayed by our virtues". (p. 83) Courage smashes a cathedral, endurance lets a city starve, pity kills. He finds companions in the world who like him are trapped and betrayed by virtues. Betrayal and crime are universally present in the world.

All these aspects of Rowe's predicament in apposition to the conditions of the outer world are brought into focus in Section 1 of

Chapter 7 called "A Load of Books". We are given an inside view of the working of Rowe's mind. He contemplates suicide and analyses the motives which remorselessly lead to the inevitability of ending his life as an expiation for the unjust trial he had, and in fulfilment of a justice that would atone for his act of guilt. There seems to be no other solution. He is homeless, without money. And he is wanted by the police for a murder which he has not committed. His sense of pity roams round and finds too many objects. There are too many rats to be killed. Ironically he is one of them. There are two courses open to him : either to commit suicide or to surrender to the police. The latter course, he thinks, is unwise because if he surrenders he would probably be hanged and ". . . the idea of hanging for a crime he hadn't committed still had power to anger him" (p.101) His primitive idea of justice and his conformism would prefer suicide because he would be killing himself for a crime of which he is guilty. He believes in justice and he knows that he is condemned by that justice. Closely analysing his motives, he comes to realise that "it was he who had not been able to bear his wife's pain—and not she. . . He was trying to escape his own pain, not hers". (p.103) But he has not been able to know whether *his fear of pain is worse than the pain.* He can never tell whether his wife might not have preferred any kind of life to death. The core of his predicament lies in his inability to reconcile the irreconcilables : love and fear. Unless he learns to reconcile, he has to suffer despair: to escape from which he decides to put an end to his life.

But the end does not come. The enemy spies successfully decoy him to a hotel where they expect to kill him. They exploit his sense of pity to their advantage. Rowe, on his part, is moved by the seedy, shabby dealer in old books. He wishes to do one good deed before he leaves this world by helping the sick and tired-looking stranger. He does not like it but then he "felt directed, controlled, moulded, by some agency with a surrealist imagination". (p.110) In his conversation with Anna in the hotel, he comes to know a little more about 'them'. "But *they* can bear pain—other people's pain—endlessly. They are the people who don't care." (p.118) He changes his mind about suicide because he is exhilarated by the prospect of being useful to someone again. And then the bomb explodes. There is a trace of selflessness in the care he feels for Anna to protect her.

Book two of the novel is called "The Happy Man". With the loss of memory pertaining to his adult life, Rowe is happily enabled to relive in a state of adolescence—an ironic fulfilment of a desire he felt strongly at the beginning of the novel when he was attracted by the

fete. While this section of the novel narrates Rowe's plunge into adolescence, it also marks the beginning of a new life which would enable him to face reality when the lost memory returns. More, important is the insight he gets into the working of the Ministry of Fear and finally the clue he gets to break the mystery surrounding the activities of the spies, which in turn helps him to attain self-knowledge and inner balance. Out of curiosity he studies some passages in Tolstoy's *What I believe* and stumbles all of a sudden on the realisation of self-less love, and the justification for risking damnation for the sake of the people one loves :

> " . . . there was the point . . . not to kill for one's own sake. but for the sake of people you loved, and in the company of the people you loved, it was right to risk damnation". (p. 156)

This is the moment of new birth. Once again it works on two levels : with the recovery of his own selfhood he musters enough moral courage to face any ordeal; purged of his fear and self-pity, assured of Anna's confidence, he makes bold to break the mystery of the spyring.

Book Three is called "Bits and Pieces", which again has an ironic meaning in that Rowe with the recovery of lost memory and gaining of selfhood not only blows the network of the enemy spies to bits and pieces but pieces together bits and pieces of information to arrive at an integrated picture of his own self. He feels exilarated to participate in the mopping up operations. Now his understanding of pity is different. He has learned to outlive pity. Now he can watch the rats of the spyring mercilessly killed. He grows into a full man, a mature man, the "whole man" of Book Four. He is unmoved when Willi, the head rat of the spyring, commits suicide with the gun Rowe has knowingly given. Finally he realises that fear is something which can never be removed. "If one loved one feared". (p. 267) He belongs to a ministry as large as life to which all who loved belonged. This Ministry of fear is different from the Ministry of Fear operated by the Fifth Column. They spread fear and distrust, whereas, the other Ministry promoted fear and love together. It is constructive and ensures maturity of understanding. The irreconcilables of the innocence-experience paradox cohere. The irony ultimately works out in bringing the different tensions into a state of inner balance. It comes as a sort of 'unsought revelation'. He also accepts the ironic situation forced on him to pretend ignorance of what Willi had told him only to prevent Anna from knowing his knowledge :

> They had to tread carefully for a lifetime, never speak without thinking twice; they must watch each other like enemies because they loved each other so much. They would never know what it was not to be afraid of being found out. It occurred to him that perhaps after all one could atone even to the dead, if one suffered for the living enough. (p. 268)

In Auden's view Greene has analysed the vice of pity, "that corrupt parody of love which is so insidious and deadly for sensitive natures", in *The Ministry of Fear*. In the case of Rowe this pity leads him to cruelty, but ultimately proves constructive in helping him to get an insight into the urgent human concerns. But in the case of the Fascist Agents, this pity is destructive. To quote Auden again :

> To feel compassion for some one is to make oneself their equal; to pity them is to regard oneself as their superior and from that eminence the step to the torture chamber and the corrective labour camp is shorter than one thinks.[2]

What is unmistakably modern about this novel is the originality with which Greene vitalises the genre of thriller and elevates it to the level of serious fiction. If the distinction between these two modes is one between melodrama and drama—the former depending for its effect on violence, coincidence, surprises, etc., of the plot, and the latter on the play of the dramatic element in the exploration of character, Greene has achieved a happy synthesis of these two elements in his entertainments. T. S. Eliot in his essay, "Wilkie Collins and Dickens", makes some useful observations on the aesthetic of melodrama. He says that a comparative study of Dickens and Collins can do much to illustrate the question of the difference between the dramatic and the melodramatic in fiction According to Eliot, there was no clearcut distinction in the past between 'highbrow fiction' and 'thrillers'. The best novels *were* thrilling. But in the modern novel, the different elements have come to be dissociated. If in the serious novel greater emphasis is laid on character and the dramatic element, the plot and the melodramatic element gain precedence in the 'thriller'. "But the frontier of drama and melodrama is vague, the difference is largely a matter of emphasis : perhaps no drama has ever been greatly and permanently successful without a large melodrtamatic element . . . It is not necessary, for high drama, that accident should be eliminated . . . But in great drama character is always felt to be—not more important than plot—but somehow integral with plot". Towards the end of the essay Eliot remarks :

> So long as novels are written, the possibilities of melodrama must from time to time be re-explored. The contemporary 'thriller' is in danger of becoming stereotyped . . .[3]

As though taking a clue from the observation made by Eliot in 1927, Greene has successfully re-explored the possibilities of melodrama and created something legendary out of the contemporary thriller. While conforming to the thriller pattern with all its emphasis on coincidences, resemblances and surprises, Greene's stress is on the human element. A fusion of character and incident takes place. The events that constitute the plot are melodramatic but the evolution of character is dramatic. The narrator almost always in Greene's entertainments employs the limited point of view. This device helps to fuse the dramatic and the melodramatic. Writing on *The Ministry of Fear*, Auden says that Greene has succeeded in relating the thriller to another literary form, allegory : "His thrillers are projected into outer melodramatic action of the struggles which go on unendingly in every mind and heart".[4]

The same desire 'to create something legendary out of contemporary thriller' which Greene had in writing an earlier entertainment called *The Confidential Agent* has gone into the making of *The Ministry of Fear* also. There is an explicit reference to the conditions of modern post-War life bearing thriller-like qualities in the passage quoted in the beginning of this article. The insight of Rowe which may be taken to be that of Greene that the modern life fits into the thriller pattern without evoking any sense of incongruity or unreality ensures a realistic framework to the novel. There are two levels at which the plot operates : at one level the action is confined to the progression of events and incidents relating to Rowe's involvement in the mystery of the Fifth Column activities; at another level, the plot is strengthened by an inner structure that gets identified with Rowe's search for self-knowledge and inner balance. These two levels are held in balance by the operation of irony. In the end a metaphysical insight emerges when both the levels fuse into one. A.E. Dyson in his book. *The Inimitable Dickens*, says that *Bleak House* is "a mystery story, however, with metaphysical overtones; the formula of *Bleak House* has its truest progeny neither in *The Castle* and *The Trial*, nor in the modern detective story, influential though it was in both these directions, but in such intriguing if comparaitively minor masterpieces as Rex Warner's *The Aerodrome* and Graham Greene's *The Ministry of Fear*".[5] We can extend the point made by Dyson a little further and say that not only

the formula of *The Ministry of Fear* can be traced back to Dickens's *Bleak House* but even thematically it alludes to Dickens : *David Copperfield* is one of the formative influences on the adolescent Rowe and his sense of pity.

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Notes

1. Graham Greene, *The Ministry of Fear* (London : Uniform Edition, William Heinemann), p. 71.

   The subsequent quotations from the novel are from the same edition and are indicated by page numbers in parenthesis following the quotation.

2. W, H. Auden, "The Heresy of Our Times" , *Graham Greene: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Samuel Hynes, (Englewood Cliffs : Prentice—Hall, Inc., 1973), P. 94.

3. T. S, Eliot, "Wilkie Collins and Dickens", *Selected Essays*, (London : Faber and Faber, 1951), P, 469.

4. W. H Auden, "The Heresy of Our Times" ,P. 93.

5. A.E. Dyson, *The Inimitable Dickens*, (London : Macmillan, 1970), P. 156.

Epitaph

What rats of fears scurried through her veins !
How many times a thick blanket of fog
choked off the sun touching the meridian !
The rose-bud rounding out to perfection
pulled apart and crushed into nothing.
To have been killed clean at one stroke
she would have found much more to her liking
than this business of being mauled
and brought back to normal living
for reasons of logistics.

The deal could not be struck over her
unless she was kept in suspended animation.
How many times she teetered on the edge
nobody can ever know now.
This consummation she had not hoped for.
The legend of the man and his maid
so much a part of her being
that it overrode the stark reality of her situation
until finally she found that the man
she had gone round the fire seven times with
was weighing her—her warm flesh
and ancient fever of desire—
against hard cash, a scooter and
a certain quantity of yellow metal.
The scale naturally dipped in their favour.

She, a woman, proved a lighter thing.
Who cares what diabolical things were done
to her body decorously enfolded behind the veil ?
It's enough to go by the coroner's report:
she died an absolutely natural death,
or, at worst, a case of suicide.

P. P. Sharma

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Pincher Martin and the Sea-gulls

Sham Kumari Wali

William Golding's *Pincher Martin,* with the densest verbal texture of all his works, is extremely complex. It is like a poem, suggestive and allusive, depending for its meaning and impact, largely, on the images and motifs often with symbolic overtones that are interwoven integrally into the fabric of the narrative. It requires close reading and re-reading to see the connections and inter-relationships, for not only are the numerous motifs intricately interlaced with far-reaching ramifications, they also function at several levels. A subsequent reading shows them in an entirely new light, and the significance of some of the repeated images becomes clearer.

Besides adding to the richness of the fable, the compact. concrete, vividly realized images create effects with great economy obviating the necessity of description and narration. The result is a significant tenseness of language and tightness of structure.

I propose to examine here the memorable image of the gulls that keeps punctuating the narrative, occurring and recurring throughout the work.

Its power, its unforgettable visual and aural impact, can be traced to the simplicity, the concreteness and economy with which it is presented. Sketched briefly in a few words, with focus only on a broad feature or two, the gulls haunt the reader almost as much as they haunt Pincher Martin. One can easily recall "the motionless blobs of white", "the pattern in black and white changing a trifle and making little noises;" and picture the gulls descending downwind, drifting, floating "standing with erect heads and tongues" or "standing on the look-out like an image". Equally memorable are the feathered reptiles advancing "with wings half-open, head lowered", and the flying lizards "flapping overhead".

Initially the description of the gulls—associated with land and the sea-shore and an important part of normal sailing experience—seems to be a naturalistic account of the landscape, innocent of any deeper significance. Pincher Martin, struggling desperately in the sea, spies in the distance a mysterious dull shape. As he lies slack on the waves he sees it loom suddenly over him; "and there was rock stuck up in the sky with a sea-gull poised before it" (21).[1] The gull is here taken to be an expected, recognised feature of the landscape. as the gulls are even later on, swinging, wheeling, clucking, or roosting. The only other living creatures on the rock besides the man,[2] not only are they innocent and harmless, they are rather companionable. At times they seem to be a trifle sinister but scared of the human figure they side-slip away. The gull "braking widely over the wall . . . of the trench, legs and claws held out" (41), "yelling angrily", appears to be a realistic description of the bird resentful at having its sanctuary on the lone rock in mid-Atlantic violated.

The birds, however, are not only associated with "the primal innocence of nature", they are also carnivorous scavengers—"wartime gulls"—who looking on the ill and battered Pincher as a likely prey, and "finding a single man with water round him, resented the warmth of his flesh and his slow, unwarranted movements" (56). They then assume a threatening form and take the shape of yet another force that the already tortured Pincher has to contend with in his lonely, agonizing struggle for life and sanity on the rock.

> They rose clamorously wheeling, came back till their wings beat his face. He struck out again in panic . . . they retired, then circled and watched (56-7).

Not only do the gulls function on a naturalistic level testifying to the solidity and reality of the rock by filling in the necessary details of the landscape, but they also perform another, and a more subtle, function. They act as an index to the state of Pincher's mind mirroring his ebbing and flowing consciousness, having the status almost of objective correlatives. This imparts to the narrative the immediacy of unmediated experience, so that to read the fable is not to be told the feelings and sensations of the struggling man but to undergo the experience oneself with the protagonist.

Flung out of a torpedoed destroyer into the swirling waters of the sea, and over-powered by the "welter", Pincher is seen struggling blindly for life. Swept ashore, gradually recovering control over himself, and his personality fragmented, he is hardly ever completely normal. Cold,

feverish, starved, alone, tormented by memory pictures, continually on the verge of physical and mental breakdown, his vision, swinging from the more to the less normal, gets moçe and more distorted till the final dissolution of mind and body.

Pincher's barely conscious state, his battered body and dazed mind unable to control or even be conscious of himself, incapable of focussing his eyesight properly or of understanding what his eyes see, is imaged in his dim, vague apprehension of the gulls. They are seen as "a pattern in black and white" which "existed in two layers, one behind the other, one for each eye", which "changed a trifle and made little noises" (24). They mirror here his limited perception that can register only broad features—colours, noises—without the ability to sort out the details and make them cohere into a clear, meaningful picture.

The gulls also help integrate his fragmented personality by assuring Pincher's submerged consciousness of the reality of the rock and the outside world, and thus of his own reality. The process of integration is imaged in the cry of the gull (24). A little later, a "seabird cried over him" and

> This time he had got back so much of his personality that he could look out and grasp the whole of what he saw at once (29).

Associated with innocence,and being at the same time carnivorous creatures, the birds mirror a whole range of feelings between hope of survival and terror of approaching death. They appear benign and malign, ond on occasion both at once, depending on Pincher's fluctuating consciousness.

To Pincher Martin, struggling in the sea, facing imminent death, the sudden sight of the rock "with a sea-gull poised before it" (21) holds out the promise of a haven, a refuge, a hope and the picture of the gull, indicative of solid earth and in a way endorsing the reality of the rock, is a peaceful one.

Having found shelter on the alien, inhospitable rock, and some measure of security in the crevice, though still far from comfortable or free from danger, the gulls seem to him a trifle alarming :

> They settled and cried with erect heads and tongues, beaks wide open on the high point of the rock (47).

But, on the whole, for Pincher, sheltered for the night and on the verge of sleep, the gulls assume a harmless appearence by becoming a neutral part of the landscape with which they merge. More than that,

they seem to be comforting presences and there are even some heart-warming links between the man and the birds who

> talked and shook their wings, folded them one over the other, settled like white pebbles against the rock and tucked in their heads (47).

Their cries are now, to his more secure consciousness, transformed to the anthropomorphic 'talk' that turns them almost into fellow creatures. They also, like Pincher, "tuck" in their heads.

Tormented in the night by physical pain and the memory pictures, the noise "connected with the motionless blobs of white" (55-6) is a welcome signal, announcing as it does, the end of the night and with it the end to his torture. The "faint light . . . consolidated his personality, gave it bounds and sanity" (56), so that, with returning daylight and 'normalcy', the sound to his more reassured consciousness is the warm, comforting "throaty cluck from one of the roosting gulls" (56).

They embody also Pincher's terror. The "cry" of the gull changes to the more sinister "scream" that accompanies his own as the realization dawns upon him that the cleft where he had found refuge was actually " a sea-trap alien to breathing life".

> A gull screamed with him so that he came back into himself, leaned his forehead against the rock and waited for his heart to steady (33).

Pincher Martin makes repeated efforts to keep hold of his sanity and to integrate his shattered 'self'; but his is a constant and progressively losing battle against the forces of destruction. The least reminder of the seriousness of his predicament fills him with blind, sickening fear and distorts his perception. As his precarious control weakens the gulls undergo a change.

When "knowledge and memory flowed back . . . He became a castaway in broad daylight and the necessity of his position fell on him" (56). As pressures mount and he verges closer towards physical and mental breakdown, the gulls assume nightmarish forms. His unbalanced mind and diseased imagination are imaged in the surrealistic shapes of the gulls: "Their heads were narrow . . . . They were flying reptiles" (57) and flying lizards (163).

To his fluctuating consciousness their movements too seem subtly to change. From 'descending', 'swirling', 'swinging', 'flying', 'sweeping' they float :

> The reptiles were floating back to the sea round the rock. They said nothing but sat on the flat sea with their legs hidden (143).

The word 'float' expresses with precision the gulls being carried along by the current and yet, is there not something sinister and vaguely chilling in the very silence and lack of voluntary animate movement suggested by the word ? Something that seems to hold in patient readiness a veiled threat underlined by the words "they said nothing" but sat with their "legs hidden". Gone are the comforting links of a more secure consciousness, between the man and the birds—they no longer "talk".

With the dykes burst and the final dissolution of mind and body set in, Pincher's disintegrating consciousness again and finally finds an objective correlative in the gulls :

> the lightning found reptiles floating and flying motionlessly and a tendril ran to each. The reptiles [like Martin] resisted, changing shape a little, then they too, dropped out and were gone (200).

Nothing now remains of Martin but the "centre" and the claws.

Not only do the gulls reflect at different stages of the narrative Pincher's consciousness vascillating between fear and assurance, they can also picture with great force and economy both the emotions at once. For instance, on the brink of facing the stark reality of impending starvation, he makes a desperate effort to shut out the dangerous thought and convince himself that all is well :

> "I can outwit you . . . . I kill and eat. There is nothing to"— (115).

Suddenly he realizes in panic that there is nothing to eat, but sheers away from the knowledge and leaves the sentence incomplete :

> He paused for a moment and watched the gull drifting nearer; but not so near that the reptile under the white was visible (115).

The terror of starvation—the reptile under the white—intrudes into the conscious mind, but he deliberately suppresses it seeing only the innocent white gull. He is, nevertheless, conscious of its presence in the background.

To get rid of the horrifying knowledge he repeats the sentence again but ends it with the word "fear" instead of "eat" :

> "There is nothing to fear" (115).

thus rendering the thought not only harmless but positively reassuring. With this the gull again becomes innocuous and he sees it "being carried along by the tide" and later preening its feathers and fluttering "like a duck in a pond." (116).

Besides providing a naturalistic setting for the fable and embodying the various stages of Pincher Martin's consciousness, the image of the gulls works on yet another level. This is realised on a subsequent reading of the story when one makes the startling discovery at the end, that the rock that seemed so substantial and was described with such circumstantial detail, and all that happens on it, is imaginary. It is an audacious attempt on the part of the dead Pincher,[3] clinging doggedly to his identity in the face of absolute annihilation, to create a world for his ego to survive on while his body—held up by the life-belt and devoured by the voracious gulls—is floatiug towards the Hebrides. Deep down in his consciousness, some obscure centre of knowing is aware of the truth but the fierce will and intelligent mind make frantic attempts not only to suppress but to transmute the reality of his death.

Part of the interest of a second reading lies in following the manner in which he uses the gulls fighting over his body—as he uses the tin box, the life belt, the weeds etc —to construct and control his world, achieves some measure of success at places and breaks down at others.

The idea of fabricating the rock can be seen germinating subliminally in Pincher's mind as early as p. 18. The thought of the U-boat.

> breaking the swell with her *heavy body like a half-tide rock.* Her periscope . . . . [the] eye of *a land-creature that has defeated the rhythm and necessity of the sea (18).*[4]

suggests to him the thought of breaking the rhythm and necessity of his own existence and extinction by creating the rock. The idea gradually shapes itself. He sees a 'ship' in the mist : "The shape moved. It grew larger and not clearer", it "rose over him", till suddenly is materializes as made reality : "and there was rock stuck up in the sky with a sea-gull poised before it" (21). His will and his fertile mind fabricate the rock out of his floating body, and the man-eating gulls, hovering over and devouring him are ingeniously turned to account to signify safety—land and shore. But on careful re-reading one wonders whether there is not something perhaps a trifle vaguely unreal about the rock and his mode of apprehending it. Is it not too much like a picture ? The word "with" links the rock "stuck up in the sky" integrally with the gull, as if the two ought to go together and the presence of the one necessitates that of the other. Is there not

something perhaps a little too simple, neat, and compact about the picture, too still, to be absolutely true ? One has a vague suspicion that the sea-gull has been made to poise on purpose to authenticate the rock.

Later his constantly manipulating mind metamorphoses the terrifying webbed feet and claws into the surrealistic, "Brown fronds and green webs of weed" (27).

Pincher Martin transforms the nature of the gulls not only to assure himself of the reality of his rock but also to give definition to his identity, which he is in danger of losing, and to convince himself that he is actually on his rock. Though he utilizes the gull's cry to declare "to the groping consciousness, wherever you are, you are here!" he has not been able to constitute himself fully. He needs the solidity of his created world to further define his 'self' and the gull's cry emptied of all that is threatening comes in handy :

> A seabird cried over him with a long sound descending down wind . . . . This time he had got back so much of his personality that he could look out and grasp the whole of what he saw at once (29).

At times, however, his mind breaks down under the terrific strain and fails to maintain the fiction. He notices that the "inside of the trench. . . . [is] white, strangely white", and endeavours to ignore it by taking stock of his physical situation. He lists known facts, in the language of statement, naming them to distract his attention from the pernicious truth :

> I have tumbled in a trench. My head is jammed against the farther side and my neck is twisted. . . . That whiter white under the water along there is my hand. . . . (41).

But disturbed and unable to ignore the reality altogether he sees the gull as it actually is :

> legs and claws held out . . . it hung flapping only a foot or two above the rock [himself]. Wind chilled his cheek. . . . feet came up . . . . (41).

The crafty mind, then tries to shut it out and sends "the gull side-slipping away".

Pincher Martin employs the gulls not only to order his world but also as a means of escape. The nagging memory pictures of the night called up by his guilty conscience are insistent reminders of the

fact that he is suffering the fires of hell[5] for his sins on earth. When these become unbearable he uses the gulls to black out the tormenting night and the fact of his death by making it day again :

> There was dull fire in his feet and a sharper sort in either knee (48).

> One half of this world burned and froze (49).

> Then he was larger again, filling every corner of the tunnels, sweeping with shrieking nerves over the fires. . . . This became a rhythm that had obtained from all ages and would endure so (49-50).

> There was an order in neon lighting. There was a woman, not like the white detailed bodies but with a face (50).

> [Nat's smile] rising spontaneously . . . evidence of sheer niceness that made the breath come short with maddened liking and rage (55).

> There came a new noise among the others. It was connected with the motionless blobs of white out there . . . .
> there was a faint light that consolidated his personality, gave it bounds and sanity. The noise was a throaty cluck from one of the roosting gulls (55-6).

When, on the other hand, the reality of his created world is unbearable and cannot obliterate the sickening truth, it is best to forget it all in sleep. His tirelessly transforming imagination now employs the gulls to make it night. Discovering that there is nothing to eat and drink on his barren rock except the nauseating red blobs of jelly and the harsh water, the words "Bloody hell", (63) burst out of his lips. Then he suddenly realizes with a shock—underlined by the sign of exclamation now added—that not only is the world he has constructed metaphorically "bloody hell" but literally so :

> His face set in a look of agony.
> "Bloody hell !" (66)
> He is literally in hell

the true nature of the gulls can be disguised no longer :

> The sea-gulls were circling the rock now and he looked at them with hate (66).

He consoles himself by thinking that he has enough to drink. But the reality of his extremely precarious hold on his identity can be ignored no longer :

> the incongruous fresh water [was] held back among all the salt; but held back so delicately that the merest touch would set his life irrevocably flowing . . . . "Forget it !" (67).

He thereupon thrusts himself backwards into the sleeping crevice, sends the sun down, turns the sky "blue, dark blue". Then to confirm the authenticity of his created night be makes the gulls float down and settle down again for the night.

To control and manage the nightmarish actuality of the screaming, swirling gulls fighting over him he even attempts, by voicing and naming his fear, to render it less threatening. Touring the rock, netting it down with names, fitting it into his pattern and by making it more familiar, less inimical, he comes to the cliff :

> "This cliff here to the west, with the funnel in it is—"
> He paused, searching for a name (84)

(actually to gather courage to vocalize the terror). He sees the threatening gull and tries to shut it out by sending it away :

> A sea-gull came swinging in under the sun . . . screamed, side slipped crazily and wheeled away (84).

He then attempts to forget it by diverting his attention to the act of creation which in turn strengthens his belief in the solidity of his fabricated world "The thing in the middle of the globe, active and tireless", immediately 'sees' a detail of the rock—the cliff turning inwards below :

> "A lump has fallen out of the cliff." (85)

His fertile imagination "searched the water carefully and thought he could make out a square shape deep under the surface". Master of himself and of his world, he now has the courage to name the fear

> "Gull Cliff" (85).

Nevertheless, the inexorably nagging truth of his body being carried by the current towards the Hebrides, surrounded by the feasting, fighting gulls, keeps struggling towards the surface. His conscious

mind, unable to ignore the fact, tries to hold it in check by attempting to distance it. He cannot help seeing the gulls come back, sweeping in to examine him with sharp cries, and he is forced to accept the fact that they were :

> wartime gulls who, finding a single man with water round him, resented [but here the creating mind again transmutes reality, converting the fact of his death to the less inimical possibility of death and they are seen as resenting] the *warmth* of his flesh and his *slow, unwarranted movements* . . . . They told him, with their close approach, and flapping hover that he *was* [not is] far better dead, floating in the sea like a burst hammock (56).

But the effort and the strain it costs the mind to veil the truth even slightly is evident in the words underlined :

> They retired then circled and watched. Their heads were narrow They were flying reptiles. An *ancient* antipathy for things with claws set him shuddering at them and *thinking* into their smooth outlines all the strangeness of bats and vampires (57).

The antipathy, he reassures himself, is only an ancient one and that they are bats and vampires simply his imagination.

Finally at a moment of great stress, when the sense of his guilt is at its most powerful, the truth bursts to the surface. The thought that Helen, the producer's wife, was to him "an instrument of pleasure" is too much for the already badlv shaken Pincher and suddenly "all the unsorted stuff comes flying out as from a dustbin upset in a high wind" (91):

> immediately a glossy picture swept the blue sky and the stone out of sight. This was a bright patch, sometimes like a figure eight lying on its side and sometimes a circle. The circle was filled with blue see where gulls were wheeling and settling and loving to eat and fight. He felt the swing of the ship under him, sensed the bleak stillness and silence that settled on the bridge as the destroyer slid by the thing floating in the water–a thing, humble and abused and still, among the fighting beaks, an instrument of pleasure (96).

After this apocalyptic glimpse, not of his impending death but the death that has already taken place, his imagination finds it difficult to transform the gulls and use them. He counters by projecting his own floating on to the birds. They are however more threatenting and sinister, and he now generally sees them as feathered reptiles and flying lizards.

The tenacious Pincher, however, refuses to give up even when the game seems to be lost. The ingenious mind thinks of another ruse

to account for their terrifying, nightmarish shapes and attitudes. He attempts to dismiss the threat by assigning their appearance to bodily ill health and delirium :

> I need a crap. I must see about this. Now I must . . . sweat this heat out of my body (143).

Later on he explains away the frightening forms as the distorted vision of a madman :

> A madman would see the gulls as flying lizards, he would connect the two things out of a book . . . when his brain turned (179).

He keeps struggling till even the last bastion of madness gone and dissolution of the ingenious, fabricating mind set in, the gulls vanish with the rock and the created world at a touch of the black lightning.

The clever, educated Pincher uses the gulls for his purposes in yet another way. His guilt—the memory pictures—keeps haunting him and refuses to be suppressed The realization that he is suffering the fires of hell for his deeds on earth is present just below the threshold of consciousness. To shut out the sickening knowledge he converts the hell fires to the less threatening fever and physical pain, and his struggle for the fire of his life with God to his struggle for life with the sea :

> He let his eyes close and ignored the pictures that came and went behind them. The slow movement of his mind settled on a thought. There was a small fire in his body that was almost extinguished but incrediby was still smouldering despite the Atlantic. He folded his body consciously round that fire and nursed it (28–9).

Suggestive of Promethean fire, the idea that he can pose as Prometheus is still not conscious enough. When, however, the fires become insistent and the memory pictures gain in clarity and strength, and the truth cannot any longer be evaded absolutely, Pincher realizes that even pain and torture, assuring him of his being, are preferable to non-being. Better to be torn by the vultures in hell, to be the defiant, immortal Prometheus, his identity separate and in opposition to Zeus, than to submit to and accept punishment for sins which would, to some extent, amount to a surrender of his ego. The idea gathers force subliminally :

> "Yah ! Get away ! Bugger off" . . . They retired then, circled and watched. Their heads were narrow. They were flying reptiles (56-7).

(The man-eating gulls are subtly transformed. They are now, with their narrow heads and bare necks, like the vultures-"the feathered reptiles" of p. 96)

> "Keep off ! Who do you think I am ?"

The idea that he might pretend to be Prometheus is suggested by the pronoun "who" instead of the more natural 'what' in the circumstances. It gains shape till, aware of "the last repeat of the pattern", his impending annihilation, it springs out fully formed, and he shouts :

> "Hoe, hoe ! Thor's lightning challenges me ! Flash after flash, rippling spurts of white fire, bolts flung at Prometheus, blinding white, white, white, searing, the aim of the sky at the man on the rock—" (188-89).

The image of the gulls turned vultures helps Pincher build up and give body to the myth that he is Prometheus.

The gull motif is intricately interconnected with the other images and reverberates again and again with far-reaching ramifications. The "dead gull, its upturned breast-bone like the keel of *a derelict boat*" (p. 59), looks back, for example, to the moment when Pincher first sights or creates the rock. It looks back to the boat. to the rock, to Pincher himself :

> A carrier ? A *derelict carrier*, deserted and waiting to sink ? . . . A derelict liner ? Then she must be one of the Queens by her bulk (20).

The words that seem to be opaque and bear significance only at the naturalistic level are seen on hindsight to be part of an intricate network of meanings. The "derelict carrier" is then not only the wreckage, the rock, the floating body of Pincher but broadens out to signify Man. Pincher is the carrier, the destroyer, the "Wildebeaste" on which he was drafted. There are, however, others – men of superior worth—the "liners" and the "Queens" like Nat. But whoever they may be, and whatever their value, one cannot but wonder sadly with Campbell at the end, whether man with all his sound and fury is not in the ultimate analysis a "poor derelict". The "derelict carrier" of p. 20, is seen in this light when it is read along with the other images. This image also

looks forward to the end, linking the gulls with Pincher Martin, the lean-to and Man.

Trying to deflect the evil from himself (his own body is waiting to sink) Pincher projects it on to the gulls reducing them to a harmless skeleton boat :

> He came on the mouldering bones of fish and a dead gull, its upturned *breast-bone like the keel of a derelict boat* (59).

When, however, the end approaches and the reality, more and more insistent, refuses to be suppressed, he needs must face it partially :

> "Now I am thin and weak. My joints are like knobs and my limbs like sticks. My face is *fallen in* with age and my hair is white with salt and suffering. My eyes are dull stones . . . . *my chest* is like *the ribs of a derelict boat*" (188)

The poetic language, the rhythm, the stark simplicity and elemental quality of the passage lifts Pincher out of the ordinary individual and gives him the stature of an archetypal figure. The words "fallen in" in combination with "derelict boat" look forward to the end, to the image of the lean-to with its "roof fallen in-a wreck" while the image of the sun "going down seemingly for ever" (206) prefigures the sun which "sank like a burning ship, went down, left nothing for a reminder but clouds like smoke" (208). "Strong and handsome with an eagle profile," Pincher, like all men is reduced not only physically, to "the poor derelict" and the lean-to (207-8), there is little certainty even of his spiritual survival.

The image of the gull, the rock, the boat, the lean-to, the sun are thus inextricably interlaced. They also seem to be at one level surrogates of Pincher.[6] The rock and the gulls seen together at the beginning disintegrate at the same time. What further connects Martin with the rapacious gulls is the image of the claws, and the words "instrument of pleasure". To both the other is only an instrument of pleasure. The image of the vulture takes another form—Pincher with his "eagle profile" (188) is seen devouring himself on his self-created rock.[7] Could this perhaps signify that this fierce concern with identity and the 'self' which is at the root of civilization is also destructive of it ?

The gulls metamorphosed to the feathered reptiles and the flying lizards give Pincher's struggle on the rock yet another dimension. Not only do they reflect the world as seen by a man whose only value is assertion of the 'self'—a world made up only of claws and fighting

beaks-they link it with the elemental, the primeval and the archetypal. They transpose us to the remote past with man emerging from the seas on the barren rock, to which he clings with the tenacity of the limpets, the jellyfish and the weeds. Drinking water at the water-hole, he is on a level with the other elemental forms struggling for life. The flying lizards and the feathered reptiles fit in with this background and take us back to the history of life itself—to the webbed weeds and "the sessile and mindless life", to the world of the claws of the gull, the crab, the lobster, the man. This gives the fable a slightly amoral slant. Man may be more than an animal but this instinct for survival goes back to the very origins of life itself and is as deep rooted. It is this that is at the bottom of civilization impelling man to make stupendous efforts to perpetuate himself[9] It is this that makes it so difficult to surrender to death and non-being.

The above analysis of the motif of the gulls exemplifies the infinite complexity of the imagery of *Pincher Martin*. Intricately interlaced, with far reaching reverberations, functioning subtly at manifold levels it is difficult for the reader to exhaust its significance. Greatly enriching the fable the images are largely responsible for the powerful, unforgettable impact of the work.

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Notes

1. All page numbers within brackets refer to quotations from the Faber edition of William Golding's *Pincher Martin*, reprinted 1974.
2. Excluding the "mindless and sessile" forms of life like the limpets.
3. It is not very clear whether Pincher is already dead or if all that happens takes place in the split second before medical death. I would favour, like Babb (Howard S. Babb *The Novels of William Golding*, Ohio State University Press, 1970, p. 66) and most other critics, the former interpretation, though the latter also is valid. Consequently though I may refer to Pincher as being dead, the fact that he is on the point of medical death is not ruled out.
4. All the italics in the passages quoted from *Pincher Martin* are mine.

5. This is not to say that the fires, at one level, are not metaphorical.

6. The lean-to has already been seen as a surrogate of Pincher by Babb in his *The Novels of William Golding.*

7. See Ernest Claude Bufkin, Jr. , *The Novels of William* Golding: A descriptive and Analytic Study, unpublished thesis, Vanderbilt University, 1964, p. 216.

8. V. Tiger: "Possibly even an evolutionary context is involved in Pincher's evolution from the sea". See *William Golding: The Dark Fields of Discovery* (London : Calder & Boyer's, 1974). p. 103.

9. See Gabriel Josipovici, *The World and* the *Book* (London : Macmillan, 1975), p. 245.

The Sage And The Prince

Irreversible was the covenant :
The Sage's prayer and the King's oath sealed
The deed of promise. The man sans power,
Who once by merit a new world enacted,
Now stood, with supplicant hands outstretched
For alms no less than the loan impossible
Of the first born, for heroic feets great
unattempted yet by angels or men,
From the man of power absolute made
Powerless by his bequest and left
Derelict in authority and will
By the savage compulsions of selfhood,
Bound by truth publicly proclaimed and sworn.

Thus began the voyage long and winding
Into the embryonic land afar
Of demons and spirites and ghosts unshapely,
Of werlocks and witches and chimeras,
Lying across the marshes oneiric,
And the air-wavering will O' the wisps,
The subconscious topography in time
Of a stone-deaf mind out of silent space,
Creeping mutely towards primal outlines
Of life and change and growth and difference,
The wilderness domain of the dragon.

—D. V. K. Raghavacharyulu

Sex Symbolism in Blake's Later poetry

A. A. Ansari

Even in the strange, esoteric, perdurable *Prophetic Books*, Blake's heterodoxy is deeply entrenched in tradition. This is the tradition of the Jewish Cabalah, the Gnostics, and in a lesser degree, the Neo-Platonists. From the very beginning, Blake's naive but complex mind was haunted by sex as a disturbing experience, and the *Songs of Experience* are a witness to it. In later poetry, most conspicuously in the *Four Zoas* and *Jerusalem*, sex symbolism is integral to his mythical interpretation of the cosmos and of the labyrinths of individual and universal experience. In poems belonging to the first and second groups of the *Prophetic Books*, Blake conceives of the cosmic drama in terms of a polarization of Good and Evil, an immaculate scheme of opposites that subsume all the varied aspects of a multiple universe. With the growth of a deeper and more penetrating interest in human destiny, layers of interpretation were expanded, and sex symbolism gained in richness and complexity. In spite of many overlappings and confusions, of much that is eccentric and exaggerated and blurs the proportions, Blake's basic insights are luminous, and derive from a clearly articulated moral and speculative position. Blake is frequently led astray, when the prophetic mood is on him, to wander into unexpected and unfamiliar mazes, but he can always be referred back to a centre and a pivotal point. Like Nietzsche and Shaw, he believes in a transvaluation of values

Blake's account of the genesis of the universe is simple and apocalyptical. From a state of mythical perfection, called Eternity or Eden, a fall or a descent has taken place. This fall can be explained both on an intellectual and a moral level. It can be visualized as a disequilibrium that has entered the primal and hypothetical harmony among the four fundamental states of man, as well as a division of

the ideal man, who is androgynous, into Male and Female. Mortality and sexuality are interchangeable terms in Blake. Simultaneously with the revolt of Urizen against Los, as a consequence of which the former creates the Mundane Shell out of his 'self-contemplation', the Female tries her hardest to establish her unquestionable supremacy and domination over the Male. This division into the sexes is applicable to each of the four Zoas, and hence Urizen, Los, Luvah and Tharmas have each its counterpart in Ahania, Enitharmon, Vala, and Enion. The separations between Males and Females are a cause for lamentation for the latter, and these wailings are persistently audible in the *Prophetic Books*. Each of the four Zoas has also its Spectre and Emanation. By conferring upon his four fundamental states a mythological status, Blake has added a degree of warm humanism to them, and saved them from degenerating into pale and lifeless abstractions. These four metaphysical entities, in their conflicts and antagonisms, their harmaphroditic unions and ensuing bitterness and strife, do not proceed in a readily decipherable way: the modes of their manifestation in the cosmic sphere are highly tantalizing and elusive.

The four zoas inhabit the four different regions or quarters of the earth. Thus the South is allotted to Urizen, the North to Los, the East to Luvah, and the West to Tharmas. These four states stand also for head. heart, loins and the body. It will at once be obvious that to the tripartite composition of the human personality, envisaged by the Ancients, Blake has added a fourth element, body, and thus made it four dimensional. Pre-eminently, there is an antagonism between Reason and Impulse in the Blakean universe. With a slight shift of emphasis, it may be asserted that the enduring antithesis is conceived of as between what is inward, active, intellectual, masculine, spontaneous and forgiving, and what may be regarded as outward, passive, sensuous, feminine, rigid and vindictive. It is also a point of crucial importance, as has been emphasized by one of the critics, that inward is also upward, as outward is also downward. The human soul, in its cyclical progression, touches at different points of the periphry till it is brought back to the condition of primal felicity.

There are two significant aspects of Blake's treatment of the problem of sex. In the first place, the monstrous fallacy—and this is seminal to all fallacies—is to regard body as distinct from the soul, whereas it should be accepted as a portion of it, a form of its fiery energy, or its emanation. With Blake, the emergence of sexuality entails the operation of the Moral Law, and the fact of overlooking the point of contiguity between the body and the soul is to erect "stony

walls of separation" in the homogeneous and integrated human personality. It also gives rise to notions of secrecy, prudery, coyness, chastity, jealousy, vengeance, and all the familiar concomitants of the erotic apparatus. In the second place, feling should not be canalized; it is individualized passion in the form of Luvah-Vala, which is responsible for all the suspicion, cruelty and inhibitions working subterraneously in the human psyche. This fact is closely related to the concept of the selfhood, for it is the dominant possessive instinct which leads to the perpetuation of the taboos. The "physical tendernesses of the Soul" are defiled and poisoned the moment the physical passion is restricted and confined to one instead of being freely and unobtrusively given to many. Mortal man is sexbound, for he does not let the shackles of his selfhood or "Proprium" be burst open, and the light of Eternity shine upon it. The "infant joys of sex" can be experienced only when the identity of one flows into the identity of another instead of either tyrannizing over or being subservient to it. A free and mutual recognition and acceptance of the minute particulars of each by the Male and the Female is the sum and crown of human happiness.

Blake was a born rebel, and he retained the passionate rebelliousness of his spirit to the last. He wanted to strike a deathblow to the consecrated moral, political and religious institutions that appeared to him to have corrupted the springs of joy in human life. In the *Songs of Experience*, and more so in *The Daughters of Albion*, *Europe* and *America*, the denunciation is most ruthless and unequivocal. In the later *Prophetic Books*, the sexual problem has been elevated to a higher plane. Blake tries to explain the dominion of the law, the mystery of religion, and the conception of sin and vengeance as natural corollaries of the unhappy division in the organic unity of man. With him the sexual world is commensurate with the Moral Absolute.

> Imputing Sin and Righteousness to Individuals, Rahab Sat deep within him hid, his Feminine Power, unreveal'd.

Blake believes in a free, spontaneous, self-effacing love, unrestrained by deceit, unhampered by the sanction of the law, uncontaminated by the fascination of sin, and uninhibited by pangs of jealousy. It consists in an acceptance of divine energy which leads to a form of self-realization by merging one's identity into that of the opposite sex; it erases and obliterates the notion of a cleavage between the two. "In Eternity", Blake says, "there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage". The "dark and cold" web of religion "is a Female in embrio". Religion is

anathema to Blake, for it shrouds the lovely act of copulation in mystery, and condemns it as sinful.

The notion of chastity is generated by regarding the body and soul as distinct from each other; it is irrelevant and inapplicable to a condition of physical ecstasy in which the desires of the soul or of two pure identities are coalesced and assimilated. Love is sinful when it is secretive, individualized, afraid of the minute particulars of life and hedged in and obstructed by the religion of the priests and the sanctions of the moral law. Against such a moral law we come across a magnificent outburst in chapter II of *Jerusalem* :

> Have yon known the Judgment that is arisen among the
> (Zoas) of Albion, where a Man dare hardly to embrace
> His own wife for the terrors of Chastity that they call
> By the name of morality ? their Daughters govern all
> In hidden deceit; they are vegetable, only fit for burning.

Tent, veil, woof and the Tabernacle are the familiar symbols which have been employed by Blake for expressing his disapproval of the manifestations of the mystery of sex. Similarly, Jerusalem is the comprehensive mythological symbol for all women and for the true bride of Albion in Eternity, while Vala, the feminine counterpart of Luvah, is the Female. Moreover, the love of Enitharmon for Orc, and Los' act of binding him to the Rock of Jealousy is symptomatic of the fact that in a mortal and sexual world, free love is in "bondage bound".

It has been remarked earlier that for Blake the division of the Manhood into discrete sexes brings into operation the moral law. It is also very plain that to Blake, the Ratio and the moral Absolute are two concepts with which he cannot reconcile himself and to which all the misery, narrowness and lopsidedness in the world can be traced.

> Is this the Female will, O ye lovely Daughters of Albion,
> To converse concerning Weight & Distance in the wilds of
> Newton and Locke ?

The supremacy of cold, logical, uninspired reason, the materialism of the five senses, and belief in a transcendent Deity are all intertwined in Blake, and all these three invalidate the visionary ethics and metaphysics. It has been very shrewdly pointed out by Middleton Murry that the Sons of Albion are the ministers of the Intellectual Absolute-Bacon Newton and Locke, and the Daughters of Albion are the ministers of the Moral Absolute—Vala, Rahab, and Tirzah. The reason for discovering a common denominator between the conclusions of cold intellect

and the verdicts of a rigid ethical law seems to be that both these forms of the One Absolute are incapable of taking a flexible, unified, comprehensive and tolerant view of things. Whenever, therefore, Blake is seen to be applauding the intellectual principle, or equating it with the Male, he is really putting a wider connotation upon it, and using it more or less as a synonym for creative imagination. Blake's preference is always for an inclusive, rather than a selective, principle. He came more and more to believe in a reason beyond reason and an energy beyond energy and, therefore, the simple and sharp dichotomy perceived by him earlier was submerged into a wider synthesis. Thus also a distinction came to be established between the Negation and the Contraries.

The problem of the relation of the Male and the Female is intimately connected with the setting in which the cosmic drama has been imagined to be enacted. This setting has been equated by Blake with the four worlds through which the human soul passes. In Eden the division between the sexes is unknown; the giant Albion, like the Adam Kadmon of the Cabalah, the archetype of the completely unified humanity, lives in a state of perfect bliss. In Beaulah, the division takes place :

> One dread morn—
> Listen, O vision of delight:—one dread morn of goary blood.
> The manhood was divided;

But though the sexes are there, they are wedded together, and hence, Baulah, in spite of being a darkened state, is a place of comparative serenity and contentment. In Ulro, there is complete domination of the Male by the Female, and in the next world, called Generation, the internecine conflict between the two is a given reality. It is needless to point out that in Blake, Generation is the image of Regeneration, and it is out of this open, fierce, ever-renewing conflict that the possibility of a final reunion and reconciliation emerges. The Male and the Female, which are mere Contraries in Beaulah, degenerate into complete Negations in order to be reconstituted into a unity in the final phase of experience.

Since, in the later *Prophetic Books*, the moral problem is brought to the fore and related to the Mystery of Religion, it would be interesting to know that the two worlds, Ulro and Generation, correspond to the division of the Church into the harmorphroditic and the double-sexed churches. In the former, there is perfect domination of the Male by the Female, or rather a sterile union exists between them which more or less means the perversion of masculine energy and

inspiration by the flood of materialism and sensuousness represented by the female. The double-sexed churches are symptomatic of a fierce struggle between the two. Attention should also be focused on the fact that the first of the double-sexed churches is called "female-male", and the second "male-female". The latter appellation may mean either that the fierceness and pitilessness of woman is replaced by deceit and cunning, or that after the conflict has been brought to a head, the possibility of an equipoise and of a balanced relationship between the two is dawning slowly but surely.

The fall which was necessitated by the division of the original unity into Male and Female was bad in itself, but matters worsened when the Female developed its own "Will" and sought to dominate the Male. The Eternals trembled at the fact that "now they had two intellects, two wills, and not as in times of old". The Disobedient Female is a symbol of frequent occurrence in Blake, and its justification can be sought in the fact that the Female started in terms of negativing the personality of man, and of imposing her own terms and conditions upon his mode of existence :

> Shall the feminine indolent bliss, the indulgent self of weariness,
> The passive idle sleep, the enormous night and darkness of death
> Set herself up to give her laws to the active masculine virtue ?
> Thou little dimunitive portion that dos't be a counterpart !
> Thy passivity, thy laws of obedience and insincerity are my abhorrence.

> They shudder'd at the horrible thing,
> Not born for the sport and amusement of Man,
> but born to drink up all his powers.

Blake thinks of the Female as a "Shape of delusive beauty", and as a "Polupus of soft affections". The result of this craving for domination was that the "throne of God in man" was usurped by the woman. For Blake, the female connotes everything which is delusive, dreamy, unstable, indefinite, and which leads to the shrinkage of mortality.

On a more philosophical plane the supremacy of woman is connected with the emergence of the vegetative or phenomenal world. Blake's antipathy to Wordsworth's doctrines is too well-known to be elaborated, and it was based on the conviction that Nature is the work of the Devil.

These are the destroyers of Jerusalem ! these are the murderers
Of Jesus ! who deny the Faith and mock at Eternal Life.
Who pretend to Poetry that they may destroy Imagination
By imitation of Nature's Images drawn from Remembrance.

•

Despite the fact that even in his later poetry there are passages which are full of a sensitive charm and arresting loveliness, Blake thought of Reality as a mental creation, and stubbornly refused to recognize the existence of the material universe Blake indicated his partiality for the speculative as against the experimental, and for the visionary and mythical as against the material and the realistic. He was also actively, rather bitterly, opposed to Deism or Natural Religion of the eighteenth century. He was painfully conscious of the fact that what he termed Eternity had been submerged into, and flooded over by, the deluge of materialism and false religion. The only bulwark that he could manage to erect against it was to reassert the claims of the eternal world against the phenomenal one. So long as the Female cosidered itself as derivative from, and secondary to, the Male, all was well and good; but with the growth of a disobedient female will, the proportions were reversed, and the happy equilibrium of the state of innocence and felicity was rudely dislocated.

The disastrous consequences issuing out of the dominion of the female are palpable in many different ways. Apart from the fascination of sin and a whole body of laws that crop up to infringe the liberty of the individual, it is also related to Blake's theory of perception. Sexuality entails a restrictive and repressive ethics, and it also leads to a narrowing and contraction of perceptive power. What the androgynous man sees as One , the divided sexual man sees as Many.

for contracting their Exalted senses
They behold Multitude; or Expanding, they behold as one.

He is rendered incapable of taking a unified, integrated and comprehensive view of things; his supersensible powers suffer contraction and limitation. The perceptions are also falsified; they assume fragmentariness. If there is no Natural Religion, Blake had expressed his conviction that "Man's perceptions are not bounded by organs of perception; he preceives more then sense (tho' ever so acute) can discover" . He believed in a certain kind of spiritual perception. Now, with the fall, or the appearance of the phenomenon of sexuality, the capacity for vision is lost, and man is left at the mercy of his sense impressions. Blake did not place much reliance upon the mediate truth,

but was wholly given over to the immediacy of apprehension. With his mystical temperament he could be expected to lend credence neither to the deliverances of the plodding, calculating and cautious reason nor to the dreamy, fugitive and cloudy half-truths vouchsafed to us by the senses. In Blake, Emanation represents spiritual intuitions, and the 'Daughters' control the vegetative powers or the normal modes of sense-perception.

> The Human Form began to be alter'd by the Daughters of Albion
> And the perceptions to be dissipated into the Indefinite, Becoming
> A mighty Polypus nam'd Albion's Tree. They tie the veins
>
> ....
>
> And nerves into two knots, and the seed into a double knot.
> They look forth ; the sun is shrunk : the heavens are shrunk
> Away into the far remote, and the Trees & Mountains wither'd
> Into indefinite cloudy Shadows in darkness and separation.

In this connection it is of interest to note that, with the fall, though the range of perception is diminished, the number of the senses is increased. In Eternity, Manhood was endowed with four eternal and infinite senses, but the sexual man, at the organic level, can make use of the five senses. Hence Blake speaks with contempt of the philosophy of the five senses The number four has the authority of tradition behind it. It is also possible that Blake might have been influenced by Berkeley's Theory of Vision who propounded two crucial ideas: namely, the existence of supersensible entities and the fact of our ideas attaching not to physical objects but to sensible qualities. He almost certainly reacted very sharply against the arid rationalism of the Enlightenment and the oncoming deluge of sense impressions and a belief in their authenticity and finality as inlets to knowledge and the surest means to the apprehension of ultimate reality. There is no denying the fact that in Beaulah the senses feed and nourish the mind, but for one thing, Beaulah is not an ideal phase, but only a second best alternative to Eden, and secondly, the unchallenged supremacy of organic perceptions was not acceptable to one who held an idealist view of reality. The senses, like the females, with whose dominion they are intimately associated, are only sources of delusion, error, inaccuracy and indefiniteness, and Blake stands pre-eminently for the definite and the bound. Hence his preoccupation with the idea of "form". Blake had pinned his faith upon the divine faculty of

imagination as the source of revelation, and this gift, as the privilege not of the vegetative, unregenerate man, but of the ideal man when he has achieved spiritual renovation.

Blake's fecundity of imagination is evidenced by the fact that his characters are at once vital and full-blooded, and yet symbolic of meanings that lie beyond their immediate sphere of operations. They are fascinating enough by virtue of their vicissitudes and transformations; they are still more valuable for the truths they reveal. Thus in the earlier books, Ootbon symbolizes the lost innocent delight in the physical senses and Ahania, who has been cast out by Urizen, symbolizes sensuousness and is the mother of moral pestilence. The Disobedient Will and the Shadowy Female symbolize the delusions created by the supremacy of the woman. Similarly Vala and Jerusalem symbolise the contrasting facets of womanhood. Rahab and Tirzah, symbols of the inhibiting moral law, are synonymous and interchangeahle. Similarly, the Sublime and the Pathos are neatly expressive of the Male and the Female. Mary is a symbol which, according to Percival, offers a point of contact between Generation and Regeneration. Magdalan is Vala who has been taken in adultery, but she is also the woman whom Christ forgave. It is thus through forgiveness and love that sin can be accepted and the sinner spiritually rehabilitated. It may also be mentioned in passing that the sense of touch in Blake is related to sexuality.

It was tentatively suggested earlier that the path of experience in Blake is circular. *Jerusalem* thus closes on a note of hope. The cosmic dawn which has been painted by Blake does not confront us with a bleak prospect. There has been a fall from a state of ideal perfection, but it can be re-achieved when the human soul has come full circle after its gropings through the convolutions of experiences. This is possible when the Contraries are reconstituted into a primal harmony and the sexes cease to be. Humanity is one and indivisible, and Manhood is a nobler and more comprehensive concept than sexuality. This reconstitution of humanity with One can, according to Blake, be effected through the instrumentality of Christ who is the supreme artist, and the supreme embodiment of forgiveness and imagination :

> But when Man sleeps in Beaulah, the Saviour in Mercy takes
> Contraction's Limit, and of the Limit he forms woman, That
> Himself in process of time be born Man to redeem.

To integrate the fact of the predominance of sexual themes and symbols in Blake's poetory with the details of his personal life is a fascinating task, and may yield fruitful deductions to the painstaking biographer. Traces of an immediate bearing of personal experience upon his poetic utteranees are found even in lines like these :

> The joy of woman is the Death of her most best beloved who dies for love of her

> In torments of fierce jealousy & pangs of adoration :

> What may Man can tell : but what may women be ? To have power over Man from Cradle to Corruptible Grave ?

> The Man who respects woman shall be despised by woman
> And deadly cunning and mean objectness only shall enjoy them.

But, on the whole, in the *Prophetic Books*, he has moved from a personal to an impersonal treatment, from a purely ethical position to the epistemological implications of the problem of sex and this became a part of a comprehensive pattern of values. Eden did not know of sexual organization, and the ultimate destiny of man was to be set free of its far-flung tentacles. Just as Blake conceives of time as the mercy of Eternity, similarly sexuality is a degeneration of the Eternal Manhood. So long as selfhood obstructs the path of man, and he succumbs to the rewards held out by its unrestricted assertion, humanity will remain unregenerate and earthbound. Selfhood must be discarded and abandoned so as to prepare the ground for the development of pure Identity. Only then will man come to experience and comprehend the Infinite. The entire ethical problem for Blake consists in restoring the right order in the components of the human psyche, and to bridge the gulf between Time and Eternity by invalidating the moral and religious ordinances. Blake was not so simple as not to visualize the impediments placed in the path of man by the imperfection of his nature. That is why he makes allowance for the renewal of the conflict after a temporary cessation. But he was convinced of the fact that the destiny of man was to have the sexual threefold transcended by the human fourfold. This can be accomplished only by a supreme effort of love and forgiveness, and by bringing the two Contraries into a permanent union in which the Identity of one shall be harmonized with that of another. This is not

only a state of love but of brotherhood which is manifested in willingness to abstain from moral judgment, in the recognition of the supersensible mode of apprehension in the abandonment of separate individualities and thus in the acceptance of the unity of all life.

Aligarh Muslim University

"Ah Dear Me !"

Ah Dear Me !
Be not in a dismay nor in a despair,
Nor pale nor red;
But a phantom of delight,
In a heaven of my imagination;
Do I o'erdo myself ?
Yes, I do, for I contain a great many multitudes,
Pity 'tis, 'tis true.
But be fair with it,
And let me find out the cause of the effect.
Or atleast hear the cause of the defect,
Lest defect should be operative by a method.
While we're nearer,
We've a duty to be sincere,
What can a retribution do,
When the guilty can't repent ?
So dear, don't weep for what's already done.
And let's love in excess.
Complaining would mar the joy of the day.
Come, come, my sealing love,

But not concealed nor conceal,
And break the great bond to fragments,
Symbolically, this is my art of imaginary solutions,
You may call it a protest,
Against the futility of my being.
But I tell you, in reality,
I'm dedicated to the use of a strict logic,
To arrive at my senseless inference,
To dismiss a faith in endeavour,
Only a reason and logic
—A scientific discovery can bring us upto a certain point of knowledge,
Beyond that all's meaningless.
And since that's the only point,
That really matters,
Let's die to love again,
If not live to love.

—N. S. Sahu

University of Gorakhpur

The Leavises

"While one is alive one *is* alive and goes on fighting".

F. R. Leavis

G. Singh

What constituted the "formidable critical partnership" between F. R. Leavis and his wife Q. D. Leavis was not merely their interest in literature and literary criticism, but a sense of shared values. convictions and principles which, as much as their matrimonial tie, bound them together and which went far beyond the profession of letters. In fact commitment to critical standards was itself a corollary of the values and principles the Leavises rigorously applied to the business of living, so that what was upheld in the sphere of criticism—severest criteria disinterestedly professed—was inseparable from what was upheld in actual life. "The judgments the literary critic is concerned with", the Leavises believed, "are judgments about life". There were no purely literary or aesthetic values for them. and few words were more suspect in their eyes than "aesthetic" and "academic". This was the essence of their method, the ethos behind their criticism. And to Eliot's dictum—the only method in criticism is to be very intelligent—the Leavises might well have added—"*and* very mature".

Intelligence and sensibility at their sharpest and most complex is what the Leavises admired in works of literature and what they themselves achieved in their criticism. Marxist, psychoanalytical, linguistic or structuralist approaches to literature had little meaning for them, and the same applied to scholarship for its own sake, unless directed by an intelligent interest in sensitive and closely relevant thinking about life no less than about literature. This is superbly exemplified in Leavis's evaluative critiques of poets from Shakespeare to Eliot and Pound, and

of novelists from Dickens to D.H. Lawrence; or in Q. D. Leavis's evaluations of writers like Jane Austen, the Brontes, George Eliot, Hawthorne, Melville and Henry James. Whereas Leavis wrote both about poetry and the novel, Q D. Leavis• concentrated on the novel and her criticism complements in a significant way that of F. R. Leavis, while at the same time being both original and independent. Even the kind of research and erudition that went into their writing was as different as was their style. For Leavis, whether he was tackling the work of a poet or a prose wrlter, analysis of his style and diction was an integral part of his critical procedure, for he believed that a writer's langauge and technique are the surest tests of his sincerity and originality. For Mrs. Leavis it was a writer's sociological and cultural background that was even more important than his style in helping her pinpoint his ethos and measure the quality of his moral as well as artistic impact. Moreover, she was as much interested in inquiring into and analysing the formation and taste of the reading publie and how the climate of literatue is, to a large extent, determined by it, as in evaluating the literary and artistic merit of a given author or work. That is why she wrote as enthusiastically on Mrs. Oliphant as on Dickens, on Charleotte Yonge as on George Eliot, on Edith Wharton as on Henry James, and history and biography, sociology and anthropology played a much more important part in her criticism than in that of F R. Leavis. *Fiction and the Readiug Public* (1932), a version of her doctoral thesis, is a pioneering work, exemplifying her approach to literary criticism, as is much of what Mrs. Leavis subsequently wrote, including the well-known prefaces to some English novels. Although she never held a teaching fellowship or a university appointment, she did, all her life, what she calls "ventriloquist work behind the scenes by directing research students, whose theses when published carry on my own lines in what I may call the sociology of literature"-

Before she died Mrs. Leavis was working on a memoir for a biography of her husband; regrettably all she has left behind are an outline of the plan and some jottings. She relates how, as an undergraduate at Girton, she fell in love with Leavis who was at that time her supervisor. A few months later, when she was a research fellow at Girton and he a supervisor at Emmanuel, she married him. "He was so physically attractive", she relates, "with his brightness of look, his beautiful hazel eyes, his light brown hair, his broad shoulders and narrow flanks and small waist, fair skin and fresh complexion brought about by exposure to sun (he read and wrote in the open air whenever

possible), fine bone structure of face and body, small feet and strong shapely hands".

She also comments on Leavis's reading habits. "Whereas he examined the entire output of any poet who interested him on whatever grounds or of whatever period, he did not, as I thought necessary, read or at least look through the entire *oeuvre* of a novelist". In the non-literary field her husband was "always reading, ever since I knew him, books on the philosophy of science, on the history of philosophy, individual philosophers who interested him, and had a whole shelf of books on a subject that particularly concerned him, *The Theory of Value* (psychological, philosophical and aesthetic works in several languages)—long since sacrificed to the exigencies of moving to a smaller house . . . He kept up his history and knew where to lay his hand on any historical work he needed to support an argument. What he never read was what other educated people call light reading and justify as valuable for relaxation — detective stories, P. G wodehouse, and such". As to her husband's attitude to the various entertainments and pastimes people resort to when exhausted by intellectual occupations, Q. D. Leavis quotes him as saying : "'If too tired to engage the mind in fresh effort why not re-read a classic (something worth reading) with which one is already familiar, play good music one already knows, instead of taking in trash ?'"

The collaboration between the Leavises started very early in their lives as can be seen from the link that there is between Leavis's *Mass Civilization and Minority Culture* and Mrs. Leavis's *Fiction and the Reading Public* (documenting, among other things, the disintegration of the reading public) and between the latter and *Culture and Environment*. The collaboration was to become even closer with the founding and editing of *Scrutiny* in which Mrs. Leavis played a crucial role. Not only did she bring about through her contributions a general change in the critical approach to the novel, but she also bore the brunt of what Leavis calls the twenty-years battle for *Scrutiny's* survival—a battle against "a new and triumphant academic institutionalism, the new kind of enemy this bred and empowered and the whole massive movement of civilization." And if Leavis, the editorial protagonist, achieved a full university lectureship only in his 50's, his chief collaborator and partner never had any salaried job. In the face of such odds the success of *Scrutiny* was a matter of particular pride to the Leavises, and when, a decade after its demise, Cambridge University Press reprinted the whole *Scrutiny* set in 20 volumes, Leavis commented :"'The unforgiveable had become both classical and indispensable". Indeed the Leavises could

have said of *Scrutiny* what Sydney Smith said of *The Edinburgh Review* he founded and edited: "To set on foot such a journal in such times, to contribute towards it for many years, to bear patiently the reproach and poverty which it cost, and to look back and see that I have nothing to retract, and no intemperance and violence to reproach myself with, is a career of life which I must think to be extremely fortunate".

However, the drastic critical reappraisals that Leavis effected in the pages of *Scrutiny* as well as in his books, and the bold and searching reviews that he and his wife authored aroused hostility in the literary and the academic world—hostility that he and his wife had to contend with till the very end of their lives. To this is to be added the animus Leavis incurred by declining contributions to *Scrutiny* from "known and established names we didn't want", however tactful the rejecting note. At times a contributor was dropped after one contribution, as not conformiug to *Scrutiny's* notoriously exacting standard. In her notes for her husband's memoir, Mrs Leavis has jotted down three quotes which were to serve her as epigraphs, and which sum up her feelings in the matter. The first is Conrad's comment an Steven Crane; "He was surrounded by men, who secretely envious, hostile to the real quality of his genius (and a little afraid of it), were also in antagonism to the essential fineness of his nature. But enough of them. *Pulvis et umbra sunt.* I mean even those who may be alive yet". The other two quotes are from Conrad's *A Personal Record.* "There have been times in the history of mankind when the accents of truth have moved it to nothing but derision", and "That complete, praiseworthy sincereity which, while it delivers one into the hands of one's enemies, is as likely as not to embroil one with one's friends." One charge often levelled against Leavis concerned the kind of Euglish he wrote. A reviewer of one of his early books compared it to "a third former's translation of Cicero"; Geoffrey Grigson who contributed only once to the first number of *Scrutiny* charged Leavis with being a bad writer who used English "in such a heavily pompous and uneducated . . . . way"; and Edith Sitwell, coming out in defence of C.P. Snow, remarked: "Dr. Leavis only attacked Charles because he is famous and writes good English". And yet few critics have exploited both the creative and the analytical resources and subtleties of English with such verve and suppleness as Leavis. A superb analyst and appraiser of others' styles, Leavis is, among critics, as much a stylist in his own right as Dr. Johnson and Matthew Arnold. Bluntness and severity accompanying a rigorous critical scrutiny and analysis were often taken for rudeness or cruelty

and caused offence, but it had nothing whatsoever to do with the quality of English as such.

Some of Leavis's well-knawn affirmations may be cited as exemplifying not only the nature of his thought, perception and personality, but also that of his style. "Tradition lives only in individuals, though individuals can live without it"; "A judgment is personal or it is nothing; you cannot take over someone else's"; "In coming to terms with great literature we discover what at bottom we really believe"; "I think of myself as an anti-philosopher, which is what a litarary critic ought to be—and every intelligent reader of creative literature is a literary critic"; "Discrimination is life, indiscrimination death".

As to the specific evaluations of individual authors, few critics have been able to formulate them in such a memorably pithy and convincing way as Leavis. Shakespeare, he tells us, "is not only a greater writer than Racine, but a greater kind of writer". As to Milton: "Milton's dislodgement, in the past decade, after two centuries of predominance, was effected with remarkably little fuss". And yet, Leavis tells us, he has always held "that Milton is a very great power, and that without an intelligent study of him one cannot understand English literary history". Among the Romantics. Keats fares better than Shelley; and yet "The pain with which Keats's heart aches is not that of a moral maturity". As to Joyce, his medium "may be the 'esperanto of the subconscious'; if so, the sub- conscious is sadly boring," whereas Lawrence's preoccupation with sex "seems to us much less fairly to be called 'obsession' than Mr. Eliot's, and very much preferable".

Together with literature the subject closest to Leavis's heart was the function of the university in the modern age. Concerned, as he was, with what he calls "the egalitarian tidal-wave and its consequences", Leavis observed: "A university of its very nature (or 'idea') asserts a contrary view of cultural tradition to the Marxian", and he warned: "Neither democratic zeal nor egalitarian jealousies should be permitted to dismiss or discredit the fact that only a limited proportioa of any young adults is capable of profiting from, or enjoying, university education". It is the unchallenged advance of the democratic and egalitarian ethos in the sphere of university education that made Leavis despair and observe: "There is no redeeming the mass university. The civilization it represents has, almost overnight, ceased to believe in its own assumptions and recoils nihilistically from itself".

But Leavis's concern for the university was itself part of a larger concern—concern for the kind of civilization we live in today. "If you

believe in humanity at all", he states, "you will know that nothing today is more important than to keep alive the idea of the university-function—the essential university-function and what goes with it: the idea of an educated public". That such a public had disappeared and that the modern technologico–Benthamite civilization was against it were Leavis's lifelong preoccupations, and they engaged his thinking increasingly in his later years. In voicing the nature of his disquiet and preoccupation Leavis diagnosed, as Lawrence had done before him, the symptoms as well as the causes of what he considered to be "our sick civilization". "A distinctive characteristic of democratic civilization four or five decades after Lawrence's death," he tells us, "is that we now have a Minister for the Arts balancing a Minister for Sports". Not only that England has long ago ceased to be "the community that in its time produced Shakespeare, George Eliot and Lawrence ('England my England')", but it has "become, irretrievably the country of the Welfare State, the Football Pools, and the literary culture of the *New Statesman* and the Third Programme". It is drifting towards what Leavis calls "the barbarity of reformist enlightenment . . . . the civilized barbarity, ... complacent, selfindulgent and ignorant, that can see nothing to be quarrelled with in believing, or wanting to believe, that a computer can write a poem". If Matthew Arnold saw this country in danger of becoming a greater Holland, Leavis saw it 'unmistakably turning with rapid acceleration into a little America".

Not that Leavis had anything against America as such. He and his wife went to America on lecture tour in 1966 and both lectured at Harvard and Cornell; they wrote admiringly on the real American achievement and its close interconnection with English literature (Hawthorne, Mark Twain, Melville, Henry James), and they contributed important articles to such periodicals as *The Sewanee Review*, *The Southern Review*, *The Hudson Review* and *Commentary*. Nevertheless Leavis disapproved of what he considered to be the Americanization of England and especially of English universities. "I think it misleading", he said, "to describe me an anti-American. True, I am prepared to say that we should do everything we can to save this country from Americanization: it is horrible to think of it as being, what it is rapidly becoming, just a province of the American world". And Leavis associated the process of Americanization, so far as university and literature are concerned, with a decline of standards.

Mrs. Leavis too, in the very last public lecture she gave at The Cheltenham Festival—"The Englishness of the English Novel"—just a few months before her death, traced the decline of standards in terms

of the decline of the novel. In the past the novel, which had traditionally been "the product of an essentially Protestant culture", concerned itself, especially in the hands of such masters as Jane Austen, Dickens and George Eliot, with "radical and responsible inquiry into the human condition". It was the art most influenced by national life in all its particulars as well as the art that has been most influential upon English national life. But now with the emergence of radio, television and the cinema—"institutions which seem to have some connection with, though by no means all the responsibility for, what is generally recognized to be the decay and approaching death of the English novel as a major art (though not of course of English fiction as commercial entertainment)"—what we have, Mrs. Leavis points out, is "the withdrawal of moral responsibility of novelists . . . . with a consequent lapse of the novel into triviality or . . . . spiritual pedantry". And she sadly concluded by observing "how diminished the tradition of the novel has become in the hands of the most well-known practitioners of this age, who have uncritically been accepted as classics – as well as how commercialized".

This, of course, didn't make them hanker after the past or after "lost greatness"—the kind of greatness they knew belongs to the past and that has gone for ever. But they nevertheless fought for creating and maintaining something in the present—the living seed, the living principle to be translated into standards of criticism. "My preoccupation," Leavis wrote in his last but one book—*The Living Principle*—is "to ensure that the living seed exists and that the life in it has the full pregnancy. Just how it will strike and take and develop, as it *must* if there is to be a human future, one can't forsee. Change is certainly upon us, menacing and certainly drastic; to meet it, there must be opportunism—the opportunism that answers to a profound realization of the need."

This need the Leavises interpreted in terms of upholding critical standards, preserving the essential function of a university and giving meaning and substance to the idea of an educated public. Their battle to achieve these ends continued all their lives—a battle fought through collaboration "in living, university teaching, discussion of literature and the social and cultural context from which literature is born".

The Queen's University of Belfast
Belfast.

Love Song

My love, come and wait for me
At the duskfall on a lovelorn shore,
Where twilight breaks
On a fevered evening
To celebrate our pure love
From everlasting to everlasting,
Winding through scissoring
Blue seascapes and purple skyscapes,
To touch the golden dawn of eternity
In the fleeting flickers of drowsy dusk.

My love, come and wait for me
On that moon blanched shore
To create the garden of delight we nurtured.
In that petalic speckled moment
Looking into your sparkle swirling eyes
With a touch of ebony
And with a shower of silver
Hovering around your prismatic body,
I shall open the storm of the sea
And wrapped in the tides of the ocean
I shall bring you a poem
In a pulsating pearl
Which symphonies the saga
Of our many splendoured love.

My love, come and wait for me
On the crossroads
Where the day meets the night,
To realise the realms of smithereen realities.
Every rose that blossoms must fade,
But before it flickers into nothing
It must entice and inundate
Its fragrance to the brims full—
Leaving lasting milestones of incense
That linger and hover around
Eternities spangled dome.

New College
Madras

—Syed Ameeruddin

The Ghost Stories of M. R. James : Artistic Exponent of the Victorian Macabre

Devendra P. Varma

In the dim corridors of the Haunted House, there prowl the ghosts of such literary craftsmen who were exponents of fine aesthetic supernatural themes and contributed numerous experiments to the concept and style of the genre of macabre tales. In this spectral show, very similar to that of Banquo's progeny, the faint gleam of half-light first reveals the bearded face of Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, the leading pioneer of the Victorian macabre, whose artistic tales still continue to give us shudders and creeps. Next to him, in the fading twilight, we discern the bespectacled face of M. R. James, the master-creator of the antiquarian ghost-story. In the muffled darkness beyond stands the figure of Algernon Blackwood, the modern conjuror of "cosmic" apparitions, followed by a retinue of several experimenters of the weird craft, those interesting and exciting tellers of ghostly saga like Arthur Machen, E. F. Benson, Oliver Onions and Walter De La Mare. There are many more shadowy figures unrecognised in the gathering gothic gloom.

M. R. James, a man of letters, a Fellow of King's College, Provost and Vice-Chancellor at Cambridge, Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum, and finally Provost of Eton, a lover of dignified ceremonial and rituals, had been a veteran traveller. As a young man in 1887 we find him conducting archaeological excavations in Cyprus, then pedalling on a bicycle in Scandinavia, sorting out folk-lores and legends. Later we see him on a tour in France, waiting for a change of trains in some obscure railway station, producing papers from his pockets and scribbling away. We observe him as a guest in a country mansion, writing on odd sheets of notepaper. And finally we get a vivid glimpse of his face and the friendly transparence of his rimless spectacles, ensconced in his chair with manuscripts and notebooks, whisky and soda, tins of tobacco and half a dozen pipes scattered upon the table,

Often he would softly paddle across to the mantelpiece to fetch a spill or replenish his large curving pipe from the tobacco jar.

M. R. James began as a *teller*, rather than as a *writer* of ghost-stories. His tales are rich in all verbal resources to captivate our ears, and even while reading the lines we seem to listen to the voice of the narrator.

He considered the art of "ghost-story" as an "old-fashioned" form and had no streamlined theories regarding its craftsmanship. With a delightful evasiveness he always refused to comment on this art. Neither were his ghost-stories based on his personal experiences, nor were they versions of other men's perceptions. Whether he believed in ghosts or not was an open question. He asserted that he was prepared to consider evidence and accept it.

There have been conflicting theories about the origins of James's ghost stories, but perhaps the earliest tale *Canon Alberic's Scrapbook* was inspired by his holiday in France in 1887. He had left his compnions at Toulouse (as in the story) and paid a brief visit to the picturesquely situated Cathedral of St. Bertrand perched on an isolated rock which had a commanding distant view. James himself is the hero Dennistoun, busily scribbling in note-books, processing, describing, photographing every corner of this ecclesiastical edifice. Arthur Machen lavished much praise on this tale, while Lord Staunmore confessed he had heard in the east of a similar diabolic connection with a book, and wondered if this tale were a figment or based on some local legend. A tale of quite different strain, *Lost Hearts*, is set in a country house in mid-Lincolnshire in 1811 where the antiquarian colouring is obtained from the villainous master of the mansion.

Once he naively confessed that "I have neither much experience nor much perseverance in the writing of ghost stories". But the tattered bits and pieces of notes on stories he contemplated to write, give clues to his technique, his attitude of mind which turned commonplace settings into fantastic ghostly lore. Those partial drafts, outline sketches, opening paragraphs, even the unused ideas, bring out the secret springs of his potent magic which lies in the ultimate power of his half-definitions, his reticence, his scholarly store of knowledge, his dry naturalism, and his perceptive eye for ordinary character figures.

The structure of the weird tale follows its own norms ; a casual opening, the sudden build up of tension and the use of double climax. This skill at construction remains the secret of James's stories. He

frames them in a definite period and setting; they contain clear, unobtrusive, normal realistic details, but the climax is often mantled in darkness and mystery.

His characters are normal human beings living a matter-of-fact existence, interested in most ordinary things. As a story-teller he opens in a low key with authentic touches of realism and actuality, and then brings out the most distinctive quality in an exquisite gradation of factual horror. He seems to prove that a sense of malevolence and terror can be created without the glare of evil faces or 'the stony grin of unearthly malice'; the pursuing forms in darkness can be more frightening than 'long drawn, distant screams', and very effective can be a tiny drop of blood seen in half-light. James frightens us with a crumpled handkerchief, or a fold in the linen. He shows us fear in a handful of dust.

He focuses upon the direct image of a central picture which becomes a combination of vision and a captured moment in time. He piles up his details in the setting, outlines the vision sharply, but leaves the horror itself as undefined, shapeless and elusive. Mysterious and lonesome, the anonymous central figure continues to be an enigma in *Oh, Whistle, and I'll Come to You my Lad.* His identity is never revealed, we never come to know his history—or why he Is so fond of Parkins' whistle.

All set in the frame of his own favourite tastes and pursuits, the invention of circumstances is suggested by investigation of learned research aad worked with a minute accuracy. He followed Le Fanu in the adroit use of epithets. Reticence has a magical effect, his style bears an ease of lightness and touch which communicates the necessary thrill to common reader.

His prodigious bibliographic acumen and love for medieval scholarship bestowed a learned aura to the body of his tales: the very names of churches, manuscripts, locations, and allusive scholarly minutiaie sprinkled throughout his stories ring true and authentic. In his settings the past is always throbbing. While describing antiquarian lore his settings become crowded with historical and scholarly details.

The antiquarian interests of the characters seem to transport them into a thrilling past because their present condition is weary, stale and vacuous. They keep themselves surrounded by the trinkets and relics of past, such as engravings, rare books, coins, doll's houses or ancient whistles, and move amongst altars and tombs since the

present has nothing to delight them. Such men of leisure are no villains; they are merely bored, and in the course of seeking excitement they accidentally evoke the demon or a vampire.

The supernatural seems to materialize out of a void in people's lives; an empty wistfulness and curiosity drags the characters into trouble. Mr. Wraxall in *Count Magnus* inadvertently invokes the haunting, not because of any "overinquisitiveness" but because of "ennui". In *The Uncommon Prayer Book*, Mr. Davidson researches into the tombs of Leventhorp House because his relations are away at winter sports. By reciting a psalm from an eighteenth-century prayer-book he summons a remarkable rag-like monstrosity.

For James's antiquaries even the Holy Scriptures become a demonic text; antiquarianism often invites danger, and old volumes turn into especially dangerous tools as talismanic summoners of evil.

The overtures in *Lost Hearts* and *The Ash Tree* are short, learned, graceful little essays on styles of home architecture. But there are no ominous forebodings in the 'gothic' sense, and they provide no 'atmosphere'. These stories are saturated with nostalgia, where antiquarianism provides contact with life as well as with death.

Like Walpole, M. R. James was at heart a medievalist rather than a classical or modern historian. He attempted to trace the historical development of a sacred art and establish its connection with literature and legends. It was a work of impossible dimensions, but brought him into contact with some quaint and beautiful creations.

He valued sculpture, painted glass, frescoes, pictures and illuminated manuscripts of the English and foreign churches. He visited libraries, galleries and museums. He explored altar pieces, tapestries and crypts. He talted of the folk-Lore motif and the Grateful Dead. He delighted in coins, inscriptions, mythology and gems, which often turned into motifs for his ghost stories. But his antiquarian interests took him beyond the legends of Saints and Churches, and his publications spanned themes on biblical and pseudo-biblical literature, beyond psalms, archaeology and the medieval past. He published monographs on Abbeys, and the catalogues of manuscripts at Eton, the Fitzwilliam and elsewhere.

His expertise in Christian archaeology and iconography, in deciphering old windows, his opinions on early stained glass, are well reflected in the ghost stories. In early 1882 he had viewed the chapel of Ashridge park in Hertfordshire. His study of the glass became the germ for his celebrated ghost story *The Treasure of Abbot Thomas*. In

this antiquarian story. three large figures in a private chapel occupy a whole light in a window. and the tale takes off from that point with a mixture of histrical ingenuity and horror.

While studying a fragment of glass or wall-painting, sculpture or MS illumination, the medium interested him less than the pictorial representation; he was engrossed in the iconography. They had shone on the windows and walls of the churches for centuries. The strange and exotic altar tombs with their effigies. the tracery-lights with weird figures of saints, the carved frieze in the aisle. the images upon antique windows, were visible relics of the past and distilled moments of history.

The pictorial scheme of the chapel of King's at Cambridge and its many details had roused James's curiosity. The figures and relics of prophets and apostles, and pieces of scrollwork provided him with the idea of a story *A Night in King's College Chapel.* It tells that the narrator falls asleep while studying the windows and is locked up in the chapel at night; the various figures in the windows come to life and converse. This story is now in the King's College Library scrawled on several folded sheets.

In several of his tales there is a dark focal point submerged under the stratum of supernatural evils. The plots uncoil toward a gradual unveiling of these layers, but the anticipated mysterious climax, or final disclosure, is much less compelling in power than the means employed in exposing it. In *Count Magnus*, the tale of a demonic pursuit, and in *Canon Alberic's Scrapbook,* old engravings serve as prelude to the appearance of an apparition. The meticulous carvings are so powerfully described that they become more frightening than the spectres themselves.

In *The Mezzotint.* a painting comes to life; the picture itself bears the qualities of an apparition. The piece of canvas depicting an ordinary engraving of a mansion undergoes a series of transformations. all startling and inexplicable. The collector, Mr. Williams, observes a thin. shroudlike figure mysteriously materializing on the front lawn in the mezzotint; it crawls into the house only to emerge later with a baby in its arms. The final view of to the picture is striking :

> There was the house . . . . under the waning moon and the drifting clouds . . . . the figure was once more on the lawn . . . . black drapery hung down over its face . . . . what was visible made the spectators profoundly thankful that they could see no more than a white dome-like forehead and a few straggling

hairs. The head was bent down, and the arms were tightly clasped over an object which could be dimly seen and identified as a child, whether dead or living it was not possible to say. The legs of the appearance alone could be plainly discerned, and they were horribly thin.

The passage reflects the fine artistry of M. R. James. The scene is clearly etched but we are relieved for what we don't see.

This tale has double layers of the supernatural : first, the transformation of the painting, and second, the story it enacts. The ghost had a reason for its return: Williams later discovers that the house belonged to an extinct family, whose last heir had "disappeared mysteriously in infancy".

Other mezzotint tales are *The Rase Garden*, *A View From a Hill* and *The Haunted Dolls' House*; all contain visions within visions tied into mysterious knots slowly unraveling themselves. Peering through haunted binoculars, *A View From a Hill* presents a strange spectacle; the transformation of a familiar landscape into something sinister and uncanny.

Wailing Well was written for the Eton College troop of Boy Scouts. Here a small lad is seized by a group of vampires. He is later discovered hanging from a tree with all his blood drained out. Subsequently he becomes a vampire himself, and has his abode with his new friends in a haunted well. *Lost Hearts* is a gruesome tale of an antiquary who while seeking the enlightenment of his spiritual faculties follows an ancient prescription by eating the hearts of living younger children. Subsequently they rise from the tomb to seek a bloody revenge.

In *An Episode of Cathedral History*, James unfolds the tale of a vampire hiding in the saintly relic of a fifteenth century cathedral altar-tomb. The church renovators discover a full-length coffin in the altar, and are astonished when the bloody inhabitant of the coffin, annoyed at being disturbed, leaps out in their faces. In *The Story of a Disappearance and an Appearance*, the Punch and Judy show come-to-life as the instrument of horror. In *The Diary of Mr. Poynter*, the sinister element is provided by wallpaper, combined with one of his favourite motifs, that of hair.

In the haunted chambers of Le Fanu and James, one does not have to be a Faustus or a Melmoth to face damnation. It is with a shudder that the reader puts the book down : "If this could happen to him, it could happen to me."

In vision and style M. R. James is haunted by the ghost of Sheridan Le Fanu. In his adroit craftsmanship, in the use of innuendo and indirection, he echoes Le Fanu, but seems to hide more than what he reveals. Le Fanu struck a balance between uneasy vagueness and grisly clarity, but James favours the effective unseen. Tiny, unseen flashes of clarity emerge from obscure corners as nameless horrific images or experiences. Le Fanu set the scenes better, but James remains more selective; even his visionary scenes are prosaic, but strangely effective. When Parkins blows the whistle he is startled and yet pleased with the note :

> It had a quality of infinite distance in it, and, soft as it was, he somehow felt it must be audible for miles round. It was a sound, too, that seemed to have the power (which many scents possess) of forming pictures in the brain. He saw quite clearly for a moment a vision of a wide, dark expanse at night, with a fresh wind blowing, and in the midst a lonely figure—how employed, he could not tell. Perhaps he would have seen more, had not the picture been broken by the sudden surge of a gust of wind against his casement, so sudden that it made him look up, just in time to see the white glint of a seabird's wing somewhere outside the dark panes.

In Le Fanu the supernatural horror is particularly militant,—it is powerful in its manifestation. In James's ghost stories, horror is ever pervading, but its turns into a lethal menace when inadvertently invoked. For Le Fanu's characters, reality is foreboding, dark and dreadful; with James's antiquaries the malignant forces rise through the medium of research or curiosity. In a semi-conscious way the antiquary in James knows that he is inviting trouble but persists in his act. In the celebrated story *Oh Whistle, and I'll Come to You, My Lad*, the bedclothes of Parkins become possessed. Parkins invites this singularly unpleasant consequence upon himself by digging up a dusty rusty, dreadful whistle, and having the audacity to blow it. He has sensed ample warning. But "Well" exclaims Parkins with a naive simplicity, "the best way to find out is evidently to whistle for him."

James was no admirer of Poe, and was critical of the vague texture of his narrative, the lack of any specific details and the "unreal" quality of his prose. Poe and James appear poles apart in their respective methods. Poe's tales border upon the "surreal", while James builds a barrier between the empirical and the supernatural only to

demolish it in a subtle way. In Poe, the nightmare and reality merge into one another; while James approaches his readers through clarity and restraint without any verbal effusiveness of the gothic tone, nor does he offer trivial and melodramatic explanations in the manner of Lord Lytton or other exponents of the Victorian macabre. In James there is no verbosity and no flat explanation.

The balance between scholarly reticence and malignant manifestation remains perhaps the characteristic quality of the antiquarian ghost story. Even as a person M. R. James was reticent and reserved, and these qualities gave an aesthetic tone to his ghostly sagas. The supernatural can be more effective and convincing when suggested or evoked rather than when explicitly documented. James's controlled reticence does create a unique sensation of chill and tension.

His prose has ascetic brevity and clarity; he practised a radical economy of style; he is most revealing in brief but telling details. In *The Tractate Middoth* the apparition of a parson appears in the library at ten o'clock in the morning, in broad daylight :

> His hat was on the table, and he had a bald head. . . . a very nasty bald head. It looked to me dry, and it looked dusty, and the streaks of hair across it were much less like hair than cobwebs. Well, I made a bit of noise on purpose, coughed and moved my feet. He turned round and let me see his face–which I had'nt seen before. I tell you again, I'm not mistaken. Though, for one reason or another I didn't take in the lower part of his face, I did see the upper part; and it was perfectly dry, and the eyes were very deep sunk; and over them, from the eyebrows to the cheek-bone, there were *cobwebs*—thick. Now that closed me up, as they say, and I can't tell you anything more.

This spare and unadorned prose, this paring down of incidents and characters, never clutters up the supernatural experience. It builds up to a precisely orchestrated crescendo.

As far back as 1904, in his preface to *Ghost Stories of an Antiquary*, M. R. James had noted that :

> The stories themselves do not make any very exalted claim. If any of them succeed in causing their readers to feel pleasantly uncomfortable when walking along a solitary road at nightfull, or sitting over a dying fire in the small hours, my purpose in writing them will have been attained.

But he gave to the art of ghost-story the novelty of an antiquarian touch in setting and incident, a new polish and an unctuous economy. Although his tales have none of Henry James's psychological gymnastics, nor Poe's gothic aura, nor Yeats's passion, but loaded with higher potency and suggestiveness they, discharge a heavier dose of mystery and terror.

He bestowed upon the spectre-tale a new theme. His ghosts materialize not out of inner darkness nor external machinations, but from a kind of antiquarian disquiet. The dreams and premonitions are as eerie and weird as the spectres they send forth. And when his ghosts are real, our enjoyments are real too. He wrote these tales for the pleasure of his listening audience, and was gratified to mark their facial expressions and reactions. For those listeners, when the night had waned, perhaps the bedclothes would bump themselves into shapes of terror, and the evening breeze by the sea-side moan like the sound of a whistle. It is remarkable that the charm of his stories does not fade with re-readings. The sheer thrill of these refined ghost stories continues to renew itself perennially.

The memories of the Christmas fireside and the Chitchat Society have faded far away into the distance. At about 11 P. M , M. R. James used to appear with ink still wet on the last sheet to read his ghost story under the glimmer of a single flickering candle. Night has fallen and the small party gathered at King's have dispersed. They are all gone to the world of light, like spectres of departed friends. The chair is empty. There is no grate in the fire. Time seems to stand still. In that stunning silence the portraits on the wall of the panelled parlour smile and stare at the wisp-like smoke curling from the last embers.

What is the conclusion of it all ? Life is an unsubstantial pageant, a walking shadow. We are all ghosts !

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At 30, Casually

(With apologies to R. Parthasarathy)

There's something, I am told, to be
said for being thirty. You can,
for instance, take stock of yourself.

To me
the day is
just another rite :

full of the scents of an elaborate bath,
a silent sitting before a picture of the god
uttering inaudible, inexplicable prayers.

In the shade of candles
burning on the cake, resolutions sprout
again in abundant measure.

There's something happening when you
turn thirty. That's the time, you are
told, when you learn

it's easy to feel accepted
as you talk of yourself
in shameless ease. That's the time

when you marry, breed heirs
to inheritance and
a family name, when,

in the presence of age,
you remember
never to grow old.

I look at it, casually, ready
to exchange the candles for
a set of strong teeth.

A new lust roars in my body.
I stumble as I seek to give
quality to the other half.

Dhruva Kumar Joshi

The Discipline of Unreason : Robert Frost on the Joban Question

Alo Sircar

Commenting on Robert Frost's dramatic poem *A Masque of Reason* one of the foremost of Frost's critics has written :

> In his *Masque* Frost . . . . brings out boldly the disturbing contradictions and puzzles in the Old Testament drama. In so doing he has created a masterpiece, the final experiment in his search for a 'form of outrage'. . . . [1]

And yet this 'masterpiece', voicing some of Frost's deepest thoughts on one of life's impregnable mysteries, has often been brushed aside as a by-product of his poetry workshop. His 'lovely, dark, and deep' woods have enchanted us long enough. It is time we entered an ordered garden of his thoughts on some of life's overwhelming questions, even if at times, it strikes us as a 'form of outrage'. For, to Frost, faith itself is a form of outrage—the 'awful daring' of surrendering to the 'discipline of unreason'.

The first thing to note about *A Masque Of Reason* is that it is not a modernised version of the *Book Of Job* It is a poetic-dramatic-philosophical sequel to the Old Testament book—the forty-third chapter of the *Book Of Job*, as the poet himself has called it. Frost is less concerned, here, with the human drama than with its moral and metaphysical implications. The poet does ramble over spicy irrelevancies, as he is wont to do, but the essential point of the poem is the poet's rankling awareness that Jehovah may have silenced Job, when He spoke out of the whirlwind, but He did not furnish a humanly comprehensible solution for Job's problem. Frost, therefore, re-invokes Job and his creator in the dramatic context of the Day of Judgement to have them

thrash out a more satisfying answer for Job's unanswered question. And when God materialises out of the burning bush and pitches His throne before Job, and his wife, Thyatira, she recognises Him from Blake's picture and Job feels certain that

> . . . . this is Judgment Day,
> I trust it is. Here's where I lay aside
> My varying opinion of myself
> And come to rest in an official verdict.

Job feels certain that at long last the time has come when he will be relieved of the stigma of having sinned and suffered. He feels that he will be exonerated by an 'official verdict'. He is confident that an eternity of 'heaven' awaits him and is all too anxious to find out whether there isn't more to heaven than a 'let up' from the illogical suffering marring mortal life.

> You perhaps will tell us
> If that is all there is to be of Heaven,
> Escape from so great pains of life on earth
> It gives a sense of let up calculated
> To last a fellow to Eternity.

God brushes aside Job's question and overwhelms him with gratitude for helping Him to establish the principle that God is not obliged to follow man's sense of what is right and that

> There's no connection man can reason out
> Between his just deserts and what he gets.
> Virtue may fail and wickedness succeed.
> 'Twas a great demonstration we put on.

The thing to note, here, is that God does not for a moment say that there *is* no connection between a man's 'just deserts and what he gets'. He merely insists that there is no connection *man can reason out*. God even apologizes for the 'appareutly unmeaning sorrow' with which Job was afflicted and anticipates Job's question as to why He hadn't simplified matters by taking Job into confidence and letting him know that his suffering was part of a trial of faith. He tells Job squarely ;

> . . . It was the essence of the trial
> You shouldn't understand it at the time.

> It had to seem unmeaning to have meaning.
> And it came out all right.

And these lines link up unmistakably with Frost's earliest stance towards man's 'trial by existence'.[2] If man's life is a trial, he must have submitted to it of his own choice. And if the trial is to be a valid one, it is of the essence that he should forsake the memory of his choice-making, for,

> One thought in agony of strife
> The bravest would have by for friend,
> The memory that he chose the life;
> But the pure fate to which you go
> Admits no memory of choice,
> Or the woe were not earthly woe
> To which you give the assenting voice.[3]

To know that you chose to suffer would be to rob the suffering of its most effective weapon. The ordeal of life "could not become a valid test unless the soul, in making its departure from heaven, should agree to surrender the memory of having chosen to be tested. If, on the other hand, the memory of the choice did remain, there could be no real danger of ultimate defeat and failure; there would be no valid trial worthy of man's spiritual and God-given capacities" [4] Even if life is a trial, therefore, it is of the essence that its nature and purpose should be nothing that 'man can reason out'. God thanks Job profusely for the painful part he played in emancipating his God from 'moral bondage to the human race' and in obtaining his release from the stranglehold of the Deuteronomist and his formula of reward and punishment. He tells the bewildered Job :

> I have no doubt
> You realize by now the part you played
> To stultify the Deuteronomist
> And change the tenor of religious thought.
> 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.
You are the Emancipator of your God,
And as such I promote you to a saint.

There is no dearth of commentaries—either literary or theological—on the *Book of Job*, but a more lucid and straightforward exposition of the essential theme of the book is difficult to come by. Job releases his God from the shackles of semitic anthropomorphism, by placing Him beyond and above the Deuteronomic catechism of reward and punishment, and by liberating Him from the prison-walls of man's sense of what is Just. God reclaims His divinity by shedding the ungodly compulsion of being accountable to His own creatures. He is grateful to Job for the part he played in establishing the fact that God's ways to man are nothing men can reason out for themselves.

At this point Job's wife, Thyatira, cuts in with her 'women's lib' logic. She wants to know why male prophets are made saints while their female counterparts condemned as witches. God, at once, employs His new-found weapon and tells her that what Job and He have just established is that God is not accountable to man for any of His acts.

There you go asking for the very thing
We've just agreed I didn't have to give—
Where has she been the last half hour or so?
She wants to know why there is still injustice.
I answer flatly : That's the way it is.

The answer is flat but not altogether simple. Is God's world as unjust as it appears to be ? God's only answer is that if it strikes man as such, he has no choice but to accept it as he finds it. For, God will certainly not stoop to justifying His own ways to man. He launches something of a counter-attack against Thyatira by reminding her that she had sought to mislead Job by advising him 'to curse God and die'.

Thyatira is the sceptical realist in this drama of ideas. She claims that all she did was occasioned by Job's pitiful predicament. Job scratched his boils and went on a soulful wildgoose-chase for a kind of universal reason for 'undeserved suffering' which, she feels certain, doesn't exist at all.

> All you can seem to do is lose your temper
> When reason-hungry mortals ask for reasons.
> Of course, in the abstract high singular
> There isn't any universal reason;
> And no one but a man would think there was.

Almost like an Ibsenite anti-heroine, Thyatira proclaims that women in general are far too realistic to go chasing the mirage of a universal reason ('You don't catch women trying to be Plato'), and all she claims is that the least God can do is to grant his faithful ones some 'stray scraps of palliative reason' in order to sustain their faith. Besides, it may suit God fine not to have to give reasons to anyone, it doesn't suit man the least little bit. She, therefore, stubbornly re-iterates her feminist protest before she falls asleep.

> I'm serious. God's had
> Aeons of time and still it's mostly women
> Get burned for prophecy, men almost never.

For some time, after Thyatira is asleep, Job and God go off at a tangent to toy around with incidental ideas. Job assails reformers for their failure to see that even God needs time to 'get things done'. God comments on man's re-discovery of time as 'a space dimension'. Job makes an attempt to come to his main problem :

> I need some help about this reason problem
> I waived the reason for my ordeal—but—
> I have a question even there to ask—
> In confidence.

But they go off again to discuss Thyatira's feminism and to remarks on modern science, which, they think, is nothing more serious than just another toy flattering man's infantile charm for novelty. And it is only when Thyatira wakes up again to fire one of her 'overwhelming questions' at God that the poem returns to its central problem. Thyatira asks :

> God, who invented earth ?

And God frankly confesses :

> Any originality it showed
> Was of the Devil. He invented Hell,
> False premises that are the original.
> Of all originality, the sin
> That felled the angels, Wolsey would have said,
> As for the earth, we groped that out together
> Much as your husband, Job, and I together
> Found out the discipline man needed most
> Was to learn his submission to unreason;

These lines, despite all their casualness of tone and manner, contain some of Frost's key thoughts on the nature and substance of the world around us. Paradise was perfect. But there was no room in it for originality of any kind. Man couldn't act but on the only available premise—the 'right' one. False premises were non-existent and so was choice or originality of any kind. In eating the forbidden apple man asserted his right to err and be human. The devil contributed his mite by harnessing every true premise with a false one as its alter–ego, Hell as the home of false premises was set up as an alternative to Heaven as the abode of truth. God and the Devil sowed reason and unreason as equally potent seeds for the human harvest. And the lesson God sought to impart to Job was the inevitability of man's submission to unreason as an inalienable ingredient of the human predicament. Any originality that the world has got, thus, owes itself entirely to the Devil as, except for him, man's life would have been marred by the monotony of infallibility. It is the Devil who enables us to err at every step; it is he who enables us to choose and be original. He is, thus, the co-author of a world in which originality is possible because false premises are available and error has its rightful place as an equal bidder in the human market. Except for evil and unreason the world would not have been what it is,

> It might as well
> Be Heaven at once and have it over with.

God's answer is apparently very convincing. It silences Thyatira for quite some time but does not satisfy Job. It is all very well to argue that man must submit to unreason as a permanent feature of life. But how is one expected to keep his faith in God alive unless he feels

that it is reason which governs things and not unreason ? How can one be a believer and yet not believe that God has a secret 'reason' for allowing 'unreason' a place in the world of human affairs ? As Job tells God bluntly,

> Because I let you off
> From telling me your reason, don't assume
> I thought You had none. Somewhere back
> I knew You had one. But this isn't it
> You're giving me.

It is one thing to argue there is 'no connection *man can reason oui*[5]/ Between his just deserts and what he gets' and quite another thing to argue that even God has no 'reason' for handing out a kind of treatment which strikes men as unreasonable. Frost had learnt from William James that "a man's religious faith . . . . means . . . . essentially his faith in the existence of an unseen order of some kind in which the riddles of the natural order may be found explained.[6] and he has Job tell God :

> You'd be the last to want me to believe
> All your effects were lucky blunders.
> That would be unbelief and atheism.
> The artist in me cries out for design.

The only alternative to the assumption that God permits evil and unreason with a secret purpose of His own is to assume that evil derives from an agency independent of God's will. And despite the ungodliness of the tortures suffered by Job, he is unwilling to assent to the second ossumption.

> Such devilish ingenuity of torture
> Did seem unlike You, and I tried to think
> The reason might have been some other person's.
> But there is nothing You are not behind.

Even evil cannot exist without God's sanction and must, therefore, be part of the divine 'design'. And Job refuses to be put off with anything short of a flat and final answer to the question : why do the faithful suffer in God's world ?

Now after all these years You might induege me.
Why did You hurt me so ? I am reduced
To asking flatly for the reason—outright.

As soon as God makes another feeble attempt at ducking Job's question with,

I'd tell you, Job

Job practically loses his temper and charges God with deliberately misleading His creatures. Like a Jamesian pragmatist Job argues that often things, breathtakingly mysterious, have no real mystery inside; and when you 'get down' into the so-called heart of things, you find they have nothing more to them than their ever so mundane surfaces. The obscurity we habitually equate with profundity is often a fraud concealing nothing. Job refuses to give in to the 'Existential' despair of :

We don't know where we are, or who we are
We don't know one another; don't know You;
Don't know what time it is.

He insists, pragmatically, that men know enough to live and act on :

Oh, we know well enough to go ahead with.
I mean we seem to know enough to act on.

And if there is any knowledge beyond what man already knows, the best God can do is to come out with it once and for all.

You could end this by simply coming out
And saying plainly and unequivocally
Whether there's any part of man immortal.
I'm sick of the whole artificial puzzle.

If Job is a pragmatist, his wife, Thyatira, is practically a sceptic. She is certain that the whole prospect of the earth promoting itself to a heaven, or to God's kingdom come, is fantastic nonsense. If God would only speak, He could put a stop to such juvenile optimism as the hope that the earth will crack like an egg one day and give birth to a heaven of bliss. She quotes Job as having said that 'progress' is a myth because

. . . . there's no such thing as Earth's becoming
An easier place 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 is one of Frost's most closely-held beliefs that progress, in the sense of making the earth a more agreeable place for men and women to live in, is not only impossible but undesirable as well. For it is in struggling against his earthly predicament that man is able to bring out his noblest qualities. No age is better or worse than any other age and the luminary clock against the sky, forever, proclaims :

. . . the time was neither wrong nor right.[7]

"The only progress is in conflict",[8] as Frost told one of his interviewers. Eliminate the confiict by making the earth an easier place for men to save his soul in, and real progress becomes impossible. Progress as a cessation of conflict between man and his predicament can only result in the dissipation of daring and courage—the finest of human virtues. The very notion of this kind of 'progress' is unwelcome to a poet who claims :

Even the bravest that are slain
Shall not dissemble their surprise
On waking to find valor reign,
Even as on earth, in paradise;
And where they sought without the sword
Wide fields of asphodel fore'er,
To find that the utmost reward
Of daring should be still to dare.[9]

Pressed close by Job's impatient question and Thyatira's ruthless scepticism, God, at long last, consents to answering Job's question.

I'm going to tell Job why I tortured him,
And trust it won't be adding to the torture.
I was just showing off to the Devil, Job,
As is set forth in Chapters One and Two.
Do you mind ?

And the answer that Job gets is a disappointing anticlimax to his soulful expectations. He suffered the worst of mortal tortures just becaue his God wanted to show off to the Devil. He had expected that the answer he would get would banish confusion, unreason, and illogical suffering from the world of men by furnishing him with a master-key to all that is beyond human comprehension. But, to his utter disappointment, the answer he receives is more human than divine and far too naive to merit all the effort Job had to make in obtaining it. It confirms his earlier feeling that promised profundities are, more often than not, a fraud on our expectations.

> 'Twas human of You. I expected more
> Than I could understand and what I get
> Is almost less than I can understand.
> But I don't mind. Let's leave it as it stood.

Job is left standing where he stood. He is told that there is no more logic behind all that he suffered than the 'human' whim of a God who is given to showing off at the cost of human suflering. Job is silenced once again, not by a God who thunders at man's impertinent attempts to find him out, but by one who pleads and solicits human consideration.

> Job, you must understand my provocation.
> The tempter comes to me and I am tempted.

Job is almost exasperated by God's excuses, and puts his hand not only upon his own mouth but that of his God as well when he says :

> God, please, enough for now I'm in no mood
> For more excuses.

He knows that his attempt at snatching the clue to the world's confusion from God has been successfully circumvented and he concludes that if the world is confused, it is because confusion is the 'form' that its Maker wanted it to have.

> But talk about coufusion !
> How is that for mix-up, Thyatira ?
> Yes I suppose what seems to us confusion
> Is not confusion, but the form of forms

Confusion, perhaps, is the 'form of forms' that God wants the human world to have. And however much man may desire a more wholesome, a more satisfying, orderly world where good and evil, reason and unreason, the just and the unjust are not relentlessly at war—each one of a pair against the other—he is destined forever to dwell among this unending medley of warring opposities. If he feels helplessly confused, he has no choice but to accept his confusion itself as a part of the divine design, for, his God, like Job's God, either won't or can't let him 'drink and be whole beyond confusion'.

Job is not satisfied. But he decides that there is nothing he can do about it except to make the best of a bad bargain. He calls for a heavenly get-together as a kind of celebration of the ending of the Joban controversy. But he insists that the Devil must be there too as the indispensable other half of the divine dialectic.

The Devil arrives but he is not half as grand as the Satan of *Paradise Lost*. As God informs Job, the Devil has been robbed of his vitality by the recent tendency to treat him as something figurative rather than real, as a mere negation of good rather than the potent patriarch of evil

> Church neglect
> And figurative use have pretty well
> Reduced him to a shadow of himself.

Thyatira wakes up and joins the festivities by pulling out her Kodak to take a snap of Job flanked by God and the Devil—a 'complete' picture of the human predicament—and when she finds the Devil sulky, she tries to cheer him up by telling him that

> This is polite society you're in,
> Where good and bad are mingled every which way,
> And ears are lent to any sophistry
> Just as if nothing mattered but our manners.

But the Devil hasn't much time for festivities and as God Himself explains,

> He has his business he must be about.
> Job mentioned him, and so I brought him in,
> More to give his reality its due
> Than anything.

Even God grants that the Devil is real and must be given his due place in affairs divine and human. And the forty-third chapter of the Book *Of Job* comes to a close with man being photographed with God and the Devil as the co-authors of the confusion which is the 'form of forms' as far as man's earthly existence is concerned. The curtain falls as Thyatira tries to draw smiles from her subjects with :

> Now if you three have settled anything
> You'd as well smile as frown on the occasion.

Days before he died Frost told his last interviewer :

> It's hard to get into this world and hard to get out of it. And what's in between doesn't make much sense. If that sounds pessimistic, let it stand. There's been too much vaporous optimism voiced about life and age.[10]

Frost was content to let man's journey from birth to death stay muddled and confused because life's apparent confusion was for him 'the form of forms' and faith an act of submitting to 'the discipline of unreason'.

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Notes

1. Reuben A. Brower, *The Poetry Of Robert Frost: Constellations of Intention* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963) p. 210
2. Robert Frost, *The Poetry of Robert Frost*, ed. Edward Connery Lathem (New York: Holt, 1969) p. 19. All Quotations from Frost's poems from this volume.
3. *Ibid.*, p, 21
4. Lawrance Thompson, *Robert Frost : The Early Years*, (New York Holt: 1966)121
5. Emphasis mine.
6. William James, 'Is Life Worth Living ?', *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* (New York, 1897) p. 51
7. *The Poetry of Robert Frost*, p, 255
8. *Interviews With Robert Frost*, ed. Edward Connery Lathem, (London : Jonathan Cape, 1967) p. 289
9. *The Poetry of Robert Frost*, P. 19
10. *Interviews With Robert Frost*, p. 295

First Thoughts and Second Thoughts: Hemingway's Major Fiction

P. G. Rama Rao

Ernest Hemingway's literary reputation seems to enjoy a boom today with an active Hemingway Society planning and organizing conferences at the national and international levels and *The Hemingway Review* and *The Hemingway Newsletter* gaining a wide circulation, and the Hemingway Room in the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, Boston, catering to a daily flow of researchers.

The Hemingway Room in the Kennedy Library, which contains the largest holding of the Hemingway papers, was dedicated to the memory of Hemingway in July 1980.

The papers in the Hemingway Room have grown vastly in bulk since Philip Young and Charles W. Mann prepared a partial inventory of the Hemingway papers in 1969 for the first time. Today there are more than 100,000 papers in fifty boxes—novels, stories, essays, sketches, notes, letters, and memorabilia including trench maps, train tickets, passports, and hotel bills. There are more than 800 individual manuscript items ranging from the one page list of 'stories to write' to the 1,146 page manuscript of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. All the first drafts of his fiction are there except that of "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" which is in the H.R.C. Library, Austin (Texas).

There are over 1,100 letters written by Hemingway from 1909 to 1961 including originals acquired by the Hemingway family, copies of letters donated or exchanged by academic institutions, carbon copies, and early drafts, and angry unsent letters written by Hemingway in an effort to let off steam. There are 25 boxes of letters sent to Hemingway from his family, childhood friends, literary friends, and enemies. The photograph collection contains over ten thousand prints and slides. There are the five childhood scrapbooks kept by his mother, scrapbooks of newspaper clippings, the zebra and antelope covered scrapbooks on

the African crashes, little magazines from the 1920's and onword inscribed books, and several items yet to be fully identified and catalogued. In addition to all this material donated by Mary Hemingway, the library is supplementing the primary resources with a collection of criticism.

As a Senior Fulbright/ACLS Visiting Scholar and Adjunct Associate Professor of English in the University of Massachusetts, Boston, from 1 September, 1981 to 1 March, 1912, I had an occasion to study the first drafts of Hemingway's major fiction so that I might see the writer's mind in action—what the writer had originally planned and written, how and why he changed it later, and how the changes have affected the writing. With this objective I looked up the first drafts of his fiction and other papers not only in the Kennedy Library but also in the Humanities Research Centre Library of the University of Texas, Austin, the Bancroft Library of the University of California, Berkeley, the Newberry Library and the University of Chicago Library, Chicago, the Library of Congress, Washington D C, and the New York Public Library.

The following is a brief sampling of the interesting possibilities that a study of the first drafts offers to the researcher.

The manuscripts of *The Sun Also Rises* reveal that it is a heavily revised novel. There are four different versions preceding the published version and they are in five boxes—the first drafts in two files (193 & 194), Hemingway's typewritten version in one flle (198), and typist's version in two files (20) & 201); and in file 202 C there is a list of the titles considered for the novel.

Hemingway considered five titles for the novel, four of which are from the Bible ["River to the Sea" (Ecclesiastes 1:7), "The old Leaven" (I Corinthians V:7,8), "Two Lie Together" (Ecclesiastes IV:11), "The Sun Also Rises" (Ecclesi astes I:5)], and the fifth is from a remark of Stein's ("Fiesta : The Lost Generation"). The two titles finally selected, and the epigraphs from the Ecclesiastes (I:5) and Stein, which are not there in the first draft, indicate that Hemingway wanted the novel to have a cosmic meaning beyond the mere fiesta, which forms the background, beckoning us away from it to other deeper meanings.

The first draft of this novel reveals that Hemingway had a considerable starting problem. He rejected the first thirty-two pages *in toto*. The names of real life characters like Duff, Bill, Patrick and Loeb, which had been freely used in the first draft, were changed during the revisions. It is obvious that the rejected stuff was a kind of

warming up exercise for the writer, and the way real life characters are transmuted into fictional characters is fascinating.[1]

In one of the omitted galley proofs, Hemingway says that he wanted to tell the story in the third person so that he might stay outside the story and "handle all the people in it with irony and pity that are so essential to good writing."[2] These two words, "irony and pity," are transferred from this passage to the Burguete episode and woven into the fabric of the novel on second thoughts. Besides, Hemingway succeeds remarkably well in treating his characters including the narrator with irony and pity while narrating the story in the first person which, I think, is a remarkable feat.

Large chunks of narrative are sliced away from the first draft like A. E. W. Mason's story "The Crystal Trench," thought of and analyzed at considerable length by Jake (which is reduced eventually to a brief mention),[3] and Jake's own 'true' story of a husband and wife in an Alpine setting, tightly told in contrast to Mason's sentimental stuff.[4] This pruning has made the novel more compact and effective.

In *A Farewell to Arms* the closing passage of the first draft is discarded. Here the narrator tells us in six foolscap pages that he could tell us what happened to the other characters e.g., how Ettore became a fascist, how the priest lived in fascist Italy, and how Rinaldi was cured of his syphilis, but first of all the business of the undertaker since Catherine was lying dead and so on.[5] Hemingway rejected all that stuff and rewrote the conclusion in just twenty-nine short sentences, almost all of them declarative, and we have one of the finest conclusions in American fiction.

In *To Have and Have Not*, in which Hemingway experimented with narrative perspective and with techniques like the manipulation of point of view and interior monologue and foreshortening of time, masses of writing are removed. Hemingway originally wanted to develop the story of Richard Gordon parallel with the story of Harry Morgan showing Gordon as a good writer and man. But on second thoughts he rejected twenty-two pages dealing with Gordon's life and work and showing him as a good and true writer.[6] In the published version, the Gordon story serves as a foil to the Morgan story and Gordon is shown as a fake writer and a miserable man acting as a foil to the protagonist, Harry Morgan. Hemingway removed large portions of the first draft involving 96 pages, 84 of which describe a cocktail party—the longest, perhaps, in fictional history—where, among other things, the

conversation between Tommy Bradley and a man called Roddy (a revolutionary shipping dynamite to Caba) figures.[7]

Before coming to the dynamite proposition they discuss writers like Milton, Joyce, Fitzgerald, Hart Crane, the fictional Gordon, and Hemingway himself.

Out of this mass only three pages are used as a flashback in Gordon's mind as he remembers how his affair with Mrs. Bradley ended.

The novel has gained greatly from these and other revisions.

The first draft of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* does not have the epigraph from Donne, which was added later on second thoughts.[8] This makes all the difference, for it gives a focus to the novel, central to which are two Donnean paradoxes—one dealing with involvement with mankind ("No man is an island . . . . it tolls for thee", *Devotions*, XVII) and the other with love ("our two souls, therefore, which are one, . . . like gold to airy thinness beat", *A Valediction Forbidding Mourning)*.

The first draft reveals that Hemingway started the novel as a first-person narrative and changed it to third person on the third page on second thoughts.[9] *For Whom the Bell Tolls* has a narrative which moves back and forth and has several interior monologues, flashbacks, and different narrative perspectives, and the third-person narration alone is suitable for an epic novel of this kind.

The novel is heavily revised. Some of the best scenes are added on second thoughts e g., parts of the Maria–Jordan scenes, the El Sordo episode, and Andre's journey.

Hemingway originally planned *Across the River and into the Trees* as a short story entitled "Over the River and into the Trees" (A Short Story) but changed his mind in the first draft itself [10] He put so much of himself into the novel that it was impossible for it to be a short story.

There is an interesting marginal note in the first draft that the colonel spends the evening with 'Adriana' and then goes out and gets a whore.[11] But, on second thoughts, he makes the colonel a self denying, forgiving man who tries to love and give pleasure rather than take it. This, in my opinion, is central to the whole novel and points to the development of Cantwell into Santiago in the next novel.

It is a well-known controversy among scholars whether *The Old Man and the Sea* was written in long hand, or typewritten straightway, or is just part of an old manuscript.

The first draft provides incontrovertible evidence that it was straightway typed out, for we see the author thinking and noting in the margin and typing e.g., the marginal note : "Put in the small migratory birds and the hawks. Put in the contest of rowing and the one of putting the hand down. Put in Casablanca."[12]

Hemingway's characteristic spelling and manner of typing and his occasional doubt whether the spelling of a word is right also prove that the typescript is his first draft.

Contrary to the belief that this novel was revised over and over again several times, we find very few changes (and they are very minor) in the first draft, which impresses us as an inspired work of art.

The first draft of the posthumously published novel, *Islands in the Stream*, is a manuscript of 942 pages in two books, "Bimini" and "Miami". Bimini is later heavily rewritten. Hemingway adopted the first-person minor character point of view in the first draft. The narrator is George, a good painter, who has built a house in Bimini and lives there in the off season. His friend, Roger Hancock, a good writer, has come to stay with him and is expecting his kids down.

In the published version George and Roger become Thomas Hudson, the painter, who has built a house in Bimini and is expecting his kids down at the commencement of the novel. There is a different Roger, a writer-friend, staying with Hudson. The story is told from the third-person oblique point of view. We do not know what other changes Hemingway would have made if he had ever considered this manuscript fit(according to his standards) to be mailed to the publishers or if he had lived to complete his revisions to his full satisfaction. but he allowed the manuscripts to languish in The Trust Company of Cuba in Havana.

A close study of the revisions reveals how the writing gains by adding a word or a phrase or a passage and by eliminating them. Here is an example of how the addition of four words works like magic.

In *A Farewell to Arms*, Hemingway writes in the first draft about the priest smiling : " . . . . and he smiled back." On second thoughts he adds "across the candle light" to the sentence. When we read " . . . . and he smiled back across the candle light"[13] the priest's smile comes into relief. The priest is associated with light and health and the good things of life in the novel. His smiles in the clean

well lighted place—a clean well lighted smile. The priest-baiting takes place in the night, but the priest, the tyro or the guru figure, whose philosophy of love is central to the novel and lights it up, smiles across the candle light.

A good example of how the writing gains by elimination of certain passages is provided by the removal of the quotations from Marvell in the first draft :

> " . . . . and always at my back I hear
> Time's winged chariot hurrying near" I said.
> "No, not that poem."
> "Thy beauty shall no more be found
> Nor in thy marble panel shall sound my echoing song."
> "No," said Catherine. "No, it's not true."
> "The grave's a fine and private place
> But none I think do there embrace."
> "I know that poem" Catherine said. 14

Only the first quotation is really relevant here and is retained on second thoughts and the scene becomes effective from this revision.

Sometimes, Hemingway's second thoughts caused him to remove certain passages but his second thoughts on these second thoughts—'third thoughts' if I may call them so—counselled him not to remove them e. g, the long beautiful passage in *A Farewell to Arms* (Scribner's edition) beginning with "A Retreat was no place for two virgins . . . ." "Hemingway wrote in the margin of the first draft, "Cut out, may be," but, on second thoughts, retained it.[15] This passage is analyzed by Charles R. Anderson in his monumental essay "Hemingway's Other Style" anthologized by Carlos Baker in his *Ernest Hemingway: Crtitiques of Four Mojor Novels.* This remarkable passsage would have been lost to posterity if Hemingway had not had second thoughts on his second thoughts.

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Notes

1. 193/1, pp 1-25, 25-31 (John F. Kennedy Presidential Library; Classification and numbers by Jo August, Curator of the Hemingway Room).
2. 202 a
3. 194/4
4. *Ibid.*
5. 64/13
6. 204/4
7. *Ibid.*
8. 83/1
9. *Ibid.*
10. 1/1
11. 1/2
12. 190/1, p. 39
13. 64/1, p. 14
14. 64/6, pp. 302-3
15. 64/8, p. 387

Khajuraho

Here are no sermons in stone.
The figures act : mate and mate
in eighty-four ways and will do so
beyoud 1984.
All commandments die here.

Love is their Bible
And they zigzag in it without flagging.
The whole air tingles with the aroma of their bodies.
The lusty hands run toward the clusters of flesh
and they dip into each other to reach their Jerusalem.
Some Vatsyayan sings merry psalms to them
which they hear with maddened ears,
locked lips, dreamy eyes,
and unclosed palms.

The first two cast their frills of cloth
— — the souvenir of the fallen —
to hold the vibrant, the tangible :
an open conspiracy against a poor meaningless world.

A crazy child of Man
may look with mouth ajar
at this tropical madness . . ,
Junes unnumbered have sunburnt themselves
and Decembers, frozen in icy calendars
yet they stand eloquent in each other's arms
without losing their sap and poise.
Unsagging.

The wholesome pairs, sovereign in their closets
rise from low caverns to lofty summits
from physics to metaphysics
through their speechless alchemy
saying :

Love is not a brief candle.
Time cannot squeeze us dry.
Leave the dusty gates of the world
to those who cannot defy the fiction of time.
Suspend your noisy beliefs
and come to this temple
which is not just another temple.

Here, Sunday is eternally far.

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—I. K. Sharma

Markanday's *Nectar in a Sieve* as a Tragedy

Ramesh K. Srivastava

If viewed in totality rather than in parts, Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* is a rural tragedy. Dorothy Canfield Fisher called it "unique in poetic beauty, in classically restrained and controlled tragedy."[1] It is not an Aristotelean tragedy that has for its tragic hero "a man not eminently good and just, yet whose misfortnne is brought about not by vice or depravity but some error or frailty,"[2] but it is a modern tragedy in which Aristotelean concepts are not strongly adhered to.

The action of the novel consists in Nathan and Rukmani striving to meet the elemental necessities of life—food, clothes and shelter. From the very beginning, however, it appears that even these are not going to be easily accessible to them. Nathan is a tenant farmer fated to till the land which belongs to another, yet with so much of love for it that he cannot survive without it. He is a simple yet skilled farmer with a good knowledge of land, but the vagaries of weather bring him to disaster. There are other sufferings too, both physical and psychical which Nathan and Rukmani face. After giving birth to Ira, Rukmani had fears of not having further children and of losing Nathan on Kunthi's allegations against her (Rukmani) having illicit relations with Kenny. Add to these the desertion of Ira by her husband, her resort to prostitution and the illegitimate birth of Sacrabani and the framework of a tragic plot is complete. But more than these, what make this novel really tragic are the deaths of Raja, Kuti and finally of Nathan, the hero of the novel, largely due to poverty and hunger. Raymond Williams, howevsr, feels that "tragedy is not simply death and suffering, and it is certainly not accident. Nor is it simply any response to death and suffering. It is, rather, a particular kind of event, and kind of response, which are genuinely tragic, and which the

long tradition embodies."[3] If by these ideas, Williams refers to the long tradition of many Greek and Shakespearean tragedies, which would stand the test of Aristotelean theory, and have great heroes, great events, and in which the fall is caused by the tragic flaw of the hero, this novel cannot be called a tragedy. For Nathan, the hero of the novel, is not a man of eminence, nor is his misfortune brought about by his tragic flaw or frailty but by the fury of rain or famine, poverty, abundance of childern, their desertion or death, and finally the deprivation of his land.

"The most common interpretation of tragedy," according to Raymond Williams, "is that it is an action in which the hero is destroyed."[4] Since tragedy is an imitation of an action, and the action emanates from the hero and continues with him, it is inevitable that the tragedy should end with the death of its hero. Of course, this is not always so as Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* continues even after Caesar's death in Act III. But in most cases the tragedy does came to an end with the death of its hero. *Nectar in a Sieve* concludes with Nathan's death and the return of his widow Rukmani to the village where she was brought after marriage where she is fated to lead the rest of her life.

Northrop Frye classifies fictions by the hero's power of action. If the hero is superior to other men but not to his natural environment, he is the hero of the high-mimetic tragedy in the Aristotelean sense, not an average or commonplace man. but

> The tragic hero is typically on top of the wheel of fortune, halfway between human society on the ground and the something greater in the sky. Prometheus, Adam, and Christ hang between heaven and earth, between a world of paradisal freedom and a world of bondage. Tragic heroes are so much the highest points in their human landscape that they seem the inevitable conductors of the power about them, great trees more likely to be struck by lightning than a clump of grass.[5]

The hero of the low-mimetic tragedy, on the other hand, is a common man, superior neither to other people of his class, nor to his environment, but is one of us, and we expect him to be only as much realistic as we are. Thus Nathan can really belong to this category.

Nathan does not enjoy the power, privilege and innumerable avenues of happiness. He lives in a near-dilapidated mudhouse which, at one time, was made by his own hands, and which now has the marks of weather with several leakages. Because of the failure of his crops and of his grinding poverty, he sells his possessions to pay off land revenue, and encounters a series of difficulties. Hence the essential feeling of a sense of loss of something which once was great is not there. In a high-mimetic tragedy, "it is tnese wonderful people, with all their mighty reasources of power, privilege, and personal endowment, who are shown in tragedy to be exposed to the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune; suffering intensely the confusion, terror, and humiliation of the human condition; and having in the end to endure the last loss and degradation, the extinction of personality in death."[6] Such is not the case in this novel. Nathan, far from being heroic, is an average man, living and working with other poor farmers, beggars, destitutes and stonebreakers. His death does not come as the fall of a giant, something irreparable and irreconciliable, creating a vacuum, and thus arousing an intensity of feeling, but only as a minor happening, and evokes an elegiac mood.[7] Throughout the novel, the continuous sufferings and difficulties of the farmer couple make the mood of the novel sombre, which in its turn provides a unity of the structure of the novel but cannot make it a tragedy because the tragic effect is not intensified.

The proper function of tragedy is to produce a certain kind of *katharsis*—a purgation of the feelings of pity and fear. In high-mimetic tragedy, "pity and fear become, respectively, favorable and adverse moral judgment, which are relevant to tragedy but not central to it."[8] Tragedy does not necessarily depend on the moral status of the tragic hero, and if he is deficient in it, this flaw cannot be equated with Aristotle's *hamartia* which is responsible for the tragic fall of the hero in high-mimetic tragedy. Nathan has no such flaw. In any case, there is no *hamartia* in low-mimetic tragedy. Its hero gets isolated from society and becomes a victim—the *Pharmakos*[9] or scapegoat—the kind one comes across in Anand's Bakha, Markandaya's Ravi and R. K. Narayan's Nataraj. These characters become victims of forces which are beyond their powers. Bakha cannot fight the caste system so deeply entrenched in Indian society. Ravi fights in vain against economic exploitation and Nataraj becomes a victim of his own passive yet generous nature. What happens to Nathan is also not the direct result

of his action; he is like Adam or Christ and if he loses his paradise or is crucified, it is because he has no choices.

Nathan is decidedly not a great hero but what makes him further small are the gods, fate, accident, chance and Nature. Northrop Frye says, "all Tragedy exhibits the omnipotence of an external fate. And, of course, the overwhelming majority of tragedies do leave us with a sense of the supremacy of impersonal power and of limitation of human effort. But the fatalistic reduction of tragedy confuses the tragic condition with the tragic process; fate, in a tragedy, normally becomes external to the hero only after the tragic process has been set going."[10]

Whenever a tragedy is not so much by *hamartia* of the hero but because of fate, it is often spoken of as "the irony of fate, rather than of its tragedy."[11] In such a case the less powerful, less eminent the hero is, the more operative the forces are. Nathan is such a figure. The very title of the novel *Nectar in a Sieve* points out to this irony. Nathan's labour and skill are the nectar and the land rented out to him a sieve. Thus the wastage of this precious commodity is inevitable. There are some scenes too whieh are full of suspense and irony, such as, the planned meeting of Nathan and Rukmani with their son Murugan, their difficulties on the way and the disappointing failure of their quest. It is the same kind of ironical situation they had encountered at the temple which had beckoned to them "promising food and shelter,"[12] and in which their possessions were lost. In such a situation, the fall of the hero does not evoke tragic feelings. "In low-mimetic tragedy, pity and fear are neither purged nor absorbed into pleasures, but are communicated externally, as sensations . . . . .The best word for low-mimetic or domestic tragedy is, perhaps Pathos, and pathos has a close relation to the sensational reflex of tears, Pathos presents its hero as isolated by a weakness which appeals to our sympathy because it is on our own level of experience."[13] Hardy's Tess and James' Daisy Miller come into this category. What happens to Tess is not at all because of her actions but due to a series of accidents or chances including the role of Nature. Daisy Miller becomes a victim of society as well as of European nature which gives her fatal fever. In the case of Nathan, too, there is no *hamartia* which causes his fall as it happens in the cases of Othello, King Lear, and Macbeth. The only thing that Nathan could have done is a little planning so that the two extremes of fast and feast could have been avoided. But even that planning could not have averted the tragedy. Nathan's fall is almost completely due to external forces, such as, the withdrawal

of land by the landlord and the callous attitude of his sons. Hence his death evokes no tragic feelings but pity. The feelings of pity become more pronounced because of the docile and inarticulate nature of the farmer. His death is no different from that of an animal, evoking merely pathetic feelings. He does not rave, does not rant, does not shout like Faustus, but believes in bending like grass, and when he dies it is as if the grass has been mown by the omnipotent lawnmower.

And yet it would be wrong to deny his individuality altogether. Nathan's endurnce is not without dignity and his and his wife's bending like grass is different from cringing like beggars for alms; it is a bending like that of the experienced and the wise who act like the pliant reed. Living in the village, these people have learnt a lesson from nature to mould themselves according to the changed circumstances whether it be the sun or the rain, good times or bad times. Hence the deaths of Raja and of Kuti don't draw their protests, nor do the departures of their sons make them extremely sentimental, but stoic as they are, they face these misfortunes with dignity.

Another factor that dampens the tragic effect of *Nectar in a Sieve* is Nathan's optimism. For optimism and pessimism both are inimical to tragedy. "Each in its own way is a fatal simplification of the human condition—the pessimism by its blindness to the redeeming power of the knowldege born of suffering, the optimism by its incapacity to see the humiliating, diminishing, destructive power of the suffering."[14] Throughout the novel, Nathan and Rukmani always feel happy and satisfied, and do not grumble though difficulties after difficulties come their way. This feeling of complacency does not allow the tragic feelings to be intensified. Just after her marriage, Rukmani feels shocked by looking at her husband's mudhouse and says, "It suits me quite well to live here" (p. 10). When their sons go away, Nathan exhorts his wife not to think of trials but of joys: "Look at our land—is it not beautiful ? The fields are green and the grain is ripening. It will be a good harvest year, there will be plenty" (p. 73). Rukmani is no less optimistic. When she has a little rice, she hopes "it will last until times are better" (p. 47) and when Nathan has a nightmare about the loss of his paddy, she says, "Never fear. All will be well" (p. 84). When Kenny worries about their poor condition, she tells him: "Do not concern yourself. We are in God's hands" (p. 133).

If elaborated and expanded, even the subplot dealing with Ira, her desertion by her husband, her resort to prostitution and the birth of an illegitimate son has a potentiality of altogether another tragedy, independent of the farmer couple. For here is a woman deserted because of her barrenness: but the birth of her son comes when her barrenness would have been most desirable. Here too there is the irony of fate. Rukmani says to herself, "She [Ira] was meant to have children: I have always known that. It was a cruel twist of Fate that gave them to her this way" (p. 919). There is none, except Fate, who can be blamed for the failure of Ira's marriage. Rukmani tells Granny, "No fault of yours, or the girl's or her husband's. It is Fate. Nevertheless, I do not like to think of the future" (p. 66). At a time when the purity of a woman was considered a great asset, when the moral standards of fidelity and chastity were high. it would be no less than a tragedy if Ira comes, like Hawthorne's Hester Prynne, as a living symbol of sin, and if her parents, Nathan and Rukmani, have to bear public humiliation in their old age. But Nathan's sense of shock does not have its parallel in Rukmani and certainly not in Granny who takes the blame of the failure of Ira's marriage upon herself. The reader also has no knowledge whether Nathan and Rukmani were treated as social outcastes or what sufferings and humiliations Ira faced due to it. At a later stage the playmates of Sacrabani do taunt him as to what his father's name is, probably knowing well that his father could have been any of several passersby. If the shamefulness of Nathan and Rukmani had been intensified, if it had brought intense agonies and pain, leading directly to some catastrophe, the full potentiality of this subplot would have been realized. Dorothea Krook says, "Where the shamefulness of the act of shame is, directly or indirectly denied or minimized, there the suffering which springs from it fails to make its full tragic impact; where the suffering is not, or is not fully tragic, there is no tragedy."[15]

There are a number of social problems too which have been taken up in the novel probably to point out that they too contribute their own share to the tragedy of the village people. These are the problems of marriage and dowry, of poverty and corruption, of superstition and ignorance. Markandaya does not provide any solution to these problems directly but she seems to suggest that in order to make human life happy these problems will have to be tackled, sooner than later, if such tragedies are to be avoided from the lives of the poor people. The drawback probably comes not so much from the absence of her art as from her effort to paint the whole society and its problems

in one family. It is in her attempt of universalizing the tragedy that Markandaya tries to squeeze in all kinds of problems—social, religious, economic—into the lives of the farmer couple and their children. Probably a larger number of characters might have suited her purpose better as they did in Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*. Of course, Raja Rao had a gigantic task before him in portraying the tragedy not of a single family but of the entire village infected chronically with social, economic and religious ills aud shaping under the sway of the Gandhian movement. Raja Rao's greater success is due to his larger canvas.

The story of *Nectar in a Sieve* is also the story of a village shaken to its roots by the onslaught of modernization. The author might have exaggerated the tragic incidents in the novel but the basic fact remains that such tragedies are bound to occur in India when our villages are on the threshold of modern era. The story has a universal touch in the sense that Nathan and Rukmani are the representatives of rural society with all its traditions, cultures, rites and rituals which face extinction under the impact of modern ideas so clumsily embraced by the new generation.

Some doubts have been raised about the success of the treatment of this tragedy. One objection is that Markandaya has brought in the novel some sensational incidents, piled miseries and difficulties, and has made the novel sentimental, even melodramatic. To call it a melodrama is to turn a blind eye to some of the traits of tragedy already discussed before. Here the characters are not mere types, those oscillating between good and bad If at all there is any trait in the novel which can be remotely associated with melodrama, it is the lack of restraint in piling the tragic incidents, one on top of the other, without much of a let up, to allow a proper development of character or motivation. It is not altogether unrealistic to imagine two sons dying, three having gone out, and the daughter not only deserted by her husband but facing humili tion by giving birth to an illegitimate son. J. M. Synge in *Riders to the Sea* shows how, one after other, Maurya's sons die when they go out to the sea. The difference between Synge and Markandaya is that whereas Synge has created circumstances in which each death portends the next, Markandaya fails to bring such a convincing and dignified portrayal of these tragic incidents. In Synge, the tragedy has been reduced to its simplest elements but probably the simplification has been carried too far.[16] "In essence the formula is of man's conflict with circumstance or environment, in a setting which shows a continuous and poignant awarenss of the passing of beauty, the immanence and the inevitability of death. His world is at once mysterious, beautiful,

brutal" 17 In *Riders to the Sea*, the conflict is between Man and the Sea; in *Nectar in a Stieve* between Man and the World. There is poignancy in Maurya's cry of resignation ; "They're all gone now, and there isn't anything more the sea can do to me ." It is matched by the lamentation of Rukmani over the departure of Arjun and Thambi, "If you go you will never come back" and again "Two sons have gone, now the third is going—and not to the land, which is in his blood, but to be a servant, which he has never been (p. 72)

Nectar in a Sieve is effective, like the *Riders*, because in portrayal of human miseries and agonies, Markandaya has done well. Her work touches our soul, moves us to pity and fear, holds us breathlessly in suspense and brings us to a realization of a sense of helplessness of human beings before the divine forces. It is in these respects that she succeeded in making this novel a good tragedy.

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Notes

1. Quoted on the inside cover of the New American Library edition of *Nectar in a Sieve*.
2. S. H. Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Arts* (New Delhi : Kalyani Publishers, 1978), p. 45.
3. Raymond Williams, *Modern Tragedy* (London : Chatto and windus) p. 14.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
5. Northrop Frye. *Anatomy of Criticism : Four Essays* (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 207.
6. *Ibid.* p. 62,
7. Northrop Frye writes : "The elegiac is often accompanied by a diffused resigned, melancholy sense of the passing of time, of the old order changing and yielding to a new one", *Ibid*,, pp. 36-47.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
9. Northrop Frye writes : "The *Pharmakos* is neither innocent nor guilty. He is innocent in the sense that what happens to him is far greater than anything he has done provokes, like the mountaineer whose shout brings down an avalanche. He is guilty in the sense that he is a member of a guilty society, or living in a world where such injustices are an inescapable part of existence." *Ibid.* p. 41.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 210.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 210.
12. Markandaya, *Nectar in a Sieve* (New York : The New American Library. 1954), p. 147. Henceforth all the quotations from the novel are from this edition and page numbers are given in parenthesis.
13. Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, p. 38.
14. Dorothea Krook. *Elements of Tragedy* (New Haven : Yale University Press 1969). p. 116.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 87
16. T. R. Henn, *The Harvest of Tragedy* (London : University Paperbacks, 1966). p. 20.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 202.

The Still Questions

So many years in sun and rain
Has our freedom grown
But far down in villages
I'm the same –
Oppressed, ill treated,
Humiliated and strange.
Though much is made of less
Shadows presented as saviours,
Arabian Night stories put up as facts
The mosaic of a cold hearth,
A leaking roof, a wet floor :
The fresco of barely fed bellies
And ill-clad privacies wrinkled
With unfateful miseries
Is much the some.
I live in a languid sublimity of suffering
With tyranny, exploitatation and rapes,
Mixed with prayers, philosophy and fasts
Cocktailed in an entelechy of existence
Served both by the farseeing politicians
And bourgeois saints
To make me forget my pains
But the frame of my misery
Hasn't much changed.
I don't even have hopes

To look for relief
From our superannuated Gods
Assembling images in dry pools : .
For, first they are so many
And then they have many more heads and hands
They can think or work with
In a harmony of purposeful relief.
Is retaliation then the only way of growth ?
Or the consolation that tyrants
Always die of surfeit
The last hope ?
Let some plastic soul tell me
The number of times
I may half-die of these stunts
Mixing delight with deceit.
If my destiny is to outlive
The national metaphors
Like leaves windblown from dying trees.
My pleasure may not be more
Than a masquerade of seeking justice
In tourist resorts.
Now is the time for some Indian poet
In English to act imagist or confessfonal
Write a love or bird song
Or describe a river or a festival
Over my crushed bones
To make my sighs in vain.
Yet the eyes that once sparkled at midnight
And ran dream carts down the muddy roads
Are wet pursuing the dark lanes
Returning upon themselves for truth.
No wonder some questions
Become so still with age
In their unanswer : Some circumferences
Of search diffused
That irony appears a delight
Born of pain.

Vidarbha Mahavidyalaya,
Amaravati.

—O. P. Bhatnagar

Quest for Identity of the Narrator Protagonist in *Heat and Dust*

Som P. Ranchan and Sunil K. Sharma

This paper proposes to focus on the quest for identity of the narrator-protagonist of Ruth Prawer Jhabvala's novel *Heat and Dust*. This quest for identity will be examined from the perspective of psychology, with special reference to Jungian analytical psychology. It happens many a time that the quest for identity begins with curiosity regarding another person from whom one is seeking answers. In the case of this novel it is the narrator-protagonist who is trying to find out the life history of her grandmother, Olivia. She had come to India with her husband Douglas, and at a later stage in her life, developed extra-marital relationship with an Indian Nawab. Since Olivia was caught between two cultures, her own and the Nawab's, she opted for the latter and ran away with the Nawab as she found life totally different with him. As it is, the narrator-protagonist says in the beginning of the novel: "India always changes people and I have been no exception." (P.2)[1] The person from whom one is seeking answers, about whom one is curious could be a guru, a teacher, or even someone from within one's own family, someone who represents some ego-ideals. Usually such a relationship begins from the unconscious side. This unconscious relationship in the novel *Heat and Dust* comes from the fact that the narrator protagonist and Olivia have a grand-daughter-grand-mother relationship. It is only when the narrator-protagonist sees the letters written by Olivia to her sister that her interest in the past life of Olivia is aroused and she (narrator) decides to visit India and reconstruct the past life history of her grandmother.

If one looks at the story in the novel, one finds a distinct similarity in the pattern of life in the case of both the narrator-protagonist and her grandmother Olivia. In Olivia's case, she comes to India with her husband Duoglas, but soon leaves him when she

comes under the spell of an Indian Nawab. The narrator-protagonist, on the other hand, comes to India all alone, finds a room for herself, sublet to her by a government officer, Inder Lal, and soon starts relating with Inder Lal so that both of them come closer to each other. One factor which is common to both the men i.e., the Nawab and Inder Lal, is that both have a strong mother complex inasmuch as both men are controlled by the negative aspect of their mother. To use Toni Wolff's words

> The negative aspect of the mother is mothering, anxious nursing and tutelage of the object when the latter never needed it or no longer needs it, lack of confidence in the latter's strength and independence, interference with its development. (p. 5)[2]

Such a note is seen in the character of the Nawab and Inder Lal. Both cannot function on their own, but are in total obedience to the commands and wishes of their mothers. The Nawab cannot convey his feelings to his first wife because the Begum (Nawab's mother) is possessive and domineering. Similarly Inder Lal cannot speak to his wife or convey his problems to her because of a strong mother. One finds that both men relate to their women in thə absence of their mothers. The Nawb prefers to stay away fɹom the place for long hours whereas Inder Lal relates with the narrator-protagonist when his mother and family are out on a pilgrimage.

The story of the two women runs parrallel to the point that both of them feel sorry for a particular character in their life period. The narrator-protagonist feels sorry for Chid, a young Britisher, who has come to India in search of spiritual sustenance. The narrator protagonist takes Chid to her room and mothers him by giving him food and shelter. On the other hand, Olivia feels sorry for Harry, a close friend of the Nawab. She wants to help him but finds herself unable to do so. Another analogy in the life of both the women is that both visit the same shrine, and it is here that both of them are seduced by their lovers and become pregnant. The narrator-protagonist does not reveal her pregnancy to Inder Lal, but Olivia mentions the same to the Nawab. Both women go through the process of abortion which is in fact by their own choice. Olivia succeeds in aborting the child whereas the narrator-protagonist realises at the last moment that she would like to give birth to her child and thus fulfil that quest in which Olivia failed. Both the women go to a mountain-resort after leaving their men. Olivia walks out on her husband, and the

the narrator–protagonist leaves Inder Lal. This study of the story in terms of similarities brings out the idea of how both the narrator-prtagonist and Olivia approach each other, the former appearing as the shadow or extension of the latter. One more point that could be emphasised here is that both women get influenced by the cultures of their lovers. In the narrator–protagonist's case it is Hindu culture and in Olivia's case it is Muslim culture. The narrator–protagonist is a tough and independent woman willing to face life single–handedly, whereas Olivia represents that aspect of the feminine which is totally dependent at first on her husband later on the Nawab. In other words, Olivia drifts with her fascination for the Oriental Muslim culture and does not have the tenacity or the charge of the ago to think and act out independently like the narrator–protagonist.

To reiterate, the narrator–protagonist sets sail on a journey to the land of Sufis and mystics in order to find, not any kind of spiritual solace, but to probe into the depth and mysteries which surround the unusual life story of Olivia. In such a quest the Eros of the woman comes to the foreground and finds the most forceful expression through mother love. In Greek mythology Eros is personified as the male God who presides over the function of relationship, especially the relationship between man and woman. In the case of the narrator-protagonist, Olivia being in her maternal modality becomes the carrier of Eros for her. While dealing with the material of her step-grandmother, the narrator-protagonist bathes and miagles in the heat and dust of this very material. Thus one finds that Olivia becomes her teacher and the narrator-protagonist nearly follows a similar pattern of life as her grandmother.

When the Nawab and Olivia meet for the first time at a party thrown by the Nawab Olivia notices him taking keen interest in her

> His eyes often rested on her, and she let him study her while pretending not to notice. She liked it—as she had liked the way he had looked at her when she had first come in. His eyes had lit up–he checked himself immediately, but she had seen it and realised that here at last was a person in India to be interested in her the way she was used to. (P.17) 3

Thereafter the Nawab started visiting Olivia regularly. The Nawab's style, his chivalrous behaviour, impressed Olivia a lot and brought both of them closer to each other. Earlier the Nawab would bring his

entourage with him, but later Olivia and the Nawab started moving out alone. When they visit the shrine of Baba Firdaus they are alone. The Nawab had brought along with him two lengths of red string for tying at the shrine. The belief was that if one tied strings at the shrine and asked for a wish it was generally fulfilled. The Nawab plays on the emotions of Olivia and she tells him of her desire to have a child. The moment she discloses her wish to the Nawab, he seduces her

> "Not here," he said. He led her away from the shrine and they lay together under a tree Afterwards he made a joke: "It is the secret of the Husband's Wedding Day," he said, (P,137)4

A similar situation is found in the narrator-protagonist's case also. In the beginning, when the narrator-protagonist and Inder Lal meet, Inder Lal only wishes to discuss his family and office affairs. Later when his family is away on a pilgrimage, Inder Lal starts visiting the narrator-protagonist's room in the evenings on some pretext or the other. This aloneness brings them closer to each other and finally one day on the narrator-protagonist's request both of them go to visit the shrine of Baba Firdaus. Inder Lal, like the Nawab, had brought with him two pieces of red string to tie at the shrine. The only difference one finds behind the seduction of the narrator-protagonist and Olivia is that Olivia expresses her wish to the Nawab before being seduced, whereas the narrator-protagonist does not express her wish to Inder Lal, but in reality takes the first step so that Inder Lal makes love to her

> However, at that moment I did have a desire, and a strong one: to get close to him. And since this seemed impossible to do with words, I laid my hand on his. Then he looked at me in an entirely different way. There was no lack of interest now ! But it was difficult to tell 'what' there was. I could feel his hand tremble under mine : and then I saw that his lips trembled too. Perhaps because he was about to speak; perhaps with desire, or with fear. There was certainly fear in his eyes as they looked at me. He did not know what to do next, nor what I was going to do next, I could see it was ludicrous!—how everything he had heard about western women rushed about his head. And yet at the same time he was a healthy young man—his wife was away—we were alone in a romantic spot (getting more romantic every moment as the sun began to set). Although the next few moves were up to me, once I made them he was not slow to respond.

> Afterwards he made the same joke the Nawab had made, about what had happened here on the original Husband's Wedding day to make the barren wife pregnant. (p. 127-128)[5]

It must be mentioned here that the joke regarding the Husband's Wedding Day, that both the Nawab and Inder Lal make, should not be equated with the man in the marital relationship, for in reality Baba Firdaus, a man, who awakens the woman to her Eros, is a husband in the spiritual and emotional sense.

One point that can be strongly emphasised here is that the element of extra-marital relationship in both cases seems to have a special relevance. In the case of the narrator-protagonist one can accept it as a part of the 20th century norms and mores but the same cannot be said in the case of Olivia, a woman conditioned by Victorian morality. In presenting love in both cases as extra-marital affairs, it appears the novelist wants to present sex, love and Eros in the 'humanised' form. By humanised one would mean the essential primitive or even the animal nature of sexual relation. In other words, one can say that marriage with its concommitant rules, norms, commitments, duties, etc., has, in a manner of speaking, civilised sex which is essentially a chaotic, uncivilised, primitive force. One may even go to the extent of saying that in extra-marital sex there is going back to essential Dionysian aspect of sexual union which under marriage is forced to be Apollonian. In other words, the turbulent and chaotic aspect of sex, which is very important, is forced into Appollonian forms of behaviour, methods, codes, schemes, etc. Furthermore extra-marital relationship puts the participants in a deeper relationship in psychic and spiritual values. From a study of the novel it seems that the journey moves from the Appollonian to the Dionysian, because for the Westerners, India perhaps has the connotation of primitive essential nature of man.

Here it would be interesting to note that Inder Lal and the narrator-protagonist feel much more comfortable in the dark while making love. The relationship between the two becomes much more intimate, because after their first affair at the shrine, Inder Lal begins to share the narrator-protagonist's bed in her room. Even after Chid returns from the pilgrimage and sleeps in the same room where the two lovers meet at night, it only goes to prove that Inder Lal can achieve sexual fulfilment only in the dark.

. . . . He trusts me now completely and has become very affectionate. I think he prefers to be with me when it is dark. Then everything is hidden and between us two alone. (p. I 40)[6]

In reality the narrator-protagonist requires sexual fulfilment as she has the feeling that she is not a complete woman. Being flat-chested she has to bear the taunts from the children of the area who call her *Hijra* (eunuch). Further as both achieve sexual fulfilment in the dark it can be said that darkness represents an essential attribute of being Dionysian, because whereas light gives form (it is Appollonian) darkness represents chaos. In the darkness of the room, Inder Lal ceases to be shy, reticent, quiet, and afraid. He becomes a Pan or Dionysius in his playful tenderness. The sexual prowess that he shows in the dark would be lost if the lights were to be switched on. Perhaps it is not too much to speculate that her leaving Inder Lal at the end of the novel may have somethsng to do with Inder Lal not having more Platonic values of Chid. Thus it appears that this quest for identity, for the essential humanness is expressed in both cases through extra-marital indulgence in sex. This is further substantiated by the narrator-protagonist's assertion that Inder Lal does not feel ashamed in the dark. Shame is the attribute of the persona which is the result of living life in the Appollonian manner

> Also I feel it makes a difference that he cannot 'see' me, for I'm aware that my appearance has always been a stumbling block to him. In the dark he can forget this and he also need'nt feel ashamed of me before others. He can let himself go completely, and he does. I don't mean only physically (though that too) but everything there is in—all his affection and playfulness. At such times I'm reminded of all those stories that are told of the child Krishna and the many pranks and high-spirited tricks he got upto. (p, I40)[7]

One more factor that goes in favour of the narrator-protagonist is that she has a male-ego, in the sense that when juxtaposed with Olivia she represents the twentieth century values of an emancipated, goal-oriented, forward-moving woman. It is because of this that she is able to accept the love given to her by Inder Lal. Being flatchested she is like the Amazon woman, one "who is independent and self-contained in the positive meaning of the term."[8] In fact

> She is independent of the male, because her development is not based upon a psychological relatlonsqip to him. The conscious values represented by him are at the same time her own values. Her interest is directed towards objective achivements which she wants to accomplish herself. (P. 7)[9]

The positive aspect of the Amazon is that she can be a good friend to man, making no personal demands, but acting as a competitor and rival who incites the male's ambitions and inspires his best male achievements. Physically speaking, both the narrator-protagonist and Olivia were poles apart. The former was flat-chested whereas the latter was full-breasted and feminine. One more difference between the the two was that the narrator-proitgonist was more motherly in nature than Olivia. She brings Chid home and gives him food and shelter. She also permits him to have sex with her.

> In fact, he admits that this is what he is doing—using me to reach a higher plane of consciousness through the powers of sex that we are engendering between us. I don't really know why I let him go ahead. I am much bigger and stronger than he is and could easily keep him off. But it seems as if there is really something, some emanation, that does not come from him but from some powers outside himself. (p.65)[10]

On the other hand, Olivia shows no such instinct. Even when Harry runs away from the Nawab's palace and shows signs of returning to London, Olivia's only fear is that the Nawab would be insulted.

> But the Nawab paid his fare. And has been keeping him in the lap of luxury, has'nt he, all this time. I can't see how he can just ..... run out on him. (P. 75)II

We find the narrator-protagonist is willing to accept reality and thus becomes in C.G. Jung's terms a Hetaira woman. Jung has formulated four structural representations of woman. These are mother, Hetaira or companion, Amazon and medial woman. While the mother and Hetaira are personally relatəd to the subject, the Amazon and the medial are impersonally related. The Hetaira woman has within her conscious field of vision the individual interest, inclinations and possibly also the problems of the male. This category of woman has a unique way of observing laws of individual relationships, or to speak more

generally, has the better understanding of the 'I–Thou' relationship in Martin Buber's terms. It is also important to point out that Hetaira has necessarily the valencies of motherly instinct and that is why the narrator-protagonist nurses and mothers Chid. Further it can be said that the Hetaira's instinctive interest is directed towards the personal relationship in herself as well as in the man. For a man personal relationships maybe less important, but in the case of the Hetaira it is decisive. It can be further pointed out that in the case of Hetaira a relationship may not begin with sexuality, but it may be the eventual result. This point stands true for the narrator–protagonist whose relationship at first is based on sympathy for Inder Lal and later leads to a sexual relationship resulting in her becoming pregnant. Thus in the words of Toni Wolff.

> The function of the Hetaira is to awaken the individual psychic life in the male and lead him through and beyond his male responsibilities towards the formation of total personality. Usually this development becomes the task of the second half of life. i e, after social position has been successfully established. (P. 6)[12]

The above statement stands true for the narrator–protagnist in the sense that it was she who arouses the feelings of Inder Lal and makes him realise his weaknesses. She, in fact, arouses his psychic life, brings him out of strong familial circumstances. Inder Lal's weakness is because of his strong mother complex. Though he can communicate with her, he cannot express himself before her. With his wife also, Inder Lal has no rapport and in fact he complains

> How is it possible for me to talk with her the way I am talking with you ? It is not possible. She would understand nothing. (p. 50)[13]

It is the narrator who rises to greater heights and releases Inder Lal from his inhibitions because she feels that

> . . . he is not meek and bowed at all — or only outwardly — that really inside himself he is alive and yearning for all sorts of things beyond his reach. It shows mainly in his eyes which are beautiful — full of melancholy and liquid with longing. (p. 50—51)[14]

Thus in Toni Wolff's words

> Everything in life must be learned, also human relationship, and it is therefore only natural that the Hetaira cannot begin with it on the most differentiated level. But once she has learned it, she will carefully observe laws of relationship, she will notice what belongs to it and what not, and she will, if necessary, know when a relationship has been fulfilled and complete. (p.7)[15]

Even in their sexual relations, one finds a vast difference between the two women. In the case of the narrator-protagonist, the affair is full of tenderness. Inder Lal plays the role of Dionysius showing tenderness towards the narrator–protagonist in his love making. On the other hand, in Olivia's case, the Nawab plays the role of Pan. At one stage of the novel Harry tells Olivia that no one could say 'no' to the Nawab. When the Nawah makes love to Olivia it is on a sudden impulse and she is unable to say no to him. The Nawab shows his interest in Olivia's pregnancy, but soon loses interest when Olivia decides to go in for abortion. In fact one finds that during the course of Olivia's abortion the Nawab's mother is present to see that all ends well and that Olivia aborts the child.

The personality of the narrator–protagonist moves as follows : i. e. at first she is the Amazonian woman moving towards Hetaira, then mother, and finally medial woman. According to Toni wolff

> . . . the four basic psychological functions, all the four structural forms, are inherent to every woman. If possible she will realise the one which is most consistent with her nature.
>
> . . . The woman who can intelligently submit herself to it will find her proper place in this modern world and fulfil her cultural task, thus gaining the inner security which is reached when one's psychic contents—the Shadow, the Animus, the 'Greet Mother', the 'wise woman' and even the Self—are no longer projected into the environment. As the woman is related to life, it is indeed her task to get the male involved in life and to make ideas life. But involvement and realisation can take place positively or negatively, consciously or unconsciously, with or without responsibility. p.12)[16]

Thus one can say that the narrator-protagonist has come at the threshold of sanctum sanctorum of individuality, and from the above discussion her quest is to seek her 'Self'. It is pertinent to point out a fundamental thirst in the yearnings of Olivia and the narrator-protagonist, in discovering the unknown land. It is neither accidental nor a chance that the narrator-protagonist seeks to unearth the life story of her grandmother. In a manner of speaking, the narrator-protagonist is Olivia reborn inasmuch as she is autually living in the pastness of the past of Olivia. Simplistically, her keenness to know about her grandmother maybe reckoned as her desire to collect the pieces of her past. Archetypally, however, the narrator—protagonist is driven by the unconscious energies emanating from her archetypal connection with the grandmother to seek not only a story of her own life, but also to be an agent continum in fulfilling Olivia's life. In other words, the narrator—protagonist, as a manifestation of the archetype of Olivia's concrete existentiality, comes as a researcher to re-live Olivia's past in the same land, atmosphere and environment. It is her journey through the multiplicity. vissicitudes and the dynamics of Indian social milieu that the narrator—protagonist comes to realise her vision of seeking fulfilment which perhaps Olivia fails to achieve.

While pressing this comparison between the narrator-protagonist and Olivia, it may fascinate the reader to note that while Olivia is an instinctual cthonic woman who sought fulfilment in the arms of an Indian Nawab, perhaps, carried by the visionary, emotional, romantic make-believe drive of an Oriental man, the narrator-protagonist in re-living the story of her grandmother transcends the gross murky instinctuality of her grandmother aud seeks a connection with the essence and aroma of Indianness. Thus the narrator-protagonist is in the specific modality of her ego drives as compared to her grandmother. Olivia can be seen in the paradigm of Lot's wife. Olivia was perhaps possessed by the romantesque Oriental world and could not transcend the experience of her Indian pilgrimage and, as a result, looked back like Lot's wife to meet and perish into dust. The narrator-protagonist, on the other hand, however, in re-living Olivia's life does not look behind but leaps in a quantum jump to embrace the splendour and the luminousness of the mountains of India.

As the novel ends we find the narrator-protagonist decides to go away leaving her lover Inder Lal. She decides to go to a mountain resort, the same, where Olivia had gone after her abortion. This place

the narrator-protagonist finds suitable as it is quiet and peaceful and that she would be able to give birth to her archetypal child here without any difficulty. The narrator-protagonist becomes symbolically, in-other words, a Mother India, because she has taken in her, symbolically, a particle of dust and has finally converted it into a child with her own heart. Since her quest is to find out the past of her grandmother, she decides to contact the swamis who live in the nearby mountains and take their help in giving birth to the child and as well complete the quest where Olivia had failed. It is at this stage of the novel that the narrator-protagonist in epiphane experience of beatitude, serenity and loftiness of the mountains expresses her sense of fulfilment when she says

> Unable to see, I imagine mountain peaks higher than any love ever dreamed of; the snow on them is also whiter than all other snow—so white it is luminous and shines against the sky which is of a deeper blue than any yet known to me. That is what I expect to see. Perhaps it also was what Olivia saw: the view—or vision—that filled her eyes all these years and suffused her soul. (p.180)[17]

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Notes

1. Ruth P. Jhabvala, *Heat and Dust* (London : John Murray, 1976), p. 2
2. Toni Wolff, *Structural Forms of the Feminine Psyche* (Zurich : C. G. Jung Institute, 1956) p. 5.
3. Ruth P. Jhabvala, *Heat and Dust*, p. 17.
4. Ibid. Page 137
5. Ibid. p. 127-128
6. Ibid. p. 140
7. Ibid. p. 140
8. Toni Wolff, *Structural Forms of the Feminine Psyche*, p. 7
9. Ibid. p. 7
10. Ruth P. Jhabvala, *Heat and Dust*, p. 65
11. Ibid. p. 75
12. Toni Wolff, *Structural Forms of the Feminne Psyche*, p. 6
13. Ruth P. Jhabvala, *Heat and Dust*, p. 50
14. Ibid. p. 50-51
15. Toni Wolff, *Structural Forms in the Feminine Psyche*, p. 7
16. Ibid. p. 12
17. Ruth P. Jhabvala, *Heat and Dust*, p. 180

Search For Critical Perspectives on Indian Writing In English

Vasant A. Shahane

Indian creative writing in English continues to present, in my view, the problem of evolving an acceptable framework of principles and practices of literary critcism which would be adequate to the task of evaluating its significance. This is obviously not an easy task, since the road to Indo-English *xanadu* is covered with a variety of pebbles and pitfalls. It also seems to me rather an amorphous field in which a few apparently valid critical perspectives, along with countless modes of critical guess-work, seem to be operative.

Since Indian writing in English is a product of the mingling of at least two cultures and two languages, it presents particular difficulties of evaluation to the critic who tries to search a viable mode of comprehending, analysing and evaluating it. Obviously, this is not an area of writing which can be subjected to the total overpowering of critical 'Monism', or flaunting the imperialism of the intellect on what seems to have been imperceptibly accepted, though not well defined, as 'Indian Sensibility' and its efflorescence in Indo-English creative writing. Now with the addition of a new critical term, 'the literature of third-world consciousness', the position of the literary critic trying to evaluate this literature has been rendered even more complicated than before. This literary situation, in my view, needs a very sensitive, perceptive and, at the same time, very objective treatment. Serious discriminations in this context are called for with a view, first, to clearing the crititcal (or 'uncritical') mess, and then of formulating viable modes of evaluation and literary criticism, which would be in tune with the nature and quality of the original writing itself. It is my earnest belief that in this context we should be guided by the principles and practices of what I would describe as "Critical Pluralism"—that is, a variety of critical approaches which may be brought to bear on this Indo-English

Creative Writing. I certainly do not plead for any single viable or sound approach. However, critical pluralism can lead to critical confusion, or wrongheadedness, and, therefore, every approach needs a 'rationale', which must be stated and justified as a viable tool of criticism.

The whole field of literary criticism, as it obtains to-day, of Indo-English writing seems to have been governed unconsciously by acceptance of certain ideas and concepts, the full implications of which have never been realised. In this context, I cite two examples: the concept of 'the Indianness of Indian Literatures,' and the idea of 'Indian Sensibility'. I should like to pose the main question: "What is really Indian about the so-called Indian Sensibility ?"

The Indianness of Indian literatures is either a storehouse of significant recorded values or, alternatively, it is a 'free field for highly individualistic critical guesswork based on the stock images of Indian culture. Nihar Ranjan Ray, the perceptive explicator of Indian culture, has spoken of the unreality of the 'Romantic View of India.' There is, he says, the image of a mystical metaphysical India 'engrossed in the quest of the nature of the soul' in total disregard of the inevitable demands of material life.

> "Indian has also been portrayed as a country of epic heroism and romantic pageantry, of sylvan solitudes in forms and farests of great scenic beauty. It is also said to be a land of 'Sadhus' and 'Sanyasis', 'Swamis' and 'Gurus', unconcerned with the mundane chores of life. Max Mueller and other Orientalists strengthened the myth of India as a 'nation of philosophers' (which it notably never was) "engaged in spiritual quest."[1]

This view emanating from the stock images of Indian culture through the ages has not taken into account the fact that the temples aud images of Konarak and Khajuraho couldn't have been built without a sound knowledge of engineering and architecture and that colour chemistry must have been an essential requirement of the frescoes of Ajanta Caves. Another totally misconceived stock image of Indian culture, propounded by Indologists, is of 'unchanging India' which, even in modern times, has come to be linked with 'tradition'. This apparent 'changelessness' of Indian civilisation is another instance of the tendency towards developing 'stock images' of Indian culture.

I do not imply that these stock images of Indian culture are totally false, but that these are half-truths lacking historical accuracy,

and therefore any concept of Indian culture and civilisation based on them is likely to be a half-truth, if not contrary to truth.

Writing on the unifying characteristics of Indian literatures in the sixteen languages recognised by the Indian Constitution, Motilal Jotwani writes :

> The sixteen Indian national literatures speak out, as the articles herein will show, the essentially one Indian mind, and point to the one single Indian literature which delineates throughout the length and breadth of the country the same set of primordial images and archetypal patterns of the Indian subconsciousness.

Whether the patterns of Indian consciousness are reflected in modern Indo-English writing in the light of this comment or the earlier Anglo-Indian litterature could be described as a bastard child of Britain and a British Colony having, characteristically enough, Christian missionaries as forster-parents,[3] is a matter for critical inquiry. Indo-English writing has been described as a 'minor facet of the complex, crystalline structure that characterises Indian civilization'. Others view it as a distinct, self-contained, autonomous entity with a very promising future. Indians, it is said, have used English with 'conspicuous ability', and that 'as scholars', says C. D. Narasimhaiah, 'we should try to assess the nature of that achievement'. He writes :

> We should do so not because writing in Indian English is an exotic plant, but because it can count among its practitioners—writers of verse, prose, fiction, and criticism who are read and written upon by serious scholars in India and abroad. I presume that no one who can write a great poem or novel in an Indian language prefers to write an inferior one in English. The medium is a matter of inner compulsion and it will be rejected if it inhibits response, distorts truth, does not create what it pretends to convey.[4]

This positive attitude is in sharp contrast with that of the professors of English and critics of an earlier generation who seem to have valued English literature far more than this new-found foundling of doubtful literary parentage. This attitude of Indian professors of English was very similar to the attitude of American academics towards American literature in the nineteenth century. The Americans valued British literature more than their own for a period of time. Similarly,

Indian academics spoke of Chaucer, Milton, Shakespeare and T. S. Eliot, and in a moment of perilous abstraction, condescended to speak about Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Gandhi, and Nehru as if they were guilty of deviating from their celestial path. Exploring Indo-English writting, to use William Blake's poetic phrase, was like 'wandering through each charter'd street' and 'mark in every face I meet/marks of weakness, marks of woe'.[5]

The chartered streets of Indo-English writing have now been frequented by almost a crowd; in fact, there may be a stampede accelerated by M. Phil and Ph.D aspirants. The pendulum has now swung to the other extreme, which neither the Iyengars nor the Narasimhaiahs of the earlier phase could have predicted as the dark dust of their critical fall-out. Meenakshi Mukherjee's comment on this situation is interesting :

> Of late this area has become a fertile and indiscriminate quarry for dissertation material. There seem to be more researchers than creative writers in the field.[6]

The *volte-face* in the last fifteen years has been quite incredible. In the mid-sixties most universities in India would not touch any research topic in this area with a barge-pole. It was not *done* in those days for English Departments to get mixed up in things Indian. A few last bastions of purity still remain, but most universities have become more tolerant since then.

It is obvious that the developmental process of Indo-English writing and its criticism has come full circle since March 7, 1835, the memorable day which marked the passing of the Minute on Education proposed by Thomas Babington Macaulay and approved by Governor General William Bentinck and his Council.

It is necessary to take a hard look at the critical approaches which so far seem to have been adopted by critics, and to observe whether these are the most valid ones or not. Is it advisable to formulate newer approaches and apply these to Indo-English creative writing now that this body of literature appears to have come of age? The critical approaches will obviously govern their own methodology of criticism.

First, I should like to consider briefly the critical landscape of traditional approaches. In this category, historical-biographical, moral-philosophical, expository-paraphrasable and even textual-linguistic approaches can be included. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar's pioneering

study *Indian Writing in English* (1969) is the first detailed, full-length study of this body of creative writing. As a pioneer, Iyengar seems almost compelled to be expository, and rather overgenerous to Indo-English writers and his study is governed by a historical approach, expository in character and encyclopaedic in range. This approach seems almost inevitable in the early stage of Indo-English Criticism.

Narasimhaiah continued with new vigour Iyengar's earlier endeavour to champion the cause of Indo-English writing and writers with new emphases, and concentrates his attention on Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan and Jawaharlal Nehru. His critical responses are diffused over a large area of creative writing in an attempt to link the past with the present and the relative phases of creativity.

Meenakshi Mukherjee presented her thesis on the themes and techniques of the Indian Novel in English, *The Twice-Born Fiction* (New Delhi, 1971), in the context of her findings that it is 'the product of two parent traditions', its earlier evaluations being mainly 'historical' or 'sociological'. However, her own assessments, though analytical in some respects, follow the patterns of ideas of 'East-West Encounter', 'Renunciation as an Ideal', 'The Making of a Nation' which are themselves historical-sociological in content and critical in approach. Her comments on 'Myth as Technique' seem to transcend the border of traditional approaches and enter the field of modernity.

M.K. Naik is another major academic critic of Indo-English writing and, apart from editing excellent volumes, he has done extensive studies of Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand and has written a comprehensive history of Indo-Anglian literature. Analytical and methodical in approach he offers very balanced comments on Raja Rao's novels as well as on the fiction of Mulk Raj Anand and seems to take a more detached view than what the earlier critics of the achievement of Indo-English writers have done. Uma Parameshwaran's *A Study of Representative Indo-English Novelists* (New Delhi, 1976) is an evaluation of the fiction of R.K. Narayan, Kamala Markandaya, B. Rajan and Raja Rao with a chapter on 'Nostalgia' (The Historical Romances of T. Ramakrishna and A.S.P.Iyyar). This is obviously a mixed bag, chosen at random, yet the critical focus is quite perceptive, and even incisive. She divides south Indian writers into three main categories, the native talents, the native-aliens and the expatriates. However, the use of the word 'native' is quite ambiguous, and the term is not totally free from its colonial pejorative context. Uma

Parameshwaran's analyses of Raja Rao's novels strike me as particularly intelligent and significant.

Raji Narasimhan in her study of aspects of Indo-English Fiction, *Sensibility under Stress* (New Delhi, 1976) presents her thesis that the mythic element in the sensibility of Indian novelists alone may give rise to great works now that the novel as a genre has declined after the best work of Raja Rao and R. K. Narayan is over (Has it, really?). The Indo-English novel seems to her to have come under a shadow after these 'three greats' have accomplished what they could. The conventional realistic or sociological approach could no longer produce *Kanthapuras* on *The Financial Experts* and that future directions of the development of this form of fiction would be in explorations of mythic sensibility. Raji Narasimhan also attempts to distinguish between 'spoilt' and 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' portrayal of the artist's experience. Her criticisms are refreshing in many ways, partly because they are unacademic and impressionistic and assert a view point with native vigour.

There are, of course, several other important critics and scholars who have written on Indo-English literature — such as David McCutchion, P. Lal, Paul Verghese, G.S. Amur, Anniah Gowda Ayyappa Paniker, William Walsh, to mention only a few, whose criticsms have thrown new light on this new body of writing in India.

However, in spite of these competent criticisms, the problem of evolving appropriate critical criteria or approaches for judging Indo-English writing remains undetermined. It is obvious that critics have so far employed mainly the tools of traditional criticism such as historical - biographical and / or moral - philosophical and / or textual - linguistic approaches. No serious attempt seems to have been made to evolve 'formalistic' approaches to Indo - English works of art. The search for 'form' or the attempt to find the key to the structure, and meaning of a work of art or to discover its 'shape' or to fathom its 'effect' or how it has come about—these roads are not taken by critics as yet. The rise of New Criticism in the West in the forties has influenced Western criticism greatly, but not the Indo-English criticism to this date. The Indo - English literary critic seems to be more or less innocent of, or, unaffected by, the uses or abuses of the psychological approach in criticism. A similar situation seems to prevail in relation to the mythological and archetypal approaches. The fiction of Raja Rao has not yet led to the developnent of the 'exponential' approch, the 'symbolic approach or what has come

to be known as 'motival' approach based on the 'motifs' in his fiction. Criticism has yet to explore these new fields and use new tools to make fresh discoveries.

A modern novel, a modern play or a poem in our literatures has had a tremendous impact of the forms of western literature and no knowledgeable person can deny this pervasive influence. The ancestry of a modern Indian novel cannot be traced to Bana or his *Kadambari* as much as it can be bgitimatly traced to Walter Scott or Jane Austen, Tolstoy or Dostoevsky, Proust or Kafka. To ignore this reality is nothing short of superficial pseudo-scholarship. Equally baseless and unwise is the argument that we should abjure all western modes of criticism and that we should somehow evolve only *Swadeshi* modes to understand and evaluate Indo-English writing since they are 'rooted' in our tradition. Surprisingly, critics seem to fall an easy prey to these superficial sops without realising what it is to evaluate a work of art and the fact that this effort repuires a breadth of outlook which should transcend these narrow and self-imposed barriers. However, this does not deny the importance of our tradition and our social conditions which go to the making of a work of art. One must remember that it is western criticsm which has emphasised the value of tradition even much before the first Indo-English critc visualised the need to project his view point. In fact, I am very much in favour of evolving genuine Indian critical and aesthetic modes for criticism for evaluating Indo-English writing—a view which will be elaborated Iater.

A formalistic approach to at least some of the major writers of Indo-English fiction may be explored. This critical approach is no substitute for other approaches, but, it is hoped, it will add to our awareness of the intrinsic value of Indo-English writing.

The question of form in Indo-English fiction suffers from many weaknesses. The first failing may be simply described as 'No Form.' The expression implies the non-existence of form as the term is understood in the conventional sense in the art of fiction. Although 'the form of fiction' is by no means a very precise literary term, yet its existence in relation to 'shape' or 'structure' is instinctively recognised by perceptive critics. The other failing may take the shape of 'wrong form' or worse still 'queer form,' which are odd deviations from the accepted norm.

Raja Rao told K. Natwar Singh in an interview that 'the Indian novel can be epic in form and metaphysical in nature. It can only be story within story to show all stories are parables.[7] His *The*

Serpent and the Rope is, in Raja Rao's own words, 'an attempt at a 'Poranic' recreation of Indian story telling' and is epical in dimension. N. K. Naik has described Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* as a *Sthalapurana* (a legendary history of a place) and *The Serpent and the Rope* as *Mahapurana* (major epic legend.)[8] C. D. Narasimhaiah, in analysing *Kanthapura*. pays high tribute to the novelist for his exploration of Indian sensibiitty and values of the tradition.

In fact, the one outstanding contribution of Mr. Raja Rao to Indian wrtting in English is to have struck new paths for a sensibility which is essentially Indian. While R. K. Narayan has invented a language which suits his purpose most adequately, it is not likely to be much help except in minor ways to those that write fiction in English after him, unless they bring to fiction-writing gifts like his. Indian fiction in English can, it seems to me, make headway by continuing the Raja Rao line which is to say one must have not merely his technique, but his amazingly high intellectual equipment and awareness of the Indian tradition-all of which should be possible to acquire in varying degrees by serious aspirants—Santha Rama Rau is already in his line and has achieved considerable distinction in the novel form.[9]

I have a feeling though that Raja Rao may feel quite uncomfortable in the company of Santha Rama Rau (though their names seem similar) or vice-versa. However. the main assumption of Indian critics that Raja Rao is the finest portrayer of Indian sensibility, and therefore of the form of Indo-English fiction, is seriously questioned by Western critics. Allan Wendt comments :

> And the career of Raja Rao provides a curious parallel to Mulk Raj Anand's comments about the use of English by Indian writers, for if Rao was a Babu in 1938 he has become a Sahib by 1963—his latest novel, *The Serpent and the Rope*, published twenty-five years after *Kanthapura*, leaves India almost entirely for a European setting, and presents characters who are so Westernised that they remain Indian only in name. Technically it is a competent novel, but its theme is a kind of turgid *Weltschmerz* that has nothing to do with Indian ideas or Indian responses. Although reviewers have occasionally found much to admire in *The Serpent and the Rope*, it is surely not an *Indian* novel; Raja Rao has become as much an expatriate as T.S. Eliot or Ezra Pound.

It is obvious that these views are diametrically opposite. If one critic considers Raja Rao as the finest exponent of Indian sensibility, the other considers his novels least Indian.

Raja Rao's quest for form in fiction assumes almost philosophical and mystical proportions since the quest leads him to the realization of *Advaita* and Sankara's great ideals. He is captivated by the magic of the word or rhythm so much so that he is inclined to seek silence, since silence is the best part of speech and that his fictional art seeks an impersonal objective which is curiously mixed with artistic truth. Whether this view could be attuned to the essence of the art of fiction is problematic, but it is synthesised with his view of the novel as a metaphysical work of art or comedy. A reading of *The Cat and Shakespeare* would highlight the role of the cat in the novel's narrative and symbolic structure. Govindan Nair says : 'the kitten is being carried by the cat. We would all be kittens carried by the cat' (p. 8). Ramakrishna Pai's activities as well as the ration shop smack of corruption; Govindan Nair too is nabbed by the police on charges of graft. The induction of the real cat in the rationing office is Raja Rao's fine stroke in creating a meaningful situation and developing his own form of fiction. Is the cat symbolic or real ? The mother cat perhaps symbolises the concept of the *Karma* suggesting that men become mere kittens surrendering themselves to the dictates of destiny—the cat.

The form of *The Cat and Shakespeare* is a tale or a parable, which is in part metaphysical and in part comic. It also develops an allegorical dimension—especially in relation to the cat. One could classify it as 'Queer Form' which in some ways is attuned to its queer subject-matter.

Raja Rao has used a strange incantatory and matter-of-fact style to expound character and situation. He tries to unravel the mysteries of the human personality, for instance, of the mysterious Shantha through the consciousness of Ramakrishna Pai (who is a sort of a foil to Govindan Nair). This seems so queerly a Jamesian device, but Raja Rao doesn't observe any Jamesian mode. Ramakrishna Pai speaks of Shantha :

> Shantha is almost mysterious. Just as Saroja was always clear, Shantha always says two things at the time. No wonder she and Govindan Nair like each other so mnch. She says : How can anything mean one and one thing ? Look at that bilva tree. It's

a bilva tree all right. But were there no light, would it be a bilva tree ? So when you say it's a bilva tree, that means there is the tree and the light that makes it the tree.

She seems to be a worldly woman, a counterpart of Govindan Nair. Pai observes her, as much as Raja Rao observes the world of *The Cat and Shakespeare*, and in this way, the novelist evolves his own distinctive form of the novel. 'You see what you want to see' is a key statement in the novel, and it is also true of its form.

Another important area of critical exploration which 'Professor Thinking' in English studies in India can explore with sensitivity and sharp perception is that of comparative aestheties or the common ground between Western and Eastern (Sanskrit) aesthetics as it relates ilself to world literatures written in English. Although some pioneering work has been done in this field, yet much remains to be done. I only wish to point out certain areas of fruitful exploration and research, and we must explore it in order to seek many hidden treasures.

In fact, the basic metaphor of poetry in Sanskrit aesthetics, 'the Lamp and the Jar', the essence of *dhvani* poetics, is quite close to I. A. Richards' ideas of metaphor. Richards thinks that metaphor should be considered not as a "literary grace, but as a technique of reflection" *(Speculative Instruments*, London, 1255, p.41*)* Sanskrit Poetics, as intelligently outlined by Krishna Rayan, is deeply concerned with "crucial" metaphors such as, for example, the "arrow" to indicate the theory of "meaning" in poetry (the *Anvitabhidhana* theory) or the concoction of pepper, candy and camphor as a tool metaphor in the theory of *rasa*. And the "founding metaphor" (to borrow Richards' phrase), in Sanskrit Poetics, is the lamp and the Jar, which is closely linked with the *dhvani* theory. The lamp stands for the "stated" meaning, and the jar for the "suggested meaning (Krishna Rayan, *Suggestion and Statement in Poetry*,London, 1972 p. 52). In Sanskrit, it may also indicate the theory of manifestation since the jar is already there, whereas the lamp only reveals it. The essence of poetry lies in "suggested" meaning *(vyangyartha)* and not in "stated" meaning *(vachyartha)* and this basic element of Sanskrit Poetics is quite close to the thcories of French or other forms of European symbolism and symbolists. However, statement can also form one component of a suggestive poem, though the suggested meaning shall always reign supreme.

The combination of *rasa* and *dhvani* is indeed the supreme mode of expression in Sanskrit Poe tics Although Bharata's *Natyasastra*

projected the earlist form of the theory of *rasa*, it was Abhinavagupta who sensitively articulated all its delicate formulations in *Dhvanyaloka.* He states that poetry presents emotion by a process of suggestion and every poem is governed by one dominant *rasa*. The "emotion" already exists in the reader (it is *sthayin*) and poetry only arouses it and gives it expression. Nine *rasas* flow from nine *sthayins*, and Abhinavagupta's conceptual perceptions of their relationship is in my view, quite close to what T. S. Eliot was attempting to project in his theory of "objective correlative" (1919). Later western critics have pointed out that Eliot's idea is not new (it is traced to Washington Allstow by Harry Liven, *Contexts of Criticism*, Cambridge, 1958, p.159), and that it has, after all, limited validity. However, Eliot's incisive comments on *Hamlet (The Sacred Wood*, London, 1920, pp. 95–103) seem to present a very close parallel to those of Anandavardhana on the *rasadhvani* theory.

Krishana Rayan has ably pointed out that Eliot's approach to the "essential emotion" is very close to the ideas of Anandavardhana on *rasadhvani*, on the "Suggestion of Emotion"; in fact, the "essential emotion" itself is the origin of the preponderant *rasa*, and what Eliot diagnoses as the basic weakness in *Hamlet* could be described in Sanskrit aesthetics as an example of *rasa–dosa* (the "fault" of "essential emotion"). It is amazing how close Eliot is, in expounding his idea of objective correlative, to Sanskrit aesthetics. The meeting of minds, of Anandavardhana (ninth century A. D.) and T.S. Eliot, is neither hampered nor marred by this long stretch of time, a thousand years, which separates the two theoreticians of great distinction.

We are aware that *aiankuras* (ornaments) are very important in Sanskrit poetics, but they comprise the body *(Vastu)* and not the soul (*atman*) of poetry. *Rasa* then is indeed the soul of poetry. Roshni Rustomjt has ably pointed out how Philip Wheelwright's view that the deeper validity of poetic language depends on its semantic multiplicity–in–unity echoes the *rasa–dhvani* theory (Philip Wheelwright, *The Burning Fountain: A Study in the Language of Symbolism*, Bloomington, 1959, p. 101). Wheelwright undercores the precarious balance which operates among various suggested patterns of association in poetry, and his comments in this context seem to be echoes of Anandavardhana's insigtful observation. Beardsley had restated Henri Bergson's view that "every feeling experienced by us will assume an aesthetic character provided that it has been *suggested* and not *caused*" (Monroe C. Beardsley. *Aesthetics from Classical Greece to the Present*: New York. 1966, p. 325). It seems to me that Bergson's and

Beardsley's approach to the quality of suggestion in emotions comes very close to the *rasa dhvani* theory of Sanskrit aesthetics. I have merely outlined only a few areas of Comparative Aesthetics which "Professor Thinking" in India can explore with rewarding results.

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Notes

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7. K. Natwar-Singh, *The Saturday Review*, New York, March 16, 1963
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Indian Poetry in English and the Indian Aesthetic Tradition

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"Indian Poetry in English" necessarily refers to two parameters : Indian and English. 'Indian' may mean, either, written by Indian citizens, or written about Indian subjects, or even simply expressing Indian sensibility. This implies that there is a sensibility that is identified with the land and people of India. National sensibilities are ultimately based on racial and cultural factors. Whether they are inherited or acquired is another moot question. "English" may be taken to suggest that a certain form of English language is used, or to imply that the culture of the English people—of England—is at the back of it, to the extent the literature of England is a point of reference for its understanding, appreciation and evaluation. The word "poetry" is often left vaguely understood, as definitions are likely to make the matter more complicated than it really is. But "Indian" and "English" are operative terms, and in the phrase "Indian poetry in English." they do overlap.

Thus Indian poetry in English belongs to two distinct traditions: one arising from the use of subject matter or sensibility or authorship and the other arising from the use of language, however much this language may be Indianized.

The two traditions mentioned here do not perhaps have very much in common. History, geography, climate, racial composition, linguistic factors, culture, social systems, political institutions : all these have been different for ages, and even the contacts established over a century or two cannot be said to have erased these differences. When two traditions come into contact, they may react to each other in either of two ways: one reaction is that of confrontation, the other that of compromise. It is possible to argue that confrontation helps to retain

the individuality and vitality of both traditions, whereas compromise can be counterproductive and may lead to the decline of both. A third possibility is that of mutual avoidance, in which case then there is no real contact.

Indian poetry in English seems to manifest the first two of these types of contact. What is often called Indian Renaissance in the 19th and early 20th centuries reveals both the merits and defects of contact between cultures. The interpenetration of two cultures or traditions can be productive where the individuality of either is not obscured or sacrificed. It is true that Western or English technology overwhelmed India in the nineteenth century, just waking up from an extended medievalism. To the extent the study of English quickened our national pride and patriotism, the contact was creative, and constitutes what was earlier called confrontation. Where the Indian culture totally yielded to the dominance of the English, the consequence was often disastrous. Generally speaking, even when the etiquette and table manners and costumes were aped, the basic outlook and cultural values were seldom wholly given up. Hence the large dose of revivalism in the Indian Renaissance and our immediate national heritage.

When we turn to the question, to what extent Indian literature in English in general, and poetry in particular, can be said to belong to the main stream of traditional Indian aesthetics, we realize that very few attempts have so far been made to study this. Not many, as far as I know, have tried to use Indian aesthetic notions for the interpretation or evaluation of Indian poetry in English. As a matter of fact, it seems a lot more work has been devoted to the delightful enterprise of discovering Sanskrit literary-critical principles in Western (including English) literature. Apart from seeing Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, Wordsworth, even T. S. Eliot as incarnations of the Indian Vedantin abroad, attempts have also been made to establish connections between Indian aesthetic tradition and theories of aesthetics in the West—with the result that we now know that Eliot's theory of the objective correlative, if not his specific comment on *Hamlet*, has been anticipated by our revered Anandavardhana.

Our concern here, I believe, is primarily to try to relate two traditions—namely the tradition of Indian aesthetics (both Sanskrit and Dravidian) and the present-day Indian practice of it to the extent it may be seen in Indian poetry in English. It is a historical fact that we have been using English for writing poetry for over 150 years now. Henry Derozio, Toru Dutt, Rabindranath Tagore, Manmohan Ghose,

Shri Aurobindo, Sarojini Naidu, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya, and a few other names stand out during the decades before the achievement of Independence. The post-Independence period is dominated by Nissim Ezekiel, A. K. Ramanujan, P. Lal, Kamala Das, Jayanta Mahapatra, Keki Daruwala, R. Parthasarathy and several others. The youngest generation too is fast growing up, with the increase in the number of little magazines and academic publications all over India. There are of course quite a few skeptics and cynics, upset by these developments, and even angry and unhappy about them. Their number however is not as large as that of the would-be poets and intercontinental celebrities who seem to justify all the unkind things that serious critics heap upon the atrocious verses of several of them. These unfortunate victims of self-delusion however create no problem for the presenti nvestigation.

The link between Indian poetry in English and the Indian aesthetic tradition may be looked for in two or three areas or aspects; one, the idntification of thematic recurrences, revealing influences, developments, repetitions. subversions, etc., which enable us to look at this body of work as part of Indian literature, irrespective of the place of origin of the language (English being Indian though not by birth, but by domicile); two, the application of the principles of Sanskrit or Dravidian aesthetics and literary criticism, coexisting with those of the Western tradition; and three, the recognition of the growing closeness between Indian poetry in English and poetry in Indian languages, in contrast to the closeness growing between Indian language poetry and world poetry. We shall look at eaeh of these connections with specific examples. What is contemporary is, to a largr extent, determined by what was there till yesterday—hence we may have to start from the 19th century end.

Thematic Recurrences

At least three of the major Indian poets in English seem to have developed a preoccupation with the Savitri-Satyavan story from the *Mahabharata*. Toru Dutt deals with the legend in the first of the *Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan*, while Sri Aurobindo develops the theme in his own way, and writes the most ambitious work ever attempted by any Indian poet in English. Quite recently, Jayanta Mahapatra picks up an image from the most dramatic part of the same story in *Relationship*. Toru Dutt's ballad is a fast-moving narrative retaining the folk elements in the poem, although the style often reminds

us of the 19th Century English poets' attempts to retell European puranic tales. True to the nature of a ballad, Toru Dutt's "Savitri" makes no attempt to philosophize or turn the whole experience into a mystical one, unattainable to ordinary mortals. It reads like a romantic story of young love, celebrating the natural wisdom and sense of devotion of a lovely girl to the husband she has chosen for herself. Her vivaciousness, her presence of mind, and her feminine determination are very clearly brought out by Toru Dutt. It also represents an attempt to tell the story in such a way that it might appeal to an English audience. The tempo of the narrative is remarkable. There are fine passages bearing witness to Toru Dutt's mastery of the verse. Here is the warning to Savitri about the possibility of premature widowhood if she married Satyavan :

> And think upon the dreadful curse
> Of widowhood; the vigils, fasts,
> And penances; no life is worse
> Than hopeless life,—the while it lasts.
> Far follows day in one long round,
> Monotonous and blank and drear;
> Less painful were it to be bound
> On some bleak rock, for ye to hear—
> Without one chance of getting free—
> The ocean's melancholy voice.

The sentiment and the situation are specifically Indian where widows are not allowed to remarry, yet the communication to a foreign reader is smooth and easy.

Sri Aurobindo's mystic epic retells the same story of Savitri and Satyavan—but the two characters are not just simple human beings anymore. They are endowed with superhuman powers and destinies. Their tasks are harder. The structure of the poem is also unique. The full title of the poem is *Savitri : A Legend and a Symbol,*—the symbol eventually gets the better of the legend. Toru Dutt, who is primarily interested in retelling the legend, opens her poem in a straightforward narrative manner :

> Savitri was the only child
> Of Madra's wise and mighty king.

Aurobindo's opening lines indicate a different order altogether.

> It was the hour before the Gods awake.
> Across the path of the divine Event
> The huge foreboding mind of Night, alone
> In her unlit temple of eternity,
> Lay stretched immobile upon Silence marge.

The occurrence of words like Gods, divine, temple and the use of capital letters in Event, Night, Silence (one wonders why *eternity* is not capitalized) warn the reader against looking for an ordinary tale of man and woman. This elevated tone is kept up throughout the poem, written in the classical grand style of Milton sustained by the buoyant idealism of Shelley.

When we turn to Jayanta Mahapatra's modest use of the figure of Savitri as she returns from the underworld—we are vaguely reminded here of the Greek tale of Orpheus and Eurydice--the poetics appears to have changed, but the Indian sense of the mysterious is kept intact. In the Note on the locale of the poem *Relationship*, Mahapatra says : "Punctuated with fairs and festivals, feasts and fasting, life, for most of the inhabitants of Orissa, insinuates itself into a deeper inner world of ancient mysterious symbols, visual and auditory." Mahapatra, a Professor of Physics, is not a mystic, I believe; yet the compulsion to invoke the element of mystery is inescapable, as in this invocation of the Savitri image :

> . . . Where a dark-eyed woman climbs the endless stairs
> of her abandoned house, the great earth
> cowering before her, turning back
> the triumph of death with the power
> of her faithful silence, outside the bonds of time . . .

(Here the tendency seems to be avoid the use of capital letters altogether.) That Indian poets in English too, like their counterparts in Indian languages, have to go on digging up their national myths in order to be true to their own poetic vision is borne out by the three examples given here. Whether it be a ballad or an epic or just an image, the Indian poet in English cannot let go the resources as well as the resourcefulness of Indian mythology. This basic factor of Indian sensibility links the Indo-English poet to the Indian aesthetic tradition. Retelling the myths is an inveterate Indian habit and is recognized as a

characteristic feature of Indian aesthetics too. (The same may be seen in the Krishna themes in Sarojini Naidu and Kamala Das.)

Principles of Traditional Aesthetics

In his Letters on **Savitri**, Aurobindo has specifically invoked concepts found in Sanskrit aesthetics :

> *Savitri* . . . is blank verse without enjambment except rarely— each line a thing by itself and arranged in paragraphs of one, two, three, four, five lines (rarely a longer series), in an attempt to catch something of the Upanishadic and Kalidasian movement, so far as that is a possibility in English. (Centenary Edition, Vol. 29, p. 727.)

Speaking in justification of occasional passages consisting of lines which are bare and direct statements, he quotes from Milton's "Lycidas" ("Were it not better done, as others use, To sport with Amaryllis in the shade/ Or with the tangles of Neaera's hair."). Aurobindo says: "It might be said that the first line has nothing to distinguish it and is merely passable or only saved by the charm of what follows; but there is a beauty of rhythm and *bhava* or feeling brought in by the rhythm which makes the line beautiful in itself and not merely passable. If there in not some saving grace like that then the danger of laxity may become possible" (p. 759). Again, while dicussing at length what he calls the Overmind aesthesis, he says :

> By aesthesis is meant a reaction of the consciousness, mental and vital and even bodily, which receives a certain element in things, something that can be called their taste, *Rasa*, which, passing through the mind or sense or both, awakes a vital enjoyment of the taste, *Bhoga*, and this can again awaken us, awaken even the soul in us to something yet deeper and more fundamental than mere pleasure and enjoyment, to some form of the spirit's delight of existence, *Ananda*. Poetry, like all art, serves the seeking for these things, this aesthesis, this *Rasa*, *Bhoga*, *Ananda*; it brings us a Rasa of word and sound but also of the idea and, through the idea, of the things expressed by the word and sound and thought, a mental or vital or sometimes the spiritual image of their form, quality, impact upon us or even, if the poet is strong enough, of their world-essence, their cosmic reality, the very soul of them, the spirit

> that resides in them as it resides in all things. Poetry may do more than this, but this at least it must do to however small an extent or it is not poetry. Aesthesis therefore is of the very essence of poetry, as it is of all art. (p. 809)

Developing his argument about the universality of aesthetic experience, Aurobindo adds :

> Wherever the Overmind spiritual man turns he sees a universal beauty touching and uplifting all things, expressing itself through them, moulding them into a field or objects of its divine aesthesis; a universal love goes out from him to all deings; he feels the Bliss which has created the worlds and upholds them and all that is expresses to him the universal delight, is made of it, is a manifestation of it and moulded into its image. This universal aesthesis of beauty and delight does not ignore or fail to understand the differences and oppositions, the gradations, the harmony and disharmony obvious to the ordinary consciousness; but, first of all, it draws a Rasa from them and with that comes the enjoyment, *Bhoga*, and the touch or the mass of the *Ananda*. It sees that all things have their meaning, their value, their deeper or total significance which the mind does not see, for the mind is only concerned with a surface vision, surface contacts and its own surface reactions. When something expresses perfectly what it was meant to express, the completenss brings with it a sense of harmony, a sense of artistic perfection; it gives even to what is discordant a place in a system of cosmic concordances and the discords become part of a vast harmony, and wherever there is harmony, there is a sense of beauty. (p. 811)

Sri Aurobindo's use of terms like *Rasa*, *Bhoga* and *Ananda* has obvious metaphysical overtones, but then traditional Sanskrit aesthetics is also very close to Upanishadic metaphysics. When Natya is described as the fifth Veda, when Bhartrihari discusses the theory of **sphota**, and when Anandavardhana speaks about *Rasadhvani*, there is a metaphysical undertone that is unmistakable. Hence aesthetic delight is often thought of as akin to *Brahmananda*.

The great importance Indian aestheticians have always attached to the work of a poet as a seer (as seen in statements like *Kavi Krantadarsi* and *Nanrishi Kavi)* is borne out by Sarojini Naidu's

Foreword to *The Broken Wing: Songs of Love, Death & Destiny 1915-1916* (London: Heinemann, 1917, p. ix),where she says:

> In the radiant and far-off yesterdays of our history it was the sacred duty of Indian womanhood to kindle and sustain the hearth-fires, the beacon-fires, and the aletar-fires of the nation.
>
> The Indian woman of today is once more awake and profoundly alive to her splendid destiny as the guardian and interpreter of the Triune Vision of national life—the Vision of Love, the Vision of faith, the Vision of Patriotism.

Sarojini Naidu's poem addressed to Gandhiji called "The Lotus" is a good example of this preoccupation with the metaphysical dimensions:

O Mystic Lotus, sacred and sublime,
In myriad-petalled grace inviolate,
Supreme o'er transient storms of tragic Fate,
Deep-rooted in the waters of all Time,
What legions loosed from many a far-off clime
Of wild-bee hordes with lips insatiate,
And hungry winds with wings of hope or hate,
Have thronged and pressed round thy miraculous prime
To devastate thy loveliness, to drain
The midmost rapture of thy glorious heart . . .
But who could win thy secret, who attain
Thine ageless beauty born of Brahma's breath,
Or pluck thine immortality, who art
Coeval with the Lords of Life and Death ?

Something of the hymnal tradition is present in these poems, as in the songs of Tagore's *Gitanjali*. The mystical and the metaphysical dominate the poetry of the time in the Indian languages too, along with the same kind of highflown rhetoric hyperbole. On the connection between aesthetic and mataphysics in Indian thought, R. Gnoli says ("The Aesthetic Experience according to Abhinavagupta," *An Introduction to Indian Poetics*. V. Raghavan and Nagendra, Bombay: Macmillan, 1970) :

> The examination of the relationship between aesthetic experience and religious and mystic experience, to which Indian thought always returns with special interest, is one of the aspects peculiar to the aesthetic thought of Bhatta Nayaka and, with a clearer understanding, to that of Abhinavagupta. In India thinkers have never dissociated abstract speculation from a concrete realization of its complicated metaphysical structure, which they felt themselves attracted by their nature to translate into living reality. This position, at once metaphysical and psychological, led them, with the passage of time, to conceive reality in an idealistic form. Indian thought, following different, if not opposed, lines to those of Western idealistic thinkers, perceived, at a certain moment, that reality is consciousness or thought and that everything which is around us rests in the last analysis, on the Self. Aesthetic speculation, which was born and grew up on the edge of metaphysical thought, did not omit, therefore, to enquire into the relations and differences existing between it and religious experience . . . . Any form of pleasure is an epiphany, even if distant and colourless, of the divine beatitude, which is the very essence of consciousness. Aesthetic experience, being characterised by disinterested and impersonal pleasure, is a modality *sui generis* of the unbounded beatitude that appears to the Yogin in his ecstasy and, in his eyes, transforms Samsara into Nirvana. (p. 77)

Aurobindo's short poem "A Tree" is a good example of this metaphysical dimension. Here is a Poundian "image", but endowed with a philosophical meaning:

> A tree beside the Sandy river-beach
> Holds up its topmost boughs
> Like fingers towards the skies they cannot reach,
> Earth-bound, heaven-amorous.
>
> This is the soul of man. Body and brain
> Hungry for earth our heavenly flight detain.

Pound, perhaps would have welcomed the first four lines, he wouldn't have added the couplet.

A. K. Ramanujan, who clearly belongs to the post-Independence generation, seems to differ significantly from writers

like Sarojini Naidu and Aurobindo. This difference may be partly due to personality factors, partly also due to the change in public taste, probably influenced by recent developments in western literature, but it could also be due to the fact that Ramanujan's poetry is shaped by a different aesthetics, namely that of the Dravidian (Tamil) tradition of *Tolkappiyam* and the Cankam poets, which is basically nonmetaphysical, secular and down-to-earth. There is even a touch of irony in the place of any mystical vision. Compare Ramanujan's poem "Poona Train Window" and the Cankam poem "What the Concubine Said" :

Poona Train Window

I look out the window.

See a man defecating
between two rocks, and a crow.

Drink my railway tea.
A milestone newly
painted orange, black
numbers on its sides.
The blinding noise
and the afterhush
of one train passing
another, rise and fall
of hills in two sets
of windows, faces, a rush
of whole children, white
hair in a red turban.
I drink my railway tea.
Three woman with baskets
on their heads, climbing
slowly against the slope
of a hill, one of them
lop-sided, balancing
between the slope and
the basket on the head
a late pregnancy.
Buffaloes swathing flies
with their tails.

Six gulls. The tea
darkens like a sick
traveller's urine.
Six gulls sitting still,
six eggs, laid new
on grass, in, on, near,
water. I see a man
between two rocks.
I think of the symmetry
of human buttocks. (*Selectcd Poems*, Delhi : OUP, 1976, pp. 29-3

What the Concubine Said

You know he comes from
where the fresh-water shark in the pools
catch with their mouths
the mangoes as they fall, ripe
from the trees on the edge of the field.

At our place,
he talked big,

Now, back in his own,
When others raise their hands
and feet,
he will raise his too :
like a doll
in the mirror
he will shadow
every last wish
of his son's dear mother.

(*The Interior Landscape*,
Bloomington : Indiana
University Press, 1975, p. 110)

Ramanujan comments on this poem, taking into account the poetics of *Tolkappiyam :*

> This is a *marutam* poem, a poem about infidelity; the shark, the pool at the edge of the meadow, and the mango are properties of the *marutam* landscape and define the *marutam* mood of ironic

and so comment on a lover's infidelity. The poem moves from the openness of the fields to the closed indoors of the boudoir. The lover, by *ullurai*, is the shark in the pool he owns; the fish gets all it wants without any effort. By comparing herself with the mango, the concubine is reproaching herself for being easily accessible. The last line also contrasts his carefree cavalier treatment of her with the tight-knit family in which he is now hemmed. (p. 110)

These principles of poetics could be applied to Ramanujan's own poem. For all its bareness of style, it is not without a certain richness of suggestion. The landscape as well as the language, with its inscape or *ullurai*, helps to establish the totality of the poem and its significance. The irony comes from this *ullurai*. This may be compared to the concepts of *dhvani*, *pasyanti* and *sphota* in Sanskrit aesthetics.

Most of the poems of Nissim Ezekiel too seem to belong to the the non-metaphysical tradition, although not specifically Dravidian. The concreteness of the images as well as objects, the undertone of irony. the deliberate flatness of style : these provide a contrast to the highflown raptures of Shri Aurobindo and Sarojini Naidu. A good example is the poem "Entertainment".

> The monkey-show is on :
> patient girl on haunches
> holds the strings,
> a baby in her arms.
> Two tiny monkeys
> in red and purple pantaloons
> prepare to dance.
>
> Crowd collects,
> forms a circle.
> Naked to the waist,
> the Master of Ceremonies
> drums frenzy. cracks whip,
> calls the tricks
> to earn applause and copper coins.
> The circle thickens as the plot thickens,
> childern laugh, the untouchable women
> smooth their hair. A coolie
> grins at me, his white teeth

gleam in the sunlight
Only the monkeys are sad,
and suddenly
the baby begins to cry.
Anticipating time for payment,
the crowd dissolves.
Some, in shame, part
with the smallest coin they have.
The show moves on.

Indian Poetry in English and Poetry in Indian Languages

A. K. Ramaaujan is a bilingual, if not a trilingual, poet. Already in his poetry we find a certain closeness to regional Indian poetry, especially poetry in Tamil. Kamala Das writes short stories in Malayalam and poetry in English. Jayanta Mahapatra writes poetry in English, but also translates Oriya poems into English. Arun Kolatkar is a poet both in English and in Marathi. R. Parthasarathy is actually conscious not only of his Tamil tradition but also of contemporary writing in Tamil. Political independence has brought in its wake not only a break in cultural links (except where colonial inferiority still operates), but also a certain introspectiveness and increasing interest in what happens in the writer's mother tongue. The exile, as Parthasarathy says, learns that 'roots are deep' and that "language is a tree, loses colour/under another sky. Whoring after English Gods" *(Rough Passage,* Delhi : OUP, 1977, p. 17) must now stop. But if the poet is terrified of the last refinement of speech, he cannot go very far. One can be an exile at home also—unless one gets reconciled, not just to any classical language, but to the living dialect of the locality one breathes the air of. English language must develop the capacity to register the pulse of the illiterate Indian. The task before the Indian poet in English is not easy. New myths have to be created out of the living legends of the fellowmen. In *Jejuri* (Bombay : Clearing House, 1976, P. 49) there is the poem "Chaitanya":

a herd of legends
on a hill slope
looked up from its grazing
When chaitanya came in sight

the hills remained still
When chaitanya
was passing by
a cowbell tinkled
When he disappeared from view
and the herd of legends
returned to its grazing.

Contrary to the earlier tendency among poets of capitalizing even ordinary words and abstractions, here even a proper noun loses its Capital: legends are not just inherited, they are rather created. The reaction of the herd to the arrival of Chaitanya is not recorded in minimal and memorable language, but is made to imply slyly what the saint singer seemed to have done to them. This poem has apparently little to do with what is now being written in England or USA or Australia : it's almost a Marathi poem in English; its Indianness needs no special pleading or over emphasis. It's as naturally Indian as any good Marathi poem is Indian.

This last point—namely the connection between contemporary Indian poetry in English and poetry being written in the different Indian languages, requires elucidation and illustration. The Oriya base of Jayanta Mahapatra or the Tamil bias of A. K. Ramanujan is not to be despised or dismissed with a grin. There should be no contradiction between being an Indian and being a Bengali or a Malayali or a Telugu. There are, I believe, three kinds of features which may underlie the poetics of contemporary Indian poetry in English :

1. Being written in an international language, it will manifest certain universal features found in poetry in any language whatsoever. English has been influenced by many other languages, literatures, cultures: these features cannot be traced wholly to Sanskrit or Dravidian theories of poetry.

2. Being Indian in authorship or in sensibility or in subject matter, it is likely to give priority to certain national features of culture. This will distinguish Indian poetry in English from Australian or American or Sri Lankan poetry in English. Hence the relevances of traditional Indian aesthetics here.

3. Being contemporary, it has a tendency to dwell on specific particulars, rather than on general distractions, and these particulars, one may venture to say, are likely to be regional in character. Hence Kamala Das's poetry contains regional features which are totally absent from that of Daruwala or Gauri Deshpande. These regional features are to a limited extent relevant to our discussion of aesthetics. There is a regional tradition too, that poetry in English can draw upon—as Welsh poetry or Irish poetry has clearly demonstrated—proper, but not too much, emphasis should be given to this.

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Towards the Centre

It was a night to forget;
but early morning found him
briskly stride past
the pavement sleepers,
past the clatter of milk bottles
to the railway bridge,
deserted still and dark
beneath a handful of stars.

He paused. It would be quiet here
till a train arrived.
The slums crouched around,
packed, in his imagination
with his own troubles,
in the form of citizens.
There was no way of avoiding them;
soon they would wake
and walk around, ghosts
he cannot lay with books.

A cyclist with a bundle of newspapers
balanced on the handle-bar,
stops and leaves a packet
near a heaving bedsheet.
A skeleton emerges from its depths
and yawns into my face.

Hardly, you would say,
a place for meditation.
I am not here to observe
the scene, nor to think
of what can be done . . .
I am here to free myself
from heaviness of soul
by walking when the city is asleep.

But there is nowhere to walk
out of the city's squalor
and my own. There is only
a path towards the centre.

That is why I pause, and face
the city or at least
this small part of it as it comes alive.
I know it will not leave me alone.

—Nissim Ezekiel

Some American Poets

I'm sitting quietly in my room
to please Pascal and all the saints
when suddenly there came a tapping
as, of course, of someone rapping
gently at my chamber door.
Ah, I said, it is the Raven,
that rare and gentle maiden
whom the angels name Lenore.
It turns out to be Walt Whitman
shouting, I celebrate myself and sing myself,
though his voice is rather hoarse.
I open a bottle of beer for him,
and after a barbaric yawn or two
he falls asleep upon my meagre rug.

Another knock upon the door:
Mr John Crowe Ransome, I presume,
the famous equilibrist ?
You've got it wrong, he said
My name is Robinson.
Yes, of course, Edwin Arlington,
and how was Richard Cory
the last time you met him ?
That clean favoured and imperially
slim gentleman who glittered when he walked,
how was he ?
A sad story, didn't you know, said Edwin;
While I went without the meat
and cursed the bread, what
should Richard Cory do
but put a bullet through his head.
I sympathised and let him go,
Edwin Arlington Robinson.

Come in, I said, before she knocked,
(I just knew it had to be her !)
and how are we today,
Edna St. Vincent Millay ?
What lips my lips have kissed, she sighed
I've quite forgot.
So have I, I empathised.
To what purpose, April, do you return again ?
she said, addressing the upper air.

To what purpose, April ? I echoed.
April did not reply. This was in October.

A heavy shadow fell upon the floor.
Please, let it not be another woman,
was my prayer.
Good Lord, Elizabeth Bishop herself.
How's the Archbishop ? I asked her,
rather facetiously, but she didn't laugh.
She was still brooding on
that tremendous fish
which once she held beside her boat
and then let go.
I admired his sullen face, she said,

the sheer mechanism of his jaw, she said,
and then she went with a brooding air.

I didn't admit Auden when he called
You're English, I told him, and he blushed.

Robert Frost spoke wisely and well, as usual.
Two roads, he told me, diverged
in a yellow wood
and one led to you.
True, I replied, and that
has mede all the difference.
Accepting ice in his gin
he pronounced the view
that if the world had to perish twice,
ice was also great and would suffice.
I remembered that Frost
was acquainted with the night.

Next, Ginsberg looked me in the eye :
HOWL, he said.
I tried to
but it sounded rather tame.

Eberhart, smelling of the groundhog,
made me think of China and of Greece,
Alexander, Montaigne
and St. Theresa in her wild lament

MacLeish, too, was brief :
"A poem must not mean but be"
I know what you mean, I said.

And the last word was a woman's again—
Emily Dickinson :
The soul selects her own society, she said,
then shuts the door.
I shut my door on her
and the whole lot of them
for the night.

—Nissim Ezekiel

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BOOK REVIEWS

Indian Poetics and Its Relevance Today

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Coleridge and Abhinavagupta : A Comparative Study of the Philosophy of Poetry **By Shrikrishna Mishra.** Mirzapur, Darbhanga : Amara Bharati, 1979. pp. 576. xxxviii. Price : Rs. 200.

Old Lamp for New : A Study of William Faulkner's Novels in the Light of Rasadhvani Siddhant **By J. B. Paranjape.** New Delhi : S. Chand and Company Ltd., 1982. pp. 299; xxxiii. Price : Rs. 64.00.

Indian poetics has developed through centuries of profound thinking by the ancients around certain fundamental concepts concerning literature and is characterized by a continuity of Concerns and ideas' which have ever been subjected to critical scrutiny. This process of continuous critical examination has yielded a clarity of concepts which may well make them claim for universal applicability and their relevance to our own times. The four books listed above naturally lead to this impression. Ramaranjan Mukherji and S.N.Ghoshal Sastri are scholars of Sanskrit who competently expound ideas and concepts in Indian poetics. Mukherji suggests the possibility of integrating "Sanskrit poetics with modern currents" of thought, and Ghoshol Sastri considers the truths of Indian poetics to be "eternal aud universal." The works of Shrikrishna Mishra and J. B, Paranjape,

both of whom are scholars in English studies, lend support to such claims for Sanskrit poetics. Mishra compares Coleridge's philosophy of poetry with that of Abhinavagupta, and Paranjape applies the rasadhvani theory to a study of William Faulkner's novels.

Ramaranjan Mukherji expounds with ease the diverse conceptions of the nature of poetry, sound and sense, types of poetry, and the theories of rasa, dhvani, and anuman[2]. The philosophical bases of fundamental concepts are clarified with reference to Patanjali, Bhartrhari, Nagesa, and others. The author's competent handling of philosophical ideas at the very deepest level can be seen at its best in his discussion of sound and sense and the controversy between the dhvanivadins and the anumanvadins. Mukherji presents the views of different schools impartially; nevertheless, his own preferences become amply clear in his sympathetic handling of the important ideas of Anandavardhana, Abhinavagupta, Mammata, and Jagannatha. His sympathies fall in line with the dhvanivadins. In the controversy between the dhvanivadins and the anumanvadins, examined at great length by Mukherji, the last word is convincingly allowed to rest with the dhvanivadins. Elucidation of the relation between dhvani, aucitya and vakrata is yet another important contribution of the author. Mukherji's book, written in a lucid style, highly recommends itself to all those in search of a sound critical centrality and tradition in modern times.

S . N . Ghoshal Sastri's book provides cultural, historical and philosophical contexts of Indian poetics, tracing the mystical and religious strains in it, and then proceeds to discuss poetics proper under certain important heads. He discusses the nature and scope of poetics and poetry, process of suggestion, nature of rasa and aesthetic experience, and, finally, diction and style from the point of view of the poet. Although Ghoshal Sastri objectively examines all the important aspects and schools of Indian poetics, he too evinces preferences for the rasadhvanivadins. This is evident in the tribute he pays to the work of Mammata : " . . . almost all the ways and views of Indian poetics, streaming in the Kavya—Prakasa, . . . raise it to the status of a central work on Indian aesthetics and litdrary criticism . . . an impartial and balanced judgment of thoughts, assimilating the ancient and modern concepts of Indian poetics. The Kavya-Prakaha stands as a bridge in betweea the two parallel schools, the alankara school and the rasa school,in which not only the dignity of his worthy

predecessors belonging to the dhvani school and antl-dvani school has been honourably bracketed but a cautious attempt to reveal the universally accepted truth, out of the conflicting concepts, has all along been maintained. "

Shrikrishna Mishra's work is divided into four books. The introductory pages set up the hypothesis that Coleridge and Abhinavagupta are comparable in their philosophy of poetry; Book I expounds Coleridge' s view of imagination and allied concepts ; Book I I outlines the philosophical background of Indian poetics in general, and of Abhinavagupta's theories in particular, with reference to Kashmiri saivism; and book I I I expounds Abhinavagupta's conception of rasa and dhvani ; and Book IV makes a comparison between Coleridge and Abhinavagupta with a critical appraisal of the two.

Mishra underlines the points of fundamental agreement between the two critics in their philosophical outlook concerning "self-consciousness" as "the ground of all existence and knowledge as the unty of subject and object, where being is knowing and knowing is being" ; concerning the defference between reason and understanding ; the status of poetic experience as intermediate "between the conceptual worldly and the intuitive divine. "Both believe the noumenal world to be a key to the phenomenal world. This comparison has been conducted in a systematic and scholarly manner, using seven books by Abhinavagupta and eighteen by Coleridge as the primary material of investigation, besides frequently drawing upon about fifty Indian and forty western critics. The comparison is illuminating and helps one to see Coleridge in terms of Abhinavagupta, and Abhinavagupta in terms of Coleridge. The scholarly investigation also unravels several faults in Coleridge 's arguments and establishes the superiority of Abhinavagupta over Coleridge and other western scholars and critics. For example, Coleridge's concept of imagination as intermediate between reason and understanding is faulty and untenable ; likewise, his conception of mind is clumsy ; his conception of word is undeveloped ; and so on.

Another serious flaw in Coleridge's theory of poetry, laid bare by Mishra's scrutiny, is that he "made imagination and passion the soul of poetry by turns." Although Coleridge has many sensible

things to say about the poetic passion, such as "feeling impregnated with reason," he not only leaves them undeveloped but often contradicts them. Abhinavagupta's rasa theory, on the other hand, is consistent and convincingly accounts for the soul of poetry : "Rasa is the soul of a poem, the source of its birth and organic growth. It is an intuitive perception and should not be confused with any type of worldly knowledge. It is an esemplastic experience of the unity in multeity and can only be imaginatively created with the help of its objective correlatives" Mishra's argument establishing the superiority of Indian aesthetics over its western counterpart is sound and convincing. The very best of the western authorities have themselves admitted the superiority of Indian aesthetics, Consider, for example, the opinion of Susanne Langer : "Some of the Hindu critics .... understand much better than their Western colleagues the various aspects of emotion in the theatre, which our writers so freely banefully confuse : the feelings experienced by the actor, those experienced by the spectators, those presented as undergone by characters in the play, and finally the feeling that shines in the play itself—the vital feelings of the piece. This last they call rasa; it is a state of emotional knowledge. which comes only to those who have long studied and contemplated poetry".

J. B. Paranjape's book, aftar laying its theoretical foundation by presenting the rasadhvani approach to meaning in the first part, proceeds to apply the rasadhvani theory to an analysis of seven of William Faulkner's noveis in the second part. In the third part of the book Paranjape discusses the problem of validity and reliability of the rasadhvani approach he has adopted for his study of Faulkner's novels. In conclusion, the author emphasizes the need for relating the critical apparatus of the rasadhvani theory to larger units of narrative works such as plot, characterization, form, technique, etc." His own procedure, however, has been, first, to discuss the larger units of the novels and, then, to apply the rasadhvani theory to certain important passages. He combines, and does not relate, the two. A slightly different procedure would have examined the larger units as well from the centre of the rasadhvani theory. Although Paranjape is fully aware of the fact that the ancients have analyzed the massive narrative works such as the Mahabharate and the Ramayana, and their larger units too, by applying the rasadhvani theory, it seems that Paranjape felt deterred by the opinions of Faulkner critics about the form and technique of his novels, manipulation of time and the

interior monologue. Paranjape has refrained from decreating Faulkner's novels.

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But the fact is that all criticism involves a process of decreation, even an application of the rasadhvani theory to isolated passages, even understanding of a novel "as it is". Decreation is inherent in the very process of knowing on which the rasadhvani theory is based; in the pratyabhijna, i, e. retrospective introspection, propounded by Somananda Utpalaraja, Pratiharenduraja, and others down to Abhinavagupta; in the Vedic "dasamastvamasi" from which both saivism and vaisnavism derive their theories of perception, knowledge and experience. We only perceive what we have recreated after a decreation of the reality, the phenomenal world presonted to us. Literary works are no exception to the rule.

This is not to detract from the merit of �california work that Paranjape has accomplished. For example, after discussing the larger units of *The Sound and the Fury*, he quotes a passape and remarks : "The intense pain or sorrow is the sthayin, the separation of the dearest is the excitant, the feelings of distress and dejection are the vyabhicarins, bellowiug is the anubhava. This rasa—apparatus evokes karuna", And so on. What he has done is both valid and reliable. He has vindicated the universality of the rasadhvani theory by applying it to the study of a sophisticated modern novelist of western culture.

—Shiva M. Pandeva

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A History of Indian Literature
M. K. Naik. Sahitya Akademy, New Delhi, Rs. 40/-

Dr Naik has begun the "argument" of his book with a quotation from the Elizabethan author Samuel Daniel's prophecy concerning the English language, a prophecy, which centuries later, in the middle of the nineteenth century, repeated itself in Walt Whitman's vision of "the oceans to be crossd, the distant brought near, The lands to be welded together" (*A Passage to India*). As the relations between the Orient and the Occident grow closer, literary contacts between the East and the West, apart from other varieties of contact, began to impress admirers of literature in both the East and the West. It became possible for Dr Nagendra, author of *Literary Criticism in India* (1976) to state that "Modern Criticism in Indian languages began in the middle of the nineteenth century with the emergence of modern Indian culture."

The impact of the English language and an Indian language (Bengali, in this context) commenced in 1734 when, as Dr Sukumar Sen states in his Sahitya Akademy work (p. 161), *History of Bengali Literature*, a Christian doctrinal treatise, *Xrepar Xaxtner Orth Bhed* (i.e., a Bengali language phrase, defectively spelt, which means in English. Explication of the Doctrine of Grace), was printed in Lisbon The English language, however, began to establish itself in India widely and deeply in the eighteenth century when, in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras fast-growing commercial centres, where the East India Company's British employees concentrated, and where the local Indians, ambitious of rising high in trade and commerce, began ro learn some English, spoken English largely Indianised. This "Indian English", used initiallly for utilitarian purposes, gradually came to be used also for literary ambitions, and in course of time there grew up in the country a variety of literature which has been called, and is still called, in some quarters by such names as Indo-Anglian Literature, Indo-British Literature (for example, by R. C. Churchill in his up-to-dated edition of George Sampson's *Concise Cambridge History of English Literature*). Dr Naik writes :

> Strictly speaking, Indian English Literature may be defined as literature written *originally* in English by authors Indian by birth, ancestry or nationality. It is clear that neither 'Anglo-Indian Literature, nor literal translations by others (as distinguished from creative translations by thc authors themselves) can legitimately form part of this literature. The

former comprises the writings of British or Western authors concerning India. Kipling, Forster, F. W. Bain, Sir Edwin Arnold, F. A. Steel, John Masters, Paul Scott, M. M. Kaye and many others have all written about India, but their work obviously belongs to British Literature. Similarly, translations from the Indian languages into English cannot also form part of Indian English Literature, except when they are creative translations by the authors themselves . . . there is little reason why Tagore's novels, most of his short stories, and some of his plays translated into English by others should form part of Indian English Literature. On the other hand, a work like *Gitanjali*, which is a creative translation by the author himself, should qualify for inclusion. The crux of the matter is the distinctive literary phenomenon that emerges when an Indian sensibility tries to express itself originally in a medium of expression which is not primarily Indian. . . . Since literature is not a science, there will always be a no man's land in which all attempts at strict definition are in danger of getting lost in a haze. Thus, there are exceptional cases like Anand K. Coomaraswamy and Ruth Pravar Jhabvala. (pp. 2–5)

Dr Naik divides the contents of the book into six sections. The opening section surveys the literary landscape, the final section presents a Retrospect and Prospect. In between these two sections, there are four sections which progress chronologically and *genre* wise, for example, "Prose, Drama, Fiction, the Short Story, Poetry". The materials that Dr Naik has dealt with constitute a numerical plenitude and, in the estimate of the present review, that plenitude is qualitatively of a high status too, very competently organised into a sensitive web. For the organisation of this 300-page volume, Dr. Naik has dwelt not only upon such individual writers as Swami Vivekanda, A. K. Coomarswami, Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru (I wish he had also included Surendranath Banerjee's *A Nation in Making*), but has also consulted a number of periodicals published in India and abroad, and has made full use of the works of his predecessors such as Dr Srinivasa Ayengar, Professor Narsimhaiah, Professor Alphonso-Karkala, Dr H. M. Williams, and other critics.

This will be an important addition to the Sahitya Akademy's publications.

—Amalendu Bose

The International Fiction of Henry James, By J. N. Sharma, Macmillan, 1979.

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It is a pity that this book should have had to wait for 4 years to be noticed by our journal. By now the James specialists (or "Jacobeans" for short) must have acknowledged the contribution mahe by J. N. Sharma to Jamesian studies. Unfortunately the present reviewer has no access to journals like *The Henry James Review*.

The author has traced the international theme through five of the major novels of Henry James, This procedure enables us to see the international theme against a wider background viz., the development of Jame's outlook over a period of 23 years.

Broadly speaking, the author's thesis is that as James's vision expands, "Manners yield to morals : the morals of a whole civilization, not simply those of one nationality or culture" (p. 34). In the later novels what James presents is not a typical American contrasted with a typical Italian. Instead "the norms embodied by the characters reach beyond their national context to embrace fundamental values" (p. 70). While "*The American* is essentially a novel of manners, "*The portrait of a Lady* and the three major novels of the final phase are essentially "dramas of consciousness."

The first three chapters of the book convincingly demonstrate the soundness of Dr Sharma' thesis. The fourth chapter, "The Imperial Milieu," offers us something more than what is expected of a sound thesis : a freshness of perception. The five novels chosen for detailed examination are about expatriate Americans in Europe. The situation lends itself to a dramatized contrast between cultures, especially the failure or success of an American such as Newman or Strether to adapt himself to a European setting. Mr Sharma, however, is able to show that in the maturer works of James the setting becomes more and more vague. Perhaps he overstates the case when he claims that no significance should be attached to Venice as the setting of *The Wings of the Dove*. He is undoubtedly justified in claiming that in *The Golden Bowl* consciousness "replaces the external world as setting" (p. 115).

The author notes that while Henry James insisted on "visibility" in fiction, indeed he demanded it in the novels of others (p 112), in his own later works London, Brighton and Paris are "marvels of haziness". As a pure scholar he does not venture to criticize the absence of solidity and vividness in the later novels. On the contrary there is an implied assumption throughout the book that the later novels, as they move away from specificities, are products of a profounder vision. In the final chapter, which traces the development of the international theme in the post-James period, Mr Sharma praises Hemingway for his "transcendence or the particular and the local." (p. 126).

In the opinion of the reviewer the writer owed it to us to show how the bareness of *The Golden Bowl* compensates the reader for the absence of particularity. It is partly the Balzacian minuteness of description which makes *The Portrait of a Lady* so memorable This point can be made more effectively by referring to a novel like *The Spoils of Poynton* which falls outside the scope of the international theme. The drama of consciousness is inseparable in this case from the petty household objects whose possession is in dispute.

No reviewer of this book can fail to notice the author's style. Anyone who sets out to examine a novel like *The Ambassadors* must be sensitive to the nuances of language. Mr, Sharma demonstrates that sensitiveness in his own use of English. About Mrs. Newsome, for instance he says, "In the bleakness of her moral outlook, her stubborn suspicion of pleasure, and her provinciality, she is the very antithesis of Strether" (p. 51).

We welcome Mr. Sharma to the exclusive company of Indian Jacobeans presided over by Professor, D. S. Maini.

R. K. Kaul

University of Rajasthan.
Jaipur.

Towards A New Image of Man and Society

LOST DIMENSIONS, Sisirkumar Ghose, New Delhi, Biblia Impex Private Limited, January 1982, pp. 247, Rs. 80/-

In the wake of the triumph of technology without transcendence and the eclipse of human values, the appearance of Professor Sisirkumar Ghose's *Lost Dimensions* is a welcome event, compelling us to look within, to escape what he calls the 'slaughter of subjectivity'. Since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution there has been an alarming pace of mechanisation of man and society so that he could still say with Carlyle that "Man has become mechanical, in head and hand and heart". Unless he develops, as Ghose rightly warns, 'the sense of the holy' 'of belonging and beyonding,' his cleverness shall spell his doom.

Lost Dimensions, comprising a bunch of twenty-one incisive and thought-provoking essays, is a worthy sequel to the author's earlier distinguished work, *Modern and Otherwise.* Marked by a massive erudition and a disarming humility of spirit, it projects the nagging problem of our time of troubles, voicing the writer's nostalgic yearning for the days that are no more. Ghose is distressed at the spectacle of the fast fading ideals that were venerated in the past, but have been bartered away for a sordid boon. In his enthusiasm to be modern, man has lost his ancient moorings, the lofty dimensions which lend beauty and validity to human life. As Ghose has it : "An exclusive concentration on the transient rather than the terminal, on the contingent rather than the original unconditioned has meant the loss of a necessary dimension, call it soul, spirit, holism, evolution what you will" (Preface).

The book covers a wide spectrum of subjects, ranging from the landscape of "Myths : Old and New", "The Eclipse of Symbols," "Mysticism", "Sacred and Profane", "Medieval Aesthetics" through "Forgotten Ecstasy", "Existentialism and Art", "Poetry and Liberation" to "The Human Destiny", "Voyage Within", "The Proper Sphere", "Culture and Consciousness", "Alienation and After", "Towards a New Image of Man", "The Psychology of Social Development", "Towards Tomorrow : Community of Communities", "Celebration of Consciousness", "Kundalini" and "The Return of the Gods". Through the rich and complex corpus of his work, Ghose forages through a vast and intractable territory in quest of the lost dimensions, the imperishable values, to nourish an anaemic age.

In the first essay, "Lost Wisdom" which strikes the keynote, Ghose sounds a warning that 'Modern man is too clever to survive without wisdom'. He diagnoses the malady of the modern man by dwelling on the basic deficiencies of our age and by redirecting man's attention to ethical harmonies. He highlights the need for resolving the quarrel between reason and faith, between modern and ancient, by making man realise his theophanic nature and preparing the ground for the emergence of a 'society fit for souls'. In the essay on "Myths : Old and New" the author examines the meaning and progress of myths. In his stout advocacy of the old myths he agrees with Toynbee that they cannot be discarded 'without taking the thear out of the faith whose essence the myths convey', For, myths are 'an indispensable means for expressing as much as you can express of the ineffable . . . . the instruments through which these further flights of the human spirit are achieved' (p. 26). Ghose's comparison of the old myths with the modern myths for materialist 'manufacturers in America's Madison Square' is highly engaging. His essay on "Mysticism" is a lucid exposition of a difficult subject. He advocates a meaningful relationship between the mystics and society. Ghose feels that it would be an act of spiritual myopia if man were to continue looking upon the mystics as 'outsiders and marginal men.' For, in the alchemy of awareness the 'Mystics have been the true scientists of catharsis and conversion, the piercing of the planes, which is another name for the ascent of man' (p. 51) and that 'Mysticism is perhaps the only authentic life based on knowledge of the more adequate kind and bearing on the human situation, specially the crisis today' (p. 62). If a revolution from above and consciousness is ever to come it must come through mysticism without which 'futurology can only be a fantasy or an exercise in unqualified mnipulation'. For the erection of the just society with 'the kingdom of heaven within' and 'the city of God without', the role of mystics would be of immeasurable value, as he puts it : "In darkness's core, the mystics have dug wells of light; let us drink of it and be whole'. In his essay on "The Sacred and the Profane", Ghose laments 'the loss of the sense of the holy' with which has disappeared 'a whole world, of figure and speech and figure of thought together with man's structure of meaning and attitude. The essays on 'Poetry and Liberation", "Existentialism and Art", "Psychology and Social Development" once again reiterate the writer's cherished values, but what he seeks most is a proper understanding of relationships and dimensions (p. 58). He pleads for man's commitment to a new life

of questing for 'the noons of the future', 'the beyonding of man and civilisation' (p. 162), creating in man the realisation that 'life is a seeking for God and the highest self'.

Evidently, *Lost Dimensions*, with its pronounced moral bias, is weighted in favour of the old traditions and values with which the author seeks to restructure the modern man and his world. A highly focused work, with its convergence of deep insights on issues that concern us most, *Lost Dimensions* is an illuminating book, giving an impulse to our quest for a better tomorrow.

—**Gurgit Singh**

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Poetry as Metaconsciousness :Readings in Willian Blake.
Gurbhagat Singh. Ajanta Publications. Rs. 80/-

Among the 'visionary company' Blake stands out and has provoked Indian students in the past, Most of them had been content to draw parallels between the old Indian wisdom of which Blake was not innocent, His single statement that "the philosophy of the East taught the first principles of human perception" had enough powder to blow up the conflict of cultures. Now comes an extra-ordinary young exegete (also a poet), armed with the latest in theorics of life, literature and language. Dr. Singh's approach is at once archaic and modern, a stance not easy to maintain, In spite of, or because of, an offbeat semantic—'syntagmatics', 'indefinity', 'poetic ecology', 'conscions', 'inlogue'—this is an unusual work. As he puts it, literary criticism becomes (almost) a yogic venture. Yoga recognises the turning of consciousness upon itself and things as the continuing crisis of the human situation. Poetry has links—maybe missing—with ontology. This primary fact he does not allow us to forget.

The preface opens with a statement of his aims : "This interdisciplinary and experimental work is both on Blake and literary aesthetics . . , in the area that the Germans call 'Rezeptionaesthetik'.

The potential meaning is not embodied in the text alone. The text flashes signals to the reader's mind while he experiences its structuration. His agreeable mind feigns to disappear but only to reorganize under the new influence. The new organisation of the world to which he is led to the extent of giving birth to another form, become part of the semiotic circle that brings out what the text is like." The interdisciplinary approach has several assumptions and a vocabulary of its own,

Blake's poem of the mind, binaric, *originaire*, "the special poem Blake is always trying to write", demands "to be read bodily". Why ? Because its pranic structure sends out messages both horizontally and vertically, which only 'inlogue' can decode. By its 'being' and 'language setting', the Blakean poem compels the reader, certainly a reader like Dr Singh, to an indepth seeing of himself : "His getting inwards is a must." Maybe here Blake becomes less important than the looking at him.

A characteristic but not wholly convincing interpretation of the opening poem ('Introduction') of *Songs of Innocence* is offered as evidence. We are asked to enter, 'ontogenetically', into the poem's 'energy–situation' This involves some attention to its language. Blake's use of active verbs, we are told, has a 'Hebrew quality'. (Were not the Ten Commandments a mark of the Semitic genius ?) Innocence in the poem, the paradox does not escape Dr. Singh, is another name for experience. Further, since the poem is also an act, it "reverberates the racial history or image of the historical consciousness and poetry". However, he warns us, we must not impose a system on a poet like Blake. Unfortunately, Blake himself was quite fond of personalised puranas, cosmologies of his own : "I must create a System or be enslaved by another Man's." Dr. Singh too has a passion to fit intellectual systems to visionary poetry. The long next chapter, "Blake and Systems" is a proof.

Though he has an occasional doubt how far a poem needs such heavy artillery—"systems are taxing and partly dehumanizing"—he uses them no less. Six 'encounters' are recorded, separate and by no means complementary perspectives, for all the six, rather five, poems. These are : "Mad Song", "The Tyger" "Crystal Cabinet", "The Smile", "Milton" and "The Four Zoas", The perspectives are based on "certain notions" of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty (for poems 1 and 2); the others are based on Saussare end Barthes; on Roman Jakobson and Noam Chomsky; on Eastern thought and aesthetics; and on

Jacques Lacan and Levi-Strauss. That the end product of such a pot-pourri approach will be confusing goes without saying.

The next chapter gives a sprawling, if oblique, survey of "The Four Zoas". "Its limitation, if any, is its greatness", we are greeted with that curious praise or phrase. The greatness, he explains, owes to Blake's concern with consciousness, pure and impure. The concern is revealed through a disturbance in the mind—*felix culpa* is but a retrospective rationalisation—a destructuring into the one-dimensional awareness, leading back to total consciousness-as-such. The mytho-drama has several themes or implications, but one above all : the integration of personality or the myth of Fall and Redemption, a final harmony of the four Zoas or human elements : Urizen (reason), Luvah (passion), Tharamas (body or sense) and Urthona (spirit). The whole tbing is a celebration : "The Universal Man, To Whom be Glory Evermore." It's Blake's favourite theme, the return of Adam to Paradise. According to Dr. Singh, Blake has heard the internal or 'meta-sound', the 'causal stress' of ancient Indian *Vak*. As before, he looks into the language. The 'sound tensions' in words like "The howlings gnashings groaninngs shriekings/Shudderings sobbings burstings" illustrate how the reader too (at least Dr. Singh) becomes a Chariot of Fire in the Night. In the end, purged of broken consciousness, Albion or mankind is ready for a family reunion, [the 'Golden Feast' of universal Love and Brotherhood. To realise this the reader has to 'unveil' the poem and Dr. Singh refers to his cwn 'arousal' or 'explosions' in the form of short poems with which the book closes :

> I am a rose bush
> But how hard it is for me
> To say 'I am' . . .

Again :

> You glowed
> and burnt
> like incense
> in my room
> and I kneeled
> in tears
> feeling your
> presence
> in my veins.

I died . . .
You glowed
and burnt
like incense.

How far Blake can be held responsible for those pretty pieces is anybody's guess. Is Dr. Singh's criticism really or only a defence of his own poetry ? It is, one readily admits, lovely poetry of a kind.

The criticism is another matter. A somewhat strange dissertation (by Indian norms at any rate), the study expresses his commitment, enthusiasm and awareness not only of Blake but also, perhaps more strongly, how non-literary disciplines may contribute to understanding. The tension between western pupillage and Indian heritage may one day heal. Else the line between ersatz and the passion to be authetic may be blurred. A different Blake is not necessarily better or more real. More than rational can be less than rational, less than rational can he more than rational. Where in that subtle, shifting scale does Blake belong ? Is his metaconsciousness yogic or yogic *manque* ? Also how are the Songs and the Prophetic Books to be related ? Mantras, by the way, may be explicated in a straightforward style, as in Professor Taimni's excellent notes on the Shiva Stotras. But Professor Taimni, much more of a jnani, was free from newfangled notions. Running after strange gods, Dr. Singh betrays a certain uncertainty, a lack of true assurance. The mediator must be made of sterner stuff, able to walk on his own, unaided. Does he not also tend to forget that his is only an alternative reading that must not behave as if it replaces every other ?

The poems of Blake are at once simple and complex. Perhaps the simple are the most complex (not always in the manner in which Dr. Singh would like to present them). There certainly are other ways of looking at him. Supposing one wanted to prove, and it is a plausible reading, Blake's occult affiliations ? (Hello, Madame Blavatsky !) The myth of Blake may not explain Blake's myths.

In modern criticism the wheel seems to have come full circle : from scripture as literature to literature as scripture to literature *is* scripture. In a world bereft of meaning Blake has acquired nine lives. But, his eyes fixed on the 'bio-energy' of Blake's poems, Dr. Singh bypasses literature and the literary cnitics, only a few of whom are relegated to the limbo of his bibliography. Is he not also a little

unmindful of the poetic form ? Or should we say the poem-as-such ? Is this the way to unravel what "the text is like", or what he would like the text to be like ? It is revealing that Imagination, the staple food of the romantics, as of Blake, is but rarely mentioned. Is Wittgenstein the right or inevitable reference to explore Blake's use of the language ? One sometimes wishes for the simplicity of earlier, uncluttered responses rather than the refinements of German Rezeptionaesthetik.

Questions remain. Are the creative process and the created object the same ? What are the actual lines of the descent of consciousness and its aesthetic materialization ? Can this be known from the outside ? How does one reach back to the origin, the source, to metaconsciousness ? Is a history of consciousness possible ? How safe is subjectivity as truth ? Is its verdict unanimous ? If not, which shall we prefer, and on what grounds ? These are difficult questions, which literary folk don't even raise. Dr. Singh is not to be faulted if he does not provide answers to all of these. Enough that the central thesis has been established, of poetry as living icon of awareness, 'metaconsciousness incarnate'. What we do to the icon and the Muses will depend on our state of consciousness. Did Blake, by the way, climb the peaks of Advaita ? Did the writer of "The Tyger" know that the Energy that creates the world can be nothing else than a Will, and Will is only consciousness applying itself to a work and a result ?

All in all, Dr. Gurbhagat Singh has given us a Blake with a difference in the light of a crisis theology. Blake's mental fight on behalf of unified consciousness, which many think is unreal, because it is too real, is still relevant. When things settle down a bit, and the doctor is less dependent on Authorities Abroad, we may expect deeper probes into poetic creativity and on Blake who had foreseen, perhaps more than others the anly cure for the ills of today and for whom the crisis of consciousness was also a challenge. Even through heavy academic smoke he burns bright.

Vishva Bharati,
Santiniketan.

—Sisir Kumar Ghosh

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