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Trivandrum
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K. Ayyappa Paniker
Chief Editor

The Wesker Trilogy : Propaganda or Allegory?

A. A. Mutalik-Desai

> One's soul seems under a vacuum in the South Seas....The Golden Age of the Past....what a nostalgia we all feel for it....Life is never a thing of continuous bliss. There is no paradise. Fight and laugh and feel bitter and feel bliss: and fight again....That is life. 1

If John Osborne's play *Look Back In Anger*, 1956, is supposed to have launched the English theatre into its latest phase and thus inaugurated 'The Angry Decade', Arnold Wesker, scarcely three years later, took Jimmy Porter's cantankerous rhetoric and raucous horn-tooting even farther——right into the working-class neighbourhood of the East End of London. Wesker's *milieu*, unlike Osborne's, is Jewish, East European, poor, and intellectually (and in practice) committed to left-wing politics; it is filled with revolutionary zeal and it has a millennial vision. Wesker's tone is harsh and annoyed.

Even at first sight, *The Wesker Trilogy* is marked by extreme copiousness and complexity. In his range of ideas and characters, in the variety of incidents and the shifting locale, the playwright displays imaginative conception and structural ingenuity. Among the men and women of these plays one finds well-meaning idealists, seasoned campaigners as well as unwilling and uninspired comrades. Similarly, if one consider: the philosophic impact of the play, one finds a changing sequences hope, idealism, disenchantment, withdrawal, frustration and vacuous uncertainty. And all this is so sketched as to cover a span of over two decades and to encompass three inter-connected families——the Kahns, the Simmonds and the Bryants. Given such an ambitious breadth and scope, it would be pertinent to enquire into Wesker's purpose and achievement. In undertaking this analysis, the present essay will examine the first two parts of the trilogy, *Chicken Soup with Barley* and *Roots*,

only in as much as they lead to the third, *I'm Talking About Jerusalem*.

Chicken Soup with Barley deals with a first generation Jewish immigrant family in the East End of London, their devotion to the cause of the British Left, their gradual disillusionment with the Party and their personal and ideological frustration. At the core of dramatic action is Sarah Kahn, an indomitable and die-hard party-worker; her husband, Harry, a born dodger; either he hides, runs to his mother's house or simply sleeps. Their daughter, Ada, once so passionately involved in protest marches and demonstrations, gradually cools down and feels that such things do not excite her any more. She has had enough of it. Much to the dismay of her still exuberant brother and her unwavering mother, she says:

> No more political activity.....I'm tired, Mother. I spent eighteen months waiting for Dave to return from Spain and now I've waited for six years for him to come home from a war against Fascism and I'm tired. Six years in and out of offices, auditing books and working with young girls who are morons—— lipsticked, giggling morons And Dave's experience is the same—fighting with men who he says did not know what the war was about ..... Oh yes ! the service killed any illusions Dave may have once had about the splendid and heroic working class. [2]

Stunned by this, Sarah asks if such talk is appropriate for a committed intellectual, to which Ada retorts even more emphatically: 'God in heaven save me from the claptrap of a three-penny pamphlet' (p.42). Obviously, the god has failed. First the waning loyalty to the Party and the continuous desertions from it, then the Spanish misadventure, and lastly the irredeemable and humiliating show in Hungary necessitate some scrutiny of the accepted notions and dogmas. These very circumstances make even Ronnie (Sarah's son) sceptical and prompt him to a bitter and sad argument: 'I stand here and a thousand different voices are murdering my mind.....Everything has broken up around you and you don't see it?..... I've lost my faith and I've lost my ambition' (pp.71-72). There is no need now for him, as there obviously was once, to try to become a great Socialist poet or novelist. During those twenty years much has happened, which no revolutionary, with any impunity or conscience, can forget. As he says, it is no more possible to look at things in terms black and white.

Moreover, with the end of the Second World War, the emergence of the Welfare State and the unprecedented prosperity, that old 'anger'—that sharp edge—has diminished. In the words of John Russell Taylor, the 'sense of purpose' [3] is lost.

But, then, Sarah will never accept any of this. Though she finds it most disconcerting that, one by one, her husband, her children, her relatives and friends, turn renegade, her own faith remains steadfast. The growing cynicism and the mendacity of the world around her will not deter her. To her, regardless of what has happened, the instrument itself remains above blame. [4] She explains:

> If the electrician who comes to mend
> my fuse blows it instead, so should I
> stop having electricity? I should cut
> off my light? Socialism is my light,
> can you understand that? A way of
> life (pp. 73-74).

So, Sarah stands alone in the midst of the ruins, as it were. Nobody else seems to care, and on that note *Chicken Soup with Barley* concludes.

The second part of the trilogy, *Roots*, is on a different plan. Far from the Kahn family, far away from London with its glib talk of politics, ideologies, causes and martyrs, *Roots* is set in Norfolk among the farmers. [5] This highly repetitive and structurally uneven play[6] narrates an episode in the life of Beatie Bryant, an unsophisticated but zestful young girl whom Ronnie has tried to 'convert'. Under his tutelage she has acquired a taste for classical music, abstract painting, literature, *The Manchester Guardian* and love in the afternoon. Ronnie has told her that words are bridges and the more of them the better.

But soon it is realised that those bridges were never firmly built between her and her mentor, and it is in the failure of words in uniting the two worlds (what John Mander has called in a phrase now trite, the' lack of communication'[8]) that one must find the significance or the 'message' of the play, although this theme of communication is co-extensive with that of roots. In spite of her latest ideas and habits, Beatie belongs to Norfolk. She is instinctively part of nature's seasons, trees, fruits, crops and harvests as much as Ronnie finds his rightful place in an urban environment. If at the end of *Chicken Soup with Barley*, frustration and disillusionment are caused by loss of faith or sagging idealism, in *Roots* it is because of the failure in personal or human relationships. In retrospect, therefore, Ronnie's earlier exhortation to Beatie on the value of words and language as communication becomes sadly ironic. Beatie, too, believes in bridges, on

her own terms and in her own fashion. But between his fashion and hers there is an immense cleavage, namely, their roots.

This, however, is not intended to mean that these two plays end on a totally cynical or pessimistic note. In *Chicken Soup with Barley*, Ronnie's failing enthusiasm is at least partially revived by Sarah's concluding speech. He may insist that it is all too big for him: but Sarah's words have a marked effect on him, as the stage direction assures us, 'He turns slowly to face her' (p.76). Similarly in *Roots*, despite Ronnie's breaking off with Beatie, the play does not end with mere apathy and ridicule heaped upon her by her family. Something has happened to her. Even if Ronnie withdraws, he has left a hopeful legacy. Beatie is no more a parrot quoting or merely mimicking borrowed words. Besides, the need for communication and the relevance and vitality of roots is demonstrated, with a perception increasingly underlined that one can learn, one can change or that it is never too late to hope. Like *Chicken Soup with Barley*, *Roots* shows at least a glimpse of a new determination, a regeneration; Beatie's last monologue and her own realisation of the truth of it make it clear that now she has a new voice, a language--all her own. 'The murmur of the family sitting down to eat grows as Beatie's last cry is heard. Whatever she will do they will continue to live as before. As Beatie stands alone, *articulate at last*——'(p. 148. Italics mine).

So, in the first two plays Wesker has thus dramatised the fluctuations in the ideological and personal careers of the various characters. In *I'm Talking About Jerusalem*, the playwright depicts people and ideas from a distinctly different perspective. Wesker has explained [9] at length that the trilogy combines many themes. It portrays a family, it speaks about human relationships and it deals with a set of political ideas. Even if the subject of Socialism pervades all the three parts, there are changing attitudes and approaches: ideological, domestic and individual. In 1964 Wesker stated his views with more finality:

> The three plays [are about] three aspects of Socialism. *Chicken Soup* discusses Socialism as a political weapon: *Roots* deals with Socialism as a personal contact, how to live and treat other people: and *Jerusalem* talks about Socialism as it touches man and his work. In short they deal with politics, love and art. [10]

The full implication of the last remark (especially as it applies to *I'm Talking About Jerusalem*) needs to be examined in some detail. Even *Chicken Soup with Barley* cannot be taken as a simple, one-dimensional account or as a didactic piece. In the conscious choice of characters (an immigrant Jewish family), in the well spread-out span of action (from 1936 to 1956 to cover the strife in Spain, the Second World War with the holocaust of the Jews and the Russian outrage in Hungary), in the meaningful use of parallels (as, for example, between the disintegrating ideological fervour and the growing physical decay of Harry Kahn), etc., Wesker gives to the play an allegorical overtone. In *Roots*, even if less conspicuous, Wesker does in fact make significant use of symbolism. The references to the many faces of nature, to births and deaths, to robust health and incontinence; and the final episode of the family supper--all reverberate with suggestive meanings. However, in every respect, *I'm Talking About Jerusalem* is much more emphatically symbolic. Full of Biblical and literary allusions, even the title of the play imparts to it the appearance of a parable. It is distinctively more allegorical than propagandist, the individual destiny of man given prominence over the collective fate of a people or a society. At the same time, this last part of the trilogy is a near dialectical juxtaposition of the claims of modern civilised living on the one hand and of rural, pastoral and even primitive existence on the other. Ultimately, Wesker's thesis seems to hinge upon the question whether modern man can really hope to return to an Eden-like idyllic state a la Robert Owen or William Morris. The playwright's own predilection is never in doubt. An attempt will now be made to analyse the play on these lines.

Dave and Ada Simmonds decide that they had enough of London, working nine to five, hustling and purposeless. There they had seen life reduced to subhuman existence: 'Morning after morning they've come in with a cold hatred in their eyes, brutalized! All their humanity gone.... The city makes strangers of husbands and wives' (pp. 164-165). So no more of London. They move into Norfolk on a small farm hoping to find a new anchorage, a new life far away from the aches and sores of civilisation. They prefer to live in nature's habitat, like simple folk earning their livelihood with their own labour, with their own sweat. This search for a new Jerusalem is undertaken at a very significant time indeed. It is September 1946: the Second World War is just concluded; England has put the Labour Party into the saddle and there are hopes of the millennium. Dave and Ada ('The wandering Jews' as Ronnie calls them, p. 210) could not have embarked upon their dream under more auspicious circumstances; or so it would seem.

But in Norfolk they face another kind of life, elemental and primitive with none of the urban comforts. Dave and Ada are well aware that the countryside is earth, stubborn and harsh. But the hopes of a new Jerusalem are yet alive and the experiment must go on. As time passes, the odds increase. Dave still claims, 'All in good time' (p. 177), he occasionally sings, 'Land of Hope and Glory' (p. 188), but the ominous signs point to the inevitable end. He loses his job; other enterprises (making and selling furniture, keeping a guest house) fail; and by 1959, with the Conservative Party back in power, the much - awaited Jerusalem still no nearer, Dave and Ada return to London. In a way, it is the failure of the William Morris-plan, 'living in mystic community with nature' (p. 147); it is also a vindication of Libby Dobson's pragmatism. If the world must have civilised comforts, it must not sneer at factories. Progress has its own concomitants, and, as Dobson has put it, there is little choice:

> Would you have the world do without
> cars, planes, electricity, houses,
> roads? Because that's the logical
> conclusion .... No screws-- no transport
> No labourers-- no roads! No banks or
> offices-- no commercial market! (p. 181)

Dobson had himself lived through similar idealistic dreams and fervour, and failed and made a fool of himself in the eyes of the world. Therefore, he now prescribes his own panacea:

> Democracy, mate? I spit it ! Benevolent
> dictatorship for me. You want Jerusalem?
> Order it with an iron hand--no questions,
> no speeches for and against--bang! It's
> there! You don't understand it? You
> don't want it? Tough luck, comrade--your
> children will ! (p.183)

But , apart from representing this failure in trying to live 'on an individual level' (p. 181), *I'm Talking About Jerusalem* depicts another significant dilemma. As Sarah tells Dave, leaving London in order to settle on a farm is like putting the clock back. She says :

> I don't understand it Is London so
> bad? . What's the point? All this
> heavy work. No roads, no electricity,
> no running water, no proper lavatory.
> It's the Middle Ages. Tell me why you
> want to go back to the Middle Ages?
> (pp. 159--160)

In comparing life on Norfolk farm with the Middle Ages, Sarah has rightly indicted Dave and Ada for their attempt at escaping into a kind of primitivism. What the play also establishes is that idealisms cannot thrive in isolation. No Jerusalem, no Eldorado, no bygone Golden Age will reappear if one artificially cuts oneself off the mainstream of life. It is less pertinent whether Dave and Ada succeed or not in Norfolk. The real issue is they cannot remain there for long. Deep within them in some recess of their emotional and psychological being, they have a civilised pulse which will not let them remain in the primitive surroundings of a farm. The predicament of Dave and Ada in this play may be compared with that of the protagonist in Herman Melville's *Typee* (1847). In that idyllic Garden of Eden in the South Pacific, assured of peace and comfort, Tommo (the protagonist's new name given to him by the islanders) cannot rest; on that island his wounded leg will never heal. He must try and escape, as he eventually does. If he had good reasons for deserting the ship (the symbol of civilised life), he has now more compelling reasons to return to it. He must rejoin the filth and the inhumanity on the ship *as a refuge* from the balmy, enchanted life on the island. Here, Dave and Ada are precisely in the same dilemma. They left London (because of its smoke, din, noise, traffic, brutality and squalor); and now, having tried mystic communion with nature, they must rush back to the very London. If Libby Dobson might chuckle at this—for his warnings have at last been heeded, Ronnie sinks into deeper disillusionment. One after another, his dreams have been shattered. Now, even the last pillar (after all, Dave and Ada are his idols, his Moses and Miriam) is falling. But Dave has, on the contrary, recognized the folly of what he was trying to do, namely, the folly of living in the twentieth century as though he were yet in the eighteenth or the nineteenth. It is denying what *has* been accomplished, what *is* with us, whether it is compatible, fair or not. Modern science and technology stare into man's face, and he has got to come to terms with them and not run away, lest, as Dave at last knows, he might become 'the odd man out' (p. 216).

What D. H. Lawrence has written about Melville's Marquesan islanders is, in this respect, true of Wesker's Norfolk farm: 'Whatever else the South Sea Islander is,' writes Lawrence, 'he is centuries behind us in the life struggle, the consciousness struggle, the struggle of the soul into fulness.'[11] Like Melville's Tommo and Toby, Wesker's Dave and Ada also ran away from evil, namely, the tyranny of living in a vast, modern, urban centre, a life only distinguished by anonymity, soullessness and lack of purpose and destination. But they too are bound by the cord of civilisation which fetches them back into its fold.

Against the background of this discussion, it might perhaps be easier to appreciate the implication of Libby Dobson's cynical raillery. Unlike Ronnie (who, though rather equivocally, thinks of Dave and Ada's stay in Norfolk as a purifying experience, 'like Jesus in the wilderness,' p. 211), Dobson characterised Dave's experiment as 'backward march' (p.179) and advised him to 'go home before you're dirtied up' (p 183). When *I'm Talking About Jerusalem* was first performed in London, Eric Keown (reviewing for *Punch*) felt that the play ended clumsily and unsatisfactorily. He wrote: 'The end left me puzzled about Dave's economics. He is too badly off to go on working in Norfolk, yet he can afford to take a house in London and keep his Norfolk cottage for holidays.' [12] Unsound as the economics might be, Keown's observation does suggest that Dave and Ada had other reasons, not economic, for wanting to return to London. Wesker's commitment and his didacticism are frequently commented upon. He has himself remarked: 'I want to write about people in a way that will somehow give them an insight into an aspect of life which they may not have had before....'[13] At any rate *I'm Talking About Jerusalem* makes its point by fusing this 'insight' into an art-form. Admittedly, the structure of the play is diffuse; incidents are often uncharacteristic and lacking in verisimilitude; but nowhere in the play does Wesker let his moralising or preaching dominate. Indeed he presents his creed with candour, and unflinchingly, but not by violating the proper frame-work of the play.

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NOTES

[1] D.H. Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Lierature* (New York: The Viking Press, 1964), pp. 136-139.

[2] Arnold Wesker, *Chicken Soup with Barley* in *The Wesker Trilogy* (Baltimore: Penguin Books,1960,) II-ii-pp. 41-42.

[3] *The Angry Theatre* (New York : Hill & Wang, 1962), p. 145.

[4] However, according to her son, she is 'a pathological case.' *Chicken Soup with Barley*, III,ii,p.73.

[5] However one must agree with A. R. Jones's criticism that Wesker depicts a countryside which 'is fiercely anti-pastoral;' in fact, Wesker emphasises the brutal, the unimaginative and the diseased aspects. 'The Theatre of Arnold Wesker,' *The Critical Quarterly* II, iv, Winter 1960, p. 368.

[6] John Russell Taylor describes the play as 'a one-act play....blown up to three acts...' *The Angry Theatre*, p. 150.

[7] However, she has not altogether given up reading comics.

[8] *The Writer and Commitment* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1961), p. 102.

[9] In a note published in the Royal Court programme, quoted by Richard Findlater, 'Plays and Politics,' *The Twentieth Century*, CLXVIII, September 1960, p. 237.

[10] Abraham Rothberg, 'Waiting for Wesker,' *The Antioch Review*, XXIV, iv, Winter 1964-65, p. 497.

[11] *Studies in Classic American Literature*, p. 137.

[12] *Punch* CCXXXIX, 6255, 10th August, 1960, p. 209.

[13] 'Let Battle Commence,' *Encore*, November-December 1958, quoted by Henry Goodman, 'Arnold Wesker,' *Drama Survey*, I, ii, October, 1961, p. 216.

Sense and Sensibility in Salman Rushdie's *Shame*

O. P. Mathur

"Hell is a city much like London", wrote Lord Byron with a disarming irony. Perhaps Salman Rushdie has a similar message about Pakistan, though the country of his imagination, he declares, is "not Pakistan, or not quite"[1] He has employed a multilateral strategy of fictional rhetoric which employs conflicting devices ranging from straightforward narration and satire to a disclaimer of any realistic intention. The form of this "fairy tale" (p. 70), as the novelist calls it, is quite different from the "Comic Epic" which Rushdie regards as the right form for this part of the world[2] and which he chose for his *Midninght's Children*. The form of *Shame* employs an obliquity of narration to camouflage the Pakistani reality and reflect "that world in fragments of broken mirrors" (p.69) with a playful fancy spiring into an apocalyptic imagination transcending the here and the now. A significant comment from *Midnight's Children* would throw some light on the fictional ambience of *Shame*: in a country where the truth is what it is instructed to be, reality quite literally ceases to exist, so that everything becomes quite possible except what we are told is the case. . . . ."[3] In *Shame*, reality has ceased to exist, but only within severely restricted limits. The Pakstani reality, off-centred, exaggerated, played upon by light and darkness, coloured with the numerous hues of fancy and transcended into the universal, pervades the novel, giving it a unity of vision and meaning.

The framework of chronological time in which the events are set is a clue to the ambiguity of the novelist's treatment of historical reality. The superimposition of the past on the present, of the Gregorian fourteenth century on the Higerian fourteenth, suggests that in Pakistan our twentieth century is really the medieval fourteenth, thus bringing out the contradictions inherent in the life and values in Pakistan which seem to exist on the wavelength of the medieval rather than that of the modern. This chronological 'montage' makes the co-existence of the 'fantastic' and the 'realistic' more acceptable and also crystallises the bipolar embodiment of the novelist's own value-system.

The novelist has professedly given *Shame* the dynamics of a fairy tale, calling it a "legend" (p. 79), "a sort of modern fairy-tale" (p.70), "my fairy-story" (p. 71), and using some of its accepted conventions and inventing a few fanciful motifs of his own—the 'once-upon-a-time' setting, an extensive and isolated castle almost impenetrable, three 'mothers' being the only significant inhabitants of the castle and 'jointly, giving birth to one son and a few years later to another, their gradual transfromation into old hags wreaking a terrible vengeance on the murderer of their son whose body is chopped into pieces in their 'dumb waiter'. These eccentric women not only give the events of the novel the required aesthetic distance but they also embody certain situations and attitudes with which the novelist seems to sympathise—the 'generation gap' between them and their old father, their commonsense approach to the orthodox rituals of the whispering of the name of God into the infant's ear at birth, of hair-cutting and of circumcision, their deep, if whimsical, love for their first issue and their role in the deserved punishment of the former dictator. Starting with the role of imprisoned fairies, they gradually become avenging Furies—often becoming during their long lives a receptacle of the reader's sympathy and a vehicle of his consience.

Certain segments of the novel's rhetoric come close to the funny exaggeration and escape from logic which characterise the literature of nonsense. In fact, a light-heartedness and an air of amusement pervades the novel giving it an atmosphere of unreality and making the reader a secret sharer of the novelist's assumed stance of non-seriousness. But *Shame* is not a pure fantasy, for the fantastic in it is not "exhaustively central".[4] It is restricted and confined to certain portions and so is unable to subvert the reality which these excursions into nonsense really help to clarify. The reported blasts of hot air issuing from the keyholes of the room of the President, Mohammad A (p. 119), tell us more about the temper of moody dictators than any straight-forward account could have done. The infant Sufia's hot blushes, burning the lips of the girls kissing her, giving the smell of burning to her own clothes and making the bath-water so hot that it scalds the hands of the Ayah (p. 121), only focus the "unfelt shame of the world" (p. 122) around her. The nonsense delightfully woven around Babar Shakil's life in the 'Impossible Mountains' (pp.131-32) invests the life of the tribals with a Utopian charm, moulding our ethical perspective of the murderous attack of Raza Hyder. Iskander Harappa's harassment of foreign diplomats (pp. 185-86) speaks volumes about the whims of dictators influencing the politics of the country and the world. The momentous meeting between Raza Hyder and the deposed

Prime Minister Iskander Harappa, while making fun of his uncontrollable temper and addictions, underlines the monstrous wrong done to him by Raza Hyder. The birth of the twenty-seven children of Naveed Hyder and her consequent suicide bring out the immensity of the problem of population explosion more than any treatise on family planning can do. The murderous seizures of Marlowe's play Sufiya Zinobia are also "ethically controlled", as has been shown by Susan Oommen[5]. The Pakistani reality is, thus, very much there: it has only been tilted "at a slight angle' (p. 29).

The two central characters of *Shame* also seem to belong largely to nonsense literature or to fairy-tale. Omar Khayyam Shakil, a "translated" hero (p. 29), belongs to two different resisters of consciousness. He is implicitly compared, on the one hand, to Don Quixote (p. 32) and to animals like wolf (p.31), wolf child (p.30), bat (p.22) and zoo animal in general (p.35) and, on the other, to his namesake, the poet Omar Khayyam of Naishapur (which in this novel becomes 'Nishapur', or the city of the night, with all its suggestions of darkness and claustrophobia), with Ulysses (to whom the protagonist is similar only in the fact that he too was "ankle-hung"—pp. 20, 26) and with Galileo (p.35) watching through his telescope not heavenly bodies but kites and girls. In spite of his absurdity and insignificance highlighted by these comparisons, the protagonist is a man who can attract our understanding and sympathy. His natural inquisitiveness, curiosity and desire to lead a free life outside Nishapur evoke our sympathy. His success as a medical practitioner, and his refusal to give up his fiancee Sufiya Zinobia even after her incapacitation arouse our admiration for the hero's moral courage and tolerance. His physical disproportion is largely a camouflage for his essential sanity and balance which make him a middle-of-the-road hero. More than once he seems to be the author's persona.

Like the hero, the chief female character of the novel, Sufiya Zinobia, also does not live up to her name. But she is a powerful and multiple symbol. She embodies shame and her later murderous exploits appear to be governed by a subconscious logic of ethics. She seems to become "something more like a principle, the embodiment of violence, the pure male violent strength of the Beast", (p. 242), "the violence which had been born of shame, but which now lived its own life beneath her skin" (p.242), suggesting the combination of the Beauty and the Beast of the legend, of Gorgon Medusa or Goddess Kali, and of Yeats's "terrible beauty" ("Easter 1916") of revolution. Sufiya Zinobia is rightly shown as the progeny of a dictator, the principle of violence which alone can

dispose of a dictator "in the usual way" (p.241). Rightly called "a human guillotine". Sufiya Zinobia embodies the spirit of freedom, dwarfed and rendered intellectually imbecile, but still burning with shame and bursting with all its suppressed strength into apparently senseless but really retributive violence. She is the principle of punishment, a warning to all dictators.

As Rushdie admits, *Shame* is "overtly political".[5] The novel shows the manifestation of the dictatorship syndrome, but with the fictional strategy of caricature and irony. With his "energy enough to light up a street" (pp 65-66), his forehead marked with a namaaz- created *gatta*, black pouches under his eyes looking like sun-glasses, and a waxen bulbous moustache, Raza Hyder belongs to the world of *Punch*. Similarly, his rise to power, his prevarications, his making false statements and promises, his 'hanging' of Iskander Mirza, his blaming the opposition for everything that goes wrong, his fear of his own progeny, and, lastly, his terrible end like that of a legendary demon-all are protrayed with amusement and irony and are a paradigm of the rise and fall of dictatorships. Also portrayed is a another important aspect of dictatorships, especially oriental, their making religion an instrument of winning popularity and retaining power. Raza Hyder's *gatta*, his six namaazes a day and his swearing on the Koran on the national television are instances of it. Like all such dictators, he also works in close collaboration with priests and divines like Maulana Dawood:

> So-called Islamic 'fundamentalism' does not spring, in Pakistan, from the people It is imposed on them from above. Autocratic regimes find it useful to espouse the rhetoric of faith, because people respect that language, are reluctant to oppose it. This is how religions shore up dictators, by encircling them with words of power, words which the people are reluctant to see discredited, disenfranchised, mocked. (p. 251)

Priests and religious beliefs and practices are often targets of irony in this novel, as in the episode of "the fateful necklace (of shoes) hanging around the divine's accidental neck"(p. 43). The three mothers' disregard of certain religious practices is described with tacit approval (p. 21) and the Islamic concept of Paradise is made fun of (p. 77). The universal abuse and exploitation of religion is hinted at in the last words of Maulana Dawood possibly suggesting his vision of Mecca being covered with shit (p. 206).

The vacuity of values seems to have been illustrated in Rushdie's 'Pakistan' which is much like the real Pakistan. He catalogues in detail and with apparent relish the numerous aspects of the seamy side of the life

and politics in the real Pakistan (pp. 69-70) and with obvious tongue in the cheek, defends his avoidance of their portrayal for fear of governmental action against him :

> Fortunately, however, I am only telling a sort of modern fairy-tale, so that's all right; nobody need get upset,or take anything I say too seriously. No drastic action need be taken, either. (p. 70)

But, the country of *Shame*, with its many landmarks like 'Q' (Quetta), 'K' (Karachi) which includes a Defence Colony, and the new capital (Islamabad) is unmistakably Pakistan. Some of the characters have close parallels in history—President Shaggy Dog (Yahya Khan), Iskander Harappa (Zulfikar Ali Bhutto), Rani Humayun (Begum Nusrat Bhutto), Arjumand Harappa (Benazir Bhutto), and Raza Hyder (Zia-ul-Haq). Among the important historical events which find a place in the novel are the overthrow of Ayub Khan, the General Elections in Pakistan, the Bangladesh War, Bhutto's rise and fall, Zia-ul-Haq's rise to power (and imagined fall!), Russian army's moving into Afghanistan, suppression of Frontier tribals, etc. Field Marshal Mohammad A. (Ayub) rubs shoulders with Raza Hyder (Zia-ul-Haq). Such mingling of the real and the fictitious makes the latter more convincing and acceptable By the portrayal of exaggerated characters, "monsters and clowns," as he calls them,[7] his dislike of Pakistan, "the unmentionable country across the border"[8] is quite apparent. He calls it " the new moth-nibbled land of God" (p.67), consisting of "a few insectnibbled slices," some dusty western acres and jungly eastern swamps that the ungodly were happy to do without. (Al-Lah's new country: two chunks of land a thousand miles apart. A country so improbable that it could almost exist)" (p. 61). This humour at the expense of "Allah's new country, " which has nothing really religious about it, is coupled with an explanation of the name of Pakistan, showing how its letters stand for its provinces except Bangladesh which therefore seceded from it. There is no mention of any purity ('Pak) associated with the other country. On the other hand, Rushdie associates it with sin by giving it the title of 'Peccavistan' (p. 88). Dictatorship has resulted in the dwarfing of the intellectual and moral stance of everyone and made the people pigmies (p. 271). Shame, generated by all this, is a complex emotion, "one containing encyclopaedias of nuances" (p.39), for it presupposes a dichotomy between the observer and the observed—the observed embarrassingly falling short of expectations, as Sufiya Zinobia does in her sex, height and intellect. She is a symbol of Pakistan, of the feeling of shame generated by that country and of the violent forces of rebellion and destruction let loose by a dictator. The novelist's

moral attitude is crystallised in the title itself: "wherever I turn, there is something of which to be ashamed. But shame is like everything else—live with it for long enough and it becomes part of the furniture" (p.28). The novelist too has been able to get over to it and sublimate it into an air of amused irony which is at the root of the fantasy in this novel, so as to ensure an objectivity necessary for a history (p. 28).

The novelist seems to be ashamed of both the idea and the reality of Pakistan from its very genesis. His repulsion for communal violence is expressed in *Midnight's Children*, especially where the protagonist's mother saves the life of one Lifafa Das by making her first announcement of the fact of her pregnancy before a violent Muslim crowd.[9] The Rani of Cooch-Nahin and Mian Abdullah, two of his idealised characters in the novel, are both openly opposed to the idea of Pakistan[10] and a third such character, boatman Tai, loses his life standing between the armies of India and Pakistan in an attempt to make peace between them.[11]

For Rushdie Pakistan is a "looking glass" (p.88) through which, he can cross over, when he likes, into an amusing world of fantasy. But the "looking glass" really helps him in an exploration of the self and a recognition and a confirmation of the basically Indian features of his thoughts and attitudes. In one of his most significant remarks in *Shame* the novelist calls Pakistan a "palimpsest country," "a peeling, fragmenting palimpsest" (pp. 87, 88) which, it is obvious, cannot obscure the Indian psyche underneath. He dislikes secession and compares emigrants to seceding nations, "secessionists" as he calls them (p 87), for both have come unstuck from their native land" (p. 86) and "have floated upwards from history, from memory, from Time" (p. 87). This may be one of the reasons why he feels amused at the Pakistani reality for it has done what a migrant, like a bird, does, it has "flown" (p.85). While the novelist's ironies are all directed at Pakistan and its rulers, past and present, he has a sympathy for Bangladesh, not only because it was born in protest against the disregard of popular vote, but also because by "seceding from the secessionists" (p. 87) it has paid them back in their own coin. Shame and rage dominate *Shame* just as love and tolerance suffuse *Midnight's Children*. Dilip Fernandez notices the angst, loneliness and rootlessness of Rushdie.[12] The novelist also records his anger at the selling of his childhood home in Bombay (9.86) and the forced migration. He wishes to imagine the homeland he has lost.

And one such suspicious generalisation may be that writers in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into

pillars of salt. But if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge—which gives rise to profound uncertainties—that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind. [13]

He compares his Indian and Pakistani experiences:

may be this was the difference between my Indian childhood and Pakistani adolescence—that in the first I was beset by an infinity of alternative realities, while in the second I was adrift, disoriented, amid an equally infinite number of falsenesses, unrealities and lies. [14]

This unambiguous statement provides a clear perspective on the two novels *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*, embodying this twin-reality of the Indian sub-continent. He seems to look back at undivided India with the affection of a son for a mother, "a tired old land" (p.61), of which he cherishes certain qualities like "tolerance" (p.62) embodied in the double bill of two films—Randolph Scott and Gai Wallah provided by Mahmoud, whose nickname 'the woman' acquired a new meaning at this show of 'weakness' (p.62). Rushdie makes his own cultural stance quite clear:

I grew up in a Muslim family, but I was not brought up to think that I was part of a Muslim community which was separate from all other communities. .... Religion was a secondary factor in who we were. ... My circle of acquaintances was composed of every conceivable community in the country. And that, in later life, was something from which I derived great strength. For instance, in Pakistan I was asked how I, a Muslim, could make use of Hindu culture. My view was that India is a plural culture and so in order to reflect it you need to use a multiplicity of sources. [15]

He cannot forget his roots in India:

As for me: I, too, like all migrants, am a fantasist. I build imaginary countries and try to impose them on the ones that exist. I, too, face the problem of history: What to retain, what to dump, how to hold on to what memory insists on relinquishing, how to deal with change, And to come back to the 'roots' idea, I should say that I haven't managed to shake myself free of it completely. (p. 88)

The novelist's sensibility is basically Indian—democratic, secular and humanistic. Indian myths and legends have been so extensively used in *Midnight's Children* and even in *Shame* one may perhaps get glimpses of goddess Kali in the retributive and murderous Sufiya Zinobia, and of

the legendary demons in Raza Hyder. In fact, as we have seen, throughout *Shame*, the nightmarish and monochromatic Pakistani reality has been examined, satirised and ridiculed from the perspective of one who has his 'roots' fixed in undivided India and drawn sustenance from its values. He looks back with nostalgia at the old world of his Indian childhood as a "continuity" and a "reality" as different from the facts of his present "faraway life" as "illusions"[16]. He says that an old photograph "reminds me that it's my present that is foreign and that the past is home, albeit a lost home in a lost city in the mists of lost time".[17]

The reality recorded in *Shame* may be "imaginary truth,"[18] as Rushdie suggests, though, as we have seen, it is not all so imaginary. What is more important, however, is that the novel crystallises a good deal of sound sense and a deep sensibility which is both Indian and universal: "Shame does not only relate to Pakistan. It relates to India, it relates to Asia, it relates to most of the Thirp world as an idea."[19] What Saeed Mirza says about himself might as well be true of Rushdie: "to me it (i. e. *Shame*) is a document about myself in India".[20] Connecting fantasy with life, Rabkin writes, "The fantastic reveals not only our deepest fears, but also our greatest aspirations; not only our hidden shames, but also our finest hopes."[21] Like all fantasies, *Shame* explores "the underside of our conscious world"[22] and, by imagining and interpreting an inverted, topsy-turvy country, clarifies and re-asserts the values of the "old, tired land" (p.61).

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NOTES

1 Salman Rushdie, *Shame* (1983; New Delhi : Rupa 1983), p. 29 All subsequent page references to this work are from this edition and they have been absorbed in the text without repeating the title,

2 Quoted in Fawzia Afzal-Khan, "Myth Debunked: Genre and Ideology in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*," *Journal of Indian Writing in English*, 14, 1 (January 1986), p 52

3 Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* (1980; rept. New York: Avon Books, 1982) p. 389.

4 Eric S. Rabkin, *The Fantastic in Literature* (Princeton : Princeton Univ. Press) 1976) p. 29.

5 Susan Oommen, "Fictional Intent in Rushdie's *"Shame"*, *The Literary Criterion* XX, 2 (1985), p. 40.

6 "Rushdie and Mirza", *Gentleman* April 1984, p. 6.

7 Ibid., p. 66

8 Salman Rushdie, "Reclaiming a City and a History," *Express Magazine* (*The Indian Express, 11 March 1984*), p. 5.

9 Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, op cit., p. 86.

10 Ibid., pp. 47, 48.

11 Ibid., p. 550.

12 Dilip Fernandez, "Such Angst, Such Loneliness, Such Rootlessness," *Gentleman*, February 1984, pp. 99-105.

13 Salman Rushdie, "Reclaiming a City and a History", Op. cit., p.5.

14 Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, Op. cit., p. 389.

15 "Rushdie and Mirza", Op. cit., pp. 69-70.

16 Salman Rushdie, "Reclaiming a City and a History", Op. cit., p. 5.

17 Ibid., p. 5.

18 "Imaginary truth that brought Salman Rushdie fame", *The Hindustan Times*, 24 March, 1983.

19 "Rushdie and Mirza", Op. cit., p. 66.

20 Ibid. p. 66.

21 Eric S Rabkin, Op. cit., pp. 226-27.

22 Ibid., p. 57.

The Other Harmony of Professor Godbole

E. Nageswara Rao

Critical opinion on Forster's characterization of Professor Godbole is rather sharply divided both in India and abroad. Hindu readers of the novel, with very few exceptions, are unhappy--some even feel outraged with the portrayal of Godbole. To mention two examples: Nirad C. Choudhuri, [1] in an influential essay, thinks that Godbole is a clown. K. Viswanatham[2] considers Godbole a caricature and his characterization unreal and silly. David Schusterman [3] is even more forthright in his denunciation of Godbole and says that the Brahmin "makes for disharmony," and that he is, in fact, "a disruptive force '. On the other side of the controversy, Wilfred Stone, [4] C. Roland Wagner[5] ,T.G. Vaidyanathan,[6] Frederick P W. McDowell [7] and Brijraj Singh[8] have in their different ways attempted to defend Forster's depiction of Godbole. Neither the denouncers nor the defenders seem to have noted that in Forster's scheme of things Godbole occupies an important place since he (Godbole) is made to represent one of the novelist's most cherished values, namely, Harmony. It appears that Forster throughout his career was engaged in a quest for harmony in life and in art. This paper is an attempt to consider Godbole as representing one type of harmony.

Let us first examine the view that Godbole is a clown. That Forster does not intend Godbole to be a clown or a caricature is at least partly vindicated in the attitude of other important characters in the novel towards him. Dr. Aziz has great respect for him and calls him "the most sincere chap" [9]; Fielding likes at least "an occasional scrap of him" (p. 315); Mrs. Moore shows him utmost deference. The narrator in the novel says that Godbole's "whole appearance suggested harmony as if he had reconciled the products of East and West, mental as well as physical, and could never be discomposed" (p. 71). And then, a hundred pages later, "no eye could see what lay at the bottom of the Brahman's mind, and yet he had a mind and heart too, and all his friends trusted him, without knowing why (p. 173). If Godbole, could earn the respect of and inspire confidence among Hindus, Muslims and Christians, surely he is not a figure of fun.

Godbole appears thrice in the novel. (The number three, as Wilfred Stone observes in his insightful study, *The Cave and the Mountain*, is important as it recurs in both theme and structure. For instance, the novel is divided into three parts. Three important religions, Islam, Hinduism and Christianity, figure in the novel.) These three appearances, it may be noted, are evenly distributed in the three parts of the novel. Godbole first appears at Fielding's tea-party; second, soon after the arrest of Dr. Aziz; and third, in the festival of Gokul Ashtami. He also sings thrice. Each of his appearances has a religious aura about it. Fielding and Mrs. Moore eagerly seek his comments and views. Dr. Aziz, we are told, "always felt like a baby in that strange presence" (p. 300). Godbole's mere physical appearance has had a beneficent influence on people around him.

Let us now consider the impact of the three appearances of Dr. Godbole. When he is asked by Mrs. Moore to describe the caves, he gives negative descriptions: "there are no sculptures at Marabar, they are not holy, and they are not ornamented in any way" (p.74). It is Dr. Aziz who realizes that Godbole is concealing something about the caves. Like the definition of God in Hindu scriptures in terms of *neti*, perhaps the caves could be described only in negative terms for they seem to symbolize the everlasting No, the great Void. If Godbole is enigmatic, so are the caves, so is the echo, so is India to the outsiders.

During this meeting at Fielding's residence, Godbole sings his first song which is described thus: It was the song of an unknown bird. Only the servants understood it. They began to whisper to one another. The man who was gathering water chestnut came naked out of the tank, his lips parted with delight, disclosing his scarlet tongue" (pp.77-78). The British listeners, Fielding and Mrs. Moore, are inquisitive about the meaning of the song and Godbole explains:

> It was a religious song. I placed myself in the position of a milk-maiden. I say to Shri Krishna: "Come: come to me only." The god refuses to come. I grow humble and say: "Do not come to me only Multiply yourself into a hundred Krishnas, and let one go to each of my hundred companions, but one, O Lord of the Universe, come to me' He refuses to come (p. 78).

While the impact of this song on Indian, presumably Hindu, servants is immediate and spontaneous, it haunts Mrs. Moore and Miss Quested for at least two weeks. In the section "Caves," (Chapter 14), the narrator says that this "queer little song" had a soporific effect on the

English ladies who had both lived "more or less inside cocoons, where the human spirit slumbers for the most part but .... not nearly as alert as we pretend" (p. 132). Although the ladies do not understand the song, both of them become "apathetic," that is, they are benumbed. The song produces a narcotic effect on them. There is a linked analogy to this song on "come" in the next section when the narrator says India "calls 'come' through her hundred mouths, through objects ridiculous and august. But come to what? She had never defined. She is not a promise, only an appeal" (p. 135). Godbole's religious song is also an appeal to Shri Krishna to come.

If in Godbole's first appearance, we listen to a "queer little song," in the second, we hear "a queer vague talk with Professor Godbole" (p.172). This queer talk is actually Godbole's exposition of the problem of evil. He argues:

> Good and evil are different as their names imply. But, in my humble opinion, they are both of them aspects of my Lord. He is present in the one, absent in the other, and the difference between presence and absence is great, as great as my feeble mind can grasp. Yet absence implies presence, absence is not non—existence (p.175).

To a superficial observer these words may appear as quibbling. When Fielding asks Godbole: "Is Aziz innocent or guilty?" he answers that evil is performed by everyone, including Miss Quested. This might be taken as an evasive or idiosyncratic reply. But the Collector expresses the same view in the very next chapter: "We are all to blame (for what happened to Miss Quested) in the sense that we ought to have seen the expedition was insufficiently guaranteed, and stopped it .... We are all implicated in that sense" (p. 182). Godbole is trying to explain in his own way the teaching of Shri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita. It is significant that on listening to his "value" talk Fielding was "silent, trying to meditate and rest his brain" (p. 175). He does not dismiss it as a pun as he has done "the symmetrical injunction" (p. 292) of Islam: "There is no God but God' doesn't carry us far through the complexities of matter and spirit; it is only a game with words, really, a religious pun, not a religious truth" (p.269). We should remember that Fielding is credited with a "usual sane view of human intercourse" (p. 242). Clearly, he has mentally conceded that Godbole's "queer vague talk" about good and evil has something to it.

In the festival of Gokul Ashtami where Godbole makes his third and final appearance, he is in his element. He sings his second song, "Tuka-

ram, Tukaram," and later leads a choir singing "Radhakrishna, Radhakrishna," and he completely immerses himself in the festivities. In a mood of ecstasy, Godbole has mystic visions twice of Mrs. Moore and the wasp. He sees all forms of life, all creation as one. Indeed, the festival obliterates the distinctions of caste and rank so that the Sweepers' Band and the privileged sections of Hindu society mingle in the vast crowd: "They loved all men, the whole universe, and scraps of their past, tiny splinters of detail emerged from a moment to melt into the universal warmth" (p. 281). Such ecstasy is possible for Godbole as he is fully involved in the religious atmosphere prevailing in the festival. His is the path of devotion, of total surrender to God. The festival held in honour of Shri Krishna generates Infinite Love which "took upon itself the form of Shri Krishna, and saved the world. All sorrow was annihilated" (p. 283). It is important to note that this festival was witnessed, either in body or in spirit, by almost all the principal characters in the novel. Mrs. Moore not only appears in the mystic vision of Godbole twice, she is also present through her progeny. Stella and Ralph, who are understandably drawn to Hinduism. It is in the festival of Gokul Ashtami celebrating universal love that bridges of understanding could be built, bridges connecting races, religions and nations. The bridge party in Chandrapore accentuated such differences and divided people. Gokul Ashtami, on the other hand, coming as a finale to the course of events in the novel, submerges all distinctions and unite people.

After her terrific experience in the cave Mrs. Moore finds Christianity "talkative" and "that all its divine words from 'Let there be Light' to 'It is finished' only amounted to "boum" (p. 148), the echo she had heard in the Marabar Caves.) Fielding considers the principal tenet of Islam to be a religious quibble, not a religious truth. The experience in the first cave upsets Mrs. Moore; the echo throws Miss Quested off balance. The whole episode makes the British (except Fielding) nervous; even Fielding is quite worried. On his arrest, Dr. Aziz sobs. During the trial also, people on both sides lose their equanimity and after the trial the English become panicky. But the incidents in the Marabar Caves and the subsequent events in Chandrapore, including the arrest of Dr Aziz, do not affect Dr. Godbole. He alone does not lose his balance, for, he has the capacity to detach himself from people and events; he alone achieves harmony both within and without.

Harmony, as stated earlier, is one of the principal concerns of Forster. As John Colmer perceptively observes: "The all-embracing theme of harmony appears in a variety of ways, not all of them equally successful

It is explored through the private lives of individuals, through the conflict of classes, through the conflict of national traditions". [10] In an important essay, 'Art for Art's Sake,' Forster argues that art by definition must have form or order which is a manifestation of "internal" or "vital" harmony. Art cannot exist without form which creates order. And order, according to Forster, is "something evolved from within, not something imposed from without; it is an internal stability, a vital harmony." Forster distinguishes between two kinds of order or harmony: (i) "the divine order, the mystic harmony, which according to all religions is available for those who can contemplate it .... The existence of a divine order, though it cannot be tested, has never been disproved," and (ii) the esthetic order or harmony which "an artist can create in his own work." [12] The uniqueness of a work of art is because it is "the only material object in the universe which may possess internal harmony. [13]

In *A Passage to India* Forster implicitly juxtaposes the two kinds of harmony. On his visit to Venice, Feilding admires the "harmony between the works of man and the earth that upholds them, the civilization that has escaped muddle, the spirit in a reasonable form, with flesh and blood subsisting .... though Venice was not Europe, it was part of the Mediterranean harmony. The Mediterranean is the human norm" (p. 275). Fielding forgot the beauty of form among "idol temples and lumpy hills" in India. Elsewhere in the novel references to the formlessness, disorder, or muddle in India occur almost as a refrain. There is yet another kind of harmony which Forster explicitly mentions early in the novel. During the very first encounter between Godbole and the English visitors, the narrator, as quoted earlier, says, "his whole appearance suggested harmony--as if he had reconciled the products of East and West, mental as well as physical, and could never be discomposed" (p. 71). If Venetian art produced beauty of form, as all true art would, Hinduism produced harmony of life in the person of Godbole. John Sayre Martin has rightly observed: "But Venice's beauty is that of art, a Venice without life or movement, a Canaletto view, not the living reality. The spirit of Mau, on the other hand, is the spirit of life: all is life and movement". [14] The harmony of spirit is the more difficult to achieve. Hence this other harmony of Godbole is superior.

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NOTES

1 Nirad C. Choudhuri, "Passage to and from India." *Encounter* (London), 2 (June 1954), 19-24.

2 K. Viswanatham. "Forster: *A Passage to India:* The Desperate View" in *India in English Fiction* (Waltair: Andhra Univ. Press, 1971). (A. U. Series No. 100), pp. 90-120.

3 David Schusterman. "The Curious Case of Professor Godbole: *A Passage to India* Re-examined." *PMLA*, 76 (September 1976). 429.

4 Wilfred Stone, *The Cave and the Mountain: A Study of E. M. Forster* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966).

5 C. Roland Wagner, "The Excremental and the Spiritual in *A Passage to India*. *Modern Language Quarterly*, 31 (September 1970), 359-71.

6 T. G. Vaidyanathan. "In Defence of Professor Godbole." in V. A. Shahane, ed. *Focus on Forster's A Passage to India.* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 197) pp. 45-62.

7 Frederick P. W. McDowell, "Introduction" to his *E. M. Forster: An Annotated Bibliography of Writings About Him.* De Kalb. Ill.: Northern Illinois Univ. Press, 1976.

8 Brijraj Singh. "Mrs. Moore, Professor Godbole and the Supernatural: Some Comment of *A Passage to India.*" *Literary Criterion*, 15-2 (1980), 44-53.

9 E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1961), p.67.All subsequent references are given in the text.

10 John Colmer. *E. M. Forster: The Personal Voice.* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 94.

11 E. M. Forster, *Two Cheers for Democracy* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1951) p. 90.

12 Ibid., p. 92.

13 Ibid.

14 John Sayre Martin, *E. M. Forster: The Endless Journey* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1976). p.154.

Indian Writing in English: The Predicament of Marginality

Shantinath K. Desai

Let me, at the outset, give a clear idea of what I propose to discuss in this talk. I intend to look at Indian Writing in English as objectively as possible— placing it in the context of the socio-cultural process of India and in relation to other Literatures in India—not as an independent hot-house plant. The title itself suggests the basic assumption on which my discussion is going to be based. The assumption is : Indian Writing in English is rather a marginal affair. To clarify my assumption, let me present two other assumptions that have been current and operative in the study of this body of literature called Indian Writing in English. According to one assumption, Indian culture has been always pluralistic and English has been with us, for historical reasons, for the last 180 or 200 years now, and the East-West (particularly the British-Indian) encounter has inevitably generated writers who have written in English and who have been writing in English with varying degrees of success. Indian Writing in English is, therefore, one of the literatures of India, one of the new literatures in English, reflecting and commenting on some aspects of Indian reality. This attitude is what I call a liberal attitude. Indian Writing in English has thrived and has been kept alive on the strength of this attitude.* The weakness of this attitude is that it does not take us to the central truths and the inherent contradictions of the real socio-cultural process. The sooner we dismiss this attitude or modify it in the light of a deeper awareness of history, the better for us — for Indian readers and lovers of literature and Indian teachers of English.[1] This attitude

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* It is on the strength of this liberalism that in the Festival of India held in London, Indian Literature was represented by Indian Writing in English. It is on the strength of this liberalism that in the recent Frankfurt Fair, a comparatively large number of Indian Writers in English attended it. It is on the strength of this liberalism that in Commonwealth Literature Conferences, only Indian Writing in English is considered and the writers of other Commonwealth countries go away with the idea that their literatures are far superior to the literature produced in India, which they find thin, fragile and delicate-like the Indians they meet in these Conferences.

has produced, apart from innumerable 'research articles', two 'imperfect' histories of Indian Writing in English. 'Imperfect', because both Iyengar and Naik consider Indian writing in English as an autonomous tradition, a plant that has grown by itself in its own unique way. I can understand Iyengar's attitude. It was in the fifties that he tried hard to establish the identity of this body of literature — a poor changeling which was crying for some legitimacy — and give it a local habitation and a name. Until then Indian Writing in English was part of Anglo-Indian Writing. Both E. F. Oaten in his essay, 'A Sketch of Anglo-Indian Literature' of 1908, and his chapter on 'Anglo-Indian Literature' in the *Cambridge History of English Literature* and later Bhupal Singh in his book, *A Survey of Anglo Indian Fiction* (1934) include Indian writing in English in the area of Anglo-Indian Literature ... It was necessary, therefore, to collect information about Indian Writing in English and look at it separately and give it a respectable status. But Naik's history belongs to this decade—the 80's — and still he works with the same 'isolationist' attitude — considering Indian Writing in English as an independent tradition without relating it to the complex socio-cultural process of India, without relating it to other regional literatures in India.

Let me move on to the second attitude which is rather an extremist view, generated by a reaction to the liberal view. This was once expressed in very effective terms by Bhalachandra Nemade, a well-known Marathi novelst, in one of the seminars held by C. D. Narasimhaiah in 'Dhvanyaloka' and I give here a summary of his views. He said : 'Indians should not write in English. Those who happen to write should not be taken into consideration, they should be ignored. Don't even give them the marginal status. Indian Writing in English is just not good --- it cannot be good. If there is anything good in it, it is accidental. If we talk about it, talk about it as something 'odd or abnormal --- the way we talk about, say , painting with nails, writing with toes, smoking with nostrils and so on,. This is a highly nativistic attitude — probably a healthy reaction --- to make us think and draw our attention to the central literary process in india which inevitably takes place in the Indian languages --- languages which are deeply rooted in the life of the people, languages with a history of a thousand or two thousand years.

My attitude is a reaction to both the above attitudes — the liberal and the nativistic. If we look at the history of the political and socio-cultural process of the last 200 years or so, we see, broadly, 3 distinct phases—one generating the other, one leading to the other. One, the period of 'uneasy' encounter between the British and the Indians—from 1800 to

say, 1900. It is during this period that, along with writing in our own languages, we started translating and adapting from English into Indian languages and we worked under what one might call 'the anxiety of influence'. It is during this period that some sporadic efforts were made to write creatively in English — they were made generally by English - educated and westernised people, by Indians who went abroad for education. It was a way of imbibing the western influences and Indianising them; it was also a way of establishing equality of status in the spiritual spheres — equality between a slave and a master... We see that this attempt was fraught with many tensions — resulting in [a] some writers turning to Indian themes, [b] some like Michael Madhusudan Datta turning away from English to their own native languages. Bankim Chandra, too, wrote his first novel in English and quickly turned to Bengali. Some, like Ramesh Chandra Datta, translated or adapted Indian epics and legends into English . . . Actually, what happened in the 19th century should be viewed from a totality of vision.[2]

The 2nd phase spans roughly the period between 1900 and 1947—the period of struggle, the period of the first phase of Decolonization — the period in which political activity dominated every other cultural process. The literary process involved the upsurge of creative activity in all the major Indian languages. The only pan-Indian language that was available to the bourgeois intellectuals and activists was English. For the awakening of the masses, the Indian languages mustered their strength and produced in every literature great figures — Tagore, Saratchandra Chatterji, Jibananda Das etc in Bengali, Asan, Vallathol and Ulloor in Malayalam, B.M. Shri, Masti, Karanth, Bendre and Puttappa in Kannada, Premchand, Jaishankar Prasad, Nirala etc in Hindi, Bharathi in Tamil . . . and so on. Indian Writing in English, too, produced great figures — Aurobindo, Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao . . . And in the context of the Indian literary process, the Indian Writing in English was also in the central area — though at the margin of the inner circle. There was a sort of blood relationship between the major literatures of India and Indian Writing in English. Aurobindo, for example, was the source of inspiration for most of the Romantic poets in Indian languages. The Indian novelists in English were working in unison with the Indian novelists — though in a *minor key* and, comparatively speaking, in an extremely limited way.[3] That is why, I put the Indian Writing in English produced during this phase at the margin of the inner circle.

In the third phase, the post — Independence period, the central area is entirely dominated by an intense literary activity in the Indian languages and the Indian Writing in English was shifted to the margin of

the outer circle. It is this shifting from the inner circle to the outer that has created the PREDICAMENT.

II

Marginality is implicit in the very nature of Indian Writing in English. To those who focus their attention on 'Indian Writing, it is 'English' that is the source of marginality — 'English' implies a certain section of people — the city-bred, convent-educated, bourgeois people or people belonging to certain minorities like Anglo-Indians Christians, Parsis etc who inevitably use English as their language of communication and business, and people who are expatriates staying abroad and making a living there... In the context of Indian literary process, writing in English has the inevitable quality of marginality.

To those who focus their attention on 'Writing in English' the term Indian, is the source of marginality. During the imperialistic days the British critics made some space for English-men's writing about India and called it Anglo-Indian writing and they were quite happy, and condescendingly so, to make some marginal place for Indians' writing in English within this area of Anglo-Indian Writing. That was obviously an attitude of cultural imperialism. The strange and not-so-strange thing is that this attitude of cultural imperialism still persists—even after we have attained political Independence. In his book, *'Commonwealth Literature'*, William Walsh says that the central canon is English literature and other literatures in English are added to it after a close scrutiny as, say, satellites. 'The Pelican Guide to English Literature' No. 8 (the recent one) is also organized on the basis of this attitude:[4] for instance, it includes a chapter on Patrick White, a chapter on V.S. Naipaul and a chapter (written by Walsh) on some Indian writers like he 3 great and some others — since these people pass the GRADE – according to their taste and the standards of their canon! For Walsh and the Pelicans, Indian Writing in English is a marginal thing (one chapter) in the vast 8 vols. of English literature. Now the new umbrella of Commonwealth literature has given a place to Indian Writing in English —but that, too, is marginal—because other countries put into the basket of Commonwealth literature their entire or at least 50% of their literature. But India puts in only 5% of the Indian literature—that too a marginal literature like Indian Writing in English. And naturally we make the others proud of themselves! One of the characteristics of a marginal or peripheral body of literature is that it is such a loose entity that it can easily become part of other intersecting circles. Thus Indian Writing in English could easily become a part of

Anglo-Indian writing, then of English literature, then of Commonwealth literature, and of course it is always part of Indian literature—though marginal. An enitty which can get into at least 4 circles—if one more circle is invented it would be a veritable Draupadi among literatures—with five husbands to cater to! [Why not think of the fifth circle as that of, say, 'World Literature'?]

Let me make it clear that 'marginality' is a *cultural* term and not an 'aesthetic' term, though, of course, 'marginality' does affect the aesthetic value of a work of literature in significant ways—both positively and negatively. For instance, Indian Writing in English, because of the world language, English, is easily visible to the outside world, and there is a whole traditon of western, particularly, English, literature to which it tries to relate itself, consciously or unconsciously, which does significantly affect the structure and style of a work. In fact, what happens is that Indian Writing in English becomes extremely self-conscious. Born with *two* pulls in different directions—Indian and English—it develops a certain abnormal selfconsciousness which is often inhibiting. Verrier Elwin, who made India his home, once discussed the predicament of Dom Moraes as an Indian Writer in English. He told Dom Moraes, "Your are in a peculiar historical position, you know. All your family speak English, and really, you yourself are a very English person. Your reactions aren't Indian, are they? I can't explain that, but there it is. You seem quite naturally to live in a world of English poetry and English painting, and you are an English poet." [5] Dom—English, but Dom Moraes himself speaks of the two pulls that worked upon him—the pull of India and that of England. The Indian Writer in English, particularly in the post-Independence period which is characterised by nativistic assertion, has to make a choice: to go to England or America or, like Nissim Ezekiel, to stay where he is. You are all familiar, I hope, with his 'Background, Casually', in the last stanza of which he says:

I have made my commitments now.
This is one: to stay where I am,
As others choose to give themselves
In some remote or backward place.
My backward place is where I am.

He should have added : 'My remote place too is where I am'. Marginality affects the Indian Writer in English in a significant way even with regard to where he should stay. He chooses to do one of the following: either he goes to England or America and be an exile there or stays here in India and be an exile here.

If he goes to England or America and makes it his second home, he normally writes about India in the current idiom of contemporary English or American literature. In a foreign country he feels the need for asserting or utilizing or projecting his Indianness—or else who would listen to him there? Look at Raja Rao and his self-conscious Indianness—the Advaita attitude of his own making—pervading his novels like *The Serpent and the Rope* and *Cat and Shakespeare* or his selfconscious stylistic experimentation in *Kanthapura*. What I mean to say is that the expatriate Indian has to foreground his Indianness in terms of style and in terms of theme —that of supposedly Hindu mysticism or something in order to maintain his identily.

This double-direction tension worked in the Indian Writers in English right from the 19th century—particularly in those who were educated in England and who stayed there for a long time. I have in mind writers like Michael Madhusudan Dutt, who wrote in 1849 'The Captive Ladie' or Toru Dutt, who wrote 'Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan' in 1812. This kind of India foregrounding culminated in Sri Aurobindo's poetry in which Western Romanticism was Indianized and planted in the soil of Indian spirituality, which alone could have given it the life that it needed. Savitri - a Legend and a Myth-is the ultimate fruit of this totally Indian foregrounding both in content and style — Poetry as mantra!

The expatriates of the post-Independence period who occupy the place at the margin of the outer circle have a real problem — the problem of the uncertainty of audience and of making a mark in an alien situation. One way of facing the situation is to cultivate extreme sophistication of language and be in line with the modernist, ironic, ahistorical kind of writing and for 'identity' and for effect use the Indian memories to illustrate your attitude. I have A. K. Ramanujan in mind when I say this. Another way is to use fantasy, linguistic fantasy, in a unique way and catch the attention of the western readers: G. V. Desani and Salman Rushdie illustrate this tendency brilliantly. Still another way is to revel in one's rootlessness and alienation and indulge in wild sensationalism, exoticism and sex. I have Sasthi Brata in mind when I say this—who goes in for the decultured, purely human encounter on a simple male-female syndrome. His predicament of being a writer with no audience — he speaks about it at the end of his 'Confessions of an Indian Lover:'

> For whom does one write? [asks Sartre.] I write for a few people I have loved, a couple of men I respect, and to whom I would like to say a few words. Of course I want an audience and I want to be famous But . . .

It is this uncertainty of audience which makes most of these expatriate writers go in either for sensationalism of one kind or another or fake Indian material—like he Godmen—or Indian mysticism or spirituality. What I am trying to emphasize is the expatriate's tourist view of India, Indian experiences and Indian memories and his utter marginality in the context of even Indian Writing in English. Ramanujan is intensely aware of this aspect of the expatriate's predicament and that is why he immerses himself in the translation of Indian classical poetry and 'recovers' or tries to recover his lost Indianness, his lost blood-relationships.

The post-Independence Indian Writers in English who have their particular commitment to India present interesting variations of the predicament they are in:

[a] Some, like Ezekiel, cultivate a cool and detached view of things, accepting the predicament of living in an environment in which they feel alien. They write slick, competent poetry, dessicated and extremely reductive. They adopt a kind of ironic, existentialist, ahistorical stance, and after the first or the second book of poems, which are generally interesting because of the early 'living' emotional tensions generated by the necessity of coming to terms with themselves and their environment, they vanish into the safe bourgeois corridors of academics or advertisement firms. If they persist in writing—and some do, for one reason or another they get the Sahitya Akademi Awards for their thin volumes of poetry. . . . The visibility given by the fact that they write in English is productive of foreign invitations and foreign currency . . . If we compare, say, the poetry of people like Adiga, or Dhoomil or Samar Sen or Shri Shri with that of Nissim Ezekiel, Keki Daruwala, Adil Jussawala etc, we see that the Indian-Indian poets as against the Indian-English poets write with their own generation in their bones intensely responding to the complexities and contradictions of the rapidly changing society in India The extremely fluid situation in India with its extraordinary stresses, pressures and confusions demands from our poets a strong critical impulse to diagnose and to warn. But our Indian English poets are concerned with seeking their identity and with maintaining their ironic, melancholic detachment. We used to say that Indian poets in English were good city poets writing interestingly about the urban scene. But compared to the poets of city-dalits like Namadeo Dhasal, or mill-workers like Narayan Surve, the Indian poets in English give only partial, dessicated, ironic glimpses of bourgeois disillusionment.

[b] Some, like Parthasarathy [by the way, for him Indian Poets in English are just Indian poets—of the title *Ten Twentieth Century Indian*

Poets—'in English' is cleverly dropped — but it sadly reveals the *desire* of the Indian poets in English to get into the mainstream of Indian literary process! I don't think there is any deliberate plan to mislead the poor foreign readers!] make poetry out of the 'predicament' itself. After talking about his 'tongue in English chains', 'whoring after English gods his desire to go back to the Tamil roots, where do we find him now—first Oxford University Press, Delhi, and later teaching English to American students—in Texas...When the chains are golden—English or American—Tamil roots can wait! But Parthasarathy rightly points his finger in the direction which is really 'creative' though he himself does not go that way. Unless you go back to your native traditions you cannot go beyond the first slim volume of poetry!

When we read these Indian poets in English and sometimes guide research on them, we sometimes feel like agreeing with Nemade and saying: 'Leave them alone — leave them to their particular hells !'

Some critics like Professor C.D.N. say : Our Indian Poetry in English is marginal, we agree. But what about the Indian novel in English?

But before I come to the novel, I must say a word about drama. There is no real Indian drama in English. Why? The reason is obvious: Drama is the one form which depends entirely upon the 'audience' and it lives on the direct interaction between the writer and the audience, and it expresses in their idiom their cognitive tensions and intellectual concerns. But Indian Writers in English and the English language have been pushed to the periphery of the socio-political process and so drama in English has no place in India,—unless it is the translation of Indian plays. (We'll come to translations later.) Yes, I was speaking of the Indian novel in English. I have not much of a quarrel with the old masters, who did occupy the central area — I mean Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao, not with the first or second novels of many of our post-Independence writers like Manohar Malgonkar, Kamala Markandaya, Chaman Nahal... Nayantara Sahgal — who else? Arun Joshi, Anita Desai, Salman Rushdie (now that he is famous, we would like to claim him) and Ruth Prawar Jhabvala (is she Indian? but a professor friend of mine said : why grudge her being in the group? If she is not the daughter of India, she is the daughter-in-law of India. Our Indian generosity and tolerance have no limits!). But when you look at their later 'professional' productions you realize that they have gone into the limbo of marginality. Read Kamala Markandaya's *Pleasure City*, Anita Desai's *Where Shall We Go This Summer*, Arun Joshi's *The Last Labyrinth*, Manohar Malgonkar's *Shalimar*, Santha Rama Rau's *The Adventuress* — and also read Shivaram Karanth, Pannalal Patel, Ananthamurthy, Bhalachandra Nemade, Agyeya, Tarashankar

Banarjee, Satinath Bhaduri, Yashpal, Shrilal Shukla, Devanur Mahadev —to name only a few. You will realize that it is the Indian fiction in Indian language that is vibrant, living, responsive to the existential urgencies of our complex political and socio-cultural processes — and that Indian fiction in English has lapsed into cheap professionalism catering to the foreigner's taste for the exotic, that it is cut off from its roots and hence it is satisfied with thematic trivialization and narrative sophistication as long as it gets into the foreign reader's hands as quickly as possible. That is the inevitableconsequence of marginality—to sit on the condescending laps of a curious foreign readership !

Is there any way to direct the creative energies of the Indian Writer in English towards the centre? Or, is marginality his inevitable destiny? Ramanujan and P. Lal have shown one way, that of — of relating oneself to the Indian tradition and Indian experience – the way of Translation. To both, Translation is a creative activity, and along with their own self-explorations in their poetry they are contributing to the central cultural process in India — the process that involves the recovery and reanimation of the usable past and relate it to our contemporary situation....

The Indian critics in English – most English teachers are Indian critics in English – should also take, I think, the same direction towards the centre - by doing purposive work in the following areas :

a) Translatian of good Indian works into English and evaluation of existing translations.

b) Studies in Camparative Literature :
   - x English and any Indian Literature or
   - x Indian Writing in English and Indian Literature in Indian languages.
   - x Bilingual writing.
   - x Indian Literature in English (Indian Writing translated into English) and Commonwealth Literature.

c) Writing, in their own first languages and in English, criticism of Indian literature—theoretical and textual. They should utilize their wider perspectives for the development of their own literatures.

The Indian Writers in English have also a relevant role to play : with their excellent command over English, they could be of great help in the work of translating significant Indian literary works into English and of creating a body of literature which V. K. Gokak calls 'Indian Literature, That is probably the most legitimate way of moving towards the centre

left for Indian Writers in English, if they ever think in terms of liberating themselves from the curse of marginality.

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NOTES

1 We have already exhausted the possibilities of this simplistic attitude and produced hundreds of Ph. D. theses and M. Phil. dissertations and boosted up, beyond all proportions, this 'marginal' literature called Indian Writing in English.

2 For example, the first novel in Kannada, *Indirabai* written by Gulwadi Venkatrao, in the last decade of the 19th century, was translated immediately by the collector of Mangalore and people [even Indians - like Karanth] read the English translation first and stumbled upon the original years later! There are many such interesting facts which need to be taken into consideration.

3 We should scan through the two giant volumes of *Comparative Indian Literature*, ed. by K. M. George and published by Kerala Sahitya Akademi and Macmillan [1985] to get an idea of the tremendous amount of literary activity that has taken place in Indian languages during the modern period.

4 *The Pelican Guide No. 8* speaks of 'writing in English from outside Britain [excluding USA]' aad of 'overseas writing in English.'

5 Dem Moraes, *My Son's Father*, New Delhi : Vikas, 1971/1972, p. 164.

The Other Way Through The Absurd: Dr. Faustus And The Recent Non-Heroes

Nila Das

In the Theatre of the Absurd and in recent criticism the Absurd is often accepted as an irreprievable experience of meaninglessness and much is made of Camus' well-known definition :

> A world that can be explained even with bad reasons is a familiar world. But . . . in a universe suddenly divested of illusions and of lights man feels . . . a stranger . . . This divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, is properly the feeling of absurdity.[1]

This is not the whole of Camus' own description of the experience,[2] nor is the Atheist Existentialist interpretation the only vision of the Absurd. The other view of the Absurd is the Theist one and it reflects the modern situation and the human condition in as poignant terms as the Atheist.

This paper focuses the other view in the hope to find out if it reveals some new or lost dimensions of our life and experience, which may, if at all, indicate the future.

As it is, the experience of the Absurd is not new. The modern orientation of the problem begins, one may say, with the Renaissance, when the self-enchanted man desired to have life explained in terms of reason, denounced the familiar world of faith (a situation opposite to what Camus describes), revolted against God and sought to defy the 'primary Absurdities', chance, contingency, death, the paradoxes and the mysteries of the world. The prescient Renaissance artists and thinkers had foreseen in the venture an eventual estrangement between man and God, man and his existence, the gaping dilemma of the contemporary ethos.

Marlowe's Dr. Faustus, standing at the cross-roads of the age of faith and the Godless world, mirrors the problem at the roots in sharp dramatic terms. One way of having a better view of oneself is to see oneself in terms of the other. In this paper the Faustian experience is probed in the expectation that it will enable us to reassess our own world and its heroes and non-heroes. It is an attempt to look "forward" to the past.

We begin with the Theist version of the Absurd.

To the theists the term Absurd denotes a spiritual experience that begins with the negative awareness of the paradox between God and man, as well as between man and his existence, and culminates in the realization of a relatedness with the Absolute. The biggest Absurd is that Christ, the Son of God, is born, lives, suffers, and is crucified.[3] The mystery may be fathomed through faith and "passionate inwardness." In *Fear and Trembling* Kierkegaard says:

> A humble courage is required to grasp the whole of the temporal by virtue of the absurd and this is the courage of faith.
>
> The dialectic of faith is the most remarkable of all, it possesses an elevation . . . . I am able to make from the springboard the great leap whereby I pass into infinity.[4]

In Kierkegaard's vision Abraham's life is the paradigm of the related life attained through faith. "Believing by virtue of the Absurd", Abraham overstepped the human reckonings in sacrificing his son. It is by his "absurd faith" again that he had Isaac back. When flung amidst unprovoked, unpremeditated disasters, Job too remained unshaken in his faith in God, the Truth was revealed to him. Mortal Job succeeded in establishing a relation with the Eternal, the highest attainment of human life.

The Age of Faith over, the dialectical spiritual experience is no longer so pronounced. Of his own leap to faith, Kierkegaard himself is less confident: "I am unable to make the movement of faith, I cannot shut my eyes and plunge confidently into the Absurd . . . I long for it, but I do not believe, this courage I lack."[5] In recent theatre, the agony is expressed in sharper terms by the nameless, faceless non-heroes.

Dr. Faustus is one of the first modern heroes to experience the horror and angst of the Godless world.

II

The Prologue sets the key. An earthly creature with "waxen wings', Faustus rebels against God. Heaven punishes. The revolt quickly alienates Faustus from God, his fellow beings, his normal life, even his own self. The Renaissance hero invites the Absurd. The dramatist offers the experience of his protagonist to the "patient judgement" of his audience. That marks a difference with the contemporary playwrights of the Absurd, who follow their non-heroes in their mooringless, meaningless ways of life, as companions and witnesses, never judging them and never suggesting a way out. The inheritors of a disintegrated universe, today's dramatists themselves seem to have lost their way.

The first act shows the nature of Faustus' revolt. Haunted by man's persisting dream or anguish ("Yet art thou still but Faustus and a man", "Couldst thou make man to live eternally"[6]), Faustus takes to Black Magic at a rash moment and has his imagination soaring at the prospect of endless magical power :

O, what a world of profit and delight,
Of power, of honour, of omnipotence,
Is promis'd to the studious artisan! (I. I. 52-54)

Profit, delight, power, honour, omnipotence—in religious terms these are but familiar temptations The real tempter resides within Faustus' own heart. Long before the devils appear on the scene, Faustus forgets his aspiration to make mankind immortal, desires power devoid of love, tends to embrace the inhuman:

All things that move between the quiet poles
Shall be at my command: emperors and kings
Are but obey'd i' their sev'ral provinces,
Nor can they raise the wind or rend the clouds. (I. 1. 55 - 58)
I' ll have them fly to India for gold,
Ransack the ocean for orient pearl,
And search all corners of the new-found land
For . . . princely delicates. (I. 1. 81-84
Yea, stranger engines for the brunt of war . . . .
I'll make my servile spirits to invent. (I. 1. 94-96)

Domination, hoarding, sensuous pleasures, destruction: the pattern indicates that Faustus is not merely caught in the snares of mortality but is fast overpowered by evil and negation which he has little capacity to own or control.

The Faustian choice has been the fatal choice of the Renaissance and the post- Renaissance world. The unslaked thirst for the miracles of science coupled with inhuman greed for material prosperity and power-hunger have culminated today in what appears to be an irreprievable crisis of civilisation. The human values crumbled, the coherence of life lost, the *'waxen wngs'* burnt, the present successors of Faustus seem to have nothing left to them but confusion, despair, waste—an aimless, futureless negativity. Marlowe's prophetic vision has come true.

Faustus evokes Mephistophilis. Contrary to his usual practice of tempting, Mephistophilis himself tries to dissuade Faustus from inviting an alienation from God:

Think'st thou that I, who saw the face of God
And tasted the eternal joys of heaven,

Am not tormented with ten thousand hells,
In being depriv'd of everlasting bliss?
OFaustus, leave these frivolous demands
Which strike a terror to my fainting soul! (1. i i i. 77-82)

Faustus tries to laugh out Mephistophilis' fears. At heart, however, he wavers between the horror of damnation, the attraction for the magical powers, the longing for regeneration and the doubt that the return to faith will never be possible. His self- confidence is wrecked:

Something sounds in mine ears:
"Abjure this magic, turn to God again!"
To God? He loves thee not;
The God thou servest is thine own appetite,
Wherein is fix'd the love of Belzebub. (1. v. 7-12)

Faustus knows that he has banished himself from grace ("He loves thee not"), that his values are dislocated ("The God thou servest is thine own appetite"). He can neither accept the situation nor face it.

To fail to accommodate the material and the spiritual, the outer and the inner life, is to fail ultimately. In Faustus' own life as also in the post-Renaissance culture, the problem of values, the evil and the paradox gape wide because the two are persistently viewed in terms of either/or.

Mephistophilis demands that Faustus should gift his soul to the Devil signing the treaty with his blood. Faustus obeys even though his blood congeals and the inscription "homo fuge" appears on his arm. Ironically life turns the more agonising the moment the treaty is complete. Eager to enjoy life, Faustus asks for a wife, but is given a devil dressed as a woman. Lucifer invites him to a dance but the dancers are the Seven Deadly Sins. The show makes Faustus flinch . The choice for the Devil's party has suspended him in a cursed state, where even the underworld does not own him. "The divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, is properly the feeling of absurdity," says Camus (as quoted earlier). The divorce becomes all too glaring in the new life-pattern of Faustus.

Self- alienated, Faustus laments over his lot, curses Mephistophilis, thinks of suicide. Banished from heaven, Adam and Eve also had thought of death, but could transcend the situation in their trust in God. The Renaissance hero, victim to historic forces, lacks the "courage to believe". He cannot shun his longing for the world of faith either. Perhaps the need for a dialectic of faith is basic to the human heart. In our age of non-belief and meaninglessness too, Faustus' feelings are shared by many characters. As Adamov confesses, "All I know of myself is that I suffer. And if I suffer it is because at the origin of myself there is a mutilation, separation. What I am separated from, I cannot name it."[7] Beckett's

Vladimir and Estragon (*Waiting for Godot*) cannot identify who they are waiting for ("Godot . . . who is he? . . . . "Oh he's a . . . he's a kind of acquaintance"), yet they go on waiting for Godot, their lost or unrealised source of wholeness. The agonising drama of nonrelatedness is perpetuated so long that the mind is stalled at the cross-roads of belief and non-belief.

Mephistophilis drags Faustus through all sorts of miraculous adventures. The "frisking flea" of the Clownage Scenes, Faustus keeps himself occupied with cheap tricks and trivial pleasures. At heart he has a terrifying sense of the passage of time and the on-coming end in hell. Horror reaches its acme in the farcical scene with the Horse-Courser, who tries to awaken Faustus asleep. "O, my leg, my leg! Help, Mephistophilis!" screams the hell-hounded hero. Faustus' cry is echoed across the ages in the piercing monosyllables of Beckett's Vladimir and Pozzo:

Vladimir: Help! . . . Don't leave me! They'll kill me!
Pozzo : Help!

The cry rings in empty space. Vladimir and Pozzo have inherited an eroded universe. Faustus has eroded his own. He knows what is lost and how he has lost it himself. His agony is more intense.

Faustus' last hour of life approaching, the Old Man or the hero's own conscience advises him to resort to the conventional remedy, repentance. Refusing to face himself, Faustus implores Mephistophilis to torture the Old Man, only to hear the answer he dreads most: "His faith is great. I cannot touch his soul". Evil and chaos lose power when the victim has an inner strength to face them. Faustus has none. In their own ways, the Atheist Absurdists also emphasise man's inner strength to encounter the disharmonious. "Existence is but a possibility for man", "man is what he wills to be" [8]. Only he needs the will to be.

To escape the horrors of doom, Faustus pleads with Mephistophilis to bring him Helen of Troy. The very fact that Faustus seeks immortality from the lips of Helen, rather than in the grace of God, indicates that his way to the sacred is sealed. Adam had his first taste of salvation in his love for Eve. Love had distanced him from his ego, given him the courage to invite all the suffering upon himself so that Eve is spared. Faustus' longing for Dionysiac beauty does not bring him any self-detachment. Peace does not descend on his tortured mind, not even during the last hour of his life.

Extreme self-attachment is a set-back for the recent characters too. Pirandello's Six Characters (*Six Characters in Search of an Author*) make self-piteous exhibition of their own individual suffering, bewilderment, meaninglessness, but hardly open up to bear the agony of another as their

own. They cannot even see the professional actors play the drama of their life ("That woman there .... me! I can't see myself in you at all"). When Sartre's Existentialist Orestes is asked to share Electra's suffering and guilt, he retorts: "Not even that.... Her suffering comes from within and only she herself can rid of it."[9] A way to rise above the painstaking experience of the Absurd is, in Sartre's words, to "recognise one another as subjectives", "to be responsible for the world and for himself as a way of being."[10] It requires a larger consciousness or inner discipline which Sartre's own non-heroes do not have. Nor does the Renaissance Protagonist possess it.

Alone in his hour of damnation, Faustus realises the value of relatedness with God, the earth, the elements, the human beings, the animals— but too late. Terror-stricken at the hallucination of the Furies tormenting the damned souls, he implores time to stop, tries to think of the Saviour, appeals to the earth to shield him both from the divine judgement and the devils. Even the animal existence appears to him a blessing. But the inevitable happens. The devils appear. Faustus screams:

My God, my God, look not so fierce on me!
Adders and serpents, let me breathe a while!
Ugly hell, gape not! Come not Lucifer!

The images of both the Divine Judge and the Lord of Darkness seem equally horrifying to Faustus. In such extremity, even hell, one feels, would be a release. As the devils drag Faustus away, he surrenders with the pathetic cry, "let me breathe a while," his last breath!

Faustus' experience of the Absurd does not culminate in communion with the Absolute in the conventional Theistic pattern. Unlike the heroes of old, the Renaissance over-reacher cannot 'leap to faith' and be saved from the horror and agony of the Absurd. Rather like the non-heroes of our times, he has neither courage nor confidence to encounter the multi-dimensional non-relatedness he invites by his misadventure. Spiritually paralysed, he ends in self-pity and despair. The culmination is also the collapse.

Although himself failing, Faustus ensures the authenticity of the opposite. The value and meaning of life lie in man's capacity to affirm in-spite of the Absurd, because of the Absurd. A magnetic cohesive force binds the world and makes life whole with all its paradoxes and contradictions. To fathom these connections man needs to expand his consciousness beyond his self-centered self and its demands, his fragmented vision of life's either/or. The larger awareness does not come by way of magic or miracle. It requires patient approximation, "the courage to grasp the whole of the temporal" and the will to be. "Without contraries no

progression." Man can realise the meaning and wholeness of life by absorbing its slings and arrows. What is needed is the courage to encounter, to believe in terms of the opposites. The path lies ahead. The fallen Faustus joins hands with the despairing non-heroes of recent plays to indicate the other way through the Absurd. We look forward to the future.

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NOTES

1 *The Myth of Sisyphus*, trans. Justin O'Brien (London; Hamish Hamilton, 1955), p. 13.

2 In *The Myth of Sisyphus* as in his novels and plays, Camus emphasises man's ability to rise above the awareness of primary Adsurdity. If one accepts the paradox as the "only bond uniting man and the world", he can escape the self-abating feelings of "immature unrest, renunciation and suicide" and attain dignity and elevation as Sisyphus does.

3 Way back in the third century Tertullian had said: "The Son of God was crucified . . . And the Son of God died; it is by all means to be believed, because it is absurd. And he was buried and rose again; the fact is certain because it is impossible." Quoted from William Barret, *Irrational Man, A Study of Existential Philosophy* (London; Heinemann, 1960), p. 83.

4 *Fear and Trembling*, trans. Walter Lawrie (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1952), pp. 70, 49.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 44.

6 The Text of 1604, (London: Macmillan, 1963.)

7 *Confession*, 25-26, from Martin Esslin, *The Theatre of the Absurd* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), P. 89.

8 Karl Jaspers. *Reason and Existenz*, trans. William Earle (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1956), II, P. 61.

9 *The Flies*, trans. Stuart Gilbert (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973).

10 *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (London: Methuen, 1957) p. 606.

Australian Poetry of the Seventies and David Malouf

Subhas Chandra Saha

There prevails a set of divergent critical opinions on the trends and tendencies in contemporary Australian poetry. Though the Australian poetry of the Nineteen Forties and Fifties now enjoy a wide critical acclaim, there does not seem to be any settled critical opinion on the merit of the Australian poetry that flourished during the Seventies. One of the reasons for this may be the fact that the poetry of the Seventies is too contemporary to evoke a balanced judgement. The other probable reason may be that the poets of the Seventies hurt the sentiments of the older generation of critics by their rebellion against the poetic styles of the poets who established their reputation immediately after World War II.

K.L. Goodwin's remark about the aims and achievements of the recent Australian poets in his review of Thomas W. Shapcott's anthology *Australian Poetry Now* is rather too condescending:

> The best poets have for the most part worked in other (generally earlier) traditions; the mediocre have, over the past couple of decades, progressed from neo-Georgianism to the slackness of contemporary free-field verse, by passing the exacting apprenticeship required by the craft of Eliot or Pound ... There is a touching belief now among young Australian poets in the inherent poetic quality of things or objects, as if the reality of the materials used guaranteed the reality of the result produced. [1]

Max Harris's diatribe against the forms and styles adopted by the Australian poets in recent times is too aggressive and dismissive to be correct and impartial in judgement:

> Young poets are emerging at a moment when we are all coming to realize that the established names in Australian Poetry have become boring, insistent, repetitive and irrelevant ... For all these positives, there remains the hard-core fact that young poets are rushing like Gadarene Swine towards their great, muddy, emotional wallow. And there is no critical apparatus, no ideology, no set of views about the properties or

words, to keep the mass of meandering, formless, post-pubescent meditations out of print. 2

Though too brazen, and even revolting, the views quoted above may appear to be, they arouse in the mind of readers like ourselves who are distant from the Australian scene a keen curiosity about the reality of recent Australian poetry. Is the recent Australian poetry still imitative, or retrogressive or dull and mediocre? The question is an important one in view of the fact that while the Australian poetry of the Nineteen Forties and Fifties has already earned wide recognition and approval, as yet no proper evaluation of the trends and tendencies in Australian poetry during the subsequent decades has been undertaken to find out whether they are moving in the positive and progressive direction or not.

The new Australian poetry of the Nineteen Seventies is marked by a predominant note of revolt against the forms and styles of the predecessors. This is very concisely and clearly stated by the contributors to *The Oxford Companion to Australian Literature* :

> Although the practitioners of the new poetry held various ... views as to its character, attitude, and limits, they felt a common antagonism to the mainstream of Australian poetry as represented by the work, for example, of A.D. Hope, R.D. FitzGerald, Judith Wright and James McAuley, who had dominated Australian poetry for the previous quarter of a century. The new poets judged the established poetry to be, in its form and content, traditional and conservative to the point of atrophy. 3

Against a backdrop of the comments, quoted above, by the well-known critics and literary historians, I propose to study the poetic style of David Malouf, a contemporary Australian poet who has tried to keep himself away from the polemics, and devoted himself industriously and scrupulously to the development and refinement of his poetic art during the Seventies and early Eighties. The persistence and consistency in his effort to chisel the contours of his poems with assiduous care and scrupulous conscientious artistry is evident in the poems of the six volumes of poetry that he brought out over a period of ten years. Neither a publicist nor a polemical figure ,Malouf has produced poetry that can offer a yardstick for measuring the innate qualities of recent Australian poetry.

Malouf, born in 1934 in Brisbane, of Lebanese and English parents, is not, however, a very prolific poet. At the age of thirty-six he published his first book of poems, *Bicycle and Other poems* (1970). The two other important books of poetry by him are *Neighbours in a Thicket* (1974) and *First Things Last* (1980). Though meagre in bulk, his poetic output is impressive because of its striking originality, and has thus drawn

the attention of several discerning critics. Thomas Shapcott's assessment of Malouf's poetry may be quoted:

> His (Malouf's) early poems were, like those of Rodney Hall and Chris Wallace-Crabbe, cool, detached, firmly in control even of old losses and distresses . . . . But his most recent volume, *Neighbours in a Thicket*, extends that formal poise into a much richer expression, loosened by recent gains in open structure strengthened by the new flexibility of association. [4]

While making a general estimate of Malouf's poetic technique the contributors to *The Oxford Companion to Australian Literature* sketch an outline of his approach and art with a note of appreciation:

> Malouf's verse has an individual, polished style, distinguished by arresting images and an urbane, dispassionate tone. As in his prose work, childhood experience and the rediscovery of European roots are revealed as powerful creative forces. [5]

Even James McAuley, who is his predecessor, grants recognition in unequivocal terms to the contribution of Malouf to the development of poetic art in Australia:

> David Malouf, a Queenslander by origin, after returning from Europe produced a small volume, *Bicycle*, which is contemporary and informal in a moderate style and won critical esteem. A second volume, *Neighbours in a Thicket*, shows growing strength. [6]

Malouf has earned recognition not only from several critics but also from several editors of anthologies of contemporary Australian poetry. He has also eschewed the poetic forms and styles of the poets of the Fifties and Sixties, and has developed an original style of his own. In his poetry he has experimented with language to create a new pattern of verbal phrases for the evocation of symbolic overtones.

A close analysis of one of his characteristic poems will help us to arrive at an appraisal of the capacity of his poetic art to communicate and crystallize human experience with its multiple, subtle nuances. The poem that I have chosen is entitled "For Two Children", which I quote below in full:

> Across the lake the small houses appear
> to be real, or to imagine themselves somehow
> painted on the view and leaning toward
> their shaky selves in water, taking the sun
> for granted, stretching their timbers, half asleep
> in a dream of such apparent permanence
> that we hire a boat and would row across to visit,
> or walk there if we could, watching fishes

snap their tails beside us and the mirror
scales reflect us tiny on their backs.
Instead we trail our hands under a jetty
and stay close into shore. The water is clear,
metallic, deep, with an edge so keen our hands
are struck off at the wrist, set in Peru, say,
or Alaska, in a reliquary of solid
rock crystal. No longer ours, they seek
adventures. In the houses opposite, across
the blue-black glassy lake they stroke a cat
or crumble cup-cakes, saying we should have come there
too. And indeed we should, in a hired dinghy
and a swirl of smoke over joy pebbles, trailing
our oars and flicking crumbs of rainbowed sunlight
at fishtails in our wake. But the houses seem
no nearer. At arm's distance our hands give up
a career of pins-and-needles and drift back
to a warm, a known continent. Only the fish
rise to the surface and their round mouths gape.
We lean to where the boat tugs at its shadow
down there, blue-black and deep. Where have you been
all day ? they ask at the boatshed on the beach. [7]

The poem presents a series of picturesque images through an evocative arrangement of words. Using a subtle rhythmic pattern the poet arranges words in a tapestry that appeals not only to our eyes but also to our ears Yet the effects are not only sensory but cerebral. Malouf subtly leads us from the sensory images to a serious thinking about the ultimate values in life.

The first line of the poem,

Across the lake the small houses appear

is a purely visual image with a certain matter-of-factness about it. A careful craftsman as Malouf is, he uses its factualness as a support to the abstract concept of the second line—"to be real, or to imagine themselves somehow".

With an unerring artistic sense Malouf oscillates between the concrete and the abstract, and the abstract and the concrete, while reshuffling the visual images in the next line, "painted on the view and leaning toward".

The fourth line, "their shaky selves in water, taking the sun", endows the poem with a cosmic as well as a psychic significance with stresses on the two words "selves ' and "sun". However, the poet puts the second line with an abstract thought and the fourth line with a cosmic implication

within a tight framework of the concrete and the real; thus the fifth line implies an ineluctable grasp in the phrase "stretching their timbers".

Still the concrete imagery does not limit the poem to the level of the descriptive—beneath the surface of the visual images there is always an attempt to reach an appraisal of life: the attempt results in symbolic overtones which sometimes burst into a beautiful line like "in a dream of such apparent permanence". The symbolism is consistently worked out through metaphors charged with meaning. The symbolic framework is gradually evolved: even the traditional metaphor of ferry across to the other world is woven into it to shape out the matrix of meaning: "we hire a boat and would row across to visit". The concluding lines of the first stanza emphasize the apparent insignificance of the human beings dwarfed by the gigantic and enigmatic cosmos through a scintillating image :

Watching fishes
snap their tails beside us and the mirror
scales reflect us tiny on their backs.

An expert weaver of words that are impressive because of their visual, aural and architectural effects, Malouf creates not only vivid images but arranges them in such a close and compact manner that the resulting verbal pattern produces an additional aura of implicational significance.

Because of the universality of its significance, the scene is not localised; stripped of its landscape particularity, the scene becomes significant only in the psychic sense. The poet assumes an informal colloquial tone—"set in Peru, say, / or Alaska". Constantly shifting between the metaphor and the meaning, the real and the symbolic, Malouf is able to lend his lines a familiar tonal quality which, because of its incongruence with the serious purpose of the lines, acquires an eerie effect. This artistic process produces an appropriate effect of enchantment in Malouf's description of the denizens of the other world:

across the blue-black glassy lake they stroke a cat
or crumble cup-cakes, saying we should have come there too.

Man attempts to achieve the impossible but his only possible achievement is the blazing of a wild, perhaps magnificent, trail,

flicking crumbs of rainbowed sunlight/at fishtails in our wake.

Man realizes the futility of his ambition ultimately: the nullification of his efforts is conveyed through the disjointed lineation of the relevant sentence:

But the houses seem no nearer.

Yet no realization is final; the only final realization man can reach is the realization of the ever-changing illusion, which is conveyed by the verb used, namely, "seem". But the poet points out that man ever loves to reach back to the tangible, the concrete and the known,

drift back to a warm, a known continent

But the dramatic tension between illusion and reality never comes to an end since man is portrayed as ever surrounded by the mystery of life. The poem concludes by accepting the pull of the life nexus:

We lean to where the boat tugs at its shadow
down there, blue-black and deep.

Man's feeling of safety on the "beach" is accompanied by his mystic experience of the surrounding "deep". The "beach" and the "deep" are contiguous to each other perhaps inseparably. The paradox of the juxtaposition of the real and the imaginary, the known and the unkown, the achievable and the unachievable is the basic thematic concern of Malouf's poem.

While presenting his thematic concern in his poem, Malouf has been able to achieve a dramatic tension in the structural pattern of the poem by a combined use of fresh and striking images, metaphors and similes. He has been able to evolve a structural pattern which is adequately capable of communicating the conflict between the idea and the perception. The closely woven texture of words in the poem testifies to Malouf's artistic ingenuity and originality. His achievement as an experimenting poet is exemplary—it indicates in a substantial manner the level of maturity that contemporary Australian poetry has reached, and it betokens a very bright future for the poetic art in the new continent.

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NOTES

1 *Meanjin Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 3, p. 363.
2 *The Angry Eye*, p. 236. (Quoted by James McAuley, *A Map of Australian Verse*, Melbourne: O. U. P., 1977, p.334)

3 Wilde, Hooton and Andrews, *The Oxford Companion to Australian Literature*, Melbourne O. U. P., 1985, p. 515.

4 Thomas Shapcott, "Australian Poetry Since 1920", *The Literature of Australia*, edited by Geoffrey Dutton' Victoria: Penguin Books, 1976, reprint 1981. p. 147.

5 op. cit. , p. 456.

6 James McAuley, *A Map of Australian Verse*, op. cit ., p. 303.

7 David Malouf, *Neighbours in a Thicket*, University of Queensland Press, 1974.

Clio and Contemporary American Fiction

T. N. Dhar

That fiction and history are closely related to each other and that the pull of history on the writers of fiction has always been strong is undeniable; but the nature of the relationship between the two has varied from time to time, partly because of changes in the writer's attitude towards history and partly because of changes in the very concept of history and the manner in which it is written. This essay attempts to explain the distinctive nature of the varied ways in which history enters into fiction in contemporary American writing. Its approach is largely perspectival : It examines this phenomenon by comparing it, very briefly though, with history-fiction intermixtures in the past, and the theoretical bases of the relationship between the two.

I use the word history "to mean the events and characters in the record of actual social life, as well as the discipline or genre of writing that describes or analyzes these events and characters."[1] In its first sense, fiction seems to be in total contrast to history, because it is mostly concerned with things which are invented or imaginary. Precisely because of this, early writers of novelistic fiction strove to write in a manner that could give their writing a semblance of history. This largely accounted for the growth of what is known as formal realism. Fielding gave it solidity by aiming at historical particularity : by inventing characters who are like us and by placing them in an environment and setting governed by time-space nexus ; he even went to the extent of adding the word "history" to the titles of his books, a practice which was followed by many British novelists right through the nineteenth century. Even a highly self-conscious artist like Henry James stated that "It is impossible to imagine what a novelist takes himself to be unless he regards himself as an historian and his narrative as history.... It is only as an historian that he has the smallest *locus standi*. As a narrator of fictitious events he is nowhere."[2] The novelist, in this way, used history as a protective shield; to dispel any doubts in his readers that he was a liar, as also to affirm for

his work "that verisimilitude, that solid basis in pre-existing fact, which is associated with the idea of history."[3]

Some of the major American novelists of the early twentieth century do not only build a semblance of history in their works, but also absorb into them a great deal of history, not as much of the past as of their immediate present. This is like Thomas Hardy's use of history in his novels. Hardy is principally concerned with his characters, but makes them live, work and suffer in locations which are real, and in times which are historical. Dreiser, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Sinclair Lewis do almost the same thing. What R J White writes about Hardy is applicable in a large measure to them. By using history as an environment for his fictive characters, Hardy put on "record a history which he had lived on his pulses, and for that very reason, it was a history more real than anything he could turn out in a 'historical novel' properly so called."[4] The novels of these American authors offer considerable information about and insight into the times in which they are located, but this benefit is in the nature of a bonus to the reader: besides getting pleasure, he also becomes knowledgeable. That is why Nelson Manfred Blake tells us that from Sinclair Lewis' *Mainstreet* we can "learn that many Americans in the twentieth century were living in small towns,"[5] and that James T. Farrell helps us to know that "in the 1920's and 1930's most Negroes lived lives of poverty and desperation."[6]

When we look at the contemporary fictionists, we find that several writers, such as Norman Mailer, Robert Coover, William Styron, E. L. Doctorow, Gore Vidal, make use of history, both past and present, in their fiction in a manner that makes it complex, in parts rich and illuminating, in parts very controversial, but nonetheless interesting. They bring into their fiction characters and incidents from past history and also from not very distant past, mix them with invented people and situations in varied blends, for different kinds of effects. The motivation for doing so however is invariably the same.

This intermixture in which history becomes the material of fiction, the freedom with which the novelists work it out and their acute self-consciousness about it is not totally new, but certainly different from what it was in the past. In the *Poetics*, Aristotle accepted the idea of poetic fictions as imitations of history; Scaliger followed it by stating that "History, sometimes delineated only in semblance, sometimes idealized, and always with changed aspect, is made the basis of poetry."[7] Arnold Toynbee concedes that in the actual writing of history "the line between fact and fiction is undrawn"[8]; he considers Homer's *Iliad* as a unique blend of history and fiction.

In the actual practice of blending the two, Walter Scott holds an important position. He used incidents, characters and issues from actual history not merely because these gave him any facility "for the construction of a better story, nor any superior interest that attaches to the known and prominent characters with which it deals ... but rather the occasion it gave for making us familiar with the everyday life of the age and country in which the scene is laid."[9] Implicit in Scott's practiceof using historical material for fictional purposes is a plea for a new attitude towards history as well as a new style for writing history. Macaulay was nfluenced by Scott; Carlyle admitted having learnt from his novels "that the bygone ages of the world were actually filled by living men, not by protocols, state papers .... "[10] Even Ranke thanked Scott for putting him on sceintific historiography. In his indirect address to Clio in *Henry Esmond*, Thackeray states his view of history more explicitly: "I would have history familiar rather than heroic: and think that Mr. Hogarth and Mr. Fielding will give our children a much better idea of the manners of our present age in England, than the *Court Gazette* and the newspapers which we get thence."[11] In the practice of Scott and Thackeray we find that the novelists use history in their fiction for reacting to the historiography of their cultural moment, and not merely for creating fictions out of it.

The present-day American novelists are in a happier position because since the times of Scott and Thackeray there have been great many changes in the concept of history and historiography and, consequently, in the relationship between history and fiction. Scott and Thackeray questioned a certain view of history and historiography, of what constituted the purpose of history. The historians, in their turn, made adjustments in their priorities and schemes. But now the accent is on finding out *how* history is made and *who* makes it. The solidity and the sanctity of the pre-existing fact as the basis of history has already been questioned, and when E. L. Doctorow observes that "there is no longer such a thing as fiction or nonfiction; there's only narrative,"[12] it certainly is not a revolutionary statement.

Historians themselves admit that a scientific, fact-oriented view of history is just not possible. Consider the implications of this vivid passage from Lynn White: "History does not exist; all that exists is debris—scattered, mutilated, very fragmentary—left by vanished ages. Each historian knows that by his own labors in scrutiny of the rubbish heaps, he arrives at more and more understanding of what happened in the past."[13] The historian has to recreate what happened in the past, and this as R. G. Collingwood tells us does not mean just looking into

the "processes of mere events but processes of actions, which have an inner side, consisting of processes of thought. . . . All history is the history of thought."[14] Collingwood further adds that "The history of thought and therefore all history is the reenactment of past thought in the historian's own mind ...he reenacts it in the content of his own knowledge and therefore, in re-enacting it, criticizes it, forms his own judgment of its own value, corrects whatever errors he can discern in it."[15] In short Collingwood concedes that the historian is freed from "dependence on fixed points from without, the historian's picture of the past is thus in every detail an imaginary picture, and its necessity is at every point the necessity of the *a priori* imagination. Whatever goes into it, goes into it not because his imagination passively accepts it but because it actively demands it."[16]

I have quoted Collingwood at length because his statements have two serious implications:

1. The novelist no longer needs to use history as a shield because there is a great deal of similarity between historical imagination and fictive imagination. Historians as well as literary critics have commented upon this. Both history and fiction are narratives which embody a story. W. B. Gallie in *Philosophy and the Historical Understanding* states that "an historical narrative does not demonstrate the necessity of events but makes them intelligible by unfolding the story which connects their significance. History does not as such differ from fiction, therefore, insofar as it essentially depends on and develops our skill and subtlety in following stories."[17]

Louis O. Mink and Walter Reed go a little further by stating that the accent is not merely on following a story, but on "what it means to have followed a story." Both stress that the novel and the historical narrative appeal to "configurational" mode of understanding which "consists in thinking together in a single act, or in a cumulative series of acts, the complicated relationship of parts which can be experienced only seriatim."[18]

2. By allowing freedom to the historian to recreate the past according to his own judgment and knowledge, and by permitting him to correct whatever errors he feels there have been in the past, Collingwood virtually legitimizes a subjective and personal view of history. The historian can reject and select: his freedom to do so promotes what he calls historical construction.

Once we accept that history like fiction is a narrative and also allow for varied interpretations of the past by giving freedom to the historian to

choose some facts and reject others, we are in a way encouraging fictional recreation of history. And this is where the novelist takes over from the historian. His recreation of the past may not necessarily be a trivial, eccentric, or irresponsible version of the past; on the contrary, it may be more authentic, more comprehensive, and interesting than the history written by the so-called academic historians. Most of the contemporary American writers I have referred to are prompted to write their own version of history because they are dissatisfied with the history written by other people. Like Salman Rushdie's Saleem Sinai they would like to state their version of the truth of history: "It selects, eliminates, alters, exaggerates, minimizes, glorifies, and vilifies also; but in the end it creates its own reality, its heterogeneous but usually coherent version of events; and no sane human being ever trusts someone else's version more than his own "[19]

Norman Mailer in *The Armies of the Night*, [20] while documenting his account of the October 1967 March on the Pentagon, voices his fear of "the horrors of journalistic mistranscription"; "The papers distorted one's actions . . . they wrenched and garbled and twisted and broke one's words and sentences"; "Nuances were forever being munched like peanuts" (80-81). In the second part of the book, he is more explicit: "The mass media which surrounded the March on the Pentagon created a forest of inaccuracy which would blind the efforts of an historian; our novel has provided us with the possibility, no, even the instrument to view our facts and conceivably study them in that field of light" (245-6). Mailer thinks of his novel as a tower which offers a better perspective on history.

The novelist fears that the facts may be distorted by professional historians. Such fears have intensified because of the growth of the official view of history, particularly the one which is geared to an ideology. This is what Doctorow has said in one of his recent interviews: "All history is composed. A professional historian won't make the claims for the objectivity of his discipline that the lay person grants him .....We used to laugh at the way the Russians knocked people out of their encyclopedias from one edition to the next, but we did the same thing. It turned out that American historians had written, for the most part as an establishment—they had written out of existence the history of black people and women and Indians and Chinese people in this country. What could be more apparent than the creativity of that?"[21]

Gore Vidal is mild; his reason for writing on historical events and people is that it is useful to know one's past, but he feels that the existing histories are dull and out of tune with reality. In his own words: ". . . I think recreating the past illuminates the present. We're a strange society

In that we have no(sense of the) past. That's why I wrote my American trilogy . . . . partly, I wanted to tell myself the story of the history of the country because I found history as boring in school as everybody else did, and it wasn't."22

These excerpts make it clear that the novelists feel dissatisfied with histories that have been written or are about to be written. But their ways and means of giving a better version of history through their fiction differ. Mailer writes *The Armies of the Night* in two parts and in two different styles. The first one is not merely an account of the facts, it is also interspersed with "Leviathan rumination and meditations" of its central character, who is Mailer himself. He is the narrator because for total objectivity the novelist needed "an eyewitness who is a participant but not a vested partisan" (67) he is also comic and assertive. The result is that the incidents are overlaid with a number of reactions to politicians, situations institutions, and so on. The private problems of the narrator get mixed with the larger issues facing the country. The second part is a more factual account of what really happened, and there we see the difference between the two. One sympathetic to Mailer is right when he says that as a historian, he is trying to be factually inclusive — offering us details which are relevant to an understanding of the events and also charging his account with an emotional power and a symbolic significance which we don't find in official or documentary descriptions. 23

Mailer's self-consciousness as a writer is reflected in his technique which transforms his book into a work of metafiction; one could go a little further and state that it is also a work of metahistory, as defined by Hayden White, who says that historical works have a verbal structure as well as a deep structural content "which is generally poetic, and specifically linguistic, in nature, and which serves as the precritically accepted paradigm of what a distinctively 'historical' explanation should be." 24 This is the metahistorical element which he thinks is common to all histories. Mailer's employment of a specific narrator, who is invested with certain qualities, and who expresses himself vigorously throughout, helps him to see the March and also to explain it in terms of his ideas on what he thinks is wrong with America. This is the metahistorical content of the book.

Doctorow's *Ragtime* is very different from Mailer's *Armies*. It is neither strident in its tone, nor does it have any narrative complication. It is essentially a very enchanting, straightforword narrative, superbly told, and deals with the story of a number of people belonging to various social groups—whites, blacks, and immigrants. The story is located in a

definite historical setting; the reader is constantly reminded of this. The narrative involves the lives of people real as well as invented, and Doctorow makes the real historical people do things which they never did. He gives us the impression that he is not very concerned with what they actually did; some of his facts are as he himself admits made-up, but he claims to have captured their spirit. Doctorow is actually approaching the problem of historical re-creation through the mode of poetry. He labours to evoke the mood and the style of the period he is writing about. This strategy, combined with the charm of his language, has made many people see *Ragtime* as a kind of historical romance, but that would be slighting the merit of the book. For almost imperceptibly it makes comments on the social and political tendencies of the period by drawing our attention to some of its lesser known aspects. It is sympathetic towards the lower classes and the radicals. And what is so pleasing about the book is that it does it in its own inimitable style.

Gore Vidal's *Burr* has a scholarly aura about it. Vidal worked on it for ten years: he read enormously on Burr, consulting all the available historical sources; and later got it doublechecked on its historical accuracy by academic researchers. The story of Burr and his times is given to us in the novel by a narrator, an imaginary character, and is punctuated with extracts from the memoirs of Bur The result is a very engaging narrative in which the narrator becomes the confidant of Burr, getting all the historical information from him. The grip of the narrative on the reader is tightened by the element of detection in the story, for we learn that the principal business of the narrator is to find out whether or not Van Buren, the vice-presidential candidate, is the illegitimate son of Burr. In the onward movement of the plot of the book, we get to know many details about the most crucial phase of American history. Vidal offers us, mostly through the eyes of Burr, portraits of several well-known presidents, generals, diplomats, men of consequence, as well as a recreation of several crucial historical events. Most of these are quite different from what we find them to be in traditional accounts. This raises a crucial question: Is Vidal producing a gossipy account of the past and debunking people just for fun? Some academic historians seem inclined to say yes. They cast doubts on his account by calling it aesthetically pleasing but historically unsubstantiated[2]. But several others feel that Vidal's facts are all right: he is only arranging these facts, or recreating the past to advance a particular theory of history. In the words of Michael Ross, this theory argues that "all men engaged in politics and war on a grand scale are so involved in order to attain the pleasure of power and

glory. Furthermore, it argues that the American historical enterprise has been no more than an extension of this personal desire to reach the national level. Finally, it insists that the pursuit of this aim has never sat comfortably on the American conscience, resulting in a historical record out of touch with reality."[26] This makes *Burr* a major work of historical interpretation.

Thus in different ways and in different shades, and of course with different intensities, but almost for the same reasons, these fictional works incorporate historical materials into them to pay their homage to Clio by claiming to have produced a balanced and pragmatic account of history. This restores a cognitive value to history, and makes fiction relevant to our lives.

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NOTES

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The East-West Theme in the Indo-Anglian Novel

L. S. R. Krishna Sastry

In a foreword to *Potter's Clay*, a collection of stories about South India published in 1929, Hilton Brown says: "There is already growing up in South India a school of indigenous fiction which holds within itself, I do believe, the promise of something really excellent. Men like K. S. Venkataramani, Nagarajan and G. K. Chettur are, I hope, but the forerunners of a company who will yet put stories about India in a high place among the world's fiction. If these will but be true to their own traditions and will follow their own line where it will lead them, there will be books worth reading and there will be no further need of half-instructed interpreters—like me." Indian novelists have demonstrated that they are good enough interpreters of India at different levels of awareness. To be an interpreter of India, however, is not to be a tourist guide to the curious foreigner. Progress in terms of volume and depth has placed Indo-Anglian fiction on its own. Thanks to the imaginative daring of novelists like Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao, who have in their own ways tried "liberties" with the English language, one is now able to talk in terms of an Indian idiom, with a distinctive and unmistakable Indian flavour, as a natural and organic part of the evolving English idiom.

The struggle for independence, and the pangs of partition, the changing Indian society and its basic problems and flaws—these have been the staple of Indo-Anglian novelists. However, the theme of East-West encounter and transcultural exploration continues to interest some of them. All these writers—Raja Rao, Kamala Markandaya, R. Prawer Jhabvala, Balachandra Rajan and Arun Joshi, among others—have had the opportunity of a first-hand foreign experience and in some of their novels they project this double perception in terms of creative experience. They introduce foreigners as characters in such novels for convincingly dramatising the transcultural exploration of these writers. R. Prawer Jhabvala has a unique position of advantage. Although she has made India her adopted country, she

can still, being a Pole brought up in Germany and educated in England retain her attitude of detachment. The theme of alien consciousness is basic in much of her work and its nuances brought out in her short-stories and novels.

In her novel, *Esmond in India*, Jhabvala presents this theme in a sharp way. Esmond's life with Gulab is miserable. He feels in the end that he has made a mess of life. He reflects:

> And always, encompassing everything and holding it in its vast howl, the Indian sky—an unchanging, unending expanse of white-blue glare, the epitome of meaningless, monotony which dwarfed all human life into insignificance. There was no romance about life in India. Esmond knew: only for tourists, he bitterly thought, who clapped their hands delighted over what was, he knew, only shabbiness and poverty repeated to a point where the spirit yawned at the boredom and futility of it all. How he longed for England, where there were solid grey people, and the sky was kept within decent proportions.

He agrees with Betsy that they are not meant to settle in India and that they should pack up and go. He looks forward to his return home. Even the company and assured companionship of Sakuntala cannot alter his stand.

The later novel, *A Backward Place* juxtaposes different points of view. Etta has nothing but scorn for India but like Bridget in the short-story sponges on rich Indians to lead a care-free life. She realises in the end that she has made mistakes and when she lands herself in a mess of psychological breakdown she is helped out by the Hockstadts, who play the good Samaritans to all. Judy is devoted to her Indian household - husband, children and even Bhuaji. Clarissa loses herself in the cause of the theatre. Though she too leads an aimless, kite-like life, she feels committed to stay in India and exert herself in some cause. The Hockstadts come to India with a knowledge of the country, its climate and culture, and so they have no jolts. Mrs Hockstadts seems to strike the right note when she says:

> "India teaches us this one great lesson: only love, all-embracing love, must fill the heart."

But this too may be the studied attitude of an enlightened tourist whose short stay softens the blow of the hardships of the situation.

A whole spectrum of attitudes to East-West encounter thus brightens up in Jhabvala's stories and the two novels: protest

uneasy co-existence, reluctant reconciliation and acceptance. The predominant note is one of protest. This is what one finds in her more recent work also, *An Experience of India*, a collection of stories, and *A New Dominion* and *Heat and Dust*.

In her novel, *Possession*, Kamala Markandaya, another woman novelist, brings together Caroline Bell, "rich divorced, wellborn," and Valmiki, an illiterate peasant boy, and builds up a whole structure of political, artistic and spiritual symbolism. Valmiki agrees to go away with Caroline with his Swamy's permission. His genuis as an artist finds expression in England and he achieves fame and social importance. He grows into a handsome young man, capable of speaking in English also, thanks to Caroline's training. Her possessiveness now acquires a sensual purpose. Valmiki himself gets involved with a refugee girl, Ellie, whose suffering deeply disturbs him. His sympathy soon becomes possessive passion and Ellie, pregnant, goes away to "think about" herself. Later she is reported to have ended her life. Ahnabale, who is of Valmiki's own age and admires his art, is introduced to him by Caroline herself, who successfully separates them in a scene of consummate, yet cold, perfidy. Valmiki frees himself from the strangle-hold of Caroline and returns to India, to his Swamy.

Kamala Markandaya's political-cultural implication is made amply clear in the following:

"Divide and rule. It was a formidable inherited skill."

Caroline says, in a conversation with Anasuya:

"I shall never really understand you," I said, and she nodded at once, looking at me with faint amusement.

"No, it's the classic ailment, isn't it?"

"What is?"

"That England and India never did understand one another."

The scene of the cocktail party in London which Caroline arranges to introduce Valmiki to artists is also symbolically significant. Valmiki appears with the dressed-up monkey. He is no better than a monkey, an exhibition piece to her. In fact, he is more sincerely attached to the monkey than she ever is to him. Valmiki's words: "None of these things. Only one, that you wanted to own me, and it is not an uncommon iniquity" sum up the crux of the drama.

There is an unmistakable contrast between the Swamy's interest in Valmiki and his art and that of Caroline. In fact, even when Valmiki was in England, it was the Swamy that inspired him, though it was a deceit practised by Caroline. But, then, why did the Swamy permit

Valmiki to go away with Caroline? This was because he desired that Valmiki should go through life's variegated bitter-sweet experience and return to him chastened through suffering and also because he knew and believed that only the lessons of experience were learnt well in life. Anyway, Valmiki did justify the Swamy's confidence in him. His art, which started as an offering to the Divine, is rededicated to the service of God. The wheel has come full circle.

The much-discussed *magnum opus* of Raja Rao, *The Serpent and the Rope*, is, among other things, about the marriage between an Indian who inherits Vedanta in his very blood and a Western lady who careers from Christianity to Buddhism out of despair and a strange fascination. Their marriage fails because firstly, Madeleine is Ramaswamy's senior in age; secondly, they represent West and East which can never meet; and thirdly, they stand for Buddhism and Advaita which cannot go together.

At the time of their marriage Madeleine has an inauspicious premonition and says: "I have a fear, a deep fear somewhere here, I have a fear I will kill you, that something in me will kill you, and I shall be a widow. Oh ! beloved, do not marry me. Let us part. There is still time." She lets down Rama at three levels. There is first the culture which includes religion The oriental and occidental cultures are opposed to each other. She does not participate in his superstitions and she does not like Sanskrit. For Rama Sanskrit is the very key to self-possession. When Rama's father dies, she does not accompany him to India. He is bitter about this: "I almost felt if she came father could not die, he would not die. How, when the first daughter-in-law came home, could the father die?" Although in the beginning Rama says that if you wed a woman you must wed her God, he later says that the God of Woman must be the God for her man. Rama affirms finally that they cannot go on together:

> For Madeleine there is an area which is not me that she
> fills with Christian longings, but she will not admit it.....
> Catholicism is in her blood when she talks of Buddhism
> I feel the word Dukkha almost with the entrails dropping
> into my hand, whereas for her it is mere sorrow. Dukkha
> is the very tragedy of creation, the sorrow of the sorrow
> that sorrow is.

This emphasises the need for a common religion between man and wife and for a common language through which that religion is experienced.

Raja Rao further says that Madeleine broke the female principle by embracing Buddhism. That is why Madeleine was chaste and remained chaste even to her husband in the end. By thinking of the body

as the compound made of eighteen aggregates as the Buddhist monk Nagarjuna described it, she denied her own womanhood, for woman belongs to the earth and the earth is for the woman.

On the other hand, Savitri discovers the meaning of life through Rama's association because she surrenders her all to him. She is of his religion and culture. That is why they marry, although symbolically, and the toe-rings given by Little Mother fit her.

The Serpent and the Rope bodies forth Rama's multiple vision of France, England and India. Having seen and experienced enough of world and human life at the physical, intellectual and spiritual levels, Rama returns to India to spend his life in Travancore for becoming an *antarmukha* to achieve the quest and conquest of Truth.

Balachandra Rajan's *Too Long in the West* also suggests that an Indian had better preserve his own identity, as is indicated by Nalini's final choice. A recent novel, Arun Joshi's *The Foreigner*, unfolds the fascinating drama of Sindi Oberoi's quest for the meaning of existence. Oberoi is an Indian orphan from Kenya. Rootless and aimless, he goes to London and later to Boston. He finds that he is a foreigner wherever he is. He is indrawn and, like Raja Rao's Ramaswamy, has the habit of looking at things with detachment. His friends feel that he is too distant and philosophical to be involved with them. He realises to his grief what havoc his mood of renunciation and non-involvement caused to two lives in the course of his American sojourn. He eventually comes to India to fill the gap in his life. Even here the first feeling is not happy, the situation seems to be the same. His attitude to life is summed up thus:

> "But you don't seem to be lost."
> "I am, and I am not. I am lost in the usual sense of the word. And yet" ....., I hesitated. I had never talked to anyone like this.
> "Good things and bad things appear to be the same in the long run of existence."

It is this detachment, or incapacity for involvement as June took it, that separated them. After the separation Sindi realises the extent of his loss and the dent it made in his being. They try to get over the shock, she by lavishing her affection on Babu and he by throwing himself into his work. They come together unexpectedly and June's delay in Sindi's room drives Babu into a fit and he speeds away in his car to his death. Like Valmiki in 'possession' coming back to the Swamy for his regeneration, Sindi comes to India and in course of time realises what

it is to decide and act with involvement, when he agrees to manage the near ruined company of Mr. Khemka's daughter and Babu's sister. Life looks bright once again.

In *Thillai Govindan* Govindan flirts with Westernisation but returns to the fold of Hindu faith before it is too late. Most of the foreigners of Jhabvala feel that the climate of India is too strong for them. From A Madhaviah to Kamala Markandaya the point of view seems to be curiously consistent: East is East and West is West. Raja Rao's Ramaswamy, Kamala Markandaya's Valmiki, Rajan's Nalini and Arun Joshi's Sindi return to India after their adventures abroad to round off their lives, as it were. The Africans believe, as one learns from some of their novels, that a person must return some day to the place where his umbilical cord is. Perhaps it is true of all Indians. Whether by instinct or by intuition, one is gathered into the fold of one's own Dharma. For, has not the Gita said: *Swadharme nidhanam sreyah.* (To die for one's own Dharma is good)

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Myths in R.S. Thomas's Poetry

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Myths have often been used by writers for presenting their personal vision of reality when it has not been possible for them to express through the expository language of rational thought the complex, mysterious and sometimes paradoxical nature of their vision. Blake did so when he felt that he "must create a system or be enslaved by another man's"[1] and therefore invented a mythology of his own by the fusion of hereditary myths with his own intuitions, while Yeats did almost a similar thing when he proceeded to expound his own, systematic mythology in *A Vision*.

The framework of a logical narrative or poem may not accommodate the elements that have a paradoxical character, while the complex structure of a myth, in which "all the rules of normal action, normal reasoning and normal relationships may be suspended or distorted",[2] may come to terms with even contradictory qualities like beauty and ugliness, kindness and cruelty, strength and weakness, pleasure and pain, good and evil, life and death, and hope and despair simultaneously. Eliot had certainly realized this power of myth to deal with the disparate and incoherent when recommending "the mythical method" to the modern writer He described myth as

> a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history,[3]

The strange and mysterious appeal of a myth, even when its content is not rationally understood, has been variously attributed to its origin in the unconscious of its creator. The discoveries of the psychologists and anthropologists of our century have revealed the connection of myth not only with the unconscious instincts, wishes and fears under the hidden layers of the human mind, but, through a Jungian collective unconscious, to an archetypal, primal state of human civilization too. Myth has been

described by writers as "a message from ourselves to ourselves, a secret language which enables us to treat inner as if outer event," [4] and a myth-maker has been called a shaman "speaking out of his unconscious a primordial truth," [5] Using Lawrence's terms it has been said that a myth gives us a deeper "blood knowledge" or "bone knowledge" [6] while Philip Wheelright claims that the truth that a myth presents is profounder and more immediate than the empirical or experimental truths of the scientists.[7] That Thomas himself subscribes to similar ideas about the power of myth is illustrated by the way he connects it with the Coleridgean imagination and says in "Abercuawg":

> ... it is not necessarily facts which decide the course of a man's life, but words. And one example of this strange power words have is myth—man's capacity to create figures and symbols which convey the truth to him in a more direct manner than could plain, colourless facts. What name shall we give this faculty? For many it is the imagination ... In order to understand its true meaning one must be acquainted with the work of Coleridge, [8]

As we read the long discussions of various artists, psychologists and and anthropologists about the nature of myth we feel that the primordial mystery that a myth presents is revealed by a writer unconsciously. Even the primitive myth, which looks like an explanation for natural phenomena actually emerged in a state when man saw the natural events as the projection of a drama in his psyche.[9] Blake seems to illustrate this state of the creator of a myth:

> 'What,' it will be question'd, 'when the Sun rises, do you not see a round disc of fire somewhat like a Guinea ?' O no, no, I see an Innumerable company of the Heavenly host crying 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty.' I question not my Corporeal or Vegetative Eye any more than I would question a Window concerning a Sight. I look thro' it & not with it; [10]

So a myth, which is not something that can be explained in a rational way, requires, perhaps more than any other form of artistic creation, that "negative capability" in which a writer remains 'in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts without any irritable reaching after fact and reason'.[11]

A new unifying myth or mythology, as the German Romantic writers F W J Schelling and Friedrich Schelegel suggested, [12] or even as Eliot seemed to suggest in "Ulysses, Order and Myth," could perhaps synthesize the insights of the myths of the Western past with the new discoveries of philosophy and physical sciences; but this would depend on the writer's ability to invest today's world with his personal, psychic vision. The

modern experience cannot be dovetailed in to the mythical experience of the past without a high degree of unconscious, imaginative pressure. The 'mana,' the "preternatural." the magic force or potency that makes a myth convey to its reader the sense of the 'extraordinarily beautiful, terrible, dangerous, awful, wonderful, uncanny or marvellous' cannot be infused into a myth except through a deep and unconscious involvement in it of its creator's imagination.

Our reading of the latter poem of R. S. Thomas, however, compels us to admit that a number of them appear to be very much like the products of conscious invention. "Once" (*H'm*, p. 1) the very first poem of this kind in the later phase of his writing, illustrates the way this poet has written most of his later myths. The persona in the poem is obviously a fusion of the modern man and the Biblical Adam. The poet is trying to re-write the Genesis story in the light of our scientific knowledge about the evolution of life on earth. At the beginning of the poem the earth is still hot and there is no sign of life on it. At God's volition this Adam appears in some supraterrestrial form, though still controlled by God's fearful command:

God looked at space and I appeared,
Rubbing my eyes at what I saw.
The earth smoked, no birds sang;
There were no footprints on the beaches
Of the hot sea, no creatures in it.
God spoke. I hid myself in the side
Of the mountain.[14]

There is paragraphing in the poem after these lines, which is obviously indicative of a time gap as the next lines describe a later phase of the evolution of life on earth. The planet has now cooled, and weeds, flowers and trees can be seen on it. 'The fire sermon" of God, hinted in the opening lines, is now only dimly remembered:

As though born again
I stepped out into the cool dew,
Trying to remember the fire sermon,
Astonished at the mingled chorus
Of woeds and flowers. In the brown bark
Of the trees I saw the many faces
Of life, forms hungry for birth,
Mouthing at me.

In the last few lines of this poem the persona is joined by the counterpart of Eve and they both march forwards toward the Machine:

I took your hand,
Remembering you, and together,
Confederates of the natural day,
We went forth to meet the Machine.

Those who are familiar with R. S. Thomas's other writings know that for him the Machine stands for a form of evil and for the loss of all that is spiritual. In "The Critical Forum" tape, for example, we find him saying:

> And then ..there is the problem of the Machine and the mind which invents it. Where is love's part in the napalm bomb or the submachine gun? And having once invented it, does the mind remain in control, or according to its own dialectic does machine turn into a kind of contemporary Frankenstein?[15]

It is natural, therefore, that the poet fuses the idea of original sin and the loss of Paradise with the idea of man's march towards the Machine.

The idea of the Machine turning into a modern Frankenstein finds its expression in Thomas's other myths also. In "Other" (*H'm*, p.36), for example, when God plans the destruction of the long peace of the earth, which is his own creation, his desire instantly takes the form of the Machine:

The machine appeared
In the distance, singing to itself
Of money.

The song of money that the machine sings (obviously an allusion to the pleasures that a materialist culture offers) is like a web which sucks the villages empty, the way a spider sucks the flies (the lines clearly have the thought of the depopulation of the Welsh hill country):

Its song was the web
They were caught in, men and women
Together. The villages were as flies
To be sucked empty.

And then the old dilemma that "either God can prevent evil and he will not; or he wishes to prevent it and he cannot,[16] presents itself to the poet, and he imagines a God who has perhaps grown powerless before this mighty embodiment of evil:

God secreted
"A tear. Enough, enough,

He commanded, but the machine
Looked at him and went on singing.

A number of these later myths express R. S. Thomas's familiar ideas under the cover of an invented story, which sometimes just serves the function of a metaphor. In some of his earlier poems the same ideas were expressed more directly. Thus if we compare "Enigma" (AL., p.31) with "The Reception" (LS. p 20) we find that in the former poem the poet is writing about the blindness of the peasants for the beauty of nature while in the latter poem he is inventing a myth about God to convey the same idea. In "The Reception" the dull brown of the land has got so deep into the minds of these peasants that they cannot recognize God, in whatever beautiful colour—bright green of the tree leaves or the feather-white of the winter-snow—he presents himself before them:

The brown
got into their minds
so that they could not see
God . ...
... He arrayed himself
in bright green, but the winds of the place
burned him; he was a ghost
unnoticed, ...
.....White, he thought;
I will visit this people
as a white bird, my feathers
their winter. They perceived
him then; fell upon him
in silence, seeking for the brown soil
he deprived them of.
trampling him into it.

The central theme of "The Island" (*H m*, p.20), similarly, is the "virtue's/Defeat", the untimely death of the young and the blind hand of fate—a theme to be found without any mythical trappings in "Petition" (*H m*, p. 2) also. Poems like "Ah" (*P*, p.45) "They" (*NBF*, p 39) and "On the Farm" (*BT*, p.45) in which the poor suffer sickness and death in return for their meekness, faith, patience and hard labour, can also be regarded as the precursors of the myth in "The Island."

And God said, I will build a church here
And cause these people to worship me.

And afflict them with poverty and sickness
In return for centuries of hard work
And patience . . .
. . . I will
. . . watch the bitterness in their eyes
Grow, and their lips suppurate with
Their prayers, And then women shall bring forth
On my altars, and I will choose the best
Of them to be thrown back into the sea.

As we read about the dwindling number of his church-goers in some of his interviews[18] and poems (for example "The Chapel," *LS*, p.19 and "Llananno," *LS*, p. 62) and learn about the perdicament of the clergy as people grow more and more callous and indifferent to spiritual and religious matters through poems like "Service" (*P*, p.36), "The Priest" (*NBF*, p. 29) and "The Calling" (*LS*, p.50), we can immediately understand the autobiographical significance of the following lines in the myth in "The Island"

And its walls shall be hard as
Their hearts, and the windows let in the light
Grudgingly, as their minds do, and the priest's
words be drowned
By the wind's caterwauling.

Thus it appears that whereas the primitive mind explained some of the natural phenomena and some mysteries of nature believingly and unconsciously through a myth, R. S. Thomas is explaining in his myths these things consciously and unbelievingly. The rational mind of our time, after all, cannot be expected to believe the simple mythical explanations such as Thomas provides in "The Woman" (*F*, p. 14) for the attraction that a woman's body holds for man or for the mysteries of her menstrual cycle. It, similarly, cannot be expected to believe the story he invents in "Ann Griffith" (*LS*, p. 29), as he re-writes the New Testament myth about Jesus's miracle at Cana (*John*, Chapter 2), to explain the poetic talent of an eighteenth century mid-Wales farmer's near-illiterate daughter.

The underlying ideas in a poem such as "Rough" (*LS*, p.36) can also be explained if we take its opening lines as alluding to the way nature preserves a balance of species in the animal kingdom on earth :

God looked at the eagle that looked at
the wolf that watched the jack-rabbit
cropping the grass, green and curling
as God's beard. He stepped back;
it was perfect, a self-regulating machine
of blood and faeces.

The next few lines of the poem obviously allude to the creation of man and to his indiscriminate behaviour on earth resulting in a condition threatening the extinction of some species:

One thing was missing:
he skimmed off a faint reflection of himself
in sea-water; breathed air into it,
and set the red corpuscles whirling. It was not long
before the creature had the eagle, the wolf and
the jack-rabbit squealing for mercy— Only the grass
resisted.

The grass resisting this extinction also does not appear to be a novel idea to the readers who are familiar with some of Thomas's early poems in which grass symbolizes the vigorous and enduring forces of nature. In "To the Farmer" (*T*, p. 10), for example, grass blades have been described as "the old triumph / Of nature over the brief violence / Of man." God's sowing of germs in the flesh of "the creature" in the next lines can again be taken as an allusion to the introduction of the knowledge of science and technology which reads to the obscene world of modelling, the pride of the affluent and the stinking hypocrisy—the crocodile tears—of our times:

God took a handful of small germs,
sowing them in the smooth flesh. It was curious,
the harvest: the limbs modelled an obscene
question, the head swelled, out of the eyes came
tears of pus.

What could be the relationship of Jesus and the Christian virtues to such fierce representation of a God who alone could be responsible for such developments of our age? In the vast body of this God, whose "loud uncontrollable laughter" could be heard in thunder, Jesus, with his associations of meekness, sacrifice and tolerance, could be only like one stitch (which is "Cross"-shaped) left after a minor surgery—only a sign of debility and deformity.

The following introductory remark of the poet about the poem "The Gap" (*F*, p.7) in "The Critical Forum" tape, similarly, provides us with a hint about the idea that underlies this poem:

If one thinks of Him as a Being, how does He
comprehend all languages under the sun?
Our age is obsessed with the effect of
speech. There is an old belief that to
name was to gain power over what was
named. What is the true name of God,
the word by which He is bound, the

thing-in-itself behind the appearances?
It was a question like this that gave
rise to the following poem called "The Gap."

The myth in this poem is a re-writing of the Genesis story about the tower of Babel,[19] the building of which symbolized man's attempt to attain the divine. In Thomas's version of this myth God is worried over man's growing "tower of speech":

Word by word
the tower of speech grew.
He looked at it from the air
he reclined on. One word more and
it would be on a level
with him; vocabulary
would have triumphed.

The only one word missing is the real name of God; and as God had foiled the human attempt to reach heaven by creating a confusion of languages in the earlier myth, so in this case he confuses men by putting "a sign" the blank space on the page in the dictionary they use. This sign becomes the enigma that torments the grammarian, the mystery that the natural scientist fails to unravel, the equation the mathematician is unable to solve and the narrow wall that divides us from the Divinity. The new myth acquires a subtle allusiveness for the reader as he thinks about the sign of the cross such as an illiterate person makes on a document when he cannot write his name, and about the association of this cross with the images of healing by letting of blood, crucifixion and atonement.

Thomas also tries to present examples of the instinctual irrationality of some of the human behaviour in his mythical characters in poems like "Echoes" (*H'm*, p.4) and "Other" (*H'm*, p.36). In "Echoes" the earth is held in almost a spouse-like relation with God. God beats and torments her with the sadistic cruelty of a paternalistic husband while the earth suffers it in dumb submission:

He struck it
Those great blows it resounds
With still. It glowered at
Him, but remained dumb,
Turning on its slow axis
Of pain, reflecting the year
In its seasons. Nature bandaged
Its wounds. Healing in
The smooth sun, it became
Fair.[20]

The idea of the instinctual sexual jealousy of a father towards an independent-growing son is similarly used in "Other." God is filled with envy

towards his own creation in it, and plans to destroy its peace:

He loved and
Hated it with a parent's
Conceit, admiring his own
Work, resenting its
Independence. There were trysts
In the greenwood at which
He was not welcome. Youths and girls,
Fondling the pages of
A strange book, awakened
His envy.[21]

However, the way these myths can be explained as concepts makes their genuineness as myths questionable, because as Richard Chase says "once disinherited from their literary matrix concepts are not, properly speaking, myths."[22] As argued at the beginning of this chapter, myth is not a matter of conscious invention but a record of the writer's consciousness of an "all-encompassing Mystery."[23] What characterizes a genuine myth is its inscrutability and opacity. The rational mind cannot fully comprehend and pin down the character of the great whale in Melville's *Moby Dick*, and the qualities of Blake's tiger cannot be completely resolved in our ordinary terms of good and evil.

Before we pass any judgement about Thomas's myth-making capacity, however, we should also take into consideration his earlier work. It is true that the immediate suggestion of writing myths towards the end of the sixties, at a time when the poetic activity was exhibiting signs of exhaustion,[24] and when he was searching for fresh poetic avenues, came from Ted Hughes. Thomas does not deny the possibility of his having been touched off by a poem or two of *Crow*[25] and has no hesitation in admitting any influence of this kind. "There is nothing wrong with influence," he says in an interview, "The whole history of life is the history of influence."[26] But he defends himself very strongly against any suggestion of plagiarizing and against the exaggerated statements of some critics about his loss of individual identity;[27] and we must agree with him when we read the unfounded remarks such as the following in the light of R. S. Thomas's achievement as a poet in his later works:

In mature work Thomas suddenly succumbed to
the influence of a younger poet, Ted Hughes,
rather as George Crabbe, late in life, succumbed
to the influence of Wordsworth[28]

If we closely survey Thomas' works we can discover an early intimation of the activity such as we find in "Once" — first published in 1969 — in

a poem like "Parent" [29] which was published in *BT* in 1963, a long time before the publication of *Crow*. This poem can be regarded as R.S. Thomas's version of W. B. Yeats's poem based on "Leda and the Swan" myth. It deserves a comparison with "Once" all the more because in this poem also Thomas is making use of his scientific knowledge about primitive man very much in the way he used his knowledge about the evolution of life on earth in "Once":

> Her haired breast heaving against his,
> Her voice fierce;
> Her yellow teeth ba ed for the love bite.
> The seven against Thebes, the many
> Against Troy, the whole earth
> A confusion of persons,[30]

The mythical imagination of this poet, however, has been at work since the beginning of his career in a far more complex way than what a casual reader would discern. His early writing exhibited a stronger affinity with the primordial forces of nature. An announcement of *SF* (1946) proclaimed it as

> a collection of verse which seeks to re-affirm man's affinity with the age-old realities of stone, field and trees .... Their imagery is more akin to that of those early Welsh writers, whose clarity of vision was born out of an almost mystical attachment to their environment. [31]

Peter Abbs's remarks about the revival of the mythopoeic imagination in R.S. Thomas's later poetry,[32] therefore, can be applied with far greater justification to his early poetry. In "Wales" (*AL*, p.8) he can still identify himself with the mythical past of Wales, can hear "the ousel of Cilgwri" and see "Gwernabury's eagle,"[33] and can project these mythical characters into the Wales of his own time. In "The Qualities of Christmas"[34] he uses a Christian myth in his search for order that could unify the country and the town. In "Song" (*SF*, p.23), "Memories" (*AL*, p.38) and "The Mistress" (*SF*, p.21) Thomas explored the archetypal relations between man and his environment. "Pieta" (*P*, p.14) evokes deep reverberations in reader's minds because of its underlying mythical structure and the appeal of "The Slave" (*SYT*, p.104) can be partly attributed to the myth about Circe, Odysseus and his companions which this poem carefully conceals. The following remark by a critic indicates that the secret of the figure of Prytherch's immediately taking hold of readers' imagination lay perhaps in its somewhat archetypal quality :

> The peasant is indeed archetypal; he is a "prototype," and Thomas associates him with the seasons, the weather, growing things, history, and with a timelessness which not even death can destroy. [35]

For the presentation of its mystery myth requires a plenitude of expression which only a highly allusive and evocative language can achieve. A limpid, rational and unambiguous language would fail in this purpose whereas an indirect, imaginative, euphonious and rhythmical language could succeed. Philip Wheelwright observes in one of his essays [36] that the primitive language of myth succeeds in expressing the full, manifold and paradoxical character of the primordial "mystery" through a manifoldly allusive, rhythmical and evocative language.

We know that the language of Thomas's early poetry had that plenitude of expression which could enable it to bear the mythical content of his poems; but towards the end of the sixties his language was moving in a diection opposite to the direction needed for presenting a myth. Peter Abbs observed in his essay quoted above that the weakness of *H'm* lay in the weakness of its language. "In *H'm*," he observes, "the language is not generally strong enough to carry its bold cargoes." [37] R. S. Thomas's failure in presenting powerful and complex myths in his later works can be attributed, therefore, partly also to the poet's use of simple, clear and unornamental language for the expression of something which was, by its very nature, dark, mysterious and complex.

Chittorgarh

NOTES

1 Quoted by M. H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1957), p.103.

2 G. S. Kirk, *Myth: Its Meaning and Functions in Ancient and Other Cultures* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p.268.

3 T. S. Eliot, "Ulysses, Order and Myth," *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), p.177.

4 Erich Fromm, quoted by Wilbur Scott in *Five Approaches of Literary Criticisms* (New York: Collier Books, 1962), p.249.

5 C. Hugh Holman, quoted by Wilbur Scott in *Five Approaches of Literary Criticism*, p. 249.

6 See William J. Handy and Max Westbrook, eds. *Twentieth Century Criticism: The Major Statements* (New Delhi: Light & Life Publishers, 1974), P. 201.

7 Philip Wheelwright, "Poetry, Myth and Reality" *Twentieth Century Criticism*, p. 254-55.

8 "Abercuawg." *R. S. Thomas : Selected Prose*, ed. Sandra Anstey, p. 160.

9 See C. G. Jung, "Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious," *Twentieth Century Criticism*, p. 207.

10 *The Oxford Anthology of English Literature*, Vol. II (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 121.

11 *Ibid.*, p 768.

12 Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, p. 102.

13 Richard Chase, "Notes on the Study of Myth," *Twentieth Century Criticism*, p. 247.

14 "Once," *H'm*, p. 1.

15 "The Critical Forum," Norwich Tapes Ltd., 1978.

16 Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy* (London: Earnest Benn, 1947), p. 204.

17 "Petition," *H'm*, p. 2.

18 Timothy Wilson, "R. S. Thomas," *The Guardian*, 15 Sept., 1972, p. 8. Reproduced in *Critical Writings on R. S. Thomas*, ed. Sandra Anstey, p 70.

19 *Genesis*, Chapter 11, 1--9.

20 "Echoes," *H'm*, p. 4.

21 "Other," *H'm*, p. 36

22 Richard Chase, "Notes on the Study of Myth," *Twentieth Century Criticism*, pp. 250—51.

23 Philip Wheelwright, "Poetry, Myth and Reality," *Twentieth Century Criticism*, p. 257.

24 Peter Abbs, "The Revival of the Mythopoeic Imagination—A Study of R. S. Thomas and Ted Hughes." Reproduced in *Critical Writings on R. S. Thomas*, p. 104.

25 Ted Hughes, *Crow* (London : Faber, 1970).

26 "R. S. Thomas talks to J. B. Lethebridge," *The Anglo-Welsh Review*, No. 74 (1983), p. 54.

27 *Idid.*, p. 54.

28 Introduction to *British Poetry Since 1970 : A Critical Survey*, ed. Peter Jones and Michael Schmidt.

29 *The Bread of Truth*, p 28.

30 "Parent," *The Bread of Truth*, p. 28.

31 Quoted by R. G. Thomas in his essay "R S. Thomas," *Andrew Young and R. S. Thomas* (London : Logmans, 1964), p. 27.

32 *Critical Writings on R. S. Thomas*, pp. 107—115.

33 Animal characters in *The Mabinogion*, trans. Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones (London : Everyman, 1949).

34 *R. S. Thomas : Selected Prose*, pp. 57—59.

35 James F. Knapp, "The Poetry of R. S. Thomas," *Twentieth Century Literature*, 17 (1971), p. 7.

36 "Poetry, Myth and Reality," *Twentieth Century Criticism*, p. 257.

37 *Critical Writings on R. S. Thomas*, p. 113.

Sri Aurobindo's "The Tiger And The Deer": An Analysis

M. TARINAYYA

Sri Aurobindo is modern India's philosophical poet par excellence—philosophical not in the abstract academic sense but as a poet who gave us a philosophical interpretation of life, a world-perception seen through, to use his own words, "Integral yoga" which he himself endeavoured to evolve. His poetry is often called "over-soul" poetry, meaning thereby "celestial poetry", written "from above" as Sethna puts it. But his stupendous poetic creation is not limited to celestial poetry alone. He has composed a number of lyrics and "The Tiger and the Deer" is perhaps one of the best examples of this genre.

The spiritual "celestial" element in the poem has been dealt with. But, in the lyrical genre, the dialectical relationship between the poet's subjective experience of reality, and the essence of objective reality which gave rise to this experience has not been explored. This aspect is important for though Sri Aurobindo lived a seemingly isolated life in Pondicherry "no horizon walled his gaze" and one recalls how sharply he reacted to Hitler in that poem: "The Dwarf Napoleon"

K. D. Sethna in an article. contributed to *Critical Essays in English Literature* (editor, Sethuraman, V. S.) says that Sri Aurobindo's poem is "the most memorable outside Blake." But the impact each of these poems makes on the sensitive reader is different: while Blake's poem throbs with emotional urgency, urgency which is overwhelming, Sri Aurobindo's communicates the perfect serenity of philosophical certitude. While Blake uses the strongly accentual charactor of the English language to recreate his emotional pressure, Sri Aurobindo uses, "quantitative mater" in which the metrical pattern is determind by the "combination of long and short syllables." While Blake's tiger is only *seemingly* a wild beast - it is in fact "Christ the Tiger" (to use Eliot's phrase) come "burning bright" into the spiritually and morally anarchic "forests of the night", Sri Aurobindo's is literally a wild beast, While Blake, though, as Saurat tells us, was aware of Indian thought, the Lord taking the form of wild beasts, the boar and the lion, whenever there was tyranny and decline of *dharma*, operated

within the Christian tradition. Sri Aurobindo strives for a reconciliation of good and evil within the Indian philosophical system.

"The Tiger and the Deer" is refreshingly free from abstract philosophical terms such as "remote unknown", "hazy unknown", "Shadow of Nature", "Embrace of Life", "Formless Infinity", one often comes across in the longer poems. The poem begins with concrete action "the tiger" "crouching", "Slouching" and "creeping". The adjective "brilliant"- something which causes admiration (one misses the impact of Blake's "burning bright") is followed by the verbs "crouching", "slouching,' and 'crept, and their juxtaposition creates a discord, for "crouching" suggests murderous intent and "slouching" has associations of something unworthy while being related to "crouching" both semantically and phonologically and "creep" has associations of something unpleasant, The juxtaposition thus captures the dual character of the tiger: something splendid which evokes admiration but which has murderous intent. The second line makes the dual character more explicit: "Gloaming eyes" 'mighty chest', 'soft soundless paws" but all these "of grandeur and murder", great beauty and great destructive power, the curious combination of incompatible and mutually hostile qualities cohering in nature in "the green heart of the forest". The question mark at the end marks us doubt whether this strange combination could be a reality. Such is the destructive power of the beast that even the wind, one of the four elements of nature, "slipped through the leaves" lest it should perturb the "pitiless splendour" (one recalls Blake's marvellous phrase' fearful symmetry" and W.B. Yeat's "terrible beauty"). "Crouched and crept" in line 4 capture vividly the very movement of the tiger while "pitiless splendour" strikes us as something unusual as "language" and invites closer attention. If "splendour" is "pitiless" what does it avail? One recalls the Biblical saying: "Salt which has lost his savour". The "pitiless splendour", the "strange cruel beauty" soon becomes death itself in the "green heart of the forest" and leaps craftily "noiseless and fatal" and tears to shreds the mild, meek "harmless beauty" at a moment when it was "unsuspecting" and drinking water from the "great pool in the forests, coolness and shade".

Sri Aurobindo communicates the incomprehensible mystery of the strange diversity of nature: the "green heart of the forest" with its "great pool", its "coolness and shade", harbouring both "pitiless splendour" and "harmless beauty". And biological nature, unhumanised, needs no reason to destory "harmless beauty". It uses its crafty resources nature has endowed it with to deal its fatal blow. What happens in the animal world can happen in human societies too if man's biological nature is not humanized. One of the finest touches in the poem is the dying deer thinking of its mate from whom it had been so suddenly and cruelly dis-

membered. Not only has the tiger killed one harmless innocent life, it has made another life inseparable from it, helpless and miserable. One can only imagine the bewilderment, agony and distress of the mate. (One recalls the agony of the bird in Whitman's "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" — an unparalleled poetic enactment of its agony and distress). Once again the social implications are obvious. Wherever biological nature predominates in human societies the innocent suffer and are made utterly miserable and helpless. But, hopes Sri Aurobindo, "a day may yet come when the tiger crouches and leaps no more in the dangerous heart of the forest" and the tiger and deer drink from the coolness of the great pools. It is significant that Sri Aurobindo uses the words "may come" and *not* "will come". But most commentators have taken 'may come' as equivalent to "will come" which is perhaps unwarranted. Sri Aurobindo's words remind us of Isaiah: 'The wolf shall dwell with the lamb and the leopard shall lie down with the kid'. It is surprising how Sri Aurobindo and Isaiah separated by time and tradition and place, have more or less the same visions of a millennium. The certainty of Isaiah's "shall dwell" and "shall lie down" is not there in Sri Aurobindo's poem Sri Aurobindo as it were substantiates his hope with the observation from natural evolution "the mammoth shakes no more the plain of Asia". The mammoth shakes no more the plain of Asia reminds us of the doom of the mammoth and the dinasaur in the poem "The Dwarf Napoleon"—a poem in which he has shown a profound sense of his age and expressed a distinctly intense feeling against the neo-Napoleonism of Hitler and as in "The Tiger and the Deer" drawing a parallel from natural evolution. It is perhaps significant that the word "mammoth" is from the Russian "mammoth" and a large part of Russia is Asian. There is perhaps also veiled reference to imperialism making Asian countries, particularly India "bow low before the blast" of new technology and the brute military might that technology gave it.

The last two lines of the poem — different in their rhythm and in the aphoristic style of the mantra — "come as a prophecy :

The mighty perish in their might
The slain survive the slayer.

The very brute force of those who have not overcome their biological nature and their predatory instincts, be they men or animals, becomes the source of their destruction. The monster always ends by devouring its own instruments of power as the typical Indian story of Bhasmasura so profoundly illustrates. In natural history, the dinosaur and the mammoth because of their predatory nature and their consequent inability to cooperate with other living creatures, have perished and become extinct inspite of their gigantic size and enormous brute force while the defenceless mild cow and goat and even the tiny ant have survived and multiplied...

As has been said earlier, Sri Aurobindo's poem operates from a different plane—different from that of Blake's. Sri Aurobindo's poem though based on a profound observation of objective reality both in nature and in human affairs stems from a poise and a calm that comes from the serene philosophical contemplation of the contraries and mystery of the universe and resolving the mystery, the conflicts and contraries which otherwise can be shattering, and so the poem ends with the hope that ultimately goodness will triumph and evil will become extinct. "All problems of existence are" says Sri Aurobindo, "essentially problems of harmony. They arise from the perception of an unresolved discord and the instinct of undiscovered agreement or unity. To rest content with unresolved discord . . . . is impossible for the fully awakened"(*LifeDivine*, pp.2-3). This philosophical ideal, however desirable, fails to register its impact on reading the poem because it is not enacted in poetic terms. Why the Creator made the tiger and the deer will forever remain a dark mystery. And the mystery of life feeding on life—the terrible vision which Melville in *Moby Dick* and Hemingway in *Old Man and the Sea*, saw—will perhaps remain a mystery. While "unity" and "harmony" are desirable, could one look to whatever divine design there might be behind the process of natural selection and rest content that the same design will also come to prevail in the bewildering complexities of human life? It was when the anti-fascist forces of the panic-stricken world united and fought that Fascism was defeated. It was only when under the leadership of Gandhi and Nehru with the spiritual weapon of *abhaya* (fearlessness) which Gandhi gave the nation, it fought, that imperialism was wiped out. Assailed by deep doubts and torn by conflicting duties, when Arjuna with failing limbs, parched tongue and mind whirling, asks Krishna:

nihatya dhartarastran nah ka pritih syaj Janardana!
papam eva srayed asman hatvau tan atatayinah!

(What delight can we derive, O Janardhana by doing away with the sons of Dhrtarastra? Sin only will accrue to us by slaying these desperados (Swami Chidbhavananda). And Krishna asks him:

Kutas tva kasmlam idam visame samupasthutam'
andaryajustam asvargyam akirtikaram arjuna'

(Whence has this unworthy (anarya-like) heaven -- barring shameful dejection come upon you, at this juncture, O Arjuna?)

and tells him:

atha cet tvam imam dharmyani
samgramam na karisyasi
tatah svadharmani kintimca
hitva papam avapyasi

(If you don't agree to wage this righteous war, then forfeiting your own dharma, your honour, you sin)

And so Sri Aurobindo's poem, despite some brilliant poetic sparks, leaves one wih questions: When and how will the tiger "crouch and leap no more?" How and when will the mighty perish in their might? Is one to leave things in human affairs also to natural selection and whatever divine design there might be? Or is it when the process of evolution and involution are complete and the universe merges with the Creator that the tiger and "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb and the "tiger crouches and leaps no more?" What are the vital links between what we observe in nature and what we see in human life with all its bewildering complexities and conflicts? Is unity and harmony possible without the passion—human and spiritual—and the urge to action which is the very stuff of life? And without action isn't there the danger of slow merging into non-existence? The greatness of Sri Aurobindo's poem perhaps lies in the questions it raises.

It is therefore difficult to agree with E. J. Kalinnikova who in *Indian English Literature* (pp.50-55) thinks that Indian philosophy "some how *reconciles* good and evil" (emphasis added). There was of course an inner urge towards synthesis but synthesis is very different from compromise with evil.

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The Dystopian Nightmare :

Humanity as a Mob of Locusts in Anthony West's ANOTHER KIND

KUL BHUSHAN RAZDAN

Anthony West's *Another Kind* (1951) expresses certain fears regarding the future survival of man in a world dominated by cold war tensions and power politics. The first decade after the end of the Second World War projected the Soviet Union as a super-power and a source of threat to the western countries. From an ally against Hitler's Nazi Germany, it had become a potential enemy now. The prospects of a nuclear confrontation between Russia and the United States assumed menacing proportions. It was in this kind of political atmosphere that Anthony West wrote his novel.

Another Kind, as the title suggests, is a novel about another kind of people: the middle class people who have deen swindled out of their hopes and expectations by statesmen and politicians, acting as super-promisers. As in Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust*, in Anthony West's novel as well the middle class individual in the role of a commoner, a worker, finally becomes a "locust", a destroyer, who resorts to violence and mayhem out of sheer boredom and frustration. The image of the locust as a destroyer comes from the *Revelation* or the Book of Apocalypse in the *Bible*.

Another Kind is the story of Walter Jackson, an architect by profession. Jackson lives in London, during the early fifties, with his wife Margery Jackson and their two children, Jeanette and Francis. Contemporary England has virtually become a dystopia for its middle class people, who find living difficult because of rampant ill-health and poverty. Jackson's London witnesses a general breakdown of the standards of ordered life, till the "locusts", the middle class workers, resort to civil strife and violence. Satan is let loose in the form of social turmoil, strikes, civil war, and finally the advent of a destructive war and apocalypse.

Walter Jackson, while going around London, pictures the presence of evil in terms of a succession of destructive wars. A bronze statue of St. George killing the dragon becomes symbolic of the perpetual fight

against evil in Walter's stream of consciousness: "That damned drag-on. . . That time it was the Kaiser's Germany. We've just killed it as Hitler's Germany. Next we'll have to kill it as Stalin's Russia. And every time we kill it we get weaker and it gets stronger."[1] The sense of the last loosening of Satan in the contemporary world is very strong. The forces of humane order are found weakened on every front: moral, social, and political. The forces of evil grow stronger to destroy civilized ways.

Though Walter Jackson is conscious of the presence of evil around him, ironically enough he is himself a victim of evil. Amidst a mob of 'locusts', the humans in the fictional cosmos of *Another Kind* Walter too becomes a "locust" and puts himself irretrievably on a path which leads to disaster. A sudden demoniac desire to possess a beautiful prostitute, Anne Horne, makes matters worse for Walter at the personal level. Already smarting under a haunting sense of professional failure, Walter seeks salvation in leaving his family, and living with Anne Horne in the countryside. Even Margery Jackson's compromise with the situation, by sharing her husband with Anne Horne, cannot save the hapless Walter from destruction.

Tempted by an ex-second World War bomber pilot, Charles Ross, Walter falls to the lure of making easy money during a civil war. The working class of England, implicitly the "locusts", ravage their country through civil strife and Britain becomes an easy launching pad for World War III. Like the Californian locusts of Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust*, Anthony West's locusts descend upon their own country's civilization, and with vicious acrid boredom trembling on the edge of violence, tear apart England's social and political set-up. Walter gets killed, and the Republican fanatics, who win the civil war, execute his wife and daughter. Only Anne Horne, and Walter's son Francis, survive the carnage. Anne feels inspired to continue the battle with life; she is carrying Walter's child. *Another Kind* is essentially a novel about evil in the mind of man, an evil which incites human beings to annihilate themselves. But the novel also projects a destructive social vision.

Walter Jackson is a witness and medium through whom the novelist conveys a predominant point of view regarding the contemporary human situation. The "dehumanizing and spiritually bankrupt nature of modern life,"[2] of which Walter is fully aware, makes him bereft of a sense of responsibility and rectitude. He ceases to adhere to accepted norms of human behaviour. On coming into contact with Anne Horne and getting completely swept off his feet, he consigns his family to a state of misery and frustration and awakens to a sudden realization of a sense of failure in his profession as well as in his marriage. After this realization haunts him unceasingly, Walter actively becomes the "locust": it is the locust's

the middle class individual's, gnawing sense of hopelessness and despair, born out of living in a demoniac human world. Walter's behaviour exemplifies the typical perverted human relationships in demoniac world. Anne Horne is cast in the role of a witch, a siren, a harlot. If Anne Horne is the inexhaustible repository of destructive inspiration, then Walter is the alert, dissecting, interpreter of destruction. At the personal level he, too, is a human locust. It is an Anne-Walter-locusts axis of doom and destruction. Be it the "locusts", including Anne and Walter, West's symbols are grotesques, perhaps more disturbing even than Kafka's, because they more strongly resemble the real than the satirical. This almost "Swiftian loathing for the texture of life itself,"3 perhaps comes from the novelist's contention that everything is dreadful and empty, and nobody gets what he aspires to. Walter does not get this professional and domestic happiness he so eagerly desires, and looks for. Margery Jackson as well never "gets" Walter, in spite of sharing him with his mistress. Even Anne is left at the end clinging to a faint hope of renewal and resuscitation, after the "locusts" have destroyed everything. It seems that the characters in *Another Kind* are a horde of discontented individuals who can find satisfaction in an explosive climax, as is the case with Nathanael West's Californian "locusts" in *The Day of the Locust*.

The transformation of Walter from a peace-loving and conscientious architect to a human locust is pathetic: the fate of our hero is pathetic as "the catastrophe of defective intelligence".4 Pathos presents its hero "as isolated by a weakness which appeals to our sympathy because it is on our own level of experience."5 Walter, isolated by his weakness for Anne Horne, becomes the object of pathos. The study of Walter "is the study of the isolated mind, the story of how someone recognizably like ourselves is broken by a conflict between the inner and the outer worlds, between imaginary reality and the sort of reality which is established by a social consensus."6 In spite of the drugged happiness Anne gives him, "by drowning him in her beauty and annihilating him physically" (*AK*, p, 60), there lurks the shadow of evil, like an ugly worm in the heart of a beautiful flower. Secretly, in the deep recesses of his mind, Walter feels disturbed; there is something rotten inside. It is the gradual transition from the state of "grass-hopper" to that of a "locust". Perhaps this accounts for his consciousness picturing a sea waiting, when the sea knows that a person is going to get drowned. Anne is the sea, the whore, stretched out, waiting for him to take the final plunge. But the magic of her beauty lulls him into complacency, charms him into nothingness. The catalytic impact of Anne's beauty hastens Walter's transformation. He becomes a locust himself and forms a part of a human mob in which humans are ripe to get destroyed and to destroy. Man's

character gets moulded by the "demands of the world" he has built with his own hands,"[7] and Walter Jackson's world, implicitly our own world, demands that man should get committed to ruin, failures and frustration. The human locusts hasten the process of destruction through a flow of pitiless events, global wars, upheavals, and civil strifes.

As a human locust, Walter Jackson is also symbolic of a humanity whose individual member has become "a very imperfect kind of being. He is equipped with a modicum of intelligence, but also with an array of conflicting passions and desires. He can be reasonable but is often extremely stupid. He has impulses to sympathy and love, but also to cruelty and hatred. He is capable of moral action but also has inevitable capacities for sin and error."[8] Just before his tragic end, Walter spends his time feeling "as if he were already in prison waiting trial and execution, numb-minded, neither reading nor thinking" (*AK*, p. 317). Walter's "inevitable capacities for sin and error" have brought him to a state of futile existence. This is the true picture of the modernist human locust, demoniac, with an evil instinct inside him.

In a society where the forces of evil and despair have alienated man even from his own self, "The basic talent of the novelist" writes Albert Cook, "is to observe social behaviour."[9] It is this study of social behaviour which makes Anthony West show his hero "in the clutches of a force that acts through him".[10] The problem of the individual as human locust "is to escape from this alien force before he has been compelled to do something that will destroy him. The struggle is so unfair, so bewildering, that one's sympathy is with the hero, whose very thinking powers are distorted by the monster that has possessed him,"[11] Our sympathy is certainly with Walter; for he is the victim of uncontrollable forces which compel him to destroy himself. This image of the human locust symbolically conveys the feeling that there is something intrinsically weak and poor in man, something which anytime goes haywire and destroys.

The first detailed picture of contemporary British society, seething with dissatisfaction and torn by the ravages of technological advancement, is given when Anne Horne, through whose stream of consciousness the apocalyptic vision of the novel gets manifested, witnesses a crowd of union leaders, a selected band of Nathanael West's locusts, staging a demonstration against the British Prime Minister in London. Anne now feels that "the sense of doom weighed down more heavily than before" (*AK*, p. 163). She is confronted by a man from the mob of the striking leaders, the locusts.

This man, himself a locust, throws light on the nature of other locusts whom he calls "another kind". The destructive union leaders of the locusts are another kind, different from ordinary human beings who are

the victims of the locusts. In the words of this locust, the titular theme of the novel is clearly stated: "But there are people like us who know about happiness, and want it, and are miserable about not having it, and there's another kind. Perhaps they were just like us once, and not being happy soured them. . . They're different now. They've given up the idea of our sort of happiness, that you get from inside yourself by loving, and being kind. . . . All the dinginess, and the roar of the machines, and the complication of life— it's broken them down, swamped them as people. They think of themselves as small, helpless things— they've no faith in anything inside themselves. They believe they can only do things by banding together till they are strong enough to take what they want. . . And once they've enough to take what they want. . . And once they've found that sort of strength, and had a taste of what they can take, they want to take and take and take until there's nothing left. . . They will smash anything that stands in their way, and when they've smashed everything and there's nothing more for them to take, they'll start smashing people. . . "These words amply illustrate the view that *Another Kind* is an account of the destruction of civilization at the hands of these human locusts. The masses in *Another Kind* are another kind of people. They are now the "locusts" with "wild disordered minds and awful anarchic power to destroy civilization."[12] These locusts of *Another Kind*, as the Californian locusts of Nathanael West, make the London of Anthony West's novel "a cosmic metaphor for the falsity corruption, and decadence of contemporary civilization." [13] In *The Day of the Locust* Hollywood serves the same imaginative, function as London in the present novel. The mob of workers which Anne Horne witnesses in London becomes the main symbol of the human world, a hydraheaded beast, responding to only one instinct, that of violence or destruction. As a mob of human locusts, the mob is itself a symbol of a destructive urge among the masses. It is the novelist's way of expressing serious concern over the current human situation.

It is this "another kind", sprung up as it is from the ordinary people, that destroys British civilization. Not only this, Anthony West adds an international dimension to Nathanael's locusts. Another kind plays into the hands of super-powers. The rabble leaders play in the hands of the Russian "agitprop" and are equally a part of the agitprop. How does civilization breed these human locusts? Joost Meerloo remarks that civilization "shapes and distorts human drives and inhibits them as well. What we usually call aggressiveness in modern man is either connected with man's action for self-defence and his need for survival, or with a more primitive need for power, revenge, and tremendous destruction."[14] Society has tremendous potentialities for rushing into an apocalyptic stage and Anthony West is merely stating a hard fact in a visionary form. Anger,

dissatisfaction, hate, and fear go on accumulating in the mind of contemporary man, until the urge for retaliation and destruction breaks loose. It becomes dangerous when it inspires men who can band together like a swarm of locusts, and resort to violence and destruction.

Behind the general strike and the civil disturbances in Britain, there is the hand of the Russian agitprop machinery. This incites the locusts through agitation and propaganda, indicating that the Russians are out to cripple British economy, create chaos, and thereby, pave the way for a totalitarian takeover. The same picture is conveyed in Constantine Fitz-Gibbon's *When the Kissing Had To Stop*. The locusts themselves symbolize the malaise afflicting British society. One of the Americans tell Walter during the days of civil strife in Britain: "We are acutely conscious of some deep-seated social sickness which has robbed most of yourpeople of their self-confidence and their faith in any form of social organisation." (*AK*, p.273) Actually this sickness is the frustration of a personal kind. Existing from meal to meal, people have got only a load of disappointments from society, from politicians who govern and control, and from parents and guardians. The super-promises were never fulfilled, thereby hastening the incidence of the human locust.

The message conveyed is compelling and authentic: the ironic failure of the super-promises breeds individuals who ultimately become human locusts and tear apart the fabric of contemporary civilization. It becomes a dith/rambic dance of violence. The dissection of the super-promises in current human civilization is conveyed in these words: ". . . doctors tied up in the half-completed, half-abandoned, health scheme; teachers trying to work a huge educational reform that can't work . . . ; businessmen pushed out of production . . . . " (*AK*, p. 274.) A Texan among the Americans asks Walter: "Why do you Europeans all lie down and wait for death when things go wrong?" (AK, p. 274) Walter's reply is most revealing: "We haven't got anything. We gave up individualism for something called the General Good, and when we'd sold out to it, it died on us" (*AK*, pp. 274-75). The "General Good" is another donkey's carrot of a super-promise.

Rottenness of people in a sick society, conveyed by the incidence of the human locusts, also conveys a potent message. What happens to people happens to communities, what happens to communities happens to countries, and what happens to countries happens to the whole world. "The only real things are people. Take them one by one and you'll find out something worth knowing" (*AK*, pp 279). The "real things," the "people", have become locusts eagerly waiting for the apocalypse. This predicament of modern man becomes quite relevant to the novel's vision and can be summed up in these words:". . . many modern men seem to be suffering a crisis neurosis. They are frightened by their unbelief.

They do not believe in organized religion, in the beneficent powers of science, in the idea of inevitable progress, in the strength and virtue of a democratic, capitalistic society, ... in traditional standards of morality. Lost in a wilderness of doubt and relativity, they cringe and cower before the dreadful spectacle of their own pessimism and despair."[15] These words aptly convey the psychological state of mind in which the human locusts find themselves helpless and become willing tools in the hands of evil forces. Walter's own remark is no less revealing: "Communities which stake their future on success, and sacrifice. . . individual rights . . . commit suicide. When they run into failure they've no reserves left. They've just got crowds of broken people on their hands, people who'll turn on the commmunity that has failed them and tear it apart" (*AK*, p. 280). Nathanael's locusts just tear apart American civilization, climaxing it with "The Burning of Los Angeles" in *The Day of the Locust*, and in *Another Kind*, the human locusts do the same with British civilization. England becomes a gigantic slaughter-house with innocent citizens like Margery Jackson, Jeanette Jackson, etc., executed on the decree of farcical tribunals. In this demoniac human world the locusts become modern becchanites possessed by a mad frenzy to destroy and annihilate anything that represents order and stability in the ironic mode.

Towards the novel's climax the dreadful spectacle of modern British civilization recedes into the background when Anthony West switches over directly to the subject of a desctructive Russian—American confrontation, mushrooming possibly into a Third World War. So depressing and emasculating is the socio- political situation created by the locusts that the outbreak of the Third World War is welcomed as "tremendously exciting, a vast historical event" (*AK*, p. 340). Millions perish for want of food and other basic amenities of life, while a huge amount of money is spent on the manufacture of deadly weapons. Anthony West's particular emphasis upon evil as the greatest enemy of mankind, and the real war being fought in the mind of man, also finds expression in these words : Every war is a dramatization of man's inner war, the externalization of his inner conflicts. Man feels temporarily relieved of tensions when there is outside trouble in the world'.' [16] Walter Jackson, though ironically himself a locust, talks of the civil war and the socio-political situation created by the human locusts. He tells Anne : "There won't be anything but bitterness, starvation, and vengeance . . . . It' s the worst mess there's ever been (*AK*, p. 298). Bitterness, vengeance and starvation are already taking a heavy toll of human lives, and thanks to the locusts, humanity at present is finding itself in the worst possible mess, sinking gradually deeper and deeper and deeper, into the quagmire of doom and extinction.

To conclude, *Another Kind* is a novel with an apocalyptic vision of a demoniac human world, in which war, lust for money, perverted erotic

relations, destructive passion, and power are all external manifestations of the evil in man's mind. The last loosening of Satan is manifested in the form of the human locusts who only create social and political unrest. Increasing social tension, instability and uncertainty, have made a balanced human behaviour a remote possibility. Proliferation of human locusts throughout the world is being brought about by the machinations of con-men and super-promisers, who only go on swindling people out of their hopes and expectations. Destruction through war and violence can be the only end product for the civilization of a country in the world today. These are the implications of Anthony West's *Another Kind*.

NOTES

1 Anthony West, *Another Kind* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1952), p. 11. In all further references the novel will be abbreviated as *AK*.

2 Raymond M. Olderman, *Beyond the Waste Land* (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1972) p. 14.

3 "The Great Despiser", *Time* (June 17, 1957), p. 102.

4 Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1957) p. 38.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 38.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 39.

7 Erich Fromm, "The Present Human Condition," *Modern Essays*, ed. Russel Nye (Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1963), p. 471.

8 Julian Huxley, "The Future of Man," *Modern Essays*, ed. Russel Nye (Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1963), p. 489.

9 Albert Cook, *The Meaning of Fiction* (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1960) p. 83.

10 Charles Child Walcutt, *Man's Changing Mask* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1968), p. 11.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 11.

12 Harold P. Simonson, *The Closed Frontier* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), p. 119.

13 Richard H.Pells, *Radical Visions and American Dreams* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), p. 223.

14 Joost A. M. Meerloo, *That Difficult Peace* (New York: Channel Press, Inc. 1961), p. 19.

15 Orville Prescott, *In My Opinion : An Inquiry into the Contemporary Novel* (New York; Charter Books 1963) p. 19.

16 Joost A. M. Meerloo, *That Difficult Peace*, p. 16.

Individual's Dilemma in Iris Murdoch's A Severed Head : Lawrentian Dimension and Concern

G. RAI

Iris Murdoch is one of the foremost writers of modern British fiction. Both as a philosopher and as an artist she is concerned with the problem man is facing today. The major problem facing modern man which occupies the centre of Murdoch's works is the loss of moral values resulting in the disintegration of human relationship and human personality. A study of *A Severed Head*, which is one of the most successful of Mrs. Murdoch's early novels, will be helpful to understand and appreciate her themes.

As a philosopher Murdoch sees twentieth century individual's dilemma as one in which there is "far too shadowy and flimsy an idea of human personality."[1] The reason for this degradation is the disappearance of old values. Man is no longer seen against a background of values which transcend him. He is a brave, naked will surrounded by an easily comprehended empirical world. The general consciousness today is ridden either "by convention or neurosis,"[2] both of which "are the enemies of love."[3] The way out of this dilemma, as Mrs. Murdoch sees it, is "transformation"[4] in both men and concepts brought about by freedom and love. There is very little distinction between love and freedom as Mrs. Murdoch has defined these terms. "Freedom is knowing and understanding and respecting things quite other than ourselves."[5] Love is a function of freedom, i.e., once one is free to know, understand and respect things other than oneself, one can love that otherness. Mrs. Murdoch condemns brute sex which leads to the mechanical round of couplings. Love, to her, is an unselfish desire to fuse oneself with the person loved. Intimacy reached through a personal quest for deep involvement with another human being is central to ultimate sexual satisfaction. Love grows out of sex and transcends it without, however, abolishing it in the process. In an interview published in a paper recently she defines love: "Primarily in some sexual sense, but also in the sense of one's work and one's ambitions, one's passions and what connects one with the natural world. That is love. That is the energy."[6] In her novels Mrs. Murdoch insists on the need for understanding the independent existence of others through

the exercise of love and freedom. It will be illuminating to illustrate Murdoch's ideas of freedom and love with reference to her *A Severed Head.*

The novel portrays a world where people live without God, religion and social conventions. Here morality has "rusted through lack of practice . . . . . "[7] Their life is absolutely regulated by the consideration of their own happiness and personal satisfaction. Martin Lynch-Gibbon, the narrator, denies having any religious beliefs. "It may be relevant here to add that I hold no religious beliefs whatever. Roughly, I cannot imagine any omnipotent sentient being sufficiently cruel to create the world we inhabit." (18) Antonia, his wife, also has no religion. Adultery and abortion in this God-forsaken world have lost all emotional implications of sin or guilt. Though Martin declares his marriage with Antonia "perfectly happy and successful" (18), he does not see why he cannot have a mistress also: "It was just that I wanted Georgie as well and did not see why I should not have her . . . . . I was certainly capable of being cool and rational about adultery" (18), Antonia, Georgie, Alexander, Palmer, Honor, too have adulterous affairs without any feeling of remorse. There are three main men characters and three women characters, and by the end of the novel each man has slept with at least two, sometimes three, of the women, each woman with at least two, sometimes three, of the men. Like adultery, the thought of abortion, too, is absolutely painless:

> Last spring my beloved had become pregnant. There was nothing to be done but to get rid of the child. Georgie had gone through with the hideous business in the manner that I would have expected of her : calm, laconic, matter-of-fact, even cheering me along with her surly wit . . . . For myself, I got off with an extraordinary ease. . . . . It had all been quite uncannily painless. (17)

But Mrs. Murdoch is not interested in promiscuity as she has acknowledged in an interview: "I'm very, very hostile to promiscuity, which as you rightly say, does not occur in my books. It is not a subject I'm interested in, and I don't see why I deal with it. A promiscuous character in a book of mine would have to be a minor or a comic character."[8] Mindless experience of sex is emphasised by Murdoch in her novels so as to satirise modern triviality and selfabsorption. Moreover, it points out the eccentric patterns of thought and behavour of the people. In an interview with Professor Hyed, Mrs. Murdoch once suggested that "when one has the privilage of knowing one's friends more intimately, one learns that people are eccentric."[9] In a moment of crisis people run to a psychiatrist who has

"a considerable reputation as that fashionable kind of modern magician". (24) Antonia acknowledges to have received help from Palmer Anderson: "Yes, he made me honest. Made me braver, perhaps. It is better to be explicit and try to hold things all the same."(23)

Though Mrs. Murdoch has no religious feeling nor does she believe in God, she has deep faith in a sense of goodness: " . . . I mean I don't believe in God. I have no religious feeling, but something goes missing. A sense of goodness."[10] *A Severed Head* depicts a culture in which good manners have assumed the air of a major virtue. Individuals are encouraged to be civilized and rational, and are praised for behaving well. Behaviour is defined by roles and judged, if at all, by the rather flexible rules of society. People strive for a spiritual unity by concealing nothing and discussing everything and by trying to understand other people's actions. In actuality, anything really embarrassing is concealed and the discussions lead to pleasant feelings of freedom for the talker and of power for the listener. The narrator takes up his position as a cuckold in a civilized and rational way: "Well, well, if you're so much in love with your analyst, perhaps you'd better go to bed with him ! Only don't talk to me about divorce, for I simply won't hear of it." (31). Analysing his feelings towards Antonia who has betrayed him and towards Palmer who has put horns on his head, the narrator reflects:

> I love my wife and I still desire her. I also love your brother . . . . I have never been in the accepted sense a homosexual, but certainly my attachment to Palmer has something of this colour; and it is an odd thing . . ., that Palmer's liaison with my wife has increased rather than diminished my affection for him. (142-143)

This reminds us of Lawrence's mystique of human relations. Rupert Birkin of *Women in Love* demands more than a satisfactory relationship between man and wife.[11] Martin's running errand for the person who has seduced his wife is something Honor fails to understand. Martin replies: "I am not one of your primitive savages, Dr. Klein", I said," and I do not believe in vendettas" (81). But the source of this gentility is not religion nor any social convention nor does he feel the horror of hell. Palmer is full of praise for his freedom from morality: "You have, after all, a talent for a gentler world. I mean of course the right thing for your happiness and for the ultimate needs of your soul. I will not insult you with hollow words of morality. Your freedom from those bonds was what first made me take you as a companion" (237). Nor has he any consideration for life hereafter: "I saw nothing beyond and was concerned with nothing beyond" (242). Martin is thus a free individual who tries to live in sincerity to his own self and is full of regards for the independence of

others. He does not demand obedience and submission from his wife and feels very sad to see his mistress enslaved to the psychiatrist:. "Georgie herself seemed over-excited and dazed. I observed her plump face and her uncertain movements. Something was dulled in her. Perhaps it was that glow of independence which I had so much loved, which had made her, for my particular depraved purposes, possible. For all her protestations, I had never enslaved Georgie. She was, I conjectured, "enslayed now" (244).

Murdoch is thus an earnest champion of the individual's independence, and she very vehemently criticises everything that constricts this freedom. She approves of "monogamy."[12] However, she is hostile to the rigid marriage-bond which is likely to restrict the individual's freedom and weaken their love for each other. If the partners of a marriage do not enjoy mutual love, trust and understanding, there is no point in their staying together, as husband and wife. Though Martin has illusions about the success of his marriage, it is broken from the very beginning. The partners do not belong to each other. Antonia feels very desperate about this marriage. A marriage is an adventure in development", said Antonia, "and ours is simply at a stand-still. I was conscious of that even before I fell in love with Anderson. It's partly my being so much older and being a sort of mother to you. I've kept you from growing up. All this has got to be faced sooner or later" (33). An intense and passionate woman Antonia has a sharp appetite for personal relations: "she holds that all human beings should aspire towards, and are within working distance of, a perfect communion of souls. First she tries with the psychiatrist but her longing to belong remains unfulfilled: "I felt he hated me. He is a demon, you know. And love can die quickly, I think, just as it can be born quickly. I fell in love with Anderson in a flash" (182). And subsequently she turns to Alexander, an artist, and believes that her desire for deep involvement will be fulfilled. "Oh yes! I am so terribly relieved that I shall not lose Alexander after all. Somehow this test with Anderson has shown it to be so utterly the real thing" (236). Martin unreasonably feels that their marriage is "an extremely solid structure" (35) and is intact even after he has been betrayed by his wife. "There is no substitute for the comfort supplied by the utterly taken-for-granted relationship; and after all inspite of all that had happened, Antonia and no one else was my wife. It did not occur to me to reflect that there was anything illogical in this and indeed there was nothing illogical" (228). But their love suffered distortion on account of his gentility, selfishness and possessiveness. Martin tried to possess Antonia in the same way as he "possessed the magnificent set of original prints" (11), and his talent for a gentler

world was not a "very saintly talent" but " merely a quieter mode of selfishness" (241). Consequently their marriage disintegrates. Martin is likely to have a permanent living relationship with Honor with whom he falls in love in a flash: "I had nevertheless such a deep certainty that it was love .... How very different was this from my old love for Antonia, so warm and radiant with golden human dignity, and from my love for Georgie, so tender and sensuous and gay. Yet, too, how flimsy these other attachments seemed by comparison"(1956). in course of time she begins to occupy his whole consciousness. Their love is real and is thoroughly based on mutual surrender and knowledge: "Let me know you. I have an apprehension of you which is deeper than ordinary knowledge. You realise this also or you would not be talking to me now. You are not a woman who wastes her time "(224) Honor at the door of Martin's apartment, dripping wet and unsure of her welcome, is a real woman of great intelligence, sensitivity and humour. She, in her turn, has evidently been making some effort to learn Martin's language. She tries to explain her action by quoting Herodotos (252) recognising that it is helpful to cite history to a historian. But Martin, whose reading habits have shifted from military history to *The Golden Bough*, tries to respond by speaking her language of myth. Both simultaneously recognise the futile absurdity of explantion and permit themselves, myth and history to dissolve together into the simple human reaction of laughter (224). Thus the novel ends with the promising co-existence between two individuals. Co-existence is a word Mrs. Murdoch introduces in her first novel *Under the Net* 13 to denote love or the unselfish apprehension of another person's reality. Here one is reminded of the Lawrentian stance with regard to love. Love, in Lawrence, is not to be interpreted in a romantic or Christian sense. It is a relationship between fulfilled individuals who remain individuals. The lovers form a union without the loss of their individuality. Each achieves through the other some contact with a hitherto unknown, non-human power. One lover is to be the "door" of the other to this unknown power, the life-source to which Christianity or still modern humanitarianism and democracy have no access. Birkin of *Women in Love* tries this way of freedom in love through Ursula. Birkin and Hermione represent the wrong kind of relationship between a man and a woman.

This brief study of the novel points out Mrs. Murdoch's concern with the problem confronting contemporary man and her attempt to suggest a solution. The problem is the breakdown of old values and disruption of human relations. In her treatment of this problem Mrs. Murdoch sounds remarkably Lawrentian. Like Lawrence, Mrs. Murdoch exposes the deap

formulas about romantic love, friendship and marriage which deeply frustrate individuals and she stresses the need of achieving living relationship between a man and a woman through love and human interaction. She is thus one of those novelists who remind us of the dignity of man and the potency of love to heal and redeem.

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NOTES

1 Iris Murdoch, "Against Dryness," *Encounter*, XVI (January 1961), p. 16.
2 Iris Murdoch, "The Sublime and the Beautiful Revisited", *Yale Review*, XLIX (December, 1959), p. 266.
3 Iris Murdoch, "The Sublime and the Good," *Chicago Review*, XIII (Autumn 1959) p. 52.
4 Iris Murdoch, "Mass, Might and Myth," *The Spectator* (September 7, 1962), p.337
5 "The Sublime and the Beautiful Revisited", p. 270.
6 Iris Murdoch, "I'm not Interested in Promiscuity," *Times of India* (Sunday, October 20, 1985), p. 6. Here she talks to Adams Mars-Jones.
7 Iris Murdoch, *A Severed Head* (London : Chatto & Windus, 1961), p. 53. All subsequent references to this book are parenthetically indicated in the text of the Peper.
8 *The Times of India* (Sunday, October 20, 1985), p. 6.
9 Hyed Ruth Lake, "An Interview with Iris Murdoch in *University of Windsor Review* (Spring 1965), p. 135.
10 *The Times of India* (Sunday, October 20, 1985), p. 6.
11 "No", he said. "You are enough for me, as far as woman is concerned you are all women to me. But I wanted a man friend as eternal as you and I are eternal", D. H. Lawrence, *Women in Love*.
12 *The Times of India* (Sunday, October 20, 1985), p. 6.
13 Iris Murdoch, *Under the Net* (London : Chatto & Windus, 1954),

Hermaphrodite and Heritage

A Brief Review of Some English Classics

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I

Vedanta implies that God is the "Omnipotent Creative Male Principle" (*Purusha*), and Nature is the "Tender Generative Female Principle" (*Prakriti*). Nature is the visible reflection of God: God is the invisible Original of Nature. They are One in Two: *Prakriti-Purusha* or *Ardhanari-swara*, the "Spiritual Hermaphrodite", whose splendid insignia are "Sympathy and Service and Sacrifice". When the two principles flow and fuse together spiritually, in equal proportions, the individual becomes Perfect Human, "Spiritual Hermaphrodite". The he-she relationship and synthesis is the pervading heritage of all classics, and each classic is a variation of this basic heritage. This "hermaphrodite" is what Coleridge perhaps meant by his term "androgynous" mind which is complete and perfect in all respects. Virginia Woolf also writes:

> I went on amateurishly to sketch a plan of the soul so that in each of us two persons preside, one male, one female; . . . the normal and complete state of being is that when the two live in harmony together, spiritually co-operating. 1

Characteristics like tenderness, goodness, beauty, etc. are essentially feminine; and strength, ego, cruelty, etc. are evidently masculine. In literature the 'Hermaphrodite Principle' can be applied for character analysis.

II

Virginia Woolf further says that "In fact one goes back to Shakespeare's mind as the type of the androgynous, of the man-womanly mind".2 In his *Sonnets*, Shakespeare expresses vividly his selfless love equally for a young man and a dark lady (without looking for the fruits of being), and this "Mutual Flame" is the epitome or generative matrix of all his

dramatic themes. The lack of spiritual synchronization, the inability of achieving the hermaphrodite harmony, results in total failure of the protagonists in his tragedies. Undue ambition affects and renders Macbeth and Lady Macbeth sink in terrible blood-bath. Lunatic doubt detaches Hamlet and Ophelia and leads them to their respective poisonous and watery graves. Proud inability to realize true affection divides King Lear from his real daughter Cordelia and drowns him in insanity that ends with the ruin of both. Senseless suspicion separates Othello from Desdemona and drives him to smother her and commit suicide. On the contrary, in his comedies, the spiritual hermaphrodite identity heals and rehabilitates, creating the condition for the music of existence as in *As You Like it*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Measure for Measure* etc. In *The Tempest*, Prospero appears to be the real dramatic self of Shakespeare himself with his hermaphrodite mind. The tenderly-powerful Prospero is not only able to gain the services of the more-than-half beast Caliban and the etherial fairy Ariel, but also succeeds in effecting the harmonious hermaphrodite union of "the grand male Ferdinand" and "the pure female Miranda", regaining his own dukedom, and shows that "all's well that ends well".

John Milton has "a dash too much of the male" in him, and he believes and dubs woman as destroyer of man, for he does not have the spiritual hermaphrodite balance in him. He finds Samson and Man as suitable means of expressing himself. Samson appears purely masculine with enormous strength, and his physical craze for fair women drives him to yield to the charms of Dalila only to be blinded and shorn of his strength. The blunder makes him lament and implore Divine Grace, and the realization of Divine Hermaphrodite inspires him to find his way to the liberation of himself and his tribe. In *Paradise Lost* it is the suspension of the spiritual hermaphrodite balance that first leads Satan to his fall. Satan's incest with his daughter-like Sin (born out of his head) begets Death for Life. He does not repent nor pray, and on the contrary turns more arrogantly vengeful, and hence is doomed and confined to Hell to eat dust for ever. The hermaphrodite principle operates initially in Adam and his daughter-like Eve(created out of his rib) : they live in reverence to Nature and God. But the interference of the falsehood of Satan with the tranquil fulcrum of their hermaphrodite balance, in their weak moments, affects the spiritual identity of Adam and Eve : they commit sin in physical passion intoxicated by the fordidden fruit. But soon they realize, as the affected spiritual hermaphrodite balance regains normalcy : they repent and pray ,soulfully and get the deserving Divine Promise of Redemption. Adam and Eve hand in hand spiritually walk out of Eden.

III

The hermaphrodite principle appears dramatized in a new way in Bernard Shaw's plays. For example : in *Man and Superman*, it is the Female Principle that pursues heroically the fleeing Male Principle resulting in harmonious hermaphrodite identity for the evolution of the Superman. In *Saint Joan*, the country damsel Joan is a personification of the perfect hermaphrodite principle, akin to Divine Incarnation, like Christ in nature. Inspired by the angelic triad, Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret and Saint Michael, "she wears men's clothes", "dressed as a soldier, with hair bobbed hanging thickly round her face", a perfect fusion of "heroic Male" and "tender Female. "Joan herself defends her attire at the trial :

> I was a soldier livng among soldiers. I am a prisoner guarded by soldiers. If I were to dress as a woman they would think of me as a woman; and then what would become of me? If I dress as a soldier they think of me as a soldier, and I can live with them as I do at home with my brothers. That is why St Catherine tells me I must not dress as a woman until she gives me leave.[3]

Dubbed as a mere heretic and condemned, she dies a martyr, and her supreme hermaphrodite spirit becomes the "Life Force" of the French that brings through time the ultimate Liberty and Reformation of France and Mankind. Joan naturally declares :

> my head was in the skies ; and the glory of God was upon me; and man or woman, I shall have bothered you as long as your noses were in the mud.[4]

In J. M. Synge's classic *The Playboy of the Western World*, the hermaphrodite principle is dramatized in a different way. Young Christy has male heroism lying latent in him that requires to be catalyzed by female grace. But he is too shy of girls, and they laugh at and make fun of him. His father tries to marry him to a rustic widow. In a fit of anger he hits and wounds his father and runs away. He comes across the girl Pegeen to whom he relates that he has killed his father. She admires his heroism and adores him with all her grace, and in her company his latent male principle gets spiritually awakened and catalyzed into dynamic action. He is charmed by the local girls competing for his favour. Tickled thus, he becomes the only "playboy of the western world", winning all the local sports and games, and rises, high in their esteem. He assimilates the female grace of Pegeen. With the appearance of his father Mahon alive on the scene, though Pegeen rejects him dubbing

him a liar, Christy's spiritual hermaphrodite education is complete; he is able to live as a perfect individual with dignity, for which he thanks one and all:

> Ten thouand blessings upon all that's here for you've turned me a likely gaffer in the end of all, the way I'll go romancing through a romping lifetime from this hour to the dawning of the judgement day,[5]

And he leaves the place, followed by his father, "like a gallant captain with his heathen slave".

T. S. Eliot married rather late in his life; and he admits that he is an Anglo-Catholic in religion. In *The Waste Land*, evidently he presents vividly pictures of "sexually crazy women and their failure" in particular. Against this obsession with the female principle, he exposes his preoccupation with the male principle as well, and longs for the spiritual synchronization of the two for 'Shantih' to prevail. And aptly Tiresias the mythical Hermaphrodite, an image of Eliot's own mind, becomes his chief spokesman in the poem. In continuation *Ash Wednesday* deals with the hermaphrodite principle on the religio-spiritual plane. Here "I" stands for Eliot subjectively and the male principle objectively, starting with the concept of the body "carrying the sin of Adam" and "spitting from the mouth the withered apple-seed". The male devotee craves for identity with Divine Grace, "the lady in white, and rose of the garden" of Love, akin to Virgin Mary the Female Principle. In a visionary semblance, he prays to her, "Let my cry come to thee"—in supreme devotion akin to the Hindu *madhura-bhakti* for identity, which is best dramatized in Tagore's poetry. The hermaphrodite principle in its constrasting physical and spiritual aspects, in the sex-conscious modern context, is effectively dramatized in *The Cocktail Party*. On the physical plane, Peter gets physically excited in the company of Celia; and the relationship of married Edward and the unmarried Celia operates only on the physical basis. Both the relationships fail owing to the lack of spiritual hermaphrodite identity. Her guilty association with Edward and her failure lead Celia to spiritual harmony and she leaves to find her Destiny through "sympathy and service and sacrifice" in the distant Kinkanjah. But the fractured he-she relationship of Edward and Lavinia is healed leading into spiritual hermaphrodite identity finally; and it is understood at the end of the play that Lavinia is pregnant, and Lavinia aptly comments in a symbolic tone: "Oh, I 'm glad. It's begun". All this is catalyzed and effected by the shrewd interference of the guardians: Dr Reilly and his agents, the female Julia and the male Alex.

Even in a recent play like John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*, the hermaphrodite principle appears dramatized in the modern context. Jimmy

who hails from a lower working-class and Alison who hails from an upper aristocratic class happen to meet at a party, fall in love and marry. But Jimmy suffers from inferiority complex and Alison from superiority complex though living together in a cheap apartment, in mutual hate and anger. Into this fractured relationship enters Alison's friend Helena, a professional actress. She soon understands the situation and acts to a plan which remains suggestive in the play. She sends a "wire" to Alison's father Colonel Redfern, who arrives and fetches pregnant Alison to his home. Jimmy rails in anger against Helena: "she slaps his face savagely", "kisses him passionately, drawing him down beside her", and brings him under control. Passing through the pangs of separation, delivering and losing the baby, softened Alison returns to Jimmy. Fulfilled in her plan, happily Helena leaves for London; and Alison "collapses at his feet". Now the spiritual hermaphrodite union manifests: "Jimmy takes Alison in his arms" and whispers.

> You're all right. You're all right now . . . . We'll be together in our bear's cave, and our squirrel's drey, and we'll live on honey and nuts—lots of nuts. And we'll sing songs about ourselves - about warm trees and snug caves, lying in the sun . . . . Right?[6]

"Alison nods", and "slides her arms round him". Thus Helena and Colonel Redfern are the guardians and Jimmy and Alison are the guarded; and *Look Back in Anger*, despite its contemporaneity, appears as Osborne's version of Eliot's *The Cocktail Party*.

IV

D.H. Lawrence stresses the importance of spiritual hermaphrodite love, employing impressionistic technique, in terms of miserable failure. For example: in his *Sons and Lovers*, he portrays three kinds of he-she relationships: Paul Morel, a modern Oedipus, has futile associations: with his mother Mrs Morel bound by psychological passion, with Clara bound by physical passion, and with Miriam bound by spiritual passion. Paul becomes an enervated neurotic in his unnatural relationship with his mother which renders his relationships with the two girls miserable failures. He remains unsatiated in his physical contacts with Clara. His relationship with the religious girl Miriam is spiritual like that of "a mystic nun for a mystic saint', but the prevalence of spiritual hermaphrodite in their union is decatalyzed and marred by his Oedipus experience, and finally he is doomed—to "walk lonely towards death" Lawrence thus indirectly conveys the importance of the manifestation of spirtual hermaphrodite principle in human life for a glorious existence.

Somerset Maugham portrays the glory of the operation of the spiritual hermaphrodite principle in a contrasting and deductive manner in *The Moon and Sixpence*. Charles Strickland, a modern Prometheus, comes across four women in his life. First he is married and has two children. Mrs Strickland is more concerned with her prospective. fiction- writing career; and he finds union with her is just perfunctory, not spiritual. In fact, in a particular context, she curses him angrily:

> I should like him die miserable, poor, and starving, without a friend. I hope he'll rot with some loathsome disease. [7]

He abandons the family and escapes, like Buddha, in search of the spiritual hermaphrodite beauty through painting. He comes across a prostitute, and does not find the Ideal he is searching for. Next he gets access to the Dutch artist's beautiful wife Mrs Blanche Stroeve: he has a brief liaison painting her naked beauty, but finds himself nowhere near the Ideal ached for. Reaching Tahiti, the right place he has been looking for all life, he comes across the real female principle in the girl Ata who falls in love spiritually with him, which he tests through interrogation for acceptance:

> "Well, Ata," he said, "do you fancy me for a husband?"
> She did not say anything but just giggled.
> "I shall beat you", he said, looking at her.
> "How else should I know you loved me?" she answered.[8]

In their unique union, dwelling in a secluded "place of beautiful nature", they find the real spiritual hermaphrodite synchronization, in mystic grandeur, and have a son. Gradually Charles Strickland's physical body withers away in blinding leprosy, and the envisioned Spiritual Hermaphrodite Glory finds splendid colourful expression painted on the encircling walls inside their cottage, which is not for the so-called materialistic world! Only the spritual hermaphrodite Dr Coutras, who treats men and women with equal devotion, has the opportunity of having a purifying glimpse of the mysterious Hermaphrodite Beauty in real Art, and he describes it to the narrator of the action in the novel:

> . . . . It was strange and fantastic. It was a vision of the beginning of the world, the Garden of Eden, with Adam and Eve—*que sais-je*? - it was a hymn to the beauty of human form, male and female, and the praise of Nature, sublime, indifferent, lovely, and cruel. It gave you awful sense of the infinity of space and of the endlessness of time . . . .[9]

In E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*, the hermaphrodite principle

appears as the main theme. Mrs Moore comes to India with Miss Adela Quested, the fiancee of Ronald Heaslop. Invited to tea at Cyril Fielding's, they come across the young physician Aziz, which leads to intimate relationship. The relationship between Aziz and Adela is not spiritually hermaphrodite. It is just physical and one-sided: in the dark Marabar Caves, holding Aziz's hand, Adela gets sexually excited in vain, and feels that Aziz has attempted to molest her.

Though he is released after the trial, her relationship with Aziz is a failure, and she leaves shame-stricken for England. On the other side, the mother-and-son-like relationship of Mrs Moore and Aziz is spiritual. Unable to put up with the shame caused to Aziz, Adela dragging him to court, Mrs Moore tries to leave India, but dies on board the steamer in the vastness of the Indian Sea, and her spiritis supposed to have returned to Aziz. The whole action is projected against the *bhakti* concept of Professor Godbole, of the eternal Radha Krishna Hermaphrodite Principle. The novel is thus a dramatization of the hermaphrodite principle on the physical and spiritual and religious levels.

Graham Greene's novel *The Power and the Glory* is also a variation of the hermaphrodite theme, in the context of the present-day sterile materialistic world which is symbolized by vultures and beetles, in a country where all religious practices are banned. Against haunting death, represented by the mestizo (and the police lieutenant) the priest is a symbol of perfect hermaphrodite principle in terms of his association and spiritual relationship with the village maid Marie, who protects the priest from being caught by the police lieutenant. The priest owes his inspiration and sustenance to the tender protecting female principle represented by Marie of his native village, the little girl Coral of the banana station, and Miss Lehr of the barn. The little girl Coral who first gives asylum to the priest and the boy Louis who gives asylum to another priest at end together constitute the spiritual hermaphrodite principle in operation, which is the Power and the Glory of God. Although caught and shot dead by the lieutenant at the end, the priest finally dies a martyr as spiritual hermaphrodite for the Glory of God. Against the holy martyrdom of the priest, the sterile union of dominated Padre Jose and dominating Mrs Jose remains vain as life in damnation.

William Golding appears to have "too much of man in him". In his novel *Lord of the Flies*, there is not even a single little girl in the group of the marooned boys on the island. The island is a miniature of the men-dominated adult world saturated with the evil of selfishness, destruction and war. Golding intends to show, in terms of Jack and his followers, as to how in extreme selfishness man becomes a primitive savage

taking destruction as jolly sport, threatening the being of even science and democracy represented by Piggy and Ralph respectively in the novel. However Golding does not fail to symbolize the manifestation of the hermaphrodite principle, and the representative character is Simon. Like Christ, Simon is a spiritual hermaphrodite - a blend of male qualities like "vision and power" and female qualities like "sympathy and sacrifice". Hence he alone is able to discover the destructive masculine Evil and sacrifice himself to that Lord of the Flies so that the other boys will be spared. Aptly at the end of the novel, at the appropriate moment, the Captain arrives and saves the rest of the boys.

V

In *A Room of One's Own* Virginia Woolf talks of spiritual androgynous or hermaphrodite condition for the he-she combination in the taxi-cab of life for harmonious creative existence:

> . . . there was a complete lull and suspension of traffic . . . A single leaf detached itself from the plane tree at the end of the street, and in that pause and suspension fell . . . . It seemed to point to a river which flowed past, invisibly . . . Now it was bringing from one side of the street to the other diagonally a girl in patent leather boots, and then a young man in maroon overcoat; it was also bringing a taxi-cab; . . . the taxi stopped; and the girl and the young man . . . got into the taxi; and the cab glided off as if it were swept on by the current elsewhere.[10]

She asserts that when "masculine courage and power" and "female tenderness and beauty" combine together spiritually, it crystallizes into perfect creation. Aptly Virginia Woolf considers that Jane Austen's is the most hermaphrodite mind like Shakespeare's. "Happy hermaphrodite union of girls of middleclass families with suitable boys of well-to-do families, for harmonious physical and spiritual existence in pure soulful love" is the general theme of Jane Austen's novels; and each novel is a variation of this theme.

Elizabeth Bowen employs the reverse technique: she portrays failure and tragedy in love-relationships, and suggestively conveys the need for manifestation of spiritual hermaphrodite principle for the real harmonious existence of humanity. For example: in *The Hotel* this basic theme is embedded. Middle-aged Mrs. Kerr, who lives alone away from her husband and son, in a Hotel on the Italian Riviera, is a homosexual failure. And the relationship of the protagonists, young Miss Sidney and the middle-aged Bishop Milton is love of convenience springing from a sense of

alienation and loneliness: they fail to marry, as the spiritual hermophrodite principle does not operate, and they leave the Hotel separated. In her last novel *Eva Trout*, tender Eva is alone with rich inherited ancestral property and people bestow pseudo-affection on her for personal gains. And finding a true partner for a happy spiritual hermaphrodite union in life becomes impossible for Eva. She finds a spiritual friend in her early playmate Henry who is much younger than herself. She leaves for America, and aftar a long time returns to England with an adopted deaf and mute child Jeremy. To avoid being exploited, she decides to leave England, and requests Henry to help her make people believe that they are engaged, going to marry and settle in France. At Victoria Station, the revolver in the hand of little Jeremy goes off and Eva is shot dead. Throughout the action in the novel, Elizabeth Bowen leaves the suggestion that, though unfruitful on the physical plane, the relationship of older Eva and younger Henry is in fact spiritually hermaphrodite.

Virginia Woolf herself dramatizes the hermaphrodite principle in her novels. For example: in *Orlando* fancifully, and in *The Lighthouse* symbolically. In *Orlando*, the spirital hermaphrodite or Tiresias motif is charmingly dramatized. In the Elizabethan Age Orlando was a boy and a monosexual. Later he becomes a woman, and in the Victorian Age marries Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmerdine, and endures separation and in the Modern Age begets a son and her Victorian husband returns in 1928, and they are spiritually united. Meanwhile the she-Orlando completes her long poem "The Oak Tree", which finds creative perfection through protracted hermaphrodite experience of full three centuries. In *The Lighthouse*, the lighthouse is masculine in the sense that it is round and tall and emits powerful light far into the Sea (of Life); it is beautiful enduring the beating of waves and seasonal furies. It is thus a symbol of hermaphrodite spiritual culmination for the characters in the novel. Mr Ramsay is male principle, harsh and authoritative: Mrs Ramsay is female principle, tender and affectionate. Mr Ramsay does not seem to be in spiritual identity with Mrs Ramsay, and hence cannot reach the Lighthouse. It is only long after the death of his wife, when he is softened and devoid of his masculine ego, that he reaches the Lighthouse, especially along with his son and daughter. Against this, in the light of the Lighthouse, there is the hermaphrodite meeting of the young lovers: Minta Doyle and Paul Rayley on the beach. Lily Briscoe is an imperfect painter, searching for perfection: she is almost masculine in temperament— a middle-aged sad spinster setting aside marriage despite her association with her friend William Bankes thinking that it is degradation. It is only after long loneliness for years that she gets identity with real female

principle in a vision, the triangle in which spirit of Mrs Ramsay appears to her, and she attains perfection on the canvas in the illuminating light of the Lighthouse, suggesting the spiritual union with her admirer William Bankes; and she concludes: "I have had my vision."

In a recent classic like Iris Murdoch's novel *The Sandcastle* also, the hermaphrodite principle appears as the central theme. First there is the former Headmaster of St Bride's, Mr Demoyte, living in his house "Brayling's Close", served faithfully and affectionately by the housekeeper Miss Handforth spiritually bound. Against this spiritual hermaphrodite manifestation, there is the guilty passion of the middle-aged Mor and the teen-aged Miss Rain, the beautiful young artist who is commissioned to paint the portrait of Demoyte. Mor, a senior teacher at St Bride's, and his wedded wife Nan have a son and a daughter, Donald and Felicity. Between Mor and Nan there exists no spiritual synchronization: he lives in disaffection with his too dominant wife and feels lonely and alienated. In this situation arrives Miss Rain. Between Mor and Miss Rain operates physical passion in electrifying contacts. Mor plans secretly to abandon his family, elope with Miss Rain, and start life afresh in London in the love-rain of Miss Rain. Very soon Miss Rain gets disillusioned: she realizes that her union with the householder Mor is impossible, detaches herself, and leaves for France. Meanwhile perceiving the sexual intentions of her husband's friend Tim Burke, Nan extricates herself from the trap, realizes the necessity of establishing spiritual identity with her husband Mor. And the couple regain the spiritual hermaphrodite synchronization and normal life. Murdoch thus conveys the message that mere physical relationship is bound to be washed away like sand-castle, and that spiritual androgynous union remains glorious like the mighty religious neo-Gothic Tower of St Bride's.

VI

In a biographical classic like Lytton Strachey's *Eminent Victorians* also ncidentally the hermaphrodite theme finds expression. Henry Edward Manning hailing from a rich family of evangelic piety was really intelligent. At Oxford, he appeared all set for a shining political career. He fell in love with Miss Duffel. But since his father became bankrupt unexpectedly, the rich father of the girl rejected him as his son-in-law. Manning became a country clergyman, and he had to marry his rector's daughter whom he lost very soon. As the spiritual hermaphrodite principle did not crystallize in him, he soon forgot his dead wife, and turned into an ambitious practical pseudo-ecclesiastic rather than a man of saintliness.

and learning. Adopting the cunning of an unscrupulous politician, trampling down the more worthy John Henry Newman, he became the Cardinal of the Catholic Church of England. Towards the end of his life, he realized that "he had been useless" and that "his was a life in the shadow". Strachey comments that the dusty Hat of the hater "hung in the Cathedral from the dim vault like some forlorn and forgotten trophy". Florence Nightingale was also born in a rich family, but there was nothing of woman's affection in her. "A demon possessed her", and she remained a work-and-fame crazy unisexual spinster, ruined her own life and her loving friend Sidney Herbert of the War Office, ruthlessly making him overwork for her advantage till he perished. Towards the end of her life, the Lady of the Lamp realized that the Lamp showed her own shipwreck: as an aristocratic narcissist, she died, lonely and sterile with none to lament. Dr Arnold was considered the only hope of reforming school education in England. He married and had the physical convenience of indiscriminately begetting children without the achievement of spiritual hermaphrodite harmony. Devoid of female compassion and affection, the harsh and hard headmaster of Rugby School failed to effect any educational reform excepting introducing sports in schools, which in fact culminated in the emergence of indiscipline in the temples of learning. Similarly General Gordon was not a hermaphrodite spiritual: he was a Victorian victim of his own contradictions, of religious fervour and military strategy - a little off his head: Queen Victoria's grace and sympathy failed to reach and level his male ego. And he brought on himself horrible death at Khartoum in the forbidden land of Africa. Thus because of the failure of the manifestation of spiritual hermaphrodite principle in them, the so-called Eminent Victorians, despite their secular achievements, were indeed spiritual failures and damned Victorians. Thus Strachey proves beyond any doubt that all the so-called eminent people have been in fact egoistic power-mongers, lacking in "spiritual hermaphrodite vision and selflessness" and have selfishly corrupted life and the world.

VII

In reality all the literary classics, directly or indirectly, objectively or suggestively, convey the power and the glory of the manifestation of the spiritual hermaphrodite principle in human mind and soul. Hence the real study of literature is more relevent to life than any other subject, in that it renders this Base transformed into a World of Light and Peace and Perfection.

NOTES

1 Virginia Woolf: *A Room of One's Own* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1959), p.147.
2 *Ibid.*, p.148.
3 Bernard Shaw: *Saint Joan* (Bombay: Orient Longmans, 1954), p.156.
4 *Ibid.*, p.173.
5 J. M. Synge: *The Playboy of the Western World* (London: George Allen Unwin, 1929), p.131.
6 John Osborne: *Look Back in Anger* (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), p.96.
7 W. Somerset Maugham: *The Moon and Sixpence* (London: Pan Books, 1974), p.60.
8 *Ibid.*, p.186.
9 *Ibid.*, p. 209.
10 Virginia Woolf: *op. cit.*, pp.144-145.

Nissim Ezekiel and the Making of the Indian-English Idiom.

BIJAY KUMAR DAS

Nissim Ezekiel is the first post-Independence Indian English poet who gave Indian English poetry "a local habitation and a name". His name is synonymous with post-Independence Indian English poetry. Not only did he write poetry in a new style but he also taught other poets including Dom Moraes how to write poetry in English. Adil Jussawalla makes a point when he says that "Ezekiel is perhaps the first Indian poet consistently to show Indian readers that craftsmanship is as important to a poem as its subject matter."[1] Ezekiel is to Indian English poetry what T.S. Eliot is to modern English poetry.

Ezekiel published his first book of poems, *A Time to Change*, in London in 1952. Back home, he published a number of collections: *Sixty Poems* in 1953, *The Third* in 1959, *The Unfinished Man* in 1960, *The Exact Name* in 1965, *Hymns in Darkness* in 1976, and *Latter-Day Psalms* in 1982, which won him the Central Sahitya Akademi Award in 1983. In this article I wish to study two questions: one, how much Indian his poetry is and two, how far he has been able to create an Indian English idiom.

In the course of an interview to John B. Beston, University of Hawaii, Nissim Ezekiel affirmed that "I regard myself essentially as an Indian poet writing in English. I have a strong sense of belonging, not only to India, but to this city. I would never leave Bombay — it's a series of commitments."[2] He hastens to add that "My background did make me an outsider. I do not want to remain negative : I felt I have to connect, and turn the situation to positive."[3]

Though he is of Bene-Israel Origin, he has a strong sense of belonging to India, the country of his birth and living. He declares it unequivocally.

I cannot leave the island
I was born here and belong.

("Island")

C.D. Narasimhaiah compliments him in the following words: ". . . to the extent he has availed himself of the composite culture of India to which he belongs, he must be said to be an important poet not merely in the Indian context, but in a consideration of those that are writing poetry anywhere in English"[4]. What makes a poet belong to a particular country necessarily involves nationality and his identity is to be found in being rooted in the soil. A poet's response to the landscape of his country, his sense of tradition and culture of the land of his birth and many other factors go together to make a poet assume an identity of his own. Nissim Ezekiel is right when he says that "there is no single Indian flavour which alone can claim the designation (Indianness)" and that "its value too depends on a host of generative factors which should never be simplified for purposes of praise or blame"[5]. Ezekiel is deeply rooted in the Indian soil. In him one discerns a certainty of touch that seems to reflect a confidence in the direction and purpose of his writing as well as an integrity of the images of India, style and subject matter. Ezekiel's Bombay is located in the present and this city is as much within him as without. J. Birje-Patil has rightly noticed that "Ezekiel's originality lies in his projection of Bombay as metaphor which defines the alienation of the modern Indian intellectual, brought up in the Judaeo-Christian and Greco-Roman tradition and being forced to come to terms with a culture whose response to life is controlled by a totally different metaphysics"[6]. This City (ie, Bombay) has become central to Ezekiel's poetic thought and an integral part of his poetics. Ezekiel's poetry is as much Indian as that of any other poet in any Indian language (Indian English included) is, or is supposed to be. Ezekiel dislikes vague poeticism and his intention is to create a different music to give poetry a greater informality, to bring it closer to the spoken language. He looks for a new start in poetry and knows that "the best poets wait for words". He handles the language with utmost care and competence. He believes that "poetry is essentially a method of organising oneself through words," and this he pursues with rare dedication. In a discussion on modern Indian poetry with D. J. Enright and S.N. Ghose, Ezekiel has stressed emphatically at one place the importance of contemporary idiom. "You cannot write good poetry," he says, "in a language which is not alive"[7]. In the course of answering a questionnaire on the issue of handling language by poets Ezekiel observes:

> I think it is true that a poet must have the right to change and re-create language, but it is not true that this cannot be done by foreigners. In my opinion, it is not essential that a good poet should change and re-create the language, but if he aspires to be a great poet, he is likely to attempt

the task. A poet acquires the right to change and re-create language by arriving at the existing possibilities.[8]

The desire to come to terms with one's own self inevitably brings a concord between one's inner life and the outer life. In the course of an interview given to *Gentleman* Ezekiel states: "To start with, my own inspiration is and always was 'my inner life'. And writing is, for me, a way of coping with the tension between my inner life and the outer life. Looking back, this from the earliest days seems to be the main source of my writing. Every other source is somehow related to it — even the experiences of other people. My poems are often introspective and, therefore, express self-criticism and self-doubt. I also write about my relationship with other people: love, sex, the individual in society, etc."[9]

Ezekiel is a poet of many themes and one finds a wide range of subjects and great variety in his poetry. His poetry is not born out of dogma and he does not confine himself to a particular type of theme or technique in his poetry. He has an open mind and therefore he changes the subject matter of his poetry from time to time. He makes this clear in his poem "Theological":

I am tired
of irony and paradox
of the bird in the hand
and the two in the bush
of poetry direct and oblique,
of statement plain or symbolic
of doctrine or dogma -

He writes poetry out of his own experience and encounter with people at different places and times. Ezekiel does not invent a situation but describes an event as he sees it. In "Poster Prayers" III, he says.

I have to sing
The song of my experience.

His poetry emanates from life and that is why he describes "the horror, the boredom and the glory of life". India's poverty, the rituals observed in the country, and her people belonging to all walks of life attract the attention of the poet. A leper beggar in a railway station, a woman beggar elsewhere and the beggars, hutment-dwellers and pavement sleepers in Bombay—all appeal to the poet and he describes them in a cool detached and objective matter-of-fact tone. His poverty poems amply illustrate this point.

Ezekiel's contribution to Indian English idiom lies in his attempt to re-create Indian characters in their situations. The tone may appear to be

mocking but Ezekiel faithfully reproduces these characters as they appear in their real life. The language in these poems is based on colloquial speech rhythm and the tone is conversational. Poems like "Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T. S." "The Railway Clerk," "The Truth About the Floods", "Hangover", "Healers" and "Very Indian Poems in Indian English" belong to this category. In these poems Ezekiel uses English the way most semi-literate Indians write, speak and perhaps understand it. Let us examine the following lines from different poems:

Sex is prohibited or allowed.
Meat and drink are prohibited
Or allowed. Give up
everything or nothing
and be saved.

("Healers")

No Indian whisky sir all imported this is Taj.
Yes sir soda is Indian sir.
Midnight.
Taxi Strike. George Fernandes, ...
Half the day hazy with the previous night.

("Hangover")

Remember me ? I am professor Sheth
Once I taught you geography. Now
I am retired, though my health is good.
.....
.....
If you are coming again this side by chance,
Visit please my humble residence also,
I am living just on opposite house's backside.

("The Professor")

Come again
All are welcome whatever caste
If not satisfied tell us
Otherwise tell others
God is great.

("Irani Restaurant Instructions")

Ezekiel has tried to re-create the Indian characters who happen to speak English in an un-English manner and with a native accent.

You are going ?
But you will visit again
Anytime any day
I am not believing in ceremony

Always I am enjoying your company.
("The Patriot")

The use of the present progressive tense in place of the simple present tense is a habit and perhaps a way with Indians. Moreover there are common errors among Indians when they frame questions in English.

Apart from this, Ezekiel is fond of using paradoxical language in his poetry for greater poetic effect. Let us examine the following lines:

The further I move
away from madness
towards stability
and a measure of sense,
the closer I seem
to the verge of madness
("Dilemma")

1 He knows how to speak of humility
without humility.
2 He has lost faith in himself
and found faith at last.
3 Darkness has its secrets
which light does not know.
("Hymns in Darkness")

The closer you come, the further you move
("Distance")

Where you are
Is where you have to be
("Counsel For Shri Hariji, who said it")

In these poems Ezekiel reminds us of T.S. Eliot who used paradoxical language in his later poetry, particularly after his conversion to Anglo-Catholicism in 1927.

Ezekiel is a love poet par excellence. He has given a very daring portrayal of love and sex in a number of his poems. Ezekiel knows that true lovers are innocent and therefore he says that "the lamb is not as innocent/as lovers in the act of love." Not only lovers, but couples too, attract his attention. He looks at love and woman from a man's point of view as Kamala Das views love from a woman's point of view. Flattery and bold advances are necessary for "survival and success" in love and married life. Ezekiel examines a situation in which a woman was wooed by a man in unmistakable terms:

You are a wonderful woman, he said,
and she laughed happily,

having heard it before from many men
all trapped in the desire
to see her naked
and to know how he surrendered
who was so hard and vain.
In that moment of mutual deception
she was truly quite beautiful
and almost lovable.
("The Couple")

Sex and sensuality are a part of life and in order to accept art one has to affirm sensuality, the poet seems to say in his "Passion Poems" and "Nudes." In "Nudes" (a cycle of 14 poems) sex moves centripetally rather than centrifugally in a narrow circle, and participation remains physical. Physical satisfaction of love holds the key to these poems. Thus the poet states:

I am given up to nakedness,
a pleasure in itself, doubled
now by the nakedness of the other.
("Nudes" - 1)

The woman in the third poem of the series "Nudes", far from being shy teaches the man how to kiss and make love. Thus she says:

"Did you enjoy it ? No ? you have
to love the other person, then you do.
Nevermind, you love my breasts, thighs,
buttocks, don't you ? of course you do.
It's O. K. you know, and I love—
your body too, though you're hardly
my cup of tea."

In "Passion Poems" the poet uses words about love and sex freely. In some of his earlier poems like "Two Nights of Love", "The Recluse", "Delighted by Love" and in a later poem like "Jewish Wedding in Bombay," the consummation of love has been freely described.

In the ninth section of *Hymns in Darkness*, the woman appears in the role of a sex object. Ezekiel describes this intimate scene between man and woman in a calm and cool manner:

Don't, she says, don't
conniving all the same
short of tearing her clothes
he's using all his force.
Soon, he's had what he wanted,
soft, warm and round.

In a poem entitled "Motives" the persona honestly states his motive to consummate his love with the desired woman and emphasizes his sexual passion in unequivocal language:

My motives are sexual . . . . . .
Your thighs are full and round
thin and flat I'd love them too
I here go my aesthetics.

In two other poems entitled "At the Party" and "At the Hotel" the persona looks at women from the point of view of a male protagonist:

Ethereal beauties, may you always be
Dedicated to love and reckless shopping,
Your midriffs moist and your thighs unruly,
Breasts beneath the fabric slyly plopping.
("At the Party")

Our motives were concealed but clear,
Not coffee but the Cuban dancer took us there,
the naked Cuban dancer.
On the dot she came and shook her breasts
all over and dropped
the thin transparent skirt she wore.
Was it not this for which he came
("At the Hotel")

The purpose of quoting so many lines from different poems is to show that Ezekiel is bold in describing man-woman relationship from the biological point of view. Sex is a normal instinct in man and woman. No wonder that they desire each other for sexual union. Sex is not a myth but a reality like other realities of life; this has got to be observed and described though in an artistic way. Unlike the Victorians we are no longer prudes in public. Thus in a changed milieu, poetry should take sex as its subject. Ezekiel uses unconventional words like "unruly thighs" "plopping breasts", "midriff moist" and descirbes female anatomy as well as garments in his poetry. There is as it were an attempt to create an Indian English idiom to describe love and sex in poetry. Take, for instance, a poem like *Nudes* 1978 (2) where the woman takes a lead in the sex act and this is how the poem moves:

"I love undressing", she has to say.
as she undresses . . . . . .
"Is it a part of you?" she asks,
as she holds it, stares at it.
Then she laughs. "Put your finger there," she pleads as if
I need instructions. It's only

Impatience, though becoming frenzy
as I penetrate. Now she claims

Ezekiel uses phrases like "threshing thighs" "swinging breasts", "buttocks" "stripped bodies", "orgasm", "breasts naked to the waist", quite freely in his poems of love and sex. He has declared that the use of nakedness is good and has acknowledged Sanskrit poets as his ancestors. Love and sex are no longer taboos. Ezekiel, like Kamala Das and Shiv K. Kumar, has used erotic vocabulary in his poetry.

Ezekiel knows that "Life is not as simple as reality" and therefore reminds us that all you have is the sense of reality! It is this sense of reality which makes him look at life objectively. He becomes critical of rituals, as well as of the injustice that he encounters in day-to-day life. Hence irony becomes his forte. Sometimes his irony turns into satire when he disapproves of some of the way of contemporary society. Sometimes he gently mocks at the rituals of the society that are performed mechanically. In "Jewish Wedding in Bombay" Ezekiel observes:

Her mother shed a tear or two but wasn't really
crying. It was the thing to do, so she did it,
enjoying every moment. The bride laughed when I
sympathised, and said don't be silly.

Which makes the poet ask:

Who knows how much belief we had ?

The "Old order changeth yielding place to new", as Tennyson would say, and Ezekiel describes such a situation as we experience in our country in a matter-of-fact tone, perhaps with a tinge of irony:

These are days of family planning
I am not against. We have to change with times.
Whole world is changing. In India also
We are keeping up. Our progress is progressing.
Old values are going, new values are coming.
Everything is happening with leaps and bounds.

("The Professor")

Poems like "Morning Prayer", "Case study" and "Night of the Scorpion" make use of irony. In fact, irony is the hall-mark of good poetry and even great poetry. Thus "Night of the Scorpion" ends with an undertone of irony:

My mother only said
Thank God the Scorpion picked on me
and spared my children.

One encounters the frequent use of irony, paradox and metaphor in a number of Ezekiel's poems. Ezekiel has the gift of story-telling. More-

over he can create poems out of ordinary incidents, situations and events that one encounters in everyday life. He takes a situation, examines it and describes it in such a way that it immediately assumes a kind of social significance. Thus he turns his personal emotion into "structural" emotion which finally becomes artistic emotion. Let us examine a poem from "The Trivandrum Sequence"[10] in which he describes a simple incident like the failure of the poet's brother in an examination which arouses his personal emotion. Then this particular incident is allowed to acquire a universal significance:

Any failure in the human family,
my mother said,
is the failure of the whole family.[11]

He can narrate simple incidents and events in an artistic manner. Ezekiel is famous for the harmony of emotional effect, for the subtlety of variation and the subtle touch of irony in his narrative poems. Poems like "Night of the Scorpion", "How the English Lessons Ended", "Enertainment" and "Ganga" reveal his artistic skill. Parents have to learn a lot from "How the English Lessons Ended". A Muslim neighbour's nineteen-year-old daughter who could not pass in English for "these successive years" was sent to the poet for coaching in English. The parents did not know that the girl's interest lay elsewhere. She showed a "picture book" to the poet's daughter and did not turn up for her lesson as she knew that the poet knew about it. The poet was suspected of making "advances" and in the meanwhile the poet's mother came to know about it and was angry with him. "That girl will never get a husband!", she said. The colloquial language and intimate tone make the poem poignant.

She knows I know. The English lessons
end abruptly. I have learnt enough, she claims.
She's learnt enough to say she's learnt enough.

The last line comes as an aftermath to the line: "She knows I know." The poem ends with the marriage of that girl and the poet says "Now she does not need that picture book".

In "Ganga" the poet tells the story of a maid servant named Ganga and mocks at our so-called generosity:

The woman
who washes up, suspected
of prostitution,
is not dismissed.
She always gets
a cup of tea
preserved for her

from the previous evening
and chapati, stale
but in good condition
Once a year, an old
sari and a blouse.

In another poem called "Entertainment" Ezekiel describes a "monkey-show" and beneath the ordinariness of the event lies the callousness and hypocrisy of our people.

The monkey-show is on:
Patient girl on haunches
holds the strings
a baby in her arms .....
.....
Crowd collects.
forms a circle .....
.....
.....
Anticipating time for payment,
the crowd dissolves.
Some, in shame, part
with the smallest coin they have.
The show moves on.

Ezekiel is a very competent poet from the technical point of view. He writes in regular iambic metre, in blank verse as well as in free verse. He writes with ease both in free verse and in metrical verse. In his poetry one encounters a number of Indian words (Hindi words in particular) in italics. This he does perhaps with a desire to create an Indian English idiom. For instance words like "goonda", "Indirabhen", "Rama Rajya" "guru", "ashram", "bhikshusks", "burkha", "chapati", "Pan", "mantras" are used in his poetry.

Ezekiel is a conscious poet "looking before and after". To him poetry is not a gift to be adorned but a craft to be studied seriously. He believes in the revision of a poem and works hard on it, till it achieves a kind of perfection. A poet like a woman "must labour to be beautiful". Ezekiel's clarity of thought, clinical precision of words and phrases and employment of imagery make his poetry distinctly Indian. The new poetry (ie, Indian English poetry after Independence) demanded a new use of language and called for the use of everyday speech rhythm in poetry. Thus there is a demand, as it were, for the creation of an Indian English idiom, to give an identity to modern Indian English poetry, independent of and different from the world literatures written in English including

Anglo-American literatures. To my mind, Ezekiel has succeeded in creating a new Indian English idiom.

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NOTES

1 Adil Jussawalla, "The New Poetry" *Readings in Commonwealth Literature* (ed) William Walsh (London: O. U. P., 1973), p. 80.
2 John B. Beston, "An Interview with Nissim Ezekiel". *World Literature Written in English* (April. 1977)
3 Ibid.
4 C. D. Narasimhaiah, *The Swan and the Eagle* (Simla: Indian Institue of Advanced Study, 1969) p. 40
5 Nissim Ezekiel, "What is Indian in Indo-English Poetry" *Osmania Journal of English Studies*, XIX (1983), 50
6 J. Birje-Patil, "Interior Cadences: The Poetry of Nissim Ezekiel," *The Literary Criterion* XII.Nos2-3 (1976), 209.
7 D. J. Enright and S. N. Ghose, "Modern Indian poetry: A Discussion" *The Miscellany*, 28 (August 1968), 66.
8 "Replies to the Questionnaire". *Modern Indian Poetry in English*, ed. P. Lal p. 169.
9 Interview to *Gentleman*, July 1984, 97.
10 The sequence consists of 10 poems written on a train journey to Trivandrum for the 84th All India English Teachers' Conference.
11 "The Trivandrum Sequence.", *Ken*, 2(1980), 2.

Lets get away from language One more plea for learner-centred strategies[1]

P. K. THAKER

Commenting on the "far-reaching" and "sudden" change in the status of the English language in India in the wake of Independence, Bhandari (1954) lamented "that it was not possible for teachers in schools to adjust this teaching quickly and correctly to the new situation. No plan was worked out to check the fall in the standard of English and the result has been that today a correct English sentence from a High School student is an exception rather than the rule".

That was written over thirty years ago, in 1954 to be precise. Since then most of the "reform" measures recommended by Bhandari, such as revision of the syllabuses, training of the teachers and preparation of new textbooks, have come to be implemented, perhaps not once but several times over. A number of successive committees or commissions have gone into the question of improving the teaching of English in India.[2] Yet not much progress seems to have been made. Some may even maintain that the situation has been worsening over the years. It might not be out of place, therefore, to try to see if there was any scope for improvement in a new direction. The present paper is a modest attempt to explore such a possibility.

The last two decades have been marked by "a flux and ferment" in the field of language teaching in general, and English language teaching in particular, which Prabhu (1984) attributes to "a general disillusionment with the Structural Approach." Widdowson (1972) placed in global perspective the phenomenon of frustration experienced in attempting to teach the English language through Structural Approach, with its characteristic emphasis on the *teaching* of pre-selected language items in a definite sequence, when he observed that "students, and especially students in developing countries, who have received several years of formal English teaching, remain deficient in the ability to actually use the language, and to understand its use, in normal communication, whether in the spoken or in the written mode".[3]

The several approaches that emerged at first as alternatives to the traditional language-centred approach tended to concentrate on either the cognitive or social needs of the learner or his manipulation of language in different situations or for different functions.[4] However, extensive research in language acquisition that followed has served to highlight at least one important fact, viz., that the mastering of the system of a second or foreign language is a necessarily complex process involving an interplay of not only linguistic but socio-cultural and psychological factors.[5] It is increasingly realized that language has its roots and sources in what Brumfit (1979) calls "cognitive and cultural processes which operate deep within the personality of the learner." He goes on to say that "the language teacher's purpose is to link the integrated and internal needs of the learner to external demands of society".

To take but one instance, affective elements like interest, anxiety, fear and self-respect have now been known to play a crucial part in the success or failure of language teaching. If the learners are found to be unable to use in ordinary life what to all appearances they have already "learned" inside the classroom, it is possible that the explanation for the failure lies in the psychological domain of independence-building. It is precisely because of such a possibility, particularly in the case of the initial learners of a second or foreign language, that Allwright (1977) considers the demand, "so very persistent among language teachers", for correctness or "accuracy" to be "counterproductive". Errors might be better interpreted as a map of strategies that the individual adopts to cope with the problem of communication through the target language.

In the words of Prabhu (1984), "Given the strong plausibility of the interlanguage hypothesis (in the sense that language learning takes place through a series of approximate systems. . .), one can no longer expect language pedagogy to benefit from a planned linguistic progression, preselection of language for particular language activities or language practice as such. . . . our best hypotheses at this time—viz., that the internal grammar develops unconsciously as it gets deployed in language use and that the process involved is a holistic one—indicate a very indirect form of teaching, confined to ensuring availability of language data and attempting to bring about a preoccupation with meaning."

It might be observed that one effective way of keeping the learner's attention focused on meaning is to evolve a task-oriented strategy, in which, as Johnson (1979) points out, the success or failure would be judged not so much in terms of accurate manipulation of language items as of satisfactory performance of given tasks. These tasks could comprise, among other things, diverse problem-solving activities and

different types of participation in authentic social interactions in the classroom or outside. The aim should be to shift the focus from language as content to authentic activities, in the performance of which the learner naturally comes to realize the need as well as the value of the language he is expected to master. In the absence of such a realization on his part, the required kind of creative struggle, concentration and continuous effort would not be put in by the learner.

The learner, in fact, holds the key to the success of any programme of *teaching* a second or foreign language.[6] He controls and contributes to the process in numerous ways. From the cognitive viewpoint, he brings his total background of knowledge, experience and abilities to bear on the learning process. More explicitly, in the sociological sense, learning effort requires him to engage in activities of initiating, negotiating or maintaining contact and communication with people around him, including his fellow-learners. Moreover, the learner's perceptions of what language he is going to learn, and why and how, have a decisive influence on the outcome of the learning process. Allwright (1984) even goes to the extent of saying that "our carefully worked-out syllabuses are relatively powerless over learners' own ways .... of getting something from language lessons".

Perhaps from the viewpoint of the learner himself, the process of language-learning remains much more unconscious and generalized than is customarily granted. However, that does not in any way minimize the need to think of language teaching, English language teaching specifically, not just as a sequence of language points or sets of skills or a given number of language texts to be read, understood and studied, but as a conglomeration of learning opportunities suited to the age, interests and attainment of the learners in question. What is important is to identify ways and methods of engaging the *learners* of English as a second or foreign language in relevant activities which should require, in varying measures, easy, spontaneous use of the language by them, with the focus on meaning and without any loud demands for accuracy.

Obviously, designing an ELT programme that thus keeps the learner and his "activities" in focus is bound to be a difficult task. It will, for one thing, require experimental studies at regional or local level. It may also imply involvement of learners in the process of curriculum development. It will have to be a prolonged effort. Above all, it will call for a will to innovate, to break away with old ways of thinking on the teaching of the English language and readiness to take risks and even to fail.[7] All this sounds formidable, but perhaps that way lies hope of redemption from the morass that English language teaching appears to have become in many

schools and colleges.

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NOTES

1 The phrase "one more" is introduced in the title to prevent any impression of a claim that the ideas discussed in the paper are entirely "original". Yet the "plea" becomes necessary and relevant particularly in view of the persisting preoccupation with "language" and "language teaching" in most of the ELT programmes in the country even today. It might also be noted that the present writer's own effort to bring about even a limited change in the desired direction in ELT in his own State or University has not met with much success so far.

2 Kachru (1983) mentions the following committees/commissions in particular among those that have discussed the place of English in Indian education and the problems in the teaching of English":

1 The University Education Commission headed by S. Radhakrishnan (1950-51)
2 The Official Language Commission, Government of India (1955-56)
3 The Kunzru Committee, appointed by the University Grants Commission (1955-57)
4 The English Review Commission headed by G.C. Bannerjee, appointed by the University Grants Commission (1960-65)
5 The Secondary Education Commission headed by A. L. Mudaliar (1965)
6 The Education Commission headed by D. S. Kothari, appointed by the Ministry of Education, Government of India (1966)
7 The Study Group on English headed by V. K. Gokak, appointed by the Ministry of Education, Government of India (1967)
8 The Committee on Colleges, appointed by the University Grants Commission (1967)
9 The Study Group on English headed by V.K. Gokak, appointed by the Ministry of Education and Youth Services, Government of India (1971)

3 Perhaps the first explicit "attack" on the Structural Approach was made by Newmark (1966) in a short paper significantly entitled "How Not to Interfere with Language Learning", where he comments, with a characteristic touch of irony, how "if each item which the linguist's analysis leads him to identify had to be acquired one at a time, proceeding from simplest to most complex, and then, each had to be connected to specific stimuli or stimulus sets, the child learner would be old before he could say a single appropriate thing, and the adult learner would be dead."

4 The programmes developed by Allen and Widdowson (1974), Van EK (1975), Wilkins (1976) and Munby (1978) could serve as examples of such "alternative" approaches, which might in retrospect, be thought of as stages towards the formulation of the later and, according to some, more radical, learner-centred models.

5 Damiani (1979), for example, shows how "communication in a foreign language requires non-linguistic skills which adults can only master through continued experience. A spontaneous conversation, in fact, entails not only the knowledge of vocabulary and structures, but also the courage to initiate or respond, the ability to speak fluently without the fear of making mistakes, and an active system fo feedback which may lead to further clarification of the message rather than to the inhibition of the speaker."

6 It is significant that Stern (1983) "defines" "language teaching" "as the activities that are intended to bring about language learning..... A good language teaching theory would meet the conditions and needs of learners in the best possible ways".

7 It is relevant to note that Brumfit (1979), who registers a word of caution against the risks involved in a "position that concentrates exclusively on the process", also goes on to observe that a "growth model" which has its focus on language teaching/learning processes, and which "at its best recognizes both the complexity of linguistic operations and the close relations between language, personal needs and social situations", is to be preferred to the "linguistic model" which emphasizes the detailed specifications of language items in the syllabus, and which is "always external to the student", while "the growth takes place inside him".

BOOK REVIEWS

Studies in Indian Fiction in English, G. S. Balarama Gupta, ed. (Gulbarga : JIWE Publications, 1987), pp. 157. Rs. 100

The growing popularity of Indian literature in English has resulted in the publication of a large number of critical studies beginning with K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar's *Indian Writing in English*. The present collection of critical essays represents studies in the same direction but by various contributors.

The aim of G. S. Balarama Gupta in bringing out this collection of essays has been "to stimulate scholars . . . to write well-thought-out articles" in order to solve the problem of the scantiness of sound critical material in the area. The essays selected in the volume are on a wide variety of novelists and their works, going as far back as K. Nagarajan's *Athawar House* (1937) to as late as Rushdie's *Shame* (1983). The variety of these essays is well-matched by the levels of their standard.

Uma Parameswaran, conscious of the lopsided nature of earlier criticism of Indo-English writing, focuses her critical attention on K. Nagarajan—one of the ignored pioneers of Indo-Anglian fiction. His *Athawar House* reflects the Independence movement of the 1920's and 30's.

Rushdie's *Shame* has attracted two papers by Feroza Jussawalla and Sushila Singh. Jussawalla takes up the problems of communication and of the audience of multicultural literature, arising largely from Rushdie's transmogrification of a realistic novel into a fairytale for satirizing Pakistan's hideous political realities. Sushila Singh considers *Shame* as a political novel on Pakistan, calling it "a sort of black joke on one of the worst ditcatorships."

Arundhati Chatterjee and A. V. Krishna Rao write on two novels of Markandaya. Whereas Chatterjee's essay on *Nectar in a Sieve* gives merely a character-sketch of Rukmani as a universal mother with an occasional good remark thrown in, Krishna Rao finds in *The Golden Honeycomb* evidence of the novelist's feminine sensibility, her absence of ideological commitment and her projection of developing national consciousness.

There are three essays that begin by challenging the prevalent critical assessments and raise hopes of some very incisive papers on the subject but mostly in vain. Ramlal Agarwal in his article on Jhabvala's *Heat and Dust* refutes Nissim Ezekiel's criticism of the novel, but instead of arguing forcefully gives a vague account of the work and then hurries on to eulogize its "pure, gem-like quality." A. N. Dwivedi's paper on Rajan's *The Dark Dancer* begins by defending the novelist not on the merits o the work but on the grounds of his stature as a critic, his scholarship and of his being a distinguished Professor of English. Hence while attacking Rajan's critics as biased against him, he himself becomes one in favour of the novelist. T. N. Dhar's article on Bhattacharya questions the sociological concern of critics in discussing *He Who Rides a Tiger*, but argues convincingly that the novelist uses the device of role-playing of many characters — Kalo, Motichand and Lekha —to expose the society.

There are two papers by Basavraj Naikar and B. Parvathi which seem to have been written according to the editor's plan of stimulating the interest of the reader and of providing him information enough for understanding a novel. Naikar's paper on *All About H. Hatterr* is excellent in its aim of interpreting "the pattern of meaning underlying the novel." Hatterr is a pholosopher of sort who seeks truth through various methods. Having a bi-cultural sensibility of the lowest order, Hatterr visits even saints of India, gains knowledge and wisdom, and then tests them further in life only to find them contradictory. What gives the comic touch to the novel is his being a product of two opposed cultures, and the limitations of his empirical approach to life. B. Parvathi's paper on Narayan's *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* discusses the novel from various angles—thematic as well as structural, and praises Narayan's use of myth symbolizing conflict between forces of good and evil, the circular structure of the novel, and the "mellifluous enlightening and also purifying qualities" of Narayan's humour.

A few other papers could hardly be called stimulating and illuminating Hilda Pontes' paper on Anand's *Untouchable* is a clumsy presentation with rather long quotations of the existing critical material. Mohan Jha's paper on Chaman Nahal's *Azadi* consists of multi-angled summaries of the novel with liberal sprinklings of superlative epithets. Ujwala Patil's article on Desai's *Fire on the Mountain* dwells on the theme of guilt and rape but without giving illuminating conclusions. However, Laxmi Sinha's perceptive essay on Sahgal's *Storm in Chandigarh* correlates the political theme of the novel with the crisis in the lives of married couples, pointing out that the novelist's suggestion of recognising each other's individuality is a key to good relationships.

The book has been very well produced with nearly errorfree phototype-set, quality paper and printing, good get-up even if it is somewhat expensive. However, one cannot fail to notice some confusion in the use of various types as seen in the indented quotations invariably given in italics. Since there is not much of training to students upto Master's degree in the use of critical tools in Indian institutions, the published critical books are often taken as models by researchers, and hence the duty of editors in keeping their books free from these flaws assumes more significance.

As the dearth of good critical material still remains a problem for ever-hungry students and researchers, anthologies, like the present one, are bound to be extremely useful in highlighting some of the obscure works, in discussing the new ones, and in removing the cobwebs of confusing critical opinions from the popular works.

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Studies in Indian English Literature: M. K. Naik.
(New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1987), pp-179. Rs. 100

With its fast-growing scope and appreciation the Indian English literature has established itself in an indisputable position. The Indian writing in English in its scope is extremely rich and diverse with observable varied and contradictory tendencies and is still evolving and susceptible to the literary trends developed in India and abroad. To acclimatize themselves with this literary trend, the scholars and critics alike have initiated critical appraisal and research on various aspects of the subject. A still greater ovation to Indian English Literature is its induction into the syllabi of various Indian Universities. All these have created a need for better exposure to ideas; personal bearings, social, political and ethical tempera-

ments, biographical details of Indian authors and a systematic critical review of their works.

M. K. Naik's *Studies in Indian English Literature* is a scholarly attempt to conceptualize Indian writing in English both thematically and in its form and style. Naik is quite successful in establishing different authors, points of view in this work. Seriousness of attitude and tone, frustration over life, problems of existentialism, unconscious elements of every disillusioned modern mind, the clash of contra-cultural trends among various societies and, above all the urge for freedom from social, political and moral exploitation of the time constitute the serious literature of the present age. All these have found the most lucid description in Naik's book in relation to his study of different Indian authors.

Spanning the entire work over twelve chapters, Naik touches every branch of Indian English writing, viz, prose, fiction, drama, short stories, poetry and aesthetics wherein he discusses various aspects of Indian writing in respect of each writer. There are four essays (two general and two on individual poets) on poetry, three on fiction, one on short story, two on drama and one each on essay and aesthetics.

The first essay is on G. V. Desani's *All About H. Hatterr* in which Naik discusses with rich practical applicability, the form and the structure of the novel. He underlines the frequent use of the proper names loaded with symbolic, allegorical and ironic significance, and takes into consideration the views of Anthony Burgess and S. C. Harrex to arrive at a balanced judgement. This well-written and thought-provoking article is to be chiefly noted for Naik's analysis of the speech pattern specimens, which, to say the least, is admirable. The thesis of Naik's second article on Raja Rao is contained in the following lines:

> As Raja Rao's vision develops, the role of the external world in his fiction inevitably changes in consonance with the pressures of his central thematic concern (p.34).

Naik also analyses the symbols of Raja Rao with some very appropriate comments. In the third chapter, on Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* Naik states that identity crisis is the central theme of the novel. He attempts to make this clear in the following observation:

> *Midnight's Children* is a many-faceted novel which invites scrutiny at once as an autobiographical *bildungsroman*, a picturesque narrative, a political allegory, and an experiment in form and style with elements drawn from Rabelais, Sterne, Joyce and Gunter Grass. While each of these facets is of absorbing interest, its is the study of the central theme unifying all these that is perhaps the most rewarding: this is the theme of identity and its fate in a hostile world (p.46).

The next essay on Manjeri Isvaran's short stories makes a study of nine short-story collections by a writer who is not a very well-known name in the field. Most probably, Naik has included this essay which he had written on some other occasion.

The next four chapters are devoted to various aspects of poetry. In chapter V Naik attempts to find out the Indianness of Indian poetry. He discusses here some well-known and even commonplace things to drive home his point of view. Here it may be pointed out that there is no single featrue which alone can claim the epithet "Indianness". It could be in theme, imagery, language and even in style. Naik explores in vain to find the Indianness of Indian poetry. The next essay, "Alienation and the contemporary Indian English poet" is based on a generalisation. How alienation is rooted in the consciousness of an Indian English poet remains the chief concern of Naik in this essay, which thereby makes interesting reading. The third essay, on K. N. Daruwallah, is a fine research article which analyses Daruwallah's poetry as "drama-talk", much like the second voice in Eliot's "Three Voices of Poetry" i. e. the voice of the poet addressing an audience, whether large or small. In "Two Worlds: the Imagery of Jayanta Mahapatra", Naik analyses Mahapatra's imagery, dividing them into two types—external and internal, the former in relation to nature and landscape and the latter in relation to body and its physical function. The images drawn from science and religion make an extremely interesting reading of Mahapatra's poetry. Here Naik rightly maintains that "a close examination of his (Mahapatra's) symbols shows that the associative process is most fruitful when a bridge has been constructed between the two worlds" (p 115).

The next two chapters are on the plays of Asif Currimbhoy and on Girish Karnad's drama *Tughlaq* in comparison with Camus' *Caligula*. These two articles, though informative and interesting, do not appear to have the same high quality of wisdom and judgement that Naik has shown in other essays. This is inevitable perhaps, depending on the subject itself.

The most controversial essay in the book is on "Nirad C. Choudhary's First Publication", which could be read more profitably as a historical document than as a literary essay. This is an essay on the military warfare of the country during the British Raj. The next essay "Defence of India" is highly informative and patriotic in nature, though the author has not aimed at making a comprehensive study of the subject.

The last chapter entitled "Towards an aesthetics of Indian English literature" shows Naik's deep interest in and great concern for Indian English literature. Naik here aptly bewails the sad state of criticism in Indian English literature and rightly pleads for maintaining critical standards

keeping in view the ancient Indian literary tradition on the one hand and the recent Anglo-American criticism on the other. He urges upon the critics to take stock of the ancient Indian poetics and to apply their minds to evaluate the works of art in that light. An extremely suggestive and informative essay, it makes a correct critical appraisal of the state of Indian criticism and the study of Indian aesthetics

In conclusion it may be said that to read Naik's book on Indian studies is a rich and rewarding experience. Although the essays in the collection are rather uneven in quality, which is perhaps chiefly due to the nature of the subject and the time and the occasion of their composition, each essay does make a fresh analysis of the subject that it deals with. The first and the last essays are the two outstanding pieces in the collection dealing with two major aspects of Indian literature in English. In general, however, it may be said that intricate and controversial problems are discussed here with bewitching urbanity, wit and wisdom. The title of the book may not appear to be very appropriate as the author does not make a systematic study of Indian English literature; on the contrary, it is a collection of essays on some important as well as some rather minor authors and works. Naik is a humanistic critic who pleads for tolerance and compassion in the assessment and appreciation of the work of art, and this book does to some extent fill the vacuum in a particularly neglected field of criticism on Indian literature. On the whole the book can be read with great pleasure and profit by the common readers as well as scholars.

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Neema: Ramesh K. Srivastava (Calcutta: Writers Workshop, 1987), pp. 219. Rs. 100 (hardback), Rs. 60. (flexiback),

Ramesh K. Srivastava (Professor of English, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar) has already published plenty of critical writings on American, English and Indian-English literatures—he has half a dozen critical books, besides several research papers, to his credit—and is a well-known figure

in academic circles. He is the fourth professor-turned fictionist in English, the others being Chaman Nahal, M. V. Rama Sarma and V. A. Shahane. *Neema* is the maiden attempt of Ramesh Srivastava at novel-writing, although he has already three volumes of short stories—*Love and Animality* (1983), *Cooperative Colony* (1985) and *Men and Masks* (1986)—published by Writers Workshop.

For a first novel, *Neema* strikes us as quite remarkable, far exceeding our expectations. With his very first novel Srivastava has gained the honour of standing alongside Mulk Raj Anand, as, after Anand's *Gauri*, Srivastava's *Neema* is the second novel in Indian-English literature that is written by a male exploring the sensibility of a female with stupendous conviction and confidence. It is the first-person narrative in which Srivastava has delved deep into the feminine psyche with an astonishing artistic finesse.

Neema relates the pathetic tale of a young woman who marches forward braving several hardships and battling against numerous social hurdles created by the threadbare morality of the middle class. Neema, the chief protagonist in the novel, is loved by quite a few persons. Wherever she is, she is looked upon as a sex-object. She loves Chaman Lal but because of the hindrance caused by the caste system, she fails to marry him. Considering the misery of her old father confronted with the problem of dowry, she marries a widower who is a poet. Her husband, Jeevan Jyoti, had once run into trouble with a politician whose henchmen had made him impotent. Though old values make her hesitate to have extra-marital sex, Rasik Lal, her husband's cousin staying in the same house, takes advantage of the situation and seduces her. When her husband charges her with having illicit sex, she justifies it giving several examples when even Gods had it. She gets pregnant by Rasik Lal. As her pregnancy advances, her mother-in-law beats her and ultimately drives her out. Jeevan Jyoti dies of shock and shame. She goes to Pushpendra Kumar (her cousin's husband) who had once offered to marry her—but it was too late. Chaman Lal is kidnapped by dacoits and she discovers Rasik Lal in jail who refuses to acknowledge her as his wife. After a lot of trials and tribulations, she ultimately finds solace with her old friend Sunnoo who has come back from Dubai with lots of riches and who marries Neema before she gives birth to her child.

Throughout, the novel is highly gripping, no doubt. There are several bends and twists in the narrative that keep our interest from flagging. The theme of the novel is very bold and meaningful and it tries to sanctify a woman's extra-marital sex in case her hubby is incapable of meeting the basic demand of her overpowering instinct of motherhood. Demonstrating

technical maturity, Srivastava dexterously handles this out-of-the-run theme that substantially contributes to the cause of middle-class women's emancipation from constricting social taboos and obsolete morality. Srivastava certainly merits credit. Chapter 19, giving illustrations of extra-marital sex of Gods from Indian mythology, has been deftly worked into the thematic texture of the novel. The structure of the novel is well-built; it never creaks or lurches. What is really admirable is Srivastava's complete identification with the chief protagonist in the novel. He so realistically depicts her sensibility as well as her natural response to various situations that we forget that the writer of the novel is a male. Certainly, this is no mean achievement of Srivastava. This novel makes a positive contribution to Indian-English fiction, no doubt, and we justifiably look forward to some more novels to flow from the pen of Ramesh K. Srivastava.

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A Select Listing of Indian Contribution to English Studies during 1986

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