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Eliot's Concept of Rhythm, Genre and Style ✓

Shiva M. Pandeya

Introduction

In T.S. Eliot's criticism, practical as it is in its nature and purpose, theoretical formulations lie scattered throughout, perhaps because critical practice cannot proceed without some kind of assumptions and principles, whether explicitly stated or left implicit. Rhythm, genre, and style are related concepts in Eliot, and he has returned to them again and again, looking for their bases definable on technical grounds. These concepts are important enough for criticism and understanding of literature to warrant an investigation into their nature and complex interrelationship in a great critic of Eliot's stature.

This paper, therefore, aims at elucidating the concepts as they emerge in Eliot's writings. His ideas will be placed, as a clarifying device, under the perspective of Northrop Frye's principles to suggest a continuity of these critical concerns in our time, and, towards the end, relevant ideas of Mammata will be presented to put the new ideas under old focus, hopefully, to illumine both.

Identifying a Third Rhythm in Language

One of Eliot's preoccupations, from the very beginning of his career as a critic, had been to identify, define, and distinguish the three rhythms of language as he found them in literature. Two of these rhythms had traditionally been given names, viz., prose and verse; but the third rhythm of language, whose presence Eliot recognized in literature, disguised sometimes as prose and sometimes as verse, had no separate name for it in criticism. When this third rhythm occurred in

the guise of verse, it was usually recognized as poetry, a term which was also used for verse even when this third rhythm was absent from it. On the side of verse, there were these two terms, verse and poetry; but on the side of prose, there was just one term, prose, even when the third rhythm had made incursion in it. And poetry, unlike verse and prose, was not distinguishable on technical ground: it could only be distinguished on the basis of its material content and purpose, emotion and delight.

In his early writings on prose and verse, Eliot expressed his dissatisfaction at the absence of a fourth term on the side of prose; and it was this discontentment that, later, led to his identifying and defining the third rhythm on technical ground. As early as 1917 he drew, while reacting against what he considered the mistaken notions of the imagists, a sharp distinction between prose and verse : "...after much reflection I conclude that the only absolute distinction to be drawn is that poetry is written in verse, and prose is written in prose; or, in other words, that there is prose rhythm and verse rhythm. And any essential difference is still to seek."[1] While prose and verse are recognized by Eliot as the distinct rhythms of language, poetry is not seen as verse: "I do not assume the identification of poetry with verse; good poetry is obviously something else besides good verse; and good verse may be very indifferent poetry."[2] And "any enjoyment that can be communicated by verse may be communicated by prose, with the exception of the pleasure of the metrical form." Eliot has in mind shorter passages of verbal expression that appear in the guise of prose but have the effect of poetry on the reader, excepting the pleasure of verse rhythm.

The problem Eliot grappled with in 1921 was the fourth term and poetry, which could not be identified wholly with verse rhythm: "Thus we might fairly say that we need a fourth term: we have the term 'verse' and the term 'poetry' and only the term 'prose' to express their opposites."[3] The problem of terminology centred around poetry, particularly the poetry that occurred in the guise of prose, or on the borderline of prose and yet not in verse rhythm. So he set out to define poetry according to its method: "The work of poetry is often said to be performed by the use of images; by a cumulative succession of images each fusing with the next; or by the rapid and unexpected combination of images apparently unrelated, which have their relationship enforced upon them by the mind of the author."[4] We may notice that this is essentially a lyrical conception of poetry, with its associative logic in "images apparently unrelated." Having defined poetry thus, he refuses

to accept that this is not equally true of certain kind of prose: "...it does not follow that there are two distinct faculties, one of imagination and one of reason, one of poetry and one of prose, or that 'feeling', in a work of art, is any less an intellectual product than is 'thought'."

In 1930 Eliot again returns to the poetic method which is distinct from both verse rhythm and prose rhythm and may be employed in either : "Poetry may occur, within a definite limit on one side, at any point along a line of which the formal limits are 'verse' and 'prose.' Without offering any generalized theory about 'poetry,' 'verse,' and 'prose,' I may suggest that a writer, by using... certain exclusively poetic methods, is sometimes able to write poetry in what is called prose. Another writer can, by reversing the process, write great prose in verse."[5] We have already seen that what Eliot calls here "certain exclusively poetic methods" is the associative method of apparently unrelated images in lyric poetry, which may occur in either verse or prose rhythm. But "great prose in verse" is actually an instance of the mixing of rhythms, not a reversal of the process. The fourth term he is looking for in the associative method has to do with the third rhythm of language, and its absence in criticism causes two difficulties : "There are two very simple but insuperable difficulties in any definition of 'prose' and 'poetry.' One is that we have three terms where we need four : we have 'verse' and 'poetry' on the one side, and only 'prose' on the other. The other difficulty follows from the first : that the words imply a valuation in one context which they do not in another. 'Poetry' introduces a distinction between good verse and bad verse : but we have no one word to separate bad prose from good prose. As a matter of fact, much bad prose is poetic prose; but only a very small part of bad verse is bad because it is prosaic."[6] Eliot's exploratory cogitations bring him to a recognition of the associative method of unrelated image as something distinct from either prose rhythm or verse rhythm.

The Three Rhythms Defined on Technical Grounds

It was in 1951 that, after years of deliberations, Eliot gave a name to the third rhythm of language, "ordinary speech" and distinguished it from both prose rhythm and verse rhythm. Prose, with its subject-predicate relations and logical links, and verse, whether "accented, alliterative, or quantitative," are alike artificial; and our ordinary speech, in its technical manifestations, is below the level of both prose and verse : ".. prose...is as remote, for the best part, from the vocabulary, syntax, and rhythm of our ordinary speech—with its fumbling for words, its constant recourse to approximation, its disorder, and its

unfinished sentences—as verse is."[7] The third thythm, which may occur in either verse or prose, is our ordinary speech "with its fumbling for words, its constant recourse tc approximation, its disorder, and its unfinished sentences."

Having identified and named the third rhythm as a manifestation of language, Eliot refers to M. Jourdain in Moliére and affirms his triple distinction of the rhythms of language : "We have all heard (too often !) of Moliére's character who expressed surprise when told that he spoke prose. But it was M. Jourdain who was right, and not his mentor or creator : he did not speak prose—he only talked. For I mean to draw a triple distinction : between prose, and verse, and our ordinary speech which is mostly below the level of either verse or prose."[8] We may notice that what Eliot had earlier been calling the exclusively poetic method, in the guise of either prose or verse, with its associative links in the apparently unrelated images, is associated, if not identical, with speech rhythm.

Technical Name for the Third Rhythm in Northrop Frye

It may be noticed that though Eliot gave a name to the third rhythm of language, our "ordinary speech," it is not a very appropriate technical name. For in spite of a very clear-cut distinction that Eliot has made between prose and ordinary speech, people in general continue, like Moliére, to identify ordinary speech with prose. It was needed that a less confusing nomenclature be made.

It was left to Frye to absorb Eliot's insights into his comprehensive theory and give the third rhythm an adequate technical name; he christened it as the "associative rhythm" of language. This critical term has the advantage of being suggestive of the qualities of the third rhythm, and it cannot be confused with prose. It may be remarked here that there is a difference between Eliot and Frye in their method of presentation of the three rhythms of language. Eliot is exploratory and tentative and inductive in his pioneering cogitations; Frye is deductive in his method of presentation. He was able to present the rhythms deductively because Eliot had already made inductive explorations in the fleld.

One finds in Frye the presence of Eliot's insights as a stimulation. While distinguishing associative rhythm, ordinary speech, from prose, Frye gives the same example in Moliére as Eliot had given: "...one of the most reliable jokes in literature concerns the delight of M. Jourdain, in Moliére's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, at discovering that he had been

speaking prose all his life. But M. Jourdain had not been speaking prose all his life, and prose is not the language of ordinary speech."[9] Frye gives his reasons for calling the rhythm of ordinary speech the associative rhythm: "Because of the prominence of private association in it, I shall call the rhythm of ordinary speech the associative rhythm."[10] Frye is deductive and very lucid in his theory of rhythms, to which we shall return later.

Verse Rhythm, Speech Rhythm, and Free Verse

Verse rhythm, as Eliot has pointed out, may be either accented, alliterative, or quantitative. It organizes the sounds of the language, as permitted by its system, into recognizable and predictable patterns. Any line can be scanned into feet and accents, but it is the recurrence of the elements in other lines that makes the metrical pattern recognizable. Speech rhythm, on the other hand, does not allow any predictable pattern of verse rhythm to emerge. The imagist movement, which was intended to bring the verse rhythm close to speech, often produced chaotic results in the practice of free verse, which lacked positive definition: "And I can define it only in negatives: (1) absence of pattern, (2) absence of rhyme, (3) absence of metre."[11] Eliot disposes of the third point by remarking that it is impossible to imagine a line that cannot be metrically scanned; what really matters is the pattern, repetition of effect.

Eliot disapproves of both the mechanical monotony of metrical patterns and the chaos of the ordinary speech, of free verse. According to Eliot, only a poet who is adept in the use of verse forms can employ free verse for specific purposes; he is not free if he wants to do a good job. What is desirable is a state of tension between the order of verse patterns and the fluidity of speech rhythms: "...the most interesting verse which has yet been written in our language has been done either by taking a very simple form, like the iambic pentameter, and constantly withdrawing from it, or taking no form at all, and constantly approximating to a very simple one. It is this contrast between fixity and flux, the unperceived evasion of monotony, which is the very life of verse."[12] Free verse, based on speech rhythm, can be employed inside a poem in verse rhythm to get over monotony; and "the ghost of some simple metre should lurk behind the arras in even the 'freest' verse; to advance menacingly as we doze, and withdraw as we rouse. Or, freedom is only truly freedom when it appears against the background of an artificial limitation."

Besides helping combat monotony, free verse and absence of rhyme can help express the greatest moments of intensity: "When the

comforting echo of rhyme is removed, success or failure in the choice of words, in the sentence structure, in the order, is at once more apparent. Rhyme removed, the poet is at once held up to the standards of prose. Rhyme removed, much ethereal music leaps up from the word, music which has hitherto chirped unnoticed in the expanse of prose. Any rhyme forbidden, many shagpats were unwigged."[13] Liberation from rhyme, according to Eliot, also means liberation of rhyme for important purposes, "for some special effect, for a sudden tightening-up, for a cumulative insistence, or for an abrupt change of mood." His conclusion is that a legitimate use of free verse cannot be defined by absence of pattern or rhyme; one has to choose between good verse, bad verse, and chaos.

The relation between free verse and verse patterns are illustratively discussed by Eliot in his examination of Ezra Pound's metric, which is remarkable for the adaptability of metre to mood. Pound's proficiency in handling free verse is possible only for a poet "who has worked tirelessly with rigid forms and different systems of metric," including quantitative measures. Pound considered a work of art to be a combination of freedom and order, hanging between chaos and order, a felicitous departure from a norm. Eliot has certainly been influenced by Pound's ideas when he formulates his desirable notion of verse as a "contrast between fixity and flux." "The freedom of Pound's verse," writes Eliot, "is rather a state of tension due to constant opposition between free and strict. There are not, as a matter of fact, two kinds of verse, the strict and the free; there is only a mastery which comes of being so well trained that form is an instinct and can be adapted to the particular purpose in hand."[14] It is the particular purpose in hand, in graduating the scale of intensity, that justifies the use of free verse based on speech rhythm or of strict metrical pattern.

Verse Rhythm and the Idiom of Common Speech

In Eliot's view the common speech and its idiom are of great importance for the poet. Language changes across time, and the idiom and diction suited for one age become inappropriate for another. This necessitates revolutions in poetic diction from time to time. The first revolution of this kind was effected by Waller, Denham, and Dryden to bring the language of poetry close to the common speech; the second was initiated by William Wordsworth; and, in our own time, Pound and Eliot are responsible for bringing the idiom and rhythm of poetry close to the common speech. A poet may assimilate influences from abroad or from the past in his handling of the rhythm and idiom,

"But there is one law of nature more powerful than any of these varying currents, or influences from abroad or from the past : the law that poetry must not stray too far from the ordinary everyday language which we use and hear. Whether poetry is accentual or syllabic, rhymed or rhymeless, formal or free, it cannot afford to lose its contact with the changing language of common intercourse."[15] Verse rhythm and poetry, whether conventional or experimental, have to come to terms with the idiom and rhythm of common speech of the time.

Eliot sees every revolution in poetry as a return to the common speech of the time; for while the spoken language goes on changing, the poetic idiom and diction go out of date. The rhythm and diction of poetry, therefore, must be rooted in music and idiom of the speech of the time. The poet has to use what he finds most familiar. Although Eliot emphasizes the importance of speech rhythm for poetry, he is opposed to free verse as a liberation from verse patterns. The fashion of free verse, according to him, has been responsible for a great deal of bad prose. He approves of Pounds's encouragement of free verse as a revolt against dead verse forms, and as a preparation for remaking the verse form.

Prose Rhythm in Verse

Just as Eliot approves of an admixture of free verse or speech rhythm with verse to serve some legitimate purpose, so also he approves of a legitimate entry of prose rhythm into verse rhythm. For poems of sustained length, what is needed is prose rhythm which provides continuity. Prose rhythm is the vehicle of logical meaning, which may serve to keep the reader satisfied while poetry does its job. It must be noted here that although Eliot approves of the use prose rhythm and meaning for diverting the attention of the reader, both he and Ezra Pound gain intensity in their poetry by eliminating them.

The inclusion of prose rhythm in poetry makes the writing more relaxed, and its elimination makes it more concentrated : "...in a poem of any length, there must be transitions between passages of greater and less intensity, to give a rhythm of fluctuating emotion essential to the musical structure of the whole; and the passages of less intensity will be, in relation to the level on which the total poem operates, prosaic—so that, in the sense implied by that context, it may be said that no poet can write a poem of amplitude unless he is a master of the prosaic."[16] Eliot considers this principle to be a complementary doctrine to Arnold's touchstone theory; the greatness of a poet must

also be judged by the way he writes the structurally important but less intense matter.

The Principle of Mixed Rhythms

The interaction between verse rhythm, prose rhythm, and speech rhythm is conducive to vitality in literature. Prose can be formalized by verse to give the effect of relaxation in moments of less intensity, but it is the formalized speech rhythm, or just speech rhythm, which may express the moment of greatest intensity. An interaction between prose and verse in a poem makes it musical, in the sense that the pattern of sounds and the pattern of meaning fuse and blend into an indissoluble unity. It is in the structure of the whole that the interaction of the three rhythms has its significance and value for a musical poem.

Speech rhythm, though quite different from the formalized verse rhythm, is yet conducive to poetic intensity and may be formalized or left unformalized by verse patterns. As for the value of verse rhythm in a poem, Eliot finds that there is a correlation between emotion and verse : "The human soul, in intense emotion, strives to express itself in verse. It is not for me, but for the neurologists, to discover why this is so, and why and how feeling and rhythm are related... if we want to get at the permanent and universal we tend to express ourselves in verse."[17] A graduation between the intensity of feeling and relaxation of meaning calls for an interactional combination between prose and verse.

Verse rhythm, as a tune in the head, has a function in the creative process, too : '...I know that a poem, or a passage of a poem, may tend to realize itself first as a particular rhythm before it reaches expression in words, and that this rhythm may bring to birth the idea and the image; and I do not believe that this is an experience peculiar to myself."[18] It quickens the germ of the poem and, in the creative process, functions as the auditory imagination : "What I call the 'auditory imagination' is the feeling for syllable and rhythm, penetrating far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling, invigorating every word; sinking to the most primitive and forgotten, returning to the origin and bringing something back, seeking the beginning and the end. It works through meanings, certainly, or not without meanings in the ordinary sense, and fuses the old and obliterated and the trite, the current, and the new and surprising, the most ancient and the most civilised mentality."[19] Such is the important function of verse rhythm for poetry in the creative process.

According to Eliot, this feeling for syllable and rhythm is learnt not so much by scansion and the rules of prosody as by engrossing assimilation and imitation of some particular poet. Once acquired, it may quicken the poetic germ and bring from the unconscious depths of the mind reborn images, initially acquired by the poet from his whole sensitive life, including his readings. Rhythm and imagery take two directions of the language, constituting a scale, musical elaboration and common speech; and the poets have an endless adventure on this scale, adventure into the fascinating interactions of the three rhythms of language.

Frye's Theory of Rhythms

Frye systematizes and develops Eliot's ideas about the rhythms of language by examining them in their twofold context : cultural and critical. The cultural aspect of the rhythms is concerned with the social use of the art of words and the problems of literary education, and the other aspect is concerned with the problems in literary criticism. He also develops his theory of the links between literary criticism and literary education. I shall only briefly summarize his ideas about the rhythms in their literary and critical aspects.[21]

Like Eliot, Frye recognizes three primary rhythms in language : "First, there is the rhythm of prose, of which the unit is the sentence. Second, there is an associative rhythm, found in ordinary speech and in various places in literature, in which the unit is a short phrase of irregular length and primitive syntax. Third, there is the rhythm of a regularly repeated pattern of accent and meter, often accompanied by other recurring features, like rhyme or alliteration. This regularly recurring type of rhythm is what I mean by verse."[20] Like Eliot, again, he excludes poetry as not definable on technical grounds in any predictability or rhythm in the verbal structure.

Frye examines the literary roles of these three rhythms and their mixed forms at secondary and tertiary levels. The secondary rhythms are "prose influenced by verse, verse influenced by prose, prose or verse influenced in either direction by associative rhythm." These are the six secondary rhythms; and when the influencing rhythm affects the host rhythm as strongly as it can, short of breaking it down as the organizing rhythm, the host rhythm reaches its tertiary or experimental form. In this way we get six tertiary rhythms. The total of primary, secondary, and tertiary rhythms in Frye is, thus, fifteen.

The most interesting development of the theory of rhythms in Frye is that it can account for the complex features of the verbal

structure on technical grounds in a clear and lucid way. He makes his theory convincing and insightfully illuminating by giving copious examples from literature. I can only refer to some of them as illustrations. The normal prose of description and exposition in Darwin has a few incidental associative traces which, if not justifiable on expository and descriptive grounds or otherwise, will make it bad prose. The incursion of verse-like rhythm in expository prose makes it rhetorical and stylized and induces meditative interest, as in Gibbon. The recurrence of accentual patterns in prose makes it oratorial, as in Lincoln and Churchill. It may take the direction of introverted prose rhetoric, as in Browne. And the influence of verse on prose to the strongest possible extent will give rise to the tertiary rhythm, as in the euphuism of Greene and Lyly. Ornamenting of prose with as many features of verse as possible is a permanent technical resource of prose style. Dylan Thomas, in our own time, has given us instances of modern euphuism with plenty of associative elements in it. One step further in the incursion of associative babble will produce the unconscious wit of malapropism on Freudian principles.

The heroic couplet is an example of normal verse, equidistant from both prose and associative rhythm. Blank verse, with rhyme removed, takes a step nearer prose. A further incursion of prose into verse gives rise to the conversational style in poetry. At the tertiary level, verse with a maximum of the influx of prose becomes intentional doggerel. Doggerel, with unconscious associative element in it, becomes humorous. At the secondary level, an influx of prose accelerates the tempo and pacing of verse rhythm, whereas an influx of verse into prose rhythm slows down the speed of the latter. At the tertiary level, however, euphuism and satiric doggerel have almost the same speed and tempo.

Several forms result when the associative rhythm influences or is influenced by verse and prose. Associative rhythm is subliterary and seldom appears except in the disguise of either prose or verse. One hears associative rhythm in "college yells" and "crowd chants," with simple patterns of repetition close to verse; it includes the device of "catalogue," one of the clearest signs of associative influence. Incremental repetitions, refrains, nonsense words in ballads and folksongs, and nursery rhymes show the associative strain.

From about 1750 on, Frye finds literature being introspective and sophisticated in its use of associative rhythm. Free verse is an associative rhythm strongly influenced by verse; it consists of a series of phrases

with no fixed metrical pattern. The phrases are rhythmically separated from one another, without syntactic connections. The influence of verse on associative rhythm can be seen in the catalogues of Whitman and the hypnotic chants based on repetitions in imagist poems of J.G. Fletcher and Amy Lowell. This tertiary form is rhapsodic rhythm. When verse is influenced by associative rhythm we have the lyric. Rhyme removed, the influence may produce a sibylline line with introspective rhythm of association. Alliteration, inter-rhyming, assonance, and refrain enhance the discontinuity of lyric as a form. The tertiary form of verse influenced by associative rhythm is echolalia congenial to dream poetry.

Associative rhythm influenced by prose but not quite organized by it is what Frye calls "free prose," to be found in some private letters, diaries, Swift's *Journal to Stella*, Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, and Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*. It can be found in the stream-of-consciousness fiction as well as religious meditations, such as John Donne's *Meditations.* Prose influenced by associative rhythm becomes discontinuous and aphoristic, full of cliches, accepted ideas, and proverbs. Epigrams, puns, antitheses, and analogies are generated by associative influence on prose.

Rhythm, Voice, and Genre

Eliot's theory of voices is related to the rhythms on the one hand and genres on the other. He has neatly stated his theory of voice thus : "The first voice is the voice of the poet talking to himself—or to nobody. The second is the voice of the poet addressing an audience, whether large or small. The third is the voice of the poet when he attempts to create a dramatic character speaking in verse; when he is saying, not what he would say in his own person, but only what he can say within the limits of one imaginary character addressing another imaginary character."[22]

The first voice is related to some traces of associative rhythm in some way, because the latter suits meditative self-expression. The second voice is related to prose rhythm, which is aware of the audience and helps communication. In the passage just quoted from Eliot, the third voice is associated with verse; but it may occur in prose fiction as well. Further, if the third voice is heard when one character is speaking to another character in a dramatic context, it is bound to have an admixture of prose rhythm with a sense of the audience; and if the character is soliloquizing in a dramatic context, it will have an admixture of associative rhythm suited to self-expression

and meditation. The mixture of rhythms will be modulated to suit the voices, whether the predominant or organizing rhythm of a work is prose or verse.

In this theory of voices there seem to be at least two personages involved, the speaker and his audience; and the speaker-audience relation is the basis of generic distinction. The first distinction he makes on this basis is between dramatic, quasi-dramatic and non-dramatic. When the poet is talking to himself in a poem, what we get is a lyric; and we may still see the two personages involved, the poet himself as both the speaker and the auditor. Eliot finds the use of first voice in meditative verse, where the poet is trying to clarify himself to himself. Let us say that the first voice is the basis of lyric and meditative poetry. The second voice, in which the author addresses an audience, is, in fact, writes Eliot, "the voice most often and most clearly heard in poetry that is not of the theatre : in all poetry, certainly, that has a conscious social purpose—poetry intended to amuse or to instruct, poetry that tells a story, poetry that preaches or points a moral, or satire which is a form of preaching... The voice of the poet addressing other people is the dominant voice of the epic, though not the only voice."[23] In other words, the second voice is the basis of all genres with a social purpose and didactic intention. Thus in the dramatic monologues of Robert Browning what we hear is, neither the first nor the third voice, but the second voice of pseudo-dramatic poetry.

It may be noticed that the author-audience relation involves four personages in literature, and not just two. Of love lyrics Eliot remarks: "...a good love poem, though it may be addressed to one person, is always meant to be overheard by other people."[24] In "A Dedication to My Wife" Eliot writes : "These are private words addressed to you in public." If there are two audiences, one internal and the other external, then there are two speakers as well, the internal and the author. These four reference points are the clearest in respect of drama, but they are all the four still there even when in a meditative poem the poet is clarifying himself to himself.

The Principle of Mixed Voices within a Genre

Analogous to Eliot's principle of mixed rhythms, we have his principle of mixed voices. "So far I have been speaking," writes Eliot, "for the sake of simplicity, of the three voices as if they were mutually exclusive : as if the poet, in any particular poem, was speaking *either* to himself *or* to others, and as if neither of the first two

voices was audible in good dramatic verse.... But for me the voices are most often found together—the first and second, I mean in non-dramatic poetry; and together with the third in dramatic poetry too."[25] It is out of his own sense of personality that, according to Eliot, the poet creates a character, but unless he gave him the first voice in the admixture, that character would not come alive.

The mixing of voices, like the mixing of rhythms in the verbal structure, produces richness and complexity. In all good literary works, therefore, more than one voice can be heard. The touch of the author's voice speaking to himself imparts intensity, poetic intensity; and a total absence of the second voice from the first would make the poem incommunicative. In poetic drama Eliot hears all the three voices in unison in moments of intensity.

Eliot's Influence on Frye's Theory of Genre

The author-audience relation, central to Eliot's theory of voices and genres, has an important place in Frye's theory of genre, too. In Frye's theory the term "radical of presentation" is used in place of "voices." The central principle of genre, writes Frye, "is simple enough. The basis of generic distinction in literature appears to be the radical of presentation. Words may be acted in front of a spectator; they may be spoken in front of a listener; they may be sung or chanted; or they may be written for reader.... The basis of generic criticism in any case is rhetorical, in the sense that the genre is determined by the conditions established between the poet and his public."[26] Frye's radical of presentation is essentially related to Eliot's voices : words can be acted before a spectator in the third voice, sung or chanted in the first voice, and spoken before a listener or written for a reader in the second voice.

If in Eliot a lyric, love poem, or meditative verse—all in the first voice—"is always meant to be overheard by other people", the poet's "private words addressed to you in public," in Frye the lyric is "preeminently the utterance that is overheard.... The radical of presentation in the lyric is the hypothetical form of what in religion is called the 'I-Thou' relationship. The poet, so to speak, turns his back on his listeners, though he may speak for them, and though they may repeat some of his words after him."[27] Eliot, we have seen, posits the principle of mixed voices, and Frye recognizes the mixing of the radicals. When Conrad employs an internal narrator in a novel, "two different radicals of presentation exist in it." Like Eliot, again,

Frye relates his generic classification with the rhythms : epic with the rhythm of recurrence, prose with the rhythm of continuity, drama with the rhythm of decorum, and lyric with the rhythm of association. Frye develops the theory of genres in a very systematic way.

Genre, Rhetoric, and style

Genre, rhetoric and style are related; and "voice", as the basis of generic distinctions in Eliot, is employed in Frye to define style: "In all literary structures we are aware of a quality that we may call the quality of a verbal personality or a speaking voice something different from direct address, though related to it. When this quality is felt to be the voice of the author himself, we call it style.... The conception of style is based on the fact that every writer has his own rhythm, as distinctive as his handwriting, and his own imagery, ranging from a preference for certain vowels and consonants to a preoccupation with two or three archetypes.... The suiting of style to an internal character or subject is known as decorum or appropriateness of style to content."[28] Again, Frye defines appropriateness or decorum as "the poet's *ethical* voice, the modification of his own voice to the voice of a character or to the vocal tone demanded by subject or mood." It is on this basis that he develops his theory of style, coupled with the principles of rhythms and rhetoric.

In his book on style and order, Eliot considers the most conspicuous qualities of style to be three : "ordonnance, or arrangement and structure, precision in the use of words, and relevant intensity."[29] The ordonnance has to do with the syntax at the level of the sentence structure, and with the design of the whole in a piece of composition. Words are chosen to meet the requirements of the structure, and the emotional intensity has to be relevant to the content, the subject matter. The three qualities should be in harmony. Style, thus conceived, is the product of the author's intellect and sensibility. It is the man himself, in this sense. Good style, in all its three qualities, is characterized by lucid luminosity and governed by the principle of decorum in its use of rhythm and voices.

Vagueness and jargons corrupt the style of discursive prose, and a rhetorical style in literature may be proper or corrupt. A rhetoric that tries to affect the independence of the reader or audience, tries to impress him, is corrupt rhetoric : "A speech in a play should never appear to be intended to move us as it might conceivably move other characters in the play, for it is essential that we should preserve our

position of spectators, and observe always from the outside though with complete understanding."[30] When a character directly appeals to our emotions, we are immediately victims of what Eliot calls the vicious rhetoric. He finds the really fine rhetoric in Shakespeare, where a character making rhetorical speeches sees himself in a dramatic light. Instead of trying to impress us, Antony attempts to impress the mob with full preparation. And this is appropriate to his role.

Eliot considers the usual opposition between the rhetorical and the conversational in style to be a false one. If rhetoric can be abused, the conversational style can be misapplied, too. He considers much of the second rate free verse and Wordsworthianism of his time to be instances of badly used conversational style. The conversational style, like the rhetorical, must be adapted to the moment and varied thought and feeling : "If a writer wishes to give the effect of speech he must positively give the effect of himself talking in his own person or in one of his roles; and if we are to express ourselves, our variety of thoughts and feelings, on a variety of subjects with inevitable rightness, we must adapt our manner to the moment with infinite variations."[31] Style—whether euphuistic and rhetorical or simple and pure, full of antitheses and similes or tumid and flatulent, abounding in strained and mixed figures or marked by careful declamations may—be good or bad depending on whether it is appropriate to the character, his feelings, situation, and the occasion, of utterance or not.

Style and the Ideas of Mammata

To bring an Indian perspective to Eliot's thinking, some of Mammata's ideas concerning style will be briefly outlined here. According to Mammata,[32] word and sense inseparably united, free from blemishes and endowed with the suggestibility of the qualities of emotion, may be even without figures in poetry—*tadadoşau śabdārthau saguṇāvaṇalaṅkṛtī punaḥ kvāpi. (Kāvya-Prakāśa, 1:4)*

Blemishes, according to Mammata, are those that harm either the suggestion of emotion or the expressed sense that suggests the emotion. Both word and sense may have blemishes. But whether the verbal construction and the sense, with their specific features, are blemishes is determined by a fivefold principle of propriety or decorum to (a) the speaker, (b) the person addressed, (c) the suggested emotion, (d) the expressed sense, and (e) the context—*vaktrādyaucityavaśād doşoapi guṇah kvacit kvacinnobhau. Kāvya-Prakāśa*, (7:59) If they have propriety, they may be considered virtues in style.

The organic attributes of emotion, to which word and sense have to be pertinent, are threefold: a soft melting quality (*mādhurya*), expansive vigour (*ojas*), and transparent lucidity (*prasāda*). All emotions, whether soft or vigorous, have, when properly suggested by the features of the verbal structure and the sense, the quality of transparent lucidity (*prasāda*), which enables them to enter the mind either like water in clean cloth or like fire in dry wood. The softer emotions such as love, compassion, wonder and peace enter the mind like water in clean cloth; and the vigorous emotions such as courage, fear, anger, and disgust like fire in dry wood—*śuṣkendhanāgnivat svacchajalavat sahasaiva yaḥ*. (*Ibid.*, 8:70)

Sweetness, vigour and transparency are not the qualities inherent in word and sense; they are inherent in the emotion. So the figures of word and sense do not have these qualities, either; qualities are the organic attributes of the emotion. However, the figures are able to suggest the qualities of the emotion. Words and sense have the power of suggestion; and the emotion, which is unexpressible and unexpressed, is suggestible and suggested. In other words, the soul of a poem is the suggestible emotion, and the expressed sense its suggester and function. The verbal and rhetorical structure, in its turn, is the expresser and function of the sense. Word and sense are, therefore, to be justified by the principle of propriety. Figures may help the expression of sense and suggestion of emotion, may harm them, may remain neutral, or may just exhibit their own curious forms.

Mammata's formula for the ordonnance of a literary work and its structural emotion is the one handed down by Bharata: *vibhāvānubhāvavyabhicārisañyogād rasaniṣpattiḥ*. (*Ibid.*, 4 : 28 *vṛtti*) It means that it is by means of a correlation of the situation, action, and floating feelings that the emotion intended is evoked. The situation (*vibhāva*) motivates emotion in the character, and the *anubhāva* and *vyabhicāribhāva* or *sancāribhāva* are the expressive and suggestive factors. *Anubhāva* is the ensuant action, gesture, and speech, by means of which the character gives vent to his emotion; and the *vyabhicārins* are the floating feelings that arise from the subconscious level of the mind and get fused with the emotion being expressed by the character through his action, speech, and gesture. It is within this framework of structural arrangement that style (*sanghatanā*), rhetorical or conversational, and diction—high, middle, and low—have their justification and relevance. If they are pertinent to the content and the suggested emotion, they are a virtue; if not, they are a blemish.

Mammata and the Stylistic Analyses by Eliot

The criterion of relevance for both Mammata and Eliot is propriety. We have only to glance at Eliot's comments on passages from authors to find how close he is in spirit to Mammata's principles. Commenting on a character's speech in Cyril Tourneur's *The Revenger's Tragedy*, Eliot writes:

> In this passage (as is evident if it is taken in its context) there is a combination of positive and negative emotions: an intensely strong attraction toward beauty and an equally intense fascination by the ugliness which is contrasted with it and which destroys it. This balance of contrasted emotion is in the dramatic situation to which the speech is pertinent, but that situation alone is inadequate to it. This is, so to speak, the structural emotion, provided by the drama. But the whole effect, the dominant tone, is due to the fact that a number of floating feelings, having an affinity to this emotion by no means superficially evident, have combined with it to give us a new art emotion.[33]

The combination of the two emotions evident in the speaker's utterance is, in Mammata's terms, variegation of emotions *(bhāva śabalatā);* one of these is destroyed, becomes subordinated *(gauṇa)*, to help maintain the emotional unity. This balance of emotions is in the dramatic situation *(vibhāva)* to which the speech of the character is pertinent (has *aucitya)*. The structural emotion provided by the drama *(sthāyibhāva)* needs something more to produce the whole effect (of *rasa)* on the audience; and that is supplied by the floating feelings *(sañcāribhāva)*. Art emotion is the *rasa* experienced by the audience or reader. The principle underlying the passage just quoted from Eliot is the one he consistently applies in his stylistic analyses, and it is close to Mammata.

Conclusion

Eliot's conception of Rhythms, voices and genres, and style was a great step forward in systematic study of literature; and it has been further developed and refined by Frye. At a time when impressionistic and abstract styles of criticism were in fashion, Eliot endeavoured to formulate a theory of ordering one's impressions of literature into a system, and applied it in his own criticism. His importance in the development of the conception of rhythm, genre and style is attested by the fact that Frye has absorbed his insights in his system. The following lines of Eliot will always fascinate the reader interested in the problems of style:

What I call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from. And every phrase
And sentence that is right (where every word is at home,
Taking its place to support the others,
The word neither diffident nor ostentatious,
An easy commerce of the old and the new,
The common word exact without vulgarity,
The formal word precise but not pedantic,
The complete consort dancing together)
Every phrase and every sentence is an end and a beginning,
Every poem an epitaph....[34]

Banaras Hindu University
Varanasi

Notes

1. "The Borderline of Prose," *The New Statesman*, IX (May 19, 1917), p. 158.
2. "Prose and Verse," *The Chapbook*, 22 (April 1921), p. 3.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
5. Preface to *Anabasis* by St.-J. Perse (New YorK : Brentano's, Inc., 1945), p. 63. Originally published in 1930.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
7. "Poetry and Drama," *On Poetry and Poets* (London : Faber and Faber Ltd., 1957), p. 73.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *The Well Tempered Critic* (Bloomington : Indiana University Press, 1963), pp. 17-18.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.
11. "Reflections on *Vers Libre*," *To Criticize the Critic* (London : Faber and Faber Ltd., 1978), p. 184.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 185.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 188-189.
14. "Ezra Pound : His Metric and Poetry," *To Criticize the Critic*, p. 172.
15. "The Music of Poetry," *On Poetry and Poets*, p. 29.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
17. *Selected Essays* (London : Faber and Faber Ltd., 1976), p. 46.
18. "The Music of Poetry," *op. cit.*, p. 38.
19. *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (London : Faber and Faber Ltd., 1980, pp. 118-119.
20. *The Well Tempered Critic*, p. 24.
21. *Ibid.*, 55-93.
22. "The Three Voices of Poetry," *op. cit.*, p. 98.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 96.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
26. *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 246-247.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 249-250.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 268-269.
29. *For Lancelot Andrewes* (London : Faber and Faber Ltd., 1970), p. 15.
30. *The Sacred Wood* (London : Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1969), p. 82.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
32. *Kavya-Prakasa.*
33. *The Sacred Wood*, p. 57.
34. *Little Gidding*, V

Uni Bazaar

In the academic supermarket,
incessant the ebb and flow.

Shopping is a consumerist pastime
in our affluent cities.

Advertise the wares ! Let people nose round
giving snorts of excitement !

And call into play all the bandyings
of the boisterous bazaar.

In Minerva's multi-storeyed towers
wild variety is on show.

Knowledge is fragmented and quantified,
then capsuled, named and numbered.

There are, besides, the unofficial stalls,
the hawkers, pavement-vendors,

The salesmen of inconspicuous dope,
and the *mushaira*-mongers.

Every bit of non-knowledge has a nook
in some Faculty or School.

There are graded tradesmen, and the takers
come from the ends of the world.

The more outlandish crevices attract
the audacious honey-bees,

And the crush is for betwist and between
interlooking 'disciplines'.

While Existential Computeronics
stifles the Humanities.

The outside-the-schedule caterwaulings
comprise furtive beginnings,

Defiant explorations, the lift-offs,
the trips and the crash-landings.

There are joints and joustings for every fad,
campaignings for every cause,

And the La Manchas and Sancho Panzas
run the Absurd Theatre.

K. R. SRINIVASA IYENGAR

A Note on Lines and Line-groups in *Leaves of Grass*

Rabi Shankar Mishra

In this paper I intend to relate the lines and line-groups in *Leaves of Grass* with Whitman's self-presentation.

Whitman wrote,

> Whoever you are holding me now in hand,
> Without one thing all will be useless,
> I give you fair warning before you attempt me further,
> I am not what you supposed, but far different.

If these four lines are read continuously, to find out what they mean or say, line two appears to be in parenthesis. But if they are read as individual units, independently, each line will be found to behave in a similar way: like an impulse of desire. 'Whoever you are holding me now in hand,'—the first line proposes to say something but it is not said. It points to an emptiness that could as well be plenitude or vice-versa. Similarly, the second line (no longer parenthetical in nature) enacts this psychic curve. It is not said what this all-important 'one thing' is. The third line also halts on the brink of meaning. And the fourth line, though it ends with a full stop and *completes* this group of four lines, is not very different as an independent unit from the earlier three. It is in fact two lines, in the sense I am describing: [I am not what you supposed,/ But I am far different]. The comma in the fourth line is in spirit like the earlier three, an indication of an absent line. The point is that the independence of each of these lines is democratic in nature like Whitman's self; its impulse of desire, its incompleteness, dramatizes an absence that the self always seeks for. The independence

of a democratic self, contrary to the feudalistic, is defined in the acceptance of a different self.

When the line does not explicitly show such an expectancy as outlined above, it implicitly carries the same desire through the device of interrogation, for example: 'Who is he that would become my follower?/ Who would sign himself a candidate for my affections?' (lines 5-6).

Now, if the whole poem, 'Whoever You are Holding Me Now in Hand' is examined, one finds that the poetic self is manifest in the interplay between secrecy and openness like the line demonstrating its independence and secretly surrendering it. 'Back of a rock in the open air' or 'on a high hill, first watching lest any person for miles around approach unawares' makes the place of intimacy both secret and open. And the 'kiss' (line 20) is both that of a 'husband' (an open identity) and that of a 'comrade' (a secret identity—not only in the context of "Calamus" but also in relation to the husband). This paradigm is, finally, carried into the acts of reading and writing. 'Even while you should think you had unquestionably caught me, behold!/ Already you see I have escaped from you'. The important thing here is that the poet's absence or secrecy ('escaped') is realized through sight whereas his presence or openness ('caught') through thought ('think'), apparently a non-visual experience. So the poetic existence cannot be *seen;* what is seen is its absence: 'it is not for what I have put into it that I have written this book'. Whitman is dislocating the conventional perception of a poem through 'reading' (visual); one has to 'hold' (nonvisual) the poem. To 'think' or to 'hold' is not ordinarily possible through the eyes.

Therefore, the parenthetical ambiguity of the second line points to an intersection of the horizontal and vertical reading of the poem. If the vertical visualization of lines shows a feudalistic, hierarchic gradation which leads one to find what the poet says or how he exists, the horizontal visualization moves towards a democratic, 'average' view of the poet's self which means that it is not graded, selved or isolated. The purely vertical reading underscores the syntactical and grammatical presuppositions which imply a hierarchical organization of self. The absoluteness of a god or a king is, for instance, inhered in the idea of a subject. The rarity of run-on lines in *Leaves of Grass* ('In more than 10,500 lines in *Leaves of Grass*, there are, by my count, only twenty run-on lines'.[1]) reinforces the need for horizontal perception, which I have described as an interplay of secrecy and openness, of the poet's absent presence.

Even in less complicated situations, in a catalogue passage for example, the lines fundamentally do not act differently:

> The pure contralto sings in the organ loft,
> The carpenter dresses his planks, the tongue of his foreplane
> whistles its wild ascending lisp,
> The married and unmarried children ride home to their Thanks
> giving dinner, ("Song of Myself"—lines 264-266)

These three lines narrate three completely separate events, and each line is self-sufficient. But though each one stands as an independent unit like a framed picture on a wall, the verbs 'sings', 'dresses' and 'whistles', and 'ride' point to fields of activity. So the lines do not end at the end. This sense of the line moving beyond its exact location on the page is accentuated when the lines are perceived horizontally but of necessity read vertically.

When the verb does not function to indicate activity, as in a line like, 'The old husband sleeps by his wife and the young husband sleeps by his wife' (line 326), the rhythmic repetition of the first and second part (joined and divided by 'and') leaves behind a sense of continuity when the line itself seems to have ended its flight. Each line in the catalogue evokes a world where things continue to happen. It is not haunted by a sense of ending : 'Off on the lakes the pike-fisher watches and waits by the hole in the frozen surface' (line 317). The acts of watching and waiting sharply contrast with the 'frozen surface'. The contrast brings to focus the withheld action of the line which points towards its unwritten dimension. The pikefisher held, in the line, in the middle of an action is both frozen and fluid. He is a perfect image of Whitman's line.

In this catalogue ("Song of Myself"—section 15) there are a few parenthetical comments. They reveal the presence of what I have called the absent line. These comments are either within the line or lines by themselves. 'The pedler sweats with his pack on his back, (the purchaser higgling about the odd cent;)'. 'The purchaser' appears as a result of the first part of the line ('the pedler'). Similarly, the following two lines, 'The prostitute draggles her shawl, her bonnet bobs on her tipsy and pimpled neck. The crowd laugh at her blackguard oaths, the men jeer and wink to each other,' bring to birth the next line in parenthesis — '(Miserable ! I do not laugh at your oaths nor jeer you;)'. This line presents a probable emotion towards the prostitute, which the prostitute-line hints at but the crowd-line tends to stifle. So the parenthetical line appears as it were in spite of itself.

Charles Hartman writes, 'There is a dichotomy — not a spectrum — between verse and prose. Lineation distinguishes them'. And, 'Poetry is usually written in verse because lineation promotes the attention which is necessary to prosody and essential to poetry'. He defines poetry as 'the languages of an act of attention'.[2] Within this framework lineation naturally serves a distinguishing function between poetry and prose. But the Whitmanian line is coupled with the absent line. It promotes attention as well as disturbs it. It is located ambiguously. The line that is seen on the page elongates towards an 'invisible' presence. This defocuses attention while inviting it. A line from "Our Old Feuillage", for example, carries the dynamics of 'attention' to an extreme condition on the page itself :

> The migrating flock of wild geese alighting in autumn to refresh themselves, the body of the flock feed, the sentinels outside move around with erect heads watching, and are from time to time reliev'd by other sentinels—and I feeding and taking turns with the rest (line 73).

In a line of such length the formal enterprise of capturing in one span of consciousness the beginning and the end of a line is stretched to a breaking point. This line reaches outwards almost physically as the comparatively shorter lines do psychogically. Its integrity cannot be defined by distinguishing it from prose, but in responding to its hidden momentum that indicates a world of *continued* activity. If one approaches the Whitmanian line as poetic or prosaic (i.e. reading with formalist orientations), the essential spirit of such a line will not be released. The traditional, vertical, and institutional quest for organization is continuously questioned by the experimental, horizontal, and personal reading of the line. In a sense, the democratic drive of the Whitmanian line is subversive in nature. The subversion is aimed at the institutionalization of a line into a category of differentiation.

Line-groups :

Instead of the term stanza, paragraph or division I prefer line-group. A stanza is basically a prosodic organization by rhyme or rhythm, a paragraph is an argumentative structure or a narrative unit, and division implies more an idea of separation than combination. The line-group does not aim at such principles of discipline. A line-group in *Leaves of Grass* can consist of just one line ('The clock indicates the moment—but what does eternity indicate?') or any number of lines. The whole poem, "Our Old Feuillage" which is made up of more than eighty lines is one single line-group. In fact, it is not going too far to propose

that a line-group for Whitman is potentially a 'poem' or, to put it more accurately, a poem is a line-group. *Leaves of Grass* as one single poem, which the later Whitman clearly meant it to be, contains the 389 poems as its line-groups within the volume. And the use of the term 'line-group' points to its non-literary, provisional, human status that the poet refers to time and again.

The line-group follows the rhythm of Whitman's evolving thoughts and feelings instead of realizing the integrity of conventional organization, as in a stanza, for instance. That is why it can be a line as well as a whole 'poem'. From this perspective, the line-groups release two kinds of force in the poem: one is cohesive; the other, dispersive. If in the first case, lines are as it were propelled together, in the second, lines tend to stand as independent units of utterance. However, I do not wish to imply that the kind of organization I am suggesting can be programmatically explained from every poem of *Leaves of Grass*. The poems were not written with such abstract consistency.

"Starting from Paumanok" is a poem of 271 lines, which Whitman has divided into 19 sections—each section is different from the other so far as number of lines is concerned. The first section is one line-group of 14 lines whereas the second consists of seven line-groups of a total of 22 lines. These groupings present an inner drama. In the first section, though the poet gives a brief history of his various occupations, these are controlled by one wave of experience. In a sense, each experience comes one after another almost sequentially, but each returns to its psychic origin. The poet starts from the dawn of his life—a location in time and space, 'Starting from fish-shape Paumanok where I was born'; and ends there by placing his singing—his self-identity as a poet or singer—at the moment of dawn, the singing time of 'the unrivall'd one' ('heard at dawn'). In these 14 lines the pressure is cohesive—identity or the sense of cohesion is a single moment of becoming. The awareness of the 'I' of each item of his experience is always at 'the first step', temporally at the dawn. He simply roams, dwells, camps, mines, eats, drinks, muses and meditates; is aware, experiences, studies—and sings. A word like 'aware' (repeated three times) in this situation is not weighted with psychological and metaphysical complexities nor is 'muse and meditate'.

Whitman marks these 14 lines as one section; they are interlinked as a group just as the next three lines are, though in a different manner. These lines are a brief list of abstractions :

Victory, union, faith, identity, time,
The indissoluble compacts, riches, mystery,
Eternal progress, the kosmos, and the modern reports.

They do not have the complicated compactness of lines 1-14. In fact, their compactness as a group is the unity of a list of items i.e. these lines do not carry a *wave* of thought and feeling but show a sequence of them. This kind of compactness is basically dispersive by the very need to move step by step, marked by a series of commas. Even though this list contains words and phrases which are inclusive and synthesizing like 'the indissoluble compacts' and 'kosmos', these do not constitute moments of coherence, but they are separate and single moments of perception as all other words are. However, the next two lines (lines 18-19) is a new line-group expressing a different kind of momentum within a sequence such as in lines 15-17. 'This then is life' (line 18) swerves into a larger curve of utterance in line 19, 'Here is what has come to surface after so many throes and convulsions'—a movement which is not there in lines 15-17. Lines 20-21 follow the pattern of lines 18-19, yet they are two separate line-groups, because if they are joined the out-going rhythm (as in line 19) of line 21 will be affected. The silence of space between these two seemingly ordinary line-groups (lines 18-19 and lines 20-21) is a part of the mechanism of grouping the lines; it ensures the renewal of the outgoing impetus, and equally the impetus of renewal.

In fact, more than the numerical notations that divide the poem into 19 sections, the spacing of the line-groups is vital in organizing the quality of reading. The basic rhythm of the Whitmanian poem is not the conventional rhythm of metrics but the rhythm of spacing and grouping, which echoes his self-organization. The movement of Whitman's verse has often been compared with the movement of Biblical prose, the sequence of *versets;* but the divisions between Biblical *versets* are divisions which express the pre-ordained nature of event and utterance, which imply consequence in sequence and reinforce the liturgical tone and submission to a divine order. In Whitman, on the other hand, the spaces between line-groups are returns to the self, to the self's relativity and constant metamorphosis, out of which are continuously born new propulsions into the world of external experience. There are 61 line-groups in this poem, "Starting from Paumanok". In the recently published textual variorum of *Leaves of Grass*, sections 19 and 9 provide spacings which are not present in the edition of this particular poem in the Reader's edition (Norton Critical Edition—reprint, 1973).[3] A pause between line one and the rest of the five lines of

section 19, however, seems to me natural as made by Whitman. When this spacing is removed, and the two line-groups (line 265, and lines 266-271) are made one, a dramatic moment of intimacy is lost, a moment that gives a peculiar weight to the lines that follow and begin with, 'O a word to clear one's path ahead endlessly!'. The spacing indicates the shift of perspective: from apostrophe to exclamation; private to public; second-person to third person; vocative to accusative. The first two O's are different in spirit from the rest. Similarly, when Whitman's groupings in section 9 (lines 122-124, and lines 125-128) are joined, the anxious questionings of the first group moves too swiftly to the confident definitions of the second. This is not a hair-splitting point, but an indication that Whitman groups his lines to trace the movements of a thinking and feeling mind on an open principle—an openness nearer to his life than to the absolute demands of art.

The entire poem of 38 lines, 'Scented Herbage of My Breast' is one line-group. Of course, as a 'poem' it has a line that opens it and one that closes it, but these are not formally determining. The whole poem is an uncircumscribed and uncircumscribable breath of meditation. Nowhere is there a full stop except at the end. This fact indicates that the poem should be read physically in one continuous moment of time, which I have called a 'breath'. To break up these lines into manageable segments for analysis, a break at line 22 ('Emblematic and capricious blade I leave you, now you serve me not'), for instance, interprets and thus distorts the strange integrity of this line-group. The important issue is that the meditating poetic self instead of expanding into language or art to achieve completeness of self-consciouness, infolds into silence, reaching for an inner peace. This is why 'death' dominates the poet's thoughts at the end of this poem. The coherence of these 38 lines is not the *image* of a unified experience. In extending the reader's capacity to meditate as ths lines move continuously forward, and finally inward, the self of the poet sees the inadequacy of art as sensuously as the smell of grass. In 'A Twilight Song', a poem written about thirty years later than 'Scented Herbage of My Breast', the lines group in a similar way. This poem is also one line-group of 15 lines and moves both sequentially and inwardly. When cohesion becomes art or what the poet 'was calling life', it must be surrendered to 'death —dispersed. This is the rhythm that Whitman's line-groups project. Language relates to silence not by falling silent but by absorbing it, by taking silence into its sphere of activity.

Sambalpur University,
Orissa.

Notes

1. Autrey Nell Willey, 'Reiterative Devices in *Leaves of Grass,' American Literature'*, (1929), 161-170 (P. 161).
2. Charles O. Hartman, *Free Verse: An Essay on Prosody* (Princeton, 1980), p.52.
3. See *Leaves of Grass: A Textual Variorum of the Printed Poems*, edited by Sculley Bradley et al, The Collected Writings of Walt Whitman, 3 vols (New York, 1980), II, p.289 and p.280.
(For all references to Whitman's poems, in this paper, see *Leaves of Grass*, edited by Sculley Bradley and Harold W. Blodgett, Norton Critical Edition, 1973)

Your Eyes

When the sun sets amidst the grim
Savage silence of the hills, you came
With the azure langour of the desert.
I filled your golden form in the interior of my soul
When I hold you close to my hairy chest
My heart throbs with rhapsody
Mind filled with ecstasy and
Soul simmers with symphony.
In that purple mood
Floodgates of passion break.
I hold your rosy cheeks on the blues
Of my fiery palms—and look into your
Blazing eyes with spring flames.
In your eyes I watch fireflies light up
The future manuscript of my poems.
I am space launched into a golden paradise:
A continuous gaze into your sparkling eyes—
The eyes that threw the flood light in my dusky soul
The eyes that illumined my winding path
The eyes that revealed the lotus of wisdom
To my opaque mind
The eyes that brought the torrent of roses
To my barren heart.
Now I rise to your dazzling eyes
I live in your eyes and dream of your eyes.
I drown and bask in the white rediance of your eyes.
Because,
The sun never shines as bright as your eyes.

—SYED AMEERUDDIN

Ex-artist

Normal, crazy, constantly warned
that his allegiance is in doubt,
he holds out his thin hands
to be caressed by strangers.

Their warmth is conventional.

Not reassured, he goes back
to his friends, who know
he has not only lost his way
but will never find it again,
unlike the explorers of heaven and hell.

The man's domain is a coffee-house.

And he's celibate only
because he has to be,
his purse being empty
both of money and love.

It's true he can go without water
for days, like a camel,
and trudge on with his nose in the air.
But his thirst is not
a form of seeking,
It's merely a dry throat
from which no words will ever come
to meet the needs of others.

That is why they leave him alone.

—NISSIM EZEKIEL

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,
The mosaic of a cold hearth,
A leaking roof, a wet floor
And a fresco of vacant eyes
Set in barely fed bellies
Inlaid with ill-clad privacies
Wrinkled with unfateful miseries
Is much the same.
I live in a languid sublimity
Of tyranny, exploitation and rapes
Mixed with prayers, philosophy and fasts
Cocktailed in an entelechy of existence
Served both by the farseeing politicians
And bourgeoisie saints
But the frame of my misery
Hasn't much changed.
I don't even have hopes
To look for relief
In 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 purposeful harmony of 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.
Maybe now is the time for some Indian Poet
In English to be creative
To act imagist or confessional :
Write a love or a bird song
Or describe a river or a festival from abroad :
Look for the finish of a line and rhythm, British
In my crushed bones
To render the measure of my sighs in vain.
Yet, the eyes that once sparkled at Midnight
And ran dreamcarts 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.

—O. P. BHATNAGAR

Lionel Trilling and the Psychoanalytic Approach to Literature

J. N. Sharma

It is now widely acknowledged that Lionel Trilling was one of the earliest and ablest commentators on the relevance of psychoanalysis to the study of literature. Considering that his critical output is substantial and impressively diverse in character and that he used a variety of critical approaches, informed and unified by his extraordinary range and sensitivity as a reader, it is understandable that he neither endorsed nor employed any *one* critical approach. But it is indeed significant that of the various available critical approaches he should have singled out the psychoanalytic approach for a searching scrutiny.

Trilling's examination of the relevance of psychoanalysis to an understanding of literature is to be found chiefly in two essays, "Freud and Literature" and "Art and Neurosis," both written in the 1940s and later included in *The Liberal Imagination, Freud and the Crisis of Culture, Beyond Culture*, and *Sincerity and Authenticity*. In "Freud and Literature" (1940), Trilling investigates the contribution of psychoanalysis to literary criticism. How seriously he takes psychoanalysis and how valuable to the study of literature he finds it is evidenced by the very opening remark :

> The Freudian psychology is the only systematic account of the human mind which, in point of subtlety and complexity, of interest and tragic power, deserves to stand beside the chaotic mass of psychological insights which literature has accumulated through the centuries. To pass from the reading of a great literary work to a treatise of academic psychology is to pass from one order of perception to another, but the human nature of the Freudian psychology is exactly the stuff upon which the poet has always exercised his art. It is therefore not surprising that the psychoanalytical theory has had a great effect upon literature.[1]

In this essay Trilling first examines Freud's conception of art and notes that Freud is not only sensitive to art but often mentions it admiringly. He also notes that Freud admired artists, especially writers. But with characteristic acuteness he also notes that what Freud "most appreciates in literature are specific emotional insights and observation; as we have noted, he speaks of literary men, because they have understood the part played in life by the hidden motives, as the precursors and coadjutors of his own science" (*LI*, p. 42). While Trilling notes Freud's praise of art as wholesome entertainment, as a fulfilment of the "pleasure principle" in the human psyche, and of artists as his allies in the delineation of the unconscious life and the hidden motive, he also recognises that for art as a whole and for art in its essential nature Freud has almost contempt because he regards it merely as a "substitute gratification," and therefore as "an illusion in contrast to reality" (*LI*, p. 41). From this assumption Freud naturally derives his belief that one of the chief functions of art is to serve as a "narcotic," and therefore attributes to art a "sort of dishonesty" (*LI*, p. 42), a trait it shares with dreams.

Trilling, however, also discerns that it is not anything in psychoanalytical thought itself that determines Freud's disapproval of the basic character of art but that it is the exigencies of the practice of psychoanalysis that require him to set up a rather crude and false distinction between illusion and reality. While granting Freud's premise that the poet is a neurotic, Trilling makes the important distinction that while "the poet is in command of his fantasy," the average neurotic is "possessed by his fantasy" and that unlike common neurosis "the work of art," as Freud himself puts it, "*leads us back to the outer reality by taking account of it.*"[2] He also convincingly refutes Freud's notion that the artist returns to reality only when he suspends his artistic activity. Trilling, on the other hand, believes that while even the functions Freud grants to art are quite respectable, artistic activity is not divorced from reality but that it engages reality creatively. Though he refutes Freud's conception of art as inadequate and finds his understanding of the nature of artistic activity mistaken, he goes on to explain and appreciate what is valuable to literature in Freud's theory of the mind.

Trilling credits psychoanalysis with establishing the normality of the writer's neurosis and the naturalness of artistic thought; recognizes psychoanalysis as a valuable tool in understanding the writer's personality and the connection between him and his writings; discovers in it an immensely useful iustrument to understand the inner meaning

of art; locates in it a strong support for the belief that works of literature have both surface and latent meaning; and explains and endorses Freud's brilliant explanation of our interest in tragedy.

Above all, he notes that Freud shows the topography of the mind to be such that not only is Vico's thesis in the eighteenth century about the metaphorical, imagistic language of the early stages of culture true, but that even in the age of science, man still thinks and feels in non-logical, metaphorical modes. For Trilling the logical culmination of Freud's delineation of such a topography of the mind is his creation of psychoanalysis, "a science of tropes, of metaphor and its variants, synecdoche and metonymy" (*LI*, p. 50). Furthermore, he points out that Freud shows how one part of the mind can work without logic, without losing its directing purpose, and that as the unconscious mind works without such logical linguistic devices as syntactic conjunction, in dreams such connections are achieved by the mind imagistically, by "compressing the element into a unity." Freud, he says, "discovered in the very organization of the mind those mechanisms by which art makes its effects, such devices as the condensations of meanings and the displacement of accents" (*LI*, p. 5).

It is a measure of Trilling's perception of the implications of Freudian theory for literature that he can say : "If, then, we can accept neither Freud's conception of the place of art in life nor his application of the analytical method . . . what . . . he contributes outweighs his errors; it is of the greatest importance, and it lies in no specific statement that he makes about are but is, rather, implicit in his whole conception of the mind" (*LI*, p. 52).

In the other essay, "Art and Neurosis," which was written later, in 1945, and therefore demonstrates his sturdier grasp of psychoanalytical ideas and resolves some of the confusion and tentativeness in the earlier essay, Trilling applies his reading of Freud to demolish what he considered gross misconceptions about the relationship between the artist's neurosis and the source of his artistic power. He argues that the notion of the artist being mentally ill is nothing new, though there have been times . . . notably the Renaissance and the eighteenth century . . . when the artist was regarded as a normal being like other men. Trilling attributes the view of the artist as a neurotic to the values of the bourgeois philistine culture of the nineteenth century and to such artists as Zola, Auden, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, and Verlaine, whose obsession with their "selves" often created and fostered this misconception. Drawing upon Freud himself, he stoutly refutes this view of the artist's personality by arguing that neurosis is not a special

condition of the artist alone; that scientists, businessmen, lawyers, indeed all men, suffer from it in some degree or other :

> Let us expressly emphasize that we have never considered Leonardo as a neurotic . . . We no longer believe that health and disease, normal and nervous, are sharply distinguished from each other. We know today that neurotic symptoms are substitutive formations from certain repressive acts which must result in the course of our development from the child to the cultural man, that we all produce such substitutive formations, and that only the amount, intensity, and distribution of these substitutive formations justify the practical conception of illness . . .[3]

In *Sincerity and Authenticity* he again asserts that "neurosis is of the very nature of the mind. Its intensity varies from individual to individual . . . "[4]

With disarming logic he goes on to argue that neurosis cannot account for merely intellectual success or failure or limitation but will necessarily explain the vast mass of mediocrity as well. He asserts that it is not only the artist, and a genius at that, who is afflicted with neurosis but indeed all society is involved in neurosis: "If we make the neurosis-power equivalence at all, we must make it in every field of endeavour. Logician, economist, botanist, physicist, theologian . . . no profession may be so respectable or so remote or so rational as to be exempt from the psychological interpretation" (LI, p. 171).

Trilling recognises that there is a connection between neurosis and art, and, accepting Saul Rosenzweig's application of this theory to Henry James, admits that the "reference to the neurosis of his personal life does indeed tell us something about the latent intention of his work and thus about the reason for something which interests us" (*LI*, p. 173). But he cannot accept Rosenzweig's conclusion that James's literary power was derived from his injury early in life and the sexual castration it is believed to have caused.[5] He reasons that

> If genius and its source are what we are dealing with, we must observe that the reference to neurosis tells us nothing about James's passion, energy, and devotion, nothing about his architectonic skills, nothing about the other themes that were important to him which are not connected with his unconscious concern with castration. We cannot, that is, make the writer's inner life exactly equivalent to his power of expressing it. Let's grant, for the sake of argument, that the literary genius, as distinguished from other men, is the victim of a 'mutilation' and that his fantasies are neurotic. It does not then follow as the inevitable next step that his ability to express these fantasies and to impress us with them is neurotic, for that ability is what we mean by his genius. Anyone might be injured as Henry James was, and might also respond to the injury as James is said to

have done, and yet might not have his literary power . . . the reference to the artist's neurosis tells us something about the material on which the artist exercises his powers, and even something about his reasons for bringing his powers into play, but it does not tell us anything about the source of his power, it makes no causal connection between them and the neurosis. And if we look into the matter, we see that there is in fact no causal connection between them. For still granting that the poet is uniquely neurotic, what is surely not neurotic, what indeed suggests nothing but health, is his power of using his neuroticism. He shapes his fantasies, he gives them social form and referenoe. (*LI*, p. 173).

In saying this Trilling also explicitly rejects the theory propounded by Edmund Wilson in *The Wound and the Bow*,[6] the theory that is the unifying strand running through the various essays in Wilson's book, and denies that Freud's conception of neurosis is that of a wound. The wound, he argues, is a state of passivity, whereas for Freud neurosis is an activity, a conflict. If neurosis is a conflict between different elements in the unconscious, then there can be no neurosis in the absence of such conflict. The condition of neurosis exists only when there is a conflict :

> A neurotic conflict cannot ever be either meaningless or merely personal, it must be understood as exemplifying cultural forces of great moment, and this is true of any neurotic coflict at all. To be sure, some neuroses may be more interesting than others, perhaps because they are fiercer or more inclusive, no doubt the writer who makes a claim upon our interest is a man who by reason of the energy and significance of the forces in struggle within him provides us with the largest representation of the culture in which we, with him, are involved, his neurosis may be thought of as having a connection of concomitance with his literary powers. (*LI*, pp. 178–79)

He goes on to cite Freud in his essay on Dostoevsky that "neurosis . . . comes into being all the more readily the richer the complexity which has to be controlled by his ego" (*LI*, pp. 179). But while accepting the fact of the richer complexity of the elements of the conflict within the artist, Trilling again asserts the normality of artistic power because clinical litrature on psychoanalysis suggests that richness and complexity of conflicting elements may be found in ordinary men, i.e., non-artists as well.

In "Art and Neurosis", again, Trilling's contribution as a literary critic is that he was among the very first to recognize the pioneering role of psychoanalysis in restoring respectability to the artist as a normal man. Furthermore, he rescued the artisttc gift from the cobwebs of the disease-genius connection. In doing this he also underlined the eed to look elsewhere for the secret of the litrary power.

Trilling's most important contribution in establishing the significance of Freud's theory of the mind, however, is perhaps in demonstrating that this theory provides a solid basis for a major theme in all literature, especially modern litrature. The prime concern of Freud's theory is the "self" and,as Trilling remarks, "in almost every developed society, literature is able to conceive of the self, and the selfhood of the others far more intensively than the general culture ever can."[7] and again :

> The truth we especially expect literature to convey to us by its multifarious mode of communication is the truth of the self, and also the truth about the self, about the conditions of its existence, its survival, its development. For literature, as for Freud, the self is the first prime object of attention and solicitude. The culture in which the self has its existence is a matter of the liveliest curiosity, but in a secondary way, as an essential condition of the self, as a chief object of the self's energies, or as representing the aggregation of selves. But for litrature, as for Freud, the test of the culture is always the individual self, not the other way around. The function of literature, through all its mutations has been to make us aware of the particularity of selves, and the high authority of the self in its quarrel with its society and its culture.[8]

This is an extremely perceptive statement about the ramifications of Freudian thought to the deepest source of an important concern in modern literature and its implications for the general culture. It also accounts for Trilling's life-long interest in psychoanalysis in relation to literature as well as to culture in general. A substantial part of Trilling's own reflections upon literature has been informed by his advocacy of the individual self in its quarrel with the surrounding culture. While he notes that in its projection of this quarrel literature is in a sense subversive, he finds in Freud's theory a basis for investing the individual self with a respectability and authority the origins of which are rooted in the human psyche itself. It is here that Trilling's psychoanalytical and cultural approaches to literature meet.

But Trilling also makes his mistakes. First, though Freud did declare on his seventieth birthday that the unconscious had been discovered before him by poets and philosophers and that what he discovered was only the scientific method by which the unconscious could be studied, Trilling is not quite convincing when he makes out psychoanalysis to be an outgrowth of the romantic literature of the nineteenth century. The romantic writer did undoubtedly examine his inner life a great deal and did often talk and write about it. But that is at a far remove from the proven existence of the unconscious and its

different elements as established through scientific verification. In his zeal to make out a case for the literature of nineteenth-centurv romanticism as a crucial factor in the genesis of psychoanalysis, Trilling goes so far as to say that "psychoanalysis is one of the culminations of the Romanticist literature of the nineteenth century. If there is perhaps a contradiction in the idea of science standing upon the shoulders of a literature which avows itself inimical to science in so many ways, the contradiction will be resolved if we remember that this literature, despite its avowals, was itself scientific in at least the sense of being passionately devoted to a research into the self" (*LI*, p. 35).

Here Trilling is clearly stretching the definition of science to prove a point derived from a too literal acceptance of Freud's famous birth-anniversary remark. Surprisingly, he excludes not merely nineteenth-century science, which was a greater influence on Freud's findings, he altogether neglects nineteenth-century knowledge and habits of thought in the other branches of intellectual activity as well. As Louis Fraiberg notes, "the claims of science, of religion, and political and social thought cannot be so easily dismissed."[9] But it is not difficult to see the reason for Trilling's earlier overemphasis on nineteenth-century romanticism as the source of Freud's discovery of psychoanalysis. As a zealous liberal humanist Trilling devoutly espoused the basic unity of all knowledge and his ardent passion for literature sometimes misled him into exaggerating its influence. Thus it is that he can make a sweeping statement such as that "the effect of Freud upon literature has been no greater than the effect of literature upon Freud" (*LI*, p. 34). Though only a few lines later he contradicts himself :

> A lack of specific evidence prevents us from considering the particular literary 'influence' upon the founder of psychoanalysis and, besides, when we think of the men who so clearly anticipated many of Freud's own ideas—Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, for example—and then learn that he did not read their works until after he had formulated his own theories, we must see that particular influence cannot be in question here but that what we must deal with is nothing less than a whole *Zeitgeist*, a direction of thought. (*LI*, pp. 34-35).

Perhaps unconsciously, he ends up ascribing the source of the influence on Freud vaguely to the nineteenth-century "ethos". This tendency to find tenuous and not always legitimate connections between Freudian science and literature repeats itself when he endorses Wilhelm Fleiss's view that Freud's scientific interest was "based on a firm foundation of the humanities."[10]

Trilling is also less than accurate when he accuses Freud of not having realized that a work of art cannot be explained by psychoanalysis alone. On the contrary, in his essay on Dostoevsky, Freud declares that "before the problem of the creative artist analysis must, alas, lay down its arms."[11] And elsewhere Freud clearly admits that there are two aspects of literature that psychoanalysis cannot even pretend to explain—the nature of the artistic gift and artistic technique.[12] Furthermore, Freud also recognizes that the artist returns to the reality of everyday world when he is not busy composing the fantasy world of art.

On balance, though, Trilling has done valuable service both to psychoanalysis and to literature not only through his two major essays on the subject but through his scattered references to it in the context of literature throughout his career as a critic. Particularly useful is his application of his personal gifts as a critic—the resources of an electic critical attitude, an objective and discriminating intelligence, and the uncanny or, in his case, not so uncanny ability to demonstrate that regardless of how good one particular approach to literature might be, it had to be aided and completed by other approaches, that no theory, however comprehansive and scientific. could afford to reject other ways of reading a literery text or understanding a writer's personality.

University of Jodhpur,
Jodhpur.

Notes

1. Lionel Trilling, *The Liberal Imagination* (New York : Viking, 1951), p. 34. Subsequent references to this eassy are from this edition and are incorporated in the text.
2. Quoted in *The Liberal Imagination,* p. 45.
3. Quoted in *The Liberal Imagination* pp. 175-76.
4. Lionel Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 143.
5. Saul Rosenzweig, "The Ghost of Henry James", *Partisan Review* 11, No. 4 (Fall 1944), 436-55.
6. Edmund Wilson, *The Wound and the Bow* (New York : Oxford University Press, 1965). Basing his theory on the myth of Philoctetes, Wilson sees a direct and close connection between disease and genius. Physical deprivation of suffering, he believes, generates compensatory powers in some other function; in this case, the artistic.
7. Lionel Trilling, *Freud and the Crisis of Our Culture* (Boston : The Beacon Press, 1955), p. 19.
8. *Ibid.,* pp. 32-33.
9. Louis Fraiberg, *Psychoanalysis and American Literary Criticism* (Detroit : Wayne State University Press, 1960), p. 204.
10. Trilling, *Freud and the Crisis of Our Culture,* p. 13.
11. Sigmund Freud, "Dostoevsky and Parricide," tr. D. F. Tait, *Collected Papers* (London : Hogarth Press, 1950), V. 222.
12. Quoted in *The Liberal Imagination.*
13. *The Liberal Imagination,* p. 45. Interestingly, Trilling himself quotes Freud as saying that the artist is different from the average neurotic in that the artist can "once more get a firm foothold in reality."
14. See Frederick J. Hoffman, *Freudianism and the Literary Mind,* 1945) rpt. Baton Rouge : Louisiana State University Press, 1957). Hoffman makes a serious and grossly unfair omission in not including Trilling in his list of the pioneering American critics who demonstrated the significance of Freudian psychology to an understanding of literature and the literary artist. Curiously, even in the revised editon Hoffman does not correct this omission.

Canvas : 324 UP

The train is hot dust memories.
From your seat I look out.
A dark rolls over and over.
I want you to speak
rinse me of aches of expectations.

Stubborn, you sit
another face in a window, alone :
a serious girl in a quiet seat
beneath sleeping berths
by unglazed window frames.
You seem to opt fot it.

Your hair is combed out to a shawl
cascading in folds down to the stain-
checkered railway compartment floor.
I cross the path of your reverie.

You hold a book, half-closed,
one finger keeping the page.
A dialogue suggests itself in your
downcast eyes. In the incline of
your hair, I see moving
gestures in small uneasy honds.

I hold a mine of words
about to explode. A distant moonlit
night silhouettes against still
patches of silence.

Dhruvakumar Joshi

Yeats's Theory of Drama

Massodul Hasan

Unlike his unacknowledged literary mentors, the French Symbolists, Yeats saw literature both as a medium of discovering metaphysical reality and a vehicle of psychic and artistic reform. Being an idealist, he felt unhappy with the superficiality, pettymindedness, commercialism and lack of cultural consciousness in contemporary Irish society. While the Fennians struggled and strived for the retrieval of Ireland's political prestige, Yeats simultaneously and jointly with some of them added a cultural dimension as well to the movement. He rightly stressed that political independence alone was not enough for the realisation of national entity, which could be actualised fully through a sense of continuity and a rediscovery of the national heritage. Accordingly, he considered such a psychic revitalisation of people indispensable for an actual and lasting reconstruction of his country. So he devoted his early poetry and plays to the task of transforming the taste and sensibilities of his countrymen. Since this objective could be achieved more effectively and expeditiously through visual arts with a wider and readier appeal to people at large, he founded the Abbey Theatre in collaboration with Lady Gregory, Synge and a few other like-minded writers. The venture familiarised him with the problems of play-writing and the limitations of conventional stage-craft. He was dissatisfied with contemporary theatre-art, and undertook to reform it through his numerous critical and creative works. But a proper appreciation of these contributions had to wait for many years as Yeats's tall poetic stature continued to overshadow his position as a playwright. It is, however, from the sixties onwards that serious critical attention has been consistently paid to his plays,[1] particulary after their variorum edition by R. K. Alspach (1966). But even this treatment centres mainly round his theories about, and experiments in, dramaturgy, and the message and

symbolism of his plays. By and large, his dramatic theory has remained neglected in spite of his numerous statements about the substance, nature and function of drama. A brief appraisal of these concepts and views is, therefore, needed, and it may even offer a fresh perspective on his dramatic practice and achievement.

Speaking to a delegatlon of the British Association on a visit to the Abbey Theatre in September 1908, Yeats spelt out the objectives of the Irish Theatre Movement in these words :

> We are trying to put upon the stage in playing as in play-writing the life of this country, not in a slavish copy of it as in a photograph, but a joyous, extravagant, imaginative image as in an impressionistic painting-[2]

Yeats's special motives naturally introduced a national bias in this abridged manifesto, which also suggests that drama's raw material grows on the writer's native soil. This fact was also indicated in a lecture 'The Ideal Theatre' delivered in April 1899 in which Yeats attributed the excellence of Scandinavian drama to its being rooted in the "legends and the folk songs and the folk traditions of the country". (*UP.*, p. 155). As one of his main grievances against contemporary Irish literature, particularly drama, was its alienation from its national context, a restoration of these vital links was his cherished ideal :

> I worked through the drama, through a commingling of verse and dance, through singing that was also speech, through what I called the applied arts of literature, to plunge back into social life.[3]

Drama, as such, has a dual and reciprocal relation with life. It derives its material and sustenance from community's life, and in return nourishes and fertilises it. Elsewhere too Yeats refers to drama as the "most vivid image of life" and a record of "a moment of intense life" (*B. & C.* p. 103).

But Yeats did not visualise social reality merely as a static, soulless historicity or factuality in time. He disapproved of the incursions of frigid, sophisticated realism into art, and preferred to see it tinged with imagination and romance. Factual or external reality is dull, drab and uninspiring unless it springs from man's own intimate experience—it is reality touched with poetry, and Yeats suggested it as the base of true drama, as is evident from these remarks :

> The play that is to give them a quite natural pleasure should tell them either of their own life, or that life of poetry where

every man can see his own image, because there alone does human nature escape from arbitrary conditions". (*P. & C*, p. 32)

But even while concerned with the life of common people, a dramatist should not deal with social lineaments realistically. In spite of its apparent strategic externalism drama remains "a picture of the soul of man, and not of his exterior life" (*UP*, p. 297). Drama, as such. Is a map of a community's inner weather, and Yeats's own plays reiterate this truth. Therefore, an objective reflection of individual experience merges with the universal, investing drama with immense spiritual magnitude, and renders a dramatic masterpiece into "a portion of the conscience of mankind·"

That Yeats held a sublime and spiritualistic concept of drama is also indicated by his preoccupation with symbolism and his reference to it in a letter to Lady Gregory as "a mysterious art" (*P. & C*, p. 213). His view of a subtle, inexplicable, but nevertheless undeniable inter-relationship between the artistic components of a play also points in the same direction. Undoubtedly, a play subsumes a pattern of unity, but it is not just a mechanical close structuring of scenes and movements, nor the organic unity produced by coherence of throught. On the other hand, it is comparable to the deeper unity in mathematical concepts and problems. Yeats hinted in a letter to his father written on 14th June 1918 :

> A play looks easy, but is full of problems which are almost a part of mathematics French dramatists display this structure and seventeenth century English dramatists disguise it, but it is always there. In some strange way, which I have never understood, a play does not ever read well if it has not this mathematics.[5]

Drama is a dual art. As a written composition it belongs to the domain of literature, but the inherent problems of histrionics link it with theatre-art also. The dramaturgic reforms proposed by Yeats, and his bold rejection of conventional stage-property may seem to suggest that he approached drama primarily from the point of view of the theatre-artist. But the following remarks dispel any such mis-reading of his intention and views :

> Our plays must be literature or written in the spirit of literature. The modern threatre has died away to what it is because the writers have thought of their audiences instead of their subject. (*P. & C*, p. 117)

In fact, he did not see any essential antagonism between the two, though obviously he attached greater importance to the dramatic

qualities of a play rather than its theatrical elements. The drastic cut in stage machinery effected by him was mainly directed towards the elimination of artificial intrusions between the artist and his audience. Yeats adopted the *Noh* technique also in order to ensure an unimpaired mediumistic role of symbolism in his plays. This is also borne out by his specific reference to drama as a "joyous, extravagant, imaginative image". His concept of a play, therefore, is primarily 'literary' rather than theatrical in character.

Apart from sybolism, Yeats prescribed "extravagant" treatment of reality as an essential technique of dramatic art, particularly useful in the type of plays that he wanted to write. This extravagance consisted of exaggeration which he considered even germane to art, as explained in his article on people's theatre :

> An artisan or a small shopkeeper feels, I think, when he sees upon our Abbey stage men of his own trade, that they are represented as he himself would represent them if he had the gift of expression. I do not mean that he sees his own life expounded there without exaggeration, for exaggeration is selection and the more passionate the art the more marked is the selection, but he does not feel that he has strayed into some other man's seat.[6] Exaggeration, therefore, is an integral part of the role of imagination in drama.

About the difference between tragedy and comedy Yeats held an interesting and philosophical view. To him the difference between the two was one of spiritual orientation rather than of form or of the opposition between happiness and unhappiness. One implies fusion, the other fragmentation and isolation. He wrote :

> Tragedy must always be a drowning and breaking of the dykes that separate man from man, and it is upon these dykes comedy keeps house ...[7]

Great tragedy is obviously cosmic in sympathy and apocalyptic in effect. It demolishes psychic barriers between man and man, while comedy emanates from at least partially insulating the individuality of the dramatis personae, and thrives on discrepancies and disjunctions among people. Initially, indomitability is the essence of the tragic hero, and he has a touch of the Neitzschean superman. But ultimately he has to discover and establish right relationship with the universe.[8]

Evidently a dramatist interested in the life or legends of a country builds up a play around an idea or a fable. But he should not work through a direct exposition of the central idea; his real concern is with the emotion evoked by the idea. Yeats disapproved of statement

or even direct enactment of a thought as a dramatic device, and he cautioned Brinsley MaCnamara against it :

> We should not as a rule have to say things for their own sake in a play but for the sake of emotion. The idea should be inherent in the fable (*Letters*, p. 657).

Yeats tried to reproduce this delicate, quintessential emotion in his own plays, and maintained that it could be communicated effectively through suggestion and symbol alone : "I would like to keep to suggestion,to symbolism, to a pattern like the Japanese" (*UP*, p. 401). This artistic emotion arises from objectivity and sincerity of experience in all creative activity, but more particularly in a poetic play. Mawkishness and affectation only debase and impoverish art, and this truth could be noticed in contemporary Irish drama. But the work of his own friends like Edward Martyn, Alic Milligan and George Moore, possessed this virtue, and he complimented them for it :

> . . .Whatever be their merit they are written with sincerity, as one writes literature, and one writes for the Theatre of Commerce. (*UP*, p. 197).

In an article 'The Play, the Player, and the Scene' Yeats made a rather controversial remark about the centrality of poetic vision in literature :

> All art is founded upon a personal vision, and the greater the art the more surprising the vision; and all bad art is founded upon impersonal types and images, accepted by average men and women out of imaginative poverty and timidity, or the exhaustion that comes from labour. (*P. & C*, p. 154).

In view of drama being a branch of art, and in view of Yeats's desire to approximate it with literature one is led to believe in the supreme importance of vision in dramatic works. Of course, it is the poetic vision that makes it possible for the dramatist to produce an "imaginative image" of life, and to attach emotion to the idea or fable of the play. In Yeats's own plays the role of vision is evident in the representation of the characters of Cathalean, Deirdre and Cuchulain and in the treatment of legends associated with them. However, as 'personal vision' may involve an element of subjectivity too, it raises certain problems especially because of Yeats's repeated emphasis on objectivity of conception and treatment as an essential quality of drama. He wrote to Edmund Dulac in July 1937, "All my life I have tried to get rid of modern subjectivity by insisting on construction and contemporary world and syntax" (*Letters*, p. 892), The point is reiterated elsewhere too :

> The dramatist must picture life in action, with an unpreoccupied mind, as the musician pictures her in sound and the sculptor in form (*P. & C*, p. 103).

Moreover, this theory of 'personal vision' seems to run counter to his better known theory of objectivity and masks of the artist. But this apparent contradiction may be resolved if one remembers that this 'personal vision' is not determined by the dramatist's personal views and leanings; it is the distillation of that poetic and aesthetic personality that is instilled in the artist in moments of creative experience. A dramatist's vision, in spite of its being 'personal', in the sense that it is particular and peculiar to the individual artist, is neutralised by the 'historicity' and the actual nature of the event or fable on which the play is constructed. Yeats tried to explain this paradox in a letter to Sean O'casy dated 20th April 1928 :

> Among the things that dramatic action must burn up are the auother's opinions; while he is writing he has no business to know anything that is not a portion of that action. Do you suppose for one moment that Shakespeare educated Hamlet and King Lear by telling them what he thought and believed ? As I see it, Hamlet and Lear educate him by thinking and studying everything that gives them the language they are groping for through his hands and eyes, but the control must be theirs, and that is why the ancient philosophers thought a poet or dramatist Diamon–possessed". (*Letters*, p. 741)

Yeats's own plays embody and illustrate this vision and artistic objectivity.

Strictly speaking, Yeats's suggestions and attempts for the reform of theatre lie beyond the scope of this paper. But since most of these reforms aimed at retaining and heightening the dramatic effect of plays, a brief reference to some of them may not be entirely irrelevant. The main thrust of these changes in theatre-craft and stage-structure was in the direction of simplicity in order to employ the symbolic mode of presentation. Realism dispels and destroys symbolic effect, so Yeats intended to "make a theatre where realism would be impossible". (*UP*, p. 293), and he readily accepted Gordon Craig's innovative scenery-designs as they signified "an abolition of realism" in the stage-effect (*UP*, p. 394). Similarly, his reference for the stage shaped like a half-closed fan (*UP*, p. 250) and rejection of "all painted light and shadow" (*U.P*, p. 383) were motivated not only by theatrical considerations, but also by the need of dramatic communication and requirements of the themes and inner atmosphere of his plays. The necessity of simplified acting also arose from the urgency of suggesting remoteness from real

life so vital to poetic drama. Even some prose plays like his own *The Hour Glass*, required this simplification of stage machinery for the same reason (*P. & C*, pp. 4J-48). This debunking of realism and predilection for simplicity was further accentuated by his belief in the innate beauty of simplicity : "Beautiful art is always simpler and graver and quieter than daily life" (UP, p. 285).

Emphasis on the primary of word and speech figures prominently in Yeats's views on histrionics. He considered words more valuble than gesture–"We must make speech even more important than gesture" (*P. & C*, p. 47)–and believed that the actor's "principal power" lay in his voice rather than physical movements (*UP*, p. 367). So he wished to revive oratory particularly in poetic drama which had become "a lost art upon the stage" (UP., p. 203). Equally important is the language, the principal medium of a literary artist. Yeats recommended the use of language that suited and revealed the character in its totality. Thought or emotion and diction should coalesce with and complement each other. A mastery of this subtle chemistry of language is one of the prime qualifications of a dramatist :

> One must be able to make a king of faery or an old countryman or a modern lover speak that language which is his and nobody else's and speak it with so much of emotional subtlety that the hearer may find it hard to know whether it is the thought or the word that has moved him, or whether these could be separated at all. (*P. & C*, p. 46)

It is obvious that Yeats's interest in language and the power of speech was based on literary and dramatic rather than merely theatrical considerations. After all, he reminds us in 'Samhain–1902', literature is basically heightened verbalisation of thought and emotion :

> "Let us go back in everything to the spoken word, even though we have to speak our lyrics to the psaltry or the harp, for, as A.E. says, we have begun to forget that literature is but recorded speech. . ." (*P. & C*, p. 31).

This compulsive interest in language and dialogue is reflected in his poetry as well, and about two-thirds of his poems are patently dramatic in tone. [10]

Yeats conceived and handled drama as tool a of education and edification. To him literature was the "great teaching power of the world, the ultimate creator of all values", and this was true not only of scriptures but of all imaginative secular literature including drama.[11] Though as the most effective literary form drama possessed this educative potential in an exceptional measure, by its very nature it had to be completely free from obtrusive didacticism :

> Drama, the most immediately powerful form of literature, the most vivid image of life, finds itself opposed, as no other form of literature does, to those enemies of life, the chimeres of the Pulpit and the Press (*P. & C.*, p. 60).

Like other literary forms drama too does not have any 'palpable designs' on the audience, and works subtly through its revealing and suggestive power. It stirs the intellect, and exercises a liberating effect on the individual and national psyche, which generates refinement and deeper consciousness in the community. Discovering and emphasising this value of drama, Yeats wanted to create now theatre in Ireland :

> "...(plays) that will make the theatre a place of intellectual excitement—a place where the mind goes to be liberated as it was liberated by the theatres of Greece and England and France at certain great moments of their history, and as it is liberated in Scandenavia today". (*P. & C*, p. 45)

Drama's role as a generator of culture and emancipator of mind is further elucidated in an essay 'A People's Theatre' contributed by Yeats to *The Irish Stateman* in 1912. He points out that by awakening dormant susceptibilities of the people drama animates their imagination and stimulates self-expression and self-realization. He visualized the ultimate goal of drama as "the making articulate of all the dumb classes each with its own knowledge of the world, its own dignity..." (Bentley, p. 331).

Thus, according to Yeats, drama is a means of collective psychic therapy as well. He inputed the vulgarity and crass commercialism of his countrymen to the abuse of democracy and policies of degenerate politicians :

> "Ireland has suffered more than England from democracy, for since the Wild Geese fled, who might have grown to be leaders in manners and taste has had but political leaders" (Bentley, pp. 336–337).

He proposed to remedy the *malaise* by changing people's attitudes through art and drama, and devised his theory and works accordingly.

With this end in view Yeats commended the role of even parochial drama on the ground that it enabled the audiennce to see their national identity in sharper focus, which led to a richer and more intimate appreciation of other cultural patterns. Irishmen, it was hoped, would learn to write admirably about other countries when they had learnt "to utter the personality of their country" in their own plays (*UP*, p. 141). But Yeats wanted this cultural conversion to begin on a

selective basis. Everyone is not capable of a generative receptivity of art, though the cultural transmission is meant for a much larger audience. The limitation enjoined an elitist theory of drama, and Yeats had to restrict himself to the objective of generating "a feeling of exclusiveness, a bond among chosen spirits, a mystery almost for leisured and lettered people" (Bentley, p. 336).

Yeats's theory of drama originated from his reaction against the trend of obsessive realism in English theatre as represented by Pinero, Jones and Shaw. As against the then popular modes of statement, criticism, irony and inuendo, he insisted on the utility of suggestiveness, and pleaded for grounding drama in national myths and archetypes of human experience. Though not quite in sympathy with the cult of the problem play he readily endorsed and adopted Ibsen's technique. Like Wagner, Yeats also attached feeling rather than intellect or idea with drama. While admitting its aesthetic genesis, he valued drama chiefly as a repository of poetry and an instrument of cultural transformation.

Aligarh Muslim University
Aligarh

Notes

1. Some of these significant studies are : P. Ure, *Yeats the Playwright* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, Lind, 1963); S.B. Bushrui, Yeats's Verse Plays : The Revisions 1900-1910 (Oxford at Clarendon, 1965); D.R. Clerk, *W. B. Yeats and The Theatre of Desolate Reality* (Dublin, 1965); Akhtar Qamber, *Yeats and the Noh* Weatherhill, New York, 1974); Reg Skene, *The Cuchulain plays of W.B. Yeats* (Macmillan, 1974); George Mills Harper, *The Mingling of Heaven and Earth-Yeats's Theory of Theatre* (Dulbin, 1975); A.N. Jeffares & A. S. Knowland, *A Commentary on the Collected Plays of W.B. Yeats* (Stanford U. Press, 1975); James W.B. Flanney, *Yeats and the Idea of Threatre–The Early Abbey Theatre in Theory and Practice* (Macmillan, Toronto, 1976); R. Taylor, *The Drama of W.B. Yeats : Irish Myth and the Japanese No* (Yale U. Press, 1976); Andrew Parkin, *The Dramatic Imagination of W. B. Yeats* (Gill & Macmillan, New York, 1978).

2. *Uncollected Prose of W B. Yeats*, ed. John F. Frayne & Colton Johnson (Macmillan, 1975), P. 367. Subsequent references are indicated in the text under the abbreviation *UP*.

3. Extract from *Pages from a Diary*, quoted by Peter Ure, *Yeats the playwright* (1963) as an epigraph to the work.

4. W.B. Yeats, *Plays and Controversies* (Macmillan, Lond. 1923) p. 60. Subsequent references to the work are indicated in the text under the abbreviation P. & C.

5. W.B. Yeats, *Letters* ed. Allen Wade (Rupert Hart-Davis, Lond. 1954) p. 649. Abbreviatsed in the text as *Letters*.

6. W.B. Yeats, 'A People's Theatre' in *The Theory of the Modern Drama*, ed. by Eric Bentley, (Penguin, 1969/1979 reprint), p. 329. Abbreviated in the text as Bentley.

7. Quoted by Una Ellis Fermor, *The Irish Dramatic Movement*, (Lond. 1931), p. 87.

8. J R. Moore, 'The Idea of a Yeats Play, *W.B. Yeats Centenary Essays*, ed. D.E.S. Maxwell & S.B. Bushrui (Ibadan U. Press, 1965), p. 156.

9. For a detailed treatment of Craig's influence *see* Rege Skean, *The Cuchulain Plays of W.B. Yeats* (Macmillan, 1974), pp. 110-119.

10. Anrdew Parkin, *The Dramatic Imagination of W.B. Yeats* (Gill & Macmillan, 1978), p. 38.

11. W.B. Yeats, *Explorations* (Selected by Mrs. B.W. Yeats; Macmillan) P. 117.

Love and Imagination in A Midsummer Night's Dream

Rajnath

The central theme of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has been subjected to extended discussions, and though the critics tend to disagree on certain points, most of them agree that love, particularly love-madness, lies at the centre of the play. Ernest Schanzer expresses such a view in his remark that "love-madness is the central theme of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*."[1] H. B. Charlton expresses an identical view,[2] while R. W. Dent holds that the artistic imagination is also one of the central themes of the play, and demonstrates how in love the imagination is an irrational influence, whereas in art it is a disciplining force..[3]

The main weakness of the above critics is their sweeping generalization. There is no denying that love-madness is one of the themes of the play, but Shakespeare has also portrayed lovers who do not suffer from it. Love-madness itself may take a moderate form, as in the case of the Athenian lovers, or an extreme form as in the case of the fairy queen, Titania. Though critics have commented on Theseus as lover,[4] Bottom as lover has received little attention. As regards the other theme of the play, the world of art, most critics have discussed it rather casually, not realizing that this is almost as important as the theme of love. Love and art practically alternate in the play, and the final act is devoted almost exclusively to art. While critics have related Theseus's longish speech at the beginning of the fifth act to the four Athenian lovers,[5] they have not sufficiently realized the relevance of this speech to the play-within-the-play, "Pyramus and Thisby". Though Dent takes stock of the world of art as one of the two themes of the play, he fails to distinguish between the different kinds of arts that Shakespeare describes in the play. In the present essay I propose to demonstrate the different kinds of lovers and

the different kinds of artists delineated in the play and the relationship that Shakespeare establishes between them. My main argument is that Shakespeare has described three kinds of lovers and three kinds of artists in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and that the artists are the counterparts of the lovers. As Theseus asserts, there are similarities between lovers and poets, but Theseus himself goes awry, as do Shakespeare critics, in believing that there is only one kind of lover and only one kind of poet.

Taking our cue from Theseus's speech we can say that there is a kind of lover who can be grouped with the madman. But who in the play behaves precisely like a lunatic ? The four Athenian lovers do not, though their rational faculty is slightly loosened resulting in the shift of their love from one person to another and their exaggerated protestation of love. When I make this point, I do not mean only their behaviour under the influence of love-philtre which only extends their earlier demeanour. Demetrius transferred his love from Helena to Hermia for no obvious reasons, while Lysander transferred his love from Hermia to Helena under the influence of love-juice. Of the exaggerated profession of love, the best example is Demetrius's speech (III, 2, 137-44) where he finds crystal muddy compared with the eyes of Helena and the white snow of Taurus black compared with her hands. Demetrius and Lysander may have suffered from the kind of loosening of reason suggested by midsummer madness, but they cannot be likened to lunatics : their rational faculty never completely gives way, not even under the influence of love-juice[6]. But there is one character who completely loses her reason, namely Titania. When Theseus says that

> The lover, all as frantic,
> Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt (V, 1, 10-11)

he contrasts beauty with ugliness. One can argue that "Helen" sugggests Helena, who is fair, and "brow of Egypt" points to Hermia who is dark, but this is certainly not Theseus's intention. Whatever may be the difference in complexion between Helena and Hermia, the latter is not altogether ugly transformed into a beauty by Lysander's love. Helena herself says in her soliloquy that "Through Athens I am thought as fair as she (Hermia). "(I, 1,227), which is to say that both are considered equally fair. There is a striking parallelism between Helena's and Theseus's views on love. Like Theseus, Helena says :

> Things base and vile, holding no quantity,
> Love can tranpose to form and dignity. (I, 1, 232-33)

This reminds one of Theseus's utterance above. Again, the generalized utterance should not be taken as applying to Hermia. Like Theseus, Helena is talking of love in general and of the transformation that it is capable of bringing about.

As has been said, Titania alone suffers from the kind of love-lunacy that Helena and Theseus speak of. If there is any lover whose reason is completely gone, it is Titania who finds beauty in the shape of an ass and feels enamoured of its voice. She is the one who finds beauty in ugliness and thus bears out the truth of the views of both Theseus and Helena, the former thinking that love is madness and the latter that it is blindness. Between the speeches of Theseus and Helena Shakespeare has suggested that the lover is both mad and blind, not literally but only in the sense that his rational faculty is dominated by his emotions. That Titania's reason is completely dominated by her emotions is witnessed by her lover himself who, responding to the praises being lavished on him, says : "methinks, mistress, you should have little reason for that. And yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together now-a-days". (III, 1, 132–34).

If Titania's reason is completely crushed by her emotions, Bottom's emotion is atrophied by his reason. Of all the characters in the play Bottom is the most literal-minded person, and he is literal-minded in his response to both love and art. His remark that "reason and love keep little company together now-a-days" applies to himself just as to Titania. If Titania is all love, Bottom is all reason, not so much in the sense of rational faculty as in the sense of literal-minded, unimaginativeness. This explains why he fails to respond to the love of no less a person than the queen of the fairies. In a highly sensuous language Titania asks her attendant fairies to attend on Bottom, but Bottom's response to the fairies dissipates all the sensuous and imaginative wealth of the language. The symbolic significance of Cobweb, one of the fairies, is completely destroyed by the literal response of Bottom who can only think of staunching his blood with cobweb. In response to Titania's offer of caressing his cheeks, sticking muskroses on his head, and kissing his large ears, he only asks one of the attendant fairies, Peaseblossom, to scratch his head. One feels that Bottom is incapable of responding to love just as Titania, under the influence of love-juice, is incapable of reasoning.

We get a better idea of the different kinds of lovers in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* if we think in terms of love and reason, as Bottom does, rather than love and imagination as Dent does. At one extreme love is without reason, at the other reason is without love, and there is a medial position where love combines with reason. Thus there are two extreme forms of love, one each represented by Titania and Bottom, and a third form where the two extremes combine as represented by Theseus[7]. It is in Theseus that love and reason keep company, neither in Titania, nor in Bottom. Of course, there was a time when Theseus also suffered

from love-madness and had affairs with several women such as Perigenlia, Aegles, Ariadne, and Antiopa. But at the stage at which he is described in the play, he is certainly a disciplined lover. He controls his love for Hippolyta to such an extent that he can perform his duties as the head of the state, though he is going to wed the Amazon queen in four days' time.

Like love, imagination also takes on three different forms in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. At one extreme is the imagination without reason represented by the poet described by Theseus, at the other is reason without imagination in "Pyramus and Thisby", while Shakespeare himself emerges as the ideal poet who combines reason with imagination. The main flaw of "Pyramus and Thisby" is that it operates at the literal level, the text as well as the actors and the audience. To begin with, the language of the play is literal. The theme of "Pyramus and Thisby" is that of a tragedy, and the play is written in verse, but its language never attains the kind of poetic complexion that is expected in a tragedy. The language of the following lines, for example, is purely denotative with hardly any poetic property :

> O grim-look'd night ! O night with hue so black !
> O night, which ever art when day is not !
> O night, O night, alack, alack !
> I fear my Thisby's promise is forgot,
> And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,
> That stand'st between her father's ground and mine,
> Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,
> Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne (V, 1, 168-75)

The language here is deprived of poetic imagery as well as functional rhythm. Consequently the verse form seems out of place. and one feels that the ideas could have been better expressed in prose. "O night, which ever art when day is not" gives the literal meaning, while the repetition in the next line has no functional value.[8] In fact, the play of "Pyramus and Thisby" aims at destroying any connotations that it may obtain. Right at the outset of the play, the prologue tells the audience that "they can wonder at the show only till truth makes all things plain", and the wall says that it is not a wall but one Shout, and that

> This loam, this rough-cast, and this stone, doth show
> That I am the same wall, the truth is so, (V, 1, 160-61).

The characters in the play want to ensure that they appeal to the audience's reason, not to their imagination.

"Pyramus and Thisby" is a play where actors and audience appear as frequently as the characters and contribute to the literalism of the play. The most emphatic instance of the literalism of the action comes from Snug and Starvelling. Snug tells the audience in so many words that he is not a lion but Snug, the joiner, and Starvelling intimates them that he is himself the man in the moon which is represented by the lantern. With such statements to the audience the two characters destroy the dramatic illusion which a great dramatist like Shakespeare will try to create through language and other devices. Like the actors, the audience also contribute to the literalism of the play by responding to it on the literal level. Theseus's unimaginative comments on the performance of the play clearly suggest that he is out and out a literalist and as such incapable of responding to a work of art.[9] When Pyramus curses the wall, he remarks that the wall, being a human being, should curse back, not realizing that a man with loam, rough-cast, and stone is not the same person on the stage as in life, On the stage he is no longer a human being but the wall. Similarly his remark to Starvelling that he should be inside the lantern if he respresents the man in the moon is equally unimaginative, and also illogical. The lantern is the moon only symbolically, not literally, and the size of the man makes the argument of Theseus absurd. If the actors contribute to the literalism of the play by telling the audience their identity, particularly Theseus contribute to its literalism by taking the performance literally and not trying to "amend" it with their own imagination. Theseus's remark on the wall and Bottom's rejoinder to it is a fine meeting point of the two literalists.

If "Pyramus and Thisby" lacks the imagination, the poet described by Theseus is all imagination without reason. A successful work of art needs not only the imagination but reason to control and direct it. But Theseus's poet is grouped with the lunatic whose imagination, destitute of reason as it is, is uncontrolled and uncontrollable. A major difference between the poet and the madman is that the former controls his imagination and lends it an artistic form, while the latter is completely controlled by his imagination. There is no doubt that the poet has something in common with the madman in the sense that both can imagine things which transcend the circumambient reality. But the poet goes beyond the madman in that he is also conscious of what he is imaginining. In fact, the words that Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Theseus remind one at once of Plato's definition of the poet in the *Ion*.[10] Whatever may be the source of Shakespeare's knowledge, there is no denying that Theseus's view of the poet is Plantonic, and Shakespeare, being a poet himself, will not find it tenable.

Shakespeare's own *A Midsummer Night's Dream* minus "Pyramus and Thisby" is by contrast a play where the imagination combines with reason. One can safely argue that Shakespeare is in the world of the imagination what Theseus is in the world of love. Unlike "Pyramus and Thisby", *A Midsummer Night's Dream*[12] is highly imaginative, rich in imagery and rhythm and in the connotative properties of the language. The uncontrolled imagination will end in mere raving, but the controlled imagination of an artist like Shakespeare gets proper direction from reason. It is this faculty of reason which will distinguish Shakespeare from the kind of poet described by Theseus. We can best understand the union of reason and the imagination comparing *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with "Pyramus and Thisby". One of the devices that prove fatal in "Pyramus and Thisby" is the change of identity. The actors make sure that the audience know that they are actors and not the characters whose roles they are playing. This is particularly true of Shout, Snug, and Starvelling playing the roles of the Wall, the Lion, and Moonshine respectively. Bottom, the supreme literalist, also comes out of his role as Pyramus to silene Theseus when the latter suggests that the wall, being alive, should curse back Pyramus. As has been pointed out, the mechanicals lack the imagination and as such are all out to destroy any illusion on the stage. Shakespeare, on the contrary, knows the value of the imagination and the fact that for its proper functioning it must needs be accompained by reason. He knows that comedy, unlike tragedy, pivots on the change of identity. Tragedy must create a sense of invitability so that since the very inception the audience know the disaster the tragic hero is heading for. In the classical tragedy the sense is created by the omnipotent Destiny that inexorably directs human action, while Shakespeare creates it by lending a definite, an irrevocable, shape to the personality of the tragic hero. We know at the very beginning of *King Lear* the way the King is going to behave in the future and the sufferings that he will cause himself with this type of behaviour. But in a comedy the change of identity is a must so that the audience can always expect a turn for the happy ending of the play and the characters in it. The change of identity may be as simple as the shifting of one's love from one person to another, or as complex as the discovery of someone's disguise or the character behind the actor. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the change of identity is quite in place just as in "Pyramus and Thisby" it is out of place. We learn in the opening scene that Demetrius has already shifted his love from Helena to Hermia, and this gives rise to the possibility that Demetrius may go back to Helena, leaving Hermia to Lysander. This is further confirmed by the "Private schooling" to which Theseus

invites both Egeus and Demetrius presumably to persuade them to agree to the marriage of Hermia with Lysander. In the woods the fairy king brings about further change of identity which the audience had suspected from the very beginning and which Theseus also wanted to bring about with his "private schooling". Tragedy aims at the identification of the andience with the tragic hero, while comedy distances the audience from its characters. This distancing is more complete in a classical comedy such as one written by Ben Jonson than in a romantic comedy written by Shakespeare. But, as Elder Olson has pointed out, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has a great deal in common with the classical comedy[12]. Because of the change of identity "Pyramus and Thisby" fails to produce the tragic effect, while the same change of identity is one of the mechanisms in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for producing proper comic pleasure.

I have said above that the language of "Pyramus and Thisby" is literal, while the language of a tragedy, particularly a poetic tragedy that "Pyramus and Thisdy" is supposed to be, is highly suggestive. This is evidenced by the heightened language of tragedies like *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*. We feel a gap between the tragic emotion of Pyramus and Macbeth. We feel a gap betwcen the tragic emotion of "Pyramus and Thisby" for which metre and rhyme are being used and prosaic language. Coming to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* we find that its language is just as heightened as it should be. We never feel any gap between the emotion that the playwight purports to formulate and the language that he employs. Unlike "Pyramus and Thisby", *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has a poetic order of words, not prosaic, and is rich in imagery, that of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* abounds in highly poetic images. We can take, for example, the most dominant image in the play, namely the moon. This pervades the play from start to finish and is also present, though on the literal plane, in "Pyramus and Thisby". In the early parts of the play there are allusions to the moon, while in the woods the moon is present physically presiding, as it were, over the action of the play. The very first reference to the moon is charged with meaning. Theseus tells Hermia that in case she does not agree to marry the young man of her father's choice, namely Demetrius, she will have to live the rest of her life as a nun chanting hymns to "the cold fruitless moon", i. e. Diana, the moon-goddess. Later Theseus refers to the physical presence of the moon when he warns Harmia that "by the next moon/the sealing day betwixt my love and me" she must make up her mind. The moon in these references as well as in her physical presence points to two direc-

tions. She represents Diana who is worshipped by virgins and she also suggests love-madness, as the lovers are moon-struck. It is significant to note that one of the names of Diana is Titania, and in the play Titania is the one who suffers most from love-madness. Moonlight which pervades most of the action of the play is conventionally symbolic of enlightenment, but it is also emblematic of love-madness. The two meanings of moonlight significantly act upon each other: love which is madness is also a source of illumination. That love is madness is attested by Bottom's remark to Titania that "reason and love keep little company together now-a-days". (III, 1, 133-34) Lysander gives us the other version of love when he says a propos of true love that it is

> Swift as a shadow, short as any dream,
> Brief as the lightning in the collied night,
> That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth; (I, 1, 144-46)

Shakespeare has intentionally employed the moon image in both *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and "Pyramus and Thisby". In the former, the image functions effectively, while in the latter the symbolic significance of the moon is destroyed by the literalist approach of the artisans.

Like imagery, rhythm has also been exploited by Shakespeare to the full. The rhythm in "Pyramus and Thisby" is otiose, and one cannot help wondering if the rhythm generated by the metre and rhyme scheme is warranted by the natuie of the language. When the language is so bare and literal, poetic rhythm is out of place. But in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the rhythm is fully justified, as it serves a useful function. In the first place, the poetic rhythm is accompanied by the heightened language, and secondly, the rhythm reinforces the meaning. We can take, for instance, the lines quoted above in which Lysander conveys the idea of the transitoriness of true love by comparing it with a shadow, a dream, and "the lightning in the collied night". The short syllables and the unstressed syllables outnumbering the stressed ones bring out the idea of transitoriness conveyed in the lines.

The three kinds of love and the tree kinds of imagination discussed above consititute the central theme of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. These discriminations that I have made stem from my deep-rooted conviction that sweeping generalization is the main malady of literary criticism today. More often than not it is this that lies at the back of the critics going awry. It is only by resisting sweeping generalization and realizing that love and imagination take on different forms in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that we can get at the core of the play.

Allahabad University,
Allahabad.

Notes

1. Ernest Schanzer, "A Midsummer Night's Dream," Shakespeare : The Comedies, ed. Kenneth Muir (Englewood Cliffs, N. J. : Prentice Hall, 1965), p. 27.

2. *Shakespearean Comedy* (London : Methuen, 1949), pp. 108, 112.

3. R. W. Dent, "Imagination in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*" *Shaksepeare Quarterly*, XV (Spring 1949), p. 115.

4. See, for example, Paul A. Olsen, "*A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the Meaning of Court Marriage", *A Journal of English Literary History*, XXIV (1957), pp. 101-3.

5. See, for instance, C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* (Princeton, N.J. : Princenton University Press, 1959), p. 142, and J. R. Brown, *Shakspeare and His Comedies* (London : Methuen, 1970), p. 86.

6. In fact, Demetrius and Lysander argue, when under the influence of love-juice, that their transfer of love is based on reason. Sse II, 1, 111-22 and III, 2 162-73. For further discussion of this point see J. R. Brown, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-85.

7. H. L. Myers has argued that love in *A Midsummer Night Dream* operates on three levels, the level of commonsense (the love of Theseus and Hippolyta), the level of non-sense (the love of the four Athenian lovers), and the level of fantasy (the love of Oberon and Titania). See "*Romeo and Juliet and Juliet and A Midsummer Night's Dream* : Tragedy and Comedy" in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ed. Wolfgang Clemen (New York : The New American Library, 1963), pp. 163-64. I do believe that there are three kinds of love in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, but I do not accept the threefold division made by Myers. In point of fact, we hardly see the love between Oberon and Titania, as most of the time they are quarrelling. Titania's love for Oberon we can only imagine, but we clearly see the love between Titania and Bottom. Moreover, I have reckoned Titania's love for Bottom only an extreme form of the love of the Athenian couples, I also differ from Dent ae well as other critics in grouping Bottom with the lovers.

8. Compare the repetition here with the very effective use of repetition in Shakespeare's tragedies, Lear'e "Never, naver, never, never, never" or Meobeth's "Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow". The repetition is meant to rainforce a certain idea or experience, and hence it is justified only when the idea is sufficiently weightly or the experience sufficiently rich. But the experience bodied forth in the passage in question is so superficial that the repetition becomes nothing more than a mechanical device.

9. Foakee and Charlton who idealize Theseus overlook this limitation of his. See R. A. Foakes, "Owl and the Cuckoo : Voices of Maturntly in Shakespeare's Comedies". *Shakesperian Comedy*, ed. Malcolm Bradbury and David Palmer (London : Edward Arnold, 1972), pp. 125-27, and Charlton, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

10. ". . . a poet is a light, winged, holy creature, and cannot compose until he is possessed and out of his mind, and his reason is no longer in him; no man can compose or prophesy so long as he has his reasan". *Ancient Literary Criticism*, ed. D. A. Russell and M. Winterbottom (London : Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 43.
11. To distinguish between *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the play minus "Pyramus and Thisby", I have placed the latter in quotation marks, while the former has been printed in italics.
12. *The Theory of Comedy* (Bloomington : Indiana University Press, 1968), pp. 89-90.

Enchantment, Fantasy and Reality: a Study of Murdoch's THE FLIGHT FROM THE ENCHANTER

Francine E. Krishna

Most fiction or drama begins with a problem or with some sort of a muddle or confusion which has already arisen or is soon to arise in which the main characteres are involved. Generally the disorder is posited at the empirical or phenomenalogical level; the assumption in most novels is that out of the chaos and confusion, some sort of order is to emerge. In the case of the fiction of Henry James, for example, a formal pattern is woven out of given events and characters. Such ordering of reality does not appear to satisfy Iris Murdoch. How are we, she seems to ask, to account for the inexplicable, mysterious interruptions of basic human life ? In her novels the accidental is a much more basic element of the universe than order or clarity. She does not eschew pattern altogether, as pattern is the feeble attempt that man makes to reform chaos and to make sense of the muddle, so that we find random elements as well as pattern in her work. Obviously as a novelist she cannot totally avoid pattern as art has to mould reality into some kind of an intelligible form. It is really a question of emphasis, but it is nevertheless here, I think, that Murdoch achieves her greatest success—in being able to present the quality of the contingent and the accidental that is central to the human situation.

Human, or for that matter, all forms of animate and inanimate life are made up of a large number of indeterminate and random events. Like meteors, they fall out of nowhere into the orbits of individual lives causing profound and unexpected effects. In her famous essay Murdoch argues:

> We need to be enabled to think in terms of degrees of freedom, and to picture in a non-physical, non-totalitarian, and non-religious sense, the transcendence of reality. A simple-minded faith in science, together with the assumption that we are all rational and totally free, engenders a dangerous lack of curiosity about the real world, a failure to appreciate the difficulties of knowing it. . . . We are not isolated free chosen monarchs of all we survey but benighted creatures sunk in a reality whose nature we are constantly and overwhelmingly tempted to deform by fantasy. Our current picture of freedom encourages a dream-like facility; whereas that we require is a renewed sense of the diffiulty and complexity of the moral life and the opacity of persons.

The Flight from the Enchanter can be seen as an enactment of what it means to grapple with a reality that is rich and complex at all the various levels of existence, ranging from the minutest to the highest forms of life, taking into account the contingent and the accidental as well. The problem of freedom lies both at the vertical as well as at the horizontal level of existence. Novelists generally work at the horizontal level depicting the activities of close interrelationships. Here causes and effects are easier to grap; they are more visible, often more predictable, so that we have a greater idea of what to expect and so do the characters themselves. On the other hand, human life is made up in a large part of unconnected incidents which have a wide range of effects and consequences on our lives. Even a seemingly insignificant act committed in a remote, far-flung part of the world by some anonymous person can have a profound effect on us. In fact, these actions can often have a greater effect because they catch us suddenly unaware and unprepared for their sometimes vital consequences.

Just as the accidental is a feature of our life at the horizontal level, it can be seen to be a feature of the vertical as well. Murdoch writes of transcendental reality; this can include descending or lower orders of life as well. What the human order may be to the lower order is how the transcendent higher order might be to the human order in the scheme of things. Let us take two examples from *The Flight from the Enchanter*. As Chapter Ten opens, John Rainborough is found standing in his garden miserable in the knowledge that it (the garden) is about to be destroyed because the hospital nearby needs the land for an extension of its X-ray department; he suddenly notices the flowers at his feet, the hyancinths (sic), the narcissi, primulas and daffodils "rigid with life," a small snail, "still almost transparent with extreme youth," "slowly putting out its horns upon a leaf." He watches an army of ants near his foot; "each one knows what it is doing, he thought. He looked at the snail. Can it see me ? he wondered, Then he felt, how

little I know, and how little it is possible to know; with this thought he experienced a moment of joy" (p. 119).[2] A little later his tenderness turns into deliberate cruelty by Rainborough realizes that Mischa Fox knows he has concealed Annette in the china cupboard and he grinds the wood leopard moth under his heel in his annoyance. In this way, human beings interfere either inadvertently or deliberately in the lives of the lower orders.

In a later scene, Mischa Fox tells Peter Saward that as a child he would sometimes kill animals :

> "I was so sorry for them," said Mischa. "They were so defenseless. Anything could hurt them. I couldn't stand it. . . "Someone gave me a kitten once," he said, "and I killed it, I remember . . . So poor and defenceless," Mischa murmured. "That was the only way to help it, to save it. So it is, If the gods kill us, it is not for their sport but because we fill them with such an intolerable compassion, a sort of nausea. Do you ever feel," he turned to Saward, "as if everything in the world needed—your protection ? It is a terrible feeling. Everything—even this matchbox." He took it from his pocket and held it up in front of them" (p. 204).

Thus we have Mischa's own account of how human beings might appear to the gods. There is, then, a double aspect; out of pity can come either delibrate or inadvertent suffering, and out of cruelty can come inadvertent or delibrate benevolence. This is one way to account for the seemingly enigmatic mystery of human life as well as for some of the randomness or the accidental. Towards the end of the novel, Calvin Blick suggests that the "truth lies deeper," that "reality is a cipher with many solutions, all of them the right ones" (p. 274).

In Shakespeare's *The Tempest* Prospero functions in the human world in the way that we visualize the gods as functioning in relationship to the human order, His powers, though not so remote to the audience or the reader, are remote and mysterious to most of the other characters whom he can enslave or enchant or use for his own ends, whose freedom he can deny or bestow at will, whom he can transform form evil to good. Prospero can be seen as an allegory of god or as an allegory of the artist, both of whom have the power to create worlds and to shape and interfere with the destinies of human beings. The same may be said of Mischa Fox whose role as enchanter is central to the understanding of *The Flight from the Enchanter*. Any interpretation of the novel will have to hinge on what we make of him and his relationships with each of the other characters. Each character relates to him with a different degree of freedom, beginning with Nina who is

the most dependent, to Rosa, who at the opening of the novel has almost severed her relationship with him. Sometimes the powers and intentions of Fox are as unfathomable to the reader as they are to the other characters. Each of the characters in turn tries to make some meaning out of his or her relationship with him.

Calvin Blick's role is also mysterious as he, too, is often an agent of cruel and seemingly demonic acts, so that one is tempted to push the analogy of *The Tempest* a little further and think of him as being Fox's Caliban (Calvin). Rainborough, for example sees, him as "the dark self of Mischa Fox's mind. . . . He does the things which Mischa doesn't even think of. That's how Mischa can be so innocent" (p. 30). Taking such remarks as a lead, several critics such as Ann Cully have referred to Blick's 'diabolical schemes'[3] or to him as being 'satanic,' one of Murdoch's "Mephistophelian characters."[4] But there are also moments when Calvin Blick can be seen as being, if not compassionate, at least kind, when he seems gifted with some of the special insight of Fox, when his cruel actions can be seen in the light of late revents to be the catalyst of a good result or outcome.

In Chapter Two , Blick is shown trying to browbeat and intimidate Hunter Keepe into selling the journal, the *Artemis*, that Hunter and his elder sister, Rosa, have inherited from their mother who was during her lifetime a staunch supporter of women's rights and which they have been half-heartedly managing. Nevertheless, Hunter and Rosa are reluctant to give up the *Artemis*. It is not made clear as to why Fox has has Blick to negotiate for the journal. When Hunter asks him what Fox wants it for, Blick replies, "He just wants it,.......'That's all. He just wants it" (p. 15). In this case, Fox's and Biick's interference is generally resented. When Rosa, Peter Saward and John Rainborough speculate as to why Fox wants to buy the *Artemis*, Rosa says:

> "There aren't many completely independent periodicals these days. Perhaps the sight of a little independent thlng annoys Mischa. It's like the instinct to catch fish or butterflies" (p. 30).

Even the life of inanimate objects can be interfered with. Later she suggests :

> "Perhaps it would be a good thing if Mischa Fox were to put it out of its misery. If he can turn it into a glossy magazine and make it pay, good luck to him." (p. 34).

There are moments in the novel when one wonders if Blick has usurped his position in regard to Fox. Is Fox even really aware of what Blick is doing on his behalf ? There is no way of knowing. In this

case, we come to know that Rosa earlier had had a close relationship with Fox. But whether or not this is Fox's means of reestablishing that old realationship with Rosa, or a purely business deal, is not clear. Once the feminists assert themselves in the Board meeting, the matter is closed. Nevertheless, we do know that from his distant and high position, Fox has remained aware of all that Rosa does.

Calvin Blick is obviously under the power of Fox; in fact, much later he tells Rosa, "Mischa did kill me years ago" (p. 276), though this has, of course, to be taken in the figurative sense. As an agent of Fox, he tries to entrap others. Just as Annette first sees Mischa reflected in a mirror, Hunter, who is walking along a street, has sensation of being followed. Suddenly Blick's image appears to him in the window of a restaurant as Hunter is inspecting his own reflection in the glass.

> His features had changed. Another face, a familiar and dreaded one, had come to take the place of his own. He was looking straight into the eyes of Calvin Blick. After the first shock, Hunter realized that what had happened was that Blick was standing inside the shop, on the other side of the glass door, and looking out at him through it. (p. 152).

In the counterpart mirror scene between Annette and Fox, reality is distorted and opaque, here the glass is transparent; Blick is merely the agent for someone beyond him.

When Hunter and Blick develop the photographs in which Rosa is seen in the arms of the Lusiewicz brothers, Hunter is infuriated as he realizes that Blick intends to blackmail him in order to get hold of the *Artemis*. Blick admits that he has done this without the knowledge of Fox. Yet, a short while later, after the fight between them, we see a more benign side of Blick in the almost tender way he tidies Hunter up before sending him on his way. This aspect is even more apparent in the wonderfully comic scene of the shareholders of the *Artemis*;

> The problem of whether he could trust Calvin hardly occurred to Hunter at all. It was as if the destruction of the *Artemis* was a symbolic act which higher and more terrible powers would take note of and count, somehow to his credit (p. 163-64).

In the end both Hunter and Calvin become allies in the anti-chauvinist atmosphere generated by the ladies who are now bent on reviving the *Artemis*.

> Hunter gathered up his report and prepared to leave. He gestured to calvin to accompany him. He had never felt so close to him. As turned, he was surprised to find on Calvin's face an expression of delighted amusement. Calvin rolled his eyes and raised his hands to heaven (p. 117).

Thus ends Calvin Blick's interest in controlling the *Artemis*. He has interfered with others lives and property, and now things have gone out of his control. But there is no remorse; The *Artemis* has been revived; out of what seemed to be a malicious or ill-intended act, has arisen a good effect.

Calvin Blick is later the catalyst for the destructive fury unleashed in the party scene in Fox's house when he begins to show photographs to some of the guests. What these photographs actually represent we do not know, though Hunter assumes that blick is about to show the photographs he took of Rosa in the arms of the Lusiewicz brothers. Nevertheless, Blick cannot be forced into an analogy of Caliban, though some facets of his role in the novel might seem to suggest it. It can equally be argued that Calvin Blick functions like the novelist, a second level creator; often he intervenes and manipulates the lives of other characters, sets actions in motion, the consequences of which are not always clear from the beginning. He can be seen as a mediator between the reader and the real, just has he mediates between Fox and the other characters. As a photographer, he holds the mirror up to life, his name might be a composite for the blink click of the camera's eye.When he shows Hunter the lens of his camera, he tells him "this is the truthful eye that sees and remembers, (p. 155). He has photographed the scene of Rosa, and it is also he who discovers Rainborough and Agnes Casement in a violent love scene behind the tapestry in Fox's drawing room. The photographer records the truth of empirical reality undeformed by fantasy and our dreams of it.

Mirrors, tapestries, all reflect various versions of the animate and inanimate universe—sometimes distorted, sometimes mythic, sometimes realistic, they are always selective, dependent on the eye of the beholder. In *The Flight from the Enchanter*, Mischa Fox first appears in the mirror before which Annette is trying on the evening dress that Nina Foy, the dressmaker, has made for her.

> A man had come in and was standing by the door at the far end of the lane of clothes. Annette could sce him in the mirror. She could cee their three heads, her own bright and close, Nina's elow her, a little in shadow, and the man's head, far back over her shoulder, and quite darkened. Yet she knew that he was looking in to her eyes. . . . . She saw him clearly now. He was a stranger to her; and the most striking characteristic of his face was noticeable immediately, making everything else about him for the moment invisible. He had one blue eye and one brown eye. . . . He was a slight man of medium height, with soft brown hair and a small moustache and a long tenderly curving mouth. But Annette could not help staring at his eyes. The blue one was not brownish

> nor was the brown one bluish. Each one was its own clear unflecked colour. There was thus a brown profile and a blue profile, giving the impression of two faces superimposed, (p.76).

Murdoch's use of the mirror image is ubiquitous in the novel. The real world as reflected in the looking glass is distorted, but sometimes it reveals aspects of the real world that we do not see otherwise. Annette sees Nina's reaction to Fox: "before Nina turned round Annette caught in her face a look which might have been anger or fear or both" (p. 76). When John Rainborough watches Miss Casement applying make-up before a hand mirror, he becomes lost in the detail of the face; "it took Rainborough a moment to realize that Miss Casement was smiling at him. With a start he hastened to respond". (p. 179). In the same way, he is slow to realize her actual intentions towards him. The mirror frames reality; but it Is not selective like a work of art or a painting. It merely reflects, but it is not the same as that which it reflects, being once removed from the appearance, it gives us a secondary rather than a primary apprehension of the real. Moreover, it is opaque, a glass through which we cannot see, being merely reflective, so that the mirror makes the actual world seem ambiguous. The image is appropriate to the character of Fox as he is himself a figure of ambiguity. There is a certain Janus quality about him even in his physical characteristics, namely the already mentioned blue and brown eyes, each presenting a radically different aspect. His effect on Annette is almost hypnotic. As Nina turns her around, Annette moves "as if she had been a dummy." "She felt like a puppet" as Nina pins the dress on her, Annette "saw herself in the glass with her arms lifted stifly like a doll" (p. 77), The whole scene takes place before the mirror. Nina has now left the room at Fox's request to bring tea. Fox "was still sitting in an idle way upon the chair, with one leg tucked under him in a posture which was more feminine than masculine."

> He got up slowly, in the graceful loose-limbed manner of an animal rising, and came into the bright light beside the mirror. Annette noticed the long and gently curving line of his mouth. She looked upon him with nervousness and surprise. Mischa Fox was studying her face meanwhile. Then he smiled at her. Then he reacyed out a long arm, and taking her slowly by the shoulder turned her round so that more light feel upon her face. Annette sprang back. 'Don't touch me.' she said. This cry brought them closer together than any physical contact (p. 79).

The return from the state of enchantment to harsh physical reality is difficult and produces a shock. The effect is similar to what

happens to the prisoner in Plato's cave,[4] who, being used to the shadow puppets and the scene on the well, thinks them to be reality until he is dragged out of the darkness and views the light with pain and horror until his eyes become accustomed to the sun. We do not know if this gesture of Fox is intended to liberate or to enslave, but Annette prefers to remain enchanted.

Mischa Fox next appears in the scene at John Rainborough's in Chapter Ten earlier referred to. Rainborough has just made an unexpected physical approach to Annette, when in the midst of their struggle, the door bell rings. "As if touched by a wand, Annette and Rainborough froze into a silent mobility arrested in the wild gestures of the struggle" (p. 125), Rainborough thrusts the semi-nude Annette into the china-closet and straightens things up just in time as Mischa Fox enters the room. Obviously aware of the situation, in the discussion that ensues, Fox deliberately takes the occasion to present his theory of feminine ambiguity :

> It is the beautiful birds that have the sharpest beaks . . , Young girls are full of dreams . . . That is what makes them so touching and so dangerous. Every young girl dreams of dominating the forces of evil. She thinks she has that virtue in her that can conquer anything. Such a girl may be virgin in soul even after much experience and still believe in the legend of virginity. This is what leads her to the dragon, imagining that she will be protected , , . The poor dragon has to eat her up and that's how dragons get a bad name (p. 126-29).

This type who is bound by her own fantasy of what she is or ought to be, he calls the "unicorn girl" (p. 129). There are other types also : the siren, who John Rainborough can identify as Miss Casement. The third type Mischa identifies as a "kind of wise woman" :

> . . . One in whom a destruction, a cataclysm, has at some time taken place. All structures have been broken down and there is nothing left but the husk, the earth, the wisdom of the flesh. One can create such a woman sometimes by breaking her— (p. 130).

The latter we shall come to identify as Rosa. At the same time Nina, the dressmaker, imagines herself to be a victim of the power that Fox has over her. Because of her status in England as an illegal alien, Fox has protected her in a fundamental way, saving her from a situation which might have made her a prisoner of a political system. However, this aspect Nina hardly ever seems to consider until she thinks in terms of escape and realizes how little freedom and choice there is in her situation. But her enthrallment with Fox can be seen

as being of her own making. Instead of seeing Fox as a deliberate enchanter, he is, in this case, the enchanter that Nina wishes him to be: "She was ready from the first to be his slave" (p. 136). Later she says that she is never certain what exactly he requires of her : "at times she felt that he was waiting for her to understand something, to see some need which he would never speak of, and which she was simply failing to see" (p. 138). Sometimes she imagines that "perhaps he was keeping her in reserve to play to a part in some plot or conspiracy which had not yet matured, which might not mature for years" (p. 138). Whenever she tries to become economically independent of Fox, he seems to draw her more securely in his power by giving her more money. "She was aware, it was the current gossip, that Mischa Fox was supposed to have at his disposal dozens of enslaved beings of all kinds whom he controlled at his convenience" (p. 139). Because of this strange obsessed relationship she has with Fox, Nina becomes more isolated from other people, though she continues to love him. She then begins to think of the possibility of escape, but fear prevents her from acting. There is little in the text, however, to show that Fox actually imposes his will on her. Most of the discussion takes place from her point of view as the narrator reveals the process that takes place in Nina's mind. When Nina's need for help is ignored by Rosa, the positive aspect of Fox's role in her situation becomes even more obvious.

Earlier, in the scene at Nina's, Annette could only see the blue eye of Mischa (p. 79). In Chapter Seventeen as Mischa looks at the hieroglyphs on his papers, Peter Saward, the historian,

> could hardly bring himself to believe that Mischa could not understand it. As he looked down at the writing, with his brown eye visible, and his sallow hawk-like face, he seemed suddenly to Saward to be the very spirit of the Orient, that Orient which lay beyond Greeks, barbarous and feral, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon (p. 305).

The Orient has always been seen as a projection of what the western mind wished it to be, generally either barbaric or mysterious. Similarly, the brown eye represents to Peter the remote and enigmatic aspect of Fox that he wishes to see. He refuses to believe Fox when he tells him that he should give up his work as he can never hope to work out the secret of the hieroglyphs, predicting, correctly, that there will be a bilingual stone soon" (p. 205). Peter is also something of a fish, captive in the "sea of books," in his strange room which "resembled an underground cavern," with his search for the meaning of the ancient script." He is like his "anonymous looking green plant, whose mysterious vitality produced in the dark and dry interior a luxuriance

of green leaves but not flowers" (p. 19-20); Peter is as much a captive of his obsession with the hieroglyphs as Nina is with her obsession with Fox and has almost lost touch with reality. In the scene in Chapter Three, he has begun to realize that :

> in such a morass of imagination and conjecture, to attach oneself desperately to any idea which had even the faintest plausibility, to allow a conjecture, through mere familiarity and through the absence of rivals, to seem gradually more and more likely, and to become daily more in love with it because of the complete lack of even any rational starting point to which one could return (p. 22).

This statement itself might serve as an excellent definition of any kind of obsession. John Rainborough, during his visit to Peter speculates in the same light on the futility of Peter's work :

> And if Saward had in fact gone slowly mad and were inventing it all, Rainborough reflected, it would be years before anyone found out, even, he thought spitefully, his fellow-historians; and it would'nt make any difference to anything (pp. 25–26).

A little later, Rosa tells Peter in an even more irreverent tone : "it's more likely to be someone's laundry list", (p. 34). As both imply, Peter has built up a monolith of historical fantasy with which he has now become obsessed and is almost unable to manage his relationship in the actual world, in particular the fact of his love for Rosa.

In Chapter Seventeen when Fox comes to see Peter, they look at the old photographs of Mischa's childhood that Peter has procured for him. But the significance of the photographs are more relevant to Peter than they are to Mischa. They are the key to the way the past should be seen—not as something dead, but as something vital and meaningful to human life. The statue of the bronze fish, a work of art, is important in its symbolic as well as personal significance; it has concrete relevance to the life of Mischa Fox. As Mischa begins to talk about his childhood, Peter feels that

> Mischa was a problem which . . . he would never solve-- and this although he had got perhaps more date for its solution than any other living being. Yet it seemed that that the more Mischa indulged his impulse to reveal himself in these unexpected ways to Peter, the more puzzling he seemed to become . . . . At first Peter had not been at all sure that everything that Mischa told him was true; now he was certain that it was true as Mischa would make it and that the pursuit of exactness and completeness was for him a terrible necessity (pp. 202–03).

Ultimately it is Mischa Fox who will have to disenchant Peter from his historical obsession and Rosa from her enchantment with

himself and show the way they might come together. In Chapter Twenty Two when Rosa turns to Mischa for help, she tells him she is "lost in a forest," to which Mischa replies;

> 'Just go on a little way,' said Mischa, 'and soon you'll hear the clop-clop of the axe. Then go on a little way farther and you'll come to the woodcutter's cottage.'
>
> 'No, she said, to the enchanter's house.'
>
> Rosa looked at him. It was like looking into a mirror. It was as if her own spirit had imprinted itself upon him as they embraced and now looked back at her wide-eyed.
>
> 'How strange,' said Rosa, 'I never noticed before that we resembled each other.'
>
> It is an illusion of lovers,' said Mischa. He rose and helped her to her feet.

While Mischa wishes to direct her to the woodcutter's cottage, the real or actual world and to liberate her, Rosa insists that she prefers to remain enchanted. What she sees in the mirror is what she wishes to see, just as Peter sees in his work what he wishes to see, resemblances of their own selves. But just at the moment when Rosa is prepared to submit herself totally to Mischa, to her surprise he says that he would like to talk to her about Peter Saward.

The crucial questions regarding Fox, then, is whether or not he "enchants" the others to enslave or to control them or to ultimately liberate them. To what degree do they become enchanted through their own desire to remain in his power ? Can, in fact, we might well ask, these questions even be separated ? Between original intentions of causes and the ultimate effects, there appear to be far-flung and sometimes totally unexpected gulfs, so that even if intentions are known and clear in the beginning, the ultimate results have a tendency to seem opaque, mysterious and enigmatic, in the way that unexpected turns of events occcur in actual life. The limitations of Fox's actual powers are never revealed to us. Is he a Prosperro, or is he like the novelist who sets into action a chain of events and watches the transformations from afar ? Certainly he is not impersonal, and like most gods, not utterly indifferent. In fact, Mischa grieves, he suffers, as a god might, as we human beings do, for lesser creatures. And yet, as Peter realizes, so " strangely close to each other in this man lay the springs of cruelty and pity" (p, 204), when Mischa relates how once he had killed a little kitten. Both pity and suffering, then, stem from the same source. But not even perhaps god can know the chain of events that a single act can trigger off and even if he does, pleasure and suffering are probably inseparable. Even non-interfernce can lead to terrible conseque-

nces as we have seen in what happens when Rosa ignores the desperate attempts made by Nina when the latter comes to her for guidance.

Mischa Fox's house is as labyrinthine and mysterious as its owner: he had the "fantasy of buying four houses in Kensington, two adjoining in one road, and two adjoining in the next road and standing back to back with the first two" (P. 181). In between these houses is a "square structure" which join them. No one seems to know much else regarding it; however, there is much speculation and heresay—rumours say one thing, reports another, but the general impression is of rooms with no windows, no corridors and no continuous stairway, something like a set of Chinese boxes. But of what was known, of that which was visible and accessible was crowded with work of art. "This maze of splendours was described by Mischa's foes and acquaintances, according to taste, as 'mad,' 'sinister,' 'vulgar,' or 'childish' (p. 182). In the party scene in Chapter Fifteen, the guests are ushered in through a "series of rooms and up a silent flight of stairs which rose directly out of one room and gave directly into another" (p. 182). When the final door is reached they are met by Calvin Blick and led into a long room, "full of low and heavily shaded lights (p. 182).

> Three of the walls were hung with tapestries which completely covered all the windows. Only the door through which they had come was revealed, the tapestries on either side being drawn well apart at the base and meeting to a point above the doorway. Rainborough looked at these hangings. He jugded them to be French work of the fifteenth century. They were profusely covered with leaves and flowers among which ran, flew, crawled fled, pursued, or idled an extraordinary variety of animals, birds, and insects. No human figures were to be seen. Rainborough noticed in a glance a hound leaping amiably in pursuit of rabbit, an astonished encounter of a hawk and a pigeon, and a unicorn holding a conversation with a lion (p. 183).

On the mantlepiece is "a group of ivory figures of men and animals."

> Annette lifted one of them. It was an old man seated and leaning against a sleeping buffalo. She turned it upside down. It was covered underneath too, the man's naked foot turned back, his figured robe, the fur of the animal. She put it down. Next to it was a girl seated on a clam-shell, then a boy with his arm round the neck of a goat, an old man with a rat on his shoulder, a woman holding a fish. Each one represented a human being with an animal (p. 188).

In the tapestry, only the lower orders of nature are represented, though they are somewhat humanized—the conversation between the

unicorn and the lion, for example. They are not merely a realistic representation of the lower order, but some aspect of fable or myth is also present there as in the figure of the unicorn, indicating perhaps the way fantasy is intermixed with actual life. The ivory figures extend the relationship of the animals and the mythical to the human world in a scene that depicts a tender, and, perhaps, ideal love between the two orders. The whole is reflected in a "large gilt mirror," another symbolic version of the imitation of the real.

In the center of the room is placed a large bowl of green glass in which "tropical fish swam idly to and fro" (p. 183). The fiish image has been persistent in the novel. If in *Under the Net* Murdoch has used the image of the net to represent the entanglement that prevails in human relationships, here the subterranean water, sea, rain, seem to be metaphors for the state of enchantment. Certain people are compared to fish—Mrs. Wingfield calls Miss Foy an "old trout," Fox says that women are like fish. In Chapter Three, Rosa tells Rainborough that Mischa wants to gain control of the *Artemis* because "the sight of a little independent thing annoys Mischa. It's like the instinct to catch fish or butterflies. To feel the thing struggling in your grasp" (p. 30). At the end of Chapter Five, Rosa tells Annette, "you are like a little fish, You are completely smooth. You should have been a mermaid" (p. 60) and at the party Annette wears a sea-green dress. In the scene where Rainborough attempts to seduce, Annette he feels her 'twisting and of turning in his grip like a powerful fiish" (p. 124). Most of the imagery the fish has to do with being caught and confined in some way or another like the fish in the bowl in the center of the instance of Hunter room in Mischa's house. When Rosa throws the paperweight at the in order to create a diversion from the photographs that Blick is about to display, the bowl is shattered and, out of water, their natural habitat, the fish die producing disturbingly profound effect on Fox. At the same time, something more is broken, the past action is cut into; it becomes the catalyst for new levels and new movements in the novel. The time for a sea-change has come.

Just as the muddles in Iris Murdoch's novels seem to arise out of nowhere, when the characters least expect them, so do the solutions to the various crises arise in sudden and unforseen ways. At the peak of the crises, certain persons emerge, some of them minor characters, who are able to take charge and untangle the confusions. In the case of Annette's attempt at suicide, there is an almost comic anti-climax when it is discovered that she has taken milk of magnesia instead of sleeping pills. But what is more interesting is the arrival of her mother, Marcia

Cockeyne, who takes over. Not only does she, Marcia, set things right as far as Annette is concerned, she also averts the crisis that Rainborough has found himself in by becoming engaged to Miss Casement. Marcia listens sympathetically to his story as he flatly confesses to her: "I'm in a muddle!" (p. 251). Marcia has understood that he wants to extricate himself from the situation, to escape. She immediately extracts him from his commitment with one phone call to Miss Casement, and arranges for him to leave England in the nick of time.

Similarly, Rosa is saved from the Lusiewicz brothers by the question that has been raised by an anonymous M. P. in Parliament about illegal immigrants. Stefan Lusiewicz "had vanished as completely as if he had never been there" (p. 253). This also solves Hunter's problem as he has been virtually black-mailed by Stefan. The fall-out of the questions raised in Parliament has, on the other hand, an adverse effect on Nina Foy who is isolated and alone. With no one to turn to, she commits suicide—the single tragic victim in the novel. Causes can create simultaneously benign or malign effects. No solution is simple.

The only remaining thread to be tied up is Rosa's relationship with Mischa,

> Reflection and countereflection about Mischa Fox had brought her to a point of disequilibrium where rest was no longer possible. She had now no doubt but that Mischa's curious behaviour at their last meeting was designed to produce exactly this frenzied state of mind (p. 263).

Her attempt to telephone Mischa has a strange Kafkaesque quality as she listens to half a dozen voices at the other end of the line. Mischa is as remote as ever. Her only contact at the other end of the line is with Calvin Blick who gives her Mischa's address in Italy. Rosa's pilgrimge to Italy has an odd telescoped effect. In two paragraphs, she has left Victoria station, reached Naples, and the village near Mischa Fox's villa where, to her astonishment, she meets the ubiquitous Calvin Blick who is waiting for her.

The Italian landscape, bare with rocks, and dust, "the white farms, scanty as bones," the intense light, warm air, Rosa's austere room, are a perfect setting for the psychic movement of the novel—as if, all the past, everything that is unnecessary will be stripped to the basic core and the complex made simple at last.

> Before her, framed by the hills, lay the sea, streaked now with golden lines, its blue turning to amethyst, its dazzling surface resolved into an inward light, It glowed like a great window of stained glass. Rosa looked down into its depths (p. 267-68).

But the unknown and subterranean is still to be fathomed. It is on the shore where clarity and reality exist that Rosa is to meet Mischa Fox; he now appears less as a human character and more a part of the mystery of the universe. Together like the gods of an ancient Greek or Sanskrit play, he and Rosa look down on the human drama.

> He was not looking at her, but was gazing at the ground. Rosa looked down too and saw that the gravel surface of the terrace was covered with living creatures. Ants passed by carrying heavy burdens. Poor dried-up beetles walked or staggered on their way. Large green grass-hoppers paused immobile and almost invisible and then sprang suddenly out of sight; and here there were patches of red which were ladybirds, enormous and and without spots. As Rosa looked it seemed to her as if the whole scene had been conjured up by Mischa simply for her benefit. If she were to go away, all this would vanish too, and Mischa would be left, haggard and staring, in some place unimaginably stripped and denuded. At the last stroke of the clock all these things would return to their human natural shape too (p. 269).

Mischa picks up a tiny lizard. But when Rosa asks for it, she grasps it carelessly when he puts it into her palm and in its anxiety to escape, the lizard loses its tail. "They looked at each other wide-eyed with a sudden fright and distress" (p. 270). Even the minutest act of interference though performed in the tenderest manner can cause the suffering of another being. Whether Mischa Fox is to be taken for an allegory of god or not, it is clear that his knowledge is superior to that of any of the other characters in the novel.

The next morning Rosa feels "an enormous serenity falling upon her like a blessing" (p. 272). She expects to meet Mischa again, but instead, Calvin Blick intervenes and gives her, at least, "the whole picture." She now knows that Mischa has seen the photographs of herself with the Lusiewicz brothers. The photographs are important as they explain the sensuous aspect of Rosa that she has refused to face. In the end, Calvin Blick gives her a telescope through which she watches Mischa Fox, now at the far end, standing on the edge of the horizon, by the sea. "She could not believe that Mischa could not see her face and soul. For an instant, but only for an instant, she believed that he knew and intended all" (p. 276-77). She tells Calvin, "in the past I always felt that whether I went towards him or away from him I was doing his will. But it was all an illusion" (p. 277). The truth that she then discovers is that it is her own will that she is enacting, not Mischa's. It is the collapse of this illusion that releases her from her fantasy both about Mischa and herself. She returns in the last chapter to Pater who has also been freed from the work that has

obsessed him for so many years. Hopefully both will be able to see the rich and complicated world as it really is with a greater degree of exactitude and clarity. Liberated from their enchantment with their own fantasies they may now be able to see the "otherness" of others and of each other

University of Rajasthan
Jaipur

Notes

1. Iris Murdoch, "Against Dryness," *Encounter*, XVI (January, 1951), 16.
2. All quotations from *The Flight from the Enchanter* are taken from the Triad/Panther Books (paperback) edition, 1976. The novel was first published London : Chatto Windus Ltd., 1956.
3. Ann Cully, "Theory and Practice : Characterization in the Novels of Iris Murdoch," *Modern Fiction Studies*, 15, 3 (Autumn 1969), p. 351.
4. Cully, p 356.

Domination of the Eye in Early Wordsworth

R. K. Raval

> The state to which I now allude was one
> In which the eye was the master of the heart,
> When that which is in every stage of life
> The most despotic of our senses gain'd
> Such strength in me as often held my mind
> In absolute dominion.
>
> —*The Prelude* (1805 text), Bk. XI, 11,171-76.

On his return from France in December 1692 Wordworth soon came under the spell of the intellective faculty which made him approach Nature with a mind at once analytical and obsessed by that compelling malady of the age, namely, the habit of comparing one scene with another with a view to bringing forth the strikingly visual qualities of the one in relation to the other. A poet with such mental attitude dur'ng the formative years of his career could not but he interested in observing only the external charms and 'meagre novelties of colour and proportion' as offered by the scene in view for the feast of the eye, while remaining almost impervious and insensible to both 'the moods of time and season' and 'the spirit of the place' :

> . . . even in pleasure pleased
> Unworthily, disliking here, and there,
> Liking, by rules of mimic art transferr'd
> To things above all art. But more, for this,
> Although a strong infection of the age,
> Was never much my habit, *giving way*
> *To a comparison of scene with scene,*
> *Bent overmuch on superficial things,*
> *Pampering myself with meagre novelties*
> *Of colour and proportion, to the moods*
> *Of time and season, to the moral power*
> *The affections, and the spirit of the place,*
> *Less sensible.*[1]

This insensibility to the moods of time and the spirit of the place, otherwise requiring an overall offective response to the beauties of nature, is present in a great degree in the early Wodworth who at the time was more interested in and dominated by what the physical eye saw in Nature. And what the physical eye saw was based on the poet's extensive reading of the picturesque material available at the time in the form of 'prospect' poems, diaries, journals and various accounts of the tour written by such famous enthusiasts for the picturesque as Walpole, Thomson, Gray and Gilpin. The poet's interest in the picturesque was furthur augmented through his acquaintance with the topographical paintings of the time. A delight in general landscape and an eye for the visual detail and colour in one's observation of the specific sports of nature, at once curious and striking to the eye, formulate some of the basic features the picturseque tradition.

The theory of the picturesque, acting as an interregnum between the neo-classical and the romantic school, led to a delight in the things visual which, in turn, led to the domination of the bodily eye in the enjoyment of the visual world. It was this delight in the mere *visibilia* of nature, in the qualities of a landscape made manifest to one's eyes, such as colour and light, especially the former, that enabled the artists of the time, at least during the initial stage of their poetic growth, to look upon nature the visual way. This made it difficult for them to pass from the appreciation of something visionary lying beyond or behind nature's familiar manifestations. The poet and the painter alike continued to be under the thraldom of the cult of the pictursque.

Wordsworth's interest in things directly observed was greatly increased by his tour of the Alps in 1790, and in a letter (dated 6 September, 1790) to his sister Dorothy at the end of the tour, giving a detailed picture of the profound effect that these scenes had on his mind, Wordsworth, while expressing his sorrow at parting, wrote to her of his being 'a perfect enthusiast in his admiration of nature in all her forms' and how the very idea of parting from such pleasant scenes oppressed his mind with a feeling of sadness similar to what he always felt in quitting a friend. Thus the period of his intellectual tutelege to the picturesque ran paralled to the domination of the physical eye which impelled him to go out in search of new forms and pleasures, turning him into an avid observer of all he surveyed :

> Yet was I often greedy in chase,
> And roamed from hill to hill, from rock to rock,
> *Stili craving combinations of new forms,*
> *New pleasure, wider empire for the sight,*

Proud of its own endowments, and rejoiced
To lay the inner faculties asleep.[2]

Close on the heels of these lines Wordsworth makes it emphatically clear that :

Amid the turns and counterturns, the strife
And various trials of our complex being,
As we grow up, such thraldom of that sense,
Seems hard to shun . . . [3]

Thus it is evident that this period of the dominance of the physical eye in early Wordsworth was concomitant with his thraldom to the picturesque in landscape. For this interest in the direct observation of the scenes that spread before his eyes, this sharing, absorbing and recording of the charm of the things that lay, round him and for this appetite and passion for the forms and colours of nature, one has only to refer to a poem like *Tintern Abbey*, wherein, as the poet observes :

The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion : the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.

—(11.76-83)

This is typically representative of the *simple picturesque* with its appeal only to the things sensuous, while assiduously avoiding any appeal to one's intellect or imagination, the qualities of the associative picturesque. The senses, in the case of the simple pictureque, respond not merely to the beauty of visible objects as such, but to 'the beauty of such objects as *merely* visible'.[4] It may also be interesting to note here how this tendency to succumb to the eye's dominance is present in varying degrees even in the maturer poems of Wordrworth, but nowhere so promiscuously as in his early poems like *The Descriptive Sketches* and *An Evening Walk* (both pubd. 1793). At this period of his poetic growth, Wordsworth looked upon the bodily eye not only as the most despotic of our senses, but also as one which seemed to him hard to shun as one grew up, and therefore, he owed to the directly seen and felt observations of a local scene or spot in nature some of his most vivid impressions as recorded in *The Vale of Esthwaite* (1787) and the other two companion pieces mentioned above.

In a note written to Miss Fenwick in the seventy-third year of his life, Wordsworth, referring therein to both his early poems, viz., *The Vale and Esrhawaite* and *An Evening Walk*, makes it clear in no

uncertain terms that there can be no other basis of poetry than direct observation. He mentions in the note that he has not recorded any image in *An Evening Walk* that he has not observed. Recollecting even the time and the place where most of these images were noticed, he confines himself to one of a shepherd's dog emerging barking from the mountain mist and disappearing again :

> And on yon summit brown and bare,
> That seems an island in the air
> The shepherd's restless dog I mark,
> Who, bounding round with frequent bark,
> Now leaps around the uncovered plain,
> Now dives into ihe mist again.
>
> —*The Vale of Esthwaite*, 11.13-18[4]

Continuing in the same note to Miss Fenwick, Wordsworth writes that he was an eye-witness to this while crossing the Pass of Dunmail Raise, and then, upon second thought, he mentions another image distinctly recollecting the very spot where he had noticed for the first time the darkening boughs and leaves of an oak tree :

> And, fronting the bright west, you oak entwines
> Its darkening boughs and leaves in stronger lines
>
> —*An Evening Walk*, 11.214-215

This, Wordsworth records, happened on the way between Hawkshead and Ambleside and the moment was important in his poetical history, for, as he mentions in the Fenwick note : "I date from it my consciousness of the infinite variety of natural appearances which had been unnoticed by the poets of any age or country, so far as I was acquainted with them : and I made a resolution to supply in some degree the deficiency. I could not have been at that time above fourteen years of age."[5]

An Evening Walk, in the words of Russell Noyes, is 'an album of beautiful landscape scenes of the Lake district . . . a poem that fulfilled Wordsworth's resolution to supply in poetical form an abundant variety of directly observed natural appearances'.[6] The whole idea of undertaking a walk in the evening, as J.R. Watson observes, was 'one which was dear to picturesque writers'[7] of the time like Gray, and a host of others who have recorded in their tour-journals their enthusiasm for the evening walk. The most remarkable thing about the poem is its description of various sights and sounds directly perceived by the poet in nature while out for a walk. It has an appeal that is at once visual and aural, and hence concerned primarily with the precise presentation of the world of sights and sounds. Very much a poem in the picturesque tradition in its description of specific spots of

nature beloved of the picturesque traveller, 'it is a well-composed piece of landscape painting filled with a wonderful collection of precise and delicately perceived eye-observations and ear-observations that catalog Nature's charms'.[8] The entire poem very accurately describes the pattern of the evening landscape as revealed through the gradually changing stages of light like the sunset, the twilight and the moonlight, showing the poet's keen eye for the almost imperceptible shades of difference lying latent behind the visible appearances, for, as he himself confessess :

> . . . I had an eye
> Which in my strongest workings, evermore
> Was looking for the shades of difference
> As they lie hid in all exterior forms.
>
> —*The Prelude* (1805 text), Bk. III, 11. 156–59.

Descriptive Sketches is a bit different from *An Evening Walk* in that it contains the only isolated example outside and before *The Prelude*, of wordsworth's attempt at liberating himself from the bondage of the outer eye and the concomitant love for the picturesque in the famous sunset storm passage wherein he reaches that inner vision which realises the entire outer landscape of the Alps in a lightning moment of apocalyptic imagination. But more about this freedom from the thraldom of the picturesque later on. For the present I should like to concentrate on a series of scenes that are picturesque in being contrastive in quality and speak of the hold of the bodily eye on the poet's mind :

> Here half a village ahines, in gold array'd,
> Bright as the moon, half hides itself in shade,
> From the dark sylvan roofs the restless spire,
> In constant glancing,mounts like springing fire,
> There, all unshaded, blazing forests throw,
> Rich golden verdure on the waves below.
> Slow glides the sail along the illumin'd shore,
> And steals into the shade the lazy oar.
>
> —*Descriptive Sketches*, 11. 106–13.

The poet's eyes restlessly pass from one scene to another without getting any fixed spot to rest them upon till he reaches the vision of the sunset passage, thus indulging his bent, as Aubin would have it, 'for picturesque genre scenes.'[9]

Russell Noyes, contributing an interestingly moot point in this connection, adds that the heroic couplet, the traditional form of topographical poems, chosen by Wordsworth for *Descriptive Sketches*, inclined the poet to divide, particularize, and balance his landscape, rather than to paint it in a blended, idealized way, thus leading once

more to the picturesque treatment of the view before the eye, an eye cravingly moving in every direction to assimilate hurriedly the shifting scenes in one continuous process of swallowing, presenting thus a series of concrete images like the pictures in a running film. The work performed by the heroic couplets in a poem, that of dividing, separating and binding the different verses in neat independent units, is akin to the one, done by serrated edges, broken outlines and sharp-drawn contours in a painting of picturesque landscape.

That wordsworth approached the Alps with the eyes of a picturesque traveller is also evident from the letter that he wrote to Dorothy from the shore of lake Constance :

"... it is true we had the same disagreeable weather, but the banks of the water are infinitely more picturesque ..."[10]

And yet it is interesting to note that there is, according to Watson, hardly anything in the poem suggestive of the fact that the eye is acting against the imagination. It seems that in these early poems Wordsworth is actually hovering between an eye for the picturesque detail and any emotional involvement in what he saw. Lines like :

> How blessed, delicious scene! the eye that greets
> Thy open beauties, or thy lone retreats.
>
> —*Descriptive Sketches*, 11.120-21.

reveal the poet's craving for something more than what merely meets the eye, for those 'retreats' which might yield something deeper and unfamiliar, and therefore more moving than the '*open beauties*' than ereet the eye, Perhaps this could be owing to the fact that the picturesque itself, as it stood in relation ta every art, was regarded, as Hussey would have it, as a transitional ohase occurring between neo-classicism and romanticism, i. e., ' at the point when an art shifted its appeal from the reason to the imagination'.[11] Both the companion pieces abound in passages which show a sort of uncertainty, an uneasiness in the poet which, while displaying the poet's passion for the picturesque, also exhibit glimpses of his dissatisfaction with the mid-eighteenth century habit of viewing the landscape from the sensuous level only. As a prelude to the romantic movement, there was something inherent in the very nature of the aesthetic of the picturesque that enabled the poet not only to see with the eye, but also *to feel* through it.

Thus it is that in a poem like the *Descriptive Sketches*, while the poet's eye is busy greeting the shifting scenes of nature in all their vagrancy and variety, his imagination is trying to break away from the iron-hold of the physical eye and begins to assert itself, however momentarily, over the domain of the mere picturesque, in the famous

sunset passage. The invisible antennae of the poet's imagination reach out for the first time toward that realm of colour and light which a mind free from the yoke of the outer eye alone could bestow upon the common things. It is here that the poet's imagination is finally able to confer an essence upon things making them appear in an unusual aspect.

The trouble is that Wordsworth at this stage of life was hovering between the two extremes, that of the picturesque rendering of the landscape on the one hand, and the denial of the pictureque on the other that involved a deeper insight into and a transcendental grasp of the view before the eye, resulting into something magically luminous, a melting transparency or a flaming halo reminiscent of a Turner bathed in the milk of an atmospheric light that never was on sea or land. There is thus ın *Descrspiive Sketches* a reaction against the vague of the picturesque and in a footnote to the stormy sunset passage* Wordsworth writes :

> I had once given to these sketches the title of the picturesque; but the Alps are insulted in applying to them that term. Whoever, in attempting to describe their sublime features, should confine himself to the cold rules of painting would give his reader but a very imperfect idea of those emotions which they have the irresistible power of communicating to the most impassive imaginations. The fact is, that controlling influence, which distinguishes the Alps from all other scenery, is derived from images which disdain the pencil. Had I wished to make a picture of this scene I had thrown much less light into it. But I consulted nature and my feelings. The ideas excited by the stormy sunset I am here describing owed their sublimity to that deluge of light, or rather of fire, in which nature had wrapped the immense forms around me; any intrusian of shade, by dest-

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*The sunset passage under consideration is :

"Tis storm; and hid in the mist from hour to hour
All day the floods a deeper murmur pour,
And mournful sounds, as of a spirit lost,
Pipe wild along the hollow-blustering coast,
Till the sun walking on his Western field
Shakes from behind the clouds his flashing shield.
Triumphant on the bosom of the storm;
Glances the fire—clad eagle's wheeling form;
Eastward, in long perspective glittering, shine;
The wood-crown'd cliffs that over the lake recline;
Wide o'er the Alps a hundred streams unfold,
At once to pillars turn'd that flame with gold:
Behind his soil the peasant strives to shun
The west that burns like one dilated sun,
Where in a mighty crucible expire
The mountains, glowing hot, like coals of fire."

—*Descriptive Sketches*, 11. 332–47.

roying the unity of the impression, had necessarily diminished its grandeur.[12]

One just cannot resist here the temptation of quoting in its entirety the poet's footnote to the passage, as its full presentation alone can make explicit the ideas put forth in it. Any attempt at presenting the footnote in fragment would have taken away the very essence of what the poet wanted to say about his attitude to the problem of the picturesque at the time. It is here in this passage that Wordsworth reaches that vision of a fiery deluge which makes him free from the hold of the picturesque and the outer eye at once. This is an outright demolition of the aesthic of the picturesque, according to the norms of which the application of proportionate light and shade to a scene depicted by the poet, the division of the scene into foreground, middle-distance and offskip, would have been quite necessary but the poet precisely does away with such picturesque necessities and devices in order to arrive at the vision that is at once inner, all-enveloping and apocalyptic. Noyes, while writing about the sunset passage, aptly comments :

> According to the formula of picturseqe composition, the rules of proportionate light and shade be applied, but Wordsworth sensed that they should not be applied here.[13]

Thus, by not allowing himself at times to be guided by the rules of the picturesque in his early poems, Wordsworth in his '*Guide to the Lakes*' rather scornfully deflnes the 'picturesque' as 'a fad for relishing the select parts of natural scenery'.[14]

I may as well venture to suggest here that a very potential reason for Wordsworth's inabilility in doing away with the picturesque elements from his early poems could be near absence of the type of the landscape that was yet to be captured on the canvas—a lanpscape suffused with the various elements of nature in a whirling pool of light and colour, and together forming a ball of ethereal beauty—and which none could till the arrival of the great Turner on the scene. I am happy to note that my suggestion flnds corrobaration in Mary Moorman who has also pointed out that this bondage to the picturesque in Wordworth's early poetry 'is due in great measure to the inadequacy of English landscape painting at the time',[15] a painting that was yet to go beyond the traditional rules of picture making and break the rigid framework of the picturesque formula. This means that Wordsworth in a trans-picturesque passage like the sunset one 'was envisaging effects of light which were not to be mastered on canvas until Turner'.[16] Commenting further on this transflgurative quality of the Alpine passage in *Descriptive Sketches*, Watson writes :

Wordsworth, while recognizing the uniqueness and remarkable beauty of the Swiss Alps, was struggling to express qualities which the writers on the picturesque did not sufficiently recognise....there are atmospheric effects of the light which transcend the total range of contemporary painting[17]

The famous passage on the Simplon Pass in the VI book of *The Prelude* recaptures for the second time the poet's walking tour to the Alps in 1790 with Robert Jones, and in this second attempt at describing the tour he once again surpasses the picturseque considerations. Here the poet has projected, as in the sunset passage earlier, a harmonized add blended vision of Nature, a vision that his mind was ever struggling to achieve and which finally dawned upon him as the timeless image of a Mind, a Face, which carried upon it the imprint of eternity, the digital marks of the great Apocalypse itself :

> The immeasurable height
> Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,
> The stationary blasts of waterfalls,
> And in the narrow rent at every turn,
> Winds thwarting winds, bewildered and forlorn,
> The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,
> The rocks that muttered close upon our ears,
> Black drizzling crags that spake by the way-side,
> As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
> Add giddy prospects of the raving stream,
> The unfettered clouds and region of the Heavens,
> Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light
> Were all the workings of one mind, the features
> Of the same face, blossom upon one tree,
> Characters of the great Aqocalypse,
> The types and symbols of Eternity,
> Of first, and last, and midst, and without end.[18]

From a Rosa type picturesque description of Nature in the early part of the passage, we at once move to what Professor Hartman refers to as 'Wordsworth's Apocalyptic Imagination,' that supreme moment made eternal when the lone traveller halting in his journey for a while, looks upon 'a place bounded yet not time-bouded life that is the visible pledge of immortality'.[19] What makes the entire landscape transcend the picturesque elements is thus its imaginative power capable of *re-creating* the entire scene years later from memory.

Thus, apart from this famous passage on Simplon Pass in *Prelude*, the earlier 'sunset' one in the *Descriptive Sketches* is the poet's first grand attempt at capturing that inner vision which alone could bestow a symbolic meaning and character on the face of nature, It was a heroic pursuit of the features of the Absolute Mind which, as Noyes would have it, 'except in the blinding moment of light, failed'. [20] In this

poem, according to Noyes, Wordsworth was still searching for an Idea of Nature which might be adequate enough to express the essential truth of Nature as found in the majestic Alps, but as he observes, *Descriptive Sketches* is for the most part a record of his failure in that quest."[21]

Between the year 1795 when he went to Racedown to settle there with his sister and the year 1805 when *The Prelude* was published, lay a decade full of happy years when under the tender care of Dorothy as under the fraternal influence of Coleridge, the poet's mind gradually began to develop from being merely interested in the sensual enjoyment of external Nature to a stage when it began to look beyond the senses and into the life of things. No more content with sensory perceptions-- the world of the eye and the ear—his mind, aided by imagination, began to colour the external world with a visionary gleam investing the perceptions with an added significance hitherto unknown to him. This enabled him to assert the supremacy of the heart's intimations over the sensuous world that had no need of any distant charm, nor any interest in any thing that was *not* borrowed from the eye.

Dorothy's gentle ministrations made her brother free from the dominance of the outer eye, and slowly led him along the path that made him realize the importance of the inner contemplative eye, something that he so direly needed. She brought back for her brother on a more lasting basis the hitherto forgotten and hidden gleams of a visionary world, the glimpses of which visited the early Wordsworth only in rare and inspired mhments of life. Hers was a sinpler mind which didn't approach nature burdenen with the rules and subtleties of a perplexed intellect, but with a wisdom that always prompted her to watch and receive the out side world with a humility and straightforwardness devoid of all the intricacies of a meddling intellect. Wordsworth, acknowledgeing his debt to his sister, writes:

> . . . . and yet I knew a maid,
> Who, young as I was then, conversed with things
> In higher style, from appetites like these
> She, gentle Visitant, as well she might
> Was wholly free, far less did critic rules
> Or barren intermeddling subtleties
> perplex her mind; but wise as Women are
> When genial circumstances hath favour'd them,
> She welcom'd what was given, and craved no more.
> whatever scene was present to her eyes
> That was the best, to that she was attuned
> Through her humility and lowliness,
> And through a perfect happiness of soul
> Whose variegated feelings were in this

Sisters, that they were each some new delight:
For she was Nature's inmate."[22]

Dorothy finally restored him to a mental state free from the enslavement of the bodily eye, thus enabling him to face Naure with:

. . .an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy . . . .'

—*Tintern Abbey*, 11. 46-47,

It is here than that the visual and the ideal blend together and teach Wordsworth a higher fidelity which, while nagating the hold of the picturesque, affirms the poet's faith in:

'A presence that disturbs me with joy
Of elevated thought; a scene sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the livlng air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man.

—*Tintern Abbey*,, 11, 94-99.

M. S. University
Baroda

Notes

1. *The Prelude* (1805 text), ed. E. De Selincourt, (O. U- P., 1970), Bk. XI, 11. 152-64. *(Italics mine)*
2. Ibid., 11. 190-95. *(Italics mine).*
3. Ibid., 11. 196-99. *(Italics mine).*
4. W. J. Hipple (Jr.), *The Beautiful, The Sublime, and the Picturesque,* (Carbondale : The Southern Illionis University Press, 1957), p. 281

* This and all subsequent citations from *An Evening Wark* and *Descriptive Sketches* are taken from E. De Selincourt (ed.), *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth,* (O. U. P., London, 1940).

5. Quoted by Arthur Beautty, (ed.), *Wordsworth: Representative Poems* (The Odyssey Press, N. Y., 1937), intr., p. xxix.
6. Russell Noyes, *Wordsworth and the Art of Landscape* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1968), pp. 149-50.
7. J. R. Watson, *Picturesque Landscape and English Romantic Poetry (*Hutchinson Educational, London, 1970), p. 65.
8. Russele Noyes, *op. cit.,* p. 153.
9. R A. Aubin, quoted by Russell Noyes, *ibid.,* p. 159.
10. *The Early Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth,* ed. E. de Selincourt (Oxford, 1935), p. 31.
11. Christopher Hussey, *The Picturesque* (Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., London, 1967), p. 4.
12. Arthur Beatty (ed.), *op. cit., Intr.,* p. xxxiii.
13. Russell Noyes, *op. cit.,* p. 270, n. 11.
14. Quoted by Noyes, *ibid.,* p. 161·
15. See J. R. Watson, *op, cit.,* p. 72.
16. J. R. Watson, *ibid.*
17. *Ibid.,* p. 75.

GHOST

The evening wallops away
into distant curls of dust
nesting on the tamarind tree.

Slowly the fog wambles, thickens
obliterating visions; the monodic sky
over an ostium swells like humid eyes;

and the air darkened by dreams
of some ancestral deities; eyes
of foxes stroam about the bushes.

At the wizened end of our parlour
my invisible grand-father coughs,
snotters and snores.

At him sudden snivelling
I stop playing
snip-snap-snorum.

Parched, petrified and sweat-soaked
I stare at the goggle-eyed grand-father
whose groans grind me to a shaft of steel

I tear out my patience for further
endurance; and all at once I felt
his weightless hands on me, patting.
His silent whisperings buckle my ears'
sudden deafness: "Have I come here
to negotiate for a kindered recognition ?

Suddenly his eyes were a pool of tears
wherein I was floating, as though a trout,
unaware of the fisherman's net,

—Niranjan Mohanty

Nirad C. Chaudhuri's First Publication

M. K. Naik

It is eminently symptomatic of the present state of scholarship in the field of Indian English literature that while Nirad C. Chaudhuri is universally acclaimed, both in India and the West, as one of the most outstanding of Indian masters of English prose, very few people seem to have even heard of his first significant publication-viz., a seventythree pagelong essay entitled "Defence of India or Nationalisation of Indian Army" which appeared in 1935.[1] Neither of the two full-length studies of Chaudhuri published so far[2] makes even a passing reference to it, and no bibliography of Indian English literature lists it. Surprisingly enough, even an authoritative work like *A Survey of Work Done on the Military History of India*[3] makes no mention of it, though the Bibliography appended to *Survey* runs to not less then sixtythree pages and includes full-length studies as well as brief articles. Apart from a casual reference to it in Chaudhuri's *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*,[4] the only other work to mention the essay is *Oriental Studies in India*.[5] In this note, it is proposed to introduce this essay to all those interested in chaudhuri's writings.

Chaudhur'is argument in *Defence of India* is divided Into four sections. The first section entitled "The Problem States" occupies nine pages and discusses three issues : 'The National Demand' for the progressive Indianization of the Indian army, the 'Character of the present army' and the 'spirit and quality of the army : Chaudhnri begins by emphasizining the demand of the Indian National Congress to transform the whole of the defence service of India from its present (i,e. 1935) to a national footing as one of the indispensable conditions and the natural fulfilment of the ideal of *Swaraj*, because the right and capacity of defence is an integral part of self-government. Disscussing the 'character of the present army,' he argues that the armed forces, as now

constituted, are Indian in only one sense-in that their cost is borne by the peoples of India, in everything else they are non-national, though an overwhelming proportion of their personnel is furnished by India. The following factors reveal the non-national character of the Indian army i) it is not controlled by Indians and the constitutional representatives of the people of India in the governmental machinery have no effective voice in its affairs. (ii) It is recruited from certain parts of India only and not from the country as a whole e. g. large areas of the Madras and Bombay Presidencies do not furnish a single soldier to it (iii) The strict regulation of the quotas to be furnished by each district, tribe, caste or sect is another inhibiting factor. (iv) The army's internal organization is based on a caste system more rigid than that of even Hindu Society. An elaborate system of grouping and checks and balances ensures that soldiers retain their tribal or communal loyalties without developing a national consciousness. (v) Indians in the army are practically insulated from civil population; the result is mutual suspicion and even hatred. (vi) The army in India is partly constituted of units of the British Army and till very recently Indians were not employed in all its arms. There has been some relaxation in this policy recently, but not quite enough to enable the Indians to constitute a self-contained fighting formation, by themselves. (vii) The leadershlp of the Army is purely British and its ideals those of British imperialism. (viii) The function of the Army in India is imperial, not national.

As for the 'Spirit and Quality of the Army', though the Indian army is a good fighting machine, it stands in a class apart from the armies of the modern civilized states in several respects : it lacks the moral asset of a national feeling and its spirit is purely professional, with the result that its morale is weak to that extent. Secondly, it denies to its Indian element opportunities for leadership on the highest military plane.

In contrast with this, a national army for India "should be commanded and controlled by Indians, be recruited from all parts of the country and be animated by a national spirit. It should be a self-contained fighting machine able to do without the help and guidance of foreigners and above all, it should foster the military capacity of the whole nation and be directly related to it." (P. 9).

In the second section, "Function (which, like each of the remaining sections, runs to about twenty pages) Chaudburi discusses the national and imperial function of the Indian army, and the problems concerning this. He challenges the popular view that the Army in India is merely an army of occupation designed to perpetuate India's political

subjection to Great Britain. This, according to him, is an extreme view which ignores the military stakes involved.The "army of occupation" role has been obsolescent since the 1880s and after its post (World) War(I) reorganization, the Indian army became at once a reserve police force, a garrison and a field army providing for border policing, internal security, and external defence. And in everyone of the functions assigned to it, it is more concerned with British than with Indian interests, though British writers naturally do not admit this, pleading that the task of defending India is extremely complex anddifficult.

The function of the Indian Army is decided less by the natural military requirements of India than by those created by the British connection. The three important factors in the defence of a country are: its geographical situation; its economic needs and political aspirations and its relations with foreign powers. In every one of these respects, India holds a peculiarly favourable position. It has excellent natural defences, is capable of becoming a self-contained economic and politieal unit and need have no direct point of friction with any of her neighbours. The official apologist's emphasis on the possibility of an invasion by the Afghan and Pathan tribes in the North-West is misplaced in view of the realities of the twentieth century situation; in actual fact, it is the British fear of Russia that has decided the nature and function of the Field Army of India.

As for the internal security duties of the Army, they are entirely a product of the British connection, and are designed to ensure the continuation of the British rule in India. They include the suppression of revolutionary movements and of lawlessness arising from local or widespread grievances and the prevention of communal disturbances.

The last of the imperial obligations of the Army in India is the liability for service overseas. This liability has become greater after the war, so that while the old Indian army was an autonomous force with a more or less autonomous strategic role, the army of today is an integral part of the elaborate syseem of imperial defence. India's armed forces will be drawn upon in every war in which Great Britain may be engaged as a matter of course and without any reference to her interests, thus reducing the function of the Indian Army to that of a datachment of the British Army.

The third section, "Man Power" deals with the composition of the Army. Here Chaudhuri brilliantly exposes the manifold evils of the unjust recruitment policies adopted be the British Government. The

extremely one-sided composition of the Indian army has been sought to be explained away by the notorious theory of the "martial races' of India—a theory so "full of contradictions and biologically improbable that it carries its own refutation within itself." (P. 30). Actually, the composition of the Indian Army has been determined by questions of political expediency gnd immediate needs rather than by well-thought out military policies. In this connection, Chaudhuri reviews the Indian tradition and concedes that lop-sidedness in the composition of the Indian Army is also due to certain inherent features of Indian society which furnished British policy with its starting point. Indian military life in the past was governed by two principles: specialization and heredity, which together prevented the growth of a tradition of universal military service. A countributory factor was the low political development of the country as a result of which the State and the People were never considered to be synonymous terms. War was the business of kings and professionals and not 'a condition of national existence'; hence there was no approximation between the man-power and the military power of the community. The Marathas under Shivaji and his successors, and later the Sikhs and the Jats tried to take the tradition of military service from a clannish or professional to a broader national or religious grouud, but they were all broken by the British before a regular tradition of national service could grow up in India.

The effects of the British policy have prevented the natural military development of India. The British practice of maintaining a small, highly-trained professional army instead of a short term conscripted army as in most European countries has restricted the needs of the Indian army to a fraction of the total population of tne country. This irresponsible use of the man-power of the country has led both to the hardening of the caste tradition and the alteration of the distribution of the fighting castes, leading to a shrinkage of the field of recruitment.

The military energy of a nation proceeds from two psychological sources derived from two simple biological instincts–the instinct of pugnacity (which marks the professional soldier) and the instinct of defence (which the ordinary citizen possesses). The two resultant types of armies are the 'Condottiere' and the 'Burgher' armies, and the latter type was a product of the French Revolution which saw an amazing liberation of the latent military energies of a whole nation. While the armies of most modern states are clearly 'Burgher' armies, the Indian Army remains narrowly professional, while in the past (as in the case of the Marathas, the Sikhs and the Jats), Indian armies were at their best in fighting for a righteous cause, the Indian military tradition being essentially unaggressive in character.

The decline in the military capacity of the Indian people has been further compounded by the deliberate demartialization of India by the British brought about by (i) keeping the army as distinct from the general population as possible and (ii) depriving the Indian public of the right to carry arms. Both these steps are directly opposed to the practice of governments which have a stake in the man-power of their countries. All modern states try to bridge the gulf between the army and the general public through schemes like the Territorial Army and preparatory military training in schools and colleges; in India the gulf is actually sought to be widened.

The future organizers of a national Indian army will therefore have to restore the military spirit of the people and improve the efficiency of the entire population by halting their physical deterioration, which is the result of a vicious circle of poverty, ignorance and, in some cases, baneful habits of living and unsuitable diet.

"Command and control" is the sub-title of the concluding section which begins by pointing out that the question of Indian control of the army has either been confused with the question of Indian leadership or made dependent on it. Actually, in Great Britain ministers of war have rarely been professionals, and in fact, some of the most far-reaching innovations in organization, equipment and strategy have been due to the initiative of politicians. It is this civilian collaboration in the military sphere that is wanted in India and for this nothing more is required than a sense of defence and a flair for the general principles of strategy and army organization. If this sense is not as highly developed in the politically conscious classes in India as it is among those in Europe, that is not because of any lack of basic aptitnde as inexperience. The way to familiarize the people and the politicians of India with the reality of defence questions is to bring them into closer relation with the problems of national security. This can only be done through the increasing association of Indians with the actual defence arrangements of the country, if not at first in an executive, at least in a consultative capacity. Unfortunately, the Act of 1935 denies the Indians even this, since, according to it, the Department of Defence is under the exclusive direction and control of the Governor General. This provision is clearly designed to continue the imperial character of the Indian army.

The control of the Indian army by the imperial military authorities is maintained in various ways–first by giving no voice to the Indian people in matters of defence, and secondly, by making the Government of India responsible to Parliament and the British Government. Again, the

Commander-in-Chief and the principal staff officers have the right to correspond direct with the War office in most military matters. Furthermore. the British officers of the Indian army are purely local agents of the Imperial General Staff and do not acknowledge any duty to the furthermore national defensive requirements of India.

These imperial stakes in the Army in India have inevitably hampered the process of its Indianization. The scheme of Indianization approved by the Defence Sub-committee of the first Round Table Conference labours under several limitations : (i) though, for the first time in the history of the post-Mutiny army, it seeks to create a formation of all arms composed entirely of Indians. the decison to confine Indianization to a particular formation continues the principle of segregating Indian officers. (ii) The recent establishment of a millitary college in India is a welcome step but the annual in-take of the college is so low that the proccss of Indianization will be extremely slow. (iii) The Indianized portion of the army is sought to be condemned to an inferior status by giving the new Indian Officers a lower rate of pay and restricted powers of command.

These crippling limitations make one suspect that the entire scheme is a clever attempt to divide the army in India into two parts, one to be composed of and commanded by Indians and emplyed for local defence, and commanded wholly by British officers, to be reserved for imperial purposes. so that if at some future date the political control of defence has to be transferred to Indians it might be confined to the field of local defence and not distrub imperial defence arrangements.

The latest argument against quickening the pace of Indianization is that there is a lack of suitable candidates even for the limited number of annual vacancics now available. But the creation of an officer class is everywhere-even in England-and at all times a long and arduous process, and the only way to succeed in it is to set about it on right lines; but the methods adopted by the present organizers of Indian military education are hardly the right ones. First military education should be suited to national character and should not try to uproot the cadets from their social environment. But this is exactly what the military authorities are doing in India, by trying to fashion Brown Englishmen from Indian youths. Secondly, the most suitable material for this transformation is to be found in the anglicized upper-middle class which has naturally been over-represented in the Indian military academy; but this class is frankly careerist in its orientation and its mode of living has already made it a stranger to the common people. It is manifestly incapable of providing the required leadership.

Another check on the supply of candidates to the military college is the want of the necessary backgroune. The three stages in the education of officers are : preliminary education imparted through the general education system of the country and intended to develop physique and character; the graduating stage at military college, and the post-graduate stage at the staff college. Present day Indian military education can hardly be said to be properly organised in this manner.

The policy of appealing to the sons of *Sardars* and *Zaminders* to come forward for commissions is also misconceived for two reasons : (i) not all the *zamindars* are the natural leaders of the country (ii) the history of the Indian army after British conquest is one of the progressive degradation of the native officer, all substantive power being in the hands of British officers. This has discouraged upper class Indians with military ambitions and they have preferred to serve the Princes of the native states instead.

Chaudhuri coacludes by saying that this historical process must be reversed if there is to be a revival of the military capacity of the nation. "In the higher sphere of command as in the lower sphere of man-power, the only way to create a truly national army is to wipe off the slate the developments of the last hundred and fifty years and lay the foundations afresh" (p. 73),

"Defence of India" is, in many ways, a piece of composition typical of Chaudhuri, though as an early work it is, generally free from some of nastier bees in his intellectual bonnet. As his *Autobiography*[6] shows, Chaudhuri's interest in military matters goes back to his boyhood. He tells us how his adoration for Napoleon then was only an exmaple of the widely shared Bengali fascination for tais great military leader and that he also admired Wellington, Lord Roberts ('Whom we regarded as the greatest living soldier') and Lord Kitchener. When the news arrives that the post of Commander-in-Chief is abolished in England and an Inspector-General installed in his place, he is filled with 'unspeakable disgust', for, this is regarded as a disgrace to England; "a Commander-in-Chief was a man next only to the Vicrroy, while an Inspector was no higher than the Inspector of Schools.' As a boy he also gained knowledge about the "more important European wars of the previous fifty years." This early interest in military matters was obviously strengthened when Chaudhuri became a clerk in the Military Accounts in 1921, though he did not continue in this post for a long time.

Chaudhuri's essay also reveals glimpses of many characteristic aspects of his literary personality with which his better known works

such as *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* and *The Continent of Circe* have made us familiar—viz, the breadth of his intellectual interests, his encyclopaedic learning, his thoroughness, his "spirit of fierce intellectul defiance"7 which makes him challenge accepted positions, his brilliant marshalling of his material and his distinctive prose style.

His argument in "Defence of India" clearly shows Chaudhuri's mastery of the subject in all its ramifications. He knows as much about the Indian military tradition through the ages as about the theory and practice of modern Western military science, and at every stage of his argument, his agile mind is constantly active in sifting available knowledge, interpretiag it and relating it to a comprehensive view of the subject. His numerous references to British writers on military, historical and political matters shows his wide reading on the subject. Among the authors and works he alludes to are Sir Valentine Chirol, the reports of the Royal Commission on the Masopotamian campaign, the Royal Commission on recruitment after the Mutiny, and Sub-committee No. VII, on defence, of the first Round Table Conference; Sir John Lawrence, General Sir George MacMunn, Sir Richard Temple, Lord Haldane and Sir Philip Chetwode. It is entirely typical of Chaudhuri that his essay also reveals his knowledge of ancillary subjects. While discussing the question of the physical efficiency of Indians, he refers to the report of the Royal Commission on agriculture and the Imperial Institute for Nutrition established in Japan in 1920. and in pin-pointing the deficiencies of the British recruitment policy he alludes to the blunder of the Permanent Settlement in Bengal after the British Conquest.

As the summary given above indicates, Chaudhuri's argument is extremely well-reasoned and incisive. The perceptiveness of his analysis is clear throughout, one of the best examples being his comment on the British Governments' decision to make a contribution towards the cost of the army in India. He characterizes the acceptance of this contribution as "one of the signal blunders in Indian politics in recent years" (p. 66) and points out how it has materially prejudiced the case for Indianization; because this is perhaps the first move in a long-range plan to divide the Indian army into two parts, one under Indian command and the other under British.

Scrutinizing Chaudhuri's argument from the vantageground of today, one notes that the march of history has proved him totally wrong at one place. While discussing the natural defensive requirements of India, he argues "the natural political and economic development of all her Asiatic neighbours is in no way affected by India. None of them have (*sic*) any direct point of friction with her which could induce them to such war and unless we ourselves excited their cupidity by a culpable

display of military weakness they would probably all be perfectly ready to leave us alone" (p.16). The fact that within less than two decades of Independence, India developed direct points of friction with two of her neighbours and had to go to war with them thrice has entirely disproved Chaudhuri's view, But in his defence it may be pointed out that writing in 1935, not even the shrewdest of political commentators could have foreseen the sweeping changes which lay hardly a dozen or so years away then viz. the advent of Independence, the creation of Pakistan and the establishment of Communist Government in China.

Tautly structured and to the point, "Defence of India" has no room for digression; only one of Chaudhuri's favourite ideas (to which he recurs in his later books) therefore seems to appear here and that too very briefly: his views on the inadequacies of Indian "habits of living and unsuitable diet" to whieh he attributes in some measure "the physical deterioration of the masses as well as the intelligentsia in India" (p. 49). It will be recalled that this view is reiterated with further elaboration at various places in the 'Essay on the cause of Indian History", in *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian, The Continent of Circe, The Intellectual in India* and *To Live or not to Live*.

Two extremely interesting features of *Defence of India* are the total absence from it of both his notorious anglophilia and his 'Hindu-baiting'. He is highly critical of the policies of the British Government here and it is significant that his essay was published by the All India Congress Committee. There is also not the slightest trace here of those preconceived theories, and prejudices about Hindu character and culture which gradually hardened into obstinate dogmas as Chaudhuri grew older. This is perhaps because when he wrote the essay his own individual frustrations had not yet grown strong enough to compel him to elevate his personal pique to the level of primary principle. He had not yet become a complete "stranger to my environment"[8], nor had he decided to turn "away from the new Hindu Yahoos".[9] Writing in 1935, he had not yet made the great discovery that the ("so-called") Gandhi cap and the ("so-called") Jawahar "waistcoat" are "two of the ugliest imaginable adjuncts from non-Hindu families of clothing, which add to the unattractivencess of the political costume.[10] The writer of "Defence of India" is certainly not the incorrigible 'Hindu-baiter" that the later Chaudhuri is, while at the samc time manifesting at least in some measure those gifts of thought and expression which one always associates with his name. Chaudhuri himself has emphasized the principle that "style·········is not only the man himself, it is also the subject itself",[11] and the rather technical nature of its subject has naturally circumscri-

bed the stylistic excellence of "Defence of India." There is not much scope here for the varied allusion and learned quotation periodic eloquence and striking imagery, lively anecdote and sharp irony which lighten up the pages of Chaudhuri's acknowledged masterprieces. Nevertheless, in many ways the Chaudhuri stamp is unmistakably apparent in "Defence of India."

Karnatak University,
Dharwar

Notes

1. Congress Golden Jubilee Brochure No. 8, published by The All India Congress Committee, Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad, 1935. I found a copy of this in the Library of the University of Allahabad, Allahabad.
2. *Nirad C. Choudhary* by Paul Varghese (New Delhi, 1973) and *Nirad C. Choudhuri* by Tara sinha (Patna, 1981).
3. S. N. Prasad, *A Survey of Work Done on the Military History of India* (Calcutta, 1976). The book is sponsored by the Indian Council of historical Research.
4. "The Congress had in the meanwhile published an essay by me on the Indianization of army, "*Tone Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* (Bombay, 1951), p. 263.
5. *Oriental Studies in india*, published by the Organizing Committee, 26th International Congress Orientalists, New Delhi, 1964. My thanks are due to Professor G. S. Dikshit for drawing my attention to this.
6. *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, p.522.
7. Nirad C. Choudhury in *I Believe*, ed. Khushwant Singh (New Delhi, n. d.), p.27
8. *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, p. 522.
9. Nirad C. Choudhury, *The Continent of Circe* (Bombay, 1966),p. 375.
10. Nirad C. Choudhury, *Culture in the Vanity Bag* (Bombay, 1976), p. 10
11. Nirad C. Choudhury, *The Intellectual in India* (New Delhi, 1967), p. 79.

Irony in The Waste Land

H. P. Mohanty

The opening of *The Waste Land* is itself ironical. The abrupt surprise of 'April is the cruellest month/breeding lilac out of the dead land', mixing memory of the opening of Chaucer's Prologue, is at once a precise description of post-war English milieu and its poignant alienation from fifteenth century English mode. And 'mixing memory and desire'—that provides the clue to the pervasive and profound irony of the poem. It is the irony of the highest order, the movement occurring on the triple plane of memory, actuality, desire. Memory of the positive past, actuality of the impotent present and abortive gestation of values—in the intense simultaneity of these three awarenesses is clinched the irony. All the principal situations and symbols have this ironic bearing, a bearing that, in its unobtrusive insistence, generates the poem's peculiar agony of contemplation, and its complex poise.

Madame Sosostris, dabbling in Tarot pack of cards, presents a banal picture. First, she has a bad cold. Secondly, she has not the assured completeness of divining capacity. She starts confidently but boggles soon after. She is forbidden to see the 'flank card' and 'I do not find the Hanged Man'. The 'hanged man' in the original is the hanged god, the sacrificial deity in the fertility cult. It may even symbolise the crucified Christ. Both point to resuscitation, resurrection. Nothing of the sort here. And the sneaking end to this passage—'one must be careful these days'—only exposes the banality of her profession. Even where she is confident in her divination she blurts out names and snatches without any weight. The weighty significances of the Phoenician sailor, the Lady of the Rocks—Belladona has a dual, ambivalent meaning, (a) beautiful Italian lady, Mona Lisa (b) a flower used in manufacture of dangerous drugs—fall flat on a world

that has lost the lore. "Those were pearls that were his eyes" with its rich, positive response adorns the passage as an ironic mockery. In brief, a pervasive and haloed medieval profession is reduced to caricature. And yet, the ramification of this passage in the poem to cover all the principal symbols—the drowned Phoenician sailor symbolised in Phelbas, Belladona in all the ladies in the poem, ladies of different scales, the man with three staves and the Hanged Man in Christ, the one-eyed merchant in Mr. Eugenides—is irony in the reverse order, a sort of counterpoint.

The opening passage of Section II has the same complex effect. Cleopatra's barge and Belinda's boudoir, one gorgeous and the other gay, and Imogen's bedchamber are recalled behind the glittering exaggerated artificiality of the society lady's situation The *artifice* that is the characteristic of Cleopatra and Belinda passages pulsates with life, with vivacity. In Shakespeare it is cumulative, pulsating sensuous intensity, in Pope it is sprightly visual intensity. Whereas, the deliberate exaggeration, the action and the motion verbs, the personifications, the studied sensuousness of this passage are *artificial* because they don't contain the lady, they only contain her things. The lady is lost in the staggering opulence of her dressing room. Cleopatra and Belinda glow like their ornamental setting, glow through their ornamental setting. Imogen's serene chastity and her setting produce a tranquil stasis. This poor lady is evicted by her materials. And when she reappears at line 111, she is in dithers—all nerves, excitement, melancholy, emptiness, ennui, neurasthenia. Even in the gorgeous description of her sophistication, the introduction of the Philomel theme—'the change of Philomel by the barbarous king so rudely forced'—and 'other withered stumps of time' and 'staring forms' acidly counter the previous studied sensuousness. Philomel is an ironic, ambiguous symbol, symbol of violation, and, in her survival as a nightingale, of inviolation as well. The society lady's predicament is at once countered by the pub woman's glibness, in spite of the grave/mock implication of 'HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME'. Irony in meaning and irony in technique make this passage doubly ironical.

The same technique operates in the opening to Section III. Spenser's "Prothalamion" and Marvell's "Coy Mistress" provide the nostalgic reverberation to a degraded and degrading amour : The nymphs are departed Sweet Thames run softly till I end my song'. And 'at my back in a cold blast I hear the rattle of bones and chuckle spread from ear to ear'. The uneven parallels in this passage-the

musing speaker on the one hand, 'fishing in the dull canal' against the grotesque background of the creeping rat 'dragging its slimy belly on the bank,' 'white bodies naked..../And bones cast in a little low dry garret/Rattled by the rat's foot only, year to year', and the hermit brother of the Fisher King Anfortas and Ferdinand of *The Tempest* on the other—have the same kind of effect as the Elizabeth-Leicester passage a little later. This passage, flanked by 'The river sweats/oil and tar' passage and 'Trams and dusty trees' passage on either side, is an obvious instance of ironical variations on the same theme. The celebrated amour of the Elizabethan protagonists in a gorgeous setting, the barge as well as the river, has for its modern counterpart the mean commerce-ridden river and the gross promiscuity of 'By Richmond I raised my knees/supine on the floor of a narrow canoe'. Sex in *The Waste Land* is not the pronounced orgy, blatant and vehement, that it is in permissive literature. Exhaustion, ennui, emptiness, shame and resignation are the results. And that implies the recognition of traditional moral values. 'I Tiresias have foresuffered all'. But Sex in *The Waste Land* has not the glamour, the elan, the full-blooded vitality of the past either. The typist, the sophisticated lady, the pub woman, the Highbury woman are puny, pitiable matches to Isolde, Imogen, Dido, Cleopatra and Belinda. The hyacinth girl carrying an ambivalent symbolic load—phallus and resurrection—strikes the protagonist speechless. This speechlessness may be due to wonder and astonishment. 'I was neither/living nor dead, and I knew nothing,/ looking into the heart of light, the silence' : or, due to fear : 'I shall show you fear in a handful of dust' : 'a nameless, ultimate fear, a horror of the completely negative'[1] : or, very ironically, it may be due to a blend of both feelings. This kind of dual meanings, ambiguous, intra-sectional and inter-sectional as well, constitutes the staple of irony that I.A. Richards defines as the 'bringing in of the opposite, the complementary impulses' in order to achieve a 'balanced poise'.[2]

Commenting on this passage Cleanth Brooks argues that what Eliot is doing here is connecting history to contemporary time to bring out the sameness of sensuality and lust in all times. 'The effect is a sense of the oneness of experience, and of the unity of all periods'[3] Matheissen makes the same remark about the Spenserian gallants and their modern counterparts. But more subtle than the sameness is the difference in quality, degree and timbre of passion and lust that are stressed in Eliot's skilfully-placed parallels. Even differences in the aftermaths of sensual gratifications are subtly brought out. The typist's mechanical, matter-of-fact resignation is a different proposition from

Olivia's remorseful reaction in 'Vicar of Wakefield'. Sex is a primordial experience but the curve of the sex-experience defines its quality and determines its value.

The final passages of *The Waste Land* are excruciatingly ironical. To the thunder's booming voice of Datta, Dayadhvam, Damyata the protagonist's response is tragically ambivalent, or ambiguous. Our response to the Upanishadic '*datta*' is craven surrender to lust, secret sin of lust; to 'dayadhvam' the response is 'each in his prison/thinking of the key, each confirms a prison'. No rapport with anybody. Each a 'broken Coriolanus', each is like the imprisoned thirteenth century Italian noble who 'heard the door of the horrible tower being locked up'. *Damayata* only elicits the response of a gay trip in a gay boat.

These passages, in the light of Cleanth Brook's interpretation of the myth, have become controversial. Brooks would see a progression in the poem in the light of the positive contents of the protagonist's response to the thunder's voice. But closely read, his exposition of the meaning of the three responses to the three voices of the thunder is not clear and convincing. 'Man cannot be absolutely self-regarding'[4]. True. But the surrender to lust, the secret sin of lust— for in spite of the ambiguous swing of meaning towards noble love in the 'awful daring of a moment's surrender' the passage means the secret sin of lust—is not the correct kind of surrender, not the correct *datta*. In the same way his explanation of the response to *dayadhvam*— 'the surrender to something outside the self is an attempt, whether on the sexual level, or some other, to transcend one's essential isolation'[5]— is devoid of any spiritual meaning. Surrender to sex is, firstly, not the correct transcendence of one's isolation. The typist and her seducer in that case would stand 'transcended'. Secondly, the load of allusions in this passage emphasises only muffled isolation, total isolation. The response to *damyata* is more positive, or, more correctly speaking, is nothing negative, that is, in a naturalistic sense. But even then the word 'gaily' is twice mentioned. And certainly the control of the boat is a far cry from Upanishadic control. The three *das* of *Prajapati* to gods, men and demons is *Brihadaranyakopanishad* meant the three paths of Salvation. To gods it meant *damyata* (curb or control); to men it meant *dutta* (give); to demons it meant *dayadhvam* (sympathise or be generous). These would apply to mankind also as there are three categories of men in life gods, men, demons. Hence, against the spiritual connotations of the Upanishadic *das* the responses recorded here appear ironically earthy. The trouble with Brooks is that he is

leaning too much on Baudelaire's statement that he quotes for interpreting these passages : 'So far as we are human, what we do must be either evil or good; so far as we do evil or good, we are human; and it is better, in a paradoxical way, to do evil than to do nothing; at least we exist'.[6] May be, but the irony of human situation is that it would be so, in spite of the tradition of better experiences at its back. Hence the poignancy, the suffering of the poem—not sentimentalised, for, irony is the controlling, critical lever that secures detachment for the contemplation. No sentimentality, no morbidity. The obsession with 'waste', particularly sexual waste is, in the last analysis, concentrated contemplation.

And the great poem comes to its close in the jumble and jar of positive and negative tensions which in their dramatic, electric clash with each other produce a charged ironical effect. The Fisher King fishing is the symbol of life but this against 'the arid plain behind me.' 'Shall I at least set my lands in order' with its echo of 'Thus saith the lord, set thy house in order' (Isaiah) and 'set my love in order, O thou who lovest me'—prayer of the thirteenth century Italian poet Jacopone de Todi–ends with a dubious question mark. 'London bridge is falling down falling down falling down'. The Italian fragment from Dante which means 'then dived he back into that fire which refines them' is not catharsis complete but purgatory in process. Arnaut Daniel dives back to the fire requesting Dante 'to be mindful in due time of my pain'. 'The Waste Land' is not precisely Eliot's 'Inferno', for, in Dante's 'Inferno' there is no proleptic intimation of his 'Purgatorio' as there is in 'The Waste Land'. Sharp follows the line about 'the Prince of Aquitaine of the ruined tower', the 'disinherited' prince. Then comes 'Hieronymos' mad again' after the murder of his son. And '*shantih shaatih shantih*' coming after such concentrated, ambivalent agitation of the immediate context never signifies what it does in the Upanishad. 'The peace that passeth understanding', the peace that is spiritual serenity and certitude comes more as a yearning than as an acquisition. Positive values–human and spiritual-are expressed as yearning, as tormenting memory rather than as acquisition throughout the poem. In the earlier sections, even upto and inclusive of the 4th section, they provide the background frame to the poem's experience. In broad parallels and ambivalences or in twined, compact allusions or in dual meanings or symbols the positive values curl and cling in one's response to the poem. Phlebas the Phoenician dies by water and 'a current under sea picked his bones in whispers'. But 'of his bones are' no 'coral made', nor, in passing, 'the stages of his age and youth' he is retrieved like the effigy of the fertility god throw every year into the

river at Alexandria and retrieved at Babylon for fresh worship, a cult symbolic of death and resurrection. The French equivalent imagines a 'terrible and for a man so handsome and tall'. "Death by Water" has all the implicit load of purgatorial baptimism without actually bringing it off. In Section V the positive values are more pronounced, more overt, the purgatorial echoes more audible, and in that sense there is no doubt a progression in the poem. But they are sucked up by intense effects of drought and demolition. 'Here is no water but only rock, rock and no water and the sandy road'. Rock, however, in the first section, is the symbol of the holy grail, of shelter and nurture. 'Come in under the shadow of this red rock'. But here in section V we have 'falling towers/Jerusalem Athens Alexandria/Vienna London/Unreal. And 'the unreal' turns to nightmarish horror and horridness in the next few lines (377–384). The possibility of a blessing hinted earlier in Christ's journey to Emmaus is wrecked in this modern panorama of waste and horror.

Thus the poignancy, the agony of the poem's experience have tragic dimension without maturing into proper, perfect tragedy. The fragments of Budhistic and Augustinian fire—'burning burning burning'—are ironically ambiguous, meaning fire of lust as fire of purgatory. And the ambiguity carries the heavier load of lust. The fire of purgatory is a background blaze, a potential positive, unrealised and unrealizable yet. That realisation comes at last in "Little Gidding".

Ravenshaw College,
Cuttaka.

Notes

1. F. R. Leavis : *New Bearings in English Poetry.*
2. I. A. Richards : *Principles of Literary Criticism.*
3. Cleanth Brooks : *The waste Land : Critique of the Myth.*
4. Ibid
5. Ibid
6. Quoted, C. Brooks's *The Waste Land : Critique of the Myth.*

The Feminine Point of View in the Novels of Elizabeth Bowen

Ila Rao

In the early years of the twentieth century there were quite a few highly educated women with a keen perception and an exquisite sensibility who chose the career of creative writing. The "new great age in literature" that Virginia Woolf had predicted in her pamphlet *Mr. Bennet and Mrs Brown* was responsible for the creation of a number of distinguished women novelists like Ivy Compton - Burnett, Rose Macaulay, Rosamond Lehmann and Elizabeth Bowen. All these novelists had acquired some degree of popularity, but the one novelist who reacted very sensitively to her age and who was often compared to Virginia Woolf was Elizabeth Bowen. Though she has often been described as a novelist of "Sensibility", the term cannot fully cover or estimate the "breadth" of her talent as a writer. Elizabeth Bowen herself had denied any association or involvement with any particular group or school. She had her own interpretation of the term 'sensibility' which according to her was a kind of medium through which she could have a clear apprehension of the world, like a landscape that becomes more brilliant when viewed for a particular angle or in a special light. Walter Allen has therefore described her as a novelist with

> an intense awareness of, and sensitivity to, place and weather, to the living character of houses, for example, and the indefinable yet readily palpable relation set up between them, and the people who dwell in them. '[1]

Elizabeth Bowen was born in Dublin in the year 1899. She was the only child of an Irish lawyer who was also a landowner. Her ancestors who were Anglo-Irish had contributed a good deal to the cultural heritage of Ireland. She spent her early chidhood at the family estate in Bowen's Court, and when she was seven she was taken to live

in the South of England. She had such a fascination and love for Bowen's Court that she wrote the history of her own house and family in her book *Bowen's Court*. Elizabeth Bowen had been very attached and close to her mother, but she died of cancer at a very early age, when Elizabeth Bowen was only thirteen years old. Her father remarried and later due to overwork had a nervous breakdown and was consigned to a mental asylum at his own request. Elizabeth Bowen left home at the age of nineteen and she lived alone in London with frequent visits to the continent until her marriage to Alan Cameron in 1923. In London she had to live a hand to mouth existence, but this was good as she started writing for her living. Writing for her was not a means to an end but a real passion, an expression of her own views about life. After her marriage, Elizabeth Bowen lived near Northampton and later on when her husband was offered a teaching position at Oxford she moved there with him. Her husband subsequently jointed the B.B.C. and continued in that appointment until his death in 1952. Elizabeth Bowen used to live in London and often visit Italy. Elizabeth Bowen was awarded the Degree of Doctor of Letters from both Trinity College, Dublin and Oxford University. In 1965 she was made a companion of Literature by the Royal Society of Literature.

Elizabeth Bowen wrote her first short stories when she was twenty. In her own words,

> From the moment that my pen touched paper, I thought of nothing but writing, and since then I have thought practically of nothing else. I have been idle for months, or even for a year, at a time; but when I have nothing to write, I feel only half alive.[2]

Her short stories were published in 1923 and since then she published thirteen novels, many volumes of short stories, historical has sketches and a collection of essays. She died in 1973.

Elizabeth Bowen is a very sensitive writer completely dedicated and committed to the art of writing. She has very clear and precise views with regard to the craft of fiction and she has set them down in her article, 'Notes on Writing a novel.' In many ways she is like Jane Austen, especially in her love of social life and manners and her perceptive depiction of the domestic scene What is most striking, is her vivid and brilliant delineation of the visible world which has been compared to the art of Henry James. Like him therefore she has been described as a novelist of atmosphere.

> She has a highly developad sense of time and place, an eye for the roses dropping petals one by one on damp autumn afternoons, and ear for the music from distant band stands, a response to the message of a once lived-in, once loved, but now abandoned house.[3]

According to Elizabeth Bowen many of her novels and stories had their genesis in the vision of a particular place. The action and the characters are an integral part of the landscape. This quality has been explained by Mr. Edward Sackville West as similar to painting.

> There is undoubtedly, a quality in Miss Bowen's writing which suggests the work of the French Impressionists – in particular, one remembers her intense feeling for light, and it is interesting, in this connexion, to learn that Miss Bowen did, in her early youth, intend to be a painter. Another possible source for this pictorial quality in her work – and especially for her sensitivity to light – is the fact that Miss Bowen has spent much of her life in Ireland, where light is an extremely important factor in the landscape.[4]

Elizabeth Bowen has often been compared to Virginia Woolf in her preoccupation with the visible world. Though there is a similar acute awareness of the environment and the same pictorial and poetic intensity of vision, there is a difference. Virginia Woolf is interested in nature and surroundings for its own sake, whereas in the case of Elizabath Bowen, the landscape is never allowed to overwhelm the characters that live in it The surroundings and light assume a symbolical significance in her novels. In *The Last September*, for instance, the Montmorencys arrive and stand shaking hands with their hosts in the

> "yellow theatrical Sunshine."[5]

Lois, the heroine of the novel, looks at the lawn

> "Where little tufts of shadow pricked
> like reeds from water out of the flat
> gold light."[6]

In *The Death of the Heart* the wintry landscape is very suggestive and significant of the theme of betrayal and deception. Her description of the scene is so beautiful that it is like a painting-the brown, and the bronze giving the most equisite colour to the landscape. She also uses the most unusual words and phrases :

> The islands stood in frozen woody brown dusk; it was now between three and four in the afternoon. A sort of breath from the clay, from the city outside the park condensing made the air unclear, through this, the trees round the lake soared frigidly up. Bronze cold of January round the sky and the landscape; the sky was shut to the sun-but the swans, the rims of the ice, the pullid with drawn Regency terraces had an unnatural burnish, as though cold were light.[7]

The description of the lake, frozen in parts, and swans swimming majestically is reminiscent of Tehaikowsk's 'Swan Lake'-the final scene where Odette realizes how she has been betrayed. Here the scene is

only a prelude to the subsequent betrayal of a young girl-the death of a heart. The frozen lake also denotes the cold heart of Anna Quayne who is one of the principal betrayers. It is interesting to note that Elizabath Bowen generally starts her novels with a description of the landscape. In *The House in Paris*, the novel starts with a description of a 'dark greasy February morning,' which signifies the nature of the plot. Her description of light in this novel is also quite meaningful.

There was just enough light to see[8]

Throughout the novel the atmosphere of depression and gloom is sustained by her descriptions of the landscape. In *To The North*, the suburb as seen from the window of an express train is described as :

> that with washing strung over the streets
> sustained like an afflication the sunless
> afternoon glare.[9]

She has a great talent for presenting a familiar scene, an apparently trivial action and show the underlying urgency and dramatic awareness.

As a novelist, Elizabath Bowen attaches maximum importance to characters and their behaviour. In her talk 'Notes on writing a Novel', she affirms that characters cannot be constructed to a formula predecided by the plot, she says,

> One cannot 'make' characters only marionettes. The manipulated movement of the marionette is not the 'action' necessary for plot. Characterless action is not action at all in the plot sense. It is the indivisibility of the act from the actor, and the inevitability of *that* act on the part of that actor, *that* gives action verisimilitude[10]

Like her illustrious predecessor Jane Austen, she is mainly interested in the social behaviour and manners of highly civilized men and women. She has therefore described herself as a novelist of behaviour. It is however interesting to note that she rarely writes about people below her social level. Her characters are generally from the upper middle-class. In two of her novels, *The Death of the Heart* and *The Heat of day*, she includes the Philistine middleclass but also manages to show her distaste for this class which according to her is the most dangerous element in society. It is also very interesting, that the characters in most of her novels are mainly women, and that it is their view point that is taken into consideration, and that the men rarely matter. *To The North*, which is a novel dedicated to David Cecil is the first of her novels in which the men really count. In her early novels like *The Hotel*, *The Last September* and *Friends and Relatives* the women

characters are given too much of importance and are perceived with a disproportionate intensity, whereas the men characters are represented as either repressed or delinquent. She is never complimentry to the men characters in her novels.

It is quite obvious from her novels, that Elizabeth Bowen does not transgress the limits of her own experiences, and that she strictly confines herself to her own opinions on life. Her novels are crystallizations of her own actual experiences. Some of the plots of her novels are based on her own experience *The Hotel* is based on her experiences in a hotel in Italy where her aunt was staying with her children and where she had gone to spend a holiday. Her attachment to Bowen's court is displayed in her preoccupation with large mansions in each of her novels-the hotel in her first novel; the Fisher's house in *The House in Paris* which draws on her own love affair. The sandwiching of the past and present, the complexities of the plot may belong to the imagination, but the central triangle of the plot contains the essence of Elizabeth Bowen's real life triangle. In *To the North* it is Rutland Gate and Danielstown in *The Last September*. In her preface to this novel she has explained

> I was the child of the house from which Danielstown derives. Bowen's court survived-nevertheless, so often my mind's eye did I see it burning that the terrible last event in The Last September is more real than anything I have lived through.

Her heroines are also mostly self portraits and are based on various stages of her own life. Her early novels therefore portray the adolescent trying to come to terms with life, they depict the conflict between the two worlds of the adolescent and the adult. Her latter novels depict the problems of the mature women. In her early novels her main characters are either young boys or girls who like their creator have either been deprived of both parents or have one parent only. In *The Death of the Heart*, Portia has lost both her parents and in *The Last September*, Lois is living with her aunt and lcncle. In most of these early novels the theme is the conflict between the generations-the rebellious young and the conventional elders. *The Death of a Heart*, is a very sensitive portrayal of a lonely young girl living with unsympathetic relations and trying to adjust to the hard facts of realities. Elizabeth Bowen's art is to expose the insensibility and the emotional atrophy of the adults which is finally responsible for the rude shock in the life of a young girl. Elizabeth Bowen has a very unusual way of delineating the conflict between the generations in her novels where she utilizes the pattern of juxtaposition of two dissimilar women.

Generally both are drawn from polarized aspects of her own personality, herself and her subself--Lois and Marda in *The Last September*; Portia and Anne in *The Death of the Heart*. She also manages to have an old lady in all her novels to take the place of the mother or aunt image. This omnipresent 'older woman' figure in a Bowen novel also incorporates bits of Elizabeth Bowen's personality. Her characters are very often her mouthpieces, and she expresses her views about life through them. Lady Naylor, in *The Last September* speakes about marriage

> There's a future for girls nowadays
> outside marriage........careers........
> how I should have loved one.[11]

Likewise, her reminiscences of her holidays at the seaside also play a very prominent part in her novels.

Elizabeth Bowen has been able to evolve a prose style which has the richness of texture and the suggestiveness of poetry. Her intense awareness and sensitivity to place, weather and the minute details of life are the special attributes of her feminine point of view. Her observation of minute details about houses and clothes are typical of a woman's world. Her novels are full of descriptions of the interior af houses and the dresses that women wear. Thus, Henrietta's first impression of the house where the Fishers lived

> You saw no windows, the hall and the stairr were undraughty, lit by electric light. The inside of this house-with its shallow doorpanels, lozenge door knobs, polished brass ball on the end of the banisters, stuffy red matt paper with stripes so artfully shadowed as to appear bars-was more than simply novel to Henrietta, it was antagonistic as though it had been invented to put her out [12]

She also indulges in the minute and detailed description of the clothes worn by her women character. It is as if she takes a special delight in dressing up her characters. She also concentrated on certain details of the daily routine of life-the act of washing the hands assumes a ritualistic importance. In *The House in Paris*,

> "Henrietta chases a cake of sandalwood soap in the foreign water, feeling it lap her wrists."[13]

In *The Last September*, Francis looks at her hands while washing,

> ....they turned in the water like gentle
> porpoises in a slaves of violet soap.[14]

In her later novels like *The Little Girls* and *A World of Love*, Elizabeth Bowen's mood is one of satire and comedy. Her target here is the world of adults *The Heat of the Day*, which also belongs to this period is the most completely detailed evocation of the war years in London. She has been able to recreate the feel of the times—the disillusion and the dislocation of the 1940-44 years. Her art reaches a culmination in her later novels, especially *The World of Love*. It is in this novel that Elizabeth Bowen's mastery of all that she had learned by writing, by constant experiment comes to its climax.

Miss Elizabeth Bowen cannot be considered as a popular novelist. She is a novelist of sensibility and a highly conscious artist who keeps within the limits of her feminine consciousness. Her novels can be considered as expositions of different stages of a woman's world-an interpretation of the women's point of view. She has therefore deliberately confined herself to themes which are within the range of a woman's perception. Her novels are the apt illustrations of Virginia Woolf's stipulation.

> The elaborate study of the psychology of women by a woman.[15]

Elizabeth Bowen will be remembred as a highly intelligent and exquisitely sensitive Anglo-Irish writer who has taken into account both the restrictions and the specific advantages of her position as a woman novelist. Though her range is limited, as regards human emotions she is very perceptive and analytical. There is an intensity in her presentation of experience in a small but perfect world, an integrity that makes her unique as a woman novelist. Her novels can be considered as perfect examples of the feminine point of view.

Andhra University
Waltair

Notes

1. Walter Allen, *Tradition and Dream*, Penguin Books, p. 213.
2. *Twentieth Century British Literature*, pp. 168-169.
3. P.H. Newby, *The Novel 1945-50*, (The British COuncil), p. 20.
4. Jocelyn Brooke, *Elizabeth Bowen*, (The British Council), p. 7.
5. Elizabeth Bowen, *The Last September*, (Jonathan Cape), p. 14.
6. Elizabeth Bowen, *The Last September*, (Jonathen Cape), p. 15.
7. Elizabeth Bowen, *The Death of the Heart*, (Penguin Books), p. 7.
8. Elizabeth Bowen, *House in Paris*, (Jonathan Cape), p. 9.
9. Elizabeth Bowen, *To the North*, (Jonathan Cape), p. 13.
10. John Hersey, ed. *The Writer's Craft*, (Alfred A. Knopf), p. 83.
11. Elizabeth Bowen, *The Last September*, (Jonathan Cape), p. 239.
12. Elizabeth Bowen, *The House in Paris*, (Jonathan Cape), p. 17.
13. ibid., p. 17.
14. Elizabeth Bowen, *The Last September*, (Jonathan Cape), p. 27.
15. Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, (Hogarth), pp. 117-118.

Alun Lewis and India

K. Radha

The most important poets who lost their lives in the Second World War are Alun Lewis, Richard Spender, Keith Douglas and Sidney Keyes. These poets had attained an astonishing maturity at a very early age and Lewis, as Kenneth Hopkins points out, had "a mastery of form and technique many older poets may envy."[1] Lewis was more lyrical than the rest. In one of his letters to Brenda Chamberlain he advised her :

> Your poetry must never echo anyone but yourself. That is the sole condition of its virtues.......that is the great truth which you must create through.[2]

He also wrote to Robert Graves that his poems were personal experiences, expressing the truth as he had lived it; they were a soldier's statement, and a soldier, as he had said in connection with the *Raider's Dawn* poems, "sees with his own eyes and nobody else's."[3]

Lewis always yearned for experience. He believed that writing was only "a proof of the sincerity of the experience."[4] He was utterly honest and he cared much for integrity. He wrote to his wife Gweno :

> My longing is more and more for one thing only, integrity........"[5]

Another virtue which he highly respected and which he himself possessed—was humility. In 1941 he wrote to Robert Graves :

> If you read any of my work, please know beforehand the source from which my writing comes. Humility.[6]

Alun Lewis was born on 1st July 1915 at Cwaman, a small Welsh mining village near Aberdare. His father who was a school teacher became Director of Education, Aberdare, in 1938 and his mother was the daughter of a Welsh Unitarian minister. They had fallen in love at first sight at a sufiragette meeting and stayed in love for the fifty years

of their married life. Lewis was the eldest of their four children who knew only happiness at home. Lewis studied at Cowbridge Grammar School and University College, Aberystwyth. Even as a school boy he contributed short stories to the school magazine. In 1935 he passed Honours with a first class. At college he played hockey, danced at Saturday night clubs, swam a great deal and played bridge very well. He proceeded to Manchester University to pursue a two-year course of post-graduate research in medieval history. But Manchester throttled him. However, by the end of March 1937 he had a rough draft of his thesis ready. He attended an international conference at Pontigeny in N. France and returned to Aberystwyth in September to gain his Teacher's Training Certificate. In the summer of 1938 he completed his course successfully and worked as sub-editor of The *Aberdare Leader* for some time. Then he got a temporary teaching post at Pengam. The teaching appointment continued into the next academic year. Early in 1939 he met again a school teacher called Gweno Ellis-they were students together at Aberystwyth. They fell in love and were engaged In 1940, to the surprise of some of his colleagues, he resigned his school job and enlisted himself in the army. Gweno and Lewis were married in a quiet way in July at the Registrar's Office, Gloucestershire Though it was not easy for them to stay together for long she became his close companion and confidante

The 6th Battalion to which Lewis belonged received orders to embark at Liverpool for service overseas The South West Borderen embarked at Bombay at Christmas 1942 and proceeded by rail and road to a tented camp assigned to them at Nira near Poona. Torrential rains caused much inconvenience. When one of the lorries was marooned Lewis had to swim back to it with a rope to shackle it out. He became, to his great dismay, on New Year's Eve Squadron Messing Officer. He wrote to his wife how he had to put up with the new job :

> Native cooks. bad fish, buried pits of waste-a job any man would run a league from. It's mine.......Saw the Indian wallahs in the cook house—One man works for nothing but his meals chopping wood. Another sits all day peeling potatoes for six pence a day. He does it very slowly and I said, "Karo tezi, tezi" ("Do it quickly"). The Indian sergeant with a big belly and eyes like paraffin was most impressed. "You speak proper Indian, Sir," he said, "you've been how many years in India ?"[7]

Early in the new year he broke his jaw playing football and for six weeks he was at a military hospital in Poona. He suffered from dysentery also. A few weeks after leaving the hospital Lewis was sent off on detachment into the Mahratta Hills and while there he wrote

many poems. He camped there for two months beside a massive dam under a hill fort of great antiquity and splendour. His tent was by the lake and at night

> there was nothing at all in the world but the great boulders of unhewn poetry to strive with........It is easy to write prose in India, there is so much to satirise or hate or shrug one's shoulders at. But poetry is harder to command, mainly I think because everything is some how remorseless here, and pellucid and incurable. Politics at home is an inviting dance because things are more plastic and organic........[8]

News reached Lewis and his fellow soldiers that the 6th Battalian was to revert to its original role and become Infrantry Battalion again The unit moved from Nira to Juhu and there in coastal swamps they began to prepare themselves for jungle warfare. In August 1943 he was sent on an Intelligence Course to Karachi, then in India. He did everything like a robot. He loved sleeping out again listening to the sea.

On his return to his unit he was busy preparing for the Burma fighting that lay ahead. India continued to fascinate him particularly during the September and October months when the rain had turned the "burning cruel earth into a green gentleness of fruit and leaf."[9] He started reading *A Passage to India*. In the second week of December 1943 he was happy to spend two days with his soldier brother in a Poona hotel.

On one occasion lewis had a 300 mile journey to look at the jungle. Towards the end of February the Battalion received orders to move into Burma. They travelled by road and rail convoys first to Calcutta and from there by sea to Chittagong and Cox Bazar. He pleaded for permission to join the men of his Company in the forward area where the first contact with the Japanese was reported. Permission was given. On the 5th of March 1944 Lord Chalfront who was himself on his way to see what was happening, met a stretcher party bringing Lewis' body down from the forward position where a revolver accident had caused him to be fatally wounded.

When he came to India in 1942 Lewis found the country in the grip of war, famine and political distress. He wrote to his friend Brenda Chamberlain in February 1944 :

> If I were a young Indian I should wish for nothing except to serve my country.

In a letter to his wife Oweno he wrote that India

really is an amazing, spectacular land but something seems to have gone wrong at the root of it.......I wish I had come here as a doctor, teacher, social worker : anything but a soldier.[11]

Lewis took great interest in the peasants of India, especially during his two months' stay at Mahratta Hills where he wrote poem after poem. In a letter written to Graves at the beginning of May 1943 he says :

The peasant remains and it is in the villages that I've found what I'm always seeking.[12]

He availed himself of every opportunity to talk to Indian peasants and often went out of his way to do so. He discovered that they showed that quality of integrity which he highly cared for in human relationships. One of his happiest experiences was when he and a fellow officer were invited to participate in a Hindu religious festival one evening in a remote village. The steady chant and the rhythm of the drumming had stimulated the awareness within him of "a rhythm of many universal and real truths."[13] In his letter to Robert Graves dated 23rd January, 1944 which reached Graves a day or two before Lewis' death in Arakan, he wrote :

I'm almost completely normal when I'm roaming across the country on a motor-bike, aware of the flow and the tradition of peasant life, passing gay funerals with beautifully attired corpses propped up on canopied platforms, or when I'm peeping at Victorian Gothic princely palaces in corrupt Native State towns, or eating a coconut in a jungle village in communion with the dancing and chanting youths before the pot-bellied elephant-god of luck.[14]

In many of his poems written in India (Burma was a part of India at that time) there are references to the poverty of Indian peasants. In "By the Gateway of India, Bombay" he writes about "the beggars" who lean against "the indifferent arch of Kings" (pp. 39-40). In another poem "Karanje Village" Lewis speaks of the "naked children begging the elders in poverty", "the crumbling hovels" and the "old hags mumbling by the well" (p. 42). He goes on to say :

But the people are hard and hungry and have no love
Diverse and alien, uncertain in their hate. (p. 42)

In "The Mahratta Ghats"—which has been praised for its good beginning with an evocative picture of India and condemned for its poor ending because of the poet's attempt to introduce a moral[15]—the poet says :

.......each arid patch
Own the lean folk who plough and scythe and thatch
Who is it climbs the summit of the road ?
Only the beggar bearing his dark load. (p 44)

"Holi" which is a description of the Hindu festival of spring begins thus :

> The village is growing fertile
> The bankrupt peasant feels the wheat
> Spring green within his stony loins. (p. 44)

During his stay at the hospital in Poona early in 1943 he thinks of his wife Oweno in Wales, and himself in India where he heard the wild daws crake "In India's starving throat" ("In Hospital : Poona (1)", 1943, p 53). In the second poem "In Hospital : Poona (2)" he refers to the sickmen watching the "barefooted peasants winding back."

> Sad withered loins in hanging dirty folds
> Mute sweepings from the disappointed streets,
> Old shrunken tribes the starving dusk enfolds. (p. 53)

Lewis mentions famine in "Indian Doy" :

> Dawn's cold imperative compels
> Bazaars and gutters to disturb
> Famine's casual ugly tableaux
> Lazarus is lifted from the Kerb. (p. 55)

He adds that the sun and the thunder and the hunger grow and the peasant is denied the mercy of the rain. (p. 156) In "The Peasants" Lewis sees a "dwarf barefooted, chanting/Behind the oxen by the lake" (pp. 56) and "women breaking stones upon the highway." They walk erect with burdens on their heads :

> One body growing in another body
> Creation touching verminous strawbeds (p. 57)

Lewis is aware of the climatic problems of the Indian peasants. He observes :

> Drought denudes the planting
> In the dry and heat
> Dawn spills its ghostly water,
> Black heads on the wheat.
>
> ("Observation Post ; Forward Area", p. 57)

He had a thorough knowledge of the life of the low class people in India. In his first poem in India "To Rilke," he says that "The goat-herd sleeps upon a strawpiled bed" (p. 38). He speaks of "the swart and skinny goatherd" in "Observation Post : Forward Area", p. 51). He sees in Karanji village "Old hags mumbling by the well"; "young girls avoiding us" and the girl in a red sari "despairingly swinging her rattle" (p. 42). In "The Mahratta Ghats" he describes

hardwarking dark peasants who "drag the sun upon their backs" (p. 43) and in "Holi" girls "with priestly faces" stirring in the circle of flames. His keen eyes observe the red ochre melting on the girls' foreheads, their eyes "dark with shame" While the drum beats a crescendo, the young men are fain and

> The young girls twitch with pain
> Blood drips from the drumskins,
> The youths and girls obey
> The wild God's uttermost intent,
> And sob, and turn away,
> And turn into the Indian forest
> And there they are as one—(pp. 44–45).

While describing the march of the "forerunners of the army" in India in "The Journey" he sees girls

> tawny as gazelles
> Beating their saris clean in pools and singing,
> When we stopped they covered up their breasts;
> Sometimes their gestures followed us for miles. (p. 46)

On the way the soldiers came accoss "caravanserais of gipsies":

> With donkeys grey as mice and mincing camels
> Laden with newborn lambs and trinkets
> Tentage and utensils and wicker baskets (p. 46)

As they passed, the soldiers saw in jungles "men like fawns, with drenched eyes" avoiding them, "bearing arrows" (p. 46). In "Indian Day", there is a fine picture of "the supple sweeper girl" who goes by

> Brushing the dung of camels from the street (p. 55)

There is "the russet tribesman" laying aside his flute "Rigid with Time's hypnotic error" (p. 56). In "Observation Post : Foreward Area" he sees childern filled with fear and "wizened women" crying, the bridegroom lying trembling and the bride rigid not because of the threat of poverty but because of the threat of war (p. 58). Deespite the threats of war the peasant draws water early at dawn in the countryside ("Bivouac", p. 70) and the poet is attracted by the paddy fields

> Where boys sit timelessly to scare the crows
> On bamboo platforms raised above their lives (p. 70)

Lewis does not ignore even the corpses. In a village he sees in the midst of a crowd perched on a make-shift "throne" a splendid old Indian in fine clothes The crowd was beating, waiting and buzzing. The old man wan a corpse. [16] In "Village Funeral : Mahratta" he writes :

> The wasted sleepy corpse
> Benignly, unassumingly reposes
> Among the flowers flung on him all day. (p. 48)

And in "In Hospital : Poona (2)" Lewis speaks of a corpse being carried by the Parsis in long white robes with kites wheeling about them.

To the high tower that the vultures know. (p. 54)

We get vivid descriptions of Indian gods and festivals in their honour in some of his poems. Once as he sees Vishnu, carved by some rude pious hand" lying "by a heap of stones, demanding nothing" "To Rilke", p. 38). In Karanje village the sweeper tells that there is a temple with golden roof. But he sees only crumbling hovels and poor people :

And alone by a heap of stones in the lonely salt plain
A little Vishnu of stone
Silently and eternally Being
Bidding one come alone. (p. 42)

Lewis refers to the arid patches of land with stubborn stones "which ban peasants plough" in The Mahratta Chats" (p. 44). While describing Holi he mentions how the girls and youths obey "the wild God's uttermost intent" and how they turn away to the forest as

One with the dust and darkness
When God's last will is done (p. 45)

In the poem "Village Funeral : Maharashtra" he prays thus :

Nandi, bull of Holiness
Ganapati, elephantine force,
Siva, destroyer and sparer,
Consider this poor corpse." (p. 49)

"The gods have prophesied disease", he writes in "Indian Day", and perhaps there is some sarcasm in his tone when he concludes the second section thus :

Gods and dacoits haunt the mountains. (p. 55)

for gods carved out of stones, and dacoits are common in the valleys and mountains of North India.

Another notable feature of the poetry of Alun Lewis is the description of nature, animate and inanimate. Having himself been a poet who had seen service in India, Currey claimed that in such poems as "Karanje Village," "The Mahratta Ghats," "The Journey" and "The Peasants" Alun Lewis had written about the landscape and people of India with an exactness and sympathy–not even kipling had previously shown.[17]

His poems are full of descriptions of Indian animals and birds. The first animals that greet him when he lands in this country are the jackals that "howl and whimper in the nullah." ("To Rilke", p. 35). They reappear in "Indian Day," skulking "among the scree". (p. 55). But the animals he seems to have liked least in his Indian menagerie, are the monkeys. He thinks of these "sacred animals" as "obscene creatures"—"loping obscenely round our smell," or making the trees "obscene" with their 'grey-down hanging." They take long, low leaps on the trees and stare mockingly at the girl in the red saree "despairingly swinging her rattle" to drive them away ("Karanje Village", p. 23). In "The Jungle" he compares the monkeys in the jungle with soldiers marching :

> Grey monkeys gibber, ignorant and wise
> We are the ghosts, and they the denizens;
> We are like them anonymous, unknown,
> Avoiding what is human........ (p. 70)

Among other animals that attracted his notice are the "long-nosed swine" ("Karanji Village", p. 41) and "donkeys grey as mice and mincing camels/Laden with new born lambs and trinkets" ("The Journey" p. 46), the mules stamping and grazing ("Karanji Village," p. 42), the oxen that shiver in the "skinny fields" ("Indian Day", p. 55) "the bleating goats" ("The Mahratta Ghats", p. 43), the crocodile in the stagnant pool "sliding from the ochre sand and driving the great translucent fish/Under the boughs across the running gravel" ("The Jungle", p. 63), the field mouse in the trenches hearing the last sighs of the dying soldiers-perhaps a symbol of destruction as in Eliot's "East Coker"-("The Assault Convoy", p. 7/), and the fat rat crouching beady-eyed (Bivouac", p. 66),

Nor does the poet fail to notice the Indian birds-the red-winged gull which

> beats down the bay,
> Finds the mole, the square of green
> And shakes the tempest off its breast.
>
> ("By the Gateway of India, Bombay", P. 19).

the vultures

> Groping the refuse for carrion
> And the burial cairns on the hill with its spout of dust
>
> ("Karanji Village", p. 41-42).

the hawk that

> sees something stir among the trenches
>
> ("The Assault Convoy", p. 72).

the wild daws that "crake india's starving throat" (In Hospital : Poona (1)", p. 53), "the pied kingfisher deep darting for a fish" ("The Jungle", p. 63)[18] and "the first excited bird" at dawn ("Bivouac", p. 66).

Alun Lewis in his Indian poems reveals himself as a keen observer not only of animate but also inanimate nature. His poems are full of fine sketches of landscapes, of trees and plants and flowers. Addressing Rilke from India Lewis writes :

> I watched the pure horizon for the earth
> To rise in grey bare peaks that might enfold
> The empty crumbling soil (p. 37)

He refers to "the sarabande of trees/of guava and papaya/And crimson blown poinsettia" in "The way Back" (p. 41) the "yellow ramtilla" that "stiffens in noon" and there are

> Hedges of spike and rubber, hedges of cactus
> Lawns of bougainvillea, jasmine and zinnia.
>
> ("Indian Day", p. 55)

In "The Jungle" he describes

> The banyan's branching clerestories close
> The noon's harsh splendour to a head of light (p. 69)

In the concluding section of "In Hospital : poona "(2)", Lewis refers to the garden in the hospital where the patients used to assemble in the evening. It is a symbol of a place of refuge for them (p. 54). Another vivid account of landscape is in "Observation post : Forward Area" :

> The thorns are bleached and brittle
> The empty folds decay
> Roofless trees crack the silence
> Of inarticulate dismay (p. 57)

The soldiers had sometimes a lot of trouble crossing rivers :

> Sometimes there were rivers that refused us
> Sweeping away the rafts, the oxen;
> Some brown spates we breasted
>
> ("The Journey", p. 46)

Lewis was very fond of the sea and the beach of Penbryn in Wales gave him deep happiness and spiritual refreshment. The sea always haunted him like a passion although it does not seem to have any symbolic significance as in the poems of Dylan Thomas. When sent to Karachi on an Intelligence course he loved

> Sleeping out again, this time in the beak of a cliff pounding like a great white angel on the red sands below.........I was quite tranquil sitting listening to the familiar lonely sound of the

> sea........I couldn't feel desolate and outcast with the sea to sing to me, not even if I was Robinson Crusoe........the exquisite rocky bays out there are so fresh and innocent.[19]

Lewis sees "two Arab fishermen mending their nets" and he loves "the immediate contact with the wild sea" for it sweeps away all the worry and longing and doubt which assail him.[20]

"Motifs", a love poem, perhaps written in Karachi, opens with a description of the tide :

> The tide is slack in equipoise
> Lacking the inmost reaches of the creek (p. 65)

And he sees the fishermen "brim their torn sails"; he listens to the "harsh cicada's monody" (p. 65). In "The haid" Lewis writes :

> The estuary silted up
> The dredger rusting by the pier
> The beaches red and indolent
> The coolies running now with fear (p. 73)

Even as a boy he liked mountains, especially the Cumaman. In India he watches the "hills' red thighs" and the eagle climbing to her mountain bed whose soil is fine as flour and blood-red ("The Mahratta Ghats", p. 43).

There are several descriptions of the different times of the day. The heat of the sun is mentioned in many of his poems :

> The valleys crack and burn, the exhausted plains
> Sink their black teeth into the horny veins
> ....
> Dark peasants drag the sun upon their backs.
> High on the ghat the new turned soil is red
> The sun has ground it to the finest red.
> ("The Mahratta Ghats", p. 43)

The "daylight's silver bangles" glitter on the naked feet of the girl ("Indian Day", p. 55); "The sun has sucked and beat the encircling hills/Into gaunt skeletons" and the sickmen in the hospital watch "soft shadows warm those bones of rock" (In Hospital : Poona (2)", p. 53); "In mole-blue indolence the sun/Plays idly on the stagnant pool" ("The Jungle", p. 67), the "merciless sun" "beats on the silt up river" ("The Raid", p. 73).

Lewis thinks also of moon and night in the Indian poems e.g. in "Shadows",

> The cold winds of indifference
> Disturb the scarves of night
> As earth and moon go voyaging
> Through dark, through light. (p. 51)

"Night bibles India in her wilderness" ("Indian Day, p. 56), "There was no trace of Heaven/That night as we lay/Punch-drunk and blistered with sunlight" (Bivouac," p. 66); darkness is "drenched with evil" (p. 66); in the jungle bamboos "creak like an uneasy house" at night and the night is "shrill with crickets, cold with space" ("The jungle", p. 70). "The moon's ammunciation grows" at midnight ("Midnight in India", p. 74). There are also descriptions of rain and storm in hls poems. Torrential rains caused much inconvenience to the Welsh soldiers as soon as they landed in India. Perhaps in his Indian poems his descriptions of rain are based on his own unpleasant experiences. The "storm's cold javelins" constrain the "swirling roads" and he also mentions "the biting arrows of the rain" ("By the Gateway of India, Bombay", p 39); Lewis watched "the shafted rain/Feminise the burning land,/Cloaking with a green distress/The cerulean and the ochre/Of the season's ruthlessness" for "six days and two thousand miles" ("The Way Back", p. 40). Autum is described as "rotting like an unfrocked priest" in "The Jungle" (p. 67).

Thus Lewis has the same clear eye for all the aspects of nature. Slips of landscape are sometimes let in as background to his pictures of man as in Larkin. But he also describes nature for its own sake on a few occasions, not merely as adjuncts to human feelings on incidents. And there are lines and phrases "of aspect more sublime" in which he endows inanimate objects of nature with life and feeling. On rare occasions Nature comes to life with a mystic voice in Lewis' poems as in "Water Music" :

> Deep in the heart of the lake
> Where the last light is clinging
> A strange foreboding voice
> Is patiently singing. (p. 49)

The lake water is cold and "dark as history" (p. 50). In "Indian Day" he writes :

> Yet all night long the boulders sing
> The timeless songs of mountain streams. (p. 56)

He mentions in "Wood Songs" the pine trees casting their needles softly for his love's "gipsy bed." The tall blue saplings "whispering more than can be said" (p. 63) sounds Wordsworthian. In "Bivouac" he hears "the dry disturbing whispers" of the "agitated word/With leathery vendetta,/Mantillas dark with blood" (p. 66).

Even plants have life for Lewis. Just as Burns mourns the destruction of a mouse's burrow or a mountain daisy by a plough share

Lewis feels sorry for "the Cactus where our wheels/Had bruised it, bleeding white" ("Bivouac", p. 66).

Conclusion

In assessing the worth of his Indian poems we must remember that they were written in India in the pre-Independence days. He came to this country as a British military officer. He was the representative of the ruling race coming to a dependent country as its protector. Many in this capacity would have felt the white-man's burden too heavily. What is to the great credit of Alun Lewis is that he sees India without any vitiating obsession. He describes what he sees without the least prejudice. All his poems are characterised by simple realism. Whether it be the Indian scenery, or the poor peasants or the images of Gods, he sees them all clearly and describes them with verisimilitude. Not verisimilitude only but with sympathy and understanding. Few English writers in the last thirties would have seen India with such clear eyes or written about her with such a warm heart. John Press has pointed out that while Keith Douglas, another Second World War poet, savagely dissects the people in war time Cairo as types of social corruption, Lewis observes with compassion the Indian peasants bound like their ancestors to the parched soil.[21] Only towards the very end of his stay here did he begin to feel that Indians were not quite blameless for their miserable plight. This attitude is reflected not in his poems, but in his last letters as for example his letter to Brenda Chamberlain in February 1944.[22] It is remarkable that Alun Lewis was not affected by the political conflict during his sojourn in this country.

Notes

1. *English Poetry* (London : Phoenix House Ltd., 1962), p. 550.
2. Quoted by Alun John : *Alun Lewis* (Wales : University of Wales Press, 1970), p. 77.
3. Ibid, p. 77.
4. From his letter to his wife Gweno, *Alun Lewis*, p. 73.
5. Letter dated 11 October 1943, Alun Lewis, *In the Green Tree* (London : George Allen & Unwin Ltd.), p. 50.
6. *Alun Lewis*, p. 37.
7. *In the Green Tree*, p. 32.
8. Alun John, *Alun Lewis*, p. 62.
9. Alun John, p. 73.
10. Alnn John, *Alun Lewis*, p. 70.
11. Letter dated 21st September 1944, *In the Green Tree*, p. 48.
12. Ibid, p. 62.
13. Letter dated 9th Jancary 1944 *In The Green Tree*, p. 55.
14. Foreword to *Ha ! Ha ! Among the Trumpets* (London : George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1946), p. 10. See also letter dated 9th January 1944 to Gweno *In The Green Tree*, p. 56.
15. Anthony Thwaite, *Contemporary English Poetry : An Introduction* (London : Heinemann Educational Books Ltd, 1964), p. 124.
16. Letter dated 15th January 1944, *In The Green Tree*, p. 57.
17. Alun John, *Alun Lewis*. p. 84.
13. See also Letter dated New Year's Eve, *In the Green Tree*, p. 30.
19. Letter dated 5th September 1943, *In the Green Tree*, pp. 46-47.
20. Ibid, p. 47.
21. *A Map of Modern English Verse* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 231.
22. *Alun Lewis*, pp. 66–67.

At The Bend

Of quick progressing river
bones turn elastic
soft as wax :
blood becomes fuel thin
boiling and mesmerizing
elixir of prevalence

Sinking into quicksands
of enchanting revel
near high–cascading tickling
is thrilling essence

Like time–capsule dug–up
by opposition of ridicule
why waste of solid stock
tarnishing primeval glow ?

That prefers wine rather
neither Christ nor sex —
nor a ration card that
brings provisions

Selfless evaporation
spilling fragrance —
that's the nature of camphor !

Dr. K. V. S. Murti

The Isolate in Recent Indian Literature and Badal Sircar's EBAM INDRAJIT

Nila Das

I

The price of India's Independence—the mutilation of the country, communal riots, mass exodus coupled with an all-pervading socio-economic-political crisis—blasted the much cherished pre-Independence dream of a Golden Future. Free India writhing in pain, the 'angry', 'hungry', 'disillusioned' new generation found itself inhabiting an increasingly complicated, if not collapsing, world. Having both the destructive and the constructive heritage of colonialism, distrusting the traditional social codes, customs, conventions and yet rooted in them, both allured by and skeptical about the 'progress myth' of the highly industrialised West and painfully aware of

> That person who sleeps on the pavement and dies of hunger.... that person whose father was killed in a riot and...whose son blown to smithereens by a bomb....those who are daily dying out of fear of the world blowing up....who are losing hope, losing their sense of direction and all meaning,[1]

the young generation is bewildered. Growing up with the changes, many of the young are unable to adjust themselves with them. The National Freedom Movement having failed to establish a ready ideological basis for them to step on and themselves having no inner strength to discover or rediscover a profound ideology for themselves, they often fall victims to indefinite frustrations, vague desires hopeless hopes. Their "words, gestures, everything betray/The unquiet mind, the emptiness within." Their 'days unfulfilled and nights without peace, they feel their 'heart ever hanging in mid-air.' They see themselves as misfits.

> I as a stranger wandering in this human jungle
> I speak face to face, but unshakable walls stand before my eyes.
> I come to this Hall as a refugee, I cannot follow their language.
> The days ever unfulfilled
> And nights without peace—my Trishanku
> Heart ever hanging in mid-air[2]

writes a modern Indian poet.

> I don't share the outlook of my family and our class. Yet I have to be a part of the whole racket....I belong neither here nor among .. the so-called Westernised set....call it the traditional streak in me....I belong nowhere. I'm a misfit,[3]

sighs Arvind, the sensitive elite hero in Murli Das Melwani's play, *Deep Roots*. "Oh dreary, how dreary, how dreary...... All the sensitivity gone, so the poetry," cries Arun Joshi's Billy Biswas *(A Strange Case of Billy Biswas)*,[4] caught in the stranglehold of the opportunist 'smart society' and suffocating. Weary of the socio-economic mores ("He saw nothing progress, nothing advance, but everything turn slowly about him and fall in a shower of ashes and rain"), Anita Desai's young Nirode *(Voices in a City)*[5] keeps himself uninvolved and cherishes his isolation as a distinction and an identity. "He himself knew by instinct that he was a man for whom aloneness alone was the sole natural condition, aloneness alone was worth treasuring (p. 24)." Recent Indian Literature is replete with the self-chosen 'isolates'.

Unlike their Western Atheist-Existentialist counterparts, most of the modern Indian writers do not view the problem of 'isolation' as the fundamental and the ultimate human condition, and life in terms of a "cleavage between....man's aspiration to unity and the insurmountable dualism of mind and nature."[6] Belonging, as they do, to a culture that is yet to experience any serious break with its traditional value structure, its moral and spiritual beliefs, they still have their faith in the relatedness and the wholeness of life and the self. As a contemporary Indian poet says, trying to define the Outsider, "I knew a man whose definition in a word is chaos, but listened to him because he strove to be a finished man."[7] In the Indian artistic consciousness the Isolate is, though not always, the one with a heightened sensibility, who sees life in a larger perspective, whose 'sailor soul fares forward' for a 'deeper communion.'

Sometimes the Isolate's quest for relatedness is all-too-pronounced as in Billy Biswas who seeks the value of life in its elementary form and an aesthete's fulfilment in rapport with the

"trees, earth, rain, dust storms, moods of the forest.......dance, singing." Sometimes the alternative is not so obvious. The misfit, like Laxmi Narain Lal's Rajan (*Mr. Abhimanyu*)[8], gropes for self-identity and a wholesome existence being hounded by the corrupt, opportunist tendencies both within his own mind and without. Sometimes again while the isolation of the protagonist turns out to be a mode of impasse, a deliberate non-participation or irresponsibility, there are other characters, more forbearing and/or committed, to question the stance from a sharply contrasting perspective. Auntie in *Voices in the City* throws such a challenge to the self-indulgent new generation :

> We at least were dedicated to a very great movement outside our own immediate wants and whims, and we owe you your freedom, but what do you do with it ? Give it back to the old dying generation....to look after while you carry on with your petty affairs, too timid and hopeless to concern yourself with anything bigger. (p. 222)

Overt or implied, it seems almost an obligation for the Indian outsiders not to let their non-relatedness become a mere question mark between unthinking habituality and negation.

Badal Sircar's *Ebam Indrajit* is a play of the young Indian Isolates who face the realities of life 'directly' and, distanced as they are from the given alternatives, seek life's meaning in their own terms.

II

Ebam Indrajit[9] opens with the Writer, a misfit in the contemporary go-get-opportunist world, sighing for want of a theme that touches the core af life : "I have nothing to write about........ who shall I write about ? (p. 3)" As though in answer to his doubts four Characters, "the undramatic material" of our time, present themselves on the stage. The three announce their names as Amal, Vimal and Kamal. Having names they are yet nameless. "Indrajit Ray", says the fourth, correcting his earlier self-identification as Nirmal.

Indrajit, the mythical conquerer of the Lord of gods, the incarnation of the undaunted spirit, is now but a nostalgic dream that the Writer still cherishes and the modern Indrajit wishes to avoid.

> Writer : You're not Nirmal....You must have another name. You have to have. (p. 4)
>
> Indrajit : I'm older now. Age is afraid of joy, of happiness. It only wants comfort. Peace. Now Indrajit only wants the comfort of a dark, cloudy sky. (p. 5)

The words of Indrajit, the nowhere man, are anguished, though slightly theatrical. Throughout the play the mythical name of the protagonist in itself provides a commentary on the characters and the situation.

Perhaps because of, and in spite of, his name, Indrajit is different from the unthinking average. His isolation, both agony and luxury, at times bring him close to serious self-searching. An early scene catches this.

Writer : How old are you ?
Indrajit : A hundred. May be two hundred. I don't know. According to the Matriculation Certificate, thirtyfive.
Writer : Where were you born ?
Indrajit : In Calcutta........
Writer : Marriage ?
Indrajit : In Calcutta.
Writer : Death ?
Indrajit : Not dead yet.
Writer : Are you sure ?
Indrajit : [After a long pause] No, I'm not sure. (p.5)

As the dialogue changes from word-playing comicality to existential query, the non-dramatic drama in the life of Amal, Vimal, Kamal and Indrajit unfolds itself. The two Isolates—the Writer and Indrajit himself–witness the scenes. For Indrajit, the actor-spectator, it is mostly memory play. Many of the happenings are the flashbacks of his own bygone days. The Writer, a Choric presence, watches from outside.

Life's course from 'home to school, to college.......to the world' is an endless process of growthless growth, of "going round and round." As Amal, Vimal, Kamal and Indrajit make a puppet-show of their school days, responding to roll-calls, chitchating on cricket, football, film, politics, "nothing in particular," the Writer, the Outsider within Indrajit's mind, pulls him aside :

Writer : What are you doing ?
Indrajit : Nothing. (p.9)
Writer : What did you do ?
Indrajit : Nothing. (p.10)

Tied up to the daily tedium ("All these minutie—they are all meaningless"), Indrajit's runaway imagination craves to escape "somewhere far away. I don't know what'll be there—jungle probably, or desert, or iceberg.......Strange people—Bedouin, Eskimo.......a world outside geography.......Outside—beyond" (p.10).

When Tagore's Chandra (*The Cycle of Spring*) hears the call of the Life Beyond, he leaves behind the humdrum world in search of the 'invisible light'.

> The voices in the house-corner wail in vain from behind
> Death stands before....offering its crown
> Prudence and comfort bid....adieu in despair.

His mind engrossed in "the beauty of the far off and the unknown....... the freedom of the great wide spaces, the wandering on and on in quest of the secret........hidden over there. Beyond the Horizon", O'Neill's Robert Mayo (*Beyond the Horizon*)[11] becomes a perpetual misfit in the utilitarian world and is finally destroyed trying to surrender to it. Having neither Chandra' will nor Robert's inner calling, Indrajit readily accepts his longing for a larger life as a momentary fancy. When the Writer asks him to take to the Road of Life, he retreats.

> Writer : Let's go.
> Indrajit : Where ?
> Writer : Well, you said you wanted to go away.
> Indrajit : Now ?
> Writer : Why not ?
> Indrajit : Don't be stupid....What about mother ?....And the exams. are just round the corner. (p. 10–11)

And so Indrajit chooses to return to the dead routine and to remain adjusted—maladjusted as he is while the Voices at the background sing the chorus of unbreakable habituality :

> One-two-three-two-one-two-three
> One-two-three-two-one-two-three. (p. 11)

Occasionally Indrajit flares up : "Is there a rule that one has to abide by rules ?....One can hate rules....Bring down all these walls which surround us (p. 21)".—"And who are you supposed to be fighting ?" asks Manasi, his lady-love, the conformist within his own heart. "The world ! The people around us !" rages the non-compromiser. But the posture does not lead him to anywhere. "It's a pointless anger. It's blind. Powerless. It only beats its head against the wall, (p. 23)", Indrajit himself finally laughs in self-pity. At heart he feels all the more helpless, unable to sustain his anger. "When this anger is gone, I'll be finished," he sighs to Manasi.

Herself maladjusted and in the dark ("I can't understand........ I see things too. But I become sad; I feel a sense of pity"), Manasi yet tries to reach Indrajit in his non-relatedness. "I know, Indra," she says

soft and all-forbearing, "be what you are. Don't accept. Don't accept my fear either (p. 23)". In contrast to Indrajit's anger which distances him farther from the others and the world, Manasi's quiet acceptance is perhaps a more matured response to life's ways. The scene ends in an unrelieved sadness as Indrajit and Manasi stand together, yet alone, while the Writer observes, suffers and soliloquizes :

> Indrajit and Manasi. They've come a long way.......Have they really come ?.........It's all a question of going round and round. The answer is a circle—a zero. That's why no one asks the whole question.......The answer they get is—life. A different sort of life for each man. (p. 25).

The awareness of man's isolation as an inescapable existential reality makes the Writer longing for the opposite. He prays for the moment that reveals life in its relatedness: "One moment, one single moment ....Deny that going round and round........One moment in the present. Life... ....Let us save this one moment in the present—that is life"

(p. 26)

Suddenly the illumination comes. The Writer envisions life in its eternal cycle :

> Amal retires. His son Amal takes up a job........Kamal is dead. His son Kamal takes up a job. And Indrajit. And Indrajit's son Indrajit........There on the pavement.......is a woman........Her husband died of TB. Beyond there is an orange sky under which Manasi wants to love life. Life. So many loves. So many parts and bits and parcels and pieces and molecules and atoms and they mix and mingle and move and turn and go round and and round till they become a giant ferris wheel.......And one by one, seconds. minutes, hours go round and round........the earth goes on...... Our earth—our century. (pp. 28–29)

No longer a detached observer, the Writer realises himself involved in the Wheel of Existence. But his unprepared mind fails to sustain the vision of life and death, the part and the whole, time and eternity together. The image of himself alone in the impersonal everlasting life-cycle makes him scared. In order to escape the horror of isolation, he tries to see himself identified with the others: "The ferris wheel be damned. The question itself be damned. We are here—Amal, Vimal, Kamal. And Indrajit. And I. We are here, still here, here on earth" (p. 29). But with the feel of togetherness both with the others and the earth missing. his words are tense. The darkness on the stage deepens, so does the inner darkness of the Writer. Self-condemned to be isolated and unable and unwilling to encounter the situation, he cries out, "I am divided. I am broken into pieces, into atoms........

The earth is crushed, but it is still alive
The century's old, but it listens still
All the lights go off
A whisper in chorus in the dark. (p. 29)"

It is a tuneless recitation devoid of the revitalising spirit of the earth that is'still alive'.

At the core, the situation remains constant. The four characters appear in another phase of their life "from the college to the world, the world is an office." Manasi alongwith Amal, Vimal, Kamal and Indrajit enact the quotidian, while the Writer in the role of the Officer, the Peon, the choric commentator sets the typical note of monotony and resignation :

Writer : After the files, tea. Then files. Then snacks. Then files. Then tram——bus———train———Board of Directors———conference....... ....budget.—— Annual report-——That's all, ladies and gentlemen. That's all.

Amal : That's all.

Vimal : That's all.

Kamal : That's all. (p. 33)

Only Indrajit does not join the choir. He questions, but not knowing any ready alternative, regresses to habitual acceptance, powerless before its inevitable pool : "something besides all this........Is there nothing except this ?....... I don't seem to find anything.......Anyway let it be."

(p. 34)

Unable to escape the anguish of being aware, the Writer ponders : I am thinking........Am thinking........I sit there with the part and think of the whole I sit in the dust and think of the earth that is crushed." (p. 34). He searches for the core : "I still think of Man, the whole man, and the fragments of my consciousness are still searching—searching for something else." Finally a bewildered Everyman, he asks Auntie, the Earth Mother, the question of all times :

Writer : Who are we ?

Auntie : What's there to think so much about in that ? You are you. Who else ?........

Writer : But what are we ?

Auntie : Listen to him. What are we ? You are all bright pieces of gems, that's what you are. (p. 34)

Man's self-identity in terms of himself, the value and fulfilment of life in the earthly care are man's primeval and ultimate realisations. But the wisdom has little impact on the fragmentary consciousness of the

Writer. He sees the human condition as ridiculous and rhymes his observations in half-making laughter :

> Why should you sneeze ? Why should you cough ?
> Why should you smile and why should you laugh ?
> Why should you love ? Why should you hate ?
> Why should you suffer and blame it on fate ?
> ....
> Why should you live ? Why should you die ?
> Everybody does it ! That's why, that's why. (pp. 35-36)

If following life's course in smiles and tears, love and hatred is nothing but habitude, so could be man's maladjustment, his protest, his dream of a larger life. The subsequent scenes lay bare that for all the three Isolates their maladjustment has become a set mental attitude. Having surrendered himself to the 'success myth' and tired with it, Indrajit indulges in his old dream of life Beyond, fails to sustain it, reverts to his characteristic impasse, and yet dreams again. Manasi, by now another routine in Indrajit's life, repeatedly speaks of the life of values and deepar relationships ("I may be a germ but still I seek........The audacious assertion of life claims immortality in its brief spark" p.41 "Perhaps there will be something deeper, more meaningful" p. 14), but withdraws herself to her ineffectual shadowy presence. The Writer, non-participating, questions, falls back to despair, questions again, despairs again. Nothing happens.

Then the scales are suddenly shifted. Manasi shows a clear insight into and a firm grip over the situation. She also understands the others better. Her dialogue with the Writer about Indrajit indicates this.

> Writer : The more I tie him up in a plot the more he escapes ....Oh ! He knows too much.......
> Manasi : Still he dreams.
> Writer : The dream will collapse one day.
> Manasi : I know.
> Writer : And then ? ....What then ? Won't he go under ?
> Manasi : Let him. Then he may find firm earth at the bottom. Then he may start living again. (p. 50)

Manasi's word have a ring of confidence so long absent in the play. Having participated in the dynamics of experience—both her own and of the others, having accepted and loving life in spite of all its trials and turbulations, Manasi, the Insider-Outsider seems to have realised the Truth. "How do you know that ?" asks the Writer. —"I know nothing. I only believe," replies the daughter of Earth. In contrast to

Indrajit's passivity and the Writer's disillusionment, Manasi's belief in the "firm earth at the bottom" is certainly an "assertion of life that claims immortality in its brief spark."

Manasi is perhaps the only character who sees the beacon of a larger life steadily. "You have to walk the road," she says to Indrajit, firm and directing. While Indrajit falters ("Why ? Why ? The same road........I walk and walk and walk. Keep on walking. And yet is there on escape ?" p. 55), the Writer, now almost an 'ubiquitous omniscient observer' pronounces man's destiny :

> No, there's no escape
> ....
> Hungry mornings Wakeful nights.
> Shattered days. Bitter hours.
> I am. Even today.
> Alike. Awake. And remembering.
> There's more left.
> More of this life.
> What I was, I still am,
> Will be, beyond,
> Far, far away
> Being more and more and more
> Its all me—it's all I am. (pp. 55-56)

In the realisation of the I in the other man does find his ultimate fulfilment. The words of the Writer make Indrajit painfully and self-consciously aware of the ordeal he never accepted, the role he never played, and the inner light that never came to illumine his consciousness: "I had to do something......coming up filling the sky with light from one corner to another........The light never came. The sky didn't burn. I could not leave the solid earth" (p. 58).

For once Indrajit tries to come to terms with himself : "So long I couldn't accept my ordinariness I dreamt. Now I accept it.......No, Manasi, don't call me Indrajit, please don't. I am Nirmal. Amal, Vimal, Kamal and Nirmal" (p. 58.) Having fared through life's chequered course when Ibsen's Peer Gynt looks back on his diverse roles, he too finds that they are nothing but layers of his consciousness. At the core, he is a 'nobody'. As the realisation dawns on Peer, he feels a growing intimacy with nature and the fellow mortals. He finds his way to himself and to the core of the Earth, his Home. Having never attained the egolessness of Peer, never really introspective or self-analytical, Indrajit neither finds his self-identity in anonymity, nor his place among the others. An Isolate, he yet remains an Isolate.

The Writer suggests Indrajit an alternative Sysiphian identity: "you and I can't be Nirmals........For us there is only the road........So walk on. We are the cursed spirits of Sisyphus We have to push the rock to the top—even if it just rolls down" (p. 59). Indrajit does not see the role befitting him. To accept 'isolatian' as a Sisyphian obligation is to see the journey through life as meaningless, valueless, condemned. "Must we, even when we know? ....Must we still live ?" Indrajit questions the Writer, evidently unwilling to accept the alternative.

Nevertheless the drama ends with Indrajit, Manasi and the Writer—the three fellow Isolates intoning together a Sysiphian poem of the road :

And hence
There's no hope
Of fulfilment
Have faith
In the road
....
No shrine for us
No God for us
But the road
The endless road.

The conclusion is abrupt and imposed. It is dramatically unconvincing that Manasi, who all along the play has been an incarnation of the human desire for a life of values and deeper relationship and who kindles hope, should accept an endless, hopeless, goalless journey through life as her final mode. It is equally unconvincing that the Writer, whose artistic sensibility always searches for and has occasional glimpses of the wholeness of life, should discover in the Sysiphian 'paradox' his own poem of the Road. It is doubtful whether Indrajit himself, who all through the play feels his isolation as an agony and craves for relatedness, would have his faith and fulfilment in the negative stance and preserve it as Truth.

But however questionable the relevance of the Sysiphian alternative, it is pronounced that the Isolates can no longer remain non-participating. Their ingrained longing for a life of values would compel tnem to go along the Road of Life, the eternal wayfarers in search of a whole and wholesome existence. There is no escape.

III

It is a traditional Indian belief that 'isolation' carries its own imperative. Non-identification could be a way to deeper identification, distance a better way to rediscover if and when the Isolate is able to

turn his non-attachment into 'non-attached activity' rather than impasse, showmanship or a deluded exercise in fragmentation and futility. To fathom life is to 'vanish' into it, not as a thing among things but in full awareness of life's negatives and opposites. Isolation is the agony of being aware. It is by way of an inner metamorphosis that the Isolate attains a sense of relatedness with the self and the world. The illumination of consciousness comes if he has the will to move ever forward.

In *Ebam Indrajit* so long as the Writer is unable and unwilling to accept the variables of existence, he stands at the shadowline of value and valuelessness. Untempered by experience, Indrajit's idea of a larger life too remains but a means of escaping from himself and the situation. It is only when Manasi asserts her faith in the Road of Life and the other two Isolates join her that hope arises that the Sisyphian hypothesis notwithstanding, they might be able to break away from the fixity of their isolation, might be able to forward through life's quiddities and profundities and would discover their own ways to be "new, to become a form and find relevance."

University of Kalyani,
West Bengal.

Notes

1. *There's No End,* Badal Sircar, trans. K. Raha, *Enact* (Nov., 1981), 19.
2. "I as a Stranger", Bishnu Dey, Bishnu Dey : *Selected Poems* (Writers' Workshop, 1972).
3. *Deep Roots,* Murli Das Melwani (Writers' Workshop, 1970), 24-25.
4. *A Strange Case of Billy Biswas,* Arun Joshi (Hind Pocket Books P. Ltd., 1971).
5. *Voices in a City,* Anita Desai (Orient Paperbacks, 1968),, 64.
6. Jean Paul Sartre, "Camus' *The Outsider*", *Literary and Philosophical Essays,* trans. Annette Michelson (Rider and Co., 1975), 75.
7. Nissim Ezekiel, from Paul Verghese, "Poetry of Nissim Ezekiel", *Indian Literature* (March, 1972), 66-75.
8. *Mr. Abhimanyu,* Laxmi Narain Lal, Trans. Suresh Kohli (Motilal Banarasidass, 1971).
9. *Ebam Indrajit,* Badal Sircar, Trans. Girish Karnad (Oxford Univ. Press, 1979).
10. *The Cycle of Spring,* Rabindranath Tagor, Trans. by the author (The Macmillan Co., 1971), 121.
11. *Beyond the Horizon,* Eugene O 'Neill, *The Plays of Eugene O' Neill* (Random House, 1946), 85.

Hemingway Criticism, American and International : An Evaluation

E. Nageswara Rao

The volume of Hemingway criticism produced on both sides of the Atlantic and of the Pacific in the last six decades is staggering. Audre Hannemann[1] lists 914 "books on Hemingway or significantly mentioning Hemingway," and 2522 items classified as "Newspaper and Periodical material." Hannemann's bibliography and its supplement cover publications upto 1973 only In the next eight years for which the relevant information is available in the *MLA International Bibliograhpy*, another thirty-two books and 574 articles have appeared. Thus the total number of books discussing Hemingway comes to 946 and the total number of articles to 3246. Although these figures may not be authoritative or comprehensive, they give us an idea of the dimensions of the Hemingway industry throughout the world. The sheer bulk of the critical output forbids evaluation of each item in a short paper such as the present one. However, certain trends in and significant contributions to Hemingway scholarship in the last sixty years can be identified. I have chosen to examine these as a viable alternative to dealing with a huge and unmanageable mass of critical effort.

Let us start with the British critics of Hemingway's fiction. Wyndham Lewis, Aldous Huxley, Virginia Woolf, and D.S. Savage–three of them creative writers themselves—have more or less a similar complaint that Hemingway's work is low-brow and that his characters are 'stupid'. Lewis[2] likened the Hemingway hero to a "dumb ox," "a dull-witted bovine, monosyllabic simpleton" to whom things happen; his language is called an 'underdog dialect;" his world is "empty of will, of purpose." Lewis goes on to say that Hemingway's art is "of the surface, of violent action." Lewis used this nickname to refer to Hemingway's characters, and not to Hemingway. It is true that

Hemingway is basically concerned with this world of inarticulate people. He deliberately chose such people to mock at the sophisticated, civilized world. In another essay, Lewis explains that the dumb-ox type of characters are the "guinea-pig type" which are as remote as possible from Nietzsche's "super" type. He adds : "This is not a shortcoming in a work of art : it defines it merely. It says that the work in question is classifiable as lyrical....Hemingway has been a chronicler, of exceptional genius of folk emotions."[3] Although the context and tone of Lewis's first essay on Hemingway seem to denigrate him, the second essay makes it clear that Lewis considered the American novelist an important artist in the twentieth century. An artist can communicate only through his senses and in this he resembles the dumb ox.

Aldous Huxley[4] complains that Hemingway feigns stupidity and that he tries to conceal his culture and education. In other words, Hemingway is accused of inverted snobbery. Hemingway answers this criticism in *Death in the Afternoon* by saying that it would be "fakery" to make characters talk of high-sounding things like culture and music if the theme itself is not any of these. He was interested in creating living people and not characters. The latter, in his view, are "caricatures."[5] Hemingway does have an expert's knowledge of politics, economics, war, France, Spain, Italy, East Africa and Cuba, and sports like bullfighting and fishing as his articles to many newspapers reveal. He has the power to observe, to analyze, and to predict. He has correctly assessed Mussolini as the "biggest bluff ;"[6] he correctly predicted the outbreak of World War II.[7] These are proofs of his knowledge and intelligence. He did not feel it right or necessary to bring in extraneous issues of politics or culture into his creative writing. While Hemingway dubbed such an attempt as "fakery," he thought characters who are made to discuss these matters would be mere "caricatures."

D.S. Savage[8] compares Hemingway's stories to those in the pulp magazines. He is unhappy about the "lowest stratum of society" from which Hemingway's characters are chosen. He finds fault with the "retrogressive recapitulation," "profound spiritual inertia," "mechanical repetition," and "proletarianization of literature" in Hemingway. Savage's complaint against Hemingway seems to be an indication of his snobbery. Hemingway may lack a political philosophy which Lewis and Savage wanted, but he certainly has subtlety and intelligence. The controlled understatements and structure of *The Sun Also Rises* or *A Farewell to Arms* are impossible for a writer who lacks these qualities.

Virginia Woolf[9] faults Hemingway on "faking" characters who are "terribly afraid of being themselves, or they would say things simply in their natural voices" She finds no "fundamental novelty in his conception of the art of fiction;" she thinks that some of his stories have "an excessive use of dialogue."

H. E. Bates[10] and V. S. Pritchett are among the few British critics who discuss Hemingway's work with understanding and sympathy. Bates contradicts Lewis's theory of the "dumb ox" and says that we should distinguish between Hemingway and his characters. The characters may have ox-like instincts, but the author is portraying them only realistically. Bates also discusses Hemingway's constant preoccupation with death and says its possible origin is in Catholicism. V. S. Pritchett summed up Hemingway's place : More than any other writer he has defined for us the personality of our own time."[11]

John Atkins[12] and Stewart Sanderron[13] seem to be the only British critics who brought out book-length studies of Hemingway. Atkins's declared aim is to demonstrate the part played by "fear" in Hemingway's work. But his book is full of familiar ideas and examples. He seems to have a frivolous attitude to literary criticism. He is biographical, diffuse, incoherent and rather dogmatic. By contrast, Sanderson's book is a neat and balanced introduction to Hemingway, dealing sympathetically with all his works and with several aspects of his genius.

The Irish writer, Sean O'Faolain, is somewhat ambivalent in his criticism of Hemingway. While he finds Hemingway's heroes without brains, traditions and memories, he is generous in his praise of Hemingway's art in "A Clean Well-Lighted Place" as one "entirely functional and unobtrusive." Hemingway is a "delicate sculptor of great muscle."[14]

Hemingway seems to have fared better at the hands of French critics They admired his technique, notably his dialogues which had an extraordinary "phonographic" quality Jean-Paul Sartre[15] noted the "profound" influence of Hemingway and his generation of American novelists on French literature Francois Mauriac[16] thought that Hemingway not only wrote "great" works but lived them in places like Spain. Roger Asselineau[17] recognized the influence of Hemingway's technique on Sartre and Camus. The Byronic attitudes found in Hemingway—"disenchantment and tough guy nihilism"—are echoed by a few French writers like Montherlant and Jean Prevost Andre

Maurois[18] is understandably biography-oriented in introducing Hemingway to the French readers.

Arturo Barea's[19] criticism of Hemingway's novel on the Spanish Civil War, coming as it does from a spaniard, cut at the root of some of Hamingway's cherished convictions on the art of the novel. Barea finds that *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is "untruthful" as a novel about the Spaniards and their war. He feels that it sins against "realism" as its author tried to transfer the emotions of the bullring to those of the war; the characterization of Maria is "unreal" since her middle-class, Catholic background would not permit her to sleep with a stranger (Robet Jorden) so readily; the collective rape of Maria by the Falangists is unthinkable since it is against Spanish psychology. Even Hemingway's language, in Barea's view, is artificial. The English expressions are pompous attempts to translate simple Spanish words. Certain words like "rabbit" are not spoken in public (as Jordan does), because of their obscene connotations. Barea sums up his indictment of Hemingway's novel by saying that Hemingway was "always a spectator who wanted to be an actor and who wanted to write as if he were an actor." This criticism cannot be brushed aside easily. No attempt was made either by Hemingway or his apologists to answer the charge of fakery in theme, characterization, and fictional dialogue In the absence of a rebuttal, our belief in Hemingway's verisimilitude is diminished

The Italian critics, Mario Praz,[20] Pier Francesco Paolini[21] and Nemi D'Agostino[22] are insightful in their criticism. Praz discusses the vogue of Hemingway who was at one time tabooed in Italy because of his views on the Abyssinian war.) He also traces the American novelist's influance on Italian writers like Elio Vittorini Barto. Paolini makes the insightful observation on the recurring motif of "luck" which he calls a "fatal entity." Paolini's term is misleading; "fate" implies that the universe is governed by divine ordinance, that there is a principle of order and justice which is ultimately established through appropriate punishment for evil. Such a neat pattern of justice is perhaps noticeable in Hemingway's juvenile stories like "Judgement of Manitcu." The impersonal mass slaughter in the war could neither he explained nor understood in terms of conventional notions of divine justice. Paolini also observes the structural likeness of *To Have and Have Not* and the Nick Adams stories, both of which are "sectional works" with a loose structure and a recurring hero. D'Agostino is the Italian detractor of Hemingway who, in his view, had "certainly neither the talent nor the training necessary to create a work of art *engage* in the deepast sense, to write the epic of ideological and social conflicts in a tragic epoch."

The German critics, Helmut Papajewski[23] and Horst Oppel,[24] make some useful comments on Hemingway's work. The Germans found fear and *Angst*, two important elements of Existentialist philosophy in his fiction Other features of Existential philosophy like boredom and the sense of banality are also found in Hemingway. His stories are interpreted as examples of Kierkegaard's "Life at zero," involving a high degree of reductionism. Horst Oppel analyzes *Across the River and Into the Tress* in depth and observes that Cantwell, unlike the other Hemingway men, faces an internal danger. He draws our attention to the importance of subordinate themes which emphasize "purgation" in this novel.

The Russians are partisan in their view of Hemingway. *To Have and Have Not* and *The Fifth Column* are praised because they are supposedly dealing with economic, social, or revolutionary themes. But, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is not favoured because of its disparagement of Russian officers in the Spanish Civil War and the humane characterization of the Fascist, Berrendo. Sometimes, Hemingway was even compared to Tolstoi, Chekhov and Pushkin. The Russians are fascinated by death. Its recurrence in Hemingway is examined by Ivan Kashkeen who points out the purposelessness of Robert Jordan's death. Kashkeen[25] prefers to view Hemingway as one who affirmed "life in death"

The Japanese critics of Hemingway display both insight and rigour. Keiichi Harada[26] examines the symbolism in *The Old Man and the Sea*. He finds parallels between this novel and *Odyssey* and *Moby Dick*, all of which use the sea as a setting and a metaphor. He finds, for instance, that Di Maggio's bone spur is similar to Odysseus's scar, Achilles's heel and Ahab's leg. Santiago suffers like these great heroes and he achieves greatness and distinction very much like them. Keisuke Tanaka[27] enumerates examples of the use of contrast by Hemingway as a "rhetorical device" in his titles, themes, characters, etc. The 'balance" and "unity" in Hemingway's works is traceable to what Tanaka calls the "bipolar construction."

In India, there are nearly a dozen Ph. D. theses, five books,[28] and countless articles on Hemingway. Some Indian scholars have published their work on Hemingway overseas. Since I propose to deal with Indian scholarship on Hemingway separately later, I am content to mention it here in passing.

In the United States, Hemingway's work has received both extensive and intensive critical treatment. Most of the American

critics are academicians unlike British, French and Spanish critics. American criticism tends to be more rigorous, sophisticated and specialized.

Among the scademic critics, Baker,[29] Young,[30] Killinger,[31] Defaleo[32] and Hovey[33] have each devoted a book to a consideration of various aspects of Hemingway's work. Baker's emphasis is on the symbolism; Young is largely concerned with the theme of death and the development of Hemingway's style; Killinger presents an existential interpretation, Defalco and Hovey use psychological methods in analyzing Hemingway. Brooks and Warran[34] analyze "The Killers" from the standpoint of New Criticism. R.P. warren[35] in an independent essay shows the parallels between Wordsworth and Hemingway and declares that the latter is essentially a lyric rather than a dramatic, writer. Melvin Backman[36] identifies two themes–of the matador and the crucified–running through the Heminway canon and demonstrates how these are blended in *The Old Man and the Sea*. Harry Levin[37] studies the specific problem of Hemingway's style. Lional Trilling[38] compares Hemingway's view of death with Donne's view. Allen Guttman,[39] E.M Halliday[40] and Bernard Oldsey examine various symbols. Leslie Fiedler's[41] attitude is somewhat ambivalent. He finds that Hemingway, like Melville and Twain, was incapable of dealing with a prolonged heterosexual relationship. Nick and Bill, Jake and Bill, Frederic and Rinaldi are examples of the repetitive pattern of male companionship found in Natty Bumppo and Chingachook, Ishmael and Queequeg, and Huck and Jim. Fiedler also identifies the movement towards the western paradise, a recurring motif of American fiction, operating in Hemingway in a metaphorical, though not literal, way.

Leon Edel[42] is a denigrator of Hemingway among the American academic critics. He thinks that Hemingway is a second-class writer to be placed beside Sinclair Lewis rather than Melville or James. He complains that Hemingway's style is not "organic." It is a "series of charming tricks;" his world is "one of superficial action." He is more important as a story-writer than as a novelist in Edel's view since Hemingway has not written an "adult" novel. Edel sums up his view of Hemingway's art as one of "evasion."

Among the non acadamic critics in the United States Edmund Wilson[43] and Malcolm Cowley[44] have provided valuable insights into the work of Hemingway. Wilson calls Hemingway a "gauge of morale." Cowley places him in the tradition of "nocturnal writers" like Melville, Hawthorne and Poe rather than in the company of

London, Norris and Dreiser. The comparison with the nineteenth-century writers is based on Hemingway's recurring motif of death. But it cannot be pushed far because Hemingway was not deeply speculative on metaphysical questions like Melville—Ishmael's lengthy and ambiguous speculations on the whiteness of the white whale are an example—nor could he work out an elaborate allegory as in Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, nor could he contrive a sustained symbolic pattern as in Poe's "The Fall of the House of Ussher."

The European criticism of Hemingway is, with a few notable exceptions, biographical, historical, general, partisan, or hostile. American criticism, by and large, investigates specific questions like the theme of death, style, symbolism, "code hero" and ritual. Some American critics like Oldsey[45] use the statistical methods for proving a point about the frequent use of "snow" and related words. Oldsey also coins unnecess ary and highsounding words like "symboli-fication" (for symbolization). American critics try to prove or disprove theories and interpretations. Halliday disproves Baker's tall claims on symbolism in Hemingway. While American criticism errs on the side of too much complexity and sophistication, European criticism errs on the side of simplicity and superficiality.

Osmania University
Hyderabad.

Notes

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T. S. Eliot's Four Quartets : A Mystical Approach

Visvanath Chatterjee

Genuine poetry, Eliot tells us in his essay on Dante, can communicate before it is understood This is especially true of mystical poetry like *Four Quartets.* Even in the best mystical poetry the words constitute only an inadequate medium of ezpression As Shelley has pointed out in *A Defence of Poetry* : 'The most glorious poetry that has ever been communicated to the world is probably a feeble shadow of the original conceptions of the poet.'[1] If this is relevant about poetry in general, this is especially relevant about mystical poetry Silence is the essence of the basic mystical experience. In the language of the *Taittiriya Upanisad* : Wherefrom words turn back,/Together with the mind, not having attained....'[2]

As a matter of fact, the word *mystcs,* which means one initiated into the mysteries, is derived from the Greek verb *muein.* 'to keep silence'. Mysticism is the belief that the knowledge of God and of real truth is independent of the mind and the senses. This knowledge is inaccessible to the understanding and can be obtained through contemplation or spiritual insight. It is no wonder that of the four 'marks' of mystical experience enumerated by William James in *The Varieties of Religious Experience,* the first is ineffability. It cannot adequately be expressed in words. It can only be suggested, or described with the help of analogy. As Evelyn Underhill puts it, 'Where the philosopher guesses and argues, the mystic lives and looks.'[3] This being so, it is small wonder that Eliot is so much concerned with words in *Four Quartets,* which is mystical poetry par excellence.

The final section of the first quartet, 'Burnt Norton', is devoted almost entirely to words :

> World move, music moves
> Only in time; but that which is only living
> Can only die. Words, after speech, reach
> Into the silence. Only by the form, the pattern,
> Can words or music reach
> The stillness, as a Chinese jar still
> Moves perpetually in its stillness.

This is how Section V begins, with a slow-tempo movement. The meditation on the still centre theme continues, the relationship of words to form now being Eliot's immediate concern. The inadequacy of words to express our emotions is obvious enough. They are vague, they are imprecise, they are weak :

> Words strain,
> Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,
> Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,
> Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,
> Will not stay still.

The idea of the impurity and inadequacy of words, 'the intolerable wrestle with words and meanings', recurs in the other *Quartets* as well. In fact, this was always Eliot's magnificent obsession. Here, in 'Burnt Norton', the 'word' is certainly elevated to the 'Word'. We are reminded that Christ too was assailed by the 'voices of temptation', but the Word is the Logos of which we are told in the beginning of the Gospel according to St John : 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' The Word is the idea cf perfection which inspires and sustains the poet in his own empty desert. In the second section of 'Little Gidding' the ghost refers to Stephane Mallarme's well-known words ('conner un sens plus pur aux mots de la tribu', "Le Tombeau d'Edgar Poe"): 'To purify the dialect of the tribe'.

Paradoxicality is an essential feature of mystical poetry and paradoxes abound in *Four Quartets* It begins with two epigraphs from Heraclitus, one of which is a famous paradox: 'The way up and the way down are one and the same ' 'The still point', which is at the core of *Four Quartets* and is introduced in the second secion of the first Quartet, seems to suggest the stillness characteristic of eternity, as opposed to the hectic movement of the temporal. The radient light of this stillness tends

to dispel the spiritual darkness of sublunary life. But, in the very next section, light and darkness appear to be paradoxically equated when they are both contrasted with the mundane 'dim light' :

> Here is a place of disaffection
> Time before and time after
> In a dim light : neither daylight
> Investing form with lucid stillness
> Turning shadow into transient beauty
> With slow rotation suggesting permanence
> Nor darkness to purify the soul
> Emptying the sensual with deprivation
> Cleansing affection from the temporal.

This paradox is made more pointed, intense and comprehensive in the third section of 'East Coker' :

> So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness
> the dancing.

As D. E. S. Maxwell rightly points out : 'Within the still point is implied movement, as by the movement of innumerable atoms is composed the stability of objects.'[4]

A mystical experience is, in a sense, the most intense of religious experiences. This experience may be described as the penetration of time by eternity. Eliot was intrigued by the Bergsonian conception of time as duree or 'duration' with its annihilation of the barriers between present, past and future. The poet is for ever preoccupied with time (and eternity in *Four Quartets* The very opening lines are strikingly significant :

> Time present and time past
> Are both perhaps present in time future,
> And time future contained in time past.
> If all time is eternally present
> All time is unredeemable.

That is what Krishna meant. If all time is eternally present, all time is unredeemable. So Krishna is justfied in advising us not to think of the fruit of action. All our right, He reminds us, consists merely in doing our duty. We have no right to the fruit of action. Moreover, 'our deeds determine us, as much as we determine our deeds'[5] Pilgrims are we all on the pilgrimage of life and we have to move on irrespective of the consequences :

> Not fare well,
> But fare forward, voyagers.

Life is not a meaningless jumble as it appears to most people We can realize its significance only

> in a lifetime's death in love,
> Ardour and selflessness and self-surrender.

'Burnt Norton' may be described as a poem of meditation. We are Time's slaves utterly dominated by Time. A life of the spirit can perhaps be attained only when we cease to be affected by time. There are mystics like Aldous Huxley, the champion of the 'perennial philosophy', who want time to be annihilated 'Time must have a stop'6 is their motto. Not so T. S Eliot. He believes that

> Only through time time is conquered.

Eternal reality may be glimpsed in moments of insight—when we see into the life of things Only then can we attain a cosmic consciousness :

> Time past and time future
> Allow but a little consciousness.
> To be conscious is not to be in time

The basic virtue extolled in 'East Coker' is humility. The poet is going to plunge himself into the gathering gloom. Now is his moment of mystic experience, now is his Dark Night of the Soul :

> I said to my soul, be still, and let the dark come upon you
> Which shall be the darkness of God.

The epithet 'dry' in 'The Dry Salvages' subtly suggests the spiritual drought from which the poet is suffering. Small wonder therefore that the poem begins with the river and ends with the soil Like Hopkins and Tagore before him, he would like the lord of life to send his roots rain. Only denial of self can lead to salvation and there's the rub For man's craving is endless and, as a consequence, so also his suffering. As Carlyle has emphatically stated in his *Sartor Resartus*, the cessation of misery can only come from cessation of desire. But, as things stand.

> There is no end of it, the voiceless wailing,
> No end to the withering of withered flowers.

The fear of the unknown should not be allowed to overwhelm us, 'the primitive terror' should not fill us with despair. If time kills, time also heals. Like Shelley's West Wind, Time is both destroyer and preserver. When Krishna unrolled the vast vista of the future before Arjuna in the *Gita*, did not the future itself take on the appearance of the past ?

So the future is no more than a faded song, and as Heraclitus understood long ago.

> And the way up is the way down, the way forward is the way back.

It is no longer a mere paradox, it is a vital truth.

The futile agony of spiritual despair is sounded in all its intensity in 'Little Gidding'. Ironically enough, a fulfilled desire can be more painful than an unfulfilled one and disastrous in its consequence, as Deianira knew to her cost :

> And what you thought you came for
> Is only a shell.....
> ....Either you had no purpose
> Or the purpose is beyond the end you figured
> And is altered in fulfilment.

It seems to me that Eliot was thinking especially of the fate of Deianira as depicted in Sophocles's *Trachinae* which has the death of Hercules as its theme. My impression is all the more strengthened when I come across an allusion to Deianira's fatal love-gift of Nessus's shirt to Hercules a little later in the poem :

> Who then devised the torment ? Love.
> Love is the unfamiliar Name
> Behind the hands that wove
> The intolerable shirt of flame
> Which human power cannot remove.
> We only live, only suspire
> Consumed by either fire or fire.

The final note of the poem is one of joy—the joy which comes from acceptance and faith. And this joy is felt only when one gives up everything, surrenders everything, with not an iota of wordly craving left in him :

> A condition of complete simplicity
> (Costing not less than everything)
> And all shall be well and
> All manner ot thing shall be well
> When the tongues of flame are in-folded
> Into the crowned knot of fire
> And the fire and the rose are one.

We have come back to the circular movement of time and the significance of words as an attempt, however inadequate, to establish an eternal reality. Every action has importance if certain ends are ultimately fulfilled; these ends, however, are shaped not by us but by God. Finally, at the still centre, the fire of suffering is one with the rose of love for human suffering is blessed and redeemed by God's love for man. The mystic wheel is come full circle. What more can we want than that ?

Jadavpur University,
Calcutta.

Notes

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4. D. E. S. Maxwell, *The Poetry of T. S. Eliot* (London 1960), p. 157.
5. George Eliot, *Adam Bede*, Chapter XXIX.
6. Title of a book by A. Huxley, who takes his cue from a passage in Shakespeare's 1 *Henry IV* (I. iv, 81-83).

Scarecrow

Full-blown he hangs up there, alone,
in his high chamber,
musing, like some oriental Monarch,
over the wealth he has won
from the Golden Gate to 10 Downing Street.
Dare any gang of birds loiter
over the sleeping house as long he stands
supreme, awake, full-blown,
in old, unfitting, clothes
flashing waves of his fearful presence
from the Sears Tower ? Which freak
of this earth will snoop around
to lap up
the silent fruits that grow
under his long, five-star, nose ?

He is the solitary keeper of the field
nailed to the Cross, Unblinkingly
he watches the looks of ungodly beings,
daylong hears the shrill, intriguing, hymns
and computes the dusky steps of unknightly kings.

In his monomaniac vision
they suffer skychange: the faithful weeds;
he blesses them with his nameless creed.
Hardly ever he whispers to the earth-bound;
the grass, the flower, the grass-hopper;
rather, he scouts at their wee relevance
their puny status, and
their quiet work for culture.

Often I wonder;
is scarecrow
an angel,
an acrobat,
an astronaut,
an Aristotle?
or, a planted actor
that plays a high-strung drama
at a wobbly height, gained by chance,
he cannot come down from ?

I. K. Sharma

From An End To A Beginning

From an end you start
and reach a beginning
from a sunset you walk
and the dark veil burns
the bird of light rises
and flowers smile in your heart

—*Subhas Saha*

●

The Morning

I sit on
the ashes of past
the clean blue
the breezy leaf
and I watch the morning
over the ocean

—*Subhas Saha*

Sin

Oh my hidden darkness of sin !
I want to see your face at night.
Remove the veil of mystery,
The earth is wet in rain, the sad leaves
Move in the wind. Fearsome dark cloud
With lightning roars; you are glued to me,
yet I cannot see you. Your kiss
Grows like soft stone, icy coldness pervades
from your lips; the smell of primitive water
Runs through my veins, Don't go away.
Lame light of dark lane of Calcutta
Comes up from your body like purformed postules
That infect my love; it is my sin.

—Barnik Ray

Book Reviews:

Stephen Spender : A Study in Poetic Growth:
By Suryanath Pandey (Arnold Heinemann, Rs. 50)

The shock tactics affected by the rising stars of the Thirties no longer shock. In fact, save Auden, the galaxy is dimmed and little heard of. Dr Pandey says rightly, and conveniently, that the time is now ripe for an intensive study of Stephen Spender. Whether this is that intensive study is another matter. What is easier to admit is that through his running commentary, or brief survey of Spender's background, the influences (Hopkins, Owen, Eliot, Lawrence, Auden), the style and the imagery, the thesis tries to "trace the development of Spender's poetry along certain assumptions". What these assumptions may be we are, however, never quite sure. Also the tension in Spender, to yield to as well as check the romantic impulse, has been noted rather than explored. As for the poetry itself, from *Poems* to *The Generous Days* via *Vienna*, and the poetics, from *The Destructive Element* to *The Creative Element*, the change does not come out so clearly. This may be due to reasons of safety and semantics. What does come through is a development seen through rather quaintly phrased phases: Search for Redemption, Redemption through Action and Redemption through Introspection. This is more flattering than factual.

Following the way of most Indian elders, the book abounds in quotations from critics, who sound more critical than he who quotes. The occasional use of superlatives betrays a youthful naivete. Is Spender more than a major minor poet ? The question is not raised. Surely Spender is not likely to be remembered for praising the gasworks. His interest in Left politics "at whose centre I could never be" he has himself later confessed–may turn out to be a perishable property, perhaps less important than the romantic euphoria over the French Revolution.

Contemporary is rarely for ever contemporary. The poems on Vienna now appear to be more pastoral than political. Dr Pandey himself notes regret and nostalgia in "The Pilots Who Destroyed Germany, Spring 1945". The Marx–Freud mask peeled off without effort.

As for the larger claims, how far has Spender been able to tackle the crisis of identity or the problem of self ("I who say I call that eye I") ? This is perhaps not his strong point. In "Spiritual Exploration", and elsewhere, how much does he penetrate into "the very nature of human existence" ? As a love poet Donne and Sappho will easily outlast Stephen Spender. Here is no Orpheus, to use his own phrase, nor Shelley, to use Herbert Read's words. And was it proper or necessary to say, as Dr Pandey does, that Eliot was "least interested in the external social conditions" ? Damn Tom to praise Stephen ? The comparison of the Yeats-Eliot-Spender passges is, however, competent and un-polemical.

Looking back, have the programmes, the manifestos, the hope of a 'Promethean' society added up ? A lyric poet, at heart a liberal, fallen among unlyrical, illiberal times, Stephen Spender illustrates, as perhaps few else, the dangers of being a gentleman in distress.

Outter with your tongues
Of angels, fire your guns
O save and praise
Recall me from life's exile.

A late romantic–"Praying his wounds would blossom to a rose/ Of blood, vermilion under a golden moon,/Exclaiming 'O'–some of his best lines are feminine and slightly sentimental :

Was so much expenditure justified
On the death of one so young and silly
Lying under the olive trees, O world, O death ?

Whose lovely ambition
Was that their lips, still touched with fire,
Should tell of the spirit clothed from head to foot in song.
And who heard from the Spring branches
The desires falling across their bodies like blossoms.

That is the true Spender. Apart from a few memorable poems and phrases ("Eye, gazelle, delicate wanderer)" is the "weeded garden" of Spender's *Collected Poems* substantial enough to endure ? Referring to a new quality of simplicity, Dr Pandey has no doubt that it is : "The validity of this claim is borne out not only by this volume *(Collected Poems)* but also by the collection that follows." Not many will agree with such gestures, worthy of an acolyte.

A simple, readable long essay, the book is full of shrewd asides. "Exploration of the self is the major romantic impulse overflowing into modern poetry." "The well known poem ("To W. H. Auden on his Sixtieth Birthday') may be regarded as a figurative and qualified retrospect of Spender's own poetic development." "Spender does arrive at a resolution, though it leaves him battered and attentuated." "His harking back to the love (and pity) theme argues the typical gesture of a sensitive poet not adequately armed with conviction". One does not know why these obiter dicta were not gathered up in terms of a consistent, critical focus ? What prevented ? *Toujours* 1 *'audace !*

A sober, well-stated thesis, turned readily into a book, simultaneously published from New York, New Delhi and Salzburg, it has many plus points as well as a few minus. There would have been less minus points had the book been revised a little before publication. But thanks to the UGC there is no promotion without Ph.D. and/or publication.

Dr Pandey speaks of Spender's pilgrimage, this is probably a case of transferred metaphor. The book contains two beautiful photographs, of the aging poet and his young pujari.

—Sisirkumar Ghosh

Vishva-Bharati,
Shantiniketan

Studies in Modern Fiction
Shiva M. Pandeya   Vikas, 1983

This collection of essays on some of the most important novelists of the twentieth century covers the period from Conrad and Lawrence to Naipaul and Narayan. The essays add up to a coherent whole. They have a well-defined focus.

The author is a myth critic. Not only does he look for archetypes and anthropological origins, he is at pains to assign every work to some category as defined by Northrop Frye such as "comedy", "tragedy", "romance" "satire" and so on.

In the essay on Lawrence where he does not fall back on Frye or Jung he makes use of Lawrence's *Fantasies of Unconscious* for an explanation of Lawrence's fiction.

To an interest in anthropology and psychology must be added a deep knowledge of aesthetics, western and eastern. Anandvardhana comes as readily to his mind as Aristotle.

In spite of such formidable equipment he manages to convey his meaning to the reader instead of getting lost in verbiage.

The reader will find the book rewarding. Although Frye's categories have by now become stereotypes, their application by Pandeya is fresh and original. He shows how Lawrence's understanding of the unconscious is different from Freud's. Instead of being gagged and bound it is active and spontaneous.

Pandeya is aware of the limitations of the archetypal approach. It is reductive. It turns a literary work into an exemplum. For example *Love Among the Haystacks* exemplifies the dangers of "the mother complex". So does *Sons and Lovers*. All the images and symbols in Law-

rence are seen in terms of polarity between the male and female principles. This approach strips the novel of its richness and complexity.

This, however, is a weakness inherent in the works of Lawrence. when the same approach is extended to Conrad and R. K. Narayan it is not so helpful. Indeed the critical tools used for analysing *Waiting for the Mahatma* seem to be too elaborate for the work. Is the author perhaps breaking a butterfly upon the wheel ? As a rule Pandeya uses his scholarship to throw light rather than darkness on the object of his contemplation. The book is to be welcomed on that account.

Now for a little fault-finding. The misprints are too numerous to illustrate. It is to be wished that the proof-reader of Vikas had been more careful. The author is not to be blamed for the errors.

He may, however, be blamed for imposing his own preconceptions on the work he examines. *Waiting for the Mahatma* becomes "the tragic story of the saint" (p. 183). It is somewhat simplistic to repeat the old familiar charge against Kipling "In his myth of the white man's burden Kipling gives us the stereotyped assumptions of imperialists" (p. 163). Pandeya is determined to see Paul in *Sons and Lovers* turning from death to life and Miriam. (In the spirit of Nahum Tate) he wishes to impose a happy ending on the novel. On pages 366-67 there are hints of Paul's return to Miriam. But these hints are cancelled by the ending. On the last three pages Paul decides finally to break away from Miriam, "It was the end then between them". Again "he rejected her sacrifice" (p. 508-9). Such possessive and protective love which swallows up the individuality of the lover is unacceptable to Paul.

A myth critic professes not to judge. He has no subjective partiality or prejudices. Pandeya, however, does not conceal his preference for fantasy, symbolism and mysticism over mere realism in literature and art. At places he is inclined to see more mysticism than is warranted by the text. For example he claims that the passage describing the screaming of the peewits (Pandeya p. 39-40) demonstrates a mystical awareness of reality. C. S. Lewis, a very reputable critic, found this very passage muddled and pernicious because of its biolatry. *(An Experiment in Critism*, p. 126)

R. K. Kaul

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