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Towards an Indian Critical Tradition for Indian Writing in English

Krishna Rayan

Concluding the section on R. K. Narayan in *A Manifold Voice*, William Walsh says :

> As readers of the Indian novel we in this country have our deficiencies. It is hard for us to take up the references—to the Indian scene, the agricultural tradition, the vast distances, the terrible poverty, the profoundly significant religion. We live in utterly different conditions where nobody's grandmother could hand down to her grandchildren as a legacy an image of the god Nataraja, which had been found in a packet of saffron—as happens, for example, in Narayan's novel, *Mr Sampath*. As readers, we are almost certainly in the position of the young man Srinivas in the same novel and 'grasp the symbols but vaguely'.[1]

The cultural distance which worries Professor Walsh is in fact the least of the disabilities of a foreign critic of Indian literature in English or indeed of any literature. The gap does not exist when the work is not deeply rooted or when it exhibits a preponderance of universal over culturally specific elements—indeed even about Narayan's fiction, with its strong cultural reference, Walsh hastens to qualify the statement and claims that British readers can detect 'through all the appearance of strangeness a familiar rhythm'. Where the gap does exist, it tends to narrow as the reader's intimacy with the writer's world increases. And above all, the gap can be crossed by a leap of the imagination. Only a complete obliviousness to this capacity of the imagination could have produced the kind of heresy preached once by Paikeday that Wordsworth's poem on daffodils cannot be taught in a class of students who have not seena ctual daffodils. Indian

English literature, one parent of which is Indian assimilation of English literature, therefore owes its origin in part to the Indian mind's successful execution of the imaginative leap, and Indian writers in English would be the last people to question the legitimacy of British or any other foreign criticism of their work because of an alleged gap. An effort of empathy is in fact at the heart of all response to art. It is called for not only across a major cultural divide but also across sub–cultural and sub-sub-cultural boundaries within a culture and across temporal distances within a culture. Without it a Maharashtrian reader would not be able to make contact with a Tarasankar Banerjee novel with its details of landscape and human behaviour specific to rural Bengal, nor would a present-day British reader succeed in comprehending an Elizabethan play in the fullest sense. The principle applies outside literature as well—according to Owen Barfield, the meanings of the fundamental terms used by Plato and Aristotle, which are different from their established meanings in modern Western civilization, can be understood by the present-day reader only by the exercise of imaginative sympathy.

The real 'deficiency' (to use Walsh's word) of a British or American critic of Indian writing in English, I think, lies elsewhere. There is, for instance, the problem of evaluation. A South Indian music mandarin, judging a rendering of a Thyagaraja composition by someone like the late Professor Higgins, would tend to vary the rigour of the criteria which he normally applies to a local singer; an Indian dance critic's evaluation of a Kathak performance by a talented Argentinian learner is always in danger of being distorted by factors other than aesthetic response. Now this need not be a case of being patronizing, nor xenophilia, nor falling over backwards. It is a subtle interference which occurs, I think, below the conscious level—an interference which if it does not actually lead to condonation of mediocrity does, in several cases, encourage exaggeration of merit. Take, for instance, an evaluation by Professor Walsh. I return to him because I am using for a kind of micro–study the chapter on India in his very perceptive study of Commonwealth literature, A *Manifold Voice*, as a text which is reasonably representative of criticism from abroad of Indian writing in English. His rating of Nirad Chaudhuri's *Autobiography* is as follows :

> *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* is one of the finest examples of this *genre* to appear in English in this century, and the most significant, single discursive work to be generated by the love and hate of Indian-British relationships.[2]

Now Nirad Chaudhuri's *Autobiography* is a distinguished work. But considering the immense corpus of autobiographies in English in our century and the status as writing of many of them, the grading of Chaudhuri's work as 'one of the finest' would be extremely difficult to defend except by claiming that the boundaries of the category 'the finest' are nowhere marked. Similarly Walsh's superlative about the work as a product of the ambivalence of the Indian-British relationship amounts to a summary dismissal of all similar works by Britishers who were subject to the same pull of opposed emotions about their own and Indian society and who documented the conditions significantly.

A second constraint on an outsider critic's apprehension of an Indian work is the nature of his perception of its 'Indianness'. Commenting on Narayan's *The Man-eater of Malgudi*, Walsh mentions 'the charm and authenticity of its Indian colouring' and observes how easily and fully the Indian world is summoned into existence and how delicately its primary assumptions are insinuated and their intrinsic worth indicated.[3] To Walsh, the ethos of Narayan's novels is Indian. But to B. Rajan it is South Indian.[4] Narayan himself has described his personality as 'rooted to the right triangle of Madras, Mysore. and Coimbatore'.[5] His novels are saturated with the somewhat inbred and roughly homogeneous culture of this region and derive from it their authenticity and their uniqueness. The details of landscape, the exterior at least of human behaviour, certain tricks of expression and at times even the speech rhythms are recognizably Tamilian/Kannadiga rather than generically Indian. An Indian reader can notice this easily enough, but to an external observer, even when he is aware that Narayan's world and, say, Khushwant Singh's world are discrete, the two would tend to dissolve into a single image of India, and the shades and nuances, the folds and creases, which may have been important to the novelist's vision would begin to get blurred.

Yet another limiting factor which is present in an outsider critic's encounter with an Indian English text concerns its language. Walsh states that one of his intentions in *A Manifold Voice* is to explore 'some of the less familiar resources—less familiar to the British reader, that is—existing in the English language' by showing how writers other than British or American have 'realized....in a creative way capacities implicit in the language'.[6] Where a linguistic novelty has appeared in an Indian English writer's work as a result of willed language-bending for artistic ends, both the deviation itself and the creative motive will readily make themselves obvious to the British or American reader. But when the deviation is not intentional but has arisen out of what has filtered through either from the

writer's environment of the dialect or dialects of English current in India or from his own native language heritage, the nature and origin of the deviation normally will only be apparent to the *Indian* critic. The involuntary transfer of cadences and turns of phrase from the writer's own language can lend his English a flavour which a fellow speaker of the language will invariably perceive; others, when they cannot discern an artistic *raison d'etre* for it, will merely find it attractively outlandish. What applied linguistics calls 'first language interference' can be a vitalizing agent in imaginative writing and often a key to a more precise understanding of the work. It is an important process of enrichment, admitting of exploration only by the bilingual critic (in this situation normally an Indian critic) who will be at home with both the donor language and the recipient language.

It would be unfortunate if what has been said so far seemed to add up to a chauvinistic manifesto warning all critics other than Indian off the premises. In the late seventies Nigerian university seminars witnessed the rise of a heresy consisting in the claim that only Africans can be critics of African literature. A position of this kind, even if it can be provided with a doctrinal basis, is in conflict with the important truth that a literature proves itself as much by its aesthetic universals as by its cultural specifics. It is, however, obvious that only a native body of criticism can discover and describe a corpus of literature as a tradition. American criticism discovered and described the central American literary tradition, by 'canonizing' the major writers and isolating the permanent themes and dominant characteristics of American literature. Australian literature owes a similar debt to Australian criticism. There is a strong case for a like body of Indian criticism which will set up distinctions between major and minor achievements in Indian writing in English, spell out its prime concerns, and analyse its most widely shared modes. Indeed, a very considerable volume of Indian criticism of Indian English literature already exists, a good deal of it highly distinguished work which includes some thoroughly competent literary history and several perceptive studies of individual writers. At least three generations of Indian specialists in English studies have won recognition by their contributions to criticism of British, American and Commonwealth literatures, by their translations and critical studies of works in Indian languages, and above all, by their application of the same expertise to Indian literature in English. There is hardly any need to survey this impressive body of achievement. However, if Indian English critics were to recognize a common responsibility owed by them to Indian English literature as a whole, a responsibility consisting in studying how it functions both as an Indian tradition and as a member of a composite tradition encompassing the English-speaking world, and consisting

also in exploring its major interests and methads and its distinctive use of the English language, then, I think, they should begin to see themselves as a group. Whilst each critic would naturally be free to indulge his own enthusiasms, form his own focuses of critical activity, and develop his own style, he should be conscious of objectives and approaches shared with other Indian English critics and of a responsibility which Indian English critics cannot opt out of as it is a responsibility which critics other than Indian cannot reasonably be expected to fulfil.

Once this is accepted, it becomes necessary next to acknowledge that a body of criticism, in order to exist as such, needs a corporate point of view, a frame of reference—in short, a theoretical base. The Chicago Critics had their theoretical base in Aristotle's *Poetics*, the Archetypalists had theirs in Frazer's *The Golden Bough* and Jung's *Psychology of the Unconscious*, and the Structuralists found one in Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics*. If Indian English critics today feel that they would like to possess a theoretical framework, they could, as these other schools have done, use an existing authoritative formulation if only as a source or a point of departure. Obviously, as Indian classic of literary theory would *prima facie* be a good choice. A seminal work of this kind is, as we all know, the 9th Century Sanskrit treatise *Dhvanyaloka* by Anandavardhana, which sets out the theory of *dhvani*. That the term denotes a universal of aesthetics is proved by the fact that an ethnically and culturally remote tradition like ancient Tamil had evolved by *circa* 300 B.C. a roughly similar concept and named it *Ullurai*; and in the 19th Century, when the French Symbolists, following Edgar Allan Poe, set out to construct a new poetic, they made *suggestion* its pivotal principle. The Dhvani theory has filtered from Sanskrit into Indian literatures including those farthest away from Sanskrit. I discovered recently that in his critical introduction to his translation of the Sindhi work *The Risalo* by the 16th/17th Century Sufi mystic Shah Abdul Karim, Motilal Jotwani applies the Dhvani criterion to Abdul Karim's couplets. The Dhvani theory—or the Rasadhvani theory as it emerged from Abhinavagupta's exposition of *Dhvanyaloka*—is a body of assumptions and insights which have largely been confirmed by subsequent developments in Indian and Western aesthetics, and more specifically by cretain trends in contemporary literary theory. It is also a system which admits of being modified, enlarged and refined in the light of more modern systems. So adjusted and extended, the Dhvani theory in a modern version is capable of providing a critical framework which, being derived from Sanskrit sources, could identify what Indian English literature owes to its roots in Indian culture and what it shares with other Indian literatures, and being the result of adapting a classical theory to modern advances,

could explain the nature of Indian English literature as a member of a young tradition stretching across the English-speaking world.

Because of at least one excellent translation—by K. Krishnamoorthy—of *Dhvanyaloka*, and because of expositions in English by a whole line of scholars and thinkers–Pravasjivan Chaudhury, Coomaraswamy, S.K. De, Hiriyanna, P. V. Kane, Ramaranjan Mukherji, Pandey, Kunjunni Raja, Raghavan, Sankaran and others–the Dhvani theory is easily accessible through English. It has also attracted a great deal of attention in the English departments in many Indian universities. It would therefore be quite superfluous to offer a summary of it here. What has, however, not been made available so far is an enlarged and updated modern version of the theory—what one might call a modern poetic of suggestion—which could serve as a critical framework. I can only attempt an extremely sketchy outline here, avoiding names and labels and references to schools, theories and movements.

The poetic of suggestion would be less interested in extracting the content from a work than in examining the way its internal constituents unite to generate a formal structure which gives the work its identity. Being thus formalist, the poetic is in line with most present day systems of literary theory.

The poetic is in full sympathy with those modern critical positions which define poetry (and indeed all literature) as language and view the distinction between the language of literature and ordinary, referential or scientific language as of central importance. It views literature as meaning, either unstated or stated; indeed the binary opposition between suggestion and statement is the pivotal assumption of the poetic. It however sees the two as opposed poles, with degrees of activity of the statement principle occurring alongside of degrees of activity of the suggestion principle. The aesthetic worth of a work varies in direct proportion to the extent of dominance of the latter. Indeed since the beginning of the century, literature has largely been moving away from statement and towards the suggestion pole.

Like psychology, anthropology, linguistics and other enquiries, the poetic of suggestion reflects the distinctive interest of our age in deep structures. Its concerns therefore include : layers of meaning beneath the surface text; levels of narration below the visible plot; the activity of the image risen from the unconscious; inner reality, and the play of hidden emotional forces.

The rule that in art, emotion can only be expressed through its object, which suggests it, is one of the fundamentals of the poetic. It has a special importance in our age, because modern writing, having largely turned away from documentation of social reality, is extensively involved in exploration of the inner world. Emotions at the buried levels of being in particular do not admit of expression except through suggestion. Modern writing therefore is increasingly dependent on myths, symbols, and other objective correlatives which can assist in obliquely verbalizing states of mind.

The formal order of a work rests on its presentational unit. In poetry the presentational unit is the image as opposed to the concept; in drama and fiction, it is, among other things, the immediate scene ('showing') as opposed to summary narrative ('telling')

The primary suggestor—that is to say, the primary source of suggested meaning—is the word, Here, while continuing to recognize that vague general words can irradiate shadowy semi-focussed meaning, the poetic of suggestion would tend to pay greater attention to the capacity which verbal precision and complexity have for suggesting specific meaning. Textual density is in fact now regarded as a significant element even in prose fiction.

The poetic assigns a crucial role to the reader and in fact sees suggested meaning as largely a construct of his consciousness. One of the key concepts of the poetic is that omission, ambiguity or incompleteness in the text has the effect of activating the reader's imagination and eliciting its creative response. A contemporary analysis of the reading act focuses on the presence of gaps—potential or indeterminate elements—in the literary text which the reader, stimulated to engage in active participation, fills in subjectively.

The 'power' of the theory of suggestion is demonstrated by the range and variety of literary phenomena which it can explain. Although it concentrated originally on poetry, it has since proved its capacity to account for the working of the internal elements in plays and novels and for change and development in these two genres. On the whole, while the poetic of suggestion can assist, over a wide range of litetarure, in describing, explaining and evaluating, its degree of efficiency in these operations is particularly high in relation to contemporary writing.

The shorthand language which a summary cannot avoid and the omission of all names of systems and sources would tend to obscure the fact that the poetic of suggestion outlined here represents a cautious attempt at

a broad synthesis of concepts trom the Dhvani poetic, the Romantic-Symbolist poetic, and twentieth-century literary theories including present-day trends like Structuralism and Reader-Response Criticism. Hopefully it can offer a critical framework for Indian English writing, based on a sense of our cultural moorings and a matching aliveness to the thinking on the nature of literature that has gone on elsewhere. It can function as a background to activity in a common direction by Indian critics who have to set up distinctions, definitions, evaluations in regard to Indian writing in English. It can only be a felt presence, never an intrusive force nor a burden of abstractions pressing on the play of the critical intelligence.

The ideas mentioned in the summary outline are mostly familiar ones; what is different is that they have been arranged round the concept of the primacy of suggested meaning. They can perhaps strengthen some worthwhile trends, such as: close reading; attention to a possible deeper level of narrative; distrust of too much 'telling' in fiction; sensitiveness to what the imagery conveys by suggestion; study of the way the discursive and Symbolist modes can alternate and interact in the same work; and above all, identification ofthe reader's aff ective response as determined by the sensuous presentationin the work.

What is being suggested here is no more than a theoretical framework which could provide perspective and could promote order, method and consistency in criticism. Critics should normally find that functioning within it is advantageous, but they can work outside it whenever need arises. In the matter of evaluation, for instance, the suggestion theory in its original form provides only a scale ascending from zero suggestiveness to 'paramount' suggestion through an intermediate degree represented by the kind of writing where suggestion is present but not all-important. This could be a useful tool of evaluation, but clearly much greater variety, precision and sophistication are called for in making value judgements about literature. In particular, in the situation which we have been considering, Indian critics, like critics of any other national body of English writing, have the central responsibility of identifying the major writers and defining the main tradition. A 'canon' of this kind has perhaps already been formed in Indian English literature, but it needs to be confirmed and re-established by critical consensus. It is when Indian English writers are weighed in the same scales as mainstream English writers—which is something which only Indian critics can be outspoken and forthright in doing–that the major writers will be spotted; for example, an Indian English poet whose work by its quality, demands to be judged alongside of the poems of, say, Philip Larkin or Ted Hughes, is clearly of major stature although it may not be as high as theirs. If evaluation on these lines were neglected,

an Indian school of critics would tend to be inbred, and insularity could result in an unconscious readjustment of criteria which could be as distorting in its effect as what results, as we saw earlier from the converse of insularity—what can perhaps be called exteriority.

In its approach if not its conclusions, B. Rajan's comment (incorporating P. Lal's) on Nissim Ezekiel's poetry can be regarded as a fairly typical evaluation by an Indian critic of an Indian writer. (I come back to Rajan because the chapter on Indian writing which he contributed to Bruce King's compilation, *Literatures of the World in English*, is my other micro-text for the present purpose. Rajan says :

> It was T.E. Hulme who advised us that beauty was to be found in small dry things. The soft-sell, low-risk poetry into which this principle can be pursued, successfully avoids the verbal tantrum but also bypasses verbal excitement. Such excitement is occasionally approached by Adil Jussawalla but is not characteristic of Nissim Ezekiel, the leading Indian poet writing in English.... P. Lal has suggested that Ezekiel's work represents 'the bare bones of poetry, life stripped and stripped, till the translucence emerges not through feeling but intellect'. It is a comment which recalls the question in *Ash Wednesday*—'Shall these bones live ?' The answer probably is that they will, but that the estate of poetry cannot flourish on such lean articulations. Translucence, one might add, is not in itself an objective of poetry any more than complexity, or even a condition of the poetry of thought. Such poetry can define itself through intense verbal energy as well as through verbal deprivation. Ezekiel is a more than competent craftsman whose work can be read with appreciation; but it does not grow or gather force as it proceeds. His accomplishment would be more reassuring if there were someone else to stand beside or beyond him.[7]

I find it altogether impossible to agree that Ezekiel is just a craftsman, or that his work has an intellectual bias, or that he practises a transparently bare spare language as an end in itself. Least of all can I accept that his art does not grow. His continuous development is in fact unique among contemporary English poets—his most recent work, *Edinburgh Interlude Lightly*, represents yet another stage in this process, and is distinguished by further accentuation of linguistic austerity and a subtle nuancing of casual-seeming conversational prose so as to make it carry multiple layers of meaning. The base is bald statement—but there are minute departures

from baldness : fugitive turns of phrase or twists of rhythm which generate implications or ironies, modulations so muted as to be almost imperceptible. Or else a bald statement is provided with an ambience of obliqueness. By either method, differentiations of mood and depths of feeling find expression with as much authority and precision as can be achieved through verbal richness. Plain statement is thus made to serve as an instrument of suggestion.

Whilst I am thus unable to accept the conclusions offered by Rajan and Lal, I feel that their pointing out what they regard as flaws and their being objective and forthright as they see it constitute an approach which is open to an Indian critic evaluating an Indian English writer and which, even when it has led to a wrong conclusion as in this case, remains a healthy alternative to the kind of approach which cannot speak of Mulk Raj Anand without calling him an Indian Balzac nor of Narayan without calling him an Indian Chekhov nor indeed of any Indian English woman novelist without calling her a present-day Jane Austen. It is significant that when Rajan wishes to acknowledge Ezekiel's distinguished status, he does so not by calling him an Indian Philip Larkin but by factually describing him as 'the leading Indian poet writing in English'.

It is also significant that Lal and Rajan between them apply the pair of contraries, 'complexity' and 'translucence'. In my comment on Ezekiel's work just now, I made use of the same antithesis but used the terms 'suggestion' and 'statement' instead. It cannot be accidental that the three comments, all by Indians, have made use of the suggestion/statement antinomy which is the basic assumption of the poetic which I outlined.

In order to discover an Indian English literary tradition, critics have to study how Indianness is a pervasive presence in Indian English writing and is its chief distinguishing characteristic. In apprehending Indianness, the outsider critic, I think, would tend to define it as a linguist defines a phoneme or as a Structuralist defines an elementary unit in a cultural phenomenon—i.e., as a contrastive unit or a relational element which derives its identity from its relationships of difference from or opposition to the other units or elements in the system. To the outside critic, Indianness is determined differentially—by what marks it off from West-Indianness and Australianness and Canadianness and so forth. The Indian critic, on the other hand, would define Indianness syncretically rather than contrastively—that is to say, to him Indianness is the sum of properties which the linguistic sub-cultures have in common and which persist through the variations present. These generic properties should perhaps be more emphatically reflected in Indian English literature than in any Indian litera-

ture and would interest the critic, but he would be equally interested in the variations which may be a vital element in the conception of a work and will represent the writer's roots in his own sub-culture.

In working his way towards a definition of Indianness as a single set of common characteristics amid disparate sets of characteristics specific to the sub-cultures, the Indian critic will have occasion to survey the distinctive use of the English language in Indian English writing and notice how some of the variations of 'Standard' English are generic and therefore contributory to Indianness and others are specific to this or that language area. As already pointed out, what Indian critics are uniquely competent to do is to explore how an Indian language can fertilize the creative use of English by its speakers without being aware of it—how the phonology of an Indian language (specifically, stress, rhythm and intonation as they can affect an English sentence or phrase) and much more extensively, its lexical features can mould the style of the Indian English writer. While this can be an exciting study, the fact should not be lost sight of that, apart from the odd variation, the staple medium of Indian English writing is necessarily mainstream English and that an Indian English work should aim at having a linguistic texture sharing the cadences and the lexical and syntactic nuances of Anglo-Saxon speech. Apart from this, study of linguistic structure will, on another level, reflect one of the major preoccupations of the poetic of suggestion which involves scrutiny of a work's verbal life seen as the source of multiple meaning.

In conclusion, I would like to refer to what the editor of *Literatures of the World in English* said about the state of Canadian English literature and criticism in the early seventies :

> English-speaking Canada has had a history of solid, good writers: and yet an outsider cannot help but notice how uncertain Canadians are as to what constitutes their literary tradition, who their best writers are, and, indeed, which of the foreigners who have lived in Canada and which of the Canadians who live abroad are part of their national literature. I think this confusion is itself part of the larger question : what is the Canadian identity ?[8]

I have reproduced the passage, because although the situation must have changed since and although not all its elements are duplicated in our own situation, it is nonetheless a cautionary tale which we would do well to heed.

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NOTES

1. W. Walsh, *A Manifold Voice* (London, 1970) p. 23.
2. Ibid., p. 27.
3. Ibid., pp. 12, 14.
4. B. King (ed) *Literatures of the World in English* (London and Boston, 1974) p. 90.
5. Ved Mehta, *John is Easy to Please* (Harmondsworth, 1974) p. 118.
6. W. Walsh, op. cit., p. 9.
7. B. King (ed), op. cit , pp. 94-95.
8. Ibid., p. 8.

V.S. Naipaul and the Demythologizing of El Dorado

R. K. Kaul

> Wondrous is this wall-stone; broken by fate, the castles have decayed; the work of giants is crumbling.
>
> Quoted in *The Middle Passage*[1]

The above extract is from an Anglo-Saxon poem of the 8th century. "We may imagine", says the translator, "the poet walking about the overgrown streets" of a deserted Roman city. The Anglo-Saxons did not have the architectural skill to repair the Roman walls and castles, let alone build new ones. Typically the Anglo-Saxon poets had an elegiac temper. The sight of the broken-down walls and castles confirmed their world-view :

> To the Christian Anglo-Saxon poets, these tangible signs of the decay of a civilization, more magnificent than their own, provided an opportunity for moralizing on the theme of the transience of earthly splendour.....[2]

So marvellous did the remains of Roman buildings seem to them that they called them "the work of giants."

I have approached V. S. Naipaul through this unfamiliar route. The context of this quotation will make my reason clear. "The West Indies," says Naipaul, are "so completely a creation of Empire that the withdrawal of Empire is almost without meaning."[3]

The equation of the British Empire with ancient Rome is taken for granted. It had a acivilizing mission. What is more, it fused the subject people into a nation. It invested them with history. The withdrawal of

the Empire will leave the natives more or less in the condition of the Anglo-Saxons of the seventh and eighth centuries. They are devoid of all the skills which make civilization possible. Consider, for instance, what happens when colonial rule is withdrawn from the African state in *A Bend in the River*. The narrator Salim informs us that "pedestals had been defaced, protective railings flattened, flooded lights smashed and left to rest."[4]

Naipaul is not so naive as to imagine that the initial motive of the colonial powers was benevolent. In *The Loss of El Dorado* (1969) he traces the history of expeditions to Trinidad, Guiana, Venezuela and the neighbouring islands from 1592 when de Vera landed in Trinidad. The earliest conquerors, viz., de Berrio from Spain and Walter Ralegh from Britain, had chiefly one motive. In fact all the colonial powers, including the French, the Dutch and the Portuguese, like the British and the Spaniards, laboured under the delusion that there were gold mines in this region. They did not scruple to lure the native Indians into deathtraps, to subject African slaves to unspeakable cruelty or treat the rival colonial powers with treachery. Naipaul does not gloss over any of these facts which he has gleaned from learned works of history.

Nevertheless, both his fiction and non-fiction assume that the withdrawal of the colonial power would spell chaos. This fact, however, is systematically suppressed by the ambitious politician, black or brown, who is eager to take over. He succeeds because of the "liberal" whites who control the media in Europe and America.

Four of Naipaul's works of fiction have their setting in countries recently liberated from European rule, viz., *The Suffrage of Elvira* (1958), the title story of the volume *In a Free State* (1971), *Guerillas* (1975), and *A Bend in the River* (1979). In this paper the last three only will be discussed because the first is a comic account of how the very first elections took place immediately after the grant of independence to a West Indian island. It does not relate to the theme of this paper.

The other three are more grim in tone. They expose the hollow rhetoric of the new leadership that has emerged in the third world. The native dictators, military or civilian, who succeeded to the colonial rulers in the West Indies and Africa, showed no real interest in the welfare of their people. They were power maniacs whose efficiency consisted chiefly in liquidating all opposition to their governments. But no individual dictator lasted very long. They were soon overthrown by equally ruthless rivals. Their subjects had to suffer alternating spells of tyranny and anarchy.

Naipaul directs his wrath especially against the Western media which treat the coloured people as playthings. For example, when the Big Man took over the government of the African country in *A Bend in the River*, the Western press was irresponsible in its reporting. Some of the newspapers found good words for the butchery on the coast (p. 34). The explanation given by one of the characters is that "people are like that about places in which they aren't really interested and where they don't have to live" (p. 34).

Naipaul's outlook is anti-primitivist. He values the amenities of civilization. He is unapologetic about preferring the highway to the bush. Presumably he considers the Western conservationist sentiment irrelevant to the underdeveloped regions of Africa and the West Indies. When Roche in *Guerillas* visits Stephen's area he has to find his way through an unpaved road and an irregular dirt track. The sight of chickens does not occasion a pastoral rhapsody. Instead they were "open beaked, clucking in the heat". They "roosted in hollows in the thick, dry, dingy dust about the pillars."[5]

The anti-pastoral sentiment of Naipaul is understandable. The interior of the bush is not the kind of place in which a Wordsworth or a Thoreau can find a refuge from the clamour and the crowds of city life. It is the ideal setting for crimes of violence. "The bush", he tells us in *A Bend in the River*, "muffled the sound of murder, and the muddy rivers and lakes washed the blood away" (p. 58). Altogether the landscape has a frightening character.

The novelist who has fully succeeded in suggesting the ineffable horror of this landscape is Conrad. In *Heart of Darkness* he calls the smell of mud "primeval". The forest is "virgin". It is silent but its silence contains such exuberant fertility as the following :

> The great wall of vegetation, an exuberant and entangled mass of trunks, branches, leaves, boughs, festoons, motionless in the moonlight, was like a rioting invasion of soundless life, a rolling wave of plants, piled up, crested, ready to topple over the creek, to sweep every little man of us out of his little existence. And it moved not. A deadened burst of mighty splashes and snorts reached us from afar, as though an ichthyosaurus had been taking bath of glitter in the great river.[6]

It is not until we come across the comparison with "an ichthyosaurus..... taking bath of glitter in the great river" that we fathom the full meaning of the "primeval mud" in the heart of Africa.

Conrad's vision, in my view, is close enough to Naipaul's to explain why the protagonist of *A Bend in the River* wishes to be dissociated from the life of the bush around him. Africa had been the home of his family for centuries and yet he insists that he and his ancestors did not take root in the soil (p. 17). This forms a fairly close parallel to Naipaul's own situation. The difference is that his family migrated only two generations ago.

The settlers in *A Bend in the River* are appalled at the proximity of the bush. The bush threatens to over-run the feeble attempts of man to build the highway, the rock garden and the floodlit hotel. During the mutiny in a Free State "the grinning soldiers threw away their guns and tore off those uniforms and ran off naked into the bush" (p. 216). They truly belong to the bush. In Naipaul's view, and Conrad's, they are a species apart from the settlers.

And yet Conrad, who had not studied the writings of the more up-to-date anthropologists, could see beneath the exterior. "The prehistoric man" that Marlow confronts is still extant in the African heartland. Marlow and his sailors "were travelling in the night of the first ages." A suspicion passes through his mind that they were inhuman. "They howled and leaped,.... and spury and made horrid faces" (p. 96). But Conrad adds the disturbing reflection :

> What thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity—like yours—the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar. Ugly. Yes, it was ugly enough; but if you were man enough you would admit to yourself that there was in you just the faintest trace of a response to the terrible frankness of that noise....(p. 96).

Now Naipaul is not, in Marlow's words, "man enough" to acknowledge his kinship with primeval man. This is how he describes such a specimen, "a wild man of the hills was asleep. His matted hair was done in long pigtails, reddish brown in places and with a kind of thick blue grease" (p. 59). Naipaul's fear is that, after losing contact with the civilizing force of Europe or America, the whole of society will revert to primitive savagery.

It does not occur to Naipaul that we are all descended from the "wildman of the hills." More representative of the modern sensibility is the poet R. S. Thomas who sees in the half-witted grin of the Welsh peasant his own and his reader's prototype.[7]

Naipaul's reactions are strictly pragmatic, not poetic, Once the foreign capital is pulled out, the coffee and cocoa plantations will relapse into the bush that was pervasive before colonizing.[8] "The derelict old cocoa drying houses," the "little rattling shacks" were insulated from the weekend holiday traffic. Very lyrically the author adds, "charmed villages stranded in time, belonging to another era" but surprisingly concludes, "an era which contained no possibility of a future" (p. 155). To be cut off from civilization is to be without a future. Needless to say, Naipaul does not recognize the possibility of any civilization other than one based on capital investment, mechanization and modern managerial organization. Even the Marxist alternative is not considered, let alone the Tolstoy-Gandhi Utopia.

Naipaul sets out systematically to demolish the myth of the noble savage popularized in post-Rousseau Europe. The Western reader, brought up on a romanticized view of tribal rites and rituals, would be shocked by Linda's denunciation in the title story of *In a Free State* :

> 'They are going to swear their oaths of hate. You know what that means, don't you ? You know the filthy things they are going to do ? The filth they are going to eat ? The blood, the excrement, the dirt'.[9]

While Naipaul seeks to deglamorize all the flattering myths about primitive cultures his focus understandably is on myths pertaining to the West Indies. Among the numerous popular versions of the idealized West Indian perhaps Aphra Behn's *Oronooko* (1688) was one of the first. The people of Surinam, it is claimed, "understand no vice, or cunning, but when they are taught by the *White Men*."[10] Oronooko himself already at the age of 17 was endowed by nature with "real Greatness of Soul....refined Notions of true Honour....absolute Generosity, and....Softness that was capable of the highest Passions of Love and Gallantry" (p. 153).

The popularity of the fictitious West Indian apparently did not decline in the next century in spite of widespread awareness of the condition of the Negro slaves on the sugar plantations. Richard Cumberland's play *The West Indian* (1771) was performed for 28 successive nights to appreciative audiences in London. Although the hero's English origin is revealed at the very outset to one character by the father, in the eyes of the other characters he passes for a native of that "warm sunny region, where naked nature walks without a disguise" (IV, x). In contrast to the simplicity, candour and nobility of the West Indian the English are condemned as cold and contriving (IV, x). Belcour is blessed with strong animal spirits, a high principle of honour and an uncommon benevolence (III, v).[11]

Naipaul, however, in his West Indian novels and stories is more concerned with deflating the myths current now about the West Indian. One of them is their supposed frivolity, conviviality and partiality for music. In *Guerillas* one of the characters, Harry de Tunja, is critical of the West Indian reputation for music, dance and fun-making. In Toronto they call him Calypso Harry. He is bitter enough about this to observe "If I had my way I would ban music. And dancing.... This is a country that has been destroyed by music" (p. 129).

Jimmy's friend Roy writes to him from London, "I am beginning to feel that we are an incurably frivolous people and as a nation we seem resigned to giggling our way to oblivion" (p. 165). The word "oblivion" occurs where we would normally expect "heaven." To abjure all sense of responsibility is to risk an eternity of oblivion. It certainly will not earn for the "japers" and jesters a place among the blessed.

In *Guerillas* Naipaul also exposes the persistence of the Western intelligentsia in seeing not what is there but imposing their own preconceptions on West Indian and African reality. The abstract presentation of the theme goes hand in hand with the concrete presentation.

The two presentations converge in Jimmy Ahmed who is at the centre of the novel. Jimmy tells us himself that he was born "in the back room of a Chinese grocery" (p. 27). In other words, he is both a bastard and a mongrel. He is the leader of a gang consisting of "boys spawned by the city." They are "casually conceived, and after the backyard drama and ritual of their birth gradually abandoned." They attach themselves to certain groups and through the groups to certain houses that offered occasional shelter or food (p. 34). This is how Naipaul debunks the ideology of Che Guevara.

Jimmy Ahmed's so-called Community Farm is, as Jane immediately perceives, bogus. She complains very justly that the fields are in an appalling state and yet "everybody is pretending that something exists that doesn't exist" (p. 30). She immediately suspects that it is a perfect cover for the guerillas. And she turns out to be right.

According to Naipaul not only Jimmy's farm but the very idea of agricultural communes is unsound. The most articulate advocate of the idea in the novel, i.e. Roche, is made to admit that it was anti-historical. "All over the world people are leaving the land to go to the cities. And they know what they want....more excitement, more lights....richer....

brighter" (p. 204). By implication the Chinese model, as an alternative to capitalism, is rejected.

Now the interesting thing is that while Jane sees through Peter's self-deception she is herself a victim of Jimmy's meritricious charm. This aspect of the situation is presented novelistically.

To begin with, Jimmy calls his farm Thrushcross Grange. Peter simplistically remarks to Jane, "I don't think it means anything. I don't think Jimmy sees himself as Heathcliff" (p. 10). About 50 pages later, we notice that Jane, in describing Jimmy, quotes Catherine's tribute to Heathcliff, "Your mother was an Indian princess and your father was the Emperor of China" (p. 62). She confesses that Jimmy possesses her. In her imagination his body is like that of a panther. His presence casts a spell on her. She is a mesmerized rabbit. And yet the author lets us know that Jimmy has homosexual relations with Bryant, the most repulsive character in the novel. What is more, Jimmy treats her with contempt, calling her "rotten meat."

While Jimmy's self-deception is exposed, Jane's is treated with brutal irony. Instead of being compared with Catherine, Jane is frequently referred to as a prostitute. The culmination of her passion for Jimmy is pathetic. She is buggared by Jimmy and butchered by Bryant at the behest of the black panther (i.e. Jimmy Ahmed). It would not be too far-fetched to suggest that her murder in the neighbourhood of a lavatory is meant to be a parody of Othello's sacrificial murder of Desdemona.

The demythologizing of El Dorado thus reaches its culmination.

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NOTES

1. See *The Middle Passage* (1962), Penguin, 1978, p. 156. For the Anglo-Saxon poem see 'The Ruin', *The Earliest English Poems*, Trans, Michael Alexander, Penguin, 1966, p. 30.

2. Dorothy Whitelock, *The Beginnings of English Society*, Penguin, 1952, p. 17.

3. *The Middle Passage*, p. 153.

4. *A Bend in the River* (1977), Penguin, 1982, p. 32.

5. *Guerillas* (1975), Penguin, 1976, pp. 105-6.

6. *Heart of Darkness etc.* (Oxford : The World's Classics, 1984), p. 86.

7. See "A Peasant." I can anticipate one objection to my argument. While Thomas has direct racial links with the Welsh peasants, Naipaul has none with the African tribals. But when Naipaul visited his father's home, the village of the Dubes, he found both the people and the place repulsive. See *An Area of Darkness* (1964).

8. *Guerillas*, p. 123.

9. *In a Free State* (1971), Penguin, 1978, p. 122.

10. *Shorter Novels*, Vol. II, *Jacobean and Restoration*, Everyman, 1930, p. 150.

11. See *Eighteenth Century Plays*. Everyman, 1946.

The Earth Speaks Again

Cut my body again.
Cut it neatly
and cut each part apart :
my neck, my leg, my palm
that should make you happy——
you saviours of various hues
white, red, yellow,
seamless.

My body is already charred.
My womb is more than ever
polluted by alien seeds.
You dreamed to see
sickly children around
who, like a Good Samaritan,
you could feed.

Your science is a shame
a sign of charming folly,
a tool in the hands of a fiend
to lull his growing appetite.
Your Peace Prize, Nobel Prize,
Your Lenin Prize are just pious games
to keep the patient alive
for new experiments.

Already you have broken
the midriff of Asia,
posted yourself well
on dark corners of Africa.
The Indian Ocean is your playground.
The Pacific is no more pacific.
The Atlantic is too small for your exercise.

One Atlantis is deep down the sea.
Many more will go the same way.
Today I see Moby Dicks in the air
fuming over the peaks of eternal snow,
over Vietnam, Afghanistan, Cuba, Iran,
Chile, Poland, and Australia.
Today I dig the meaning of
'the magic casements opening on the foam of perilous seas.'

Where is St. Paul ?
Where is the maker of Confessions ?
Where are the well-known phrases of Socrates ?
Where are the dreams of Founding Fathers,
Whitman, Tolstoy ?
Did the gentle Marx teach you this ?
Did Confucius preach this piece ?
Two-thousand-year-long stint
has failed to lift your lumpen spirit.

Only Machiavelli is alive
with his towering lies
and is growing in size.
You have rather gone beyond M
and have made man a midget.
You have grabbed his Moon too
the one floating uncle to his children,
your footprints have devalued that too.
You now present it as a picnic place
in the time to come, to woo his fancy.
A lovely lie;
Luna has kissed away your winged sanity.
You will to make her home a prying place
to prejudge
how many heads should go
to let you your sovereignty.

Near the end
Science and Mysticism meet high up in the air.
What is not open to the bodily eye
is mysticism. Be sure, when my children die,
the survivor will mystically say :
God is angry
and has hurled thunderbolts at the erring mankind.

Without any taint of wrong and penitence
you will say :
it was hara-kari
tentatively speaking !

However,
I shall as ever
look forward to another dawn.

I. K. SHARMA

Infatuation and Reality in *The Bachelor of Arts*

K. K. Sharma

The Bachelor of Arts, though R.K. Narayan's second novel, is the first to deal with the theme of love and marriage. Naturally, it presents young Narayan's view of love as a spontaneous, inevitable experience of youth. Infatuation, that is, a youth's love at first sight for a pretty girl to the extent of unreasoning madness, forms the nucleus of this brilliant narrative. But what gives depth and wider meaning to this universally true experience is the juxtaposition of infatuation and reality, viz., madness in love leads the young protagonist to come to terms with the reality, the variegated hard facts of life.

The central figure of the novel, Chandran, is placed in such a situation that he cannot avoid falling in love with the young, pretty Malathi at the very first sight. This sensitive young man with abundant sense of humour has passed his graduation and is thus empty-minded with plenty of leisure. Incidentally, the college days are over, and without friends and class-mates, he is in a state of utter boredom. Moreover, as he is in search of a suitable career and does not have a very clear, definite programme before him (though, of course, he is all the time seriously planning to go to England to get the doctoral degree), he is naturally enveloped in ennui and despair. Under these circumstances, he, without a brother or a sister or anybody of his age in his house, and in a state of physical and mental loneliness, is infatuated with Malathi, whom he chances to meet on one of his river ramblings, without knowing anything about her. He does not talk to her, she does not even see him, and he does not know about her parentage, cast and creed, and yet the moment he sees her, he thinks "that he would not have room for anything else in his mind."[1] Narayan very

intelligently makes his authorial comment explaining that this kind of infatuation, though inexplicable, is quite natural : "No one can explain the attraction between two human beings. It happens."[2]

Though Chandran, like any youth of his age, is in the habit of staring at every girl, yet the moment he looks at Malathi playing with her younger sister on the sands, he takes unusual interest in her. He intensely likes the way she sits, is fascinated by the way she plays with her sister, and is bewitched by the way she digs her hands into the sand and throws it in the air. He stops for a while to see the girl carefully, and feels to "have willingly settled there and spent the rest of his life watching her dig her hands into the sand,"[3] but he has to leave the place for fear of being observed by the people present there. He feels an acute desire to turn back and take another look at the girl, but the shame of being watched by scores of persons squatting on the river bank restrains him from doing so. He leaves the place, but he ceaselessly thinks about her....her age, parentage, etc. ....so much so that he feels dizzy and completely puzzled.

Obsessed by thoughts about her, Chandran begins to imagine what her name might be. He feels that her name should be Lakshmi, for she looks so. At 5 p.m. he sees her for the first time, and even at 9 p.m. he is still thinking of her. His first love at first sight is unfathomable, and makes him completely restless. After dinner, he goes to his room to remain alone there for some time. He begins to read Wells's *Tono Bungay*, but finds it unreadable as against his earlier experience of finding it a simply absorbing book. This naturally irritates him, and putting the book aside he sits staring at the wall. Soon he realizes that darkness will be soothing to him, and so he blows out the lamp and sits in his chair. Infatuation causes in him obsession, which leads him to restlessness, confusion and indignation. Narayan graphically and realistically portrays his physical, emotional and mental states before he goes to bed and finally sleeps : "*He was irritated*....Suppose, though unmarried, she belonged to some other caste ? A marriage would not be tolerated even between sub-sects of the same caste. If India was to attain salvation these watertight divisions must go....Community, Caste, Sects, Sub-sects, and still further divisions. *He felt very indignant*. He would set an example by marrying this girl whatever her caste or sect might be."[4]

Chandaran's infatuation for the pretty girl occupies his mind all the more the next day. In the morning he shaves very carefully and is very particular about his hair, and thus a great change is brought about in him by his first experience of one-sided love. He very impatiently waits for the

evening when he may get an opportunity to see and meet his unknown beloved. Dressed in his best clothes, he goes to the spot on the river bank where he saw his dream-girl the previous day. But to his grief, she is not visible there. He leaves the place, peering furtively at every group in search of his sweet heart in vain. His heart beats fast at the sight of every figure wearing a *sari*. At last disappointed and unable to understand the cause of her absence, he moves homeward, depressed by a deep sense of loss and waste. Next day, he again goes to the river in the evening, waits for the girl upto 7.30 p.m., and returns home dejected, for he again fails to have a glimpse of her. This upsets him terribly, and he spends a very restless, unhappy night :

> *He tossed in bed all night.* In moments of half-wakefulness *he whispered the word "Lakshmi"*, "Lakshmi". He suddenly pulled himself up *and laughed at himself* : it looked as if the girl had paid a first and last visit to the river, and it seemed more than likely that she belonged to another caste, and was married. *What a fool he was to go on thinking of her night and day for three whole days. It was a ridiculous obsession.* His sobriety ought to assert itself now. An idle brain was the devil's workshop.[5]

Chandran certainly becomes a laughing stock because of his madness in love. He is now a jilted lover, and has a haggard look. His mother is greatly worried to notice the change in him. Next day he decides not to shave or comb his hair so that he may not think of going to the river bank in the evening. He endeavours to cut short his foolish quest for the unknown girl with whom he is head and shoulder in love, without comprehending anything clearly. He is so disappointed and distracted that he feels that the only solution to his malady is that he must leave Malgudi. But he is not able to make up his mind, and stays at home upto 6.30 p.m. However, soon after this, he leaves home for a walk, but not towards the riverside. Nevertheless, the irresistible lover in him goes against his firm decision, and he reaches the river, though too late to find persons there because it is already quite dark. Chandran the lover does not give up hope and his quest, with the result the next evening he is crowned with success, and sees the girl of his choice playing with her little companion. He behaves, thinks and feels like any lover of any country and age, and the novelist vividly portrays the scene :

> Chandran saw her from a distance and went towards her as if drawn by a hope. But, on approaching her, his courage failed him, and he walked away in the opposite direction. Presently

he stopped and blamed himself for wasting a good opportunity of making his person familiar to her; he turned once again with the intention of passing before her closely, slowly, and deliberately. At a distance he could look at her, but when he came close he felt self-conscious and awkward, and while passing actually in front of her he bent his head, fixed his gaze on the ground and, walked fast. He was away, many yards away, from her in a moment. He checked his pace once again and looked back for a fraction of a second, and was quite thrilled at the sight of the green *sari* in the distance. He did not dare to look longer; for he was obsessed with the feeling that he was being observed by the whole crowd on the river bank....He stood there and debated with himself whether she had seen him or not....Chandran steadily discouraged this sceptical half of his mind, and lent his whole-hearted support to the other half, which was saying that just as he had noticed her in a crowd she was sure to have noticed him.[6]

Narayan evinces a very keen power of observation in his delineation of Chandran's infatuation for Malathi. By manipulating the incidents, he has shown love at first sight in all its intensity. It is an artistic cleverness on his part to show Chandran failing to see Malathi for a number of days after his first looking at her, and then again unexpectedly seeing her after a number of futile quests for her. The novelist very minutely and realistically depicts the variegated moods, phases and aspects of a young man infatuated with a pretty unknown girl. The inner conflicts in Chandran's mind are exquisitely painted. Like any lover of his type he rightly feels that staring is half the victory in love. He is confronted with a problem and is torn as under between the two sides of it : whether he should gaze at and make an eye friendship with her because she may come to the river bank again and he may not get the opportunity of seeing and meeting her for a million years, or he should not scare her by staring at her lest she should be so scared off as she may never think of visiting the river bank again. Just at this moment of tension and inner conflict, his two old class-mates slap him on the back. The two begin to talk to him, but he is completely lost in his thoughts centred upon the girl who has enthralled him. He pretends to listen to them, and repeatedly turns his head to his left to steal glances at her with utmost precaution lest he should be noticed by them. The entire scene in which the infatuated young man is near his beloved and yet cannot talk to her at all and is preoccupied with her is depicted very truthfully and minutely. In fact, the description seems to be based on the novelist's own felt experiences, and hence so vivid and true to life.

After this episode, with the decision to be bold and indifferent to the public criticism, he goes to the Saryu bank next evening. Luckily, he finds her there with her little companion. He sits only at a distance of thirty yards from her, and decides to stare at her and to throw in a dignified wink or smile. He wants to ascertain whether she is fair or light brown, whether her hair are long or short, and whether her eyes are almond-shaped or round. He abandons the idea of talking to her thinking that it will be very unusual and awkward on his part to converse with a grown up girl, who is a perfect stranger to him. But he mechanically goes daily to the river bank to see her and gather several facts about her. He observes that she wears a dark *sari* and a green *sari* alternately, that she comes to the river bank for the sake of the child, and that she is absent on Fridays and comes late on Wednesday. Like a lover profoundly interested in his beloved he, on the basis of his observations, draws the conclusion that she goes to the temple on Friday evenings, and is delayed by a music master or a stitching master on Wednesdays. He is very happy to believe that she is religious-minded, is accomplished in embroidery and music, and is a lady of very regular and sympathetic habits. The fact that no male member ever escorts her on any evening encourages him to decide to talk to her easily any evening. He lives in the wonderland of romance, and dream-like thoughts crowd his mind, revealing amply his state of infatuation : "When the traffic of the town had died, *they could walk together under the moon or in magic starlight.* He would stop a few yards from her house. What a parting of sweetness and pain !"[7]

But there is a limit to everything, and howsoever deep the infatuation may be, it reaches the saturation point after which the lover, having lived in a dreamland for quite some time, ultimately sees the reality around him. His illusions and dreams need to be materialised, and he finds his love-dreams and life's hard realities on the same plane, juxtaposed to each other. Narayan who has a remarkable insight into life with all its actualities, illusions and fantasies, presents Chandran undergoing a similar experience. His one-sided love affair with an unknown girl for a month or so at last impels him to see and face the hard facts of life, setting aside the mere love-dreams and reveries; a realization dawns upon him : "He had lived for over a month in a state of bliss, notwithstanding his ignorance. He began to feel now that he ought to be up and doing and get a little more practical. He could not go on staring at her on the sands all his life. He must know all about her."[8] In this new state of mind, he follows her at a distance one evening while she returns home from the river in order to know her whereabouts. When he sees her entering a house in Mill Street, he at once feels that his friend Mohan, who lives in a building opposite her house,

can be of great help to him in knowing all about her. And thus soon, through Mohan's cooperation, he comes to know that his sweet heart's name is Malathi, that she is unmarried, and that she is the daughter of Mr. D. W. Krishna Iyer, Head Clerk in the Executive Engineer's office.

Like Shakespeare, Narayan believes that love, whatever its nature may be, should lead to marriage. The lover, whatever his kind may be, should inescapably think in terms of marriage. As such, Chandran feels comforted the moment he knows the suffix to the name of the girl's father because he is of his own caste and sub-caste, and hence caste, which is often an insurmountable barrier in the way of marriage, is no problem to him in this connection. Like a childish adolescent, he considers it "as a favourable sign, as an answer to his prayers, which were growing intenser every day."[9] In every fact he comes to know about the girl, he feels that God is revealing Himself. Gathering strength, after a few abortive attempts, he talks to his father confidentially and confidently, and soon discloses his intention of marrying Malathi. What astonishes his parents is the fact that he is determined to marry a girl who does not know him and to whom he has never talked even for a moment. The conversation between Chandran and his parents fully reveals his deep, rather foolish infatuation for Malathi and his determined, though innocent and adolescent, effort to get her as his wife, without realising the the truth that she herself or her parents may not like at all his proposal for marriage, thus evincing his foolish belief that he is bound to be accepted as her husband by every one.

Narayan very shrewdly portrays the traditional concept of marriage, of course, with a vein of mild satire. Some of the conservative ways closely associated with Indian marriages are amply brought to light. Thus Chandran's mother is surprised and shocked to know that Malathi is unmarried at the age of sixteen. Besides, his parents, despite the fact that they are not able to bear the sight of their unhappy son, are not prepared to offer the proposal of marriage to Malathi's parents because they belong to the bridegroom's side, while according to the social custom, the proposal is to come first from the bride's people. Hower, an intelligent and experienced old man, Chandran's father, who is not very orthodox in his views on any subject, endeavours to resolve the tangle by seeking the help of old Ganapathi Sastrigal, a well-known match-maker in Malgudi. The novelist here throws light on the role played by match-makers in the traditional marriages in India, revealing both the utility and stupidity of this aspect of arranged marriages. Ganapathi Sastigal very cleverly and wisely satisfies Chandran's parents by answering all the queries made about Malathi and her father. Narayan analyses the various considerations in arranged marriages

comprehensively and impartially. Social and economic status, horoscope, dowry and girl's chastity, beauty, age, etc., are some of the factors which cannot be ignored by anyone in our society. We come across people expressing their views both in favour and against these factors according to the situations. For instance, in the beginning, Chandran's mother cares very much for the social status, dowry and the age of Malathi, but after knowing about her glorious family through Ganapathi Sastrigal, she changes her attitude. Soon her hypocrisy comes out when she asks Sastrigal if he has any idea how much Malathi's parents are prepared to spend on the marriage On knowing that they will not be able to spend much, she is disappointed and sidetracks the issue, for she undoubtedly cares much for dowry, besides other considerations.

Even amidst these torturing moments of discussions and opposition in the family, Chandran's infatuation for Malathi does not lose its intensity. Often he lapses into reveries and intoxicating love-thoughts. He feels, thinks and behaves like a young lover saturated with youthful passions. The following short extract shows it :

> While on his way he could tarry for a while before her house and gladden his heart with a sight of her under the hall-lamp as she passed from one part of the house to another. Probably she was going to bed; blessed be those pillows. Or prbably she went in and read; ah, blessed books with the touch of her hands on them. He would often speculate....what hour she would rise, and how she lay down and slept and how her bed looked. Could he not just dash into the house, hide in the passage, steal up to her bed at night, crush her in his arms, and carry her away ?

Chandran does not understand the seriousness of the obstacles in the way of arranged marriage, and ignoring them, he lapses into the lover's follies and lives in a fool's paradise. He imagines that soon after comparing the horoscopes the marriage will be celebrated. He is immensely delighted to note that Malathi's parents are deeply interested in the alliance as they have agreed to give the girl's horoscope for comparision. He foolishly believes that she may have compelled her parents to do so. His mind is crowded with innumerable wild ideas of love pertaining to Malathi, and he finds him-self in the seventh heaven of joy :

> He had every reason to believe that the girl had told her parents she would marry Chandran and no one else. But how could she know him or his name ? Girls had a knack of learning of these things by a sort of sixth sense. How splendid of her to speak

out her mind like this, brave girl. If her mind matched her form, it must be one of the grandest things in the world....

The thought of her melted him. He clutched his pillow and cried in the darkness : "Darling, what are you doing ? Do you hear me ?"

....She felt, Chandran thought, that seeing him every day at the river would give rise to gossip. Such a selfless creature. Would rather sacrifice her evening's outing than subject Chandran to gossip. Chandran had no doubt the she was going to be the most perfect wife a man could ever hope to get.

....After they were married, he would tell her everything. They would sit in their creeper-covered villa on the hill-slope, just those two, and watch the sun set. In the afterglow of the evening he would tell her of his travails, and they would both laugh.

Infatuation for Malathi makes Chandran restless and blind to every thing else. In fact, Cupid has intrigued him into a new variety of love: the lover does not know the beloved properly, nor has he seen her fully well, and yet he loves her so madly as to want to marry her at any cost. Thus the delay in getting her horoscope fills him with a new plan to meet her to watch her very closely; he would knock at her gate in the absence of her father on the pretext of desiring to see him to know about the possibility of a bridge over Sarayu. In this way, he may know definitely whether her eyes are round or almond-shaped, and whether her complexion is dusky translucence or light brown. Also, he plans to carry a small camera with him and take a snap-shot of her. An adolescent lover as he is, his latest hobby is to scan the faces of the passers-by in the streets to see if any one resembles her.

The difficult situation, arising from the fact that Chandran's horoscope does not tally with Malathi's, shock hims rudely, for he cannot think of a life without Malathi. He finds a solution to the problem : he should wait for the marriage for two years more so that the evil effect of ill-placed stars in his horoscope may disappear. His father has no courage to discuss this matter with Malathi's father, for the latter, in all probability, may not wait for two years to marry his daughter to Chandran because she is already sixteen. But this does not dishearten Chandran out and out and does not dampen his spirits. Naturally, he plans to write a letter to Malathi explaining her the whole situation. And soon the letter is written to be sent to her through her friend Mohan. But unfortunately the letter never reaches Malathi, for Mohan forgets to deliver it to her, or perhaps dares

not do so. The result is that she is married to some one else, and unluckily Chandran sees the marriage himself. This shatters all his dreams, and his heart is broken. He is so deeply shocked that he has a high temperature that night and raves. When he recovers from the ailment in about ten days, he goes to Madras for a change.

Shattering of Chandran's infatuation confuses him so much so that he decides to renounce the world. As a matter of fact, he is now a broken-hearted, jilted lover, and feels that if he cannot commit suicide to get rid of his unbearable miseries, the only solution to his terrible grief is to become a *sanyasi* because he cannot live with his parents and friends without Malathi. Failure in his first love at first sight completely transforms his life. He makes himself suffer terribly, saying to himself that he is not sent to this world to enjoy. As a matter of fact, his renunciation of the world is an attempt to punish himself out of despair and hopelessness as he cannot do anything against the social system and destiny, which have prevented him from experiencing the bliss of having Malathi as his bride. Apparently, it is a renunciation which is different from the usual one which is the consequence of spiritual purpose, Soaked in bitterness, he enjoys the pain of hunger, and wishes it to kill him. The result is that he is reduced to the ghost of a man, entirely different from what he has been before the tragic end of his infatuation for his dream-girl, Malathi.

After loitering aimlessly here and there for months together and after deceiving people and himself by his counterfeit, Chandran one day realises the reality....viz., he has been humbugging people. He is ashamed of himself, and condemns himself for feeding himself with food which he neither earns, nor deserves by virtue of spiritual worth. Now he perceives his moral degration, and discovers its cause in his silly infatuation for Malathi because of which he has committed all kinds of follies and the sin of deserting his parents who have done so much for him, and have given his immense love and care. He dubs his love as nothing less than a madness ruining him physically, emotionally and mentally. Also, he blames Malathi for his miseries and misfortunes, since she did not at all reciprocate him feelings and interest in the affair. Reality dawns upon him, and he sees clearly the stupidity and madness of his infatuation for her as is evident in the passage quoted below :

> He sought an answer to the question why he had come to this degradation. He was in no mood for self-deception, and so he found the answer in the words "Malathi" and "Love".....*It was a silly infatuation.* Little sign did she show of caring for a fellow;

she couldn't say that she had no chance. She had plenty of opportunities to show that she noticed him. Where there was a will there was a way. She had only been playing with him, the devil. Women were like that, they enjoyed torturing people. And for the sake of her memory he had come to this. He railed against that memory against love. There was no such thing; a foolish literary notion. It people didn't read stories they wouldn't know there was such a thing as love. *It was a scorching madness.* There was no such thing. And driven by a non-existent thing he had become a deserter and a counterfeit.[12]

The realisation of his silly infatuation brings Chandran to his senses and he stands self-condemned. The clear perception of reality at last annihilates the remains, whatsoever, of his unsuccessful, foolish one-sided love for Malathi. Thus he discloses his whole secret to a postmaster from whom he borrows money to send a telegram to his father for money so as to fling aside the counterfeit once for all. The postmaster calls for a barber to shave him properly, makes him have a thorough bath, and gives him *dhoti* and shirt to wear. Chandran feels resurrected and an ecstatic sensation runs all through him. His grasp of reality brings him to his senses, with the result he returns to his parents and the normal life, being fully relieved of the abnormality and depression caused by his disappointment in first love. His parents are amazed to see him greatly transformed.

However, even after this resurrection, he is not able to forget completely his infatuation; he at times remembers it with bitterness. He now labels love as illusion leading man to mad heights, and believes that people marry "because their sexual appetite has to be satisfied and there must be somebody to manage the house."[13] But the first experience of love has been so profound with him that the moment he goes to meet Mohan after a prolonged counterfeit, he is obsessed with Malathi and the days he spent in the hope of getting her as his bride. Despite his best efforts, he loses the balance of his mind and hopes to see and meet Malathi there, thus falling a prey to illusion and despair.

In fact, Chandran's greatest concern is to settle down to a quiet, peaceful life, free from "distracting illusions and hysterics".[14] To materialise it, he keeps himself very busy without giving his mind a moment of freedom that is the cause of all the mischief, according to him. With utmost determination, he chases away illusions and hysterics, which have filled and dominated his entire being ever since he saw Malathi for the first time. He spends a good deal of his time in working in the garden and reading books seriously.

But despite all this, and despite his best efforts to avoid all those things that remind him of Malathi, he sometimes cannot escape the memories of Malathi that make him restless and grief-stricken. He struggles hard to keep his mind free from her by rationalising the episode. He tosses between the illusions of infatuation and the reality of life, the dreams of adolescent love and the actuality of existence. His mind is at times the battle-ground of this terrible conflict between the two opposites, and the moments are a terrible experience for him. The following extract from the novel fully illustrates it :

> There were still sights and sounds and hours which breathed, through some association or other, memories of Malathi. But he avoided them....He never looked at the shop in Market Road for fear of encountering the eyebrows of the boy in the shop. Even then something or other was sure to remind him of Malathi and trouble him. At such moments he fumigated his mind with reflection : this is a mischievous disturbance; this is false; these thoughts of Malathi are unreal because Love is only a brain affliction; it led me to beg and cheat; to desert my parents; it is responsible for my mother's extra wrinkles and grey hair, for my father's neglect of the garden; and a poor postmaster is a shirt and a *dhoti* less on account of my love.[15]

Even when Chandran becomes the local chief agent of the daily *Messenger* and is fairly well-settled in life, he is not able to bear fully the shock of the failure in his first love. Thus, when there is a very nice proposal of marriage, and his father approaches him with it, he has only this much to tell that he eannot marry, though he feels for his parents, who are very naturally interested in, and worried about, finding a suitable match for him and making him lead a normal life. His friend Mohan offers him a very correct advice in this regard, putting before him a very practical view of marriage : "If one has to marry one must do it for love, if there is such a things, or for the money and comforts. *There is no sense in shutting your eyes to the reality of things.*"[16] But even Mohan's hard logic is not able to convince Chandran of the utility and desirability of marriage. However, as the latter's stiff attitude against marriage is considerably softened by his friend's fairly convincing and strong arguments, he whimsically offers to decide the issue by tossiug a silver coin. And as by chance it is in favour of marriage, Chandran decides finally to talk to his mother about the girl who has been proposed to him recently.

At last, we find Chandran successful in shattering all the illusions and frustrations emanating from his infatuation for Malathi. He is no

longer in the make-believe, in the world of love-dreams and silly thoughts and feelings; he is now very much on the solid earth and looks at every thing realistically and rationally. Naturally, he agrees to go to Talapur with his mother to see the girl who has been proposed to him on the condition that the final word will be given only when the girl is really beautiful. His infatuation for Malathi comes to an end when he finds this girl very pretty. Her face is divine, and her entire figure is wonderful. He is at once reminded of Malathi and makes a comparison between the two : "He secretly compared it with Malathi's, and wondered what he had seen in the latter to drive him so mad...."[17] The magic of Malathi at last vanishes, and naturally the young man is ravished by the beauty of this pretty maiden. This time also, it is a case of a youth's infatuation for a charming girl, and so he instantly likes her and impatiently asks his mother whether or not she has informed her parents of their approval of the girl. When his mother tells him that they cannot tell the girl's parents anything unless they come and ask them, he feels disgusted with all these formalities and wants to flout them because all this means unnecessary delay. The moment the comes to know from his mother that the girl's name is Susila, he is transported with joy and wild lovedreams. During the entire way back home, he is obsessed with sweet thoughts related to her. He finds no comparison between Malathi and Susila; the latter is far superior to the former in every respect. Obviously, it is an instance of an adolescent's infatuation for a beautiful girl. As a matter of fact, a youth often begins to love a charming maiden he happens to come across, and Narayan portrays this in the novel very effectively through the protagonist, Chandran.

Narayan very realistically depicts the impact of marriage on a young man like Chandran. After the marriage, he is a completely changed man, lost in his own thoughts. He is obsessed with "Susila, the fragrance of jasmine and sandal paste, the smokiness of the Sacred Fire, of brilliant lights, music, gaiety, and laughter."[18] For a month or so he is absorbed in monologues centring upon Susila and things related to her. What is slightly funny is that he indulges in these monologues in the presence of Mohan, but all this is true to life.

Not only this, Chandran, like most of the newly-married men, spends much of his time in writing letters to his bride and in reading her letters. Since he has to live away from her for nearly a year, he depends on these letters to keep emotional and mental company with her. To Mohan, he tells about the subject of these letters for the sake of sharing his feelings of joy with him. The enthusiastic, vigorous young lover in Chandran is patently visible in all his talks, thoughts and activities. He is never tired of

discussing his young wife with his friend and indulges in a lot of repetitions. A few bits of his talks with Mohan show his rapturous infatuation for Susila :

> "She has written a wonderful letter to me to-day, has addressed me as 'My Own Darling' for the first time; she has sent me twenty thousand kisses though I sent her only fifteen thousand in my last letter...." Or "She likes very much the silk pieces that I sent to her. She says that they are wonderful." Or, touching his inner pocket, in which more than one of her letters always rested, "Poor girl ! She writes asking me to take very great care of my health. Says that I ought not to get up so early every morning. She has inquired about the business and wishes me more subscribers.... She has a very great sense of humour."[19]

Besides the joys of love in married life, Narayan paints the worries and agonies associated with the love of young couples. Thus Chandran is greatly upset when he does not receive Susila's letter for six days in continuation. Mohan tries in vain to rationalise the situation and console Chandran by saying that she may not have written to him because of her studies for the examination. All this fails to dispel Chandrn's deep despair. He is baffled by the problem and remarks that he has never before faced such a terrible situation. He fears that she may be down with high fever, because she has written in her last letter about her catching cold. There is no solution to his apprehension and gloom but to go to Talapur immediately, for he does not know....if her people will attend to her properly....".[20] This clearly reveals his adolescent, mad love for her and with this the novel ends. In a word, *The Bachelor of Arts* is a tale of a young man's infatuation for a young woman, and his realisation of the realities of life.

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Allahabad.

NOTES

1. R. K. Narayan, *The Bachelor of Arts* (Mysore : Indian Thought Publications, 1973), p. 54.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 55. (Italics mine)
5. *Ibid.*, p. 57. (Italics mine)
6. *Ibid.* pp. 59-60.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 65. (Italics mine)
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 78-9.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 111-112. (Italics mine)
13. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*, p. 124.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 155. (Italics mine)
17. *Ibid.*, p. 161.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 164.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 165.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 166.

Margaret Chatterjee and the Indian Identity

O. P. Mathur

In one of her early poems, Margaret Chatterjee, after comparing the spring of her native land with that of the land of her adoption, concludes :

Snow-shawled frost-tasselled lies my winter heart,
No froth of flower adeck my naked boughs
And yet far stronger than the thrust of love
And surer than the spring's insistent root
Know here the plenitude of summer days.
(*The Spring and the Spectacle*, p. 16)[1]

The imagery of "naked boughs", though with an artificial covering of shawl and tassel, is effectively contrasted to the natural warmth and plenitude of summer. We get a glimpse of the poet acquiring a new identity, based on the thrust of love and the warmth of allegiance for a life "here" which has overpowered her both by its breadth and depth.

Never having the contemptuous and patronising attitude of Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, Margaret Chatterjee always regarded the Indians as one of the sufferers of the world—along with those of Belsen and Buchenwald (*The Spring and the Spectacle*, p. 5). The three poems on the seasons of rain, winter and spring view them as universal phenomena, but the poet's growing identification with the "here" (India) as opposed to "there" (the West) cumlinates in her final acceptance of India as her country :

The Winter showers
Are tears that fall

Along an aging face,
Furrowed my face, my land
My India.
(*Towards the Sun*, p. 23)

In "To Pablo Neruda", included in her latest book of verse, she speaks almost as the voice of this continent :

Across thousands of miles
Continent salutes continent
As we take the last dust
Of your feet.
(*The Sound of Wings*, p. 29).

Some of her short stories also mirror through fictitious characters the author's gradual acquisition of an Indian identity. Katherine of "Pahari Story" merges herself in the life of India. She has started a dispensary to give preliminary treatment to the people and has learnt so much about Indian life that one of the sellers says, "We can't teach the Miss Sahib anything. Can we ? She knows everything" (*At the Homeopath's*, p. 16). The natural culmination of all this is her decision not to return to her country but to stay on in India. Fanny of "Encounter" bridges the continents and enters into "a mythical country of the mind which was neither England nor India but in which both were dear" (*At the Homeopath's* p. 68). She is so much impressed with the vitality of the Indian tutor Hari's life and mind that she decides to call her next child, if it is a boy, after him, 'Harry'. In the context of the poet's own deepening commitment to India and her people, all these emotional and spiritual involvements of the heroines of her stories acquire added significance.

Margaret Chatterjee's poems on typically Indian subjects are about four times as many as those on the Western. Among the Indian subjects she has written about are the natural scene and environment, Indian life, both rural and urban, and Indian myth and philosophy. Nowhere does her treatment of Indian themes have a false ring or betray a Westerner's patronising attitude. Her poetry epitomises the multi-dimensional experience of being Indian—the inheritance of a glorious culture and civilization, the sufferings of the present and the glimpses of aspirations and hopes for the future. The Indian scene is portrayed by her with love and compassion. She rightly says that she writes poems in English against the context of Indian nature and seasons. The Indo-Aryan image of the sun, deified into a god, as a power to be worshipped (*The Spring and the Spectacle*, p. 10), is a pervasive image in her poetry. The relative docility and impotence of

the sun in the cold Western countries is mentioned by her with something of an outsider's objectivity :

The sun is hidden in the wintry sky,
And that which is the source of every living thing,
Substance of days hoped for—waits unknown.
(*The Spring and the Spectacle*, p. 16).

Contrasted to this, there is the typically tropical imagery :

For here there is no shadow-time
Between light and dark—
Aflame the sky the urgent sun
spouts blossom from the top of every tree
And every leaf stands stiff with eager sap.
(*The Spring and the Spectacle*, p. 16).

Her poetry celebrates the bright sun and the clear blue tropical skies, both in themselves and as symbols of the bright and vast possibilities for man.

For how could we say
That in the smallness of our hearts
We could love the patch of sky,
That startled with its blueness
From the confines of our cells,
But that the whole open sky,
Firmament of all possibilities,
Lit up by the moving sun,
Blinded us ?
(*The Spring and the Spectacle*, p. 8).

In *Towards the Sun*, the title of which is highly suggestive not only of the poet's irresistible attraction for the Sun but also of the limitless possibilities of man and his occasional Icarus-like tragic fall, we find the recurrent sun-imagery. For example,

Sun breaking
Split
As fresh lemon does
The milky sky,
Blue whey
Held

In a jacaranda bowl
And the curdled clouds
Still floating....
(*Towards the Sun*, p. 12).

In the same poem the sun becomes a lover

The sun uncovers
His head,
The sky beckons,
so do I
— Both.
(*Towards the Sun*, p. 12).

The poet gradually realizes the power of the tropical sun which in the following lines is portrayed as an enemy;

The sun has scourged me
To the point of death,
Consumed my eyes
And filled my ears with fire.
My feet encounter rocks and thorns,
My mouth is parched,
Too dry my eyes for tears.
(*Towards the Sun*, pp. 21–22).

Even when the sun is not directly mentioned, its presence suffuses the atmosphere of Chatterjee's poetry, as its light pervades the universe. In its amplitude, the brightness of its colours, the warmth of its environment and its sweet fragrances, Chatterjee's poetry is essentially a poetry of the tropics.

There is another important characteristic of the Indian natural scene which has indelibly impressed Margaret Chatterjee's theme and imagery–the rains. The clouds described in "Ballad of the Earth and the Rain" are typically Indian—as big as giant's hands and with their "thick wet curls ablow in the wind". (*The Spring and the Spectacle*, p. 14). The Indian rain seems to have permeated into her imagery, like the rain-drops—"mazed with August rain" (*The Spring and the Spectacle*, p. 17). A lyric sung on a piano reminds her of the soft fall of rain-drops :

Now fall the notes
Down-petalling—
The sound of gardens

In the rain, or sun-bright
As bells upon a summer day—
Winging to distance.
(*The Spring and the Spectacle*, p. 18).

The presence of the beloved is like "drenching rain" (*Towards the Sun*, p. 11). In another poem the experience of living is made significant and meaningful by the experiences of nature, among which is mentioned

the scent
Of soil after rain,
Sky's cavalcade of cloud.
(*Towards the Sun*, p. 27)

Margaret Chatterjee seems to be specially fond of Indian birds and animals. Many of the birds of India have been celebrated in her poetry and have gone into the making of her imagery—the "squadrons of parrots/ streaking the skies" (*The Sandalwood Tree*, p. 38), the "tailor-bird on the kikar tree", "pigeons who rival architects," the "crow who knows how to survive" "The white winged albatross who is fearless," the skylark whose courage and joy "leave their mark upon the sky" (*The Sound of Wings*, p. 56). Birds become for Chatterjee symbols of the conquest of time and space :

I sing of creatures whose world is rimless,
Whose feet curl over branches
In a very temporary way,
Who have no tentacles or roots,
To whom trees belong.
(*The Sound of Wings*, p. 56)

Birds "know no frontiers" and migrate "hoardnig time in their bodies" (*The Sound of Wings*, p. 56). The title of her latest published book of poetry, *The Sound of Wings*, and the probable title of the coming one, *The Rimless World*, are significant because they try to catch the evanescent, sensuous and the deep philosophical meanings of the lives of birds. Like the birds, the animals also are sometimes treated on a symbolic plane. The tortoise becomes a symbol of the riddle of whether the world is moving or static (*The Sandalwood Tree*, p. 22).

The caparisoned elephant "swinging his bell like an acolyte's censer," galumphing his way triumphantly through a jungle or traffic and "a plethora of peevish Protestant dogs," is described in terms which suggest the magnificence of the "Orange-robed Sadhus on his back" as contrasted

to the simplicity of the cows sitting in the sun (*The Sandalwood Tree*, p. 25). The poetry of Margaret Chatterjee has the aroma of the nature and country-side of India in its manifold aspects.

Margaret Chatterjee has also portrayed the rural and urban life of India with remarkable sympathy and realism. She has a deep compassion for the poor and a desire to understand their feelings and ways of life.[2] The Indian landscape is peopled with "hungry eyes and hands" (*Towards the Sun*, p. 25) for whose sufferings her heart wells up in sympathy :

Can you forgive me
For being alive,
For breathing air,
For ecstasy,
For suffering,
For having friends to love ?
(*Towards the Sun*, p. 27)

The Indian children, the chikki-man, the violin-seller, the crafts-man of the Raj who "carved in stone the sky" (*The Sandalwood Tree*, p. 16), the clerk, the old man wrinkling the time of the day, the new bride stiff in purple velvet, the mochi, the dhobin, the ruddi-wallah, the charpoy-wallah, the napit (barber), the bhisti, the chaiwallah, the village boy—they all provide human dimensions to a poetry so fine and subtle in its sensibility. Chatterjee has put her human beings in a social framework, the cultural parameter of which is provided partly by the traditional Hindu, especially Bengali, life, but their economic context is that of the commonalty of sufferers spread all over the world. Here is a typical home of an Indian clerk :

With many calendars
And the hard bed
And the medicine bottles
On the dressing table
And he reached for his sandals
Under the alna.
(*The Sound of Wings*, p. 35)

"Summer in the Hills" describes an Indian house in a hill station. The poem "Shoes" subtly integrates the feelings of an Indian wife for her sick husband with the "tenantless shoes" :

I see your empty shoes
Wrinkled, stretched,
Stretched to the shape
of feet I touch.
(*The Sandalwood Tree*, p. 30)

Two of the important 'Samskaras' in a Hindu's life, marriage and cremation, are described so touchingly :

When you blessed me
With a handful of
Dhruba grass
Many years ago,
I bent my head
In a salute. ("Grass")[3]

The cremation, the final consummation of life, is also described in "Agni" in terms of love-making.

Here is my last lover,
The most persistent
Of them all.
Here is the last leap
Of flame to flame,
Complete, reciprocal.
(*The Sandalwood Tree*, p. 41)

A Hindu can welcome the flames like a lover for he has no fear of death.

In some of her poems Margaret Chatterjee tries to represent the strength and difficulties of Indian life by means of symbols derived from the Indian landscape—the "gnarled neem" fighting against the greatest odds, the peepul murmuring ancient syllables and luckily protected by holiness, and the "tree down the road" slashed "branch by branch/with a blunt axe" ("City Trees").[4] Her poetry is a libation to the struggling mass of Indian humanity symbolized Whitmantike by grass :

But Indian grass has to
Struggle to exist.
My half-glass of water, undrunk,
Must not be wasted,
I shan't pour it on the tulsi plant
Which gets libations in plenty,

But on a patch of grass nearby,
I mean it to live.
A point will have been made.[5]

The Indian people and their ways of life are refletcd not only in the poetry but also in the short stories of Margaret Chatterjee, the realism of which substantiates her statement that they were "try-outs for themes for novels."[6] She says, "If I write a novel, it would be about Calcutta showing extraordinary characters seen in a Dickensenian way."[7] Her short stories hold out the promise of a future novelist.

Margaret Chatterjee views the common Indian people as belonging to the ranks of the "patient eyed, heroic ones" who are of "many colours" and live in "divers countries" but are "one as man himself" (*The Spring and the Spectacle*, p. 9). The people of Bengal, victims of a man-made famine, belong to the universal brotherhood of suffering :

We who have known destruction
And who were destroyed....
We are a large company.
We are from Coventry and the East End,
Stalingrad, Cologne, Warsaw, and Caen,
Paris, Berlin, and Hiroshima,
We know the terror by night—
The destruction at noonday.
(*The Spring and the Spectacle*, p. 5)

But their present sufferings and sears are but a phase, "neither the beginning nor the end/But the middle of the story" (*The Spring and the Spectacle*, p. 27).

For whom anniversaries are but moments
In a long memory—
Patterning a destiny still to come.
(*The Spring and the Spectacle*, p. 10)

Such a long synoptic view of time is a part of the Indian philosophical outlook. Margaret Chatterjee is a scholar of Indian philosophy and her writings naturally abound in references to Indian myth, philosophy and wisdom which form a vast intellectual and spiritual background of her poetry. She has learnt not a little from the works of Bhartrihari, Vidyapati, Chandidas, Bharat Chanda, Jivananda Das, Ramakrishna Paramhansa, and Tagore with regard to theme, Imagery and style. In addi-

tion, there is the rich fount of Indian myth and Vedic and Budhist philosophy at which she has drunk, as is evident from her poems like "Variation on a theme from the Mundaka Upanishad," "Karma", ' To a Carvaka Philosopher", "Gloss on Brhādaranyaka Upanishad IV, 4" and "Gloss on Bhagvadgita VI, 21", in addition to those where Indian thought comes in casually.

More than all this, Margaret Chatterjee's essentially Indian identity is revealed through her imagery. She says "There is I believe, an unconscious distilling process at work in a writer's reflections on life. It finds natural expression in the image".[8] In addition to the imagery of the sun and the rain, two of the unforgettable of Indian life, already discussed above, there are numerous other images which show how deeply India has sunk into her being. The Indian trees are made symbols of various categories of Indians :

The one-legged tāl
Standing in vacant lots
Is silent witness
To dark deeds done;
Where the bamboo bends
But does not break,
Where trees blighted by war,
Mango and jack-fruit,
Yet survive
With hope of fruit
Next year.

(*The Sandalwood Tree*, p. 10)

And of course much is to be learnt from the sandalwood tree
Which only when most bruised
Can fragrant be.

(*The Sandalwood Tree*, p. 11)

How clearly is Indian natural environment interwoven with human life can be seen from the following :

I know when it is autumn
From the rhythm of the drums.
I know when it is winter
From the coldness of your cheeks.
Spring powders red the trees
And oil melts in the shade.

I know when it is summer
For the pavement burns my feet,
And now I know the rains have come
From the salt taste of your skin.
(*Towards the Sun*, p. 10)

There is also the typically Indian image of a tendril twining around a tree, so popular in Indian love poetry :

I twine my limbs
About your trunk
Nor easily yourself
Can extricate.
My tendrils hold
Your every part.
(*Towards the Sun*, p. 17)

Scattered over Chatterjee's works are images from Indian life and environment—feet brown with dust (*Towards the Sun*, p. 26), touching of the feet of the dead (*The Sound of Wings*, p. 73), putting the water on one's head (*Towards the Sun*, p. 26), arms tight-packed in sleeves like "cocoanut in its shell" (*The Sandalwood Tree*, p. 12), the chikki man's white gram brown-sugared "like white teeth in brown children's faces" (*The Sandalwood Tree*, p. 14), the cricket on the neem tree "Titillating *teental* tempo.... Ustad that he is/Playing his shehnai" (*The Sandalwood Tree*, p. 27), putting one's head on somebody's feet (*The Sandalwood Tree*, p. 26), sucking each moment "like a mango-stone" (*The Sandalwood Tree*, p. 32) taking the dust of one's feet (*The Sound of Wings*, p. 29), a bird flying from one deodar tree to another (*The Sound of Wings*, p. 48), the night "black/As dhaba tea" (*The Sound af Wings*, p. 52), and the lover longing "like Arjun" for the familiar form of the beloved (*The Sound of Wings*, p. 66). The use of such imagery seems to have become a natural and involuntary process for Margaret Chatterjee and is an unmistakable pointer to her Indian identity. She has rightly said, "I am completely assimilated in India and am annoyed if I am considered a foreigner".[9] To take an image from nature, we can say that hers is a case of vegetative propagation in which a cutting of a plant acquires new roots in a different place. Born and brought up in the West, she is now Indian to her bones, But, as in everybody's case, there are limitations of her Indian experience. She is apparently unaware of many of the orthodox traditional aspects of Indian social life, as indeed many Indians also are. She has absorbed only that India which she has experienced—nature, philosophy, literature, and the common men who suffer

exploitation and yet cherish a vision of the future. These aspects bring the Indian nearer to the universal man. Margaret Chatterjee's Indian identity is thus fused with her universal identity. Her poetry is an appropriate illustration of V. K. Gokak's shrewd comment on the Indian character of Indian English poetry :

> Indo-Anglian poetry, like the rest of modern Indian poetry, is Indian first and everything else afterwards. It has voiced the aspirations, the joys, the sorrows of the Indian people. It has been sensitive to the changes in the national climate and striven increasingly to express the soul of India, the personality which distinguishes her from other nations. At the same time, its constant endeavour is to delineate the essential humanity and universality which make the world her kith and kin".[10]

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NOTES

1. The following are the editions of Margaret Chatterjee's works cited in this paper :
   The Spring and the Spectacle (Calcutta : Writers' Workshop, 1967).
   Towards the Sun (Calcutta : Writers' Workshop, 1970).
   The Sandalwood Tree (Calcutta : Writers' Workshop 1972).
   At the Homeopath's and Other Stories (Calcutta : Writers' Workshop, 1973).
   The Sound of Wings (New Delhi : Arnold-Heinemann, 1978).
2. From an interview given by Margaret Chatterjee to the author :
3. From a typescript of her recent poems supplied by Margaret Chatterjee to the author.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. From an interview given by Margaret Chatterjee to the author.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Margaret Chatterjee's comments on "Khus-Khus", in a typescript supplied to the author.
9. From an interview given by Margaret Chatterjee to the author.
10. V. K. Gokak. "A Question of Variety", in *Contemporary Indian English Verse*, ed. Chirantan Kulshreshtha (New Delhi : Arnold-Heinemann, 1980), p. 45.

Of Poetry and Impressions

Impression is not experience
Like a rainbow steady for a while :
Poetry recording impressions
Only serves like a view
From a running train;
Earth photographed from moon;
Truth placed like a mannequin
Behind glass walls.

The pain of the poor
The feel of the naked
And the unsheltered,
The form of the hungry
The pathos of the exploited
And those bonded for generations,
The virtuous wronged offer
Indian poets in English no more
Than a visionary essence of
A cosmeted suffering
After the unsoiling bases
Of western perfumes :
The wearer more poised for tingling
The nostrils around.

Poetry is neither an impression
From outside nor a traditional belief
At variance with acquired doubts
But an inner experience
Dynamic of revolt : A sympathy
Like a shiver of cold
Changing perception
In the chemistry of thought.

O. P. BHATNAGAR

Chinua Achebe and the Dynamics of Change in African Sensibility

Satyanarain Singh

If the turning point in the life of Africa was its historic encounter with the imperialist West and the resultant agony of subjugation and slavery, the post-independence experience has also been none too edifying with poverty and corruption plaguing the body-politic under, ironically, the much cherished self-rule. The new phase of intense debate among African intellectuals and writers concerns the question of how best a positive and progressive content can be given to freedom which largely meant merely the substitution of masters, black in place of white.

The political and cultural imperialism based upon racial prejudice struck at the roots of African identity. A systematic denigration and disparagement of the African with the stereotypes of bushman, head-hunter, and savage consigned him to the backwaters of human civilization. This severely undermined the self-respect and confidence of the people in their own destiny. However, the emergence of 'Negritude' with its implicit Black affirmation in the 1940's and 50's came as a counter-blast to this racist cultural domination. The Negritude movement has undoubtedly its historical importance in that it attacked the cerebral and soulless character of western civilization, and glorified the intuitional and artistic genius of the native tradition.

As a dynamic social concept, however, 'Negritude' needed to deglamourise the past, shed its regressive features and imbibe the values of new knowledge in science, technology and the humanities. As Franz Fanon

declared : "to us, the man who adores the Negro is as 'sick' as the man who abominates him".[1] The issue, therefore, is not that of a simple choice between tribal tradition and modern progress. It is rather one of reconciling tradition with modernisation. Major contemporary thinkers like Ousmane Sambebe, A. Cabral and Franz Fanon seek to envision and work for an integration of the positive and resilient features of tradition with the modern, scientific spirit in the evolution of a new Africa. Sembene in his *God's Bits of Wood* emphasises the importance of a living organic culture in the transformation process, and A. Cabral pleads for the identifying of the progressive as against the regressive features of tradition and urges that the progressive features be harmonised with the imperatives of science and modernity. Similarly, Fanon is for Africanising the concepts of socialism and democracy.

An outstanding Nigerian novelist, Chinua Achebe, contributes, in his unique way, to this new awakening in Africa. He would be satisfied, he said, if his novels helped his society "regain belief in itself and put away the complexes of the years of denigration and self-abasement"[2] suffered during the colonial rule. Africa's past, he observed, was "not one long night of savagery from which the first European...delivered them",[3] nor was it "one long techni-coloured idyll". The process of regeneration consisted in not merely removing from the national psyche the vestiges of colonial legacy, but also cleansing the body-politic of tribal obscurantism with its inhuman customs. It would be most undiscerning, therefore, either to wholly denigrate or glorify one's past. It would be unwise, also, to condemn uncritically all the features of western civilization.
Achebe said :

> Why should I start waging war....on the 'soulless efficiency' of Europe's industrial and technological civilization when the very thing my society needs is a little technical efficiency.[4]

Discussing the role of the creative writer in this context, Achebe pointed out :

> an African creative writer who tries to avoid the big social and political issues of contemporary Africa would end up being completely irrelevant—like the absurd man in the proverb who leaves his burning house to pursue a rat fleeing from the flames.[5]

The form of creative writing in one's time, he said, would correspond to and confront the vital issues of the community. He disliked the "human condition" syndrome—a phenomenon peculiar to certain writers

in the West—infecting native authors. The African writer cannot afford the luxury of despair at its present stage of development.

Achebe's fiction deals with the socio-cultural and political problems of the emergent nation. His imaginative apprehension of the African reality in the novels merits an indepth consideration.

II

Achebe's 'unmediated exposition'—Soyinka's apt description of his art—is a faithful portrayal of the good and bad of Ibo customs. In *Things Fall Apart*[6] Achebe depicts the disintegration of tribal culture under the pressure of colonisation through trade, religion, superior weaponry and administration. The internecine feuds and dissensions, mass illiteracy and blind adherence to custom, the fear of capricious gods, magic, evil forest, *osu* and the malevolent forces of nature—all these contributed substantially to the success of the invader helping him, "put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart." (TFA, 160)

Okonkwo represents the spirit of unswerving loyalty and commitment to the traditional institutions, mores and myths of tribal life. Though his suicide at the end is acclaimed as an act of martyrdom to the patriotic cause, the tragic irony consists in the fact that he is disowned by his own tribe who consider it sacrilegious even to touch his dead body. He exposes, by implication, the chinks in the armour of 'Negritude' and the failure of the elders to put to enlightened use the traditional institutions of market assembly, the Oracle and the masked ancestral spirits which were evolved to guard and protect the dignity and life-enhancing values of the community.

Arrow of God[7] is an indepth portrayal of Ibo culture in the throes of change consequent upon the white man's arrival in Umuaro. The tyranny of ignorance, obscurantism and superstition could be fought, in one way, by secularising the gods. The creation of Ulu as the common deity of the six villages constituting Umuaro was a step in this direction, and Achebe has powerfully dramatised the dialectical tension, in the personal, religious and secular attitudes of Ezeulu's character.

Arrow of God is Achebe's finest novel on the theme of interpreting the religious in terms of the secular, thereby attempting a synthesis of the spiritual with the material values in the reconstruction of a strong and united nation. The spiritual reality in this view is neither too remote nor too high for human accessibility. The gods are placed within the house compounds amidst the struggle and strife of the people, helping them to

take crucial decisions involving their dignity and well-being. In the Ibo pantheon the spirit-being complements the terrestrial human being for "nothing can stand alone, there must always be another thing standing beside it".[8] Man's *chi* (his spirit-being) has to work with *aka* (his temporal self) which is organically related to another potent force in Igbo organisation —the will of the community. While each individual has his own *chi* (spirit) to consult his *aka* (self) and guide him towards a better life. God Ulu, by common consent, represents the *chi* of Umuaro, and Ezeule the *aka*, of the whole community. Ezeulu, in his turn, has to gauge the social will on important issues by summoning the Umuaro Council. Achebe thus chooses to emphasise this vital aspect of the myth of divinity grounded in human realities.

Ezeulu's final decision to postpone the crucial New Yam festival was prompted by his vow to avenge the public humiliation he suffered at the hands of his factional enemies. In a fit of passion, Ezeulu ascribes to God Ulu his own voice of personal revenge thus announcing a 'divine' sanction for deferring the festival. The 'Ulu' voice event is a crucial development that marks the turning point—the *denouement* in the Ezeulu story—paving the way for the white man's conquest. The failure of Ezeulu consists in identifying Ulu with his own individual self rather than with the self of the community. He could not establish proper equations among his priesthood, people and God. The tragedy of Ezeulu symbolizes the ultimate triumph of fetish belief over the secular ideal.

Ezeulu's final failure is a pointer to the need on the part of enlightened intellectuals and statesmen for evolving a new culture wherein the African ethos is not a closed and static entity but one having the potential and dynamism to meet the challenges of contemporary reality.

III

While the two novels discussed above deal with the turmoil and upheaval caused by the white man's entry into Africa and the tightening grip the colonial power on a country weakened by disunity and fetish wrangles, the other two novels, set in pre and post independent Nigeria, incisively portray the corruption syndrome infecting the emerging nation.

No longer at Ease[9] investigates, from different perspectives, the phenomenon of bribery in Nigeria's public life. Green represents the typical colonial attitude which professes to bring light to the heart of darkness, to tribal head-hunters performing weird ceremonies and grotesque rites. It is

the old racist mystique of saving the continent from spiritual void, mental stagnation, from evil and irrational forces. According to him, the African "has been a victim of the worst climate in the world and of every imaginable disease....he has been sapped mentally and physically. We have brought him Western education. But what use is it to him" ? (NLE, 3) Obi is a Western-educated young man who is proud of being an African and is conscious of the depth, power and beauty of his language, music and the zest for life. He asks the Englishman to "listen to the talk of men who made a great art of conversation. Let them come and see men and women and children who know how to live, whose joy of life had not yet been killed by those who claimed to teach other nations how to live". In Nigeria, Obi has to listen to Green's arrogant remarks denigrating his countrymen : "The African is corrupt through and through. I am all for equality and all that. But equality won't alter facts". (NLE, 3) Green naturally suspects the African capacity for self-rule :

> "There is no single Nigerian who is prepared to forego a little privilege in the interests of his country, from your ministers down to your most junior clerk. And you tell me you want to govern yourselves." To which Obi coolly rejoins : "It is not the fault of Nigerian (p. 139)", "You devised the soft conditions for yourselves when every European was automatically in the senior service and every African automatically in the junior service. Now that a few of us have been admitted into the senior service, you turn round and blame us." (NLE, 139–40).

The most piognant fact in Nigeria that rattles Obi is the loss of nerve and the resultant docility in the poverty-stricken masses who suffer mutely, resigning themselves to misfortune. The elitist and educated section has succumbed to the lure of money and power. Achebe sensitively explores the consequent moral plight of Obi in a corrupt establishment. The issue that weighs upon him is : Can an individual civil servant with nationalist aspirations and ideals survive with dignity in a place where bribery in its many forms operates and where a skillful manipulation of money and influence is what really matters ? "What kind of democracy can exist side by side with so much corruption and ignorance"? (NLR, 40) Obi wonders. One method, he introspects, is to raise the consciousness of the people to revolt against such banes in public life but that appears to him—under the prevalent circumstances—a vague prospect, an uncertain proposition. The other alternative is to have a change at the top—possibly a man of vision, an enlightened dictator, but the very idea reeks of a

frightening, bloodletting violence. There are, as it were, walls and walls of granite closing in upon Obi and he is unable to find a breakthrough.

Obi was a frustrated man even in his personal life. His parents would not permit him to marry the girl he loved because she was declared an untouchable, *osu* 'a forbidden caste to the end of Time'. (NLE, 65) He was caught in the vortex of personal, familial and social pressures and in a tense, unguarded moment, an unintentional lapse on his part led to his arrest. He had to face public shame at the trial for allegedly accepting a small bribe of 20 pounds. It was, in fact, a well-laid trap since the police knocked at his door soon after the party had left the money on the table, despite Obi's 'no' to such an overture.

Obi's friend Charles had said, "In these circumstances if one didn't laugh, one would have to cry" (NLE, 89). Can an educated young man afford to be virtuous when the price for it is nothing less than staking his own security, peace and future ? Even if an individual is prepared to make a sacrifice at such cost, would it cause a dent anywhere in a society where education meant "to get as much as they can for themselves and their family. Not the least bit interested in the millions of their country who die everyday from hunger and disease" (NLE 106).

Under these conditions, young men normally take to easy options—a legacy left by the colonialists. Obi is thus torn between the forces of tribal backwardness, ignorance and orthodoxy which he cannot reform and the lure of easy money and comfort which he cannot completely resist.

A Man of the people[10] depicts the sordid game of the politics of power in a decolonised and under-developed country. Operating under the facade of a democratic structure, chief Nanga is an accomplished impostor who sedulously built up his image as a man of the people. Absolute power corrupts chief Nanga absolutely. Achebe analyses the psychological truth about the black politicians in a newly independent country through the typical character of Nanga "who was a born politician; he would get away with almost anything he said or did. And as long as men are swayed by their hearts and stomachs and not their heads, the Chief Nangas of the world will continue to get away with any things". (AMP, 65)

"The mainspring of political action was personal gain". (AMP, 114) Any idealist talk is idle gossip if it does not serve one's ends. Very often words mean precisely the opposite of what they convey. Freedom signifies bondage and democracy denotes dictatorship. How can one expect

a flourishing politician to sacrifice anything for a little matter of principle? It is foolish to think that "a sensible man would spit out the juicy morsel that good fortune placed in his mouth". (AMP, 2) Odili observes,

> We ignore man's basic nature if we say, as some critics do, that because a man like Nanga has risen evernight from poverty and insignificance to his present opulence he could be persuaded without much trouble to give it up again and return to his original state. (AMP, 37)

Within a few years of its independence, Nigeria under Black hegemony turns into a cesspool of corruption and misrule. The novel is a bitter and disillusioned study of this "fat-dripping, gummy, eat-and-let-eat-regime". (AMP, 149). It questions the wisdom and appropriateness of blindly imposing a Western parliamentary structure with universal franchise and electioneering on the indigent and unwary masses without an understanding of the indigenous ethos : the use of money and muscle power to tempt or threaten the opposition candidates either to withdraw their nomination papers or stand down from contest, the misuse of Government machinery and mass media in favour of the ruling party candidate, election-eve stunts of launching public welfare schemes and projects, grant of multi-million dollar contracts to money barons, and the acceptance of massive financial aid from foreign sources jeopardising the security and freedom of the nation. Elections are thus blatantly rigged; courts are manipulated by politicians in power who in turn are manipulated and corrupted by foreign interests. Chief Nanga eventually wins the elections by adopting all such unscrupulous means, but in the wake of widespread violence and anarchism, the military junta stages a *coup* and seizes power.

In the murky climate of greed, violence and chicanery among the politicians lusting after women, cars and landed property, the character of Max in the novel rays out a new resurgent awareness. Max is an intellectual activist of the People's Convention committed to the exposing of the scandalous deals and corruption in high places, and the arousing of a sense of self dignity in the people to fight against the unjust establishment. He opposes the murder and rape of Africa by whites and blacks alike. Max is killed in a jeep accident engineered by Chief Koka's hoodlums. He is hailed as the hero of the revolution by the *coup* leaders at the end.

Achebe's insights into the political situation in Nigeria proved prophetic, as shortly after the publication of the novel, the country passed into the hands of the *coup* leaders.

IV

The vital issue, according to Achebe, is the frozen, almost petrified, consciousness of the masses who resign themselves unquestioningly to the appalling conditions of oppression and squalor. Basically this question concerns the restoration of self-pride to the nation. This is inter-linked with the twin tasks of eliminating the scourge of poverty and heightening the spiritual and aesthetic quality of life. The need, therefore, is, first, to identify the positive potential in the native tradition and eschew its negative and regressive features, and, second, to absorb the benefits of modern knowledge in the areas of science, technology and the humanities integrating them with the healthy ethos of the nation. The process of regeneration would counter a servile imitation of the imperialist culture marked by acquisitive values and an insane greed for the accumulation of material goods.

In Achebe's fictional rhetoric portraying the social dynamics, cerebral attitudes, divorced from the emotional springs of life, represent dissociated sensibility. The cult of the alienated artist is foreign to the genius of Africa. The artist is not a special breed or an exclusive category but a commoner whose main province is man's everyday concerns and activities. Art is seen as a spontaneous manifestation of its organic connection with community life and work. There is no barrier between the makers of culture and its consumers. The ceremony of Mbari, for instance, is an affirmation of the people's belief in the indivisibility of art and society. The gusto and joy of life expressed the creative zest and vigour of man, earth and nature.

Similarly, the socio-political institution of Market assembly is a form of village democracy suited to the genius of the people. A fierce egalitarianism is a marked feature of Igbo political organisation. The evolution of a decentralised polity is a more appropriated and effective form of governance than the transplantation of the Westminster model. This structure would maintain the unity and integrity of the nation while preserving a healthy diversity of cultural patterns. Similarly, given a proper orientation and emphasis, the Oracle, the ancestral spirits and the concepts of *Chi* and *Asu* would create the affirmative and life-enhancing values of the individual and the community.

The spiritual and the secular in Africa are thus not exclusive categories. They are organically connected to animate and energise each other. Achebe's projections, profoundly concerned as they are with the basic ssues of the changing Nigerian identity during the pre-and post-independence phases, are also in a vital sense typical of the factors and forces operating in the emergent nations of Africa, Asia and other third world countries.

The single most important event in the second half of the twentieth century was the rise of the individual nation-states. While the freedom struggle against colonial rule galvanised and united the people, the scramble for power in the wake of independence released divisive and disruptive forces. The failure of leadership to give an economic content to freedom manifested itself in rampant corruption at one end and wide-spread poverty at the other. The culture of affluence indulged in by the ruling class broke its rapport with the needs and aspirations of the people. The transplantation of a foreign political structure without an insight into the historical roots of indigenuous social and cultural habits reduced 'democracy' and 'socialism' to mere catch-words without substance.

Achebe underlines the need on the part of the thinkers, writers and statesmen to reinterpret the values authentic to society and show that they are not fixed and static but have the resilience and creative flexibility to respond positively to the demands of the contemporary world. It is in the reconstruction of a new socio-cultural identity that an organic growth is possible capable of synthesising the vital features of the indigenous tradition with the benefits of modern knowledge.

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NOTES

1. Franz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (London, 1970), p. 8.
2. Chinua Achebe, "The Novelist as Teacher" *Morning Yet on Creation Day* (London, Heinemann, 1975) p. 44
   hereafter referred to as MYCD.
3. *Ibid*, p. 45
4. *Ibid*, p. 43
5. "The African Writer and the Biafran Cause", MYCD, p. 78
6. *Things Fall Apart* (Fawcett Publications, 1959) Hereafter referred to in the text as TFA
7. *Arrow of God* (London, Heinemann, 1980) Hereafter referred to in the text as AG
8. "*Chi* in Igbo Cosmology" MYCD. *op. cit.*, p. 93
9. *No Longer at Ease* (London, Heinemann, 1978) Hereafter referred to in the taxt as NLE
10. *A Man of the People* (London, Heinemann, 1981) Hereafter referred to in the text as AMP,

From the Dark to the Stars

When the dark night
seeps through my windowbars
I can't close my mind
I am the dark.

I light a candle to God
its flame burns
in the centre of my heart

Then the dark merrymelts into the stars.

- Subhas Saha

★

The Bud of the Dark

Her petals seek rays to uncurl
on the death of dark

when will the fountain of fragrance
spring up

the emerald leaf
sleeps on the branch of night

who'll blow the bud open ?

there's no one, no one
except the sun
inside the bud
to release the fountain
from the sky of dark.

– Subhas Saha

Narrator's Consciousness in *The Wings of the Dove*

M. L. Raina

Much as one cringes before the mountains of theory devoted to James' technique of presenting conscious centres, one finds in *The Wings of the Dove*[1] an experience so complex and strange that it compels exploration. What kind of unity is to be had from four different centres in one book, or, if they are deeply unified, how are they distinguished ? With all the allusion and deceit, can we ever be sure that the characters are for us or against us ? On what level do we experience the book as a whole ? Leo Bersani has decided that the points of view are in fact all one, and that this fact, along with some other structural features, makes the book a big allegory of variations on one moral choice all performed in the narrator's mind.[2] In this sense Milly ceases to be a real suffering character about half way through the book and becomes a mere symbol of the good, relieving Densher of his guilt in betraying her. Certainly Milly recedes from our eyes into what seems a superhuman goodness, at least as Densher interprets her for us, but to read her whole tale as an allegory is to be unfair to her heroism as a fallible and suffering character, as well as insensitive to the complexity of James' control, and irresponsible to one of his main themes. If Milly is turned into a perfect symbol, that is the fault of the characters, not of the author, for dehumanizing her in their deadly aesthetic. Yet the author himself is creating a work of art that must be limited and meaningful to his audience. Herein lies the paradox of his form and his plot.

Bersani bases his conclusions on James' use of repeated images, conditional tenses, and associative organization of the characters' thought in order to show one mind at work rather than several. Before we apply

such methods, we should note that James cannot put too much emphasis on differentiating his characters without undermining his whole technique.

If one character is to observe the same scene another sees in totally different terms, we will shift our attention from his positive impressions to his omissions and categories, from his consciousness to his lack of it. The resulting irony would be both cruder and less humanistic than anything James ever wrote. It would also make impossible the elaborate balance of sympathies, or at least excuses, which he strives to maintain in this novel. If Milly is merely an extension of the author, separated from some of his knowledge for an experiment, her ironic position as victim reduces her nobility, and maybe even her heroism, to something more silly than pure.

To examine the role of James' narrator more closely, let us analyze two extended passages, the chapters describing Milly's triumphal dinners at Lancaster Gate and at her *palazzo*. Whether these are corresponding pieces in a pattern is problematic. They are certainly linked thematically by corresponding gestures—Kate smiling across at Milly and Lord Mark (I 181) and Milly smiling across at Kate and Densher (II 250), Milly admiring Kate (I 176 & 134) and Kate admiring Milly (II 237–9). Yet these correspondences are not quite picked up by the characters, for when Densher draws a comparison, it is with another banquet at which Kate shone and Milly was not even present II–239). Knowing James, one might expect to find a large-scale aesthetic design in the book, and there may be one, at least in the opening and closing segments. Kate begins with her father, goes to her sister and Aunt Maud and Densher, then we shift to Susan and Milly. At the end Densher encounters Milly, then Susan (his last conversation with Milly is not given as a scene), then Kate and Aunt Maud, her father, her sister and alone. Such a circular design, defined mostly by the return of old Croy and Mrs. Condrip, would underline with irony of Kate's last remark, "We shall never be again as we were !" (II 439). Still, the pattern is not evident to the characters. They can only see the loose general comparisons between themselves, Kate and Milly for instance, and not the shape of events defined in the work of art. If anything, Densher misreads it. Thus the pattern of the book, if it exists at all, is no point of meeting for narrator and characters.

In the images we have a different pattern to deal with. But we cannot be so casual as Bersani in assigning a common consciousness to all the characters simply because they use the same figures. Careful analysis will show that the images in fact operate at several levels, indicating

potentials for communication which are never fulfilled, some dealing with themes of the story that cannot be avoided by any character who is facing the issues and helping to define them.

On the whole, "Milly's pictures are more vivid and elaborate than anyone else's. Only for her would an electric bell of fear sound in the midst of a social situation (I 176). Only she feels as if she has been herded into a train compartment when Lord Mark classifies her (I 174). And if others recognize magic and princesses, only she would dress up her fairy godmother in peaked hat and diamond buckles (I, 161). Densher, on the other hand, has no images that are unique to him, though he speaks of Kate as an uncut book (II, 243) in a figure that only Milly has come close to (I 211). He is more concerned to pin down in objective terms the situation he moves in than to appreciate it creatively.

However, most of Milly's images do find echoes in the rest of the book. Some like the music or air or light, are introduced almost as dead metaphors and expanded in greater or less degree afterward. They form part of the elemental discourse of the novel's society, as language is a condition of speech but does not guarantee understanding between people. Some are more explicitly present to the characters without being verbally shared among them. And some are grand thematic emblems.

The recurring references to flowers are of the lower, conventional sort. Milly notices Maud's care for correctness in her flowers (I 165). She considers herself a cheap exotic plant in contrast to Kate (I 183), Kate refers to her brothers as the "flower of the flock" (I 73) and talks of Milly's death "in the flower of her youth" (II 360). Mostly bound in cliche and casual observation, these references impinge little on the characters' minds, little affecting the shape of their perceptions. The flowers are merely the nice thing to do, the correct thing to say. Likewise, when Densher speaks of striking the right note (II 232), he echoes Susan's mention of tunes and the actual presence of the musicians, who represent the perfectly civilized taste. The words, the tune are just background music, against which nice people move in society.

"It wasn't difficult to get into the current, or to stand, at any rate, on the bank" (I 164), Milly describes in these words a much more positive experience than noticing flowers. She goes on to consider Mrs. Lowder a freighter chugging through an archipelago of conversational topics (I 179 , and in her later encounters she struggles against a strong current (I 299). But Lord Mark, without prompting from her, considers the social scene a great greasy sea" (I 167) and Kate considers her time with Densher their own "floating.....Land" (I 74). Finally, at

Milly's party, Densher not only recognizes but feels and bathes in the great human ocean, completely gulfed by Milly's waves of warm mildness (II 233). The image, supported by a concrete emblem like the Bronzino portrait or Milly's candles or pearls, is so insistently present and so known as to become constitutive of experience, opening up the possibility of shared experience between characters. That is, given that everyone in the book spontaneously perceives the social milieu as a body of water, and the perception is not just the result of a verbal convention, the characters should be able to comprehend one another's social experience at a deeper level than the surface of language. Ironically, the absence of verbal sharing of this idea indicates not implicit understanding so much as the very isolation of the characters. The recurring picture presents not an imposition of the author's mind but a possibility for deep interaction between people which is not fulfilled.

It might be helpful to note that there are other unfulfilled images in the book which have not been recognized as such. If a critic notes that James does not expand his explicitly biblical images for their full symbolic value, it is because he means the image to be cut short to indicate the narrowness of the characters using it. Thus when Susan Stringham pictures Milly as Christ being tempted to take the kingdoms of the earth (I 138), she is wrong to think that Milly is tempted, and wrong to box her into a Christ figure even if she is right to so appreciate her unique purity. The image is deliberately cut off by the narrator to emphasize its limitations.

A few images present not only possibilities but positive choices for the characters. Milly begins innocently enough, noticing "a face all the portrait of a prelate" (I 163) and then perceives her surroundings "all touches in a picture" (I 165). The artifice of London society naturally lends itself to comparison with portraiture as Matcham seems like a Watteau (I 231). But when Lord Mark shows her the Bronzino, he is choosing to impose that mannered likeness on her. Even Milly herself takes up the portrait as an emblem, not only accepting the Bronzino, but placing herself among the pictures in Sir Luke's office. (I 257). Finally in Venice she chooses–Susan perceives and interprets her design for us—to recreate a perfect Veronese painting in her *palazzo* (II 225). If Densher shares the picture, it is not only because he has been tipped off, but because he sees for himself its perfection and consciously sinks into it. Thus the portrait, which may have begun as a kind of cliche for Milly, grows to be a major issue in the action, both as an emblem and an instrument of the moral conflict. It can operate as such only because it is shared dramatically among the characters, That is, Mark becomes morally culpable not because he

perceives life in narrowly aesthetic terms but because he deliberately offers the dead aestheticism of the Bronzino to Mill as a model of sucess. And Milly's perfection is that she can communicate all the richness of style and truth of love to her guests in a conscious imitation of the picture.

The other images in these two chapters vary within these levels of preconscious, experienced, and chosen. When Milly talks like a fairy princess, she is echoing Susan's adoring appreciation (I 134 & II 228), showing the shared understanding between the two. But Kate's use of the image is sinister and selfish (II 251), like the portrait and the dove, a means of cutting Milly off out of the land of the living. Densher thinks constantly in terms of light, the most....conventional light of understanding, or the light of Milly's mysterious style (II 223) or the gleams of understanding that come to him from Kate (II 249) or the flame of his love for her (II 247). Other characters use conventional light imagery. Densher uses more because of his desperate need to understand Kate and secure her for himself; the element of discourse almost rises to thematic significance because Densher is so determined to be enlightened.

One image remains difficult to place. In the midst of her conversation with Lord Mark, Milly slips into reverie : "our young lady alighted, came back, taking up her destiny again as if by a wave or two of her wings to place herself in sight of an alternative to it" (I 177–8). We know that the dove is the central image of the book, fully dramatized by the characters, resonant with the Biblical reference to being betrayed by a friend, consciously offered to Milly by Kate as she explains the hardness of London society, ironically mediating between Kate and Densher as they consider her money and her purity (I 309 and II 238–9). But if Milly first encounters this self-image when Kate imposes it on her, how can she *speak* of wings on her first meeting in London ? But then, if we look more closely, we discover that other characters are birds too. Densher has ruffled his wings settling in England after his European childhood (I–109) and Maud is an eagle with wings for flight like those Kate ascribes to Milly (I 83). Here Bersani may have his point . . . the sharing of the image is not dramatically justified, and the image itself is both too specific and too ambivalent to be an assumed element of discourse. Unless birds represent very clearly one element of the human situation, they should not be spontaneously applied to all of the different characters.

We can only conclude that the narrater in his marvellous wisdom here planted an image that the characters may pick up and build on for good or ill if they choose. In this case they do choose.

Fortunately we need not rely on imagery alone to gauge the functions of the narrator, for James has given us his guiding hand very explicitly in some places, intruding *sua voce* on his characters' meditations. Holland noted these obvious breaks and claimed that the author was thus taking responsibility for his characters' judgements so that he could leave his form and plot totally in their hands. His remark fits very well the situation to which Holland referred, in which we are called on to admire Kate's heroism through Densher (I3). But when James breaks in on Milly he is dealing in a very delicate sort of irony. She is new to Londen; Lord Mark is both telling her the brutal truth and beginning to beguile her. The reader, meeting her for the first time, must be beguiled himself by her intelligence and imagination and sensitivity. So at one point the narrator stands over her shoulder, repeating her own words to her . . . "On our young lady's left" (I 164) . . . as she tries to orient herself. He is implying no judgement, merely showing a little of her aloneness in the big new world. But when she is rather brutally dismissed by Lord Mark, the narrater quickly jumps in to defend her from any hint of resentment : "The kind of mind that thus, in our young lady, made for mere seeing and taking is precisely one of the charms of our subject" (I 175). Such a remark is miles away from anything that Milly could be thinking herself, and is made for the reader's benefit only, to show what is *not* in Milly's mind. It sets up a certain distance between the reader who would suspect such a thing and Milly who is too pure to let it cross her mind. Further on, the narrator steps in, not to defend Milly, but just to show that she has slipped away from the social scene and even from the reader into her own imagination. "The fear that I speak of was her own desire to stop it" (I 176); "It was just a part that while this process went forward our young lady alighted...." (I 177). Both remarks refer to her reveries, but the first is closer to her own, used to identify her alarm while the second keeps the reader apart from whatever it is she actually sees in her vision. However, all these signs alert us to the necessity of distinguishing between Milly's immediate sensations which must be reliable to make the narrative method possible, and the workings of her imagination on them, in which she may be deceived. At the end of the chapter we have a very ambiguous picture, with Lord Mark both declaring Milly's success and dismissing her naive Americanness, which bores him. Even Aunt Maud's later comments are not perfectly authoritative : "....the two wearers of the waistcoat—either with sincerity or with hypocrisy...." endorse Milly's triumph. While the narrator himself never judges Milly, except her freedom from resentment, he provides the basis on which we can discover the irony of Lord Mark's attack. Anything less authoritative would leave Milly without support in the reader's mind. Anything less delicate would reduce her to a bratty ingenue.

For Densher, however, the narrator seems by no means sympathetic. "His honour, at the same time, let us add, fortunately fell short tonight of spoiling his little talk with Susan Shepherd" (II 224). That fragmented statement is pure sarcasm, a rugged condemnation, but it is so close to Densher's own feelings that it can hardly be ascribed to another mind. It echoes at the end of the chapter. The seeming authorial objectivity sounds more like the form in which Densher....would phrase a public confession if he were writing himself up in the newspaper. Likewise "....the absence of it, as we know, quite unnatural...." (II 223) makes little sense as an authorial remark, since the reader has no immediate reason for considering the absence of an allusion to Milly's health unnatural, having seen how valiantly she hides it, but it would sound right in a journalist's evaluation of the case. Perhaps these authorial remarks are a special case, being so close together.

Let us try one more from the previous chapter, in which Kate and Densher enjoy a rare conversation alone. "Such was today, in its freshness, the moral air, as we may say, that hung about our young friends" (II 211). The narrator seems to be endorsing for both Kate and Densher the sense of release from Maud, but in fact he is also mocking Densher's 'moral air' in the light of the proposition he will make at the end of the encounter. Far from always supporting the characters as Holland would suggest, the narrator seems to be distancing his characters, not judging them, but pointing out where judgments may be had. He must, or the book, portraying an evil action through wicked characters, would become just what its characters are.

Without doubt the most complex interaction between the narrator and the characters consists in the organization of interior monologue. To deal with it in even two moderate chapters is impossible in this limited space, but we may sketch some of the issues.

Milly's chapter is ordered in time by her conversation with Lord Mark. His superficial or arrogant remarks break in on her meditations with something of a shock, drawing out the worst in her. Milly's rather inane opening remark about everything happening so fast has behind it all the force of the majestic newness she sees, but it is finally met by Mark's regretting the breakdown of the exclusive London social hierarchy—"nobody was anywhere" (I 167). The rest of the conversation progresses almost at cross purposes to what Milly is thinking. Her mind keeps circling back to Kate as she talks about other things, seeing her as the key to understanding and functioning in London society. Yet the conversation doesn't come to

Kate until the end of the chapter, when Milly is more concerned with protecting herself from Mark's digging too deep. Much of the chatter is confessedly irrelevant or separate from the motives which prompted it. "The girl went on as if now frankly to amuse him" (I 180). "But there are things you don't know," (I 179), Milly says more to provoke an opinion of herself from Mark than to assert anything positive. Thus the dialogue, the objective pole of the chapter, neither determines the motions of Milly's mind, nor is determined by them. In fact the narrator is not party to all the causes behind what is said, and so the lines come out cryptically. "Does she know much about you ?" "No, she just likes us."...."Has that lady....told her ?" "Told her what ?" "Everything." (I 172–3). If we assume that the objective situation is presented by the narrator to the character in order that she may react to it, this inconsistency of content and motivation, this reserve of unspecified remarks, shows the character holding out on the audience and the narrator.

On the other hand, there are patches of dialogue more specified for us than for the characters because we have the knowledge to appreciate them. When Lord Mark speaks of Milly's being jumped at, we recall Susan Stringham's temptation to pounce on her (I 131), but she doesn't understand his sinister meaning, considers it better than being laughed at (I 172). Or when he notes that Maud will get her money's worth, Milly replies that Maud is an idealist (I 178).

But when she does take in what is being said, Milly may react completely out of proportion to the objective statement, as when she flies into an ecstasy over the thought of social success (I 178). In such cases, the narrator and the audience, without really having the conversation manipulated for them, can enjoy an irony not available to the characters.

The manipulation we may sense more directly in one of Milly's own monologues, in which no reasons are given to account for her conclusions. On occasion she is just being very actually intuitive. Other times she is bringing to bear knowledge she could not have or associate with the situation. For instance, she picks up Marks' "you're the best now" to understand herself as a *thing* for him. a fair conclusion based on his description of how one uses and collects people in London (I 172). His "knowing" is undefined, referring either to her quality as a thing or to her being the best that Mrs. Lowder has, but neither determines that she must "helplessly" surrender to his judgment of her. If he has had enough of her particular kind of thing, he has not said so; the conclusion has grawn out of her unverified intuitions from the beginning that he would not understand her observations (I 164). "Her submission" is then

given objective justification by the fact that Mark has been to New York several times before, a fact that Milly does not discover until an unspecified later time. Then Milly projects his experience there as a basis for his judgment of her now and works into the train metaphor already cited. Each sentence in this meditation seems almost independent logically, held together partly by the mystery that Milly is, partly by the narrator's determination to show us the final meaning of this experience for her, a very tricky affair when Milly is at the same time being treated with some irony for her lack of knowledge. In fact, the irony subsists in exactly that area where Milly is being herself so acute and mysterious, so that the sensitivity of her responses and the concern of the narrator to show both her intensity and her naivete work together.

Densher is diametrically opposed to Milly in his determination to define rather than to accept. Therefore, it is possible to determine many of his remarks within the temporal form of the conversation. "Since she's to die I'm to marry her"...."So that when her death has taken place I shall in the natural course have money ?"...."You'll in the natural course have money." (II 246). There is no ambiguity here. The intervening descriptions are just stage directions for the ensuing speech. The narrator and character share the purpose of defining clearly just exactly what Kate's wicked plan is.

In passing one may be struck by the conclusions Densher comes to in themselves because they echo some of Milly's own thoughts. He notes that Milly's exquisite manner changes people, "people who during the day fingered their Baedekers, and gaped at their frescoes", the very people Milly had not known what to do with in the National Museum (I 316). Again he sees in her charm the American girl "as .. he had seen her on the day of her meeting him, in London, in Kate's company (II 235), the American girl she herself determined to be that day (I 323). Like imagery, such repetitions of words and ideas may show the narrator's contriving hand at work, or it may merely indicate Milly's success in her ventures. It is significant that Densher, who really does come to love Milly deeply, is able to share more of her ideas than other characters.

The interesting point is that the concept of American spontaneity forms a large part of Densher's impression of Milly and her triumph. Thus when Densher describes his immediate feelings he is in the position, not of a lyric poet waiting to be overheard in Mill's phrase, but of an intelligent character in dialogue with an understanding reader, one prepared by the foresight of the narrator. When he switches his attention to Kate the

justification is alluded to...."that came out in a word from Kate" (I 235)—but not disclosed until later in the paragraph when the 'word' is quoted, just as the mind leaps from one topic to the next. Once he thinks of Kate it is quite reasonable for him to remember their talk on the Piazza, still hanging in suspense, and to speculate on its consequences. His sense of her changed manner as well as the enormity of his own request explain why he is so concerned to see her, and how he can project her trapped feeling. Only then does he slip into the exclusive world of their relationship in which pressures and counterpressures do not have correlatives in events. The undefined "plenty of things" become "indications" of her sensitivity; the "aspect varies to give him a sense of his action" (I 236). In such esoteric terms the narrator is helpless to guide; the relationship is privileged. Yet it is constantly being held up against the objective correlative of Milly...."as Milly's own", "a liking greater than Milly's", the "mildness that Mills diffused", not because the narrator can open it up to us, but because Densher himself is opening up to the purity of Milly's charm. All this is to say that Densher, the reasonable character, makes his thoughts accessible in an orderly way, is even transparent when he opens up to share Milly's understanding, but flouts the narrator and the reader with obscurity of reference, not of organization, when he deals with his treasured love for Milly.

Other passages could be cited *ad infinitum*, of course, to show the varieties of James' control over his characters' thoughts. The point of this whole paper is that his control is subtle, complex, and varied, never actually imposing one mind on that of the different characters because James himself must abide by the moral of his own work : he must be clear enough to communicate but he must not so dehumanize the experience he describes as to make the work of art a deadly covering for heinous crime. Paradoxically the very covering of Milly's illness as demanded by the work is what she herself requests in life, and being true to horrible deceit requires him to be obscure about his meanings. James has written not an allegory which abstracts a moral situation, but a complex interveaving of life and art in the most intimate and literal sense.

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NOTES

1. All references to the text are taken from the Modern Library edition, New York : 1930.
2. Leo Bersani 'The Narrator as Centre in *The Wings of the Dove*' *in Modern* Fiction *Studies* 1960, Vol. VI. On Milly as a transcendant figure, see also S. Kock "Transcendence in *The Wings of the Dove*, *Modern Fiction Studies*, 1966.
3. L. B. Holland. *The Expense of Vision.* Princeton : The University Press, 1964, p. 287.

★

Light Beyond Hell

Light fills the air
Each leaf shinetrembles

The rectangles squares holes
under groves
light won't break in there
they dream and drown
in the dark worms

light waves beyond the ridge.

God fences off light
from the hollows
worms wrigglegape
and suck in the fumes

O God where doth the cool light play
the large arc of light
beyond hell

– Subhas Saha

The Oldman

1

Who else is not afraid of death ?

The old man sits still,
eyes soaked in the fear of furores
hidden in the storm.

More or less he has had a share
in everyone's dream and dreaming,
love and loving.

Is't not his concern :
whether a god dwells in the temple,
or the mangoes ripen early on boughs,
or the children weeping in the dark ?

2

Really, he is too hard to be tamed.
A child's rising obstinacy for the toy
that is broken.

How can you let him know now,
that there's no difference between
losing and being lost, beating and being beaten off.

Only a drag-net emptiness hangs, spreads
between the ship and shore where shadows
of vultures' wings dangle without vultures,
and sea-men snore like broken drums, without sleep.

3

The old man, whitened by the scattered moon,
flutters like the leaves of an aged banyan tree
near the village-end broken temple where the bats
buckle the darkness with ceaseless screechings.

Old man stirs with stillness of a lonely road.

– Niranjan Mohanty

Becket and the Knights in *Murder in the Cathedral*

Kamini Dinesh

The antithesis between the spiritual and the temporal that Eliot draws in the First Act of *Murder in the Cathedral* is consistently carried forward to a culmination in the second and concluding Act. On the one side is Becket, and on the other the Tempters and the Knights who move on the same plane. It has been observed that there is a morality type symmetrical pattern of duplication of the Tempters in the Knights.[1] The Tempters not only held up to Becket hopes of gaiety or power, but more subtly, built for the earthly Vicar of Christ a dream of martyrdom as spiritual exaltation in accomplishment of man's own ends. In his encounter with the Tempters, Becket realizes his will in the will of God and finds that the way to overcome the most subtle of the Tempters—the fourth—is to 'act' by 'suffering' to fulfil the design of God. In the second Act the Knights as tempters of the audience justify their 'act'.[2] It may be elaborated how the Knights, through this explanation and justification, stand conceptually in an antithetical relationship to Becket. It is an understanding of their role in this respect that leads to a fuller explication of Eliot's concept of martyrdom.

That Eliot intended to call up consideration of the 'act' of the Knights as an explication, by contrast, to that of Becket is obvious from the effect of immediacy created in their speech. Both the Archbishop and the Knights speak in twentieth century prose when explaining their point of view. For Becket's sermon, as for the Knight's harangue, the congregation or the populace is the same—the modern spectators of the play. To go beyond that : the sermon explains when death ceases to mean mere physical cessation and can be interpreted as having a significance beyond the temporally obvious. The Knights speaking in the same terms coax a

meaning beyond the apparently observed. Moreover, the third Knight, given the opportunity to speak first, states, "We have been perfectly disinterested" (II. 444–5), repeating emphatically when he concludes, ".... please give us atleast the credit for being completely disinterested in the business" (II. 470–471).[3] He is, besides, careful to point out, "....they won't give us any glory" (II. 468). The second Knight explaining that "the King's aim has been perfectly consistent" and commendable explains it succintly : "Our King saw the one thing needful was to restore order" (II. 495). For this purpose of the King, "We have been instrumental", and he adds, "we have served your interests, we merit your applause; and if there is any guilt whatsoever in the matter, you must share it with us" (II. 530–4). The fourth Knight putting the question, "Who killed the Archbishop ?" (II. 447) impresses the inevitability of what followed, i.e., no choice was left for them, no other course of action open to them.

Could not the Knights, in putting forward these arguments, be parodying the act of martyrdom as explained by Becket in his sermon ? The Knights have also stated their case in terms of having made their will one with the will of a higher power. They have explained that in the light of kingship they draw their being, that there is the perfect design or pattern of the Sovereign in time... the maintenance of order as the world sees order; that they, the instruments of the king, have lost their will in the will of their ruler and have acted for the good of other men; what they did was not the good of other men; what they did was not the design of one man among them, but of a greater power.

The arguments of the Knights and Becket, therefore, run parallel. But the Knights speaking to the congregation as the Tempters had spoken to Becket, setting temporal authority and good against spiritual authority and light, are posing a question more subtle than the one that the Pharisees had put to Jesus. Neither did Jesus' admonition, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's"[4] set one in balance against the other, for the things that are God's cannot be viewed in the light of temporal advantage in which the Knight's would place them.

Yet the two 'acts' are inextricably linked, for if Becket's end is a 'suicide while of unsound mind', the Knights are heroes and vindicators of the law of the land. But if Becket is a martyr, they are branded like Cain.

Martin Browne, who directed the play at Canterbury, is quoted as having commented that the fourth Knight, for instance in arguing that

Becket's is a suicide, is repeating the suggestion put into Becket's mind by the fourth Tempter, and thereby it unifies the whole experience of Becket, showing it as a single struggle towards Christian acceptance. It is further argued that the fourth Knight's case, however, "is not an impossible one. The play does not disprove his argument; it simply states that the martyrdom is genuine....A priori acceptance of Becket's martyrdom by the audience is to be assumed."[5]

Contrary to this view, it may be stated that within the play itself there is an unambiguous statement of the martyrdom of Becket. In fact, the nature of the theme demands attention to the speeches and decisions that precede and follow Becket's death. The 'act' of the Knights and that of Becket can only be qualitatively differentiated and understood by keeping these in focus.

At the end of the first Act, Becket had found his bearings, and ignoring the overtures of the priests and the women and the overwhelming assault of the Tempters, declared :

I know
What yet remains to show you of my history
Will seem to most of you at best futility,
Senseless self-slaughter of a lunatic,
Arrogant passion of a fanatic.
I know that history at all times draws
The strangest consequence from remotest cause.
But for every evil, every sacrilege,
Crime, wrong, oppression and the axe's edge,
Indifference, exploitation, you, and you;
And you, must all be punished, so must you,
I shall no longer act or suffer, to the sword's end. (I. 694-705)

The martyrdom is the enactment of this decision and rises above the suicidal act for it is, as Muir states, an action with 'the mystery implied in it"[6] ;

It is out of time that my decision is taken.
If you call that decision
To which my whole being gives entire consent.
I give my life
To the Law of God above the Law of Man. (II. 340–44)

The action "is both earthly and transcendental."[7]

In the consistent unified thought of the play these lines complement the sermon where Becket says :

> It (martyrdom) is never the design of man; for the true martyr is he who has become the instrument of God, who has lost his will in the will of God, and who no longer desires anything for himself, not even the glory of being a martyr. (Interlude. 67–70).

Becket not only *realizes* the Law of God but also acknowledges a tension between the Law of God and the force of the Law of Man. But the design of God embraces both. The Knights are the instruments of the second law or force. Contrary to the saint, they are subservient to the Law of Man and ignorant of the other Law.

In their prose speeches the Knights explain the determining social factors and the inexorability of the historical process. But in deferring to these, they are deferring to exigencies in time, of political and social forces which Becket has already overcome when he faced the first three tempters. Thus the Knights are 'men of action' in the ordinary sense of the term. What they accomplish falls within the accepted conception of human action. Becket 'acts' in suffering their violence. Becket knows what awaits him and understands the incomprehension of those who are dragged down with the inexorable movement at the rim of the wheel :

> You think me reckless, desperate and mad,
> You argue by results, as this world does,
> To settle if an act be good or bad.
> You defer to the fact (II. 332–35)

After the culminating act, the difference between the Knight's acceptance of the will of their Lord and Becket's acceptance of the will of God again emerges. The Law of the Lord and the Law of Man both call for the blood of the Archbishop. The Knights call for involvement of the audience in guilt for self-justification. Blood is also the culmination of the martyr's acceptance of the Law of God. But it leads to a reward to be shared by the people :

> A Christian, saved by the blood of Christ,
> Ready to suffer with my blood.
> This is the sign of the Church always,
> The sign of blood, blood for blood
> His blood given to buy my life,
> My blood given to pay for his death,

My death for his death (II. 368-75)

And the third Priest further explains :

—the Church is stronger for this action,
Triumphant in adversity. It is fortified
By persecution : supreme, so long as men will die for it.

(II. 590-92)

Becket's death, finally, calls up neither pity nor fear. It is a fulfilment of the design of God and a glorification of his Church. It is accepted with a threnody of religious exaltation :

The Knights are outcasts, "weak sad men, lost erring souls, homeless in earth or heaven." The audience, now dissociated from them, are partakers of the spiritual sustenance in the death of Becket. The involvement of the audience leads on to an act of faith which is essential for completion of the martyrdom. As important as this is the inexorability of the 'act' of the Knights. While refusing to accept it, they too are part of the "design" of God—a design that embraces both the Law of God and the Law of Man, running against it; a design that embraces both the martyr in Christ and persecutor :

For all things exist only as seen by Thee, only as known by Thee, all things exist

Only in Thy light, and Thy glory is declared even in that which denies Thee, the darkness declares the glory of light.

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NOTES

1. D. E. Jones. *The Plays of T S. Eliot* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960), p. 59. also F. C. Matthiessen, 'The Plays of T. S. Eliot', *Essays in Modern Drama* ed. Morris Freedman (Boston : D. C. Heath and Compay, 1966), p. 271.

2. David Ward writes, "...the agon persists in the natural man, and the conflict is transferred to the audience. This is why, in the scene following the pathos, Eliot has the Knights turn round and address the audience directly, forcing the audience into total participation, challenging them to face temptation, to undergo an agon of their own. In his new role of fourth Knight the fourth tempter is again the most subtle, with his question, "Who killed the Archbishop ?" It is said that in the original performances there were murmurs of agreement at the fourth Knights sophistries, implicitly convicting Thomas of the gross spiritual pride of courting martyrdom, of suicide for the sake of glory." *T. S. Eliot Between Two Worlds : A Reading of T. S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973) p. 191.

3. All quotations are from *Murder in the Cathedral*, ed. Nevill Coghill, An Educational Edition (Faber and Faber, 1965).

4. Matt. 22 : 21

5. *E.* Martin Browne is quoted and the argument elaborated by Gerald Weales. *Religion in Modern English Drama* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1961), p. 192.

6. Edwin Miur, New Literature, 'London Mercury'
a selection in *T. S. Eliot* : The Critical Heritage Vol. 1 ed. Michael Grant (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), p. 321.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 321

A New Love

When we sat face to face
We are like the waves
Gently marching towards the eye of the storm.
When we close our eyes
We descend
The crumbling staircase to oblivion—
A new day breaks from our visual rhapsody
A gesture. A whisper. A word.
A new love springs. A new dawn dances.

We march into the visual ravens :
Doors open
Into fitful past—
The cool wind shatters
Into splinters of glass.
The agony of solitude
And opaque life haunts around
The sun gently explodes
And in its fractured mirror
We watch the controversy of hurts
Of the present social debris.

Let us walk alone
With rainbows on our palms
In the shadow of ruins
With the blaze of sun in heart
With the flame of moon in soul
With the sparkle of star in eyes.
Uncared and unmindful
Of the social routine
Like the rest restive tides
We shall walk towards
A familiar and strange destiny
Weaving our raiment
With the strange violence
That has grown within us.

Let us walk together, hand in hand
Sharing the passion of the black moon
Exploring the silence of the seas

Celebrating the madness of our oneness
Experiencing the savage wilderness of our hearts

Recalling the green memories of the past
Caressing each other
Making a headstar for tomorrow
Into a realm of coloured skyscape
The world would be ours
If we have the guts to face.

Though, we both fear the world,
Yet, we feverishly long for beautiful dreams.
Life is a gift, Let us live and challenge.
Love is an exciting experience
Only hearts of gold alone can dare.
Love is divine,
Keeps the soul attuned
To the musician passions,
Petalled tender lovetimes,
Open vistas of spiritual union
Transcending frontiers of social taboos,
Into the trance of innocence and beauty....
And into the magic world of mute melodies.

Let us walk alone
Into a new world of our longing
Let there be smile on our lips
Let our whispers create
A new language of love
Let everything we touch
Revive the language of the heart.
So that fireflies may weave
The manuscript of our lovetimes
Therefore, Let us walk together
As lovers,
Raging a rebellion in the rising sky.
And hand in hand,
Let us walk with the storm,
Sharing its immutable pride.

—Syed Ameeruddin

L' animal Binato : the Divided World of the Burgess Novels

Jasbir Jain

The world which one encounters in the novels of Anthony Burgess does not appear very attractive at first sight. The inherent division, the schizophrenic split, a falling apart as if it were, deter the reader despite the strong humanistic undercurrent. Orwell once, while referring to Swift's work, said that it was possible to admire a writer's work even while disagreeing with his assumptions;[1] could the reverse be also true ? And is enjoyment a different matter, depending, as Orwell pointed out, in part on the fact whether the world (of the work) could hold together or not ?[2] On the face of it, there is little one can point to specifically, or hold on to as the basis of one's likes and dislikes. There appears to be an obvious simplicity, a thinness of ideas, a plot well-constructed and a sense of authorial domination. Burgess projects a sense of self-sufficiency, a wholeness, like a man who is master of his world with a kind of Chestertonian mockery at his disposal. But these responses are shortlived and cannot withstand close examination. The simplicity is deceptive, the ideas a continuing interaction, the plots have devious pathway sand the wholeness is in fact a fractured multiplicity. Burgess is a writer who calls one to the beginnings : for by the time one reaches the end of a Burgess novel, the realisation that the journey has been undertaken on mistaken premises becomes inevitable: everything is upset by a surprise clue : the apparent conclusion is not a conclusion at all. So back one comes to the beginning : this time trying to pick up all the clues the writer has so carefuly woven iuto his texture : and one realizes that the clues function at several different levels : psychological, intertextual, etymological and textual. The Burgess world is not a self-contained one : it refers to world beyond itself. It is what Barthes refers to as the 'scriptible' and the 'writerly' text and calls upon the co-authorship of the reader;[3] it reaches

out to demonstrate that there is no such thing as an "innocent reader" or a "neutral text." It sets out as a travesty of the known : but finally turns it upside down twice over.

The question then arises : how does one approach his work ? Is it as science fiction, as anti-utopias, crime thrillers or as psychological studies of the contemporary mind ? I'm sure the list could be extended : but no matter where one begins there is a central division in his world : not only in the kinds of novels he has written, in the pseudonyms he has written under,[4] in the fictions he has built, in the silent and the present, but also in the questioning of human nature. In a long prefatory essay to *1985* (1978), Burgess simplifies this by putting it within a religious framework :

> The terms Pelagian and Augustinian, though theological, are useful for describing the poles of man's belief as to his own nature. The British monk Pelagius,.... was responsible for a heresy condemned by the Church in A.D. 416 which, nevertheless, has never ceased to exercise an influence on Western moral thought....Pelagius denied this terrible endowment (the doctrine of original sin). Man was free to choose salvation as much as damnation : he was not predisposed to evil, there was no original sin. Nor was he necessarily predisposed to good : the fact of total freedom of choice rendered him neutral.[5]

Good and evil, right or wrong, freedom and constraint, internal and external, will and environment, action and inaction go on to present an endless list of binary oppositions posited against each other. There is also one—and perhaps an important one—between the comic and the tragic. But this division is not all that rigid; we are all both Pelagian and Augustinian, either in cyclical phases or a kind of doublethink, at one and the same time (*1985*, pp. 56-57). This is in itself an unusual standpoint refuting the possibility of both :—(I) the cohesive, integrative conventional religious approach to man and his surroundings and (ii) the absurd existential approach which clamours for unity, and emphasizes, on the contrary, the fractured nature of the human being. There is in this division the awareness of a schizophrenic existence which is central to his world.

Schizophrenia, once looked upon as a disease and an undesirable possibility, a divisive force, becomes, for Burgess, a human necessity. Incidentally this also posits a new view and assessment of art. Steiner in his essay "Cry Havoc"[6] dwells at length on the division between man's aesthetic sensibility and his politically oriented everyday existence which questioned

the very concept of art which considered moral values an integral component. Before him Orwell had expressed a similar concern in "Inside the Whale."[7] But this schizophrenic division which indicated an absence of centre in man in the prewar world was increasingly a reality of the postwar one which had to reframe its value structure both in terms of reality and human nature. The earlier recognitions of this were increasingly evident in the existential dimensions of this problem.[8] A moral cohesiveness was just not possible and schizophrenia appeared to be for many, including Orwell, the only way of preserving intellectual freedom and integrity ["The Prevention of Literature" (1946). *CEJL*, IV, p. 67]. However, the consequences of this division were disastrous for Winston Smith in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, who unable to sustain this polarity wills himself to death.

Burgess's *1985* is a parody of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. But unlike Winston Smith, Burgess's characters, here and in other novels, use schizophrenia as a means of self-exploration and of understanding human nature. *1985* continues some of the themes of Burgess's earlier novels. My reference here is to the Enderby novels—there are four of them *Inside Mr. Enderby*, *Enderby Outside*, *Enderby's End or The Clockwork Testament*, and the more recent *Enderby's Dark Lady or No End to Enderby*, in which Enderby is resurrected. Enderby's name comes form two sources : "the remote and uninhabitable Antartic territory called Enderby Land, and a poem about a shipwreck by Jean Ingelow in which church bells clang out a tune called "The Bride of Enderby".[9] But it also means End or Be. In a prefatory note to *Enderby's Dark Lady*, Burgess writes :

> Enderby first got into my head in early 1959, when I was a colonial civil servant working in the Sultanate of Brunci, North Borneo. One day, delirious with sandfly fever, I opened the door of the bathroom in my bungalow and was not altogether surprised to see a middle-aged man seated on the toilet writing what appeared to be poetry. The febrite vision lasted less than a second, but the impossible personage stayed with me and demanded the writing of a novel about him (p. 7).

And thus began the first of the Enderby novels *Inside Mr. Enderby*. It is in the second, *Enderby Outside* that the erstwhile poet is working as a barman in Piggy's Sty going under the name of Hogg, and is pulled up by his psychiatrist for writing poetry, which is a form of protest. Later Enderby thinks he has killed Yod Crewsy and as a result he flees from there. Then follows a comedy of errors, of walking at night into the bedchambers of women he intends to sleep with or not, of escaping to the

lavatory, and of interrupting love-making because of poetic inspiration. Enderby lands up finally with an old friend Rawcliffe who like Yod had plagiarised his works. But by now Enderby is in no mood to attack those who steal from his poems : he nurses Rawcliffe through his last illness. By now plagiarising has become "*play*giarising" thus stressing the intertextual nature of literature. It is also a way of questioning reality, and the nature of art, of truth, of uncertainty. Everything is ephemereal, falling in and out of place. There is no end, though it shall end by and by—but it doesn't. Relationships, however, uncertain, or unreal, or stepmotherly continue while Enderby interchanges and interacts with his ownself continuing to write sonnets.

Once again in *MF* the play is of another order : half-comic, half-detective, half-playful—*MF* reveals mystery after mystery. The title itself is apparently named after the protagonist : Miles Faber but in fact this is only a cover and *MF* has at least half a dozen other meanings. *F* has a musical connotation (F major) and fabrication and fabulation are not very far from faber. The publishing firm of Faber and Faber also hovers in the background. Miles itself besides being 'miles run' or 'miles scissored' also carried the meaning of 'mille.' There was also a well known singer Buddy Miles whose discs "Them Changes" were very popular in the 70s. *MF* is also Modern Fiction and the central metaphor of incest is a reworking of the intertextuallity of all literature. Miles who is expelled from college for sexual exhibitionism, discovers a strong incestuous strain in his family, Not only is he the child of an incestuous union, now an orphan, but as he later finds out, also the grandchild of one. On being expelled he undertakes a journey like the knight in search of the Holy Grail, only in this case it happens to be in search of a poet Sib Legeru—a poet whose work Miles finds 'exciting' because of its evation of the useless, and the unclassifiable. But as he moves on, his guardians attempt to change his goals, shift his perspectives, and in this reworking of Greek and Elizabethan drama with its murders and intrigues, and its treachery, the protagonist finds that there is a clash between his will and the external freedom is extremely limited in every sense for "Nobody's free. I mean choice is limited by inbuilt structures and predetermined genetic patterns and all the rest of it."[10] One is not free not to eat and sleep, only free to cease to exist but then freedom ceases to have any meaning. Its "just silence and emptiness" (*MF*, p. 15).

The initial act of exhibitionism is performed as an act of protest, as a means of establishing an identity, of standing out in a crowd. This existential protest acquires comic dimensions as it goes along and the greatest challenge that can be posed to a child of a double relationship—the

child of an aunt-mother, of a wife-sister—is whether or not he is willing to commit incest. The rest of the story is a fluctuation between the efforts of Miles and his guardians to prevent him from committing incest and the events which conspire towards a reenactment of an incestuous union. He discovers he has a twin-sister who has been hidden away in the Caribbean. As he moves towards this destination he finds that the future is a reworking of the past, "the whole of the stupid past is our father." He ends up wearing his father's clothes (p. 53) and with a feeling of having eaten his father. Just as the future is a repetition of the past, and sons step into parental roles, freedom becomes a bondage and the self encounters the twinself.

Miles lands up in prison as a result of mistaken identity, hoping to be freed when the truth is discovered, waiting for the inspector's reaction, "That's not the bloody boy, what's going on here ?" (p. 88) But instead what happens is a "bizarre, totally life-changing encounter" which upsets his hopes, he is merged into the twinself. There is no recognition leading to any true identification for "My spitten image walking the garden of this world without excuse of true egg-splitting" (p. 90). There is this extropolated *id*, Miles realises that : "It hath been said that each one in this world/Hath an exact copy of his true self/Though truly which th' original is which/the copy who can truly say." There is in this recognition also a sense of denial, and in this extension also a sense of withdrawal, in this attraction there rests a sense of repulsion. Llew, his twinself, ravishes Miles's sister and Miles faces the inevitability of this act :

> My father had been undoubtedly mad. He had been granted a mad vision. He had envisioned his daughter set upon sexually by someone of my appearance, and he had mistaken that person for myself (p. 137).

As a result of this rape Miss Emmett, their nurse kills Llew. And the rest of the story is about Miles's efforts to get rid of the dead body, which is not only the self, but also the past containing both the desirable and the undesirable. Finally, posing as Llew, Miles has to pretend to marry his own sister, thus violating the Levi-Strausian taboo on incest. The present has its roots in the past :

> A man with a clubfoot had once answered the unanswerable and moved into sleep with his mother. Riddles are there for good purpose—not to be answered (p. 182).

But whether or not riddles be answered, Miles has to try and solve the ones posed by Dr. Gonzi. And in this he moves towards a

perception of the contradictory nature of reality of life, of truth—he moves towards the central anomaly of the human experience :

> For order has both to be and not to be challenged, this being the anomalous condition of the sustenance of the cosmos. Rebel becomes hero; witch becomes saint. Exogamy means disruption and also stability, incest means stability and also disruption (p. 183).

Finally he finds that he has solved the riddle—that Sib Legeru the poet is siblegeru, lying with one's own sib, it means incest. Incest in the third generation is at last fulfilled and exorcised, and Miles marries Ethel (who is a black) and they live together not only happily but with a family of adopted children.

The world of *MF* is highly comic and surrealistic at the same time. As it moves from one level of meaning to another, it fully exploits the richness of language. In the name of his grandfather Z Fonanta are the echoes of zoon phonanta : the talking animal : and in such references is woven the whole linguistic structure as well as the narrative one. *MF* is a highly self-reflexive novel : the riddle which begins as a search for identity becomes part reality, part illusion. The narrator keeps on assuring the reader that "the main structure is solidly true, but would it matter much if it weren't" (p. 205). Several approaches are there to reality as well as to the narrative art which in itself becomes a metaphor for life : life is a puzzle whose meaning constantly eludes us. We try to weave patterns out of words, and thoughts, and ideas, and the subconscious, striving to find some foothold. There is a peculiar double quality in life combining the meaning and the meaninglessness. Within this structure incest becomes a metaphor both for rebellion and fate, as well as for freedom and enslavement combining within it a schizophrenic split—a relationship as well as an anti-relationship.[11]

What is reality ? And what place has man within this structure is a question which Burgess takes up in several other ways. Going back in time I'd like to refer briefly to *A Clockwork Orange* (1962)[12] where one of the main issues is : what is human nature ? On the surface it is a novel about juvenile delinquency, but it spreads out in various directions and the question of how best we approach this novel becomes relevant : as science fiction, as an inverted fairy tale, as anti-utopia or as parody ? The narrative is framed within time and the narrator is in a position to see it as something encapsulated within it. The four friends are like the four disciples of Christ and their new-found religion is violence. There is order within the

group but chaos all around. They are like vandals destroying and killing everything they come across—killing an old woman and raping a young one—until finally Alex finds himself in prison. In order to be set free, Alex submits to an experiment which not only leads to an aversion of violence but also of music which he had enjoyed immensely. In his postconversion phase he is used by both the ruling party and the opposition. I'm still not quite sure how to approach a novel of this kind. At one level the novel leaves one with a strong sense of dissatisfaction, of having been cheated, of the word-puzzle with all its lingo and its acronyms and its cross-currents not having lived up to its promise, but at another level it proceeds to acquire metaphysical dimensions and questions not only human reality but the relationship between self and not-self. If the self is conformity to the socially accepted norm : then the not-self is the deviation, and it cannot wholly be bad. In fact the words 'good' and 'bad' seem to have lost their relevance, just as sanity and insanity have done. Thus Alex's world is an anachronism split as it is into day and night, into conformity and deviance, into good and bad. Camouflaged within these divisions is another idea which is of value to Burgess as a religious man, and presented in the novel by the prison chaplain—the importance of choice—for "when a man cannot choose he ceases to be a man" (p 85). The possibility of choice implies freedom, a dialectical relationship, a dialogue. When this interaction is denied by the world outside, the otherness has also to be centred in man, in his self.

This brings me round full circle to *1985* where Burgess takes up the discussion of Free Will, once again within a totalitarian, deterministic framework. Taking off from Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four*, he sets up a society which is highly organised and in which the trade unions wield an immense amount of power, where the individual is merged into the collective organisation. The novel begins with Bev Jones coming home at lunch time in order to feed his thirteen year daughter Bessie who is incapable of looking after herself as she is mentally retarded, and who is at home because the teachers are on strike. Bev's wife is in hospital. Bev Jones is as ordinary a name as Winston Smith, and like the Winston of Churchill's name, Bev also has political affiliations through Bevan and Bevin, but it also indicates the meaning of bevel, "a line broken so as to have two acutely alternate angles." Within the first three pages at least three acts of violence are committed and the stage is set for others.

It is a mixed world, with hardly any human sympathy, and with death at every turn: a world hypnotised and created and dominated by TV. Bessie's whole life is geared to it—her mother, her father, death or life, love

or hatred, nothing matters to her except the world of the telly. There are several hidden implications in this, a withdrawal into a makebelief world of fantasy, a surrender of the will to choose or think, and even to remember, a narrowing down of the world, and the possibility of guiding, controlling (and conquering) people through this medium, (an interesting study of this influence exists in Jerzy Kosinski's *Being There*). There is in this world an absence of struggle and conflict and freedom.

The hospital to which Bev's wife is admitted, is set on fire. The firemen are on strike: and Bev's wife dies (on the fourth page) with one final request: "Don't let them get away with it," and Bev, in order to live upto this injunction, rebels. He wants to report on duty, when the trade union has called a strike and the employers have announced a lock-out. Bev is a teacher of history, now turned a confectioner. This rebellion turns him into an outcast; not entitled to the unemployment allowance he becomes a petty criminal engaged in petty thefts of food and drink. Caught shop-lifting, he lands in prison where he is subjected to a rehabilitation course. There is a central chapter in the novel entitled "Two Worlds," wherein the prisoners are lectured to by a trade union organiser, Mr Pettigrew (note the meaning), who referring to the intolerable human dilemma advises them to keep the two worlds apart :

> What is the nature of dilemma ; It is this that humanity craves two values that are impossible of reconciliation....There is an inner world and there is an outer world....*But*, and I must emphasize this, *but*, the inner world must never be allowed to encroach on the outer world.

But Bev is not prepared for this complete sealing off. Later when he is set free, he joins the underground movement of Free Britons, financed by an Arab, and finds that it is an equally exploitative system—corrupt, and ruthless and confining. On the way to this he has got rid of his encumbrances, except his rebellion. He has even got rid of his daughter Bessie, handing her over to an Arab ruler as a concubine. Still later, Bev once again finds himself in a court of law, being hauled up again for being a non-conformist and is "to be detained in a state institution for as long as His Majesty's pleasure shall determine" (p. 213). Insanity is defined as a rejection of the majority ethos and Bev is insane according to the definition. Locked up in the asylum the only way he can get out is to have his family claim him. But all his attempts to get Bessie to ask for him end in frustration. The only response he receives is "der dad i am alrit ere tely very gud i am ok luv besi (p. 216)." Bev is condemned to this isolation, to an integrated world bereft of all schisms and divisions. Trapped within

this Bev seeks a release through suicide, which is his way of following his wife's injunction "don't let them get away with it" :

> But, of course, they all got away with it; they always would. History was a record of the long slow trek from Eden towards the land of Nod, with nothing but the deserts of injustice on the way....Then he bared his fleshless breast to the terrible pain of the electrified fence, puzzling an instant about why you had to resign from the union of the living in order to join the strike of the dead (p. 219).

Suicide in *1985* thus becomes an act of rebellion. Bev's suicide is like Kirilov's—not an escape, but a protest : an assertion of insubordination, in which the meaning of life is finally embodied in an act of death. It is, in the world of absurd logic, the only act possible. The basic human condition must needs take account of man's mad division, which renders him both gloriously creative and bestially destructive, and oppose the Skinnerian solution. There has to be a realisation that good and evil coexist, that the kind of humanity that can "produce Hamlet, Don Giovanni, the Choral Symphony, the Theory of Relativity, Gaudi, Schoenberg, and Picasso must, as a necessary corollary, also be able to scare hell out of itself with nuclear weapons (p. 94)".

It is as Michel Foucault has pointed out in *Madness and Civilization* (1961),[13] madness reveals a liberty raging in the monstrous form of animality. Reason in itself is not adequate. The irrational has its own validity, and unreason has a substantial function in life.[14]

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NOTES

1. George Orwell, "Politics vs. Literature", *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, edited by Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, London: Secker and Warburg, 1968, 4 Vols., Vol. IV, 220. (Future references to this use the cue title *CEJL*).
2. *Ibid.*, 222.
3. See Ronald Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero*, trans. Annette Lavers and Colon Smith London, Jonathan Cape, 1967, and also Terence Hawkes, *Structuralism and Semiotics*, Methuen, 1977, pp. 106-122.
4. Anthony Burgess has also written under the names of Joseph Kell and John Burgess Wilson. In fact *Inside Mr. Enderby* was first published under the name of Joseph Kell. Besides fiction bordering on science or anti-utopian fantasies, he has also written literary criticism and history as well as some work on philosophy. The Burgess novels also fall into different categories like history, anti-utopias, or semi-philosophical ones.
5. 1985, London : Hutchinson, 1978, pp. 55-56.
6. George Steiner, "Cry Havoc" (1968), *Extraterritorial* (1971), Peregrine (1975), p. 45. Steiner refers back to Ruskin and Sartre and the view that art is essentially moral and humanistic in its assumption, and goes on to say, "there is now a good deal of evidence that artistic sensibility and the production of art are no bar to active barbarism."
7. "Inside The Whale," (1940), *CEJL*, I, 498 and 526-27.
8. Golyadkin in Dostoevsky's *The Double* (1846), is unable to escape the evil irritating presence of his twin self and Dr. Jekyll in "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Other Stories*, New York, Magnum Books, 1968, pp. 84-85), admits that man is not truly one but truly two, "I say two, because the state of my knowledge does not pass beyond that point. Others will follow, others will outstrip me on the same line; and I hazard the guess that man will be ultimately known for a mere polity of multifarious incongruous and independent denizens. I for my part.... learned to recognize the thorough and primitive duality of man.... It was the curse of mankind that these incongruous faggots were thus bound together—that in the agonized womb of consciousness these polar twins shoud be continually struggling."
9. *Enderby's Dark Lady* (1984), Abacus, 1985.
10. *MF* (1971), Penguin, 1973, p. 15.
11. See Anais Nin, *The Novel of the Future*, New York : Macmillan, 1968, p. 113 ff.
12. London : Heinemann (1962) 1975.
13. trans. Richard Howard, Tavistock Publications (1961), 1967.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 83.

Then When the Child Was Gone

Then when the child was gone,
We were alone.
His absence lingered in the courtyard air
A half-remembered scent.
The rooms he played in stood aloof,
The nooks and corners into themselves withdrew
Into sullen silence, since their secrets
Could flow into him alone.

Weaned from daily touch
We understood
Grasping him whole :
The craft of his smiles,
The threat of tears,
The moon-wonder in his gaze,
And the secret strength of his petulant ways.

In aching loneliness,
We missed the fire and flower
    of his babbling tongue
Heard tiny footsteps tear across
    ringing pavements
With the heart of us gently crying
    on cobbled stones.

II

Mother, perhaps, we do not matter
Our separate, individual fires
Subsiding into cinders,
Oblivion
Ashes
Rest.

This absurd creature
Flesh of our flesh
Dissolved in us
Like mineral and mud,

Spawning for centuries,
Time has claimed,
Draining porphyry from moribund depths.

Accomplished its secret end
Of sparking another life
Instinct with its own desires.

Let the spark revolve in its own orbit
Of laughter and light
Weaving embroideries in the star-brooched skies.

III

These things are well enough
But the feeling surpasses the erudite knowledge
Crying for the child in the beat and the blood.
Heavy hang the nights
As the passionate embraces and the last of our kisses
Crumble against the nagging loneliness
Which hammers and cries and louder cries.

We realize
We are caught in the loops of becoming
In the passionate extension of moment's mating
O to the very edge of extinction
Betrayed and kneaded into his Being.

—Som P. Ranchan

The 'Witness' in Wordsworth's Major Poems

Dipankar Purkayastha

William Wordsworth was a hesitant poet. He asserted that he primarily dealt with 'general truth', but the major poems highlight the fact that he always hesitated in stating his views and conclusions. This happens because he attempted to apprehend truth, general and operative, by following the fluxes and refluxes of the mind in a state of excitement and not by reasoned analysis. The poem resulting from such an exercise is essentially a portrayal of a mind in action, in the process, as Wordsworth himself claimed, of feeling and thinking simultaneously.[1] The conclusions thus arrived at were also essentially personal and subjective; their validity as 'general truth' was open to sceptic questionings. The poet had to establish the personal as the general. It is this compulsion which determined the structural pattern of the major poems of Wordsworth and also sustained the process of composition through the tension it created. The structure is characterized by a note of diffidence, an initial hesitation to assert an attitude or a belief, and by the presence, therefore, of a 'witness' to help overcome the doubts leading to an affirmation at the end of the poem.

The major poems of Wordsworth portray a mind in the process of living and analysing experience and the inclusion of the 'witness' is closely related to the poet's shifting concept of the mind that is imitated or embodied. In the 1800 version of the Preface to the Lyrical Ballads, Wordsworth argued that the mind that was to be observed as the source of poetry and imitated was that of the rustic. But there was a marked shift in his attitude in 1802. The orientation changed from the mimetic to the expressive. The object to be observed and expressed was no longer to be the mind of the rustic, but the mind of the poet, who replaced the rustic as the

prototype of the general or the universal. This change of orientation led to the almost inevitable inclusion of a 'witness' to testify to the poet's conclusions and generalize and validate the personal. The early narrative poems, such as "The Idiot Boy" and "The Mad Mother", which are based on the poet's observation and knowledge of the rustic life around him, do not contain a 'witness' formally introduced. But, even an early poem like "Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey", which is Wordsworth's first powerful poem of self-expression, does.

The internal organization of "Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey" is distinguished by an alternation between assertion and doubt, which regulates the structural dynamics. The final resolution is brought about by an external witness—Dorothy, who establishes a link between the poet, as individual, and the general, giving credence to the validity of Wordsworth's conclusions about the role of nature in the life of man and the steps in the development of the human mind. From the very opening lines of the poem we note the presence of a perplexed mind, which Wordsworth himself called "a sad perplexity" (l. 60). An uncertainty marks even the description of the landscape in the first 'paragraph' of the poem :

> Once again I see
> These hedge-rows, *hardly hedge-rows*, little lines
> Of sportive wood run wild : ....
> ....and wreaths of smoke
> Sent up in silence, from among the trees :
> With some *uncertain* notice, as *might seem*
> Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods
> (ll. 14–20. my emphasis).

The poet was sincere in describing the objects of observation as they appeared to him and his own incertitude colours the description. The note of hesitation becomes more explicit as the poem proceeds. At the point of transition from the second to the third section of the poem, the curve of ascent towards mystical affirmation is counterbalanced by a more diffident mood :

> If this
> Be but a vain belief, yet, oh !....(ll. 49–50)

Wordsworth does not appear to have been very confident of his assertions in the immediately preceding lines of the poem, which are, in a way, one of his powerful statements on the mystical apprehension of the relation between man and nature. He appears unsure of the general

acceptance of his views; they might after all be "a vain belief" in the eyes of the world. So he returns to an aspect of his experience of which he is more assured, offering a personal testimony to the sustaining and restorative power of nature. A similar alternation between supreme assertion and doubt is noticed in the transition from the fourth to the fifth section. In lines 102–111, Wordsworth again confidently asserts the role of nature in his own mental development through its various stages. At the same time in these lines the Wye valley becomes representative of the world of nature in general. The 'green valley' of the opening 'paragraph' turns into the 'green earth'; the world of the eye and ear in now a 'mighty world'. The general is reached through a particular microcosmic landscape. The poet then attempts a transition in the mental world paralleling that achieved in the external world. The personal testimony of the poet needed to be corroborated and universalized. He turns to Dorothy to provide the witness. Her introduction into the poem is preceded by an explicit statement of doubt :

> Nor perchance,
> If I were not thus taught....(ll. 111–112)

Subsequently, she is made the meeting point of the individual and the general. The poet not only visualises his past in her present, but defines her as capable of following the same process of development as experienced by him. This, Wordsworth says, is possible because she also, like him, loves nature. The identification is made explicit in the following lines :

> My dear, dear Sister !....this prayer I make,
> Knowing that Nature never did betray
> The heart that loved her;....(ll. 121–123)

Dorothy becomes representative of all those who can open themselves to nature and thus imbibe in their development its beneficial effects. After this identification, we find the note of hesitation and perplexity replaced by a growing sense of confidence, leading to the renewed affirmation of faith in the concluding lines, which is in sharp contrast to the uncertainty pervading the earlier lines. This shift is possible because an authentic personal experience has removed his doubts and Dorothy's witness now enables him to achieve the universalization of the merely personal. The ecstatic discovery of the correspondence between the experiences of two sensitive souls, the poet's and his sister's, finally releases the tension of doubt and the poem ends with affirmation replacing diffidence. At the same

time it is to be remembered that it is this tension which sustained the composition of the long poem.

The successful introduction of the 'witness' and its absorption in the total structure of a poem is related to the pattern of alternation as seen in "Tintern Abbey". That this is so is further substantiated by the failure of the structure of "Ode : Intimations of Immortality", where Hartley Coleridge has been used as an external witness. The personal testimony in the opening stanzas of the poem succeeds by itself in being an embodiment of a process of meditation dwelling on the alternation between sensations of loss and gain. It is this alternate movement, and not one between diffidence and confidence, which constitutes the structural pivot of the poem. Thus the poem is not in need, structurally or thematically, of an external witness introduced from the outside to reinforce the poem's dominant feeling. But Wordsworth does introduce Hartley Coleridge. As a result this introduction turns out to be more a matter of habit than one which is based on an awareness of the internal structural requirement of the poem. Subsequently, the release of tension leading to the conclusion of the poem seems less effective than in "Tintern Abbey" and it jars the organic unity of the poem. Whereas the structure of "Tintern Abbey" absorbs the external witness organically, the structure of the Ode, in the final analysis, rejects it.

The argument that a truly functional use of the 'witness' is intimately related to the basic structural pattern of binary opposition between hesitation and assertion gains a further positive substantiation from Wordsworth's achievement in "Resolution and Independence" and *The Excursion*. In "Resolution and Independence" the personal testimony and the authentication by the external witness coalesce to create a complex imaginative entity, which presents the poet's ideas with such conviction and subtle structural organization that the reader is not allowed any opportunity to pause and question its validity. The structural pattern is based on an alternate movement between the personal and the general which, in the second part of the poem, runs simultaneously with another movement, between acceptance and doubt. In the first part of the poem Wordsworth states the problem that young poets, 'the happiest of all men', are apt before long to switch to the other extreme of dejection and despair. According to him this happens because the poets tend to live away from reality. In presenting this problem Wordsworth first identifies himself with blissful creatures and then clinches the identification through them with the general :

> I heard the *sky-lark warbling* in the sky;
> And I bethought me of the *playful hare* ;

Even such a *happy Child of earth* am I;
Even as *these blissful creatures* do I fare;
(ll. 29–32; my emphasis)

There is again another movement towards the general in the subsequent two stanzas. From his own situation Wordsworth moves on to that of another poet, whom he, however, does not name :

But how can He expect that others should
Build for him, sow for him, and at his call
Love him, who for himself will take no heed at all ?[2]
(ll. 40–42)

At the next step, he refers to two more young poets who died prematurely and are known for their dejection : Chatterton and Burns (though not specified by Wordsworth)[3] :

I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous Boy,
The sleepless Soul that perished in his pride;
Of Him who walked in glory and in joy
Following his plough, along the mountain-side :
(ll. 43–46)

This is followed by the final step which climaxes the movement from the particular to the universal :

We Poets in our youth begin in gladness;
But thereof come in the end despondency and madness.
(ll. 48–49)

The enunciation of the problem also takes a concrete shape and it is made clear that the problem is a universal one, faced by all poets because of the very nature of the poetic power : "By our own spirits are we deified" (1.47). The solution thus also has to be a general one.

The way to overcome despondency is presented in the second part of the poem, where it is embodied in the figure of the old leech-gatherer personifying perseverance. The personal testimony and the external witness are, however, presented not seperately or consecutively, but simultaneously, and this simultaneous presentation is marked by alternating movements at various levels : between acceptance and doubt, the personal and the general, and the mundane and the visionary. The old man is finally projected as representative of the universal :

> In my mind's eye I seemed to see him pace
> About the weary moors continually,
> Wandering about alone and silently. (ll. 129–131)

The 'bent double' leech-gatherer transcends the barriers of time and space and moves a Christ-like figure, a living embodiment of perseverance not just for Wordsworth, Coleridge, Chatterton, or Burns, but for all imaginative souls of all time and place. The poem creates, through its structure, a feeling of complex delight, which, in its turn, depends primarily on the successful fusion of the 'witness' in the total structure of the poem.

The most sustained and dramatic use of the 'witnees' is found in Wordsworth's longest poem *The Excursion*, which dramatizes a process of mental development through confidence and diffidence. In this dramatic poem Wordsworth first presents a personal testimony, but instead of narrating it, embodies it through the interaction of four characters : the Wanderer, the Solitary, the Pastor, and the Narrator, which are essentially manifestations of various and often contradictory aspects of the poet's personality. The Wanderer represents a calm assured mind and looks at the sustaining features of life. The Solitary stands for the sceptic in Wordsworth opposed to the solid assurance of the Wanderer, he embodies the poet's hesitations and doubts. These two characters establish the functional binary opposition in the structure of the poem. The Pastor objectifies the poet looking at life through the eyes of the Church of England man; he is the Christian answer to despondency. The fourth character, the Narrator, is the objective observer, looking at and narrating the course of development, like the Chorus in a Greek play.

The basic structural pattern of the poem is that of a mental excursion, aimed at assuaging the doubts in the Solitary's mind. He is to be prompted to come out of his cave-like abode, confront the sun, and understand the essence of life. The first four books and a part of the fifth contain the personal testimony, presented dramatically. As in the other major poems it embodies a movement between assertion and doubt. The debate remains inconclusive and the Pastor is introduced in the fifth book to concretize the Christian truth and to present the external witness. The Wanderer urges him :

> Give us, for our abstractions, solid facts;
> For our disputes, plain pictures. (Book V. ll. 637–638)

The Pastor is to provide the 'witness'; he is to present 'beings' or tales of life lived, as witnesses to his and the Wanderer's conclusions. The

problems and issues round which the debate revolved are now embodied in the 'beings'; they are shown in operation in the lives of individuals and families. The mind is confronted with examples of life lived in actuality and is faced with the issues at stake in operation beyond its confines and in the general, and prompted thus to arrive at a conclusion along with a release of tension through the removal of doubt. The presentation of the 'witness' continues till the last book of the poem and as it proceeds, there is a marked change in the Solitary's attitude. He now appears more and more keen to take a positive and healthy view of life. The mind's journey, through assertions, doubts, and hope, reaches a point, where it is poised for the decisive release of tension and for confident assertion. It may be conjectured that this would have happened had Wordsworth written the third book of "The Recluse", and followed the plan he had charted for it.

Wordsworth's use of the 'witness' gives a unique quality to his major poems. He also fulfilled his avowed aim of showing and teaching how to feel properly.[4] That he was not unsuccessful in convincing the reader of the authenticity of his experience has been testified to by J. S. Mill, Matthew Arnold, and a modern critic, M. H. Abrams. Mill, a perceptive reader of Wordsworth's poetry, said :

> What made Wordsworth's poems a medicine for my state of mind, was that they expressed, not mere outward beauty, but states of feeling, under the excitement of beauty. They seemed to be the very culture of feelings, which I was in quest of. In them I seemed to draw from a source of inward joy, of sympathetic and imaginative pleasure, which could be shared in by all human beings.[5]

For Arnold, Wordsworth's poetry was great, among other things, "because of the extraordinary power with which, in case after case, he shows us this joy, and renders it so as to make us share it."[6] The views of Mill and Arnold are tributes to Wordsworth's mode of organization of a poem, through which he *shows* the reader the joy of life and makes it possible for him to partake of it. Abrams states : "....(Wordsworth) has transformed the inherited language of poetry into a medium adequate to express....new relations of the individual consciousness to itself, to its past, and to other men."[7] This is especially true of *The Excursion*, in which the observation of the self is dramatized, giving the poem the form of an inverted psychological drama.

Wordsworth's achievements and failures in successfully fusing the 'witness' in the total structure of the poem draw attention to the essential

features of the concept of organic unity, which is central in the romantic concept of a poem. His major poems give concrete examples of how a poem, written under the law and impulse of imagination, grows and ends. Defining the organic form Coleridge said that it "is innate; it shapes as it develops itself from within, and the fullness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form."[8] There is a point beyond which the inner vitality of a poem does not sustain its growth, and that is the point where the poem comes to a successful end. A poem, which embodies a mind in action, successfully closes when the mental process attains its fullest development. The closure is simultaneous with the release of tension, which sustains the meditation and therefore the growth of the poem. This is evident from the structure of the major poems of Wordsworth. The structure of the Ode fails because it violates the basic tenet of organic unity and the sructure at its best is not mechanical but one which grows from "its own divine vitality."[9] The other major poems succeed because the exigencies of the developing feelings and thoughts organically absorb the 'witness.'

NOTES

1. Defining the process of meditation, Wordsworth wrote : "...our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings;..." "Preface to Lyrical Ballads", *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, Vol. I, ed. by W. J. B. Owens and J. W. Smyser, London, Oxford University Press, 1974, p. 127.

2. Mary Moorman argues that the reference is to S.T. Coleridge. See *William Wordsworth : A Biography*—The Early Years 1770-1803, London, Oxford University Press, 1968, pp. 539-40.

3. See *Ibid.*, p. 539.

4. Wordsworth wrote in the Preface to the Lyrical Ballads that his aim was to "describe objects, and utter sentiments, of such a nature, and in such connection with each other, that the understanding of the Reader must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, and his affections strengthened and purified." Owens and Smyser, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

5. *Mill* : *Autobiography*, ed. by J. Stillinger, London, Oxford University Press, 1971, p. 89.

6. "Wordsworth", *Essays in Criticism*, First and Second Series, London, J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., p. 307.

7. "Introduction : Two Roads to Wordsworth", *Wordsworth : A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. by M. H. Abrams, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1972, p. 11.

8. *Coleridge's Shakespearean Criticism*, ed. by T. M. Raysor, Vol. I, London, J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1964, pp. 223-24.

9. "A Poet ! He hath put his heart to school", ll. 13-14, *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, Vol. III, ed by E. De. Selincourt and Helen Darbishire, London, Oxford University Press, 1954, p. 52.

Epiphany

Dark casement threw itself open
Eerily to frame semblance :
Like nonpoisonous neutron blast
Thrilling effulgence illuminated
All beyond endless circumference.

Cross-section of life-range
Faded in and out
Worlds of ghosts and gods
Floods of forces and elements
Oceans of galaxies and nebulae
Filled and refilled and faded out.

Huge dimensionless naked zero
Shapeless-shadowless-shameless
Saturated casement to flutter
Beating redeeming pulse :
In that immense vaulting 'I'
'I' found itself transfixed
Tuned to mysterious sound—

Casement shut itself satiated :
Show remained mighty I

—K. V. S. Murti

Into the Maelstrom : A Note on Golding's Vision of the Fall

Manju Jaidka

'God is the thing we turn away from into life,' says Golding.[1] 'Man is a fallen being. He is gripped by the original sin. His nature is sinful and perilous. I accept the theology and admit its triteness; but what is trite is true, and a truism can become more than truism when it is a belief passionately held.'[2] These statements place Golding in the tradition of the literature of the fall.[3] In his novels, beginning with *Lord of the Flies*, down to *The Paper Men*, we may trace the theme of the fall that highlights the 'diseased nature' of man.[4] But Golding's vision differs from other visions of the fall : whereas literature of the fall generally looks *back* at a golden past and *forward* to redemption (taking the cue from the Christian concept of the fall and redemption), Golding's vision is confined to the present alone. He does not offer any solutions, he does not show us a way out of the fallen state, and the messiahs he creates do not succeed in bringing about any salvation. Whereas a writer like William Blake, whose main theme is the fall from innocence to experience, would ask questions like....'When shall the man of future times become as in the days of old ?' such questions are never voiced by Golding....implying that never can man regain the lost state of innocence.

Mary Renault feels that Golding's subject is the prelapsarian world : 'Golding's subject is tremendous : man's first disobedience and the fruit....'[5] This, however, is not so. In the first place, disobedience is not even implied in his work. Secondly, Golding's subject is not the fall of man but the fallen state of man, i.e., not the prelapsarian world but the postlapsarian world which is present as a reality not to be denied. True, the boys in the first chapter of *Lord of the Flies* are in the prelapsarian world;

so is Matty at school in *Darkness Visible* untouched by the ways of the world.[6] And so, too, are the main characters of *The Inheritors* not yet fallen. But, in each case the transition has already set in. We are shown not innocence itself but the end of innocence and the beginning of experience, the characters almost being thrown out of the Edenic gardens. In *Lord of the Flies*, the island, as Golding admits,[7] is a 'Paradise', a virginal, natural world. Into this paradise the boys bring the evil, hatred and violence *inherent* in their own natures. Thus the fall is not the consequence of 'disobedience', as in Christian theology. Golding's vision, modified by Freudian/Jungian concepts, locates the seeds of the fall within the mind of man. *Lord of the Flies* emphasizes the impossibility of another paradise, the impossibility of redemption, because man is what he is....a 'morally diseased' creature. The boys fall not because they are placed amid a vicious social structure but because their very nature is evil and sends them plummeting into further evil.

In *The Inheritors* the fall is related to time. It is nothing inherent in the natures of the Neanderthal men that leads to their fall. As Golding says, the novel illustrates 'some of the natural, unconscious cruelty of the evolutionary theory when it is practised.[8] He gives us not men who are capable of shaping their destinies but creatures helpless in the clutches of time. The merciless evolutionary process, the inexorable march of time, puts an end to the ice age and ushers in a new age. This new order is by no means a return to Eden. Though Golding does not speak of a rough beast slouching towards Bethlehem (c. f. Yeats) there is evidence to show that the comparative innocence of the older order is replaced by a new, depraved carnivorous race given to the pursuit of the sensual.

In *Free Fall* the fall is linked not only to time but also to Sammy Mountjoy's inherent nature, to his actions, and to the coming of knowledge. The first two pages of the book explain the connection between the fall and the coming of knowledge. Sammy, out of the state of blissful ignorance, has stepped into knowledge. And, as T S Eliot would say, 'After such knowledge, what forgiveness ?' Golding equates the state of innocence with something akin to ignorance, to the absence of knowledge. It is possible to trace an oblique reference to the fruit of the tree of knowledge that, in Milton's words, brings 'all our woe,/ With loss of Eden.'[9] While trying to pinpoint the various factors that led to his fall, Sammy has to 'go back and select' from the grey faces of the past that peer over his shoulder, 'the connection between the little boy clear as spring water and the man like a stagnant pool.' (*Free Fall*, p. 9) 'We had progressed from Eden,' Sammy tells us. The Eden is, ironically, the squalid Rotten Row where Sammy spent his

childhood days....'days of terrible and irresponsible innocence.' Rotten Row was 'roaring and warm, simple and complex, individual and strangely happy and a world unto itself.' Unlike the boys of *Lord of the Flies*, or the characters of *The Inheritors*, Sammy had the freedom of choice: he chose.... and lost his freedom. 'Somewhere, sometime, I made a choice in freedom and lost my freedom, 'Sammy tells us (p. 192). The question that haunts him now is.... 'When did I lose my freedom ?' In other words, 'When did I fall ?' The emphasis is on 'Somewhere, sometime.' The fall has to be fixed in space and time. And so, Sammy relives his past. By reliving his past he is, in a way, trying to go back to a precise moment when he had not yet fallen. That he is not successful in his effort tells us that the fall is not a sudden event. It is a gradual process, like time, 'an effortless perception native to us as water to mackerel' (p. 6).

Recapitulation is an important technique used by Golding, particularly in *Pincher Martin* and *Free Fall*. The incidents that Sammy brings to life do not follow a strict chronological order. He picks and chooses what Wordsworth would call 'spots of time' and links them together. His story (and Pincher Martin's too) is, as W. J. Harvey lebels *The Prelude*, one of 'discovery and relation' :[10] discovery of the significant experiences in one's life which are then related to each other so that an answer may be provided to Sammy's overwhelming question....'When did I lose my freedom ? The difference, however, is that in Golding's 'spots of time' there are no epiphanic moments; only experiences related to the accumulated shame and guilt of the protagonist. Here, as in Wordsworth, we have 'a man who remembers being a boy looking at a tree' (*Free Fall*, p. 46). It is the 'adult hindsight' (p. 50) at work, reconstructing the past, looking for 'the beginning of responsibility' (p. 47). Among the various incidents that he recollects, his treatment of Beatrice pricks his conscience the most. That, Golding feels, was probably the beginning of Sammy's fall.[11] Sammy falls not only because of his actions....his attitude towards Beatrice...., but also because Time steers him towards a total loss of innocence. This is also the case with Pincher Martin who says, 'You gave me the power to choose and all my life you led me carefully to this suffering because my choice was my own' (*Pincher Martin*, p.). In this statement, as in the fall of Sammy, we find a curious blend of free will and a greater controlling power. Pincher Martin has the power to choose but at the same time he is being 'led' carefully towards suffering. Golding here seems to stand midway between free will and predestination. Man is doomed and yet he has the power to choose. How, then, can his be a 'free fall' ? Or, to put it another way, in *Free Fall*, Sammy, by going back into the past, is trying to transcend time. This would imply that the fall is an inevitability, a natural consequence of

the passage of time (c. f. *The Inheritors*). How could one reconcile this inevitability with the concept of 'free fall' ? The title, 'thus, becomes ironic, for man is doomed to fall, whether he wills it or not.

For Sammy, as for Pincher Martin, there is no redemption. He is left to suffer the inferno of his own creation. The world of lost innocence is one to which he, despite all efforts, cannot regress. *Free Fall* ends not with redemption but with a reiteration of the fall in the reference to Beatrice in the asylum, and to Sammy's guilt which will always torment him. If, as Kermode feels, Golding builds a bridge between the fallen world and the regenerated one,[12] the new world, though sighted, remains out of reach.

Whereas *Inheritors* and *Free Fall* dealt with the fall primarily in relation to time, in *Darkness Visible* the emphasis is not on the fall in time but in space. Matty is placed in a world of violence, vice and evil. Like the Neanderthals he has no conscious control over his destiny; he does not choose his way into the fall. This would imply that Golding again has some kind of predestination in mind—the fall as an inevitability that man (like the Neanderthals) cannot avoid. But there is a definite change of stance when we compare *Darkness* with *Lord of the Flies* or *Free Fall*, particularly when we refer to the characters of Sophy and Toni. Golding, while describing their growth and upbringing, is tracing the growth of criminals, the social factors that contribute towards their making. The fault lies in the environment in which the twins are placed : they turn away from indifferent parental care to find significance in a world of crime. Thus society, represented by the indifferent parents, is the primary cause of their fall, the Blakean forces of Urizen overcoming their innocent vitality; the 'invisible worm' finding its way into the rose's 'bed/of crimson joy'; the 'prison-house' of the world forcing adolescents out of their paradise of innocence.

Matty, though one would not call him a fallen creature, is a part of the fallen world, concerned with the fallen state. He is concerned with his Bible, with the prophecies of Isaiah and Ezekiel, and with the concept of God.[13] He asks himself questions like—'Who am I ?' 'What am I ?' and 'What am I for ?'—questions related to the fallen state, akin to those that haunt Sammy Mountjoy. He is looking for a goal, a purpose, or probably for a way towards redemption. His journey to Australia shows that the fallen state is by no means localized; it extends to all parts of the globe. So he returns to England. Symbolically his attempt is to return to the lost state of innocence which, however, is irrevocable. Realising the futility of his efforts to make people aware of their fall, he withdraws into himself, trying to find a still centre within. That his efforts are cut short by death is Golding's way of refuting all that Christian theologists would tell us about a

restored 'greater Paradise'. Golding's contention remains that a return to the lost paradise is just not possible : one may try....as Matty does....but the effort is doomed to failure. Towards the end of the novel Matty, the inspired one (is he, by any chance, an inspired idiot ?), is dead and the world he sought to redeem is one enveloped in darkness. Instead of showing us a way out Golding merely makes the darkness visible. The book ends the way it began, with 'nothing but a black night with a dying fire' (*Darkness Visible*, p. 253). The circle is complete though we do not progress in any direction, certainly not towards redemption. The darkness is not replaced by light. The problem is highlighted but not resolved.

In *The Spire*, the fall is the result of ambition (ambition was earlier suggested in relation to Sammy in *Free Fall*). But, is ambition evil ? In Golding's vision it *is* because it is a part of man's 'diseased nature'.[14] Father Jocelyn aspires to build a spire to touch the heavens and this ambition brings about evil. As in *Free Fall* and *Pincher Martin*, the fallen world is internalized and the focus is on the inferno within. As V. S. Pritchett tells us, 'we are enclosed in the hysterical mind of the dean almost all the time.[15] The journey is a mental one. If the goal is redemption, it remains, needless to say, incomplete. Jocelyn's final vision of the spire is beautiful but the fact remains that he views it from a different plane : instead of achieving the serenity and solemnity represented by the spire, he remains restless and tormented. The world of the spire, like the world of lost innocence in *Free Fall*, is unattainable. This novel, too, does not end on a note of redemption.

What then, one may well ask, is Golding's intention in laying bare the bleak aspects of the world ? Before seeking an answer to this question one must keep in mind that Golding is a fabulist, and a fabulist, he tells us, 'is a moralist. He cannot make a story without a human lesson tucked away in it.[16] It is with a didactic aim that Golding writes his novels. In the first place, he is, like T. S. Eliot, making us aware of the problems that he thinks exist, awareness being the first step towards resolution and redemption.[17] His aim is to move and trouble us out of our complacencies and take into account the evil that exists around us, the evil that man has fallen into and the evil that is within man (the 'beast' of *Lord of the Flies*). Secondly, Golding is an antiutopian, and an antiutopian, he tells us, 'wants to be proved wrong.'[18] His antiutopias clamour to be refuted and he himself seems eager to be reassured that there is still plenty of sunshine, cheer and goodwill in the world. If utopias are presented as 'critiques' of the human condition,[19] antiutopias are critiques of utopias.[20] The aim remains the same in both....to highlight the fallen state of man. Golding's

vision of the fallen state, though influenced by Christian theology, is modified by certain basic tenets : that man's fall is partly caused by the pattern of history, partly by the inherent traits in his nature, and finally by the peculiar nature of contemporary civilization. The poverty of Golding's vision, however, lies in the fact that in his insistence on man as a fallen creature he deliberately closes his eyes to all that is positive in the world, to the goodness man is capable of, to the sources of light that provide a contrast to the darkness of the world, and to the remotest possibility of a restored paradise.[21]

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NOTES

1. In a letter to John Peter, quoted by Peter M Axthelm in 'Koestler and Golding,' *The Modern Confessional Novel* (Yale University Press, 1967), p. 126.

2. 'Fable', in *The Hot Gates* (Faber, 1965), p, 88.

3. For a detailed study of the literature of the fall see M H Abrams' *Natural Supernaturalism* (New York : Norton, 1971).

4. *Hot Gates*, p. 87.

5. 'To See What Men Might Be', *Saturday Review* (XLIII : 12), Mar 19, 1960, p. 21.

6. The 'shades of the prison-house', as Wordsworth would call them, which close in on a person and take him away from divinity.

7. To James R Baker in 'An Interview with William Golding', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 28 : 2, Summer 82, p. 137.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 139-40.

9. It is also possible to relate this coming of knowledge as one of the causes of the fall with the view expressed by Yeats in 'The Two Trees' : harmony combines with spontaneity, vitality and creativity, 'Gyring, spiring to and fro/In those great ignorant leafy ways', but with the coming of abstract thought, 'all things turn to barrenness'. Joy is replaced by labour, toil and suffering.

10. *The Prelude : A Collection of Critical Essays*, Casebook Series, eds. W J Harvey and Richard Gravil (Macmillan, 1979), p. 208.

11. Golding to Baker, p. 146.

12. Frank Kermode, quoting the following lines from *Free Fall* :

...'the mountains were not only clear all through the purple glass, but living. They sang and were jubilant. They were not all that sang...the movement of the earth and sun and unseen stars, these made what might be called music and I heard it...' (pp. 186-7).

says that they indicate some kind of a regeneration, that 'Sammy still finds himself called to paradise', thus showing Golding's belief in 'divine mercy' ('William Golding,' in *Puzzles and Epiphanies*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962, p. 202) This, however, is not true because the music of the stars does not lead to redemption. On the contrary, it wrings a 'silent cry' from Sammy, making him aware of a world that has shut him out forever. This is clear from the lines that follow :

'The cry was directed to a place I did not know existed, but which I had forgotten merely; and once found, the place was always there, sometimes open and sometimes shut, the business of the universe proceeding there in its own mode, different, indescribable'. (*Free Fall*, p. 187).

13. Theology, Golding tells us, (in *A Moving Target*, Faber, 1983, p. 175), is a post-lapsarian requirement.

14. In *The Paper Men* the ambition of Professor Rick L. Tucker, again, is evil. It leads him to further depravity.

15. 'God's Folly', in *New Statesman* (LXVII : 1725), April 10, 1964 p. 562.

16. *Hot Gates*, p. 85.

17. The fall of man is also the theme of T S Eliot for what else do the rocks, boulders and broken images of *The Waste Land* signify but the fallen world ? Eliot focuses on the present in which 'memory and desire' trouble man...the 'memory' of Eden and the 'desire' to regain that lost paradise.

18. *A Moving Target*, p. 182.

19. Ibid., p. 177.

20. On could justifiably say that the utopian and the antiutopian trends combine in Swift's portrayal of the Houyhmnhmns and the Yahoos.

21. One could possibly study this lack of vision in Golding vis-a-vis his postmodernist contemporaries. As Gerald Graff in his essay on 'The Myth of the Postmodernist Breakthrough' (*Triquarterly*, 1973), points out, the postmodernist novel is characterised by two important attitudes : the 'apocalyptic' and the 'visionary', operating either in conjunction or separately, In the novels of Golding we may say we have the apocalyptic but not the visionary.

Past Separation Unison Returns

As after the heat and catalepsy of summer
the rains come, so past the drouth
Of separation a sense of unison returns.

I wake up in the morning
My breath clean
My limbs supple and strong,

Caried remorse and nicotineal guilt
cancelled for a while
As you lie night-long
between sores, and wounds and swords.

I hear bells pealing long and resonant
the tremors ricochetting across blue distances
The ceiling quivers and the walls
of my room shake.

Loth to get up, I inhale
the smell of roses and jasmines
That you leave, baskets upon baskets
quitting at dawn.

The day passes in happiness
with you pervading the whole house—
The hidden nooks, concealed recesses
all corners.

I cannot rub the apparition from my eyes :

As I sit reading
You lean over my shoulders
Your sun-flowered hair
with their profusion
Blind my eyes
Storming across my mouth
Fall on the page,
Effacing poor printed words.

Think what I may
Do what I may
You enter the cells and circumstance—
For you are the hum in the bee:hive brain

You the impulse inundating the heart
And you the energy which motivates
This hand that, flicking cigarette ash,
Fidgets, caresses, opens, as a flower.

Sometimes—
When I sit outside in the verandah
Watching the traffic of the monsoonal clouds
Watching the setting sum impregnate the dark bowl
with flaming colors

I hear you
In the winds whipping through tree leaves
In the sound of the scudding clouds.

On rainy nights, storm-swelled
You strike with tongues of lightning
Chasing the last of the dark from corners
Flooding the chambers of the conscious
with the promise of the raindrops.

Pattering in the courtyard
Falling from your hair and the dark eyelashes
Coursing down the white breasts
Filling the navel to the brim
For Gods and men to drink
And sleep assuaged like children.

—**Som P. Ranchan**

★

The Cyclone on the Sea-Coast of Orissa

What gives life also
sometimes takes it away.
They who lived by her
and loved her as part of themselves
relying on her for the supply
of daily needs
for their sustenance and even

a modicum of joy
suddenly found the sea
rising impetuously
turning and gyrating
like Shiva in Tandava dance.
Hurling a solid mass of water
like an unbreachable granite wall
the fierce and capricious sea
thought nothing of making a sport
of the skinny, cut-out-of-ebony
fishermen and women—
her nurselings.

It was wrongly said
that the sea never transgresses
her bounds and that the mother
never stuffs her maw
with her own offspring.
If the passion-gripped sea
could have just counted ten
everything perhaps would have been
all right then.
The shacks would have been there,
tiny wisps of smoke
gathering over the thatched roof
and the shouts of children at play
mingling with the thud of the
waves breaking on the sandy bars
and the singing of the menfolk
bringing ashore a rich haul
of feverishly frisking fish in a net
who have not given up all hope as yet.
The mills, it seems, go on grinding,
little concerned with or minding
who the victims are
near or far.

—P. P. Sharma

Woman as Metaphor : A Note on Atwood's Feminism

Jaidev

One way of charting Margaret Atwood's progress as a novelist is to focus on how the rather sharp assertor of woman's autonomy and individuality in *The Edible Woman* extends the implications of the word woman to include all the exploited and (ab)used people in the world in *Bodily Harm* : it is a good way because while it shows her development, it does not neglect the continuities in Margaret Atwood's career. *The Edible Woman* is an admirable first novel, but, for all its intensity, poignancy and poetry, it yet remains a limited performance : its introvertness makes it intense, but also a rather sexist book. In *Surfacing*, and more importantly in *Bodily Harm*, Atwood attains a voice that is feminist all right but something more, too : it speaks to the whole world as it were. In these novels, woman becomes a metaphor for all those who are damaged and abused only because they are powerless. Her feminism has suffered no dilution, but it has gathered layers of social and political moss around it. The present paper is an attempt to discuss how in *Surfacing* and *Bodily Harm* Atwood extends the meaning of the term woman.

Atwood has always been critical of what is generally termed femininity. No sooner do her female heroines make an effort to locate their self and assert it than they are told that they are functioning 'unnaturally', that "you are rejecting your femininity".[1] Indeed, Marian in *The Edible Woman* is all along aware that by conforming to the male-invented notion of femininity, she has been evading her self, not allowing it to form in full and be embraced by its bearer : "Somewhere in front of me a self was waiting, pre-formed, a self who had worked during innumerable years for

Seymour Surveys...." (p. 14). The book moves by first making her see what obstacles there are for a woman to cross before she can touch that self of hers. Complying with Peter's wish for a showery sex, she suddenly feels that perhaps Peter's wish really thought "of me as a lavatory fixture" (p. 58). Even Duncan is little better than Peter. This compulsive ironing-neurotic views her as a "substitute for the laundromat" (p. 147). Marian gradually but painfully learns that woman is important to man, not because she is herself, but because she is useful, usable. The rather-casually introduced image of "Marian resting on her stomach with an ashtray balanced in the hollow of her back" (p. 216) is a devastating comment on Peter's attitude to Marian. She opts out, fights out a long battle for the sake of herself, "in a spirit approaching gay rebellion" (p. 279). At the end she finds hereself alone, Duncan having proved fraudulent and her flat-mate Ainsley accusing her of 'rejecting your femininity' in the same way as Peter once accused her. Still she is aware of how many ways a woman can be used and abused by men; what is more, at the end, she has herself to live with.

The Edible Woman is a powerful introverted book in which, notwithstanding a most significant theme, the central concern does not transcend its feminist dimension. *Surfacing* is no less introverted and feminist, but the dreadful inner issues here are surfaced on the physical, geographic and outward level. It is naive to refer to Atwood's technique in terms of objective correlative. What she is doing in *Surfacing* is to create an empathic relationship between the invisible, damaged self of the unnamed heroine and the death-filled, rotting, damaged landscape of the island near the border country in Quebec. Apparently the heroine begins on a quest for her missing father, but in fact she is in search of her own hidden self, a self which has been damaged in marriage and which is far from being healed by her present affair with a failed artist named Joe. It is an existentialist quest, for in the process she gets away from all seemingness, whether of her three companions who are all 'selfless' and pastiche figures, or of the seemingly American Canadians who appear on the island only to indulge in meaningless cruelty to birds, trees and fish : "At the midway pond the heron was still there, hanging in the hot sunlight like something in a butcher's window, desecrated, unredeemed. It smelled worse....the death of the heron was causeless, undiluted."[2] She ultimately realizes that no human being can help her discover her self : it is only when she identifies herself with this senselessly-damaged landscape that she finds her self. She does become "part of the landscape" (p. 201) but before this, she ritualistically discards her marriage ring, her name, her 'seeming' identity.

Surfacing, however, addresses itself to such fundamental human issues as cruelty and violence, both of which are associated with power. In a very disquieting piece of reflection, the heroine identifies herself with the landscape so that her tragedy and that of the landscape mirror each other, reflect each other. What men do to women, they do to Nature as well. Americans desecrated this border country and killed off most of the beavers. Then, they used the term beaver as a slang for the vagina. This is wittily feminist, but it is not merely that : it is also a comment on what those who hold power tend to do to those who lack power, who are indeed innocent : they killed off beavers for the same reason that they abuse women or kill the harmless, innocent heron : "To prove they could do it, they had the power to kill" (p. 125). All power is used for destroying the innocents. "The innocents get slaughtered because they exist, I thought, there is nothing inside the happy killers to restrain them, no conscience or piety...." (p. 138). The beavers, the heron, the stunted and disfigured landscape are all thus used as variations on the theme of power and the destruction it causes, and it is almost needless to add that woman's abuse too is a variation on the same theme. Indeed, the heroine is careful to point out that just as woman and the landscape are in a symbiotic relationship, persons represented through the term American are not confined to any particular country at all. The term American becomes a metaphor too for all powerful maniacs from Hitler onwards :

> It doesn't matter what country they're from, my head said, they're still Americans, they're what's in store for us, what we are turning into. They spread themselves like a virus, they get into the brain and take over the cells and the cells change from inside and the ones that have the disease can't tell the difference....If you look like them and talk like them and think like them then you are them....
>
> But how did they evolve, where did they first come from, they weren't an invasion from another planet, they were terrestrial. How did we get bad. For us when we were small the origin was Hitler, he was the great evil, many tentacled, ancient and indestructible as the Devil....All possible horrors were measured against him. But Hitler was gone and the thing remained; whatever it was, even then, moving away from them as they smirked and waved goodbye, I was asking : Are the Americans worse than Hitler ? It was like cutting up a tapeworm, the pieces grew. (p. 139)

"If you look like them and talk like them and think like them then you are them," concludes the heroine. Hitler is dead but he lives in and as Americans, in and as those who are enemies of life, who senselessly leave the forest a graveyard of trees, who humiliate their wives just for a 'random sample', or who pose to be great priests of nature but otherwise feel nothing bad about killing, fishing and hunting. Insofar as Canadians have sold themselves to Americans "along with the land and the animals" (p. 142), they have turned themselves into Americans. It is not an accident that David talks all the time against American bastards but still talks precisely in an American way : "... he was an imposter, a pastiche, layers of political handbills, pages from magazines, *affiches*, verbs and nouns glued on him and shredding away, the original surface littered with fragments and tatters....Second-hand American was spreading over him in patches, lige mange or lichen. He was infested, garbled, and I couldn't help him...." (pp. 162–63). The heroine finds Americans an all-pervasive phenomenon, and this is why she walks out of all human society and civilization to unite with the gods who value life, fertility and peace.

Americans in *Surfacing* represent the devils : they can be men of the C.I.A.' economic imperialists, nature-rapists, male-pigs, and so on, but they all have this in common : they have turned against the gods. The heroine realizes that mere invisibility, inactivism and withdrawal can do little good to the side of the gods. She has to take a stand, refuse to play victim, and defy the devils. Her resolution at the end is no mere gesture. She is determined not to withdraw from the battlefield : "This above all, to refuse to be a victim. Unless I can do that I can do nothing. I have to recant, give up the old belief that I am powerless and because of it nothing I can do will ever hurt anyone....withdrawing is no longer possible and the alternative is death" (p. 206). Unlike Anna who finds it easier to submit to her exploiter-husband the heroine rejects the submissive role, and at the end is seen looking forward to her child whom she would bring up as a human child and a supporter of the gods rather than allow to go the American way.

It is by turning a feminist theme into a universal one, in which the battle is not only between the two sexes but also between those who side with the gods and those who turn against them, that Atwood's heroine becomes a spokesman of all the vulnerable and exploited. She finds a reflection of her tragedy in the Quebec landscape. Renata Wilford, the heroine of *Bodily Harm*, finds hers reflected in the tragedy of the mute, innocent masses whom to power-wielders all over the world find useful. The novel is obsessively concerned with the uses, the abuses in fact, of

women. But it expands and extends the implications of the term woman to cover all these masses. Atwood's method here is similar to that in *Surfacing*, but *Bodily Harm* is more successful in humanizing the theme of power and its destructiveness.

The novel has for its epigraph a very apt quotation from John Berger : "A man's presence suggests what he is capable of doing to you or for you. By contrast, a woman's presence....defines what can and cannot be done to her."[3] The epigraph neatly suggests woman's usability for man as well as her passivity and vulnerability. Her usability is referred to again and again all through the novel : she is useful because man needs to lay her; she is used as raw material for man's wildest macho fantasies; she can be tortured without fear of retaliation; and, in violent times, she can be used for serving the end of the power-hungry politicians. Rennie a bodily damaged free-lance reporter, flies to the twin islands of St. Anthony and St. Agathe, placed somewhere in the Caribbeans and close to Granada which is the object of the C. I. A.'s anxious gaze. She is in search of love and fulfilment, but by the time her harrowing stay in the islands comes to a close, she has realized that both her notion of self and her notion of love were misplaced. Rennie carves out an identity for herself, but the identity is very different from what she had expected to locate. Similarly, she finds love and fulfilment, but not in the way she had hoped to. In fact, her experiences at the islands make her realize that the thing called love is only another name for using or being used.

The novel is feminist like all Atwood's fiction, and its climax is one of the most spectacular essays in feminism in all literature. But the novel is at the same time also a bleak but radical commentary on the international situation where all human principles and issues (democracy, liberalism, individual dignity, even love) are used as pretexts for political ends, for "getting rid of people you don't like" (p. 240). When Paul, her last male lover, dismisses her references to love and decency, he does not appear a cynic; he has seen through the games power-hungry leaders play in their quest for power. The political situation on the islands has no room for love or decency or humanity; here, the voters' list contains dead people's names while many livings ones are scrupulously excluded; floods are welcomed by the rulers because these fetch charity and aid which, of course, are used for purchasing votes; here only power matters. Who cares for love, who has time for love, when the only real things centre around power and politics ? And women ? They are mere non-entities, good only for laying and torturing, even slicing off into pieces : "If you get angry and chop your woman, that's understandable" (p. 225). What the novel makes very clear

is that the uses of woman who are not different from the uses of common man : both are powerless and therefore both are abused. Metaphorically speaking, therefore, to be woman means to be weak and powerless.

It is tempting to take comfort from the fact that the fictive islands are not representative of the civilized world, that if a husband in this place forces the woman to take off her clothes before tying her up on an ant-hill, it does not mean that husbands elsewhere are also equally brutal. Unfortunately for such rationalisers, the novel does not permit such an inference. Already, Rennie has been a sick witness to a Taronto scene, though it is presented on a 'realistic' film, in which the lover enjoys shoving a live rat into the vagina of his beloved. This too is suggestive of the use of woman in the so-called civilized countries. Canada is essentially as bad as the Caribbean. And woman everywhere is as horridly used as are the poor. Rennie was taught during her childhood how to stay quiet, how not to say what the 'superior' sex would not like her to say, and how to feel superfluous, irrelevant, almost invisible. The damnation of the poor also consists in their being expected to remain invisible, silent, and irrelevant. *Bodily Harm* is a daring and disturbing novel because it equates woman with the poor throughout the world.

Like the heroine of *Surfacing*, Rennie too ends up as an activist. Taught to stay silent and suffering, she rejects her femininity and speaks out the truth, the disturbing truth both about the poor and women. She has lived half her life as a submissive, conforming feminine person. But henceforth, she is going to turn subversive, her courage to speak out, narrate and publish her experience being as subversive an act as any. It is in this newly-discovered role that she realizes her identity : "In any case she is a subversive. She was not one once but now she is. A reporter. She will pick her time; then she will report." (pp. 300–301). It goes without saying that the novel itself is what Rennie has reported to the world.

It is in the process of defining her stance and role that Rennie finds true fulfilment and love. All her lovers have just used her. In the prison where she is being kept as a hostage, she watches with impotent rage the barbaric killings that follow opposition to the ruler. It is in the prison room that she suddenly realizes that, no matter how unlikeable her fellow-prisoner Lora is, she is as much a victim as she herself or any other poor person. The scene in which she makes a symbolic contact with this sufferer is bound to be recognised as one of the magnificent love scenes in all literature. As Lora lies beaten, filthied and perhaps dying, Rennie wishes to wash her face. But there is no water, not even a rag. Ultimately, Rennie overcomes her

initial hesitation as well as her dislike for Lora and decides to lick the face clean : "She hauls Lora over to the dryest corner of the room and sits with her, pulling Lora's head and shoulders into her lap. She moves the sticky hair away from the face, which isn's a face any more, it's a bruise, blood is still oozing from the cuts....the mouth looks like a piece of fruit that's been run over by a car, pulp. Rennie wants to throw up, it's no one she recognizes, she has no connection with this, there's nothing she can do, it's the face of a stranger, someone without a name, the word *Lora* has come unhooked and is hovering in the air, apart from this ruin, mess, there's nothing she can even wipe this face off with, all the cloth in this room is filthy, septic, except her hands, she could lick this face, clean it off with her tongue, that would be the best, that's what animals did, that's what you were supposed to do when you cut your finger, put it in your mouth, clean germs her grandmother said, if you don't have water, she can't do it, it will have to do, it's the face of Lora after all, there's no such thing as a faceless stranger, every face is someone's, it has a name" (pp. 298-99). In overcoming her nausea, prejudice and habit of not touching things, Rennie is really experiencing a re-birth. In her new life, she has experienced both love and a genuine vision. This vision is going to make her subversive not only politically but also sexually; it is also going to make her a true, genuine individual, not merely a stage prop for exploiters—men.

Atwood is an ambitious novelist; she values the function of fiction as an exploration into life and human predicament. If she now no longer clings to a purely feminist kind of fiction, it is because she realizes that woman represents only one among many groups who are weak, exploited and abused. Both *Surfacing* and *Bodily Harm* mark a distinct advance on *The Edible Woman* and her short stories like "Hair Jewellery" in the sense that without compromising her feminist commitment she successfully transcends the feminist dimension and comes to cover all the weak and powerless in the world.

H. P. University
Simla.

NOTES

1. *The Edible Woman* (1969: rpt. Toronto : Seal Books, 1981), p. 77.
2. *Surfacing* (1978; rpt. Markham, Ontario : Paperbacks, 1982), pp. 140-41.
3. *Bodily Harm* (1982; rpt. London : Virago Press, 1983), p. 7.

★

The Light

Let me see where the light is.....
It's dark here

won't I be able
to climbover/breakthrough
this fast fortress

where's the crack the fissure the hole
wherethrough I see light
I try constantly blind
though you've given eyes and the sky

O God hurtle me out of my fortress
I built brick on brick
round my head

God let me see the light

– Subhas Saha

Benefactive Clauses in English and Hindi

Sudhakar Pandey

In this paper we shall present a brief analysis of clauses involving the participant role of Beneficiary. According to Halliday (1967 : 51-58), semantically we can recognize a participant role of Beneficiary in the sense of that which benefits from the process expressed in the clause, e.g. *John* in

(1) He gave *John* the book.

Structurally, this role may be realized in the clause element 'complement', as in (1), in that of subject, as in

(2) *John* was given the book

or in that of adjunct, as in

(3) He gave the book *to John*

Halliday (1967 : 51–68) gives four reasons for treating beneficiary as a participant role. They are as follows :

(a) Beneficiary is treated by the English language as a participant role, in the sense that it may be realized as an element which is in direct structural relation with the predicator : as a nominal element in the clause, without the intervention of a preposition as a 'minor predicator'.

(b) It can be realized as the subject; even if we regard John as in *He gave John the book* as an adjunct, equivalent to John with

deleted preposition, we can hardly treat *John* in *John was given the book* in the same way.

(c) There are some clause types which will not accept beneficiary complement : for example, *She washed John the clothes* but not *He marched John the prisoners.*

(d) The line between Beneficiary and Goal is not always very sharp to draw, as in *He taught John French, He played John tennis.*

Two points emerge clearly out of the above four arguments of Halliday's : (1) in action clauses Beneficiary can occur only with directed action verbs, and (2) Beneficiaries can occur with directed action verbs either optionally or obligatorily.

To take the second point first : in the clause

(4) a. She washed John the clothes

(given in the argument (c) above), *John* is an optional Beneficiary since

(4) b. She washed the clothes

is a perfectly acceptable construction. But whether or not a Beneficiary can co-occur with a directed action verb is not determined solely by the verb. Halliday thinks that the unacceptability or a Beneficiary in a directed action clause

> may thus be better regarded as a matter of semantic improbability : one is unlikely to find beneficiary with certain verbs, such as *baleaguer*, or *blemish*, but grammatically the feature 'benefactive' may be regarded as combining freely with the features making up clauses of type (i) (i.e., directed action clauses) (1967 : 55).

The clause in (1) is an illustration of an obligatory occurence of a Beneficiary with a directed action verb. Verbs like *give, show, sell, charge, pass, throw, book, offer, promise* are typically benefactive verbs in that none of them can occur without a Beneficiary :

> Not only that he gave a lecture but also *what did you give as a present ? I gave a book* are perfectly acceptable but the fact that the process they express is one inherently implying a beneficiary is reflected in their operation in thematic structures....where the goal on the one hand is separated from process plus beneficiary on the

other. Thus *he gave John the picture* is matched *was the picture* : whereas while *he painted John the* picture is acceptable, *the picture was painted John* and *what John was painted was the picture* are not (Halliday, 1967 : 55).

As regards our first point (i. e. in action clauses Beneficiary can occur only with directed action verbs), Halliday thinks that the admittance of the Beneficiary to direct participant status in the clause depends on the action being 'directed', the Beneficiary being in this case a kind of secondary goal. This is because he thinks that a Beneficiary requires, in English, a participating entity to benefit from and the benefit must be objectified. This leads him to conclude that the feature 'benefactive' presupposes the feature 'effective' (i. e. directed action clause). Beneficiary can, however, occur with one or two verbs in relational clause types. Halliday's examples of relational benefactive clauses are the following :

(5) a. She made him a good wife
b. It cost John ten shillings
c. The mistake cost John dear

To this we will add

d. John has a car

There seems no reason to restrict the occurrence of Beneficiary to clauses with directed action verbs as Halliday does. Let us begin the consideration of this matter with the following examples :

(6) John found a pen

(7) a. John bribed the official
b. John gave the official a bribe

In (6), the proccss is clearly an event, not an action. John did not do anything. An 'event benefactive' verb specifies that a Beneficiary undergoes a change of state or condition with respect to a given object. Thus it is associated with two participant roles, a Beneficiary and a Goal (or an object). Other examples of event benefactive verbs are *gain, win, lose* not a game but an object). (e. f. Chafe, 1970 : 149).

In (7a), the process may be considered a directe action benefactive verb which is inherently associated with an Actor, a Goal and a Beneficiary but from which the Goal has been deleted from the role structure because the Goal has been lexicalized into the process and becomes a built-in participant role. Such directed action verbs into which the Goal role is

lexicalized are associated with an Actor role which specifies the cause of gain or loss, and a Beneficiary role which specifies the one who undergoes the gain or loss. The Goal role is not present in the structure because it is lexicalized into the process. Of course, whether a role structure exists or not must be kept separate from the question of whether the role structure has been derived from some other structure. A role structure exists if verbs can be found which fit that role structure. Nontheless, it may be true that some role structures are derived from other. If so, the role structures which are not derived from others presumably represent a deeper level of structure.

We suggest that 'verbalization of nominals' be posited as one of the 'derivational' rules in systemic grammar for deriving one role structure (or 'clause type' in Hallidays' terms) from another role structure. This proposal should be in tune with the four types of processes (='rules') which Halliday has proposed. Since Halliday's proposals for deriving one clause type from another are not given at one place they are scattered throughout his 'Transitivity and theme' part-1—they are not so easily recognized as constituting a set of rules. His 'derivation' rules include :

(i) deletion of a role
(ii) causativization
(iii) nominalization of process
(iv) objectification of process

To these, we can add the proposed rule :

(v) Verbalization of nominals.

Deletion rule operates when participant roles are present in the transitivity structure which are not necessarily manifested in the syntactic structure. The following clauses will serve to illustrate the operation of deletion rule :

(8) She washed

meaning 'she washed (say) the clothes', and

(9 The clothes were washed

say, *by Mary*. In Halliday's terms (8) is a 'goal intransitive' clause, and (9) is an 'actor-unspecified' agent-oriented receptive clause. In (9), the actor is always present in the deep structure though it does not surface in the surface structure.

Causativization rule applies when a causative clause such as *He marched the prisoners* is derived from *The prisoners marched.* Such a causativization rule allows for a systematic relationship to hold between non-middle and middle clauses.

Conflation of roles takes place when two distinct participant roles have the same semantic referent. For instance, the surface structure of

(10) John bought a car

implies that he bought it for himself – that the Beneficiary is identical with the Actor. In such a case the Beneficiary may be deleted from the surface structure. But the deletion is optional, however, since we may also say

(11) John bought himself a car

Nominalization of process is involved when a process is "entirely expressed in the nominal element, the verb merely specifying that there is a process involved : *he had a bath, he took a dislike, he made a mistake*" (Halliday, 1967a : 60). The verbalization of nominal rule that we have suggested will thus be in converse relation with Halliday's nominalization of process rule.

Halliday's last rule of 'derivation', objectification of process, converts an intransitive clause like

(12) She sang

into a transitive clause such as

(13) She sang a song

through the introduction of a range nominal.

To go back to the clauses in (7), which motivated us to propose the incorporation of the 'varbalization of nominals' rule in systemic grammar, we consider *John bribed the official* and *John gave the official a bribe* as variants of a common underlying structure. The distinction between these two clauses is minimal – i.e., a question of the presence or absence of varbalization. Other pairs of such clauses are : *He gave her help, He helped her; He gave the dog a kick, He kicked the dog; I give advice to anyone who asks, I advise anyone who asks.* (C. f. Anderson, 1971 : 142–144).

Now let us consider the following classes :

(14) a. She sang for John
b. She sang John a song
c. *She sang John

In (14a, b). *John* seems to be a Beneficiary. But in (12) (*She sang*), there is no Beneficiary in the surface structure and there is no reason to postulate the presence of a Beneficiary in the transitivity structure and its subsequent deletion. It seems reasonable therefore to think that *sing*, which

is a non-directed action verb, may be optionally accompanied by a Beneficiary and this is attested by the clause in (14a) with an adjuct Beneficiary *for John*. But *sing* in (13) is accompanied by a 'range' nominal *song*, which specifies the extension of the non-directed action process *sing*, or perhaps specifies the process itself and also objectifies it so that it becomes not merely specific but also as it were a participant in the clause. Since *sing*, in (13) is objectified through the introduction of the range nominal *song*, it also allows the presence of a beneficiary as in (14b). But for a Beneficiary to be present as a complement in a clause with *sing*, the range nominal must also be present. If the range nominal is not present the Beneficiary complement is not (14c), though the Beneficiary adjuncts is (14a), allowed to appear in a clause with *sing*. The behaviour of the verb *dance* is similar to that of the verb *sing* with respect to the occurrence/non-occurrence of a Beneficiary in the clause :

(15) a. She danced
b. She danced *for John*
c. She did a dance
d. She did *John* a dance
e. *She did *John*

To summerise the foregoing discussion, there are verbs in English which strongly select a Beneficiary role and to that extent the clauses in which these verbs occur are inherently benefactive clauses. And all the three main types of clauses—relational, mental process, and action, include a sub-type of benefactive clause :

(16) a. relational
benefactive *have, own, belong to, cost, make....*
b. mental process
benefactive *tell, show....*
c. action process
benefactive *give, buy, sell, send, lend...*
d. event
benefactive *find, lose, win...*

In a clause such as *He bought a car*, where the Beneficiary is not present in the surface structure, the Actor and the Beneficiary roles are conflated. And in a clause such as *He bribed the official* where the Beneficiary is present but the Goal is not, the Goal and the Beneficiary roles are conflated.

We mention here an interesting relationship that exists between *have, give, lend,* and *take, rob, steal.* Consider the following examples :

(17) a. John gave Mary his ear
b. John lent Mary his car
c. John has a car

(17a) can be interpreted as 'John caused Mary to have his car', whereas (17b) has the same interpretation plus the period of transitory possession which is restricted to a certain time. (17c), which is a relational benefactive clause, is therefore a non-causative counterpart of (17a) and (17b) and is embedded in (17a, b). Clauses with *take*, *rob* and *steal* also involve the embedding of a negative relational benefactive clause and can be interpreted as 'cause to have no longer', whereas *take* is neutral with regard to the manner of causation, *steal* and *rob* incorporate in them the manner of causation : *steal*, involves secrecy, *rob* involves force (C. f. Kastovsky, 1973 : 270).

Let us consider the following examples of inherently benefactive clauses in Hindi :

(18) a. shya:m ne usha : ko apna : sku:tar diya :
'Shyam gave his scooter to Usha'
(provisionally or permanently)

b. shya:m ne usha : ko apna : sku:tar *dediya* :
'Shyam gave his scooter to Usha' (permanently)

c. shya:m ne usha : ko apna : sku:tar udha:r diya :
'Shyam lent his scooter to Usha'

It is interesting to note that the verb *dena* : 'to give' occurs in all the three clauses irrespective of the fact whether the transfer of property involves a permanent transfer or a temporary transfer or is neutral with regard to the temporal nature of the transfer. Of course *dena* : in (18a) is a lexical verb and as the English gloss shows the manner of having, whether provisonal or permanent, is unspecified here. (18b) involes a permanent transfer of the scooter, the object, from *Shyam* to *Usha*, and the verb used is a compound verb *de dena* :—the root of *dena* : 'to give' and the operator *dena* : The verb in (18c) is a conjunct verb *udha:r dena* : 'to lend', and the verb *dena* : 'to give' again appears here but as an operator. The point we want to emphasize here is that the occurrence of the lexical item *dena* : is semantically significant and allows for a semantic relationship among the three clauses.

Let us now bring into consideration the following two sets of verbs : *have*, *buy*, and *have*, *sell*, *rent*, and *let*. whereas *have* is a relational

benefactive verb *buy*, *sell*, *rent* and *let* are directed action benefactive verbs. The latter contain *have* in their underlying structure and in addition also contain the specification 'by giving money'. *lend* and *let* are different from *buy* and *sell* in that they also contain a specification of a certain span of time.

We shall close the discussion of the English benefactive clauses by referring to the three types of beneficiaries : (i) inner beneficiary, (ii) outer beneficiary, and (iii) far outer beneficiary (cf. Platt, 1971 : 50). Inner Beneficiaries function as participants in inherently benefactive clauses involving verbs such as *have*, *own*, *give*, *buy*, *sell*, *rent*, *lend*, etc. In the transitivity structure of clauses with these there is always an associated Beneficiary. But consider the following clauses :

(19) a. I'll post the letter *for you*
b. I'll open the door *for you*

It is clear that *you* in both these clauses is meant to be the beneficiary of the action. But in these cases the Beneficiary is a Beneficiary of service rather than of an object. The implication in clauses of this type is that though it is the Beneficiary who should be normally berforming the action in question, the Actor will render a service/will oblige him/her by performing that action. In English, Beneficiaries of service are realized either by a perpositional phrase mmencing with *for* and occurring at the end of the clause or by complement (e.g., *She washed John the clothes*) occurring in the middle of the clause. This beneficiary role which is termed as 'Outer Beneficiary' by Platt (1971 : 50) is not a participant role but a circumstantial role and it cau occur with directed action verbs. It is to be noted that the Beneficiary in outer benefactive clauses does not become the possessor of any object. Now consider the following clauses :

(20) a. *For you*, I'd take this trouble
b. *For you* I can do anything

It is clear again that *for you* in both these clauses realizes the Beneficiary role ('Far Outer Beneficiary') and is interpreted as 'for your sake.' Far outer Beneficiary is not a participant role but a circumstantial role and syntactically it always functions as an adjunct and never as a subject and never as a subject or complement. Far outer Beneficiaries normally occur in clause initial position and are usually separated from the rest of the clause by comma in writing or by a perceived pause in speach.

Coming to the Hindi benefactive clauses, none of the syntactic arguments that Halliday gives for treating Beneficiary as a participant in

the English benefactive clause holds good for Beneficiary in Hindi. In Hindi action process clauses, Beneficiary can never occur as a nominal it always occurs as a postpositional phrase. Consider the following clauses :

(21) a. me : ne *shya : m ko* kita : b di :
'I gave the book to shyam'
'I gave Shyam the book'
b. me : ne *shya : ke liye* ek kita:b khari : di
'I bough: a book for Shym'
'I bought Shyam a book'

Shya:m ko 'to Shyam' in (21a) and *shya:m ke liye* 'for Shym' in (21b) are postpositional phrases realizing the participant role of Beneficiary. In Hindi, even subjects and complements in a clause do not have to be nominal. In fact, in perfective transitive clauses in Hindi the clause element subject is alway realized by a postpositional phrase with the postposition *ne*. For examples, in (21a, b), which are perfective clauses, the subject is realized by *me:ne* rather than *me:* (as in *me:shya:m ko ek kita:b de raha:hu:* 'I am giving a book to Shyam'. *me:shya:m ke liye ek kita:b khari:d raha:hu:* 'I am buying a book for Shyam')

Now consider the following non-benefactive mental process clauses :

(22) a. me:ne *sher* dekha: he :
'I have seen a lion'
b. me:ne *sher ko* dekha: he:
'I have seen the lion'

The only difference in meaning between the object noun phrases in the two clauses above is that in (22a) it is generic realized by a nominal element *sher* 'a lion' (generic) whereas in (22b) it is definite realized by a postpositional phrase *sher ko* 'the lion' (definite). 'The intervention of a postposition as a minor predicator' does not convert a participant into a circumstantial in Hindi, *sher ko* 'the lion' in (22b) is as much a participant as *sher* 'a lion' in (22a) is.

A Beneficiary role in Hindi can never be realized by the subject in a benefactive clause. Even in an unmarked agent-oriented receptive clause, where the Beneficiary postpositional phrase occurs initially, and from which the Actor role is deleted, Beneficiary is not the subject.

(23) a. *shya:m* ko kita:b di: gayi :
'Shyam was given the book'

b. *shya:m ke liye* kita:b khari:di:gayi:
'Shyam was bought a book'

The ambiguity that Halliday (1967 : 53-54) refers to between the participant role of Beneficiary and Goal in a clauses such as *He taught John French* does not exist in Hindi. Consider the following :

(24) a. me:ne *shya:m ko* angrezi : parha:i:
'I taught Shyam English'

b. me:ne shya:m ke badale angrezi : parha:i:
'I taught English for Shyam'

shya:m ko in (24a) is a participant role of Beneficiary ('Inner Beneficiary') whereas *shya:m ke badale* in (24b) is a circumstantial role of Beneficiary ('Outer Beneficiary'). In both the clauses of (24) *angrezi* 'English' is unambiguously Goal.

Our analysis of the Hindi benefactive clauses shows that Hindi too has the three types of Beneficiaries 'Inner', 'Outer' and 'Far Outer'. Beneficiaries in Hindi are realized as locative expressions. For example, the English clause (4a) (which we repeat for convenience) with a Beneficiary *John* will be realized in Hindi as a translation equivalent of 'in place of John' *ja:n ke badle/ja:n ki: jagah par*

(24) a. She washed John the clothes
(25) usne ja:n ke badale/ki:jagah par kapare sa:f kiye
(lit) 'She washed the clothes in place of John'

Far outer Beneficiaries in Hindi are ralized by postpositional phrases with *keliye/ki: kha:tir and* occur in clause initial position :

(26) a. a:p ke liye me: ja:n bhi: de sakta : hu :
'For you, I can even give my life'
'For you, I can even die'

b. a:p ke liye me: sher se bhi: lar sakta: hu:
'For yo, I can even fight a lion'

It is interesting to note that though in English the same preposition *for* occurs in prepositional phrases realizing inner, outer and far outer Beneficiaries as in (27a), (27b) and (27c) respectively

(27) a. I'll buy an umbrella *for you*
b. I'll clean the room *for you*
c. *for you* I'd walk a mile

In Hindi, these three types of Beneficiaries are realised differently :

(28) a. me:ne a:p ke liye ek chha:ta khari:da:
'I bought an umbrella for you'

b. me:ne *ap: ke badle* kamra: sa:f kiya:
'I cleaned the room for you'

c. a:p ke liye/a:p ki: kha:tir me: ek mi:l pe:dal calu:ga:
'For you, I'll walk a mile'

It is to be noted that though *a:p ke liye* 'for you' in 28c) (Far outer Beneficiary) can be substituted by *a:p ki : kha:tir* 'for your sake', *a:p ke liye* 'for you' (inner Beneficiary) in (28a) cannot be substituted by *a:p ki: kha:tir* ('for your sake') :

(29) *me:ne a:p ki: kha:tir ek chha:ta khari:da :
meaning 'I bought you an umbrella'.

Both in English and in Hindi, inner, outer and far outer Beneficiaries can occur in the same clause. For example :

(30) *For my brother*, would you kindly buy
(Far outer Beneficiary)
his wife an umbrella *for me*
(Inner Beneficiary) (Outer Beneficiary)

(31) *mere bha:i: ki: kha:tir kya: a:p*
(Far Outer Beneficiary)
uski: patni: ke liye mere badle
(Inner Beneficiary) (Outer Beneficiary)
ek chha:ta: khari:d sakte he: ?

(31) is the Hindi translation equivalent of (30)

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Indianness in the Novels of Raja Rao

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Raja Rao occupies a unique position among the Indian novelists writing in English today. He chose the English language as a medium of expression of his creative genius presumably because it is, as he once said in an interview with Parthasarathy : "expandable to an extraordinary degree, breaking conventions without any fear of its becoming un-English".[1] And when we read his works, particularly novels, we are immensely impressed by a remarkable ease with which he writes English. Words seem to come to him as naturally as 'leaves to a tree' (to use the famous Keatsian phrase). His supremely powerful style used in the Sahitya Academy prize winning novel, *The Serpent and the Rope*, won the admiration of Lawrence Durrell who said "Hurrah for you ! You not only do India great honour, but you have honoured English literature by writing it in our language truly magnificent....packed with the real magic of poetry....a truly contemporary work—one by which an age can measure itself, its values".

Raja Rao's first novel, *Kanthapura*, published in 1938, had already established him as an accomplished novelist. *The Serpent and the Rope* which came out more than two decades later (in 1960) was a feat. His third novel, *The Cat and Shakespeare*, appeared in 1965. It was followed by *Comrade Kirillov* which was first published in India in 1976. His last novel, expected to be more sophisticated than *The Serpent and the Rops*, is entitled *The Chessmaster and His Moves*. Besides these novels, he published *The Cow of the Barricades* in 1947 which is a collection of short stories.

Although all the novels of Raja Rao are tinged with essentially Indian feelings, it is in *Kanthapura* and *The Serpent and the Rope* that his

Indianness finds full expression. In this paper I have, therefore, confined myself to the discussion of these two novels as illustrations of Indianness.

Kanthapura is a chronicle of the Gandhian revolution and struggle for freedom. The central character Moorthy, upon whom all the actions and incidents hinge, is a Gandhi-figure and is portrayed as an undaunted hero who is ready to suffer, make sacrifices and renounce everything for the emancipation of the people from the shackles of slavery. The momentous events that take place in Kanthapura, a small village in some remote corner of Mysore, are part of a general trend in the whole country. The tiny village is, therefore, "India in microcosm",[2] The people of this village are religious and have unflinching faith in the benediction of the goddess of Kenchamma, the Hill, and Himvathy, the river that flows from the Hill. Whenever there is a natural calamity in Kanthapura the villagers pray to the goddess of Kenchamma and the calamity disappears. If there is drought in the village, they pray to the goddess and they are blessed with showers. Thus their life is marked by superstitious belief. Even today in many villages people believe that if such an epidemic as cholera or small-pox breaks out it is a manifestation of the wrath of some god or goddess. The disease cannot be driven away unless the goddess is placated. It is noteworthy that when some people in Kanthapura died of small-pox and cholera, the women worshipped Kenchamma, the goddess, who, they believed, would stop such deaths. Villagers' complete surrender to the goddess is noticeable in their usual invocation : "O Kenchamma ! Protect us always like this, through famine and disease, death and despair". In the orthodox Hindu society *Harikatha*, the story of God's glory, majesty and grace, is recited; and the Harikatha-performer creates an atmosphere of enchantment through music and dance. The blind faith of the villagers in gods is poignantly brought out by the author in Madanna's refusal to try the Sahib's pill even though her sheer dependence on the grace of Kenchamma didn't bring down her second son's fever. She pleaded before her husband : "If the gods are angry they'll take away not only your children but yourself". Any victory or human achievement is celebrated in a deeply religious way. When Moorthy, who is an embodiment of peaceful revolution in Kanthapura, is expected to be released from prison all the women, by now enthusiastic members of the revolutionary organisation set up during the period of his imprisonment, are in a state of exultation and are making splendid preparations for his welcome back home. In Ratna's utterance we get a glimpse of what ritualistic ovation they are going to offer him : "I shall part my hair to the left, and wear just a tiny kumkum mark and wear the sari till it reaches the toes and it will flout flutter and so well; and Rangamma said, 'We shall offer him *arathi*, and all our hearts gladdened and we said 'That will be like a

Bridegroom's welcome ceremony to go and meet Moorthy on the Karwar Road by the Kenchamma Temple (p.n. 151).

What is most striking here is the characteristic Indian sensibility expressed in the above utterances. India being primarily an agricultural country (and India lives in villages) the peasants pray to gods for bestowing upon them a rich harvest. Ramayya says, 'Oh, sun-god, give us a fine harvest this year' (p. 158). All the villagers look to the 'bright and benign goddess of Kenchamma for rain' : Priest Rangappa goes on 'chanting the hymns and ringing the bell'. The blessings of the goddess are unfailing. It rains and the villagers are thrilled.

Raja Rao's keen awareness of the social taboos is unmistakably found in saveral places in this novel. The Swamy's threat to excommunicate Moorthy for the latter's free mixing with Pariahs is menacingly convayed to his mother, Narsamma, by Venkamma who had previously offered her daughter to Moorthy for marriage. The thought of being excommunicated throws Narsamma into a hysterical state and she utters :

"Oh, they'll excommunicate us—they"ll excommunicate us, the Swamy will excommunicate us", she said, and she rolled on the floor of her house while Rangamma stood by the door, halpless as a calf (p. 59). To a Brahmin excommunication during those days—more than four decades ago—was a great calamity. Fulminating against Moorthy's excommunication she expresses both her anger and exasperation. When Moorthy comes to her asking for coffee, she pushes him away warning that he should not appear before her again until he had sought *prayaschitta* from the Swamy himself; and again she goes into a fit of repentance.

"On ! To have a son excommunicated ; Oh ! to have gone to Benaras and Rameshwaram and to Gaya and to Gokurna, and to have a son excommunicated ! I wish I had closed my eyes with your father instead of living to see you polluted. polluted ! polluted ! Go away, you pariah !" (pp. 61-62). These are the outpourings of a grief stricken Brahmin woman, who is shocked to find the supremacy of her caste over pariahs disappearing at the fag end of her life.

Nothing could be a more faithful picture of a caste conscious Brahmin woman of an Indian village than that of Narsamma condemning her own, but excommunicated, son Moorthy as a despicable creature. This simply reminds us of how horrifying the difference was between a Brahmin and a pariah more than four decades ago in this country. Mahatma

Gandhi's and, in this novel, Moorthy's struggle was directed, among other things, against the enormous injustic done to pariahs.

In this context I must say that if on the one hand Raja Rao glorifies Moorthy's Gandhian virtues, on the other, he seems to tacitly satirize the hypocrisy of the Swami who is supposed to be a custodian of the Hindu religion. A disciple of the Swami misconstrues the quintessence of the *Gita* and says that while anarchy was let loose in India, the British came to protect our religion :

'.....What did we have, pray, before the British came : disorder, corruption, and egoism : disorder, corruption and agoism I say '—he continued.....' and the British came and they came to protect us, our bones and our dharma. I say dharma and I mean it. For hath not the Lord said in the *Gita*, whensoever there is ignorance and corruption I come, for I, says Krishna, am the defendar of dharma, and the British came to protact our dharma' (p. 128). And this defender of the Hindu faith apprehands extinction of the religion of the social revolution started by Moorthy in Kanthapura, and so he further warns the revolutionary enthusiasts :

Now I am an old man. You are all young. Things change. But what I fear for tomorrow is not the disorder in the material world, but the corruption of castes and of the great traditions our ancestors have bequethed us. When the British rule disappears there will be neither Brahmin nor pariah, vaisya nor sudra—nay, neither Mohammeden nor Christian, and our enternal dharma will be squashed like a louse in a child's hair. My young brothers, let not such confusion of castes annoy our manes, and let the religion of Vasistha and Manu, Sankara and Vidyaranya go unmuded to the Salf-created one" (p. 129). All social reformers have to confront such hypocrites in saffron robes who control the minds of the uneducated masses in India by harping on the uniqueness of the Hindu religion. To my mind here Raja Rao is exposing the hypocrisy of such people as the Swami in "Saffron robes" rather than vindicating the truth of Advaita propounded by Sankara and Vidyaranya.

The essentially Indian religion is based on the sublime principle of non-violence (ahimsa) and truth preached by Lord Buddha, the great ancient saint. And it is significant to note that Moorthy's revolutionary movement is also based on non-violence. Whenever his supporters get agitated and want to take recourse to violence, he very calmly admonishes them against violence. Then there is one thing more. Our ancient sages while glorifying Truth and Ahimsa (non-violence) also reminded us that the only way to win the heart of our enemy was to treat him with love. That is

what Moorthy, a true disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, emphasizes while speaking to Rangamma, 'The great enemy is in us.....hatred is in us. If only we could show fearless, calm affection towards our fellow men, we would be stronger and not only would the enemy yield, but he would be converted.'

It is significant to note that women in Kanthapura are profoundly interested in the philosophy of Vedant and look concerned when Ramkrishnayya, the interpreter of this philosophy, is dead Raja Rao also highlights the transcendental powers latent in Yoga, though he does it in a casual way in an unimportant place in the novel. After practising the first principles of Yoga Rangamma feels that strength has been flowing into her and the other women practising the same 'began to feel stronger and stronger, the eyes stuck brighter in the sockets and the mind deeper in the spirit.' Here one is reminded of the wonderful feats performed by Dhirendra Brahmachari these days, and the craze among the Westerners to come to India to find peace and panacea for all ills through Yogic meditation which forms an integral part of our cultural heritage.

While *Kanthapura* presents a Kaleidoscopic picture of India of more than four decades and a half years ago clinging to the principles of Truth, Love and Ahimsa (non-violence), trying to win freedom through a peaceful revolution and creating a new social awareness by lifting the veil of ignorance, social taboos, and religious hypocrisy, *The Serpent and the Rope* is the odyssey of the author's soul. The hero of this novel, Ramaswamy, who is identifiable with the novelist, is an apotheosis of Indianness. This becomes re-inforced when we remember what Raja Rao said in an interview with Parthasarathy while he was in India :

"By force of circumstance, purely accidental and sentimental, I have lived abroad. My roots are in this country. That is why I come here every year and spend as much time as I can. I live abroad but I am chained to my country. One of the disciplines that has interested me in Indian literature is its sense of *sadhana* (devotion)—a form of spiritual growth.....I think I try to belong to the great Indian tradition of the past when literature was considered a *sadhana*."[6] Ramaswamy, as we see him in the novel, is a highly aducated Brahmin culturally refined, and steeped in the glory of the great Hindu philosophy : Vedanta, propounded by Sankara and Vidyaranya. His infancy was nurtured by Brahminic tradition. We find a glimse of his prodigious background at the very beginning of the novel where he says, ".....I was a good Brahmin. I even knew Grammar and the Brahma Sutras, read the Upanishads at the age of four, was given the holy thread at seven." (p–5) And the novel begins with an

aphoristic statement. 'I was born a Brahmin—that is, devoted to truth and all that. "Brahmin is he who knows Brahman." The whole novel is interspersed with Ramaswamy's references to Indian mythology, history, folklore, the *Gita*, and particulary to the Vedanta Sutras. At the very out set of the Vedant Sutra Brahman is described as 'that from which can Universe proceeds, it is all intelligence and it is the source of Scripture and root of all knowledge."[7] In his scholarly study of the philosophy of Advaita T. M. P. Mahadevan brings out the definition of Brahman and the world "Truth, knoledge, infinite is Brahman, Mutable, non-intelligent, finite and perishing in the world."[8] To my mind in this novel Raja Rao seems to be elevating India to the position of Brahman; for India is not seen simply as an abode of Brahman but as a supernal source from which emanates eternal truth and light of knowledge. There is an obvious deification of India in the following passage where Ramaswamy is ruminating over his divine country :

'It was India I wanted to see, the India of my inner being. Just as I could now see *antar-Kasi*, the "inner Banares", India for me became no land-not these trees, this sun, this earth; not those ladle hands and skeletal legs of bourgeois and coolie; not even the new pride of the uninformed Indian official, who seemed almost to say, "Don't you see, I am Indian now, and I represent the Rapublic of India"—but something other, more centred, widespread, humble; as though the gods had peopled the land with themselves as the trees had forested the country, rivers flowed and named themselves, birds winged themselves. higher and vet higher, touched the clouds and soared bayond, calling to each other over the valleys by their names. The India, of Brahma and Prajapathi, of Varuna, Mithra and Aryaman; of Indra, of Krishna, Shiva and Parvathi; of Rama. Harishchandra and Yagnyavalkya; this India was a continuity I felt, not in time, but in space; as a cloud that stands over a plain might say, "Here I am and I pour"—and goes on pouring. The waters of that rain have fertilized our minds and hearts, and being without time they are ever present. It is perhaps in this sense that India is outside history' (pp. 246-47).

This passage central to the main theme of the novel is a brilliant repository of all the sublime ideas Ramaswamy has about India. Perhaps here he means that India is infinite and eternal; and, therefors, it is 'outside history'. He enumerates Brahma, gods and goddesses, and sages to emphasize that India has been the source of all knowledge—about truth and reality—to the world. To him 'India is', as he later says. 'the Guru of the world' (p. 332) India is cosmos, for to Savithri who is equally

enamoured of India 'India makes everything and everywhere an India'. In fact India represents the Absolute. India is not known by politicians and professors of political science but by Ananda Coomaraswamy, the eminent exponent of the Indian sensibility :

'This Boston Brahmin, Ananda Coomarawamy, was more of a *smartha*, a true, an orthodox Indian than some tottering old President of the Indian National Congress. India would never be made by our politicians and professors of political science, but by these isolate existences of India, in which India is commemorated, *experienced* and communicated; beyond history, as tradition, as the Truth (p. 352).

Raja Rao feels that it is through Ananda Coomaraswamy's books that the entire mine of the glorious culture and tradition of India is revealed to us. His passionate admiration for this great Indian is expressed in the concluding lines of his article entitled 'Books which have influenced me'[9] where he suggests that the Upanishads and the Vedanta are the ultimate sources of all knowledge and are like the Himalayas and the Gangotri. This he realises through the books of Ananda Coomaraswamy.

All actions and incidents in the novel revolve around the three principal characters—Ramaswamy, Madeleine, and Savithri. Ramaswamy, a staunch South Indian Brahmin who marries a Catholic French girl has an overwhelming influence over his wife who, after her marriage, starts loving anything that is Indian. One is reminded of her several utterances in lyrical praise of India, and particularly her delicate caressing of the huge flat stone, 'Shiva's bull', lying at the edge of their garden in France. Madelin's offering grass to the bull cannot be taken simply as a fun but as a manifestation of her devotion to the Hindu cult. And the culmination of the imapact of Indianness is found in her gradual but firm conversion to Buddhism. Like deeply religious Hindu women' she even observed an eclipse and fasted the night before : she bathed both as the eclipse started and as it ended". And, again, like a devoted Hindu wife anxious to cure Ramaswamy's diseases she went on a forty-one-day fast on Buddha Avalokiteshwara for she had a vision that she could certainly cure him. Ramaswamy's long residence in France made has made his soul restless and a little before he goes to sign the divorce document he pines for India, for she alone represents his entire world of reality :

India is not a country like France is, or like England. India is an idea, a metaphysic....My India I carried wheresoever I want....No, the Ganges was an inner truth to me, an assurance, the origin and end of my Brahminic tradition. I would go back to India, for the Ganges and for the deodhars

of the Himalayas .. I would go back to India, for that India was my breath, my only sweetness, gentle and wise : she was my mother. I felt I could still love something : a river, a mountain, the name of a woman". (p. 376).

The Ganges and the Himalaya are manifestations of Brahman or the Absolute and the hero's homing instinct reflected here is significant. This is a supreme example of Raja Rao's Indianness. With her education at Cambridge Savithri simply seems to be putting on a mask of Western sophistication, but within her vibrates the essentially Indian sensibility. On many occasions during her residence in France and England she expresses her feelings of a remarkable reverence for Indian culture and tradition. Her love for India becomes more poignant, presumably under the hypnotic influence of Ramaswamy who is her ideal. Though tethered to Pratap, she feels a sense of glory and triumph in her flirtations with Ramaswamy who is already married to Mandleine. In the novel she becomes a Radha and Ramaswamy a Krishna Radha-like feelings become articulate in her letter to Rama which she writes from Surajpur :"....The night is so auspicious, and tomorrow is Gokulasthmi, when Lord Krishna will be born. We shall fast, and we shall worship, and I shall think of you, my Lord." The letter closes with her invocation to Rama whom she calls "Lord my Master, of this life and of all the lives to come." This is indicative of her spiritual fidelity to Rama. This is true and what a pure Indian woman thinks about her husband or Lord. The mythological story about Radha and Krishna which is based on the concept of Brahman or the Absolute and Maya is retold by Raja Rao through Ramaswamy in a remarkably powerful style. The central point in the story relates to the apparently illusive and deceptive identities of both Krishna (*the brahmachari*) and the sage, Durwasa (the eternal *upavasi*), which beffled Radha. The enigmatic situation in the story is very adroitly explained to the inquisitive Savithri by Ramaswamy through catechism. She receives spiritual enlightenment from him, especially when he emphasizes that one must obey *dharma* as the 'plane must accept the direction of the' radar (p. 363).

In this novel Raja Rao paints an elaborate picture of Banares, the holiest city of India, where 'the dead do not die nor the living live' to project the essential Hinduism. Hindu rituals—those of hair-cutting, worship, funeral, and marriage are brought into focus in many places. Saroja's marriage ceremony gives a glimpse of the exciting scene of marriage procession and the bride's preparation for the 'ultimate destiny' which are typically Indian phenomena. But what rings throughout this novel is Ramaswamy's love for and glorification of India. He is imbued with his cultural heritage and past traditions. Let us think of Saroja's predicament.

Saroja, a sweet and loving sister to Rama, stubbornly reluctant to marry argues with her brother to prove that marriage does not bring happiness to an Indian woman who has no freedom like a European one. Rama immediately snubs her : "What freedom ?" And then he sarcastically remarks : "The freedom of foolishness". He tries to remove from her mind the delusions about the freedom enjoyed by European women. It may be noted here that Raja Rao does not forget to bring out the sublimity of the Indian brother-sister love. The unwilling Saroja suddenly agrees to marry when she finds Rama vomiting blood which she presumably thinks is the result of the strain that he may have had due to her unwillingness to marry.

The Serpent and the Rope, as the title itself suggests, is based on the philosophy of Vedanta, the guiding principles of Indian life. The hero, Ramaswamy, is predominanly a Vedantin; and all his dilectic stems from eternal treasure. His Indianness, manifest throughout the noval, is animated by this philosophy. That is why to him India represents 'an idea, a metaphysic' or the Absolute. 'India is everybody's : India is everybody'. She is 'some nameless magnanimity, a mystery'. He believes that though Buddhism also had its origin in India, it stemmed from Vedanta and has taken 'more and more of Vedanta into it'. And though 'all philosophies are possible in and around Vedanta' it cannot be improved upon. In a key passage beginning with the aphoristic statement 'The world is either unreal or real—the serpent or the rope' (p. 335) Ramaswamy brings into focus the cardinal point of Sankar's theory according to which nothing that is mutable or transitory is real. The only thing that is real is pure consciousness which is the Absolute Self. Another noticeable point that emerges in this passage relates to the significant role of a Guru—the torch-bearer—who alone helps us when we are puzzled and cannot distinguish illusion from realiity. A Guru in India is identified with God, and it is for this reason that towards the end of the novel Ramaswamy cries : "No, not a God but a Guru is what I need. 'Oh Lord, my Guru, my Lord'. "Thus a Vedantin as he is, Ramaswamy looks at the world in the light of Sankar's philosophy of Advaita, considers Vedanta superior to Buddhism; and gives paramount importance to Guru—the torch-bearer.

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NOTES

1. *Span*, September, 1977.
2. C. D. Narasimhaiah, *Raja Rao*, Arnold Heinemann, India, p. 43.
3. Moorthy's struggle in Kanthapura based on the Gandhian principles had led K. R. Srinivas Iyengar to call the novel a 'Gandhian Purana'. See *Indian Writing in English*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1962, p. 307.
4. Some of the intricate slokas including this in the *Gita* have been very lucidly explained by Vinoba Bhave who was, as late Shri Jayaprakash Narayan said, 'first and last a man of God'. See *Talks on the Gita*, Sarva Seva Sangh Prakashan, Varanasi, 1974.
5. *Span*, September, 1977.
6. To H. M. Williams 'Hindu philosophy is paramount' in *The Serpent and the Rope*, *A Writers' Workshop Publication*, Vol. II, p. 127.
7. Vasudeva J. Kirtikar, *Studies in Vedanta*, D. B. Taraporavala sons & Co., Bombay 1924, p. 14. A very illuminating discussion of the Vedas and Upanishada is found in Swami Prabhavanda's *The Spiritual Heritage of India*, Shri Ramkrishna Math, Madras, 1977.
8. *The Philosophy of Advaita* (With a foreword by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan), Ganesh & Co., Madras, 1969, p. 227.
9. M. K. Naik (Ed), *Aspects of Indian Writing in English*, The Macmillan Co. of India Ltd., Madras, 1979, p. 49.

The Good-Natur'd Man : Honeywood's Benevolence

B. S. Pathania

The purpose of this paper is to show that in Honeywood, the hero of *The Good-Natur'd Man* (1768), Goldsmith has made the benevolent protagonist of sentimental comedy a figure of fun. Benevolence, often extravagant, was perhaps the most noticeable quality of the chief male characters in eighteenth-century sentimental comedy. Goldsmith often expressed his opposition to this comedy which, despite its artificiality, was greatly liked by the contemporary theatre audiences. In his "Essay on the Theatre", which has become the *locus classicus* for his objections to sentimental comedy, he boldly attacks its characters. "In these plays," he says, almost all the characters are good, and exceedingly generous; they are lavish enough of their tin money on the stage, and though they want humour, have abundance of sentiment and feeling. If they happen to have faults or foibles, the spectator is taught, not only to pardon, but to applaud them, in consideration of the goodness of their hearts, so that folly, instead of being ridiculed, is commended ..." While the "Essay", written shortly before the opening of *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773), is far from giving an accurate account of the contemporary dramatic trends. Goldsmith clearly identifies here the major weaknesses of sentimental comedy, such as its pathetic scenes, insipid dialogue and heavy didacticism. It is, however, in his above statement on its characters that he is on particularly firm ground. The sentimental benevolent was a stock character in sentimental plays of the age.

Richard Steele's Bevil Jr., the hero of *The Conscious Lovers* (1722) and William Whitehead's Sir John Dorilant, the hero of *The School*

for Lovers (1762), to give only two examples, are indeed "exceedingly generous". Each is the embodiment of benevolence that springs from the tender emotion of pity for others' distress. Bevil rescues Indiana from her oppressor and benevolently maintains her. Sir John Dorilant, who loves his ward Caelie, learns that her affections are fixed upon another and far from harassing her, he gives her documents, leaving her free to possess her estate and marry where she likes. We are supposed to sympathise with the Bevils and the Dorilants placed in many distressing situations and delicate predicaments, and to rejoice with them when they are eventually, and invariably. rewarded with considerable material comforts.

Even the rake-heroes of some sentimental comedies are essentially good-hearted. Richard Cumberland's Belcour in *The West Indian* (1771), for example, is endowed with great generosity of feeling. He promptly leaves for the impecunious Captain Dudley two bank-notes of a hundred pounds each in a sealed paper. He seems to derive genuine pleasure from rescuing a fellow creature from misery. "I am the off-spring of distress", says he, "and every child of sorrow is my brother. While I have hands to hold, therefore, I will hold them open to mankind".[1] Stockwell, his father incognito, has "discovered (in him) through the veil of some irregularities, a heart beaming with benevolence".[2] A few more examples of such benevolent heroes may be given.

Colley Cibber's Charles Easy in *The Careless Husband* (1704) is unfaithful to his virtuous wife, as he intrigues with lady Graveairs and his wife's maid, Edging, Lady Easy, however, remarks that his reformation "is not yet impossible for while his humane nature is not quite shook off, I ought not to despair".[3] Edward Moore's Young Belmont in *The Foundling* (1747) feels twitches of conscience after falsely accusing Fidelia of looseness and relaizes that "he who solicits pleasure, at the expense of innocence is the vilest of betrayers". The heart of Lord Eustace in Mrs. Elizabeth Griffith's *The School for Rakes* (1768) bleeds for the unhappy Harriet whom he has clandestinely married after getting the wedding ceremony conducted by a sham clergyman. Instead of being consistently virtuous like Bevil Jr. and Sir John Dorilant, these heroes are good-natured prodigals temporarily led astray and easily capable of being reformed. Their reformation is attended by a display of benevolence as is shown by their eagerness to compensate their victims for loss or wrong they have inflicted on them.

The former vices of such characters are readily forgiven merely on the basis of their benevolence or, to use Goldsmith's own expression, "in consideration of the goodness of their hearts." They do not

make their exit before repeatedly extolling a kind, virtuous life in passages of emotional appeal. The fact that they can be recalled to goodness presumably provides another example of the essential goodness of mankind postulated by sentimental comedy. The 18th century ethical theories assumed benevolence[4] rather than depravity of human beings : Usually the benevolent characters of sentimental comedy stress morality by a frequent uttering of moral platitudes. Secondly, its tender or serious scenes are designed to call forth the spectator's tears. Indeed, the playwright does his utmost to exploit the sentimental possibilities of such scenes.

Goldsmith's description of the characters of sentimental plays as having "abundance of sentiment and feeling" can be illustrated by yet another type of character frequently found in them. Colley Cibber's Friendly Moral in *The Lady's Last Stake* (1707) is the best example of it. When he fortunately succeeds in ending the marital discord of Lord and Lady Wronglove, he speaks in a voice touched with emotion : "Age has not yet so drain'd me, but when I see a tenderness in virtue's eye, my heart will soften, and its springs will flow."[5] He is, like Sir Patrick Worthy in Charles Shadwell's *Irish Hospitality*, the embodiment of Shaftesburian benevolence. Another good example is Mrs. Hannah Cowley's Mr. Drummond in *The Runaway* (1776), who saves young Emily from a marriage to which her uncle is going to force her. "I will be a father to this orphan Emily" he says, "and ensure the felicity of two children." Sometimes, such a benevolent figure coalesces with the devoted father of a suffering, long-lost child. Sir Charles Raymond in *The Foundling*, for example, is so kind and compassionate as to be fit to be classed with Sir Friendly Moral. Towards the close of Act III, he asks Fidelia, the foundling, to feel free to live in his apartment, saying, "I have a heart that feels for your distresses and beats to relieve them."

The modern reader would find many of these characters ridiculous in their excessive eagerness to relieve the distresses of others. They utter with monotonous regularity edifying precepts in sober earnest. They have a merely generous heart, lacking an enlightened or discriminating mind. Often their optimism seems as uncritical as their morality seems shallow. They lack humour but have plenty of feeling and sentiment. However, as Goldsmith noted, the spectator was taught to applaud them for their kind hearts.

That Goldsmith had little sympathy with such obsession about benevolence and sensibility can be seen in his portrayal of Honeywood. Several critics, however, have failed to appreciate this. They view the plays

as sentimental by suggesting how, among other things, its hero acquits himself as a sentimental character. Bernbaum, for example, suggests that Honeywood offers nothing but "the commonplace traits of sentimental literature"[6]. Nettleton too finds sentimentalism in this benevolent hero's aphorisms.[7] Thorndike, obviously keeping Honeywood's benevolence in mind, observes that "the main plot celebrates the loveliness of virtue."[8] Such criticism is untenable. The ensuing discussion shows how Goldsmith's play, unlike the sentimental comedy of the age, presents its hero's benevolence as ridiculous rather than admirable, and as dangerous rather than rewarding.

To be sure, the good-natured Honeywood is a sentimentalist whose maxim is that "universal benevolence is the first law of nature." In Act I we find that instead of paying any money owing to a money lender, he sends ten guineas to a poor gentleman and his children. He justifies this act of benevolence, saying, "Must I be cruel because he (the money-lender) happens to be importunate; and, to relieve his avarice, leave them to insupportable distress ?"[9]. Again, he would not have a servant hanged for stealing his plate in the pantry : "....it's enough that we have lost what he has stolen; let's not add to it the loss of a fellow-creature"[10] His attitude of sympathetic tolerance has encouraged his servants not only to remain idle but to quarrel with one another most of the time. This is clear from the strange complaint of his tipsy butler that the footman's drunkenness will corrupt his morals.

Goldsmith thus created in Honeywood a figure worthy of sentimental comedy. But it would be wrong to regard this as Goldsmith's surrender to the current vogue for such comedy. Honeywood is by no means intended as an object of sympathy or admiration : he is, in fact, satirically conceived. The opening lines of the play reveal him as open-hearted but foolish. He has given security for a stranger who has absconded. His uncle Sir William, having taken up the security, decides to have him arrested for debt and then let him see which of his numerous friends really comes to his relief. Commenting on his benevolent nature, Sir William remarks that it "arises rather from his fears of offending the importance, than his desire of making the deserving happy".[11] Again, Goldsmith has Jarvis say that Honeywood "calls his extravagance, generosity; and his trusting everybody, universal benevolence".[12] He becomes an easy victim of false friends and pressing creditors because of his absurd credulity.

There is really very little in *The Good-Natur'd Man* to constitute Goldsmith's sentimental praise of Honeywood's virtues, as suggested by

Bernbaum. On the contary, Goldsmith designedly mocks his hero most of the time. In act III, for example, we find Honeywood in the custody of a bailiff and his assistant due to his own foolish benevolance. The aphorisms uttered by Honeywood on this occasion arouse derision as the bailiff himself takes them up. 'Humanity' Sir", says he, "is a jewel. It's better than gold. I love humanity"[13] Again, he is made to appear ridiculous when he pretends before Miss Richland that the bailiffs are visiting friends. He fails even to dupe her maid Garneli who remarks, "These people he calls officers are officers sure enough: Sheriff's officers; bailiffs, madam".[14]

Honeywood is shown to us even in a more unfavourable light in Act IV. Miss Richland has already set him free without informing him of it. But when the pretender Lofty hints at himself as his benefactor, he absurdly expresses his gratitude to him. Later he even recommends to the heroine the suit of the impostor, saying, "He is indeed what your warmest wishes might have form'd him. And to his other qualities, he adds that of the most passionate regard for you".[15] Desperately anxious to please everyone, he has a very difficult time when two extremes, Mr. Croaker and his wife ("she all laugh and no joke; he always complaining, and never sorrowful") try to convince him how each is right in reacting differently to a letter apparently threatening Croaker. Here Honeywood's benevolence is pointedly exposed to mockery. When he requests Croaker not to be severe in punishing this letter-writer, exhorting him to "remember that universal benevolence is the first law of nature". Croaker retorts; "Yes, and my universal benevolence will hang the dog if he had as many necks as a hydra".[16] Nattleton appears to miss the point that the pompous aphorisms uttered by Honeywood serve only to make him a laughingstock.

In his anxiety to aid the elopement of Leontine and Olivia of the under-plot, Honeywood offers them a cheque which turns out to be useless. This causes much trouble to his friends and arouses their anger. Foolish enough to court popularity by being "too much every man's man," he finds himself scorned by everyone. Indeed, he becomes despicable even to himself : "How have I sunk by too great an assiduity to please : How have I overtax'd all my abilities, lest the approbation of a single fool should escape me : But all is now over : I have survived my reputation, my friendships ...".[17] Convinced of his folly, he cannot but agree with what his uncle is made to say of him : "... your charity, that was but injustice; your benevolence, that was but weakness; and your friendship but credulity...."[18]

Thus, far from "celebrating the loveliness" of Honeywood's "humanity, charity and tenderness", as claimed by Thorndike, Goldsmith has explicitly derided his uncritical benevolence. Through Honeywood, as through Dr. Primrose earlier, Goldsmith has emphasized the failure of a benevolent man who is too generous to be prudent. and too credulous to see through the guiles of the cunning. His depiction of Honeywood has to be interpreted as an attack on sentimental idealism, culpable imprudence and facile optimism which characterized many heroes of the sentimental comedies. *The Good-Natur'd Man* clearly shows how a morbid sensibility can render tender-hearted persons incapable of distinguishinng between the genuine and the spurious. They become, as the Man in Black points out in *The Citizen of the World,* letter 27, "mere machines of pity", and their so-called benevolence is "rather the effect of appetite than reason". Again, in the essay 'On Justice and Generosity", Goldsmith declares that the qualities of generosity and charity "are not, in their own nature, virtues; and, if ever they deserve the title, it is owing only to justice, which impels and directs them". There is a striking similarity between this essay and Goldsmith's satire on Honeywood whose benevolence, since it is not impelled by justice nor governed by reason, is a vice rather than a virtue.

Perhaps Goldsmith himself was excessively benevolent. "His disposition of mind," says Davies, was tender and compassionate; no unhappy person ever sued to him for relief, without obtaining it, if he had anything to give; and, rather than not relieve the distressed, he would borrow".[19] Goldsmith might, therefore, have put much of his emotional self into Honeywood (as into Lysippus, the Man in Black and Sir William Thornhill, earlier). But he does not seem to like his audience to be pleased with this part of himelf, possibly because of his own awareness of the dangers of an indiscriminate generosity. Whereas benevolence is always a commendable virtue and guarantee of ultimate triumph in sentimental comedy, it is shown by Goldsmith as a foible or folly that makes Honeywood "the chief butt of satire"[20] and lands him in many dtfficulties and embarrassments.

Professor Auburn succinctly remarks that "when even Goldsmith set out to satirize benevolence, he bore with him a respect for the sentimental virtues and attacked not those virtues but the vices which resembled them".[21] But in needs to be stressed that even such an attack, so adroitly made, imparts an altogether different tone to *The Good-Natur'd Man.* Goldsmith's satire on Honeywood's benevolence makes the play refreshingly different from a typical sentimental comedy of the period.

H. P. University
Simla

NOTES

1. *Plays of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century*, ed. D. macMillan and H. M. Jones (New York, 1931), p. 751.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 786.
3. *British Dramatists from Dryden to Sheridan*, ed. G. H. Nettleton and A. E. Case (Boston, 1939), p. 430.
4. J. H. Smith, *The Gay Couple in Restoration Comedy* (Cambridge, Mass., 1948), pp. 204-11, argues that "benevolence" was an important element in the concept of an ideal person in many plays after 1700.
5. *The Dramatic Works of Colley Cibber*, 5 vols. (London, 1777), II, 280.
6. Ernest Bernbaum, *The Drama of Sensibility*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1925), p. 228.
7. G. H. Nettleton, *English Drama of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1914), pp. 281-82.
8. A. H. Thorndike, *English Comedy* (New York, 1929), pp. 424-25.
9. *The Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith*, ed. Arthur Friedman, 5 vols. (Oxford, 1966), V, 21. All quotations from the play are from this edition, hereafter referred to as Friedman.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
19. Thomas Davies, *Memoirs of the Life of David Garrick* (1780), II, 162.
20. R. B. Heilman, "The Sentimentalism of Goldsmith's *Good Natured Man*", in *Studies for William A. Read*, ed. N. M. Caffee and T. A. Kirby (University, La., 1940), p. 244. Some of the points in this section have been suggested by this article.
21. Mark S. Auburn, *Sheridan's Comedies : Their Contexts and Achievements* (London, 1977), p. 17.

Symbol

Why are you awake ? What disturbs your brain
at midnight ? What you will see and hear
but the ticking of a clock; noise of the electric fan;
rough cry of the cawing crow; air on the topmost spray;
faint eye of the still light; misty fear
of the morn in the cloud : drizzling;
dancing leaves on the wall, mysty of the shadow;
the gleams of the sailing stars,
dripping from the basin, cot's hard noise
for the tossing of the couples staying below :
bizzare pictures on the wall;
what suggests this image and sound
what you want to hear and see ?
Everything is in disarray and helter-skelter.
Do I feel the green leaf at my heart ?
Where is your white light of the shadow ?

—Barnik Ray

Book Review

HARDY SCHOLARSHIP

Manas Mukul Das, *Thomas Hardy : Poet of Tragic Vision* (New Delhi : Macmillan, 1983), viii+147 pp. Rs. 50.

Noorul Hasan, *Thomas Hardy : The Sociological Imagination* (New Delhi : Macmillan, 1982) x+200 pp. Rs. 80.

There has been a steady revival in recent years of interest in Hardy's poetry. Graham Hough made bold to state in *Image and Experience* that Hardy, not Eliot, represented the real tradition of English poetry. Donald Davie (*Thomas Hardy and British Poetry*) established the thesis that neither Eliot nor Yeats influenced English (as against American) poetry in as large a measure as did Thomas Hardy. With further critical impetus from Tom Paulin and Samuel Hynes, Hardy has taken a high place among the major poets who shaped modernism.

Das's brief essay, though lacking the authoritativeness of earlier studies, nevertheless, makes valid points regarding the particular nature of Hardy's poetry. I find his argument persuasive in as much as he faces the early modern antipathy towards Hardy (in Eliot, Blackmur) and grounds the poet in the tradition of the tragic poets. This is by no means a new thesis, but it needed reiteration and Das reiterates it with conviction. Hardy had already been acknowledged as a novelist in the Aeschylean mould : Das supports that recognition from the point of view of Hardy's poems. He analyses individual poems with a degree of attentiveness that almost matches the nuanced subtlety of the poems themselves. Like Robert Frost, Hardy builds an elusive surface hiding a restlessness that occasionally becomes

insistent. It is unfortunate that Das should have missed the Frost connection, for this would have enabled him to establish more fully what he could well call the Hardyesque in modern poetry. To say this, however, is not to overlook the obvious merits of this fine essay : sympathetic involvement backed by judicious scholarship.

Just as Das reads Hardy's poems attentively, so does Hasan show a clear grasp of the major Hardy canon in fiction. His book is well-argued within its premises and is free from the canting churlishness of many a thesis-turned-into book. Hasan uses the 'socilogiocal imagination' in a much broader sense than sociologists themselves would (Robert Nisbett for example). He also avoids the inevitable naivete of some of the crude Marxist analyses of Hardy (Tony Jackson, whom Hasan does not seem to have read, is an instance).

Not satisfied with Leavis's literary bucolics, Hasan sees the Hardy community without Leavis's nostalgic longing. He sees it as a system of values involved in change and transformation. Hasan traces a development in Hardy's art through able readings of the novels and establishes Hardy's sociological dimensions. These readings, on the whole, make good sense even though I do not find any major breakthrough either in insight or in critical judgement.

To see the Hardyean dialectic as a rural-urban divide, as Hasan seems to do for the most part, is to indulge in neat classifications that blur the shadings of argument and insight. The fault primarily lies in Hasan's version of the 'sociological imagination' that lacks a socially coherent theoretical support. That such a socilly coherent version is viable can be seen from the studies of Hardy not only by Raymond Williams himself (whose chapter in *English Novel from Dicknes to Lawrence* remains as seminal as ever) but also by younger scholars such as John Goode and John Lucas.

Neither Das nor Hasan has totally converted me. And yet I find their works good illustrations of scholarship engaged in relating literature to something outside itself. It is in that belief that I welcome these books to my alreado bulging Hardy shelf.

—M. L. Raina

Jasbir Jain, *George Orwell : Witness of an Age*, (Printwell Publishers, Jaipur, 1986.)

This book is based on a thesis written more than ten years ago. It has, however, been stripped of all "padding". In fact there are places where it is too compressed to be comprehensible to a reader not familiar with the authors and books discussed, for instance Wittgenstein and Whorf (They are not even listed in the bibliography). The parallels with relatively recent writers such as Beckett, Osborne, John Braine, Antony Burgess and Edward Albee must have been added to the original thesis to bring it up-to-date.

What place will be accorded to Orwell in literary history ? Dr. Jain does not fight shy of asking this controversial question. He was dismissed by Gilbert Phelps in the Pelican Guide (Volume 7) with a brief reference. But the most recent volume of the Pelican Guide (volume 8) which surveys the post-1945 period makes amends for the omission of the earlier volume. There is a full length article by D. S. Savage entitled "The Fatalism of George Orwell" in this volume. Dr. Jain states that "his presence is being felt increasingly in the post-war world." "There cannot be any doubt about his survival," she asserts, at the conclusion of the book.

Admittedly his works have been read more widely than those of comparable writers of his generation such as Koestler and Aldous Huxley. Koestler's range was wider and Huxley's creative output more impressive but neither of them captured the popular imagination to the same extent. It is pertinent, however, to ask whether Orwell's fame rests exclusively on his greatness as a writer. In the opinion of the present reviewer Orwell's appeal was partly chauvinistic. He insisted, for instance, on "the spiritual need for patriotism and the military virtues" and referred to the left wing intellectuals as "the boiled rabbits of the Left" ("My Country Right or

Left"). His two classics *Animal Farm* and *1984* supplied fuel to the anti-Communist hysteria unleashed by Senator McCarthy in the fifties and revived by Solzhenitsyn in the seventies. Will his reputation survive the Russophobia still current in the Western world ?

Dr. Jain concedes that some of his ideas are indefensible (p. 142). It is a pity that she has not had the courage to bring such ideas to the notice of the readers. On the question of birth control, for example, his position was about as tenable as that of His Holiness the Pope. Huxley, on the contrary, foresaw that disaster was likely to overtake our planet if the menace of over-population were not checked in time.

Again Orwell was inclined to sentimentalize the working class. It is one thing to ascribe their shortcomings to their limited opportunities, but quite another matter to refuse to see their weaknesses. Far from excusing or explaining their deficiencies, Orwell appears to hold them up as models :

> to Winston they (i.e. the proles) stand for a sane world.... Winston considers the proles to be immortal. Their emotions and attachments are not governed by mass hysteria and are not drained by the sadistic worship of power. (p. 50)

The above is Dr. Jain's summing up of Orwell's presentation of the class differences in *1984*. It could be extended to almost all the works of Orwell. But the reader has the right to question an opinion so crucial to the understanding of Orwell. If the proles are not governed by *mass* hysteria who is ? Who then constitutes the masses ? The lawyers and doctors or the business executives and civil servants ? Surely Bernard Shaw saw the class characteristics more clearly. If the masses are already in a state of enlightenment why then try to educate them ?

Again the writer states, "Ordinary men and women, Orwell believed, are basically quite decent." (p. 122) There is a benevolist assumption in some of the statements of Orwell which are presented presumably with the approval of the writer. "Orwell's faith," she says, "is not in the ideological base but in human beings." (p. 125).

This ties up with the author's philosophical exposition (the most original part of the book) of Orwell's qualified faith in empiricism. "He relies very heavily on the innate quality of human responses." (p. 126) According to her Orwell rejected utilititarianism and rationalism altogether

(p. 133). Instead he stressed the importance of emotions and instincts (p. 137)

I am reminded of Middleton Murry's argument with T. S. Eliot over the so-called "inner voice". Eliot's rejoinder to the upholders of the inner voice was sharp and, in my opinion, conclusive :

> The possessors of the inner voice ride ten in a compartment to a football match at Swansea, listening to the inner voice, which breathes the eternal message of vanity, fear and lust.
>
> "The Function of Criticism"

If the emotions and instincts of ordinary people are essentially decent where then does the evil in society come from ? Writers who probed human nature far more deeply than Orwell such as Dr Johnson and Henry James distrusted the supposed innocence of ordinary men and women. They were convinced of the treachery of the heart and its dispostion to evil.

The first half of the book is largely factual. The sketch of the political history of the thirties would be valuable for the younger scholars who are unfamiliar with the rise of Fascism and to whom even the title of Hitler's autobiography is unknown. This together with the state of public school education in Edwardian England should prove useful to the general reader.

Orwell's range of interests was not confined to literature. For an adequate evaluation of this "Witness of an Age" it is necessary to master a number of disciplines. Dr. Jain proves equal to the challenge. She explores afresh such areas as economic and social history and anthropology. The psychological investigation draws upon Eric Fromm, Carl Jung, B. F. Skinner and others.

Students of literature will appreciate specially the chapter "The Cruellest Month" which gives a critical analysis of Orwell's novels as novels. From her analysis the reader is inclined to think that his novels have been underrated. Orwell as a literary critic is examined in detail in chapter VII. Readers will be grateful for the painstaking manner in which the writer has fished out inaccessible articles from the backnumbers of periodicals such as "*Twentieth Century*, *World Review* and many others.

The author has expounded Orwell's critical opinions conscientiously. I wish she had been able to overcome the sense of piety

which compels her to defend Orwell even when he is patently wrong. Admittedly his judgments are usually quite sound. For example, he was perfectly right in preferring the (reactionary) literature of the twenties to the (progressive) literature of the thirties. Again his analysis of individual works such as *Gulliver's Travrels* and *King Lear* is full of fine perceptions. Even the generalizations about the nature of tragedy are convincing. Unfortunately when it came to enunciating general principles he was on a sticky wicket. Consider, for example, the following rash statement :

> Every piece of writing has its propaganda aspect, and yet in any book or play or poem or what not that is to endure, there has to be a residue of something that simply is not affected by its moral or meaning-residue of something we can only call art. (Quoted on p. 108)

That is as clumsy a way of stating his position as any critic has managed to improvise. It is to be wished that he had observed the pragmatic prudence of F. R. Leavis in refusing to generalize in an area where philosophers like Croce and Bergson have failed.

This book is an addition to our knowledge of an important writer. It is to be wished that the book had been entrusted to a better publisher. There are printing errors on every page. We hope that these will be corrected in the next edition.

I should not omit to mention that Dr. Jain has already inspired one scholar, Mohd Ilyas, to publish a full length book on *The Genesis of 1984* (Arravali Publishers, Jaipur, 1984).

—R. K. Kaul

O. P. Bhatnagar, *Shadows In Floodlights* S. L. Publications, Aligarh, 1984, pp–43 Price Rs. 30/- Rs. 40/-

Shadows in Floodlights (1984) consisting of O. P. Bhatnagar's twenty-eight poems, bound in a sleek volume, with illustrations resembling a Japanese painting in which the empty spaces are made to have as strong an evocative power as the carefully drawn mountains and pines, marks the movement of Indian poetry from the poetry of statement and comment to the new poetry of evocation of the unexpressed. These poems are cast in an ironic mould that binds together the visions of "Unfixed Shadows in Floodlights" with the dream coloured designs of "Rangoli" into an unexpressed whole that is behind all creative urges to fill the void.

The very title "*Shadows in Floodlights*" conveys Bhatnagar's use of irony as an organising principle of his poetic thought and practice. This aspect of his poetic practice is borne out also by some of the titles of these poems : 'Light in Being in Illusion', 'The Speaking Silence', 'Ending a Beginning Before its End', 'Going Beyond the Visible'. Besides even those poems which are not ironically titled such as 'An Artful Jest', 'A Journey Sweated Without and End', 'Of Change and Time', 'To Die a Whole Man' and the like, are explorations of the central paradox at the heart of human situation which consists in "Existing even in an exuberant decay", as the poem 'The Act of Creation' suggests.

Like linked-Haikus, these poems of Floodlights are modernistically nondiscursive and imagistically cryptic. They seek to widen human perception through a sudden illumination of our sense of reality. Bhatnagar achieves this effect by the juxtaposition of sharp edged images which through the use of a "Cutting Word" or "Image", triggers off the spark that connects 'Self' with 'True Self' 'Life' with 'Immortality', 'Earth' with 'Heaven', and 'Slavery' with 'Freedom !

The whole thrill of the poetic experience contained in these poems lies in discovering this pivotal image that escapes "diamond eyes" "that see a stick bent in water" ('Shadows in Floodlights').

The volume suggests that we are constantly baffled by questions :

How much of dark does the sun hide ?
How much of light does dark evade ?

But such questions can be resolved, perhaps, only by those who can transcend the opposing pulls of equal charm and thereby attain the equipoise of true wisdom which is able to fix the shadows in Floodlights :

How much of light does the dark hide ?
How much of dark does the sun evade ?
Are questions for restless eyes
Arrested by equal charm
Failing to fix the shadows
In floodlights.

Here the poet's metonymic use of 'eyes' is significant in relation to the reality which they half perceive and half conceal.

In fact, humanity cannot escape the torment of absence. And in their own symbolic way these poems of Floodlights enable us to undergo the psychological pains of metonymic existence by filling us with the urge for creation. In the volume's most moving concluding poem 'Rangoli', Bhatnagar suggests a solution to the void created by nature in human life : Fill the void with the images of beauty deeply rooted in the human heart. In 'Rangoli' the young bride casts off the still warm embrace of her handsome man.

To etch on earth
The dream coloured designs of welcome
At doorsteps before dawn !

The poet thinks :

Maybe she is filling up the void
The moon and the stars have made
By disappearing at dawn.

She does it because she believes hse "May cover the nakedness of earth !"

In fact, she is impelled by the creative urge
To make it
For her still sleeping mate
Worth getting up to see
What dreams were lacking day
What night was wanting in dark.

This is poetry at its highest function of seeking to cover nakedness of earth with the dream coloured designs of welcome. And, is it not the best humanizing of the poetics of Robert Bly, Charles Olson, Marianne Moore and William Carlos Williams who are concerned for the complementary interchange of mind and "reality".

P.D. Chaturvedi

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