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Understanding Paradox

P. DHANAVEL

To speak about paradox at this stage of current literary scholarship, criticism and theory may itself be paradoxical, for most of the recent theories are supposed to be a sharp reaction against the totalizing, monistic and ahistorical close reading of new criticism. However, a close look at paradox reveals that it is not a tool of any particular school or movement of criticism because paradox is life and literature. Here is a diachronic attempt to examine, define, and classify paradox and to suggest that there is a constant need to study literature from the angle of paradox.

Etymologically, the term paradox is traced back to the Greek root *paradoxon,* which consists of *para* meaning "contrary to" or "against," and *doxa* denoting "opinion." Thus originally, paradox meant a statement or an opinion which was in conflict with the generally received ideas and opinions. However, the related term *paradoxia* denoted "marvelousness" and another term *paradoxologeo* had the meaning of "to tell marvels." Similarly, *paradoxos* referred to "incredible." Tracing all these meanings and holding that paradox was larger than a simple contradiction, Michiko Yusa adds that it is in the sense of "miraculous" that the word *paradoxa* is found in verse 26 of chapter 5 in the *Gospel of St. Luke.*[1]

Lexically, "paradox" has several shades of meanings depending upon the branch of knowledge in which it is used—logic, physical science, geography, psychology, and literature, for instance. Generally, "a logical paradox is composed of two contrary, or contradictory statements, both of which seem to have good supporting arguments."[2] It may be resolved as in the case of Zeno's paradoxes like "Achilles and the Tortoise" and the "Arrow Paradox" with the help of special logical frameworks. It may not be resolved as in the case of the Liar Paradox of Epimenides, the Cretan. These two varieties of logical paradox are known as syntactic and semantic paradox respectively.[3]

A literary artist may not use the philosophical, logical, and mathe-

matical paradoxes in his work, but there is every possibility of an author employing paradoxes similar to that of the Liar Paradox, which is characterized by indeterminacy and self-reference. In fact, the postmodern literature and criticism have been enlarged by the self-referential and indeterminate features of modern man. An interesting case in point relates to the last two lines from Archibald MacLeish's famous poem "Ars Poetica"—"A poem should not mean/But be." These lines were used by the New Critics as a slogan against meaning hunting exercises in literature. But the post-New Critics have pointed out that the slogan occurs in a poem and so have asked whether this meaning should be taken seriously.[4]

If logic thrives on identifying and solving paradoxes, religion is founded on paradox. Almost all religions posit a God who is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. These absolute characteristics of God have always been paradoxical because several happenings in the world belie the absolute nature of God. If God is all-powerful, many metaphysical questions would not have arisen: Why is there evil? Why are millions of innocent people murdered now and then? Why are there so many wars? Why are there numerous natural calamities? Why are people so materialistic? In fact, there are any number of questions of this kind which amount to challenge the very existence and nature of God. At the same time, men have found it difficult to live without a God. That is why, whenever the death of God is announced, it is always followed by the birth of God. Therefore, a religious paradox may be described as one that is concerned with the apparently contradictory nature of God and other religious problems.

Specifically, Christianity is a paradoxical religion, for it presumes that Jesus Christ both the Son of God and the Son of Man on the one hand, and that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are one and the same, that is, the Holy Trinity, on the other. Owing to these and other fundamental questions, several Christian churches have been established in an effort to resolve the paradoxes—Catholic, Protestant, Methodist, Quaker, Lutheran, Pentecostal, Unitarian, and so on.

Several philosophical attempts have also been made to solve these religious questions. One easy option is to deny God altogether. Another equally easy way out is not to worry about God. But a concerned believer will have to understand the paradoxical nature of God. This is what the Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard did. He believed that the theory of Incarnation was the "absolute paradox" par excellence, because it could not be explained in any rational terms. Therefore, he postulated what was called the leap of faith, which could enable a man to believe in Christ as both God and Man.[5] It is no wonder, then, that

the Christian values have been paradoxical as O'Connor indicates.[6] It may be added that the Christian literature of the West has invariably dealt with the theme of the theory of Incarnation. The most notable twentieth-century writers are T.S. Eliot and Daniel Berrigan. In this context of faith and reason, a relevant observation of Yusa may be cited. Historically and epistemologically, he says, "the problem of paradox and logic can be understood as a translation of the perpetual problem of the West, namely, that of faith and reason." (194)

Since the nature of religion is paradoxical, it has been argued by many (for example, Brown[7]) that the language of religion, that is, the religious discourse, is also paradoxical. Since the religious discourse has to deal with the unknown and mysterious in known and familiar terms, it cannot but be paradoxical. Heraclitus, for instance, defined God in a series of oxymorons as "day night, winter summer, war peace, satiety hunger." (Yusa 192) The Bible, for another instance, is full of paradoxes. To cite only two instances: "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it" (Matthew 10:39), and "We are treated as impostors, and yet are true as unknown, and yet well known, as dying, and behold we live as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything." (2 Corinthians 6:9-10) These examples show that the language of religion is paradoxical.

There is a widespread belief that science is logical, precise, objective, and experimental, and therefore, it is held that it is incapable of admitting paradoxes. But it is a fact that the absolute Newtonian science has turned out to be the relative Einsteinian science. The geocentric world of Pythagoras has become the heliocentric world of Galileo. Now there is no guarantee about the eternal validity of the existing systems of scientific beliefs. Besides, there are still numerous inexplicable phenomena. Entropy is a most interesting paradoxical notion in science. The wave-particle theory in Optics is another notable paradox. Donald Baille had shown in geography that it is impossible to represent the curved surface of the earth on a flat piece of paper accurately, for it will involve a distortion either in shape or in area, though there can be two different maps for each of them separately. Hence, both of them are required for a better understanding which is certainly preferable to a partial view of reality. (Gentz, 776-77) In psychology of representation, especially that of visual perception, Gombrich has identified a paradox called visual paradox.[8] When a pictorial representation appears to simultaneously have two or more than two meanings, it is said to be visual paradox. Gombrich illustrates his concept through the "Rabbit or duck?" picture. From one angle, the picture looks like a rabbit and from another, a duck

with its beak. Another well known illustration of visual paradox is that of the goblet or two profiles picture. In this, the same figure appears as a goblet which is the light portion and as two profiles which is the dark portion. The ambiguity or the paradoxical element arises from the figure ground relationship which poses difficulty for the perceiver in deciding which is the figure and which is the background.[9] The root cause of this problem is diagnosed by Gombrich as the limitation of pictographic representation in "differentiating what belongs to the picture and what belongs to the intended reality." (303) Evidently, then, howsoever the scientists may try to avoid paradoxes, they will have to come to terms with them sooner or later.

The meaning of paradox has explicitly been defined in literature as in logic. J.A. Cuddon, for example, says, a paradox is "an apparently self-contradictory (even absurd) statement which, on closer inspection, is found to contain a truth reconciling the conflicting opposites."[10] This is the kind of definition which is normally found in the encyclopedias, dictionaries, glossaries and handbooks of literature.[11] Though Cleanth Brooks is largely responsible for establishing a respectable place for paradox in criticism, his discussion of the term in *Understanding Poetry*[12] and *An Approach to Literature*[13] also suggests the generally received meaning of paradox. However, there is much more to paradox in Brooks's essay "The Language of Paradox," as O'Connor points out. He adds that two tendencies of paradox can be found in Brooks's essay—(a) situational and (b) verbal. Rosalie L. Colie too adds another dimension to paradox. She seems to suggest a difference between verbal paradox and rhetorical paradox. While the latter is associated with such authors as Gorgias and Isocrates in antiquity, and Erasmus, Thomas More and Robert Burton in the Renaissance, the former is seen in connection with poets like John Donne, John Dryden and Alexander Pope. Therefore, it is possible to have a clear distinction among situational, verbal and rhetorical paradoxes, though a certain overlapping is inevitable. Further, it is possible to have a broad and comprehensive definition inclusive of all kinds of paradox used in literature. Then, paradox may be defined as a statement or a person or a thing or a situation or an unorthodox opinion or a radical argument that appears to be self-contradictory or absurd or enigmatic or unsettling to the common sense, but proves to make profound sense on close examination.

Obviously, a situational paradox points to a self-contradictory situation in which are found sharp discrepancies between, for example, words and deeds, the real and the ideal, the actual and the expected, cause and effect, the general and particular, and so on. To substantiate further, certain common situations may be cited. When more money is

required for advanced research in the academia, the government is reducing the budget allocation for this purpose. When more money is spent for higher education, the quality of education deteriorates further and further. The unemployed youth may not get jobs but well-established people may be wanted in several places of work. When a poet wants to publish his poems, he may be rejected mercilessly. But when he achieves popularity, every magazine editor may request the poet earnestly again and again to give a poem for his magazine, even if it is of poor quality. The universal image of the voyager of the stormy sea is a wonderful example. When the sailor needs help, people will try to drown him. But when he reaches the shore, he may be welcomed with laurels. The Second World War situation is again worth noting. Thousands of young Americans got their sustenance by getting employment in the war, which was worse than destructive. Such instances may be multiplied innumerously but these examples go to show that a situational paradox arises from an unexpected situation which may be absurd and even mysterious at times. In such paradoxical situations, one invariably tends to ask: What is this life? Is it worth living? Who is responsible for these pathetic and also ludicrous situations? and so on. The poets of the world, being more sensitive than most, respond to them and record them vividly in poetry.

Literature is full of situational paradoxes which are more often understood as paradoxical situations. A wife may get her husband killed as in *Hamlet*; a husband may kill his wife as in *Othello*; a father may cruelly be betrayed by his own daughters as in *King Lear*; a host may murder his guest in his own residence as in *Macbeth*; and an emperor may give up his empire for the sake of a notorious woman as in *Antony and Cleopatra*. Even the simple poems of William Wordsworth like "Michael" and "Resolution and Independence" embody profound paradoxes of life. Luke, Michael's son, who goes to town to fetch fortunes for salvaging his father's property, destroys his father by ruining himself in the ways of urban life. If Luke, the promising young boy, becomes hopeless, the old leech gatherer is a great stoical figure who induces hope in the despondent poet, which is none of his business. Both these poems are equally pathetic because they are profoundly paradoxical.

If a situational paradox depends on the resources of conflicting contexts, a verbal paradox relies on the resources of linguistic and literary conventions, especially figures like oxymoron, pun, antithesis, and so on. If a situational paradox presents a self-contradictory situation, a verbal paradox takes the form of a self-contradictory statement or a clause or a phrase. It may say one thing and contradict it immediately within a

sentence or a piece of discourse. It may be juxtaposition of opposite words and phrases. In certain cases, it may involve a process of equalization of opposites as well.

Verbal paradoxes are more easily visible and equally abundant in literature. Shakespeare, for example, affords plenty of verbal paradoxes in his plays: "It is a custom/More honored in the breach than the observance" (*Hamlet* 1:4:14); "The robbed that smiles steals something from the thief" (*Othello* 1:3:208); "Striving to better, oft we mar what's well" (*King Lear* 1:4:370); "Fair is foul and foul is fair" (*Macbeth* 1:1:11); "No worse husband than the best of men" (*Antony and Cleopatra* 2:2:135); "Cowards die many times before their death;/The valiant never taste of death but once" (*Julius Caesar* 2:2:32); and "When my love swears that she is made of truth/I do believe her, though I know she lies" (Sonnet 138). His contemporary, John Donne, is famous for puzzling verbal paradoxes. Addressing death, Donne says in Holy Sonnet X: "One short sleep past, we wake eternally,/And death shall be no more; death, thou shall die."

Rousseau's well known sentence "Man is born free and is everywhere in chains" from *The Social Contract* points to a basic paradoxical condition of man. Similarly, George Orwell's famous line "All are equal but some are more equal than others" from his allegorical and satirical novel *Animal Farm* sums up the tyranny of any totalitarian state. Obviously ludicrous but deeply meaningful statements like "War is peace," "Freedom is slavery," and "Ignorance is strength" are from Orwell's dystopia, *1984*.

The different kinds of verbal paradox may be discussed in this context. Usually, a paradox is distinguished from an oxymoron on the assumption that a paradox involves a whole sentence whereas an oxymoron generally involves two contrary words. Therefore, it is said that a paradox is an "expanded oxymoron and an oxymoron is a condensed paradox." (Wales, 332) For example, the phrase "terrible beauty" is from W.B. Yeats's poem "Easter 1916." Oxymoron has more often been the vehicle of intense and deep feelings of love, secular and spiritual. For instance, the Petrarchan lovers burn in a sea of ice and drown amidst fire. This Petrarchan conceit is very common in love poetry in general. One of the frequently cited and memorable oxymoronic passages is from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*:

> Why, then, O brawling love, O loving hate,
> O anything! Of nothing first create
> O heavy lightness! serious vanity!
> Mis-shaper of chaos of well-seeming forms!

> Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health!
> (1:1:174-78)

Similarly, the religious experiences of several mystics have also been expressed oxymoronically.

Like oxymoron, pun is also distinguished from paradox, but actually pun is a means of verbal paradox as Colie[14] points out. The amount of significance given to pun in recent theory is seen from Jonathan Culler's collection of essays *On Puns*. Historically, pun has been thought of as a cheap form of linguistic entertainment as is evident from Jonathan Swift's reference to the Greek root *fundum*, which means "bottom." Interestingly, however, Culler relates it to "foundation" and argues that pun is "the foundation of letters," which phrase, incidentally, is the sub-title of Culler's volume. Since pun operates in multiple directions centrifugally, it is valued for its capacity to break down the commonsensical barriers to understanding literature. Thus Culler argues that pun is a paradigm for the play of language as traditionally metaphor is. There are several kinds of pun involving different types of word play from omitting a letter or syllable (paronomasia), homonymous words with two or more than two meanings (antanaclasis), one word connecting two structures conveying quite different senses (syllepsis-zeugma), jumbling of words (anagrams and palindrome) to combining two or more than two words to make new words (portmanteau), and so on. All these techniques of pun, especially that of the portmanteau word, *a la* Derek Atridge, reveal that "meaning is an effect of language, not a presence within or behind language, and that the effect is unstable and uncontrollable."[15]

Paradox in general is a rhetorical device for a rhetorical effect. However, there is need to distinguish the rhetorical paradox from the situation and verbal paradoxes. A rhetorical paradox is characterized by an unorthodox or even a counter-orthodox argumentative vigour with the specific aim of placing ideas, things, persons, and so on in an unusual and even shocking perspective. In other words, it aims at valorizing a usually underprivileged term, thing or idea with all argumentative supports. In this context, the words of Rosalie L. Colie may be quoted to describe as well as illustrate the rhetorical paradox:

> The rhetorical paradox was a standard epideitic type, a praise of something commonly regarded as unpraiseworthy (a nut, an ass, tyranny or a given tyrant, Thersites, Helen), a defence of something contrary to received opinion or to the audience's expectations of the orator (folly, "nothing," "nobody," a new theory of mo-

> tion, a new astronomical model). Such assignments were evidently set the young dialectician as tests of his control over logic and rhetoric, the *dissoi logoi* and various *aporia* are likely the impossible or indeterminate problems serving as exercises in mental agility. (76)

Evidently, Colie's description of rhetorical paradox focuses on the rhetorical, that is, the persuasive dimension of the same as an exercise in the mental ability of the paradoxist and, of course, the audience too. In fact, such was the aim and practice in the ancient period and it is still so. A serious consideration of this leads to an understanding as to why literature, a rhetorically paradoxical enterprise, has always been in need of defending itself in the form of "defence of poetry," which has become a distinct mode of discourse *per se* against the parameter of the correctness of truth-value set by philosophy, logic, science, history, and so on. It is also very interesting paradoxically to note that the very thinkers who rejected or reject literature have been conscious or unconscious agents in promoting literature, which accounts for the constant need to revitalize literature in order to convince the "common reader" of literary pleasures and profits.

Desiderus Erasmus's *Praise of Folly* and Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* are two famous examples of rhetorical paradox. Personified as a woman, Folly says that all men are foolish and she attempts to awaken them from their foolishness. As well known, the merciless satire of Erasmus expedited the process of Reformation in the Church. Similarly, melancholy is given a superior rein in *Anatomy of Melancholy*, which Colie considers "a remarkably paradoxical work" (80) and uses it to illustrate the paradoxical method. First, a paradoxical work has a generalized statement such as "All men are melancholy" in *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Second, it has discussions on a wide range of topics including certain standard paradoxes such as "exile, imprisonment, virginity, nescience, self-love, suicide." (81) Third, it has many self-references to the author and to his book, resulting in inconclusiveness. Fourth, it uses learned authorities only to abuse or reject them. Lastly, the whole book is a concealed paradox in the sense that it challenges the prevalent knowledge of psychology and shows the inadequacies. However, it does not purport to offer any solutions. Then, what it is, to quote Colie, is "an epistemological study, an examination of the nature of human thought by means of human thought, a knowing consideration of human knowledge which shows how powerful is human unknowing." In addition to folly and melancholy, there are a number of topics within the range of rhetorical paradox: nothing, nobody, nowhere, and so on.

All paradoxes, irrespective of their kinds and field of occurrence, have certain common characteristics, functions and uses. To begin with, they are self-contradictory, self-critical and self-referential. As an example, the Blackboard paradox discussed by Gombrich may be considered: "The only statement on this blackboard is untrue." He comments: "If it is true, it is untrue true." (239) Obviously, there is only one statement on the blackboard which negates its own meaning because it refers to itself and thus acquires the paradoxical characteristic of self-negation through self-reference. Next, howsoever carefully a paradox may be formulated, it always, inclines to indeterminacy, that is, the right, wrong, appropriate or correct meaning is difficult to determine. For instance, Zeno's logical paradox of "Achilles and the Tortoise" shows that Achilles does not ever catch the tortoise and the tortoise probably does not ever reach the finish line either. In such cases, it is difficult to decide what is what for certain. Then, as a result of the self-referential, self-critical and indeterminate nature, paradoxes tend to encourage relativistic tendencies, which indicates a multiplicity of value scales. They also challenge the exactness and correctness of conventions by which they claim their correctness. While the precision of paradoxes provide for stability, their indeterminacy makes room for instability and uneasiness. Above all, they "oscillate between dialectical extremes, equivocate by their words, and in their structure, reach a tenuous transparency of meaning maintained largely by control of technical skills in logical and rhetorical expression." (Colie, 77) It may be added here that Culler's discussion of paradox in *On Deconstruction* is similar to that of Colie.[16] In sum, paradoxes are self-contradictory, self-critical, self-referential, indeterminate, undecidable, equivocal, relativistic, non-judgemental and inconclusive. These are the adjectives that are commonly found in contemporary criticism and theory of all persuasions.

Paradoxes may be said to have three closely interrelated functions. Chiefly, they test the limits of reasoning. Consequently, they provide scope for a better and more comprehensive way of understanding reality. And lastly, they are the most suitable means for man to have access to the non-rational realm of experience in all walks of life, including poetry and religion. In all cases, paradoxes attract immediate attention and provoke thinking in new ways. In literature, paradoxes are not a mere display of the author's wit but are an integral part of the form and content of literature.

Paradox in poetry is inherent and inevitable, especially when the poet himself is a paradox. The great poets like William Shakespeare, John Milton and P.B. Shelley are paradoxes in themselves and their poetry is no less an expression of their personality. A well argued case for

paradox in poetry has been made by Thomas de Quincey in his *Autobiography* which is worth quoting at length:

> to speak in the mere simplicity of truth, so mysterious is human nature, and so little read by him who runs, that almost every weighty aspect of truth upon that theme will be found at first sight to be startling, or something paradoxical. And so little need is there for chasing or courting paradox that on the contrary, he who is faithful to his own experiences will find all his efforts little enough to keep down the paradoxical air besieging much of what he knows to be truth. No man needs to *search* for paradox in this world of ours. Let him simply confine himself to the truth, and he will find paradox growing everywhere under his hands as rank of weeds. (O'Connor, 598)

Paradoxes are as common as weeds, but surprisingly, paradoxical studies of poets and poetry are not so. Perhaps, Louis Untermeyer's *Heinrich Heine: Paradox and Poet* (1937) and Edward Wagenknecht's *John Greenleaf Whittier: A Portrait in Paradox*,[17] both biographies, are exceptions. Of course, Cleanth Brooks's critical studies have earned a distinct place in contemporary criticism. However, there is a need to study all poets from the paradoxical angle, for the universe is nothing if not a knotty paradox.

Paradox, then, is paradoxical: it is neither new critical nor deconstructive; it is life, after all. It may not be all but it points to all dimensions of life. Therefore, it cannot fall out of the critical field. Instead of recognizing it as aporia, or rupture or polyphony, or disjunction, it may be useful to continue to realize the inescapable necessity of being alive to paradox whatsoever form or content it may appear in.

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Unity: The Aesthetic of Irony

RAJESHWARI PATEL

Any unity which does not comprehend a dialectical tension, arising from an interaction of diametrically opposed entities, is a unity that lacks strength and productive power. A theory of unity without diversity is either totally irrelevant or too fundamental to be dealt with. It is a naive mind that would accept a simple unity which does not hold against the complexity of experience. Philosophy is now turning to a theory of the organic development of the person that aims at enhancing every department of thought and perception by means of integration. The preoccupation with unity suggests that as an expression of the manifold facets of man's personality, human culture has been aspiring right from the beginning for a total and unified development that comprehends a diversity of interests without neglecting any.

Progress in the S-matrix theory and Bell's theorem in Modern Physics has brought in the notion of order, basic unity or fundamental interrelatedness as a key element in our understanding of reality. Leaving the Cartesian view behind, physicists are leading us to a holistic and intrinsically dynamic conception of the universe. The fundamental theory of natural evolution has gone beyond the mechanistic model held by Newton. Darwin's Evolutionary Theory and the latest findings in electrodynamics clearly indicate that the Universe (and, in turn, man) is more complex than Descartes and Newton made it out to be. Even thought arises by virtue of the undifferentiated existence suddenly acquiring a break in its unity. All potentialities are unities, actual realizations are not.

In Aesthetics, the concept of unity may be traced back to the earliest times—to Plato who was the first among Western thinkers to propose an artistic doctrine of unity. He suggested, in connection with the musical scales, that unity is a reconciliation of opposites. Horace conceived of a unity of effect achieved by a careful ordering and arrangement. He made it analogous to music and painting in terms of a harmonious blending of colours, light, etc. Longinus derived it from an intensity of feeling that

would artistically reconcile opposing elements by a process of selection.[1]

When we look at the pre-Copernican or Ptolemaic period, we find man living in a naive assumption that he is the centre of the universe. The old metaphysics also led him to believe so, and the classical notion of order persisted, sustaining his simple dream of unity till we come to the modern post-Copernican era.

Until the eighteenth century, man was fairly confident that the world was well-ordered and made for man. Hume's contention that reality as we see it is an illusion, and Kant's that our mind is in a position to constitute the structures by which it lives, shattered this complacency. Kant, the philosophical Copernicus, made the perceiving "I" all-important because he gave to the mind the power to constitute the categories of reality. If the Kantian alternative pushed the choice on to the subject and insisted on the mind's power to impose order, it did not remove the sense of insecurity.

In this context, the romantic conception of the possibilities inherent in the subject and the poetic imagination gathered new and enlarged meanings. It sought to bring dichotomy together into an organic unity in terms of a Unity of Feeling, Unity as Vision of an immanent God in Nature, Unity achieved by mediation of the imagination acting in its capacity as a symbol-making faculty and, above all, Unity as the imagination's repetition in the finite mind of the poet of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I Am. The neoclassical writers and the philosophy of the Enlightenment had entertained as essentially monopolar view. Unlike them, the romantics resisted the making of choices. Applying the Coleridgean ideal of reconciliation, they converted the "either-or" to an "either and or" way of looking at things. By balancing sameness with difference in a productive unity, they kept both sides together and yet apart.

The disturbing question is—is the unity that we perceive a fabrication of our mind? Is it self-imposed because we are genetically programmed to prefer order? Though Yeats accepted that it is the totalitarian mind that has given allowance to an impositional unity, a pathetically human acceptance of the reality of illusion, he also felt that heroism lies in the poet's attempt to create meaning out of apparent disorder—"dream and so create," out of "poet's imaginings,"

> All those things whereof
> Man makes a superhuman
> Mirror-resembling dream.[2]

The poet's "dreams shall have the potency to defeat the actual at every point."[3]

Though the power of the word has been subverted in our times, Whitehead would concede that the minimal order we live by is the order of words. Verbalization as a spatialization of time might still give a fairly adequate representation of the fluidity of human experience. The organic unity of a work of art is not passive or static. It embodies the dynamic quality of life itself. It give aesthetic form to emotions by re-enacting the fullness of experience by means of a complexity of context that takes into account the continual oscillation between opposing poles. It is this kind of poetic integration that we find in much of the later poetry of W.B. Yeats. Coleridge calls it a "tendency at once to individuate and to connect, to detach but so as either to retain or reproduce attachment." When the productive unity involves itself in the double act of reproducing as well as separating itself by a kind of dialectical thesis and antithesis, the unity it maintains becomes one of interchange. Yeats's poetry of dialogue, wherein the persona speaks from two poles of his being, seeks to capture the complexity and completeness of experience. The legendary heroes of his early poetry that were objectifications of subjective experience and conflict proved dissatisfying. He needed a more powerful mode of expression that would bring together different voices in a single poem. "A Dialogue of Self and Soul" and "Ego Dominus Tuus" exemplify this approach.

As Abrams suggests, "inclusiveness" has become the criterion of poetic excellence.[4] The individual work becomes a dialectical structure conceiving in its own multiplicity the unity of its form. It was Coleridge's belief that spontaneity gets its impulse from a productive tension with the Will which invigorates the imagination to shape and modify all the elements in a poem into a unified effect.

Richards comes close to the Coleridgean concept when he makes a distinction between two types of poetry. One is the poetry which excludes the opposite and discordant qualities of an experience, and the other is poetry of the inclusive kind which resolves the discord via the imagination to achieve a larger unity. In *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge says that a poet is one who, in ideal perfection, brings: "the whole soul of man into activity. . . . He diffuses a tone and spirit of unity that blends and (as it were) fuses, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination. This power . . . reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities."[5] The poetry of inclusion is, as Brooks puts it, "richer, more complicated, and more thoroughly detached from local issues and actions. Because of the nature of language

it appears more interesting, and because of the nature of human experience, more honest."[6]

A poetry that appeals to only one set of impulses would be 'partisan.' For Richards, the answer is in "irony, which will allow opposing impulses to be aroused simultaneously."[7] This is not the irony of "simple inversion." Richards' conception of irony seems to demand "that the poem, while stating one view . . . should by ambiguity or some other device present the opposite view at the same time."[8] It relates closely to irony in Schlegel's sense of the term which, as Paz defines it, is "love for the contradiction which lives in each of us, and awareness of this contradiction." Irony, that great invention of the Romantics, says Paz, reveals "the duality of what seemed whole, the split in what is identical, the other side of reason; it is the disruption of the principle of identity."[9] It shields the artist from the accusation that the unified vision has been too easily attained.

Yeats's "Sailing to Byzantium" embodies this ironic attitude. Though the speaker has undertaken a journey away from a country which is not for "old men," he talks of "that country" with a vehemence that betrays a hidden bitterness because it no longer belongs to him. This complex reaction is captured with a kind of poignancy in the irony of the last two lines of the first stanza:

> Caught in that sensual music all neglect
> Monuments of unaging intellect. (217)

If we go by Brooks' justification of the ironic mode in its ability to handle with greater fairness the complex texture of reality, then "Sailing to Byzantium" shows not the difficulty or impossibility of making a choice but the complexity involved in making one.

Without irony the poetic context would become bare and simplistic. Irony becomes a principle by which to remain invulnerable against attack. Warren clarifies: "the poet wishes to indicate that his vision has been earned, that it can survive reference to the complexities or contradictions of experience. And irony is one such device of reference."[10] But, is this "unity" a merely formal affair? Even if it is validated by an authentic transformation from within, how are we to actually penetrate the poem/persona and reach the person?

There are two kinds of unity—Coleridge's unity—as being found in the genesis of the mind of the poet, and the metaphysical unity which involves a certain amount of "willing." Coleridge's unity inheres in the mind of the poet, while the metaphysical one is verbal and semantic, and is embodied at the imagistic level.

Though Yeats resorted to "words" because "Words alone are certain good," he did not approve of a merely formal, verbal unity on the "semantic" surface. It is not what a poem says that matters, but what it is. Yeats was not content to stop at unity as idea, unity that is "stated." Unity would be suspect if merely stated. It must be dramatised in order to have the validity of earned vision. Yeats's method was to exploit the ironic mode, making it an artistic device by which to fortify the self against attack. It also becomes a method to conceal the many fictions without appearing fictitious. One could safely play a number of roles. For the ironic mode, Yeats chose conflict as his tool to serve as a heuristic strategy and enter into the central meaning of the poem. Conflict is exploited for its engendering power. The energy generated from the first pair of contraries starts a chain reaction and releases a new set of discordants in a long series. Even where the poet seeks a resolution, it is only provisional, not anything final. Choice is postponed in the interest of conflict. Sometimes, the inability to make a specific choice or its procrastination itself becomes the subject of poetry:

> The validity of Yeats's procedure is not at all undermined by the fact that both self and anti-self are in equal measure imaginative constructions: The poet is setting his imagination to do for its own sake what Richards, following Coleridge in this respect, has named as the special work of imagination, taking the risk of oppositions, tensions, contradictions, so that the unity at last achieved will be correspondingly and richly earned.[11]

However, the imagination is not obliged to vote for nature to provide the ideal conjunction of appearances. If it waits for the ideal conjunction, it would be difficult to write at all, especially when the poet has not himself inherited from the past the tradition of "one aim, one desire." He has to deliberately create or discover a tradition of his own. The imagination may provoke the appearances of nature by making an intelligent use of conflict so that unity comes only when it has been earned.

To provoke nature and the world of appearances is to put not only the self but also the poetic imagination at stake. Yeats as artist was dauntless. An artist who finds within himself a tension between "dream" and "action" would feel also an impulse from inside himself to resolve the tension. A unity achieved at the expense of either would appear, in the ultimate analysis, more of a defeat than a triumph. Therefore, Yeats made the mere quest for unity so important that failure in it would be no less important. If the poet could achieve in the poem a tem-

porary victory that would retain enough tensional energy to propel a fresh conflict, the process could go on as long as he wished. Yeats knew that without the "daily victory" of a unifying Image, life must be tragic. But, "we begin to live when we have conceived life as a tragedy." He was not willing to "walk out of his dream," says Kermode, and simply extended it to include everything.[12]

The symbol-making faculty would use Symbol to unite the dichotomies by a careful identification as we see in Yeats's culminating symbol of the Dancer and Tree in "Among School Children." If irony is dissonance in the poem, modern poetry is "awareness of this dissonance within analogy."[13] In undertaking the transition from one world to another, the symbolic imagination has to begin from the lowest rung of the ladder. With a gift for the "concrete," he has the power to start with the "common thing."[14] The symbolic poet may ascend the heights. The way up is not denied to him. But, unlike the 'angelic imagination' which bypasses the common, the 'symbolic imagination,' as Tate argues, needs a via media. To be able to face the spiritual truth in its physical 'body' needs an exceptional type of courage, Tate acknowledges, because it is like the experience of death. Yeats wrote in *Estrangement* that the "knowledge of reality" is "a kind of death."[15]

The symbolic poet finds not only the necessity to start with the "common thing" but a compulsion to return to it. From the uncommon to return to the common and mundane—"a mound of refuse or the sweepings of a street"—in a cycle, as it were, is the arduous task of the symbolic artist.

In W.B. Yeats we have a poet where efforts to achieve Unity of Being brought him in confrontation with the dilemma faced by the symbolic imagination. Even as he reaches the top, the symbolic poet must invariably return to the bottom:

> Now that my ladder's gone.
> I must lie down where all the ladders start,
> In the foul rag-and-bone shop of the heart. (392)

The idea is to relate at all times the polarities of interaction so that a perpetual tension is kept up. As Tate put it, the artist as hero, in having to return to the "bottom," fails in the sense that "he will have to start over again when he steps out of the 'poem,'" (103) and re-enact the "daily victory" once more. The failure is a human fallibility and is heroically accepted as such: "Its humility is witnessed by its modesty. It never begins at the top; it carries the bottom along with it. however high it may climb."[16]

Graham Hough explains that Yeats wanted to ascend to heaven but carrying all the sensual baggage with him, and this may be true. Yeats is indeed in the tradition of the symbolic poet. Every ascent is only temporary since the poet must return to the bottom, making the poetry "tragic in sentiment, if not always in form." But it would be wrong to suggest that Yeats ended where he began. No doubt he returned to the "foul rag-and-bone shop of the heart," to the bottom where "all the ladders start," but by then he has come full circle. We must remember that for Yeats there could be no real defeat in this struggle. He never permitted himself to be overpowered by despair. He conceived in it a "tragic gaiety":

> What matter if I live it all once more?

He is "content to live it all again,/ And yet again" even if "it be life to pitch/Into the frog-spawn of a blind man's ditch." (267) If living it all again in 'another poem' and 'another Image' is the price one has to pay for ascending to the top, he is willing to pay it. He says in "Lapis Lazuli":

> All things fall and are built again.
> And those that build them again are gay. (339)

NOTES

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6. Cleanth Brooks, "I.A. Richards and the Concept of Tension," *I.A. Richards: Essays in His Honour*, ed. Reuben Brower et al (New York: OUP, 1973), p. 152.
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9. Octavio Paz, *Children of the Mire: Modern Poetry from Romanticism to the Avant-Garde*, trans. Rachel Phillips (1974; Massachusetts: Harvard Univ. Press, 1975), p. 45.

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11. Denis Donoghue, *The Sovereign Ghost: Studies in Imagination* (London: Faber and Faber, 1978), p. 6.
12. Frank Kermode, *Romantic Image* (1957; London: RKP, 1966), p. 19.
13. Octavio Paz, p. 56.
14. Allen Tate, *The Man of Letters in the Modern World: Selected Essays: 1928-55* (1955; New York: Meridian Books, 1965), p. 97.
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16. Tate, p. 112.

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Is There a Nightingale in Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale"?

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In reading of Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale" I gain the perception that the text speaks not of the Nightingale but of the indeterminacies of experiences and contexts. To me it appears, that this impossibility to assert any certainties and Nagarjuna's (the second century Mahayana Buddist teacher) 'doctrine of void' has much in common. This may seem a wild claim and a far-fetched one and I will not be taken as a serious scholar. But I seek to defend myself against such a charge.

As a first attempt at this defence I would like to speak about the space in which I am placed that confronts and excites a provocative site for criticism in reading the text of Keats. The Indian soci-historical-literary-cultural context that conditions my reading responses to Keats's text is so different from the cultural space of Keats in which he has produced his writings. Therefore it is very clear that I cannot think like Keats or have a feel of his sensibilities, which are a product of his immediate socio-cultural support system. It is also difficult and frustrating to adjust my critical thinking to the already expounded authoritative Euro-centric critical constructions on Keats. This is so because the critical authority to whom I have to adjust my thinking happens to be spaced in a different cultural context. If at all this is attempted, it debilitates the critical potentialities of a diverse and multifaceted critical space like that of the Indian context. This paper is an attempt in this direction of setting a mark, however small, for the Indian response, on the map of critical inquiry in the postcolonial and post-structuralist context. The Reader Theories and the post-structuralist literary practice offers enough scope for this task.

The present study of Keats's "Ode" and Nagarjuna's 'doctrine of void' is limited only to the indeterminacies of concept and contexts. As the Indian response, in an intertextual reading, reads into the text of "Ode to a Nightingale," it seems to me that the text more than speaking of the Nightingale points to the impossibility of asserting a determinate

reality for any experience—pain or pleasure. All realities are alleged realities that turn out to be a falsity. This very condition throws up a space of void. A solution is constantly deferred as nothing is determinate. This knowledge of void of Maya is difficult to apprehend or accept. The Indian philosophical tradition is steeped in such complexities. The knowledge of voidness does not lead to nihilism or meaninglessness but provides a pragmatic and practical strategy to confront the issues like pain/pleasure and loss/gain. For an Indian reader like me conditioned in such a cultural context, indeterminacy means only this. Such a perception as it reads into Keats's Ode challenges the certainty of the notions of pleasure and pain and revises the assumption of the privileged position of the Nightingale in the text.

The title by referring to the Nightingale raises the expectations of the reader to find the text speaking of the Nightingale. But the text with its textual strategy of the opening remarks on the pain of the speaker belies this expectation: "*My* heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains/*My* sense, as though of hemlock *I* had drunk." Therefore the text is a text of the other. The speaker seems to be suffering from some pain. But the slide in the text to the experience of happiness revises this opinion: "But being too happy in thine happiness." Does the text speak of a different experience or the same experience being labelled differently? The pain felt earlier might have caused the happiness or the happiness was the source of the pain. The bird could be the source of pain. The text seems to point to the bird's happiness and not the bird being the source of the speaker's happiness. If the bird could be happy it could also be unhappy.

The text suddenly shifts from talking about the bird to that of the desire of the speaker for a "draught of vintage." There is a further slide from this desire to the description of the "Dance, and Provencal song, and sunburnt mirth" of the people of the South. It means that by and large people are happy in this world. But the speaker expresses the wish: "That I might drink, and leave the world unseen/ And with thee fade away into the forest dim." The wish is then to go from the context of the "sunburnt mirth" to that of the "forest dim."

Though the text speaks of the desire to "leave the world unseen," the elaborate details of the world and its sorrows point towards the speaker's obsession with the world. The speaker wants to forget as the text says: "to think is to be full of sorrow/ And leaden eyed despair." But the speaker does the opposite by thinking on it and listing a number of experiences of the world. This may mean that the narrator loves to indulge in the painful experiences. But why then he wants to flee from here? The speaker's attempt to expound in great detail such painful ex-

periences and marginalize the bird by dubbing it as ignorant ("What thou has not known") shows the love of the speaker for the people who suffer the pain. The desire to leave the world unseen in this context would mean the speaker's love for the people who suffer and not the love for the bird. Yet the text speaks of the wish to fly to the bird: "Away! away! for I will fly to thee." The repetition of the word 'away' signals the desire of the speaker to be away from something than the desire to fly towards another thing. The speaker seems to have landed with the bird perhaps too suddenly: "Though the dull brain perplexes and retards/ Already with thee." Maybe the speaker is not all that happy to end the flight too soon. Perhaps he loves the flight for its own sake.

The speaker's desire to fly to the bird seemed to have been achieved but curiously enough the text indulges in describing the new space in great detail than the experience of being with the bird. The bird seems to have been marginalized in this different space and its experiences. But the narrator experiences difficulty in the darkness of the new space: "I cannot see what flowers are at my feet/ Nor what incense hangs upon the boughs." The speaker seems to find fault with this situation and he gets along fulfilling the task of knowing the colour and the smell: "But in embalmed darkness guess each sweet." Though the physical senses are absent, through an intellectual process, the experience is completed. The textual strategy of the elaborateness of such description points to the fact that the speaker never makes any serious attempt to locate the bird. On the other hand, the experiences of guessing each 'sweet' and 'murmurous haunt of flies' is enjoyed.

There is a sudden shift in the text as it speaks of the wish of the speaker to die. It is curious because while the worldly space "Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes" has inspired the flight to live with the bird, the "already with thee" condition had brought the wish to die. So this raises the question—which experience the Nightingale typifies? Does the text pinpoint, in specific terms, the experience or the context for which the Nightingale stands? Perhaps not.

The text seems to be silent about the bird. The speaker never seems to have located the bird. He could only listen; "Darkling I listen." If the bird is in darkness, why does it then sing "of summer in full-throated ease"? Does the song speak of the bird's desire to be in the sunshine? Maybe. The prediction of the speaker is that the ecstatic song would become a high requiem and sod. Is it the bird's own sad experiences that make the song sad or does the speaker impose his own state of mind on the emotional quality of the song? The Tamil poet Bharathi while looking at the black crow does not see the colour of the bird but he sees there his Lord. The specificity of the bird disappears. Here in this con-

text the speaker's obsession with his notions and experiences seems to be enumerated than any attempt on the part of the text to speak of the specific bird, Nightingale. The text nowhere except in the title mentions the name Nightingale. Therefore the Nightingale bird referred to in the title and the bird referred to by the text need not necessarily be the same. Further the text speaking of the immortal voice heard by a variety of people—the king, the Clown and Ruth—privileges the voice over the bird. The contexts and the experiences of the listeners to the voice are varied and defy fixedness. Therefore there is no Nightingale in this text. It is impossible to find a simple referent to the term. What the term succeeds in referring to consists of traces of experiences and these traces are traces of traces.

Further the question that the text poses, "Was it a vision, or a waking dream?" challenges the alleged reality of the Nightingale. The speaker does not know whether he/she is awake or asleep but he/she has the knowledge that the state defies any certainty. The contexts of experiences are constituted with an infinite play of differences that defy a static definition of both, the experiences as well as the contexts. The text perhaps calls the language as the 'deceiving elf' that defies a simple reference in determinate terms about any experience. The text fails to fix the categories of pain/pleasure, sleeping/waking, darkness/light, loss/gain.

This indeterminacy caused by the text, in my point of view, instead of leading to nihilism rather throws light upon the need to confront the consequences of such indeterminacy. The text does not speak of the reality but the absence of it which is the case with life. The need for the knowledge about this voidness in order to confront the voidness itself is what the text speaks about. It gives a knowledge to engage the issues of life rather than a theory of reality.

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Defending the Indefensible: W.B. Yeats as a Country House Poet

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Writing in 1949, Norman Heffares declared, "Yeats's greatness is secure."[1] Nearly half a century later, the same can be said with perhaps even greater force. William Butler Yeats is a great poet for reasons which are clear. He was a dedicated craftsman who placed his entire life-time at the service of poetry. As a result he was able to produce a corpus of impressive bulk which displays a spectacular thematic range ably backed by technical virtuosity. His development as a poet was much more conscious—and much more exciting—than that of most other poets. The poetry of Yeats continues to be significant in a world increasingly hostile to many of the ideas contained in his verse. It is only natural that Yeats's poetry should have been subjected to relentless critical analysis down the decades. Though his work has been approached from numerous angles, Yeats as a country house poet has attracted practically no critical attention, even though some country seats like Coole and Lissadell have left marks on his corpus and country houses in general are a presence in much of his poetry. Providing this attention is the aim of this paper.

Early in *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641*, Lawrence Stone explains that one of the most striking features of the period was a pride in ancestry which reached new heights of fantasy and elaboration. "A lengthy pedigree was a useful weapon in the Tudor battle for status."[2] Yeats would definitely have not been out of place in such an age. But unfortunately his ancestors were no proud owners of medieval castles or naughty masters of vast rural tracts: they were untitled commoners. The poet was born into a middle class family of Anglo-Irish Protestants. The poet's paternal ancestors were rectors, linen drapers and merchants. Only one of the poet's relatives, Robert Corbert owned what could be called a castle. And Sandymount Castle was no real castle. It was an eighteenth century house to which Gothic trappings like battlements, cloister and tower had been added. Above all, Corbert was only a distant

kinsman of Yeats, being his great uncle. His father John Butler Yeats was a modestly talented artist. His mother Susan Yeats *nee* Pollexfen was from a family of sea-faring merchants and millers. Yet Yeats became a lover of country houses while still a child: "At my grandmother's I had learned to love an elaborate house, a garden and trees; and those grey country houses, Lissadell, Hazelwood House, and the far, rarely seen tower of Markree, had always called to my mind a life set amid natural beauty."[3] And it was Yeats—and not Lord Byron—who wrote "Upon a House Shaken by the Land Agitation," the most brilliant defence of the landed elite in English verse.

Inspiration for the poem was provided by a decision of the Land Court to reduce rents, a ruling which had a seriously adverse impact on the financial standing of Coole Park, country seat of Lady Augusta Gregory. Fifteen tenants of the Gregory estate had applied to the court for a reduction in their rents. The Land Commissioner granted their application, reducing their rents by about twenty percent through his judgement given on 30 July 1909. On 7 August, Yeats noted in his diary: "Subject for a poem. 'A Shaken House.' How should the world gain if this house failed, even though a hundred little houses were better for it. . . . How should the world be better if the wren's nest flourish and the eagle's house is scattered?" (*Ibid.*, 225)

The argument of the poem is that concentration of economic power with the landed elite at the expense of the landless poor is good for the world as it enables the former to contribute to the development of human civilization.

> How should the world be luckier if this house,
> Where passion and precision have been one
> Time out of mind, became too ruinous
> To breed the lidless eye that loves the sun? . . .
> Mean roof-trees were the sturdier for its fall,
> How should their luck run high enough to reach
> The gifts that govern men, and after these
> To gradual Time's last gift, a written speech
> Wrought of high laughter, loveliness and ease?[4]

Pointing out that the Renaissance was preceded by a concentration of economic power with the political elite of the Italian city states, I concluded my analysis of the poem thus: "Far from being obscure, the poem asks two simple, highly particularized questions: How would the world benefit by Coole Park's ruin? How would the beneficiaries of the despoilation of Coole Park ever be able to serve the world the way

Coole Park did? Together, by implication, they pose a comprehensive question, difficult for democracy's apologists to answer."[5]

The roots of Yeats's passion for country houses—they seemed to him more dear than life—can be traced to his childhood when he conceived a strong attachment to the Irish countryside, particularly to Sligo. In "Towards Break of Day," he admits:

> I thought: 'There is a waterfall
> Upon Ben Bulben side
> That all my childhood counted dear;
> Were I to travel far and wide
> I could not find a thing so dear.' (208)

The attachment became more and more intense with passing years as the poet grew older and the haze of nostalgia through which he saw the experiences of his own childhood grew thicker: 'My memories had magnified/so many times childish delight.' This passion for the Sligo countryside was further whetted by Yeats's inability to live there:

> I grew wild
> Even accusing Heaven because
> It had set down among its laws:
> Nothing that we love over-much
> Is ponderable to our touch.

The traditional interpretation of "Under Saturn" is that it is about Yeats's relationship with two women, Maud Gonne and his wife Georgie Yeats *nee* Hyde-Lees. This theory was put forward by Norman Jeffares in 1968 and has been generally accepted by critics. In my note on the poem,[6] I have pointed out that it is more satisfying to explicate the poem as dealing with England and Ireland. England gave him wisdom and comfort but Ireland was his lost love inseparable from his thought. This reading is vindicated by the conclusion of the poem: "I am thinking of a child's vow sworn in vain/Never to leave that valley his father called their home." (202) As an old man Yeats gave instructions for burial at Drumcliff churchyard, wherever his death may occur. He died in the South of France in 1939 at the height of the Second World War and was buried at Roquerbrune. In 1948, nearly ten years later, the body was reinterred at Drumcliff, as he had wanted. To quote from "Under Ben Bulben":

> Under bare Ben Bulben's head
> In Drumcliff churchyard Yeats is laid.

An ancestor was rector there
Long years ago, a church stands near,
By the road an ancient cross. (400)

As has already been pointed out, Yeats was no aristocrat by birth. It was his friendship with Lady Gregory which gave him strong first-hand contact with the world of the country house. The Gregorys were definitely members of the landed class of Ireland. But even they were no grandees. There have never been Gregory Dukes. Coole House was out and out plebeian by the side of, say, Holkham Hall, country seat of the Earls of Leicester. Their landed accents were extremely petty when compared to the holdings of, say, the Dukes of Buccleuch. The great state offices were never held by them. The highest office occupied ever by a Gregory was that of Governor of Ceylon. Yet Coole Park became for Yeats an exemplification and an objectification of the world of the feudal aristocracy, a world which was dying and hence all the more dear. There was nothing exceptional about the architecture of Coole House—in fact it was a rather dull three-storeyed cube—but the demesne with its woods and lakes and stream was truly spectacular. There may be doubts about whether Yeats fell in love with Lady Gregory. No such doubts can, however, be raised about his long, intense love affair with Coole Park.

Coole Park is the theme of Yeats's best work, an early specimen of this being "The Wild Swans of Coole":

The trees are in their autumn beauty.
The woodland paths are dry,
Under the October twilight the water
Mirrors a still sky:
Upon the brimming water among the stones
Are nine-and-fifty swans. (147)

In the last stanza of the poem, the birds are described as mysterious and beautiful. The same can perhaps be said of the poem. As in the case of several other Yeats's poems, it is not easy to carry out a line by line semantic analysis of "The Wild Swans of Coole." The poem has obviously been written by someone to whom the lake at Coole is dear. Yeats himself admits: "In later years I was to know the edges of that lake better than any spot on earth, to know it in all the changes of the seasons, to find there always some new beauty."[7] The thematic focus of "Coole Park, 1929" is as much on the house as on its owner:

I meditate upon a swallow's flight,
Upon an aged woman and her house,
A sycamore and lime-tree lost in night
Although the western cloud is luminous,
Great works constructed there in nature's spite
For scholars and for poets after us,
Thoughts long knitted into a single thought,
A dance-like glory that those walls begot. (273-74)

Yet another major Coole poem is "Coole Park and Ballylee, 1931" where every element in the scenic panorama of the demesne takes on for the poet a symbolic significance. It may be noted that the elements remind the poet of the soul. Coole is the stuff his soul is made of.

For Yeats the charms of Coole Park were positively enhanced by the personality of its owner. Lady Gregory was a dramatist in his own right and one of the founders of the Irish National Theatre in Dublin. She was a generous hostess, a talented conversationalist, a loyal friend, a powerful patroness. As Yeats suggests in poems like "Coole Park, 1929," she was able to bring about something of minor Renaissance whose hub was Coole Park.

They came like swallows and like swallows went,
And yet a woman's powerful character
Could keep a swallow to its first intent:
And half a dozen in formation there,
That seemed to whirl upon a compass-point,
Found certainty upon the dreaming air,
The intellectual sweetness of those lines
That cut through time or cross it withershins. (274)

Lady Gregory's son Major Robert Gregory, a Royal Flying Corps pilot who perished in the First World War appeared a Renaissance man to Yeats: "Soldier, scholar, horseman, he,/ As 'twere all life's epitome." (151) If his death inspired "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory," and "Shepherd and Goatherd," twentieth century's finest pastoral elegy in English, his star-crossed life as a pilot is dealt with in "An Irish Airman Foresees his Death."

Those that I fight I do not hate,
Those that I guard I do not love:
My country is Kiltartan Cross,
My countrymen Kiltartan's poor,

No likely end could bring them loss
Or leave them happier than before,
Nor law, nor duty bade me fight,
Nor public men, nor cheering crowds,
A lonely impulse of delight
Drove to this tumult in the clouds. (152)

"Today we are all little better than nomads," laments Marian Fowler, "shifting our meagre belongings from flat to house, city to city, very few of us living as adults where we lived as children, fewer still living where our great-grandfathers lived."[8] Yeats would have mourned along with her the passing of a way of life rooted in one sacred spot. When he expressed the wish in "A Prayer for My Daughter," "O may she live like some green laurel/Rooted in one dear perpetual place," (213) he had in all probability the Gregory seat in mind. The same can also be said of the desire a few stanzas later, expressed thus: "And may her bridegroom bring her to a house/Where all's accustomed, ceremonious." The Gregorys had been masters of Coole for generations, for two hundred years, to be more exact.

Coole thus forms an important thematic strand in the poetry of Yeats. However, for Yeats Coole was much more than an emblematic exemplification. It was a home and haven, a sanctuary to which he could retreat when the realities of life became too unbearable as explained in the little poem of his 1904 collection *In the Seven Woods*:

I have heard the pigeons of the Seven Woods
Make their faint thunder, and the garden bees
Hum in the lime-tree flowers; and put away
The unavailing outcries and the old bitterness
That empty the heart. I have forgot awhile
Tara uprooted. . . . (85)

Several of Yeats's poems which have thematically little to do with Coole Park owe their existence to the atmosphere provided by the sheltering acres and echoing rooms of Lady Gregory's country seat. Without the emotional, material and financial support he received from her, it is doubtful whether Yeats would have become the great poet he so unquestionably became.

When in 1917, at the age of fifty-two, Yeats bought a partially ruined four-storeyed Norman tower at Ballylee and set about repairing and renovating it, he was satisfying a need deep within him. He was also fulfilling a cherished ambition almost as old as himself. The tower, not un-

naturally, proved an uncomfortable and inconvenient residence. But that did not prevent the poet from loving it or being proudly possessive of the impressive view it offered as is revealed by "A Prayer on Going into My House":

> God grant a blessing on this tower and cottage
> And on my heirs.
> . . . should some limb of the Devil
> Destroy the view by cutting down an ash
> That shades the road, or setting up a cottage
> Planned in a government office, shorten his life,
> Manacle his soul upon the Red Sea bottom. (183)

The tower gave a fresh inspirational impetus to Yeats's poetry. In fact, the collection *The Tower* published in 1920 is one of the poet's best. The house is celebrated in the title poem and also, with great gusto, in "Meditations in Time of Civil War." Some years later, in "Blood and Moon," Yeats was to proclaim,

> I declare this tower is my symbol: I declare
> This winding, gyring, spiring treadmill of a stair is my ancestral stair;
> That Goldsmith and the Dean, Berkeley and Burke have travelled there. (268)

The tower became part of the symbolism of Yeatsian poetry. Louis MacNeice has observed, "One of the richest but more ambiguous of his symbols is the Tower itself. This was, first, an actual tower near Coole in County Galway which he had bought and repaired."[9]

Ben Jonson may have written on Penshurst and William Wordsworth on Lowther but Yeats is without doubt the finest country house poet in English. No other poet has written so often and so well on this typically British theme. Fowler rightly remarks, "The country house as a symbol of civilized living, of ceremony, community and continuity, stands in the heartland of British culture." (16) It is doubtful whether Yeats would have achieved the sort of greatness he did as a poet without his passion for the world of the country house. It is one of the two forces which propelled him into greatness as a poet, the other being his affair with Maud Gonne. Curiously, there are some points of similarity between the two. Both are stories of uncontrollable passion lasting a lifetime. The beauty of Maud Gonne appeared to Yeats to be of an elevating kind and the same can be said of the world of the country house. Complete success eluded him in both relationships. He failed to

marry Maud Gonne but remained her lifelong friend and admirer. Though he acquired the medieval tower at Ballylee, it is doubtful whether he ever became an integral part of the world of the country house.

Yeats fully realized that this world was a dying one. In "Coole Park, 1929" he speaks of a time when Coole House stands no more:

> When all those rooms and passages are gone,
> When nettles wave upon a shapeless mound
> And saplings root among the broken stone. (274)

The lines proved prophetic for the estate was sold in 1927 to the Irish Land Commission and Department of Forestry and the mansion demolished in 1941. In my reading of "These Are the Clouds," I suggested that the sun symbolizes the 'strong' in the poem: "It is highly significant that the decline of the sun has in no way been engineered by the clouds; they have only disfigured it after its fall has almost been completed. Similarly the fall of the 'strong' is not wholly the product of the efforts of the 'weak,' but the result mainly of the inevitable processes of history. Once the sun has tumbled from its high throne, the moon and the stars appear in the sky, and instead of one source of light we have many. In sociopolitical terms we might say that the fall of the 'strong' precedes a redistribution of power and wealth among the 'weak' and the establishment of more egalitarian patterns of society."[10] How did Yeats react to the realization that the world he so dearly loved and so passionately admired was inexorably hurtling towards its own annihilation? Yeats's response, as evidenced by "The Municipal Gallery Revisited," was one of anger and defiance rather than of grief and dejection:

> Childless I thought, 'My children may find here
> Deep-rooted things,' but never foresaw its end,
> And now that end has come I have not wept;
> No fox can foul the lair the badger swept. (369)

This is in sharp contrast to the gentle, nostalgic sorrow which envelops the prologue and epilogue of Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited.*

How far was Yeats justified in defending this dying world? Even the poet's most fanatic admirers admit that the world of the country house is, after all, quite indefensible on several fronts. To begin with, life in the typical country house was and is seldom idyllic. "Most mansions were cold, gloomy, eerie, filthy and insanitary," observes David Cannadine of the stately homes of England.[11] Secondly, their contribu-

tion to literature and the arts was meagre, especially when one remembers the vast resources their owners commanded. To quote Cannadine again, "Compared with the minor pricelings of Germany or the city states of Italy, what is really remarkable is not that they spent so much of their wealth on art, but that they spent so little." (266) Finally, the ethics of a system which allows a few to live in mansions while millions live in holes is seriously questionable. Yet, to the extent a world so utterly indefensible could be defended, Yeats defended it and he passionately defended it with courage and ability few could match.

NOTES

1. Norman Jeffares, foreword, *W.B. Yeats: Man and Poet* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1949), p. vii.
2. Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1979), p. 23.
3. W.B. Yeats, *Memories*, ed. Denis Donoghue (London: Macmillan, 1972), pp. 101-2.
4. W.B. Yeats, *Collected Poems* (London: Macmillan, 1982), p. 106.
5. A. Raghu, "Yeats's 'Upon a House Shaken by the Land Agitation,'" *The Explicator*, 49 (1991), p. 107.
6. A. Raghu, "Yeats's 'Under Saturn,'" *The Explicator*, 52 (1993), pp. 39-40.
7. Qtd. A. Norman Jeffares, *A Commentary on the Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats* (London: Macmillan, 1977), p. 347.
8. Marian Fowler, *Blenheim: Biography of a Palace* (London: Viking, 1989), p. 17.
9. *The Poetry of W.B. Yeats* (London: Faber, 1979), p. 129.
10. A. Raghu, "Yeats's 'These Are the Clouds,'" *The Explicator*, 49 (1991), p. 166.
11. *The Pleasures of the Past* (London: Collins, 1989), p. 101.

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A Feminist Reading of Emily Dickinson's Poetry

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In "The Double Mind of the Woman Poet," Suzanne Juhasz says, "To be able to live at all and be a poet seems at times the nearest victory."[1] And this awful privilege Emily Dickinson chose to enjoy. The power in the poem "Wife's Affection" is staggering:

> Rearrange a "Wife's" affection!
> When they dislocate my Brain !
> Amputate my freckled Bosom!
> Make me bearded like a man

and this poem ends with the patient endurance of the agony till . .

> Burden—borne so far triumphant—
> None suspect me of the crown,
> For I wear the "Thorns" till *Sunset*—
> Then—my Diadem put on.
> Big my Secret but it's *bandaged*—
> It will never get away
> Till the Day its Weary Keeper
> Leads it through the Grave to thee (1737)

She approached her vocation with a sense of guilt, as did many of her Victorian counterparts in England. In a curious metaphoric remark to her friend, Jane Humphrey, she speaks of "one gold thread . . . a long, shining fibre," the meaning of which she never explains. "I have dared to do strange things," she wrote Jane, "bold things. . . . I have heeded beautiful tempters, yet do not think I am wrong." —a boast that does not conceal the lingering guilt.[2] 'The Moth of Amherst' as she was popularly called, isolated herself from humanity and penned extraordinary poems, which were construed to be loss emerging from some man's sexual rejection! In 1961, a psychoanalytic study of Emily Dickinson pinpoints her fear of everything male as the few males she valued

had disappointed her. Her father, Edward was too busy with his briefs as a lawyer, her brother, Austin left her to get married, her mother did not care for thought, her sister, Vinnie did not tune in to her mystic, intelligent wavelength. Even her mentor, T.W. Higginson, a man of letters, found her poems "spasmodic," "uncontrolled" and "wayward" in 1862. Misunderstood by her family, brushed aside by her friends, Emily chose to withdraw crablike into her hermit shell. And she chose to scorn the world of fame and wealth to pursue her own goals. "Fame is a fickle food upon a shifting plate," and the ironic end is that, "Men eat of it and die." (223) She chose her "Barefoot Rank" (265) and declared,

> Fame of Myself, to justify.
> All other Plaudit be
> Superfluous—An Incense
> Beyond Necessity.

The worth of a woman poet was not accorded in nineteenth century America. Norman Brown speaks of "Poetry the creative act, the act of life, the archetypal sexual act. Sexuality is poetry. The lady is our creation, or Pygmalion's statue. The lady is the poem: [Petrarch's] Laura is, really, poetry."[3] This oracular comment reveals the fiercely patriarchal structure of western society. The galaxy of goddesses, Eve, Minerva, Sophia and Galatea, form part of the patriarchal mythology which defines women as created by, from, and for men, the children of male brains, ribs and ingenuity. Male power was a central concept of Victorian culture. G.M. Hopkins calls the pen, a metaphorical penis. Edward Said speaks of author or writer as the father of the text, deity pater familias, while Shelley calls him 'legislator.' Coleridge refers to the human imagination as a virile creative force. Ruskin's phallic sounding 'Penetrative Imagination' is a "possession" taking faculty where the Poet is a God, a paternalistic ruler in a fictive world. Where does such hegemony leave literary women? American poetess, Anne Finch denounced these patriarch constructs and damned women for not being aware of being 'cyphers.' Emily suffered the physical trauma of bouts of blindness but her blindingly clear metaphysical role of female Orpheus in America mainfested itself to her in a rational way: "I shall keep singing! Birds will pass me." She does not mind her late entry:

> Late—when I take my place in Summer,
> But I shall sing a fuller tune;
> Vespers are sweeter than Matins, Signor,—
> Morning, only the seed of Noon. (391)

While Lydia Sigourney, her contemporary, accepted the norms of society that literary professionalism is tolerable only when it does not impinge on the discharge of womanly duty and arranges her life accordingly, Emily refused to co-operate and rebelled against this. "Her work," as Cynthia Griffin Wolff remarks, "defied the moral truisms of mid-Victorian America; it violated the accepted practices of versification even more boldly than Whitman's work; . . . authored by a serious female poet in an age when women were not supposed to take writing seriously in any way."[4]

It is both interesting and challenging to locate a woman poet's discontent within her poetic discourse. As Emily declares in no uncertain terms:

> I'm ceded—I've stopped being Their's—
> The name they dropped upon my face
> With water, in the country church
> Is finished using, now,
> And They can put it with my Dolls,
> My childhood, and the string of spools,
> I've finished threading—too—

So it becomes clear that she has chosen to pen her thoughts freely and her desire to cast off the yoke of the father:

> My second Rank—too small the first—
> Crowned—crowing—on my Father's breast—
> A half unconscious Queen—
> But this time—Adequate—Erect,
> With will to choose, or to reject,
> And I choose, just a Crown— (No. 508)

Was it an earthly lover or was it Christ, or was she pledging herself to Art? The enigma of Emily fascinates one in the gentle triumph of the line, "The Soul selects her own Society." (8)

Hailed as one of the greatest realists of the interior of America, Emily has no doubt about how she should resolve the conflict of the self and other. Jane Gallop in her insightful book on Academic Feminist Literary Theory titled 'Around 1981' talks of feminist criticism being academic and the need for points of connection. Here Myra Jehlen, liberalist, argues that there are many ways of dealing with contradictions of which only one is to try to resolve them. Emily wishes to dislodge the utter fallacy of the notion of poetry having a monolithic status

and subverts the traditional spinning role, as Ariadne, Penelope and the farmer's daughter who had to spin straw into gold (Rumplestilskin) used thread, looms and needles to defend themselves against tyranny, in mythology. Like Mrs. Dalloway, they have sewed "hems too fine for Lady's tracing" to hide the pain at the heart of their lives. Like Adrienne Rich, they have worked to mend "This trailing knitted thing, This cloth of darkness/ This woman's garment, trying to save the skein."[5]

Emily read Elizabeth B. Browning, the Brontes, Dickens and Austen avidly. She was trying to find in them the metaphoric equivalents of her life in the female gothic, imprisoned in her Father's house she overtly dramatised this in her own verse. While Bronte and Austen wove into their fiction the melodramatic romances denied them, Emily chose to absorb the characters of her verse into the persona of the author. We see the drama of life in which the real action is interior. Emily freed herself from social and psychological constraints by impersonating and enacting many literary selves in her verse. Higginson described her work as, "fine, shy, recluse observation of nature and of men," and compares her work to that of Father Tabb (1845-1909) thus linking the celibate woman with the celibate priest. Suzanne Juhasz's observation "So, the view is phallocentric—Emily Dickinson wrote because she did not have a sex life, or the only explanation for such poetry was an active (albeit secret) sex life. Both lodge the male as the centre of her creativity," (10) makes it obvious that Emily's was so conveniently misinterpreted by critics, both kind and condescending! Her movement into her father's house is actually a withdrawal into her mind.

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in their brilliant reading of women artists in *The Madwoman in the Attic* comment on Emily's work. In particular, we shall see that, by literally and figuratively impersonating "A Woman-White," Dickinson wove her life into a gothic "Yarn of Pearl" that gave her exactly the "Amplitude" and "Awe" she knew she needed in order to write great poetry. In "She rose to his requirement" the woman drops the "playthings of her life" and takes on the honourable work of wife and mother but secretly longs for the "amplitue and awe," which lies buried and develops like "pearl and weed." (136) Again she becomes the spider weaving an intricate web:

> The spider holds a silver Ball
> In the unperceived Hands—
> And dancing softly to Himself
> His Yarn of Pearl unwinds. (605)

Virginia Woolf in her book, *A Room of One's Own* asks for peace and freedom for a woman to develop both sides of her nature, both male and female for the true artistic expression of her androgynous vision. Androgyny was the myth that helped her confront her painful femaleness in 1948. Woolf was aware of the pitfalls of both liberal and radical feminism. In terms of the female aesthetic, egolessness is the highest form of female perception. Feminist Archetypal Theory which gained popular currency in the West bases its arguments on the Jungian theory of the Collective Unconscious. While they disapprove of the Anima theory, Post-Jungians and feminists see Archetypes as psychic blueprints for understanding the eternal roles of women in mythology, dreams and real life. For example Sylvia Plath's "Daddy" images the father from childhood, an amalgamation of real experience and archetypal memories wherein Plath's own psychic turmoil and oppression is represented by the Nazi oppression of the Jews. The liberal feminist Julia Kristeva states that it is not the biological sex of a person, but the subject position she or he takes up, that determines their revolutionary stand. Women demand equality (Liberal), they reject the symbolic male order (Radical) and thirdly they reject the dichotomy between masculine and feminine as metaphysical (Kristeva's stand). Susan Howe, modern American poet and admirer of Emily, celebrates the myth of beginning in America—settlement, paradise, golden age, creation and childhood in her poetry. She writes in her book on Dickinson: "How do I, choosing messages from the code of others in order to participate in the universal theme of language, pull SHE from all the myriad symbols and sightings of HE. Emily Dickinson constantly asked this question in her poems."[6]

Emily began her poetic career by enacting the part of a child. She prolonged this exciting game with: "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" (5) She is the shy daisy, a tiny person, a wren easily overcome by the force of circumstances. When George Eliot and C. Rossetti wrote about angels of destruction Emily became an angel. While C. Bronte in *Jane Eyre*, E. Bronte in *Wuthering Heights* portrayed mad women in their attics, Emily becomes one herself! R.B. Sewall asserts that hyperbole, melodrama and rhetoric played a crucial part in her poetry. So, critics hail her as one of American literature's most expert poseurs. S. Juhasz calls Dickinson's posings as the "double mind of the woman poet: On the one hand the impossibility of self-assertion as a woman, on the other hand the necessity of self-assertion for a poet." (1-6) The male-female relationship she talks of is a father, daughter, master, scholar/slave, ferocious 'man of moon' and the vulnerable flower of dawn, one. Her brief explosive poems speak volumes for her sensitive perception:

Volcanoes be in Sicily
And South America,
I judge from my geography.
Volcanoes nearer here,
A lava step, at any time,
Am I inclined to climb,
A crater I may contemplate,
Vesuvius at home. (264)

The terse command in another lyric:

I'm wife; I've finished that,
That other state;
I'm Czar, I'm woman now:
It's safer so. (135)

Rather than renounce her inner self like Elizabeth Browning or C. Rossetti, Emily decided to renounce the concept of womanliness which had self-sacrificing qualities. Her ambivalence towards the male Other takes us to the central paradox of her art of Being. Her attitude to the powerful male order, the Other who controlled women's lives at the heart of the Gothic novel into which she changed her life, is ambivalent. Then again, the archetypal patriarch whom she called "Burglar! Banker, Father." (49) He sounds the sinister alien 'Nobodaddy' of Blake, the tyrannical God who created "the old Anything."[7] At times this defiant childwoman who wishes to escape from the despotic Master/Father as in "Father, I bring thee not myself" (150) seems to rethink the anger and depicts her beloved Master as a glowing Apollo, the god of light, craving his golden warmth. This is seen in:

Good morning, midnight!
I'm coming home,
Day got tired of me—
How could I of him? (360)

For her sunshine is sweet; but Morn did not want her to stay. Blinded and helpless in the burning heat of the male sun, Emily admits in

As much of Noon as I could take
Between my finite eyes. (327)

The metaphorical blindness is like a castration metaphor. Her poems are

rooted in gender for the flower trapped in the earth is in need of energising sunlight which also beats the daisy into submission, so "It bows its head in anguish." Emily's charismatic father so impinged on her psyche that even after his death she dreamt of him and over time turned him to God, the celestial patriarch. The consequent blurring between daddy and Nobodaddy is evinced in all her verses. "Papa above!/ Regard a Mouse." (61) Again she is the sea of Amplitude and Awe of the Magna mother earth. "You'll know it as you know 'tis Noon" speaks of the Omnipotent power of the Sun, but he has "conversation with the Sea." Emily admired the character of St. John, the missionary in *Jane Eyre*, but she was aware of the gloomy earthy power of Rochester whose voice drags Jane back to him in the end. For Emily, these two characters are really merged in one: the father/Lover/Master, almost as if God and Satan were fused in one figure of Nobodaddy for her. She viewed the world with childlike awe and the sun becomes a solar Colossus which will scorch and blind her. She is encaged in a midnight's certainty of abandonment, not in a night's vague possibility of fulfillment. In a plurality of selves she casts off the childmask to confess: "My life had stood a loaded gun." She is full of manly ambition and loyalty for "To foe of his I'm deadly foe," yet she admits "Though I than he may longer live," the poetic self has but the "art to kill—/ Without the power to die" like herself. (754) This desire to be the weapon that kills thus makes Emily project herself into another male domain. As Simone de Beauvoir explains that in their martial forays the men left their womenfolk behind in a patriarchal society. Thus the gender that destroys is superior to the one that brings forth. Emily seems to be mocking this mindset. She carries her bitter revenge in her heart in her poetic muse and the poem becomes a powerful 'Icon' of her masculine authority and artistic freedom. Like the wounded deer leaps highest: "'Tis but the Ecstasy of death—/ And then the Brake is still!" (165) When she saw with ruthless clarity that she as a woman poet had no locus standi and so decided to sing in a voice distinctly female, but subverted into an array of selves: the daisy, the Mouse, the gun, the Queen, the Woman-White. The tribute that C.G. Wolff gives is that she was a great poet who happened to be a woman.

In his essay, "Myth and the Production of History," Richard Slotkin observes: "Myth does not argue its ideology, it exemplifies it." Wolff goes on to quote him: "In Slotkin's terms, Emily Dickinson's work may be said to inscribe a new myth (and perhaps that is part of her great appeal)—that the power of a 'Woman's Poet' must be defined by the encompassing power of 'Poet.'"[8] Boldly self-possessed she can write with metaphorical wit of the sexual excitement of the woman and

her power in floral language, in, "I tend my flowers for thee—/ Bright Absentee!" (339) Another love poem demands equality for the beloved: "Forever at His side to walk—/ The smaller of the two!" (246) moves from submission to equality; to the wit of "Just finding out what puzzled us/ Without the lexicon!" Constraints and customs distort the joy of the man/woman relationship. Strangely enough Emily, the lady poet, could be a fine representative man in her verse. Her images of the Sun are part of the myth of the male, while her preoccupation with Death is another important point from myth of the Earth mother, who gives birth and death. The Greek and Roman goddesses of Fate: Clotho, who spins the thread of life; Lachesis, who measures the span of life/ the thread and Atropos, who cuts the thread of life, are women. Man is afraid of this dark, fecund engulfing earth and would like to break free from the bond of mother and worship the sun. But, it dips into the sea, the waters of life, for it rises again. Emily in her delicate way speaks of the identity of Death:

> Because I could not stop for Death—
> He kindly stopped for me—
> The carriage held but just Ourselves—
> And Immortality. (712)

Like young Shakespeare with his girlish voice played Rosalind in *As You Like It* and subverts that female identity when going to the Forest of Arden, by being a man; or Viola in *Twelfth Night* (the young male actor in the female role) masquerades as Lady Olivia's pageboy Emily does this female to male, and back to female brilliantly in a few poems. When she calls to Papa above to behold the Mouse and then demands a mansion for the Rat, as the Mouse is overpowered by the Cat. Curious interweaves of her many selves in her verses make for complex reading. About 1862 she took to wearing only white :

> A solemn thing it was—I said—
> A Woman White—to be— (271)

Gilbert and Gubar point out that this central metaphor of Emily's act is like Melville's whale, *Moby Dick* in its allegorical representation of the pure radiance of eternity. In the nineteenth century it was the female colour of virginity and purity. In Greek mythology, Diana, the moon goddess is the huntress who signifies power not weakness, and her snow white purity is a boon she gives to her bridegroom. In Emily's case, since she did not wed anyone, she gave herself to art in marriage, to

achieve androgynous wholeness. She admired Browning's Aurora Leigh, who rejected Romney's proposal to dedicate herself to the realm of art. Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott" was also a white maiden weaving the magic web, and being half sick of shadows breaks free of the spell cast on her, only to die. Emily also wishes to be a healthy artist no matter what the cost to herself. "I felt a funeral in my Brain" (280) bears testimony to this dreadful strain to achieve purity in her art. Her own psychic fragmentation in the face of social pressures and maybe her love affair is reflected in the interior schisms seen in the poems like "The Chasm" where she mocks the maid in devouring darkness. For her "Death is the Supple Suitor/ That wins at last." (1445)

In the brain of the spider artist is a "Tapestry of Paradise." (278) Here she is not an obscure figure weaving webs of obscurity, but a glowing figure. She is not forced like her mythical sisters to spin and sing by night, but live aloud dancing "in the dawn of the East." Freed from the restraints of the "Summer—lasts a Solid Year" (the male voice) who inhabit "a realm of gold" (569) she triumphs in her own realm secretly: "The Lady Lie/ In Ceaseless Rosemary." (675) Emily wove her immortal webs of beauty for posterity.

NOTES

1. Suzanne Juhasz, *Naked and Fiery Forms, Modern American Poetry by Women: A New Tradition* (New York: Octagon Books, 1978), Ch. 1, p. 3.
2. Richard B. Sewall, *Emily Dickinson in Voices and Visions: The Poet in America*, ed. Helen Vendler (New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill,1989), p. 86.
3. Norman Brown, "Daphne" in Joseph Campbell, ed., *Mysteries, Dreams and Religion* (New York: Dutton, 1970), p. 93.
4. Cynthia G. Wolff, "Emily Dickinson" in *The Columbia History of American Poetry*, ed. Jay Parini (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 123.
5. Adrienne Rich, "When We Dead Awaken," *Diving into the Wreck* (New York: Norton, 1973), p. 5.
6. Susan Howe, "My Emily Dickinson" (Berkeley, California: N. Atlantic Books, 1985), pp. 17-18.
7. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press,1979), "A Woman-White: Emily Dickinson's Yarn of Pearl," p. 594.
8. Cynthia G. Wolff, p. 127. Emily Dickinson's poems have been quoted from *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Thomas H. Johnson, 3 vols. (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1955) and *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Martha D. Bianchi and Alfred L. Hampson (London: Jonathan Cape, 1919).

Bombay

The Poetic Horizon of Sri Aurobindo

GAJENDRA KUMAR

Sri Aurobindo once said that he had been first and foremost a poet and a politician, only later he became a yogi. Like Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo has the organic coherence of a poet and a seer. Sri Aurobindo is prophet and seer par excellence and is better remembered for the integral philosophy which he has expounded through his works such as *The Life Divine* and *The Human Cycle* than for his poetry. K.R.S. Iyengar remarkably evaluates the many-faceted personality of Sri Aurobindo: "To acknowledge and salute the poet and the master of the 'other harmony' of prose is not, of course, to deny the teacher or the fighter or the patriot, the yogi, the philosopher or the prophetic engineer of the Life Divine."[1]

His poetry, however, covers a vast span of time from 1890 to 1950. He has vast spectrum of his writing including lyrics, narrative poems, a cosmic epic, a large body of philosophical poems, and a few poetic plays besides translations which illustrates the range of his poetic genius. His earliest poems "Songs to Myrtilla" and "Night by the Sea" bristle over with sensuous imagery, written under the spell of Keats.

Sri Aurobindo's early poetry bears the stamp of classical impact and learning and is imbued with classical myths and allusions. Sensuousness with classical tinge was the earliest style of his poetry. It can be seen or analysed through illustration:

> The vernal radiance of my lover's lips
> Was shut like a red rose upon my mouth,
> His voice was richer than the murmuring leaves,
> His love around me than the summer air.

Sisir Kumar Ghose argues that in the beginning of his poetic career Sri Aurobindo wrote like an Englishman. Later he switched over to Indian myths and ethos. Writing about his early sonnets on Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Rajnarayan Bose, S.K. Ghose writes: "They are more

English than Indo-English, work of Mr. Ghose rather than Sri Aurobindo. But he soon turns homeward."[2]

Though, it is not a complete break; in his later poetry there are instances of the perfect mingling of Western and Indian mythology. References to 'Eden' occur times without number. In "Urvasie" on the banishment of apsara from 'Swarga's streams and golden groves' Indra intercedes and raises a question:

> Her wilt thou banish
> From the felicity of grove and streams
> Making our Eden empty of her smiles?

There is a wonderful discourse of Narad on the problem of pain in *Savitri* containing a description of Christ's crucifixion which suggests the lofty message "Pain is the hand of Nature sculpturing men/To greatness."

Sri Aurobindo was, albeit, soaked in Western and Hindu myths and traditions but the poems "Urvasie" and "Love and Death" are, like *Savitri*, Indian in setting, sentiment and expression. In these works Aurobindo deals with the theme of "Love conquers Death." We find a gradual or chronological development of the theme of the poems. If we come across the theme of love in first two poems then it is, further, enlarged in *Savitri* and attached with the divinity on earth. The tapestry of the *Savitri* is woven in such a way that it moves on a physical as well as a spiritual plane. On the physical plane there is the story of how Savitri wins back the soul of Satyavan from Death. On the spiritual plane we find the bliss of divine or superconscient life. The pivotal point of the epic is dawn which in the Veda is Savitri, identical with Gayatri, the holiest of the Vedic mantras. Savitri herself is not merely the wife of Satyavan, she is also the incarnation of the Divine Mother. Amiya Chakravarty rightly remarks about the thematic excellence of the poem: "If the dominant problem in modern poetry both as a subjective concern and as revealed in its manner of expression is the problem of self-consciousness, the dominant theme in Sri Aurobindo's poetry is self-transcendence."[3]

Sri Aurobindo, like T.S. Eliot and Milton, has made a successful experiment in the use of blank verse. Although Sri Aurobindo is criticised for his jargonic and verbose style by the common readers and he is classified as Johnsonian. But like Wordsworth he is also of the opinion that the language of poetry must be related to everyday speech. If it is devoid of the living speech rhythms and current idioms, it will be deprived of vitality. So, it can be stated that the language of poetry is a language

distilled out of the language of common speech. No doubt, it is this 'os-sification' that has overtaken the blank verse of certain poets. In relation to this C. Paul Verghese comments upon the style and technique of Sri Aurobindo: "A study of Aurobindo's narrative poems makes it clear that instead of trying to explore the musical possibilities of blank verse vis-a-vis the changes that have come over the speech rhythms since the seventeenth century, he allowed himself to be influenced by Milton's poetic techniques. In the manner of Milton, Aurobindo uses epic simi-les, high sounding proper nouns at a stretch and also involved construc-tions and inversions."[4]

Sri Aurobindo attempted to naturalize some of the classical metres in English. He also desired to achieve something tantamount to the vedic mantra; for according to him the vedic mantra is the natural me-dium of mystic poetry. "Ahana," the longest and one of the celebrated poems, gives us the message of divinity or eternity. "Horis Aeternum" is also an embodiment of mystic union and divine consciousness. Simi-larly, "The Bird of Fire" expresses the idea of divine consciousness. Poetry achieves greatness when it effectively combines the highest in-tensity of rhythmical movement, with the highest intensity of verbal form and thought substance and the highest intensity of the Soul's vi-sion of truth. Poetry endowed with these three intensities voices a su-preme harmony of five eternal powers: Truth, Beauty, Delight, Life and Spirit, the five 'Suns of Poetry.'

Thus, it becomes apparent that his poetry is the poetry of yoga. Sisir Kumar Ghose observes thus about the unity and growth of the poetic sensibility of Sri Aurobindo: "Sri Aurobindo is always a call to spiritual adventure and it is primarily in this light that his poems should be viewed. But the poems qua poems should not be neglected. He has writ-ten poems, not yoga illustrated in verse."[5]

What is important in poetry is not the thing said but the way of say-ing it. Sri Aurobindo is interpreted as a kind of mystic. But the thought-stirring content of Sri Aurobindo's poems deserves to be studied. He is judged as overwhelming, having mysticism universal in appeal as it is genuine. Sri Aurobindo says: "The work of the poet depends not only on himself and his age, but on the mentality of the nation to which he belongs and the spiritual intellectual, aesthetic tradition and environ-ment which it creates for him."[6] Similarly M. Taine, the French literary historian, says: "Literature is the creaion of three factors: the race, the milieu, the moment."[7] In fact, this need not be accepted as a total truth, for the individual too has his own part to play in literary creation. But in sociological perspective it can be accepted or analysed. Regarding this, K.D. Sethna rightly says: "Generally the plane on which the individual

mind operates is a reflection of the level at which the nation lives—at least this mind's ultimate system of symbols answers to the realities most vivid at that level."[8]

Sri Aurobindo's poetic output has an aroma of the spirituality of India. K.S. Srinivasan observes the spiritual element in Indian literature: "A reassessment of the Indian heritage through Indian perception is over-due; it must include a readiness to reckon with realities as manifest in tradition. For instance, the recurring theme of karma in the literature of every language, the motivation of the four goals of life and their paths (dharma, artha, karma and moksha), the belief in five elements (earth, water fire, air, space) and in rebirth should all be seen as part of the life that shaped India."[9]

A normal human being is bound to have the feeling of conflict and frustration, pain and suffering, sense-images and sense-pleasures. But Aurobindian stance is almost above the human planes of duality and conflict from the very outset. Primarily it is a metaphysical theory gradually culminating into realized knowledge, the knowledge of seeking self in the style of St. Augustus and Vivekanand. Throughout his poetic career, he remains a philosophic poet, an idealistic sage, preaching his sermon from "Essays on the Gita" as a divine who attempts at a cosmological criticism of life. A perusal of his six poems establishes the notion that he is an omnipresent who can see present, past and future. The poet now holds Infinity in the palm of his hands and Eternity in an hour. K.R.S. Iyengar underlines this fact: "His recent poems are an attempt to achieve in English something equivalent to the mantra."[10] Aurobindo says the same thing in a different vein: "Everything I wrote came from yogic experience, knowledge and inspiration. So, my greater power over poetry and perfect expression was acquired in these last days not by reading and seeing how other people wrote, but from the heightening of my consciousness and the greater inspiration that came from the heightening."[11]

In fact, poetry begins as Inspiration, as heightened perception generated in the artist because of his identification with some significant aspect of Reality. He disengages a theme or object from all its external association or superficial qualities and "stands face to face with inmost core, its essential self."[12] It is this identification that helps to uncover or discover Reality. "Beauty is Eternity gazing at itself in a mirror," says Khalil Gibran.[13] What makes poetry great is the indissoluble link of the mind's response to the flux of reality. This intense and integrated response of the poet's mind can be termed as the quality of saintliness for it silences personality and has the quality of prophecy. All great poetry is inevitably saintly in character. In order to describe the nature of po-

etic delight Sri Aurobindo introduces a different set of Sanskrit terms: rasa, bhoga and ananda. And to describe the various levels of poetic inspiration he uses the terms like Satvik, Tamsik and Rajsik. On the basis of a letter written by Sri Aurobindo to his Anglicized brother, Manmohan Ghose, C.N. Devy evaluates him as a poet critic: "Sri Aurobindo attempts a passionate defence of Indian art and art values. He was clearly reacting to the Indological conception of Indian literature. His need to 'Indianize' himself and to decolonize his critical idiom are fully evident in his early critical comments."[14]

To sum up. Through his poetic output Sri Aurobindo creates a cosmos of 'spiritual reality,' 'intuitive intellect' and 'intuitive vision' which provide a body of mantric poetry or 'the mantra of the Real.' This came as a proper culmination of his long, sustained and inspiring career as a poet in the English language.'

NOTES

1. K.R.S. Iyengar, Indian Writing in English (New Delhi: Sterling, 1984), p. 144.
2. Sisir Kumar Ghose, "A Survey of Aurobindian Poetry," Sri Aurobindo Circle, 23, 1967, p. 59.
3. Amiya Chakravarty, Dynasts and the Post-War Age in Poetry, p. 3.
4. C. Paul Verghese, Problem of the Indian Creative Writer in English (Bombay: Somaiya, 1970), p. 57.
5. Sisir Kumar Ghose, "An Introduction to the Poetry of Sri Aurobindo," Sri Aurobindo Mandir Annual, No. 49, 1990, p. 74.
6. Sri Aurobindo, "The National Evolution of Poetry," The Future Poetry (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1953), p. 36.
7. Qtd. K.R.S. Iyengar, p. 22.
8. K.D. Sethna, Sri Aurobindo on Shakespeare (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1965), p. 31.
9. K.S. Srinivasan, The Ethos of Indian Literature (Delhi: Chanakya, 1985), p. 6.
10. Sri Aurobindo Mandir Annual, 1943, p. 107.
11. Letter dated 11 September 1934.
12. V.K. Gokak, An Integral View of Poetry, An Indian Perspective (New Delhi: Abhinav, 1975), p. 39.
13. Ibid.
14. G.N. Devy, After Amnesia (Bombay: Orient Longman, 1992), p. 114.

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Sri Aurobindo: A Poet Par Excellence

PRAMOD KUMAR YADAV

Sri Aurobindo is a multi-faceted personality in Indian-English literature. His range of knowledge is very vast and there is hardly anything under the sun which is beyond his reach. As D.L. Murray, the editor of the *Times Literary Supplement* observes: "Of all modern Indian writers Aurobindo—successively poet, critic, scholar, thinker, nationalist, humanist—is the most significant and perhaps the most interesting." (8 July 1944) This view is echoed by K.R.S. Iyengar in his famous book *Indian Writing in English*: "Without question, Sri Aurobindo is the one uncontestably outstanding figure in Indo-Anglian literature." (144)

In his long and varied career, Sri Aurobindo wrote regularly both in prose and poetry. The great saint and seer has explained himself in writings each of which shines as a unique work of art. He has written epics, lyrics, great spiritual treatises, essays on various topics, literary criticism and verse plays. To quote K.D..Sethna, "How shall we crown Sri Aurobindo? Is he greater as a yogi than a philosopher? Does the literary critic in him outtop the sociological thinker? Does he shine brighter as a politician or as a poet? It is difficult to decide. Everywhere Mount Everest seems to face Mount Everest. But when we study this Himalayas of various extremes of heights the first eminence that strikes us is Sri Aurobindo the poet."[1]

No wonder, Sri Aurobindo himself had always held that he was first of all a poet. He is a poet of the highest order similar to the Maharshis of classical antiquity. He is, perhaps, the only poet of modern times who satisfies the classical adage 'Na Rishih Kuru te Kavyam.' He enjoyed the ecstatic bliss of perceiving the divinity and possessed all the requisites of a poet par excellence. As a poet, he displayed immense capability in handling English language and metre. And to read Sri Aurobindo is like plunging into the midst of the Ocean and the possible meaning arrived at may be as elusive as mistaking the back of a whale for the land. Had we vision to see, it would have been easier to form a better idea and picture of Sri Aurobindo's poetry. But the problem is that we are blind

with our pride and the pomp of our passion.

However, it would be interesting to note that Sri Aurobindo was not simply a mystic poet where he is beyond the ken of the earth-bound poetic sensibility but also a poet of love and a poet of patriotism. There is a marked difference between his early poetry and the poetry of the *Savitri* period. His early poems are more English than Indo-English, work of Mr. Ghose rather than Sri Aurobindo. The young poet was the poet of love; he then sang of 'passion, power and pulse.' His literary career opens on a poetic note with "Songs of Myrtilla" which he wrote during his student life in England. "Song of Myrtilla," "Urvasie," "Love and Death," "Chitrangada" and "The Tale of Nala" are his important love poems. In these poems the poet appears to be a creature of memory, music and romance, and reminds us of the great love poet John Keats. "Urvasie" is a wonderful poem having a sensuous and voluptuous sweep. In a brief phrase like 'And she received him in her eyes, as earth/ Received the rain,' Sri Aurobindo can catch easily the whole of the lover's inner heart. The outer tumult of love he can picture with swift alterations of simile and metaphor alterations which carry in them the unexpected and uncontrollable vehemence of the body charged with desire:

> He moved, he came towards her, she, a leaf
> Before a gust among the nearing trees,
> Cowered . . . Pururavas
> Seized her and caught her to his bosom thrilled,
> Clinging and shuddering. All her wonderful hair
> Loosened and the wind seized and bore it streaming
> Over the shoulder of Pururavas
> And on his cheek a softness. She, o'erborne,
> Panting, with inarticulate murmurs lay,
> Like a slim tree half seen through driving hail,
> Her naked arms clasping his neck, her cheek
> And golden throat averted, and wide trouble
> In her large eyes bewildered with their bliss
> Amid her wind-blown hair their faces meet. . . .
> So clung they as two ship-wrecked in a surge.[2]

This certainly is the poetry of youth, but there is nothing either callow or crude about it. Everything is in the right place and nothing excessive. It has a Keatsian touch in its rich sensuousness.

Sri Aurobindo was also a poet of patriotism. He was a revolutionary and freedom-fighter. He was put in prison for his revolutionary activi-

ties. During the trial of the Alipur Conspiracy Case, Mr. C.R. Das described Sri Aurobindo as the poet of Patriotism in the course of his concluding arguments in defence of Sri Aurobindo: "Long after the controversy will be hushed in silence, long after this turmoil, the agitation, will have ceased, long after he is dead and gone, he will be looked upon as the poet of patriotism, as the prophet of nationalism and the lover of humanity."

Sri Aurobindo stressed the point that the country was the mother and that the complete independence was the goal of India's national awakening. In 1907, the British Government prosecuted the "Bande Matram" and Sri Aurobindo as its editor for propagating sedition. It created a sensation in the country. Rabindranath Tagore wrote a poem in honour of Sri Aurobindo: "Rabindranath, O Aurobindo, bows to thee!" His concrete scheme gets full revelation in "Bhavani Mandir." In the words of Sri Aurobindo: "What is our mother country? It is not a piece of earth, nor a figure of speech, nor a fiction of the mind. It is a mighty shakti." His "Vidula" (The Mother to Her Son) and "Baji Prabhou" are remarkable poems of patriotic feelings. In "Hymn to Durga" he gives the mantra by which the children can invoke the Mother's Grace. Vibrant with the spirit of aspiration, the Hymn shows the sure path to the Mother's protection: "Mother Durga! Rider on the lion, trident in the hand, thy body of armour clad, Mother, giver of victory, India awaits thee, eager to see the gracious form of thine. Listen, O Mother, descend upon earth, Make thyself manifest in this land of India."

Sri Aurobindo's "Ilion" and "Ahana" are quite successful poems. But it is *Savitri* which is called the magnum opus of Sri Aurobindo. It is cosmic and symbolic in character and without question one of the greatest epics of the world. It is his wonderful gift to the world; it is mantric and philosophical throughout. It is Sri Aurobindo's major poetic work, a 24,000 line blank verse epic in which he has widened the original of the *Mahabharata* and turned it into a symbol where the soul of man, represented by Satyavan, is delivered from the grip of death and ignorance through the love and power of the Divine Mother, incarnated upon earth as Savitri. Sri Aurobindo worked on this poem for more than thirty years. Raymond Frank Piper, an American scholar, describes it as probably the greatest epic in the English language. In his book *The Hungry Eve* he writes: "I venture the judgement that it is the most comprehensive, integrated, beautiful and perfect cosmic poem ever composed." *Savitri* is perhaps the most powerful artistic work in the world for expanding man's mind towards the Absolute."

Sri Aurobindo experimented with different kinds of style in his poetic life, and the best of them is manifested in *Savitri*. The style of this

epic is flexible and varies according to its context and theme. It can be neo-classical or romantic, symbolic or modernistic. Aurobindo used blank verse in his poetry in a masterly fashion. Shakespeare and Milton in English literature and Toru Dutt in Indian-English literature had used it before him. Blank verse is not an easy tool, and has tended to be wooden and declamatory in the less sure hands; but Sri Aurobindo displays a remarkable sense and grasp of it, and employs it in his verse with beauty and vigour. Blank verse in *Savitri* becomes ecstatic and greatly melodious in many places. It rings in our ears long after we have read a certain passage. The following passage is quoted in order to evoke the desired response from the readers:

> In her luxurious ecstasy of joy
> She squandered the love-music of her notes,
> Wasted the passionate patterns of her blooms
> A festival riot of her scents and hues.
> A cry and leap and hurry were around,
> The stealthy footfalls of her chasing things,
> The shaggy emerald of her centaur Mane,
> The gold and sapphire of her warmth and blaze.

However, *The Times Literary Supplement* gave an adverse remark about the poetic talent of Sri Aurobindo in the following words: "It cannot be said that Aurobindo shows any organic adaptation to music and melody. His thought is profound, his technical devices commendable, but the music that enchants or disturbs is not there. Aurobindo is not another Tagore or Iqbal or even Sarojini Naidu." (8 July 1944) K.D. Sethna rebuts the charge in the following words: "In poetry, music does not stand just for one particular arrangement and movement of speech, a simple dance or a rich swirl, a slow gravity or a swift puissance. . . . Everything is apt and in the right place though it falls into that place and achieves that aptness with a swirling force." (11)

In short, Sri Aurobindo's works spread over six decades, stretching from the youthful "Songs to Myrtilla" to *Savitri* portions of which were dictated when he was nearing eighty. Strictly speaking, all his works are not literary. Some were provoked by passing events, or had an overwhelming political content or were meant to explain knotty points of doctrine or spiritual life and discipline. But whatever the theme or the occasion, and be it Baroda, Calcutta or Pondicherry, there is always a force and clarity in his argument and expression. He brings to his writings a wide vision, a curious mind, an ever-questioning intellect, a cultivated taste and varied experiences—qualities that go to make a great writer.

To read Aurobindian literature is to believe in immense human possibilities. His personality and genius cannot be tetherd down to any age or movement or cult, but in him Indian sensibility gets its most genuine and powerful expression. In his hands English language unfolds its unexpected possibility and potentiality to be the medium of expression of the supreme consciousness and imagination of man which finds itself in harmony with the cosmic rhythm of the universe.

NOTES

1. K.D. Sethna, *The Poetic Genius of Sri Aurobindo* (1947), p. 1.
2. Sri Aurobindo, *Urvasie* (Baroda: Laxmi Vilas Printing Press).

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The Poet as Dramatist: A Study of Keats's *Otho the Great*

JIBESH BHATTACHARYYA

John Keats, a self-taught genius, is well-known as a great Romantic poet of England. In his very brief literary career (1816-1820) his output is astounding. Moreover, he attained maturity in this sphere with an incredible rapidity. Jack Stillinger observes: "He [Keats] had the shortest writing career of any of the major poets in English, and without question the fastest development."[1] It is a pity that Keats died young. Had he lived longer, his genius would have displayed its eminence not only in the sphere of poetry, but in other branches of literature as well. Graham Hough's observation in this connection is worth noting: "Keats's work is always changing and developing. At his death he seems to have been on the edge of a further stage of growth. If Shelley had lived longer there would have been more Shelley, but probably more of the same kind. We feel of Keats that there was much to come that would have been new and different."[2] In fact, his ability as a dramatist was going to show itself when he had to leave this world with its "weariness, the fever, and the fret" for the grove of "embalmed darkness" where his immortal nightingale sings for ever.

Indeed, we wonder at the poet's power of creating a five-act tragedy in the manner of a great Elizabethan dramatist. In the Elizabethan age the stage provided many a writer with a living. So, a large number of plays were written in that period. But, in the early nineteenth century when there were several restrictions on the presentation of a drama, when the two playhouses 'Covent Garden' and 'Drury Lane' had the monopoly for the performance of serious drama, and when the people were not much inclined to go to theatre, it was almost impossible to expect that dramatic literature should thrive. Yet in this age plays were written by most romantic poets. However, very few of them achieved success as stage plays. "Keats was right to be sure that dramatic poetry was the supreme species of the art; Wordsworth was right to judge that it was no longer possible to write,"[3] observes William Walsh.

Wordsworth and Coleridge could not be successful in the theatre with their plays *Borderers* and *Remorse* respectively. Byron, despite his too much egoism, displayed his dramatic talent in his *Manfred* and *Cain*. Shelley in his *Cenci* and *Prometheus Unbound* showed his notable achievement in blending poetry and drama. But none of them was successful in attracting the popular taste which hungered for Gothic tales and horror themes. The age, thus, was not congenial to the revival of drama. William Walsh rightly observes: "the tradition of poetic drama had been dead too long to allow a revival, even by someone with Keats's gifts, his enthusiasm for the stage, his dramatic imagination, and his profound feeling for Shakespeare." (115)

Keats's attention was drawn to drama after he had composed *Endymion*, *Hyperion*, *Lamia*, *The Eve of St. Agnes* and the great *Odes*. Compared to the other plays of the period, Keats's first attempt at writing for the stage is the product of mature genius. Had he lived and continued writing for the stage, "he might well have matured his knowledge into a successful dramatic talent."[4] Keats himself wrote to B. Bailey: "It was the opinion of most of my friends that I should never be able to write a scene. I will endeavour to wipe away the prejudice."[5] His play, *Otho the Great*, did not, however, get the recognition it deserved at the hands of the critics. He had written a good number of poems so far, and had found a niche for himself in the field of romantic poetry. And therefore, when he strayed from his wonted course to the new avenue of plays, critics viewed it with eyes of doubt and mistrust. But Keats was optimistic of his success. He wrote to George and Georgiana Keats: "I have finished a tragedy [*Otho the Great*] which if it succeeds will enable me to sell what I may have in manuscript to a good a(d)vantage."[6] The play was accepted for presentation at 'Drury Lane' with a promise of coming out 'next season.' Keats was elated at the prospect. He wrote to Fanny Keats: "My hopes of success in the literary world are now better than ever."[7]

In his tragedy *Otho the Great*, Keats treats a Gothic story dealing with the revolt against the tenth-century Holy Roman emperor Otho I ("the Great"). Conrad, Duke of Franconia, is the villain of the piece. He, along with prince Ludolf, son of Otho, revolts against the emperor. Later he is reunited with Otho in friendship by defeating Otho's enemy Gersa, the prince of Hungary.

Otho the Great is pre-eminently a tragedy of intrigue. Its action and catastrophe depend largely on intrigues hatched by the ambitious brother and sister, Conrad and Auranthe. Conrad, ambitious to thrive with the help of the emperor, tactfully befriends him although he openly revolts against the emperor. The emperor is large-hearted enough to for-

get and forgive Conrad's past rebellion and as a sign of friendship offers to get his son Ludolf married to Conrad's sister, Auranthe. Auranthe, however, has an affair with Albert, a knight favoured by Otho. But, learning from her brother that the emperor wants her to be his daughter-in-law, she is willing to give up Albert for becoming the future queen of the country. In order to appear pure and chaste before everybody she has, by a contrivance, made Erminia, niece of Otho, appear to have been involved in the affair in which, in reality, she herself is involved. But, as ill luck would have it, her secret design against Erminia accidentally comes to be known by the latter from a letter in which Auranthe discloses the matter to her brother, Conrad. Erminia seeks the help of Albert to bring the matter to the notice of the emperor by carrying the letter secretly written by Auranthe to her brother.

Erminia herself comes to Otho in the company of Ethelbert, an abbot, who charges Auranthe, who is now already married to Ludolf, with contriving the plot to stain the honour and good name of the noble and pure Erminia. Ethelbert wants to present a sound proof of his accusation through Albert. Now Albert is called. But, instead of corroborating the statement of Ethelbert, he exclaims: "what proof should I have 'gainst a fame/ Impossible to slur?" (III.ii.216-17) And this is because he still loves Auranthe and so he does not want to harm her by disclosing her secret letter. Later, when he meets her, he says: "Your safety I have bought to-day/ By blazoning a lie." (IV.i.141-42) And he gives her a chance to escape a horrible end by eloping with him. But, if she does not agree, her fate will be in his hand. As he goes out, the brother and the sister plan to get rid of this canker. Conrad thinks that if Albert is kept alive, there is no safety for them, and so he must be killed. But, Auranthe is against the murder. Yet, both decide to meet Albert in the woods where Albert said he would be waiting for Auranthe. At night Auranthe escapes. Ludolf, who has been keeping a strict vigil over his newly wed wife, learns from his page that both Conrad and Auranthe have secretly left the castle. Gersa, the prince of Hungary, who is present there, informs that Albert, too, has left. Ludolph now burns with rage. He rushes out to meet Auranthe and takes revenge for the betrayal. He cries out: "Burn—burn the witch!" (IV.ii.139) In the forest he finds Albert wounded. Albert says that he has been wounded by Conrad. Soon Auranthe comes there and laments for Albert. Albert dies and Auranthe is taken home by Ludolph. Then in a short scene we are informed through conversation of some officers of the court that Conrad is dead and that prince Ludolph has gone mad and he "fills the arched rooms/ With ghastly ravings." (V.iii.15-16) The play ends with the deaths of Auranthe and Ludolph in a mysterious manner. Ludolph loved Auran-

the's true nature that kills him. And Auranthe dies, probably being unable to bear the mental strain for the apprehended punishment that may be meted out to her for practising deception on Otho and Ludolph.

Thus, an analysis of the plot makes it clear that it is a network of intrigue. Conrad starts the intrigue against Otho the Great, who is noble enough to be easily duped. In a magnanimous manner he proposes his son's marriage with Conrad's sister, not knowing the true nature of that woman. Ludolph also becomes enamoured of Auranthe's beauty and accepts her as his wife. We also hear of Auranthe's intrigue against Erminia in order to shift her own guilt to the latter. Then there is the intrigue against Albert by Conrad, who, in order to be safe, wants Albert to be killed. And finally there is the intrigue of Albert to take Auranthe away from her husband by a threat to disclose her secret plot against Erminia to the emperor. All these intrigues have been very subtly managed by Keats like a finished dramatic artist.

The play is a typical example of Keats's Hellenism. Keats was a Greek without knowing Greek. In this play Keats observes many of the classical rules and conventions. The play maintains the three classical unities of time, place and action. The incidents of the play occur in and around the castle of Friedburg. The duration of these incidents, as stated by Keats himself, is but "one day." Thus, it does not exceed the classical limit of twenty-four hours. The unity of theme or action is maintained by the absence of any sub-plot. All the incidents ultimately lead to the intense suffering of the emperor Otho because of the tragic end of his dear son, Ludolf. Apart from the maintenance of the classical rules of the unities, *Otho the Great* maintains the Aristotelian principle that a play must have a beginning, a middle and an end with the scenes distributed proportionately among these parts. In *Otho the Great* these three parts are properly balanced. The first act may rightly serve as the exposition. Here we meet most of the important characters and learn of the Iagoesque Conrad's plan of dispatching Albert, Auranthe's erstwhile paramour, and thriving on the emperor's favour. Conrad tells his sister, Auranthe, a co-sharer of his ambitious design: "Have I not laboured, plotted?" (I.i.109) To this Auranthe replies:

> 'Twas for yourself you laboured—not for me!
> Do you not count, when I am queen, to take
> Advantage of your chance discoveries
> Of my poor secrets, and so hold a rod
> over my life? (I.i.112-16)

Conrad's villainous nature is revealed here. In the second act the com-

plication takes shape as we find Erminia, Otho's niece, discovering the vile scheme of Auranthe to involve her falsely in an immoral affair. The situation reaches the climax in the second scene of the third act where Ethelbert, an abbot, comes with Erminia and seeks justice from Otho. Ethelbert accuses Auranthe and her brother of falsely implicating Erminia in a sex scandal in which, in reality, Auranthe herself is involved. He wants to tell "the names of those vipers, from whose jaws/ A deadly breath went forth to taint and blast/This guileless lady [Erminia]." (III.ii.153-55) But a cloud of suspense is raised as Albert, the possessor of a letter written by Auranthe containing the sure proof of her villainy declines to bring any charge against Auranthe. Now things begin to move very quickly. Albert appears before Auranthe and asks her to elope with him or else meet her ruin at his hands. Ludolph, who keeps keen watch on his newly wed wife Auranthe, finds her missing from the castle. All rush to the nearby forest where Albert being wounded dies and Conrad is reported dead. Ludolph brings Auranthe home and helpless Auranthe dies of shock and shame. Ludolph goes mad and dies. Thus, the play is brought to its inevitable end most naturally.

Apart from observing the classical rules of architectural design, Keats also follows another convention of the classical tragedy, which emphasizes the sway of fate. This is secured in the play by the accident of the letter of Auranthe being lost and recovered by Erminia, an incident that may remind one of the loss of the handkerchief by Desdemona and its recovery by Emilia in Shakespeare's *Othello*. Of course, the situations in the two plays are not quite similar. But in Keats's play, by the caprice of this incident the villainy of the brother and the sister is exposed. Erminia's entrusting Albert with that fateful letter also complicates the plot and hastens the end of the play. Besides conforming to the principles of a classical drama, the play fulfils the general requirement of dramatic structure consisting in a skilled intermixture of suspense and irony. Tragic irony is at work in Erminia's handing over Auranthe's secret letter to Albert with the expectation that he will vindicate her cause. Suspense and surprise are employed in the catastrophe. The sudden death of both Auranthe and Ludolph was not expected. The dark pall of tragedy comes over the stage with the quiet passing away of Ludolph at the end.

The classical tragedy avoids violence on the stage. All deaths and murders are generally reported. In this play also the deaths of Conrad and Auranthe are reported while deaths of Albert and Ludolph are free from any violence, at least on the stage. Keats has also employed the device of the chorus in the form of the three officers, Sigifred, Theodore and Gonfred who inform the audience, through their conversation, of

many incidents and fasts which not only help the audience understand the play better, but also helps in the continuity and compactness of the plot structure.

The characters in the play, though not many, have been drawn with proper skill and insight, although some critics may think otherwise. Otho the Great has been presented as a really great, magnanimous, wide-hearted, just ruler and loving father. In his dealing with Conrad, Gersa and Ludolph these features come out very prominently. Conrad and Auranthe appear as ambitious contrivers and selfish hypocrites. We are made aware of these features of the brother and the sister from the very beginning of the play. Ludolph is a valiant fighter and an obedient son with filial piety. He revolts against his father, but realizing his folly he becomes repentant and is finally reconciled with his father. He seems to be a bit emotional and sentimental in his attitude to Auranthe. But that only shows the sincerity and genuineness of his love for Auranthe. Erminia in her brief appearance has maintained her dignity as the niece of the great emperor. She is greatly shocked when Albert, in whom she has put her trust, betrays her. Ethelbert, the abbot, has been portrayed as a true well-wisher of the royal family. With a powerful but restrained speech, just becoming a man of the religious order, he argues the case of Erminia before the emperor. Thus, in the creation of characters Keats has shown his ability to make the men and women living and convincing.

The romantic mind of Keats reveals itself in the beautiful poetic speeches he has given to some of his characters. In the opening scene Conrad muses: "Nor yet has/ My ship of fortune furl'd her silken sails." (I.i.4-5) Auranthe, on receiving the news from her brother that the emperor has chosen her as the wife of his son, Ludolph exclaims:

> Thou, Jove-like, struck'st thy forehead,
> And from the teeming marrow of thy brain
> I spring complete Minerva! (I.i.93-95)

Emperor Otho, after releasing Gersa, the prince of Hungary and prisoner of war, says: "And thus a marble column do I build/ To prop my empire's dome." (I.ii.160-61) Ludolph who has fallen in love with Auranthe longs to meet his lady-love and says: "those turreted Franoconian walls,/ Like to a jealous casket, hold my pearl/ My fair Auranthe!" (I.iii.102-4) Ethelbert waxes eloquent about Erminia when Gersa expresses his doubt about her purity. He says that she cannot be false:

> Whom I have known from her first infancy,
> Baptiz'd her in the bosom of the Church,

Watch'd her, as anxious husbandmen the grain,
From the first shoot till the unripe mid-May,
Then to the tender ear of her June days,
Which, lifting sweet abroad its timid green,
Is blighted by the touch of calumny. (II.ii.132-38)

Gersa also is charmed by the beauty of Erminia and praises her:

The swan, soft leaning on her fledgy breast,
When to the stream she launches, looks not back
With such a tender grace; nor are her wings
So white as your soul is. (II.ii.102-5)

In the fourth act Auranthe soliloquizes as her villainy is exposed by Ethelbert:

O, thou golden Crown,
Orbing along the serene firmament
Of a wide empire, like a glowing moon;
And thou, bright sceptre! lustrous in my eyes,—
There—as the fabled fair Hesperian tree,
Bearing a fruit more precious! graceful thing,
Delicate, godlike, magic! must I leave
Thee to melt in the visionary air. (IV.i.78-85)

When Ludolph in his frenzy talks of delicious wine :

let me see—what wine?
The strong Iberian juice, or mellow Greek?
Or pale Calabrian? Or the Tuscan grape? (V.v.119-21)

The lines echo the second stanza of "Ode to a Nightingale" where the poet speaks of delicious wine by drinking which he wants to leave this world unseen by others.

Though the play is scattered with beautiful poetic speeches, they are not as emotional and sensuous as the exquisite romantic effusions in Keats's marvellous poems. This restraint adds much to the realistic and dramatic effect of the speeches and makes the drama stage-worthy, unlike Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound" which is nothing but an excellent lyric.

Towards the end of his life Keats became very much interested in drama and read the plays of Shakespeare with interest. Caroline F.E.

Spurgeon makes a thorough study of Keats's reading of Shakespeare in her book *Keats's Shakespeare: A Descriptive Study.* There she most cogently observes: "Keats and Shakespeare had a very unusual, a very close and subtle relationship. They were alike in certain qualities of mind and of art, a fact of which Keats himself was fully aware, and in some of these qualities they are unique among English poets."[8] R.S. White also acknowledges Keats's debt to Shakespeare as he writes: "Keats could hardly have written a complete, five-act tragedy without drawing somewhere upon his acknowledged mentor [Shakespeare] in the field."[9]

But Keats has not based his tragedy on Shakespeare alone. He, perhaps, has in mind the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher particularly *A King and No King* and *The Maid's Tragedy* as far as his method of constructing the plot around a series of intricate relationships instead of concentrating upon one tragic protagonist is concerned. In *Otho the Great* although Ludolph is the tragic protagonist, he is not given much importance and the play is named after the emperor, Otho, as we find in naming the Shakespearean play, *Julius Caesar.* This particular aspect has attracted the attention of H.R. Beaudry who remarks, "there is no particularly outstanding character in the play as a whole, . . . each major personage is able to hold the reader's interest"[10] at some stage of the action. Yet, the tragic end of Ludolph caused by the betrayal of Auranthe, just as the ruin of the 'Knight-at-arms' brought about by the 'fairy's child' in "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," touches the sympathetic chord in the hearts of the readers and spectators alike.

The play is both a tragedy of love for Ludolph and a tragedy of ambition for Conrad and Auranthe. In a sense, it may be said to be a combination of *Othello* and *Macbeth.* But the intense passion displayed by Shakespeare in these plays has been much mellowed down in this play. Although the play may not have attained the height of excellence of a great Shakespearean tragedy, yet considering that it is the maiden attempt of the poet to write for the stage, "*Otho the Great* may yet be judged as an effective drama written in the vein of plays which had been enormously popular in the early seventeenth century, and which Keats admired."[11]

NOTES

1. Jack Stillinger, ed., *The Poems of John Keats* (London: Heinemann, 1978), p. 1.
2. *The Romantic Poets* (1953; rpt. London: Arrow, 1961), p. 157.

3. William Walsh, *Introduction to Keats* (London: Methuen, 1981), p. 115.
4. B. Ifor Evans, *A Short History of English Drama* (London: Penguin, 1948), p. 144.
5. Maurice Buxton Forman, ed., *The Letters of John Keats* (Humphrey Milford, OUP, 1931), vol. II, p. 399.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 434.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 485.
8. (1928; rpt. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), pp. 53-54.
9. R.S.White, *Keats as a Reader of Shakespeare* (London: The Athlone Press, 1987), p. 205.
10. *The English Theatre of John Keats* (Salzburg, 1973), p. 184.
11. R.S. White, p. 206.

Calcutta

Gender Deformity in Vijay Tendulkar's *Kamala*

MANCHI SARAT BABU

> In the beginning, this universe was nothing but the Self in the form of a man. . . . He was as large as a man and woman embracing. This Self then divided itself into two parts; and with that, there were a master and a mistress.[1]

This, quoted from *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* by Campbell, symbolizes the split of a whole human being into a man and a woman. The same symbolism can be found in the creation of Adam and Eve by God.

We are born whole human beings. Gender-based division of labour breaks up into male and female fragments. Each fragment retains only half of the human potential. The retained part overgrows to compensate for the other part which remains underdeveloped. These two polarized, deformed fragments are called men and women. These gender deformities are thus caused and gradually 'canonized' by socio-cultural programming sex roles. They are glorified and children are trained to attain them through socialization since their birth. Hogie Wyckoff, a Transactional Analyst, writes: "As women and men we are socialized to develop certain parts of our personalities while suppressing the development of other parts. This programming promotes a predetermined, stilted, and repetitive way of acting life."[2]

Every human being has the potential for nurturing, controlling, rationality, intuition, spontaneity and adaptation. To be masculine, men develop the faculties of controlling and rationality while suppressing those of nurturing and intuition. To be feminine, women develop the faculties of nurturing and intuition while suppressing those of controlling and rationality. To be cultured, both men and women develop the faculty of adaptation to culture (but not to Nature) while suppressing that of spontaneity; so neither enjoys life. Nurturing and intuition help women perform their culturally allotted function: child-rearing and house-keeping while controlling and rationality help men perform their culturally allotted function: bread-earning. Adaptation to culture and

lack of spontaneity make both of them obedient to their masters. Thus men and women have become different, except in their obedience. These differences cause alienation and antagonism between men and women. So they find each other mysterious and hostile.

Gender deformity not only makes men and women incomplete human beings but also enslaves them to the exploitative and oppressive society. Men are exploited and oppressed in the society while women are exploited and oppressed in the house. Men are content with their power in the house while women are content with their power over children and daughters-in-law. Like men, women are also divided and hierarchised class-wise, caste-wise and relation-wise. This causes alienation and antagonism between the women of the higher rungs (rich/ higher caste/ mother-in-law) and those of the lower rungs (poor/ lower caste/ daughter-in-law). Men and women imbibe the exploitative and oppressive culture and perpetuate it. So they never realize the reality: they blame one another for their miserable life and quarrel among themselves. But they are not united and do not collectively try to eradicate the morbid culture that brought about this pathetic state. That is why Claude M. Steiner talks about the liberation of men and women from sex role scripting. (371-83)

Tendulkar's *Kamala* aptly exemplifies this gender deformity. It was inspired by a real life incident—the *Indian Express* expose by Ashwin Sarin, who actually bought a girl from a rural flesh market and presented at a press conference.[3] Jaisingh Jadav is a brilliant, brave journalist. He and Sarita, his sophisticated wife, remain ignorant of their being exploited and oppressed until Kamala, an uneducated tribal woman, triggers their awareness. In the play, Kamala becomes a powerful symbol of being exploited and oppressed. Talking to Sunil Shanbag, Tendulkar observes aptly: '"Kamala' after a time becomes a symbol. The wife of the journalist becomes 'Kamala,' and ultimately even he [the journalist] becomes 'Kamala.'"[4] Sarita, like Kamala, is a slave of Jaisingh Jadav while he himself is a slave of the owner of the paper.

Jaisingh Jadav is an agile, adventurous journalist. He takes risk, exposes scandals and feeds the paper with sensational news. His work greatly boosts the circulation of the paper and the owner increases his salary. Jaisingh feels happy and encouraged and takes much more risky tasks. He moves to a well-furnished spacious house. Sarita, his sophisticated wife, takes care of his needs at home. She takes the telephonic messages and notes them for him. She gives him sexual pleasure. Her intuition and nurturing faculty help her in this while the faculties of leadership (controlling) and rationality help Jaisingh in his job. Jaisingh is obedient and loyal to him. In such a sexist and familial system, a

'good' wife refreshes her husband so that he may work hard for his employer. So Steiner aptly points out: "In order for a man to be optimally exploited in his labour he must live with a woman who, in his eight hours of off-work time, re-supplies him with energy." (380-81)

Jaisingh goes to Luhardaga beyond Ranchi in Bihar and buys Kamala for Rs. 250 at flesh market where women of all kinds are auctioned openly. He brings her to Delhi and keeps her in his house to present her at a press conference in the evening in order to expose the inhuman trade. He keeps it secret even from his best friend Jain who happens to visit him in the forenoon. Individualism and competition of his profession demands it. Jain knowing the hardships of Sarita casually remarks: "Shame on you! Hero of anti-exploitation campaigns makes slave of wife" and calls Sarita "lovely bonded labourer" while saying "Bye." This anticipates Sarita's sudden realization of this because of Kamala.

Kakasaheb, Sarita's uncle, who runs a paper, is there. He apprehends the predicament of Jaisingh. He forewarns him of the possible, future danger: "you may be caught in a terrible jam sometime." (9) This proves to be true later though Jaisingh ignores it then. Kakasaheb later tries to convince him to leave such a job because it is not only dangerous but also inhuman. Jaisingh is not convinced as he is under the illusion that he is fighting through press against exploitation and oppression. He also believes that his employer will protect him.

Sarita: Supposing you're sent to jail?
Jaisingh. I don't mind. My editor is going to fight this case right upto the Supreme Court. (26)

Jaisingh meticulously executes his plan and succeeds marvellously at the press conference in exposing the inhuman trade by presenting Kamala as a proof. Kamala is asked certain unpleasant questions there. But Jaisingh lacks the faculties of intuition and nurturing in this context and does not take notice of Kamala's embarrassment. Jaisingh and Jain are very much intoxicated by drinks and success while Kakasaheb and Sarita feel very sorry for Kamala. Sarita, being annoyed, refuses to sleep with him that night.

Sarita is disturbed and cannot sleep. Kamala comes and talks to her. She asks, "How much did he buy you for?" (34) This unexpected question enlightens Sarita on her position in the family. Though Jaisingh took a handsome dowry in marrying her, she feels like saying "Seven hundred." Kamala remarks, "It was an expensive bargain, memsahib." She then proposes that she will do all the house work while Sarita will

look after accounts and such 'sophisticated' things. She adds that each of them will share their master's bed half a month each. Sarita agrees to this. She realizes that she is also a slave like Kamala. The realization is shocking and painful to her.

Jaisingh receives many compliments in the morning and feels very happy. As the Police are after him to take custody of Kamala, he hastens to take her to the orphanage. Sarita opposes this and requests him to allow Kamala to stay with them in their house. Then the dormant male chauvinist in him wakes up and says; "It's I who takes decisions in this house, and no one else." (42) He takes Kamala to the Orphanage and attends a party in the evening.

Sarita grows emotional and resentful at this. She proposes to hold a press conference to expose the tyranny of her husband. Kakasaheb tries to calm her by saying that it is common with men. He then confesses, "I gave your aunt a lot of trouble. As if it was my right. I didn't care what she felt at all."[5] (47) Then he adds that men are as humanly weak as women. But Sarita is not pacified.

Later Jain comes and says that Jaisingh has been dismissed from his job by the proprietor under the pressure of very big people who are involved in the flesh market. Jaisingh, being called, returns home and learns about his dismissal. He loses his temper, curses his employer and decides to expose all his crimes at a press conference the following day. The nurturing faculty in Sarita overcomes her resentment and she tries to console her husband. But being exhausted, he collapses onto the sofa and falls asleep. Sarita does not give up her proposal but postpones it.

Sarita represents educated sophisticated wives. They do not realize that their education mystifies their slavery and that education makes them sophisticated slaves as, paradoxically enough, education impoverishes our awareness. Jaisingh represents educated liberal middle class men. They cherish the illusions of their freedom and liberalism. In crises, their hidden male chauvinism comes out. They do not know that they are exploited and oppressed by their employer as their wives are exploited and oppressed by them.

Arundhati Banerjee in 'Introduction' makes a concluding remark: "*Kamala* is an indictment of the success-oriented male-dominated society where women are often victims or stepping stones in men's achievements."[6] (xviii) But it can also be concluded that *Kamala* is an indictment of the business-oriented capital-dominated society where men like Jaisingh are victims or stepping stones in capitalists' success.

NOTES

1. Joseph Campbell, *The Masks of God: Oriental Mythology* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), Vol. II, pp. 9-10.
2. Hogie Wyckoff, "Sex Role Scripting in Men and Women," *Scripts People Live*, Claude M. Steiner (New York: Bantam, 1980), p. 196.
3. Arundhati Banerjee, "Introduction," *Five Plays* by Vijay Tendulkar (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. xvi.
4. Vijay Tendulkar, "I am against sensational journalism," *The Sunday Observer*, October 1982.
5. This is what Tendulkar himself did.
6. The Victims or stepping stones in Jaisingh's achievement are Sarita (his wife), Kamala Bai (their servant-maid) and Kamala, the tribal woman that he bought.

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Fiction vs Anti-Fiction: The Debate of the Seventies

R. PALANIVEL

Man, eversince he began to exercise his thought processes in a serious manner, has been setting forth ideological postulates in the attempt to establish systems that would take care of the continuance and progress of human life. In course of time he has also found that it is not possible for him to stick to one particular ideology and that there ought to be ideological shifts so that he would find himself in a condition to adapt to reality that is changing constantly—rather being changed by the perceiving mind. Early warnings, as history shows us, had always been ignored and the growing inadequacy of the in-vogue ideological set-up gathers momentum necessitating an alternative—a new ideology. The majority has this tendency to cling on to a steadily desiccating core in the absence of a dependable alternative. It is during times such as this people want a new ideology and ideologues to represent it.

When we look at ideologies through history it is not as if there has been a number of different ones that were used and described one after the other. Any "new" ideology has invariably been a result of that archetypal subjet-object, heart-head, classic-Romantic, imagination-reason or intuition-pragmatism dialectic inclined towards one of the two. Though it is an obvious fact that we have needed both and that solution if any can never be to the exclusion of the one or the other, it is common—may be inevitable—to come across strong polemics whenever there has been a vigorous debates on these lines. And these debates become all the more engaging when both parties have something valid to say.

Beginning from somewhere around the mid-sixties up to the early eighties the field of American fiction had been subjected to such critical attention of conflicting attitudes that "there appears to be a consensus that American literature has undergone a crisis."[1] Expressing their dissatisfaction and inability to work with older novelistic forms, writers such as John Barth, Ronald Sukenick, Donald Barthelme, Stanley Elkin and a score of others announced their intention of composing the "mu-

sic of new consciousness."[2] The experimental efforts of these writers have been variously termed as metafiction, surfiction, superfiction, newfiction, well the list of labels may extend till one gets tired of it. With their varying literary efforts—inversion, deconstruction, demystification, demythification, self-reflexiveness, to name a few—they managed to present an interesting literary kaleidoscope. But their main complaint was that reality was fast oustripping imagination, one that Philip Roth expressed earlier in 1961. Not only the usual narrative forms but the language itself had come to suffer from a thinness that rendered it impossible for a writer whose duty it was to find verbal equivalents for his experience. Some of these writers, owing to this thinness "turned to black humour, paranoid visions and a kind of linguistic guerrilla warfare."[3]

Attacking concepts like well-developed character, plot and linear presentation of time, these writers had emphasized "process" rather than the product. This shift in perception was very much a step in the right direction for, any stagnation or clog requires an overhaul, especially a process overhaul. It is no wonder, process is the buzz word currently doing the rounds in the fields of management and engineering. But their refusal to do anything with actual life and the tendency to devote all their literary energies to train their ironic, parodic guns on older literary forms and classics were a deliberate challenge to the literary quarters otherwise minded. The shift in emphasis to process was relevant but to do so with no thought whatsoever of product, object, end-result—call it whatever—was to enter into the area of philosophical disputations. By doing so these writers seem to have got themselves into the subject-object, mind-matter trap though stoutly professing that is exactly what they do not want to do. Introducing the "new tradition of the novel" Sukenick observes: "Our curriculum would probably start with Don Quixote in which we would note the split between the pragmatic and the fantastic, the empirical and the imaginative, the objective and the subjective, between meaning and feeling finally, represented by Sancho and the Don."[4] But going by their declarations as practising fictionists one is led to wonder whether they have not inclined towards one side of the post-split duality. Let us for instance look at the statements by Raymond Federman, one of the chief spokesmen for the newfiction movement:

> The shape and order of fiction will not result from an imitation of the shape and order of life, but rather from the formal circumvolutions of language as it wells up from the unconscious.[5]

The new novel affirms its own autonomy by exposing its own

> lies; it tells false stories; inauthentic stories; it abolishes absolute knowledge and what passes for reality; it even states, defiantly, that reality as such does not exist.[6]

It is obvious from the tenor of the statements that the target of attack is the mimetic novels and any survey of the 'newfiction' by such writers is certain to indicate drastic and deliberate disfigurations of the earlier narrative modes. This literary exercise is also intended to be a reader-response education. But this education cannot be imparted in a direct manner for, even the slightest trace of prescriptiveness would run contrary to their pronouncements. Hence the reader is sought to be educated through a decimating attack on the existing reader-responses which for them is "stock" in toto.

Strongly criticising the idea of conceiving character as existing outside language, William Gass called characters locales of linguistic energy. According to him the practice of filling a literary work with things that are not there through unnecessary psychologizing is an "activity" that is not "literary."[7] The assault-footnotes in his novel (if allowed to call it one) *Willie Master's Lonesome Wife* are an attempt to destroy this unliterariness. While the process consciousness of these writers are sure promoters of literary quality, their tendency to act solely as demolition squads and their refusal to construct alternative structures place them in the ideological extreme of total irreferentiality.

It is interesting to note here that the Arnoldian American humanist Lionel Trilling had anticipated a situation like the one discussed. Recommending a cautious approach towards the practice of social liberality he had warned against making fellowmen "the object of [one's] enlightened interest, to go on to make them the object of [one's] pity, then of [one's] superior wisdom, ultimately of [one's] coercion."[8] The reader at the hands of the newfictionists passes through these phases of treatment ending in coercion through an assault on his value system. Their works mostly shock, fool and confuse the reader sustaining an attack on the reader-responses that he values. It would be unjust to question their motive which is to liberate and refresh. What they do not seem to realize is that their method is the same as used by the adherents of ideologies characterised by conversionary zeal. The no-holds-barred attack on the reader's values, beliefs and literary responses is an attempt, though not a deliberate one, to shame him into their point of view. He is to feel that something is drastically wrong with whatever he has felt and understood about fiction so far. Now he is to stop and undergo a process of rethinking with regard to his literary mind-set. Rethinking, revaluation and readjustment of mind-set to accommodate expansion of consciousness

have been the fulcrum through which man has been evolving in moral, social and intellectual realms. But, for this to be effected, it is necessary that one thinks for the other too. This is where the newfictionists's ideology loses its strength and relevance. To use T.S. Eliot's terms, they would knock the pedestal off tradition to nourish individual talent. Rethinking from a point where tradition has brought us so far—if we are permitted the freedom to exercise our commonsense in matters literary—can safely be preferred to the one that is the result of total bewilderment.

A movement with such radical intent as this was bound to meet with challenge. Though the practitioners of fictions that still wanted to maintain their moral-social-humanistic business were in good number, only a few dared to talk openly against the newfictionists for, to do so without intellectual embarrassment required boldness. To defend values was to invite trouble. To use the words of Saul Bellow's Sammler: "Feeling, outgoingness, expressiveness, kindness, heart—all these fine human things which by a peculiar turn of opinion strike people now as shady activities."[9] Novelists like Bellow and John Gardner, and critics like Eugene Goodheart and Gerald Graff defended literature that refused to sever its ties with moral and social issues.

These writers and critics in fact stand for a re-emergence of humanism. According to Goodheart: "The ideology of art tends to stress the freedom and autonomy of the imagination from all moral as well as political dictation. . . . We are given a freedom of choice, but without principles of discrimination and the capacity for resistance such freedom is vacuous. It is here that humanism or culture has traditionally found its ground."[10] A writer cannot forsake his moral and social responsibility on account of artistic freedom. Taking an aggressive stance, Graff indicted the American newficitonists for making novel "a vehicle for nihilistic metaphysics, an anti-didactic form of preaching."[11] Along with Graff and Goodheart, there were also critics like Julian Moynahan, Douglas Bush and Taylor Stochr who took up the cause of the traditional novel that would under no circumstance jettison objective reality. Graff's *Literature against Itself*, Goodheart's *Failure of Criticism*, Gardner's *On Moral Fiction*, the discussion on "The Politics of Anti-Realism" initiated by Graff[12] and the panel discussion edited by Mark Spilka[13] contain in themselves spirited defence of the traditional novel. A fiction festival sponsored by the University of Cincinnati and the National Endowment for Arts brought some newfictionists and writers in the traditional mould face to face resulting in a significant literary confrontation.

Among the novelists who still believe in the novel's affirming

power, Bellow and Gardner were the ones that decided to take the bull by its horns. Zeroing in on the craze for newness and novelty Bellow declared: "The difference is in the individuals, *they* are new; since the individuals can't really invent themselves, I don't see why so much anxiety should be generated about this. I think the important thing they should discover is what they are, who they are; that is the novelty, that is what is new."[14] This tendency in the American writer was more seriously viewed by Gardner who related this to "an almost total loss of faith in—or perhaps understanding of—how true art works."[15] There are also vehement dismissals of this novelty hunt as Moynahan's branding it a "knee-jerk or salivating dog reaction to the idea of newness."[16]

The refusal of the newfictionists to assume social and moral responsibility is criticised by the defenders of the traditional novel. A writer who thus alienates himself has his "place in the wings, apart, paring his nails, indifferent to the passions of his creatures."[17] Gardner condemns "[t]he aesthetic game players" for "juggling, obscenely giggling and gesturing in the wings while the play of life groans on."[18] The "technological reality"[19] and "constructing a linguistic source on the page"[20] of the newfictionists which the British novelist John Fowles termed as "fitting machinery together"[21] are countered with an emphasis on the organicity of literary creation. In fact both Bellow and Gardner fault the newfictionists on their inability to confront passions and feelings. Like the newfictionists who assail the responses of the readers, these two also attack the reading taste of the customers of newfiction. Whereas Bellow criticises the "deep readers"[22] who cannot face feelings, Gardner calls such consumers of opaque language "those arrogant donzels who chuckle at things obscure because their enjoyment proves to them that they are not like lesser mortals." (69)

In short, fiction that affirms life found its spokesmen in these who assert its power to effect moral, experiential, emotional education in the reader. Reading fiction to discover one's self always will remain a literary activity: a "conservative view of creative originality" according to which "originality may be realisation of a previously unperceived, undeveloped potentiality of what exists."[23]

This literary confrontation of the late seventies becomes significant for, it brought up yet again the fundamental question at a time when it was probably needed. Here it was artistic freedom vs. social and moral commitment. The best way to learn from this confrontation is not by taking a side but by looking closely at the debate itself. Levine's observation throws light on this dialectic.

Beginning in the 1960s the American writer faced the kind of

> imaginative crisis identified by Doris Lessing as 'the thinning of language against the density of our experience.' The result was a literature pulling in opposite directions toward a greater concern for objective reality and a deeper obsession with literary self-reflexiveness. (11)

The problem faced by them was the same. The one sought to extend the existing form to accommodate the experience, whereas the other went about subjecting traditional narrative modes to parody in order to expose their limitations. This pointing out of limitations by itself is a positive and necessary step as it paves the way for innovation. Throwing overboard whatever has come to exist, a total severing of ties with social and moral issues altogether and a blanket refusal to conform to anything that has a trace of familiarity cannot but lead to incomprehensible idiosyncracies. But by doing what they do, the newfictionists are performing a deed that is absolutely necessary for the progressing of the literary tradition. With their expression of unquenched creative thirst, they make tradition sit up and take note of the prevailing situation.

In the debate under discussion, quite some critical vehemence was witnessed but it may be dismissed as having risen from the heat of the moment. Leaving that aside, this ideological war is an instance of a healthy dialectic that should help "literary culture" enlarge "imaginative vision," and readers gain "imaginative elasticity."[24] If we can refrain from activating our predilection to right or wrong the arguments according to literary preferences, then it will not be difficult to discern the valuable perspective this ideological exercise puts forth.

The increasing interest in the study of the activities of the left and right hemispheres of the human brain and the breakthroughs in this field may make one wonder whether it is possible that all ideologies and dialectics are a result of this left-right business. The analytical, intellectual, rational left and the intuitive, visual right: well, do we not see the classicist and the romanticist. Roger Sperry, the psychobiologist, has said: "In many respects . . . each hemisphere appears to have a separate 'mind of its own'."[25] According to him they can also collaborate on some tasks which is confirmed again by the recent bestseller *Descartes' Error* by Antonio R. Damasio, a neurosurgeon. This book maintains that best decisions are arrived at by involving both the intellect and the emotion and not solely through the former as has been thought so far. Synthesis, "unified sensibility." End of ideologies? Who knows, the future when neurology will help unlock more of the secrets and mystery of literature may be round the corner.

NOTES

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The Motif of Quest in Indian English Fiction

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Though we can identify a number of narratives in ancient Indian literature in which the image of journey/quest occupies a central position, the emphasis in these is neither on 'journey' nor on 'discovery'/'destination' but on their symbolic possibilities. Therefore, we often find the transformation of narrative from a simple linear journey to a figurative, metaphoric, symbolic action in which movement through the geographic world becomes an analogue for the process of traumatic surrogation and life renewal. The contributing factor for this concern appears to be the journey centred history of our ancestors in the pre-Upanisadic period as well as the religion centred culture of ancient India that stresses mystical values and enjoins upon its members the inward or spiritual journey. This paper proposes to evolve a model on the basis of a close examination of the quest-patterns in the ancient Indian literary texts and to provide in terms of the quest model a reading of a few Indian English novels like *The Vendor of Sweets*, *The Silver Pilgrimage*, *The Serpent and the Rope*, *All about H. Hatterr*, *The Foreigner* and *The Last Labyrinth*. While I am sure that the application of the model reveals its strengths as well as betrays its weaknesses, I dare presume that it will probably help us determine the extent to which Indian English literature is Indian.

II

A study of those works in ancient Indian literature which have journey as their image reveals three major categories. First, work in which journey is used merely as a linear technique linking up fantastic episodes, where the interest is to be sustained only at the level of narration. An obvious reason for the emergence of works of this sort could be that all Sanskrit theoreticians took a prescriptive attitude and insisted on the mandatory inclusion of the 18 types of descriptions like travel and war.

Second, works which are totally suggestive or symbolic. This alle-

goric method corresponds with the Vedic-Upanishadic model outlined in Kathopanishad (1.3.3-10). Nachiketa's journey to the world of Yama, or that of Savitri as she followed Yama with a firm resolve, the journey undertaken by Garuda to fetch ambrosia—these become meaningful when read as allegories.

Third, works which proceed at the level of narration and yet unfold a symbolic meaning throughout. In such works two patterns may broadly be seen. I call the first 'The Pattern of Exile and the Kingdom.' Our epic heroes like Rama, Nala, Harishchandra or Pandavas are forced to live in exile for many years. A structural analysis of their circular journey reveals that it is essentially a rites of passage. As the hero is forced to lose all his marks of identity like sceptre and crown even before the journey, what Harold Bloom calls 'psychological search for identity' becomes one of the chief defining qualities of the journey.

If in the above model the hero is indented as the ultimate arriver in his journey even before he sets out, a slight variation of this model could be seen in the journey of Arjuna to acquire *Pashupatastra* or of Bhima to fetch the thousand petaled golden lotus or the conquest of Arjuna in *Jaimini Bharata*. Evidently they choose on their own these journeys and they set out with an inflated ego. The long journey and various encounters tame and chasten them. Now they get the benefit of a wise old man. Finally they return enlightened. I call this pattern of withdrawal and return the 'Paradigm of Egotistic Self and Enlightenment.'

That these two patterns are not essentially different, but indeed they are two different possibilities of the same pattern grows obvious by the fact that elements like the circular movement or the wise old man are seen in both. However, the pattern is different being linear in form with the hero freeing himself from all temporal ties and one by one like Dharmaraja in the *Mahaprasthanparva* of the *Mahabharata* or Siddhartha who pursues knowledge and becomes the Buddha.

III

Now let me try out these models on a few Indian English novels. M. Anantanarayana's *The Silver Pilgrimage*, G.V. Desani's *All about H. Hatterr*, the novels of R.K. Narayan, Ranga Rao's *Fowl Filcher* and Amitav Ghosh's *The Circle of Reason* are some of the novels in which I see the paradigm of egotistic self and enlightenment. Yet all these novels are cast in a comic mode.

The echo of the model 'Exile and the Kingdom' with all its four stages is seen in *The Silver Pilgrimage* when Jayasurya, the protagonist is obliged to undertake an arduous pilgrimage on foot to Benaras. He

experiences life practically in each of its aspects until he reaches Kashi. The turning point comes when he meets here a sage who gives the message that is to transform Jayasurya wholly and the incidents on his return journey confirm how he is chastened and positively changed.

On the other hand Raja Rao and Arun Joshi do not adopt the comic mode. The way in which the pattern of withdrawal and return operates in Arun Joshi's novels can be seen in the quest of Sindi Oberoi, the protagonist of *The Foreigner*. On the geographic plane it is a journey from home through the alien shores back to the home of his forefathers. On the social plane it is a process of withdrawal from society and return to it. On the plane of an ideology, Sindi's travel synchronizes with an inward journey from a truncated notion of existence and detachment to a comprehensive and adequate sense of detachment.

The Serpent and the Rope is a novel of discovery of the Guru. All the same the pattern here is similar to the pattern suggested in Dharmaraja's *Mahaprasthana*—i.e. the hero frees himself from all the temporal ties one by one.

I think *The Last Labyrinth* is one novel which departs from the established pattern. Its narrative includes all the essential elements of a labyrinth myth—the maze, the search, the fear and inability of man to find his way out of his problems and the liberating flight. However, I feel an attempt to understand the true spirit of India is implied throughout the narrative. The novel, in this sense, is yet another attempt at finding a passage to the real India.

IV

It is thus evident that Indian writers in English, in spite of emerging from marked social and linguistic groups with their own history of strong traditions, are yet instituted in a paradigmatic concern that runs as an undercurrent in all, in every one of them. It is to my mind these pervasive structures of cultural imagings that are helpful in answering the question what is Indian about Indian writer in English rather than the mores.

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Man-Woman Relationship in Raja Rao's *The Serpent and the Rope*

SARYUG YADAV

There are three basic relationships in the world—man to woman, man to man and man to nature—through which life takes its sustenance. Of these three types of relationship, man-woman relationship has been a rallying point for creative writers throughout the world since time immemorial. Aristotle is perhaps the first theoretician who defines woman in his own framework. According to him, the female is female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities. Saint Thomas Aquinas believes that woman is an imperfect man. Sigmund Freud explores woman in multi-dimensional perspectives. Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* (1949) establishes with great clarity the fundamental questions concerning man-woman relationship.

There are five fundamental factors involved in man-woman relationship: biology, experience, discourse, the unconscious, social and economic conditions. 'Woman is nothing but a womb,' (Tota mulier in utero) so goes the maxim. Sex is determined biologically but gender is a psychological concept. "Women have been fundamentally oppressed by a male-dominated language," says Dale Spender in his book *Man-Made Language*. Virginia Woolf is the first woman critic to include a sociological dimension in her analysis of man-woman relationship. D.H.Lawrence seems to be under the spell of Freud in his works *Sons and Lovers* and *Lady Chatterly's Lovers*.

Wooing of the female is an inherited quality of man. The greatest mystery about sex is that in its fulfilment both men and women reach a sensation of joy which makes them lose their identity, however short the duration may be. This union of the two invariably leads to the birth of a third living being. In this connection A. Rangacharya remarks: "It is not a mere physical experience. The man and the woman experience a feeling in which everything, including their individualities, ceases to exist. It is an eternal moment and once they come out of it they feel as if they are reborn. This is the only experience where, in spite of all the symp-

toms of physical fatigue fresh vigour and more strength are felt by the partners."[1]

No wonder, love plays a vital role in the union between man and woman. Love is an act in which time freezes and ego evaporates. It is the most vibrant energy to man. It is not an end itself; it leads man and woman to reach the soul. To quote Periyar Ramaswami: "It is not kindness or desire or passion, but an indescribable feeling that arises in the minds of a man and a woman, for a special purpose. It arises naturally and there is nothing in the world with which love can be equated." [2]

Raja Rao's treatment of man-woman relationship is rooted in the Indian ethos and there is a quest for wholeness in its final result. His short stories and novels are deeply concerned with the mysteries and miracles of the feminine force exploring its basic nature and various forms. As K.K. Sharma observes: "His hero discovers in the woman of his choice a chemical mixture of mistress, whore, child and mother; he finds her sensual, strong, compassionate, sensitive, intelligent and mysterious."[3]

The Serpent and the Rope (1960) won for Raja Rao the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1963. The various facets of the man-woman relationship are delineated in this novel through the diverse experiences of Ramaswamy, the hero, with various female characters: Madeleine, Savithri, Saroja, Little Mother and Lakshmi.

Raja Rao believes that woman is a source of inspiration and man is incomplete without her. It is through woman that man knows fully and realizes himself. She is the ultimate meaning of his being and she becomes part and parcel of his existence. In the beginning of the novel, Ramaswamy deplores for having no mother: "I was born an orphan, and have remained one. I have wandered the world and sobbed in hotel rooms and in trains, have looked at the cold mountains and sobbed, for I had no mother."[4]

The first woman who comes in the life of Ramaswamy is Madeleine. As a research scholar in ancient history, he goes to France where he meets Madeleine, a lecturer five years senior to him. He falls in love with her and describes her physical beauty in the following words: "Her hair was gold, and her skin for an Indian was like the unearthed marble with which we built our winter palaces. Cool, with the lake about one, and the peacock strutting in the garden below. The seventh-hour of music would come, and all the palace would see itself lit. . . . Madeleine was like the Palace of Amber seen in moonlight." (13-14)

Ramaswamy marries Madeleine and they start living as husband and wife. In his sexual intimacy with her, he has a wonderful experience and feels as if he were married to her for ages. He also feels that man

finds his true woman not for one life but for all lives. Madeleine often fills him with endless lust and lofty spiritual desire. So his physical union with her is not only a matter of pure sensations but also a source of spiritual experience. As Ramaswamy says: "For a moment you had gone beyond the body, and oh, how sad it is to come back—to bear this heavy limb. . . . I give it to you, Madeleine, but you are where you are, and I am but nowhere . . . oh give it to me, give it, give it! oh give that! Madeleine do not cry. Oh Madeleine, do not suffer . . . let me squeeze the juice out of you, let me lick you like a dog, . . . let me smell you, smell the you of me and the I in you. . . . Why do you cry so, Madeleine, did I hurt you, did I awaken you, did you rise and did I fail." (160-61)

Here we are reminded of *Lady Chatterly's Lover* of D.H. Lawrence, a sexual-prophet in modern English literature. There are, indeed, moments when both man and woman need each other for animal passion and brutal love. A woman wills her man to be strong and inexhausted one. She wants to play with him as a mother does with her child and the man desires to squeeze as much physical pleasure from her as possible. As the hero says:

> A woman hates a male when he withdraws. She cannot accept his defeat—his defeat is her defeat—his defeat is the defeat of her womanhood . . . and she lifts him up and takes him into herself, like a mother a child. Then you want to take a cactus branch and beat her and scratch her all over. You want to bite her lip and pull the breast away from her chest, and taste the good blood of her wounds.[7] (163)

According to the novelist, man becomes more often than not selfish when his wife becomes pregnant. He is misunderstood by a sense of loss and he is generally disenchanted with his wife. This is why a woman is sent to her mother's house when she becomes pregnant. When Madeleine is pregnant, Ramaswamy exclaims: "She was not mine, maternity had given her an otherness. . . . I wondered what I had done." (235-36)

On his return to France, Ramaswamy tries his best to enter into a cordial relationship with his wife Madeleine but he fails miserably. Conscious of the growing rift, Ramaswamy and Madeleine desperately seek and find temporary fulfilment in sex. Their passion gutters out into a wasteland of lust:

> In the middle of the night, I know not what took hold of Madeleine. She came into my bed and made such a big demand on me that I felt afterwards like a summer river—the sun sizzling on the Dec-

can plateau, and the stones burning; the cattle waiting with their tongues out; and the neem leaves on the tree, still. (163)

It is important to note that the marriage of Ramaswamy with Madeleine ultimately fails at all levels. Their marriage is doomed with his symbolic union with Savithri by pushing 'the toe-rings onto her second toes.' The sudden demise of Madeleine's second child at birth hastens the end. The divorce which comes at the end of the novel is nothing but a mere formality. What destroys the marriage is explicit in this remark of M.K. Naik: "What destroys the marriage is not 'incompatibilite de temperaments' but an unbridgeable gulf between two cultural ethoses."[5]

However, man must wed to know this earth. True marriage is a step towards self-realization. Sri Aurobindo also takes this powerful and passionate bond between man and woman as a means of searching 'self' and not as a mish-mash of emotion and sentiments. As Nirodbaran writes about him: "'This experience also I have had.'. . . He entered the worldly life and knew that 'what love was, particularly woman's love, from direct experience.'"[6]

Woman is firmly rooted in the things of our existence. Man is, in fact, incomplete without woman. As Ramaswamy says: "It makes all the difference in the world whether the woman of your life is with you or not; she alone enables you to be in a world that is familiar and whole. If it is not his wife, then for an Indian, it may be a sister in Mysore, or little Mother in Benares." (57)

Raja Rao takes woman-love as a stepping stone to proceed on the path of spiritualism. The spiritual experience stems from physical union between man and woman. Osho has also explored this possibility in his renowned work *From Sex to Superconsciousness.* Osho says: "Man got the first luminous glimpse of Samadhi in human history during the experience of intercourse. Love is born of nothingness because we are not that nothingness; that nothingness is God."[7]

In the fathomless love of woman, man sees the oneness of life pervading the whole universe. In moments of deep love Ramaswamy feels: "The wind blows, wave after wave of it, and mountains move. . . . I transpire as the truth, . . . like the wave that sees itself to be sea, like the earth that was spread out and was called Madeleine." (159) Moreover, loving a woman means loving oneself. Ramaswamy deeply believes that man gets his 'self' in his woman. He quotes the famous saying of Yagnyavalkya to his wife: "The husband does not love the wife for the wife's sake, the husband loves the wife for the sake of the self in her."(171)

Ramaswamy, though an intellectual, expresses his belief in the incomprehensible mystery and miracle of woman. He looks at his young

and growing sister Saroja and exclaims: "What a deep and reverential mystery womanhood is. . . . I was intoxicated with Saroja's presence, like a deer could be before a waterfall, or an elephant before a mountain peak; something primordial was awakening in a creature, and I felt that maturity in a girl was like a new moon or the change of equinox, it had polar affinities. There was something of the smell of musk, of the oyster when the pearl is still within, of the deep silent sea before the monsoon breaks." (50)

Despite the conviction of Ramaswamy that woman is an enigma and a riddle too difficult to be solved, he finds in her some fundamental truth which abides always in her personality. This becomes transparent from his matchless experience with Savithri: "I felt presence, the truth, the formula of Savithri. She was the source of which words were made, the mother of Sound, Akshara-Lakshmi, divinity of the syllable; the night of which the day was the meaning, the knowledge of which the book was the token, the symbol—the prophecy." (167)

Ramaswamy's love for Savithri is something Platonic and it is a case of having the experience and missing its meaning. Savithri is the daughter of a small Raja. Ramaswamy's love for Savithri crosses the boundary of physical relationship and it becomes almost spiritual: "One cannot possess the world, one can become it. I could not possess Savithri—I became I." Ramaswamy describes his first meeting with Savithri in these words: "Her presence never said anything but her absence spoke." (31)

Savithri is wed to Pratap Singh but this makes no difference in the intensity of Rama's love for her. Savithri is his true woman. Love may or may not have any physical expression; true love is divine and it transcends as 'prema' the body. So in this love Savithri's fulfillment with Pratap is Rama's fulfillment as well. In this connection *The Gita Govinda* may be helpful because Radha calls Krishna 'Gopika-Priya' transcending all jealousy.

Here it would not be out of place to mention that Ramaswamy feels dejected for a while hearing the news of Savithri's marriage to Pratap. In a fit of sheer despair, he falls in love with sex-starved Lakshmi as he says: "I thought to myself it was like eating a pickle. My days and nights would be spent in luxurious enjoyment . . . often lying by her I wondered whether I was Rama, Saroja's loved brother, little Mother's stepson?" (289) But very soon Rama realizes his fault and his affair with Lakshmi is over. He returns to France and finds Madeleine practising Buddhism leading to renunciation. He falls seriously ill and has to have a lung operation. During his convalescence Savithri meets him time and again and he realizes that Savithri's physical relationship with

her husband does not clash with the spiritual union between him and her. So he gives his famous pronouncement: "Rejoice in the rejoicement of others. That is the Truth. . . . Love is rejoicing in the rejoicing of the other." (379)

In *The Serpent and the Rope* Raja Rao also exhibits motherhood in the relationship of Ramaswamy and Little Mother. When Ramaswamy comes to India to perform the obsequies of his father, he meets his step-mother who embodies the highest maternal principle projected through the image of the Ganges: "Little Mother slept. Her hands on the head of Sridhara, pressed gently against her breast. . . . She slept as though the waters of the Ganges were made of sleep and each one of us a wave. But she would suddenly open her eyes and ask, 'Rama, are you sure you are not cold? I am frightened of your lungs, son.'" (98) Their deep relationship as mother and son enables them to understand each other minutely and spontaneously. To quote Ramaswamy: "What sweetness flowed from Little Mother to me. She, it seemed, was my inmost centre, the mirror of my life. With no word, or sometimes with just a word, she understood the curvatures of my silences and thoughts. She seemed to have borne me without bearing me. " (234)

Now it is evident that man finds life natural with a woman. Man is not complete without woman in the true sense. She is not only warm, comfort-giving, tender and protective but also an inevitable life force pervading the whole scheme of the universe as Raja Rao declares in highly poetic language: "Woman is the earth, air, ether, sound: woman is the microcosm of the mind, the articulations of space, the knowing in knowledge; the woman is fire, movement clear and rapid as the mountain stream; woman is the meaning of the word, the breath, touch, act . . . woman is the world . . . the curve of the cloud and the round roundness of the sun." (352-53)

In conclusion it may be said that Raja Rao's treatment of man-woman relationship in *The Serpent and the Rope* has layers of meaning and much remains unsaid. Raja Rao holds woman in high esteem and considers her absolutely essential for the well-being of man—physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual.

NOTES

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6. *Mrinalini Devi* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1988), p. 22.
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Symbolism and Structure in Paul Scott's *The Raj Quartet*

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Paul Scott's *Raj Quartet* (1977) is an artistic recreation of the last decade of the British Raj. W.H. Morris-Jones whose Army unit was stationed in India during the 1940s vouches for the authenticity of the novel: "It is an advantage of age that one can sometimes say I was there at the time. My own years in the Indian Army coincided closely with *The Jewel in the Crown* period, and my recollections confirm the authenticity of the book."[1] *The Raj Quartet*, in addition to its being a well researched document of the times is also significant for its technical virtuosity and its use of symbolism. The cyclic structure that allows the theme, which is essentially the British-Indian relationship, to be examined from different perspectives and the inclusion of symbolical elements greatly enhance the richness of the texture of the novel.

The novel, primarily concerned with the causes that adversely affected the British-Indian relationship, is a fictional comment on the gradual deterioration of the relationship, in each of its volumes. The rift between England and India begins in *The Jewel in the Crown* with the separation of Hari Kumar and Daphne Manners; and the division is complete in *The Towers of Silence* with the demise of Barbara Batchelor whose life is symbolic of the presence of British in India. What follows in *A Division of the Spoils* is a representation of the horror of communal frenzy that followed Partition. Also, the novel, through the figures of Hari Kumar and Ahmed Kasim, speaks of the callous attitude of Britain towards India—a factor to reckon with in the relationship between the two countries. Hari Kumar, though a symbol of Macaulay's expectation of the educated Indians, is at the end abandoned by the British. Ahmed Kasim's brutal murder at the hands of the communal fanatics during the partition riots underscores Britain's failure to ensure a free and united India, while the creation of a united India was their professed justification for their presence in India. In the novel, the narrator, just after recreating the scene of Ahmed being forced out of a blockaded train and

decapitated by violent fanatics while the British passengers shut out the incident by pulling down the window shutters, notices that his own train had started moving, and this enables him to connect movement to the static scene of murder and mayhem. He wryly comments that in the mind of the traveller the body never reaches the ground: "Increasing speed, the train puts distance between itself and the falling body and between one time and another so that in the mind of the traveller the body never quite achieves its final crumpled position on the ground at the feet of the attackers." (*A Division of the Spoils*, 113)

It implies that Britain, after consciously pursuing the politically expedient policy of divide-and-rule[2] and thus planting the seeds for the partition of India on a communal basis, stubbornly refuses to accept any responsibility for the subsequent massacre. Further, the novel, by linking Ahmed Kasim's murder in the last volume with Daphne's rape in the first volume, comments that from the beginning the British policy in India had inevitably led to the tragedy of massacre. Ahmed's body falling to the ground "as out of a history" is linked to a stumbling girl on steps after "a long journey through the dark":

> The victim chose neither the time nor the place of his death but in going to it as he did he must have seen that he contributed something of his own to its manner: and this was probably his compensation, so that when the body falls it will seem to do so without protest and without asking for explanation of the thing that has happened to it, as if all that has gone before is explanation enough, so that it will not fall to the ground so much as out of a history which began with a girl stumbling on steps at the end of a long journey through the dark. (*A Division of the Spoils*, 113)

In the novel the life of the old missionary Barbara Batchelor is a symbolic comment on the actions of the British Government in India. The British were not seriously concerned about the progress of India. The laws for India were framed in London by men who had little or no knowledge of the conditions prevailing in India. Consequently when the administrators in India implemented these laws it only worsened the relationship between the peoples of the two countries. This point is brought into focus when Barbara thinks: "My life . . . has become extraordinarily complicated. There is more than one of me and one, I am not sure which, has a serious duty to perform." [*The Towers of Silence* 79] The truth is that the British had little concern for the people of India about whom they claimed to feel concerned. This point is clearly borne out by Barbara: she is well-meaning and genuinely interested in doing

good to Indians, but she is startled when she realizes her mistake in converting the school children to Christianity. Symbolically, the British were unduly conscious of the "white man's burden" and considered, in the manner of Macaulay, their way of life to be superior to that of the Indians and condescendingly imposed their culture on the ignorant "natives." Barbara's dream is a case in point: she sees the little girl whose crayons she had taken away at school because she had coloured God blue like Krishna. Barbara dreams that while taking attendance she cannot remember the girl's name and neither can the girl remember her own name and stands silently accusing Barbara of not only taking away her crayons but also depriving her of her name. When Barbara attempts to shake her hands, the little girl refuses to cooperate. It is too late to make amends. The anonymity of the girl is a metaphor for the loss of identity of the Indians under the Raj. The message nevertheless is clear: that Jesus and Krishna must be accepted and that the British must treat the Indians as equals. As in the dream where Barbara realizes that it is too late to make friends with the little girl, England also realizes rather late that she is not communicating with India in the way she should. This point is stressed when Barbara is shown to visualize the scene of her friend Edwina holding the dead Chaudhuri's hand with the caption "TOO LATE" written under the picture. [*The Towers of Silence*, 93] The fact that the British never made any attempts to understand the country they ruled is clear when Barbara compares the English roses in Mabel's garden with the British in India: "You are now native roses . . . of the country. The garden is a native garden. We are only visitors. That has been our mistake. That is why God has not followed us here." (*The Towers of Silence*, 283)

Barbara indicates her understanding of the shortcomings of the British adminstration when she writes to her friend Miss Jolley, the mission school administrator, asking her whether the misson ever brought love "not pity, compassion, or instruction but love" (*The Towers of Silence*, 103) to the children. She continues in her letter "Reject the evidence of my confident stride. Shut your ears to my chatter. They are all illusory. I question my existence, my right to it." (*The Towers of Silence*, 103) Symbolically Barbara's chatter indicates that even though the British give wide publicity to their pious intentions they never translate them into meaningful action. Barbara's question about her right to existence is indeed a question about the right of England to be in India. Even though the British rulers pretend to be morally right in dealing with India, Barbara, the symbolic representative of the British, stresses love, not pity or compassion, as the true basis of the British-Indian relationship.

The need for egalitarianism is again brought out in the symbolism of the "apostle's spoons." When Barbara presents these silver spoons to Susan on her wedding day, Susan's mother Mildred returns them to Barbara, for Barbara does not belong to the British upper-class in India. This makes Barbara to think of the apostles of Jesus and how they would be treated in the highly class-conscious British society. She feels that the apostles "Simple hard-working men, good with nets and boats, swarthy skinned, smelling of sweat, of fish, of the timber-yard; men who worked with their hands . . . would get short shrift in Pankot." (*The Towers of Silence*, 298) Her further comment also stresses the lack of democratic values in the British society: "I wouldn't give tuppence for your chances, least of all if you [Apostles] tried to get into that place where the silver is and asked permission to sit at the table and break your bread and drink your wine." (*The Towers of Silence*, 298)

The fact that the British administration in India is devoid of moral considerations is brought out through Barbara's thoughts and actions. Once while reading Emerson, Barbara is startled at the line "nothing can bring you peace but yourself. Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principles." (*The Towers of Silence*, 202) She tries to kneel down in repentance, but cannot do so because "fixed in this proud and arrogant position" she is not able to "remember what her principles were." (*The Towers of Silence*, 202) This is indicative of the fact that the British with their superior airs and condescending approach towards India forget their moral values.

All her life Barbara has viewed the "unknown Indian" from the perspective of a superior and condescending position; but after reading Emerson, she is able to view the whole situation as an "I-you" relationship and becomes troubled by feelings of guilt about the treatment that she and the British meted out to the Indians. Barbara then has recurrent dreams of Mabel, whom she knows to be tormented by the massacre of Jallianwallah Bagh, "turning into the pillow, crushing and splintering the lenses, cutting herself, bleeding slowly from closed eyelids so that she appears to be crying blood." (*The Towers of Silence*, 207) Mabel's death signals the demise of the Raj, its ideals unfulfilled. Barbara gets the news of her death while helping Mr. Maybrick, the Church Organist, to gather the scattered pages of his Bach. However she has to leave before putting on the binding, a symbolic suggestion that England could not fulfil its promise of uniting India but had to leave the country after dividing it into India and Pakistan.

After Mabel's death, Barbara who had been Mabel's paying-guest, stays back in Pankot and tries her best to correct the wrong of burying Mabel in the wrong church but in vain. It is at points like these that the

events in individual lives emphasize the parallel events in the political sphere. The fact that the British in India never kept their promises about granting Independence to India is brought out through the technique of internal monologues of Barbara; as when she sees Mabel buried in the wrong church:

> there . . . went the Raj, supported by the unassailable criteria of necessity, devoutness, even of self-sacrifice because Mildred had snatched half-an-hour from her vigil to see the coffin into the hold she had ordered dug . . . but what was being perpetuated was an act of callousness: the aim of collectively not caring a damn about a desire or an expectation of the fulfilment of a promise so long as personal dignity was preserved and at a cost that could be borne without too great an effort. (*The Jewel in the Crown*, 245)

Implicitly, therefore, though Britain often claimed to have understood India's need for independence, in reality it never acted so as to effect the understanding. Barbara in her attempt to put Mabel in the right grave is merely trying to instil a moral certainty into the Raj.

In the end, Barbara goes completely mad and is admitted to the Hospital of the Samaritan Mission. Her powerlessness to do any good any longer is shown in her dream in which she cannot hold the pencil because her hands have been severed. She is obsessed with the haunting image of the Jallianwallah Bagh massacre that signalled the end of the Raj in India. She is also obsessed with the vultures hovering over the distant towers of silence. This symbolically suggests the imminent death of Barbara as well as the Raj; it is also evident when Barbara can no longer remember what she wants to say because "The birds had picked the words clean." (*The Towers of Silence*, 396) In the end, "They found her thus, eternally alert, in sudden sunshine, her shadow burnt into the wall behind her as if by some distant but terrible fire." (*The Towers of Silence*, 397)

This indicates the end of the British Raj with the atom bomb (the end of Second World War) and the election of a Socialist government in England which would liquidate the British Empire. As Mohammed Ali Kasim's letter to Gandhi confirms: "I find myself uncertain which of two recent events—the election of a Socialist government in London and the destruction of Hiroshima by a single atomic bomb—will have the profounder effect on India's future." (*The Towers of Silence*, 397)

The quartet is much more than a novel in which people and events symbolize the British history in India. The novel is important for the im-

age it conveys of the alienation between England and India. The work is cyclic in nature: beginning and ending with the image of alienation of the two countries. In the novel modulation is achieved through the repetition of the same events from differing perspectives and through the slightly different focus of the central theme in each of the four volumes of the novel.

The narrator uses his travellings as an effective device to transcend the limits of locales and time to comment upon the significance that some of the past events have on the present. This has the effect of expanding the scope of action and intensifying the vision. The dimension of time, of history, is frequently superimposed on that of space as the narrator recreates his travels along the same routes and to the same places that his (symbolic) characters frequented, and tries to empathise with them and even dramatise the historical action. The narrator's travelling with Srinivasan past the Bibighar Gardens illustrates the point. Further: "The smokey metallic railway smell that is the same anywhere in the world, and was certainly no different twenty-two years ago. . . . He breathes in sharply and thinks: This is what she [Daphne] smelt as she cycled back from Sister Ludmila's Sanctuary." (*The Jewel in the Crown*, 209)

Besides, the novelist, using the panoramic style of description produces the effect of spatial expansion in the novel. The narrator's aerial view of Mayapore at the end of the first volume of *The Jewel in the Crown* is most illustrative: "The plane banks, nosing east, almost taking the course of the river that leads to Miss Crane's unimaginable coast with this God's eye-view of the created world she never had to cope, which perhaps was a pity, because the topography she found so inhibiting from ground-level reveals itself from this height, at this speed, as random and unplanned, with designs hacked into it by people who only worked things out as they went along."[3] (573)

To conclude, Paul Scott's choice of the cyclic structure and his use of the highly effective symbolism allows for a multi-dimensional treatment of the theme; the novel is thus a valuable contribution to an artistic exploration of the multi-faceted British-Indian relationship as fictionalised history.

NOTES

1. W.H. Morris-Janes, "The Jewel in the Crown," *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 58, No. 2; summer 1985, University of British Columbia, Canada.

2. Regarding the divide-and-rule policy of the British A.A. Risly, Home Secretary to the Government of India, says: "Bengal united is a power, Bengal divided will pull in different ways. This is what the Congress leaders feel; their apprehensions are perfectly correct and they form one of the great merits of the scheme. . . . It is not altogether easy to reply in a dispatch which is sure to be published without disclosing the fact that . . . one of our main objects is to split up and thereby to weaken a solid body of opponents to our rule." Premen Addy and Ilne Azad, "Politics and Society in Bengal," *Explosion in a Subcontinent*, ed. Robin Blackburn (England: Penguin Books, 1975), p. 111.
3. This brings into focus what Philip Woodruff says about India: "You must fly over India if you want to see how it is put together. From a train, there is not enough in the eye at one glance and it is gone too soon; by bullock-cart the journey takes too long; you have forgotten what you saw last week before you are in the next district." *The Men Who Ruled India* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1971), Vol. I, p. 183.

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C.S. Lewis's Space Trilogy: A Study in Theme and Form

K. SUNEETHA RANI

C.S. Lewis, familiar to the students of literature as the author of *The Allegory of Love, A Preface to 'Paradise Lost'* and *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*, is a prominent Christian apologist who has become popular as a modern-day "apostle to the skeptics." His mode of communicating his opinion to those unduly influenced by the nineteenth century liberalism and scientism is to write as if he is a "cocktail-party *advocatus-Christi*." His *Screwtape Letters* and *The Problem of Pain* show how he discusses the weightiest of spiritual matters in a language to which those reared on Marx and Freud and "human science" and moral relativism are accustomed. The same urbanity and tone of ethical orthodoxy are reflected in his novels as well. Especially the first three novels, *Out of the Silent Planet, Perelandra* and *That Hideous Strength*, constitute a trilogy in which Lewis creates his own myth, with science fiction providing him with a method and a plot and the theology of the church with a theme.

The history of science fiction is also the history of humanity's changing attitudes towards space and time. From the time of Galileo onwards, prototypes of modern science fiction appeared, but most literary historians agree that the first work of fiction that has all the characteristics of science fiction genre was written by Mary Shelley. Her *Frankenstein* is often taken for a literary monster. Swift's *Gulliver's Travels, The Utopia* of Thomas More, the Satires of Lucan and *The Republic* of Plato are sometimes included in the genealogies of science fiction—obviously to add distinction to the pedigree. Science fiction, in the hands of writers like Wells and Stapledon became a place where values could be presented in a speculative way, tested, and finally advocated. Wells called his novels scientific romances. Wells' novels *The Time Machine, The Island of Dr. Moreau, The Invisible Man, The War of the Worlds, The First Men in the Moon, When the Sleeper Wakes, The Food of the Gods, In the Days of the Comet* and *The War in the Air*

opened a new era in literature.

An understanding of J.R.R. Tolkien's conception of fantasy becomes indispensable for an understanding of the genre. For, Tolkien made fantasy respectable. He defines the term 'fantasy' as embodying both the Sub-creative Art in itself and a quality of strangeness and wonder in the Expression. "Fantasy [in this sense] is . . . not a lower form, and so [when achieved] the most potent."[1] Since the publication of *The Lord of the Rings* it has been possible for British and American writers with a serious purpose to employ once again the genre of marvellous writing, as they had not been able to do since the growth and dominance of the realist novel.

Tolkien's friend and colleague C.S. Lewis wrote the Cycle of Narnian fantasies as the vehicle of Christian mysteries. He has admitted his own delight in fairy tales and other fantastic kinds of literature including science fiction, and invited those who take pleasure in the delights of fiction for their own sake to come out of their closets and admit that they read for pleasure. Yet as a student of that era when the greatest extremes in fantastic story-telling and didactic seriousness often co-existed in the same work, as in Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, he also knew how fantasy might function as a vehicle for serious fantasy. In a letter to Roger Lancelyn Green, Lewis says, "I liked the whole interplanetary idea as mythology and simply wished to conquer for my own [Christian] point of view."[2]

Behind Lewis' imagination and his longing is what was for him a primal desire, an imaginative impulse as old as the human race working under the special conditions of our own time, namely the wish to visit strange regions in search of such beauty, awe, or terror as the actual world does not supply. The quest is not merely for remoteness: distance is only a necessary precondition of mystery and otherness. Lewis says of Lindsay's *A Voyage to Arcturus* which he considers the real father of his planet books thus: "His romance is a region of the spirit. He is the first writer to discover what other planets are really good for in fiction. No merely physical strangeness or merely spatial distance will realize that idea of otherness which is what we are always trying to grasp in a story about voyaging through space. . . . To construct plausible and other moving world you must draw on the only real other world we know, that of the spirit."[3]

In his space trilogy, a delight in fantastic imagining for its own sake is quite apparent, especially in his beautiful description of the unfallen world of Perelandra. But his serious philosophical purpose is also very clear. He was provoked into writing these books by the two developments in science fiction: the work of Olaf Stapledon and the pulpy,

Gernsbackian science fiction that was developing in America in the thirties. Lewis admired Stapledon's invention but not his philosophy, and he derided the attitude he discerned behind much of the American science fiction he encountered. "The challenge that Lewis mounted was not simply a challenge to Gernsback & Co. It was a challenge to science itself and the modern technological culture based upon science to produce an ethic worth living and dying for."[4]

In the first of the three novels, *Out of the Silent Planet*, the Earth becomes 'Thulcandra,' the silent planet, cut off from the rest of the cosmos by Satan's rebellion and the subsequent fall of man. Lewis here attempts to present basic Christian concepts in pseudo-scientific and mythical terms without distorting their meaning. The silent planet myth offers Lewis a metaphorical framework to present in fictional form the basic tenets of Christianity. If, as Charles Moorman points out, "the main tenor of Lewis' myth is Christian orthodoxy, his vehicle is science fiction."[5]

If in *Brave New World* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* Wellsian science fiction moves further from myth to satire, in Lewis' trilogy it returns very much to myth again. Perhaps one way of saying what Lewis' achievement is in *Out of the Silent Planet* would be to say that he has pressed the genre 'space fiction' into the service of ancient mythic and poetic themes. *Perelandra*, the second novel of the trilogy, illustrates this general method. Lewis here uses the literary methodology of the writers of science fiction in attempting, as in his tracts, to exemplify the doctrine of the Fall of Man. This he does subtly in a passage which reinforces the identification of Weston with Satan by means of an allusion to the Crucifixion. The theme is human freedom, choice, obedience, goodness, the will of good, and how all these harmonize in a sort of pattern. Ransom must fight the Un-man for that is Weston, the fiercely megalomaniacal scientific utopian. It is the Devil or a devil with whom Ransom grapples. The sheer physical grossness of the fight, described at agonizing length, dramatizes with terrible clarity the thing that Lewis has been working all through his fiction. The distinction between flesh and spirit, nature and supernature, history and myth, is only a provisional and contingent one.

That Hideous Strength still retains the primary structure of the silent planet myth. But the field of action shifts in this novel from Heaven to the Earth. The creation here of the National Institute of Co-Ordinated Experiments is Lewis' most vehement means of demonstrating the futility of the ideals of secular humanism, science and progress. Weston's idea of the eventual triumph of the forces of Creative Evolution over the universe is laid bare in this novel. Belbury, headquarters of the N.I.C.E.,

veritably portrays a chaotic society founded on *cupiditas* rather than on *caritas*.

Lewis' main aim in the creation of his silent planet myth is to create and maintain a metaphor that will serve to carry in fictional form the basic tenets of Christianity, and present them from a non-Christian point of view and without reference to normal Christian symbols. The main tenor of Lewis' myth is Christian orthodoxy, his vehicle is science fiction.

Olaf Stapledon's position and his emphasis on the growth of spirit was regarded by Lewis as more dangerous and no less abhorrent than the attitude of "the little Interplanetary Societies." Stapledon's terrible creation, the Star Maker, who combines in one being the qualities that Christianity divides into God and Satan, seemed to Lewis utterly blasphemous. That Lewis admired Stapledon's invention but not his philosophy is best illustrated in the following passage from *Perelandra* where he makes Prof. Weston embody the Gernsbackian human racism he detested: "He was a man obsessed with the idea which is at the moment circulating all over our planet in obscure works of 'scientification' in Little Interplanetary Societies and Rocketry Clubs, and between the covers of monstrous magazines, ignored or mocked by intellectuals, but ready, if ever the power is put into its hands, to open a new chapter of misery for the Universe."[6] This attack on Gernsbackian human racism is made from a Christian perspective. Indeed, this attack as Robert Scholes and Eric Rabkin point out, paved the way for subsequent critical considerations of the same position made from the field of science fiction.

Lewis recognised that Behaviourism was the real enemy of religion in the twentieth century. The great quarrel between science and religion that began around the time of Galileo acquired a new impetus in the twentieth century with science speculating even more boldly about the origin of the universe and the descent of man. This generated a further conflict between theology and science. The application of behaviourist theory to human conduct was found despicable by Lewis, because it involved scientists lacking values in themselves but manipulating the values of others. This idea is given creative embodiment in *That Hideous Strength* where Lewis creates a scientific foundation run by power-hungry bureaucrats. This foundation threatens to usurp all power in England and attempts a brutal modification of individual human beings. "Quite simple and obvious things, at first sterilization of the unfit, liquidation of backward races (we don't want any dead weights), selective breeding. Then real education, including pre-natal education. By real education I mean one that has no take-it-or-leave-it nonsense. A real education

makes the patient what it wants infallibly . . . it'll have to be mainly psychological at first. But will get on to bio-chemical conditioning and in the end direct manipulation of the brain."[7]

The ethical issue before Lewis in these novels seems to be to find whether or not human beings are capable of finding values to replace those of the religion. His view is that they have not, and will not, because humans are fallen. They are incapable of reasoning their way to any ultimate, be it Truth, Beauty or Goodness. That is why, according to Lewis, man must turn back to God and to the teachings of Christ. Lewis entered the ethical debate on the issue of science and values both with philosophical books like *The Abolition of Man*, *The Problem of Pain*, and *Miracles*, and with his space trilogy.

For Lewis, science fiction offered a relaxation from his true vocations of literary scholarship and theological ethics. Even so, he set his mark upon the field through his influence upon followers inside and outside his church, and through the challenge he offered science and science fiction to produce an ethic that might contend, upon a footing of quality, with his own Christian faith.

In *The Machine Stops*, *We*, *Brave New World*, and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* we observe an anti-utopia which, though differing in numerous features, is much the same. In C.S. Lewis' trilogy, anti-utopia assumes a new and different appearance. One reason for this change is that instead of being a reaction to utopia from a disillusioned left, Lewis' trilogy is an attack from conservative, Christian right. C.S. Lewis handles in his trilogy the anti-utopian novel in a new and different light. Lewis' trilogy has been considered by Hillegas "A kind of *Paradise Lost* employed to teach Christian doctrine to a sophisticated and unsuspecting twentieth century."[8]

With his reputation as a prominent Christian apologist who would direct his attention against those unduly influenced by nineteenth century scientism and liberalism, Lewis attempted through his writing in his space trilogy to woo mankind away from the laboratories and the secular reform movements. Lewis, in these novels which combine the tracts of science fiction and utopian fiction, shows himself to be a propagondist for the cause of Christian Orthodoxy and its morality.

The trilogy, though anti-Wellsian, owes much to Wells because of Lewis' strong interest in science fiction. Its Wellsian quality is first of all predominantly visible in the fictionalizing of travel to other worlds, which provides its chief myth. According to Lewis' conception, the Earth, the only fallen world in the universe, has been quarantined to prevent the spread of its spiritual infection. That is why the Earth is called 'Thulcandra,' the silent planet.

From the point of view of his own cosmic myth, Lewis expounds the doctrine of the Fall of Man. The theological problem, as Lewis sees it, centers upon the validity of that interpretation that sees the Fall as fortunate. Weston himself introduces the doctrine, and Ransom must answer. "Whatever you do, He will make good of it. But not the good He had prepared for you if you had obeyed him. That is lost forever, the first king and the first mother of our world did the forbidden thing, and He brought good of it in the end. But what they did was not good, and what they lost we have not seen."[8]

Lewis, the self-confessed dinosaur, reveals in *Perelandra* his dislike for modernity and its goods. In particular, he expresses his dislike of the glorification of technology, the social idea of equality, and the liberalism of the present-day theology. Like his friend Tolkien, Lewis turned towards medieval cultural values in his neo-medievalist enthusiasm. From Lewis' point of view, only a Christian standpoint enables an understanding of the paradox at the head of Perelandra that any created thing is at once at the centre and at the periphery in the universe. For Lewis it is only the supernaturalist who sees truly. "In the same way and for the same reason, only Supernaturalists really see Nature. You must go a little away from here, and then turn round and look back. Then at last the true landscape will become visible. You must have tasted, however briefly, the pure water from beyond the world before you are distinctly conscious of the hot, salty tang of Nature's current. To treat her as God, or as everything, is to lose the whole pith and pleasure of her."[9]

Lewis' anti-Wellsianism in the trilogy is deeper, much more complicated and more extensive than is evident even in the caricature drawn in Horace Jules in *That Hideous Strength*. This anti-Wellsianism is congruent with his attack on the secularism and scientific materialism which he sees as the greatest enemy of Christianity in the twentieth century.

Lewis' space trilogy conveys a deeply felt religious idea in terms of a fictional frame which highlights the effective use of religious and moral fantasy and techniques of science fiction, fairy tales and Arthurian legend.

An attempt at drawing constant parallelisms between the Christian myth and the myth Lewis creates in the trilogy would tend to reduce the work of art to the levels of an allegory, which C.S. Lewis' space trilogy is not. The evocative power of the space trilogy is seen in examning how the elements of religious and moral fantasy and its attributes of Wellsian and other science fiction have been incorporated in it in order to focus on the negative aspects of "the technologico-Benthamite civilization" as F.R. Leavis described it.

If Eliot believed that the negative conditions of our culture do retain some vestiges of Christian faith which the Christian artist must try to exploit, Lewis attempted to use fiction as a means to overcome the formation of a civilized but non-Christian mentality by using science fiction as a vehicle for the expression of his reaction against liberalism and scientism.

NOTES

1. *Tree and the Leaf* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1964), p. 44.
2. Letter to Roger Lancelyn Green, cited in Mark R. Hillegas, *The Future as a Nightmare: H.G. Wells and the Anti-Utopians* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1967), p. 140.
3. Walter Hooper, ed., *Of Other Worlds by C.S. Lewis* (Bles, 1966).
4. Robert Scholes and Eric S. Rabkin, *Science Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 45.
5. *Arthurian Triptych: Mythic Materials in Charles Williams, C.S. Lewis and T.S. Eliot* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), p. 103.
6. C.S. Lewis, *Perelandra* (London: Pan, 1953), p. 3.
7. C.S. Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* (London: The Bodley Head, 1976), p. 47.
8. C.S. Lewis, *Perelandra*, p. 81.
9. C.S. Dewis, *Miracles* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1947), p. 80.

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Towards Harmony: Social Concern in Anne Tyler's Fiction

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Anne Tyler's first novel *If Morning Ever Comes* was published in 1964 when she was twenty-three years old. Writing consistently since then Tyler has published twelve novels in the course of thirty years apart from four dozen short stories, numerous articles and excellent book reviews. Her literary career (1964-1994) spans three important decades of American socio-cultural history. But even after the publication of her seventh novel Anne Tyler was merely regarded as just another writer representing "the gradual decentralizing of American culture that characterizes the post-Vietnam period."[1] Such a lukewarm response can be attributed to the fact that the unpretentious format of her domestic-psychological novels lacked the dynamism of her contemporary writers, Mary McCarthy, Eudora Welty, Randall Jarrel and John Updike, among others.

However since 1985, the reclusive, sober and sedate Anne Tyler has become the focus of critical interest. She has been recipient of America's two prestigious literary awards. She won the national Book Critics Circle Award for *The Accidental Tourist* in 1985. This is also Anne Tyler's first novel which has been made into a movie. She received the Pulitzer prize for *Breathing Lessons* in 1988. She has been compared with Jane Austen, Eudora Welty, William Faulkner, Flannery O'Connor and Saul Bellow. Critics have detected discernible traits and influences of all these writers in her fiction.

Anne Tyler's work is important for through her fictive world she emphasizes the need for a sense of harmony absent in the fragmented lives of her intrinsically good, average characters belonging primarily to the middle class. This need is what her protagonists feel and this urge for accommodation and harmony can be identified as a positive step towards a more integrated self and society. Her domestic-psychological novels are primarily patterned exposures of some of the common complexities that oppress postmodern American society. The conflicts Tyler

identifies are graphically represented on a personal level but have wider, impersonal implications. Her focus of attention is the average middle class American family and the social culture that it typifies.

Close reading of the text ignoring the context is restrictive and often misleading. "Literature is a social institution, using as its medium language, a social creation. . . . Literature is really not a reflection of the social process, but the essence, the abridgement and summary of all history."[2] Literature through the ages has recorded, assimilated and sublimated tradition, culture, innovations and idiosyncrasies. The French historian Hippolyte Taine identifies three co-ordinates *race, milieu* and *moment*, which determine the sociological implications of a text. Regional geography, history, religion, politics, the socio-economic power structure have all been an integral part of literary texts from potboilers, bestsellers to classics.

Regarding literature as "asocial," "amoral" or "transcendent" is attributive to a misdirected reader-response for literature assimilates social culture and tradition which become implicit and interiorized in a text. Historicity is an inevitable aspect of literature. The historicity of texts and the textuality of history is a reciprocal concern according to the New Historicism theorist Louis Montrose. Literature does not represent a "trans-historical" aesthetic realm which is independent of economic, social or political awareness.

From such a point of view Anne Tyler's fiction may be regarded as a felicitous fusion of social and individual consciousness with emphasis on the latter, a common characteristic of post-modern literary art. Twentieth century literature reflects the "imperative inwardness of modern society."[3] There prevails a marked tendency to internalize history. The philosopher Benedetto Croce's observations sum up the modern consciousness, "we no longer believe . . . like the Greeks, in happiness of life on earth, we no longer believe, like the Christians, in happiness in an other-worldly life. We no longer believe like the optimistic philosophers of the last century, in a happy future for the human race . . . we no longer believe in anything of that, and what we have alone retained is the consciousness of ourselves, and the need to make that consciousness ever clearer and more evident, a need for whose satisfaction we turn to science and art."[4]

II

Most of Tyler's characters are white Americans of Baltimore, but this does not make her novels tedious or repetitive. On the contrary, it is owing to this reason that the middle middle-class American society that

she represents appears more convincing. The fixed locale in Tyler's novels recalls the celebrated exchange between Darcy and Elizabeth in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Darcy's supercilious remark, "In a country neighbourhood you move in a very confined and unvarying society," is countered by Elizabeth's perceptive reply, "But people themselves alter so much, that there is something new to be observed forever."[5]

Anne Tyler is never over-ambitious with her objectives and her remarkable restraint and ability to restrict her self within her well comprehended limited orbit is perhaps one of the distinctive features of her texts. The virtue of Tyler's art lies in its sincerity. While modern writers represent self divorced from society, Tyler concentrates on portraying self *in* society.

Unlike Jane Austen who excels in pre-marriage and courtship complications, Tyler's domestic-psychological novels are generally narratives of marriage years after the first flush of ecstasy. The mid-life progress novel that Tyler writes represents the daily experiences, expectations and frustrations of the American family often on the verge of disintegration. Her earlier novels explore disintegration or fragmentation but her last four novels *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant* (1982), *The Accidental Tourist* (1985), *Breathing Lessons* (1988) and *Saint May Be* (1991) reveal an inclination towards a more decisive and positive conclusion.

The novelist John Updike notices a lack of development in Tyler's novels as her characters do not show any recognizable evidence of growth or change—"a tendency to leave the reader just where she found him."[6] Tyler's penchant for authenticity restrains her from idealizing the insular, average, bourgeois American man and woman leading a placid life where involvement, shock, disappointment or happiness emanate from domestic crisis or domestic harmony. Unlike the existential protagonists of Sartre or Camus, Tyler depicts her middle class characters exactly *as they are* instead of *as they should be*. John Updike's criticism does not seem quite valid, for inclusion of growth or change patterns in her average American characters would have been a glaring superimposition, taxing credibility.

The plots of her novels are such that subtle variations, realizations, resolutions and readjustments register greater positive impact than a noticeable change or a radical transition from the starting point. Maggie Moran, the prototype American middle aged mother in her late forties with adult children queries, "what are we two going to live for, all the rest of our lives?"[7] She finds the answer as the novel concludes. She realizes that tomorrow is a new day and her conjugal life would continue

in the same spirit of shared love and understanding. Similarly in *Saint May Be* Ian the nonconformist detached participant realizes, "Tomorrow he would view this in a whole new light."[8] Tomorrow to Tyler, as to Margaret Mitchell, promises a new beginning, holding fresh hopes for the disenchanted or disillusioned person.

A discerning reader will discover two levels of issues competently blended in Tyler's novels. The personal-familial issues form the primary level of her texts. The non-domestic or social issues occupy the secondary level. On the primary level personal-familial issues range from adolescent rivalry, jealousy, boredom, lack of idealism to matrimony, divorce, negativism, moral and spiritual vacuum, lack of religion, secular attitude, identity crisis, lack of personal and familiar integrity.

The non-domestic social issues comprise teenage marriages, divorce, single parenthood, abortion, mugging and gangsterism, rock and pop culture, racial discrimination and war. In *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant* there are two references to the Vietnam War: "So she went to Illinois in July, travelling with a train load of fresh faced boy soldiers on their way to Vietnam."[9] In the second sequence Tyler writes, "on the evening news, a helicopter crewman who'd been killed in Laos was buried with full military honours. An American flag, folded into a cushion triangle, was handed to the parents." (201) The mother speaking on the microphone declares that they are "Strong and fine." One of the children listening to the news reacts promptly, "it's just a bunch of hogwash . . . she ought to say, 'Take your old flag: I object: I give up.'" (201) But Tyler does not linger on this socio-political issue. Attention is immediately transferred to some old snapshots as a "distraction." (202)

Anne Tyler seems uniformly reticent about social issues that she represented. She does not qualify, criticize or make value judgements. In *Breathing Lessons* the racial issue, which is very much a part of life in Baltimore, Maryland, is presented in an indirect and subtle manner. Though the digressive incident of Mr. Otis and the loose wheel is apparently quite funny and inconsequential, but a few remarks reveal the undesirable background of racial discrimination which is a reality, "not only was he old. . . . He was black." (136) "He thinks we're racist or something and lied about his wheel to be cruel," (137) "Next time you might not be so lucky. Some crazy white man going to shoot your head off next time." The other non-domestic issues that *Breathing Lessons* explores are the impulsive marriage of teenagers, equally impulsive divorces, the misery of single parenthood affecting both child and parent, and abortion. Tyler describes in some detail the anti-abortion picketing in front of a nursing home. Fiona, the estranged daughter-in-law of Maggie Moran, is seventeen when she becomes a mother. She is com-

pelled to bring up her daughter without a proper home, job or life partner, while she is as yet a girl. Statistics confirm the enormity of this social problem. A recent article by Kate Muir in the *Sunday Statesman Miscellany* (January 1, 1995) entitled "Virgin Territory" records, "One million American girls become pregnant every year—some as young as 11 or 12. Half the pregnancies end in miscarriage and abortion."

The opposite reaction from the Woodstock culture of sexual freedom is noticed in recent movements promoting return to church, abstinence from pre-marital sex, True Love Waits and Anti-abortion campaigns in American school and college campuses. Likewise, Tyler's concern, involvement and tentative remedial suggestions regarding this appalling social malaise seem to be epitomised in her latest novel—*Saint May Be*. In it the nineteen-year-old protagonist Ian is projected as abstaining from pre-marital sex and finding peace and moral stability by returning to the church and following voluntarily and ardently its liberalized regulations.

Also, in *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant* there are occasional references to the dismal law and order situation, the dangers of carefree rambling: "Every alley in this city is full of muggers. . . . Every doorway and vacant building . . . every street of Baltimore." (243) The statements in the context of the novel seem exaggerated. But in Tyler's very next novel *The Accidental Tourist* the apprehension becomes a reality. The twelve-year-old Ethan, son of Macon Leary, is killed in a fast food restaurant by a trigger-happy gangster without provocation. Gangsterism is another serious social problem that Tyler highlights.

But social issues occupy the periphery of Anne Tyler's domestic-psychological novels. Tyler's primary concern is with the middle class American family and the focus is on two or three generations—grandparents, parents and children. Tyler's sensitive portrayal of children, from infants to adolescents and young adults, is executed with uncanny veracity. Similarly middle-aged parents, married and unmarried young adults, and ageing grandparents are presented with enthusiasm and artistry. Tyler seems to conform to T.S. Eliot's view that the primary channel of transmission of culture is the family.

In her latest novel *Saint May Be* Tyler projects an extremely daring and controversial issue—the need for religion in postmodern America. Restructuring the cliched Abel-Cain biblical anecdote, Tyler's protagonist Ian holds himself responsible for the accident-suicide (?) of his elder brother Danny. Guilt-stricken and mortified, Ian seeks solace in religion. He atones for his error by being a surrogate father to Danny's three children, thereby sacrificing the opportunity for higher studies. He works as a carpenter in a furniture shop and Tyler emphasizes that Jesus

himself was a carpenter. Ian exercises admirable self-restraint abstaining from pre-marital sex, and is derisively described as "King Careful, Mr. Look-Both-Ways-Saint May Be." (264)

Yet when invited to be formally ordained into priesthood, Ian declines. Not unlike Jim Casy in *Grapes of Wrath* Ian feels that he cannot be a spokesperson for organized religion. But Ian feels the need for prayers and visiting the church. Ian's need is cogently summed up in Philip Larkin's poem *Church Going*:

> A serious house on serious earth it is,
> In whose blent air all our compulsions meet,
> Are recognized, and robed as destinies.
> And that much never can be obsolete,
> Since someone will forever be surprising
> A hunger in himself to be more serious,
> And gravitating with it to this ground.[10]

Whenever he is perturbed, uncertain or confused Ian turns to the church, "To steady himself he bowed his head and prayed. He prayed as he almost always did not forming actual words but picturing instead this spinning green planet safe in the hands of God, with the children and his parents and Ian himself, small trusting dots among all the other dots." (266) Ian's reliance and sense of security derived from his faith in God, *may be*. Tyler's message to the perplexed and uncertain Americans is to return to the reassurance of the church for moral and spiritual support and harmony. *Saint May Be* is Tyler's *bildungsroman*.

Also, in *Breathing Lessons* Maggie Moran appears in some respects as an unflinching seeker of harmony without realizing it. Her feminine intuition, care and concern set her apart as a dynamic middle-class American mother who, though leading an insular life, plays a significant role as friend, wife and mother. Maggie Moran is neither Doris Lessing's Martha Quest nor Sylvia Plath's Esther Greenwood, but a mellower and more integrated woman. She is not a self-obsessed feminist hostile towards a complacent phallocentric society. In her we witness no protests, no desire for independence, no eagerness for striking out a new path. Neither politics nor religion inspire her in anyway, yet her preference for a simple and happy domestic and social life reveals her as a more committed social activist than many members of women's organizations.

Some of the binary oppositions which recur in Tyler's fictive world are masculine/feminine, complex/simple, external/internal, social/personal, universal/domestic, reflective/perceptive, aggressive/passive,

self-centered/compassionate, white Americans/blacks and foreigners. Tyler's dialectical approach is directed towards integrating antithesis through negotiation and interaction in order to arrive at a synthesis which is satisfactory for many. This conscious resolution of the polyphonic voices in her domestic-psychological novels is indicative of a positive attitude when contemporary writing is mostly evasive, ambiguous, ambivalent and open-ended. Tyler's characters measure out their lives with coffee spoons, participating endlessly in such activities as super market visits, watching TV or cooking, washing, cleaning and visiting. Yet as they readjust themselves to the demands of their families, their environment and their own consciousness, they become vibrant individuals and also representative members of middle-class American society.

Anne Tyler writes with astonishing precision, in a quiet, unobtrusive, dignified style with an undercurrent of humour, seeing the universal in the particular, preserving the local flavour without ignoring wider implications. Such a style as Tyler's is destined to stand the test of time. Anne Tyler's emphasis on adjustment, reconciliation and androgyny is not a tame succumbing to the patriarchal system; it is not a negative process of resignation and mindless acceptance but a positive motivation towards harmony and integration. Unlike her previous novels, *A Slipping Down Life* (1970) or *The Tin Can Tree* (1965), in her later novels Tyler shows that it is possible to step out of the self-imposed prison of one's self and reach out to others in a spirit of tolerance and understanding. Such an attitude has a therapeutic value. Despite her overtly passive manner of approach and style, Anne Tyler is actually a committed crusader for harmony and adjustment, the two prerequisites of a happy family life everywhere.

Interestingly, in one of her letters to me, Anne Tyler writes, "I would tend to agree there's more social concern in my later books, just because as I grow older I see more to be concerned about—but it has not been a conscious literary development." (January 19, 1995) Such a candid and matter-of-fact self-appraisal is rare. Anne Tyler's ability to state the truth simply yet convincingly is one of the singular virtues of her texts.

Jean Paul Sartre's observation, "No writer is an instantaneous consciousness, a pure timeless affirmation of freedom, nor does he soar above history, *he is involved in it*,"[11] bears out the fact that while maintaining artistic distance social concern is an inevitable part of the consciousness of a mature writer. Social concern is distinctly implied in Anne Tyler's later fiction and this is all the more remarkable for she simultaneously maintains her characteristic artistic detachment. Alice

Hall Petry's summing up, "Humanists like Anne Tyler are after all, very rare indeed"[11] is undoubtedly a perceptive assessment of Anne Tyler.

NOTES

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3. Louis P Simpson, *The Brazen Face of History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980), p. 269.
4. Stuart H. Hughes, *Consciousness and Society, The Reorientation of European Social Thought* (New York: Vintage, 1961), pp. 428-29.
5. *The Complete Novels of Jane Austen* (New York: The Modern Library), p. 255.
6. Ralph Stephens, ed., *The Fiction of Anne Tyler* (USA: University Press of Mississippi, 1990), p. 12.
7. Anne Tyler, *Breathing Lessons* (1988), p. 326.
8. Anne Tyler, *Saint May Be* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), p. 243.
9. Anne Tyler, *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant* (1982), p. 181.
10. Anthony Twaithe, ed., *Philip Larkin: Collected Poems*.
11. Qtd. in Harish Trivedi, ed., *The American Political Novel* (India: Allied, 1984), p. 140.
12. *Understanding Anne Tyler* (USA: University of South Carolina Press, 1990), p. 17.

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Lexico-Semantic Aspects of Indian English

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The advent of English in India is a historical accident. As the language of rulers, it exercised a deep impact on the Indian psyche and gradually became an instrument of intellection, discussion and creative expression. Over the years it acquired certain features which distinguish it from other varieties. The changes brought about in English because of intense interaction with modern Indian languages are discernible at all the linguistic levels. In this paper an attempt is made to identify and discuss the change at lexical and semantic levels. The study provides a glimpse of the diversity in deviations from the British English and throws light on significant aspects of usage in Indian English.

English, which was brought to India by Britishers to serve their imperialistic needs, has now become ingrained in the fabric of Indian sensibility and thought process. With the spread of education in the independent India, English spread out to the masses and now it is no longer an urban middle-class phenomenon. Khubchandani's contention is that marginalisation of English is today more in terms of intellectual paradigm than in terms of individual or regional paradigms (Bharucha and Sarang 1994: vi). Today's Indian society is largely a multilingual society with English as the second or the third language of most of the educated class. It considerably affects and influences the linguistic behaviour of its users. The speech and writings of Indians exhibit clearly a stamp of English.

They have by decades of their use acquired a sufficient degree of competence and fluency in using English and now they are enabled to express their desires, feelings and ideas through this medium.

A language transmits the culture, tradition, norms and values of its users. With the spread of English to America, Australia, Africa and Asia, English is no longer confined to the British and it now transmits the associations of all its users who are drawn from different regions and have equally diversified cultures and traditions. A language commu-

nicates the experiences and expectations of its users. Every experience is unique and is described in terms of situation, context, topic, locale and participants—all of which are unique to every culture and society. That is, any event (say marriage ceremony) would be experienced differently in different cultures and its expression too, would therefore be different. This phenomenon takes further credibility when supported by Sapir-Whorf's Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis. According to this hypothesis, "the structure of a language influences the world-view of its speakers." People perceive the Nature, organize it into concepts and ascribe significance to various events on the basis of the meanings they have assigned to each by means of their language (Whorf 1956). This, therefore, implies that different languages of people inhibit them to have a unified experience of a particular event as their thinking processes are shaped by the language that they use.

Bilingualism generates hybrid variety of experience and also of the expression it results in. There is a flavour of both the cultures to a certain extent. The interaction between the cultures and languages in contact plays a significant role in modification of the languages. The culture of the native language definitely dominates and tries to influence the secondary language. The other language in turn too influences the native culture and language through its users and this leads to a hybrid of two languages and culture.

Tradition provides a linguistic-cultural landscape in which a work of art is produced, is understood and appreciated. To describe a culture if we move away from the tradition, from its language and use a different literary tradition and a different language, a hybridized literature results which can be called, in the Indian scenario, Indian-English literature. As a language is vitally and intimately related to the basics of its 'native' culture, it is a common understanding that its native users have an intuitive sense of appropriateness and feasibility in that language functions. When a non-native user employs the language, with an evident lack of this understanding of appropriateness, there results a clash or a gap which has either to be resolved or bridged. To bridge this gap, various means are employed which include lexical borrowings, syntactic adjustments and semantic changes or additions. When we try to adapt English to express experiences of our native cultures, we too have to resort to all the above mentioned methods. This process eventually leads to 'Indianization' of English.

In this paper an attempt is made to study and analyse lexico-semantic aspects of what is termed as Indian English. We are aware that the Indianization of English has taken place at other levels also but the discussion here is limited to the lexical and semantic levels. Since lexis and

semantics are closely interlinked we have clubbed together the deviations at these levels into one category. We have divided our findings into four sub-categories, namely, Translations from Common Mother Tongue Expressions, Code Mixing, Translations from Indian Idioms and Collocation and Usage.

Translations from Common Mother Tongue Expressions

When rendering the thoughts, feelings, emotions and ideas deep rooted in Indian psyche and socio-cultural ethos into English, no equivalent terms aptly expressing these is available. Translating these into English is the only recourse. Let us look at the following examples of translations which clearly reflect the Indian ethos.

S1. They did not hesitate to *sling mud* at each other even in public. (*Woman's Era*).
S2. "Policemen are my enemy. *My blood still boils* when I see one." Maya Tyagi. (*India Today*)
S3. If you keep track of these *small small things* you can improve a lot. (*Filmfare*)
S4. But then I am not the kind to *raise my hands on a woman* and she knows that. (*Cine Blitz*)
S5. *No woman has ever fallen so much in my eyes.* (*Cine Blitz*)
S6. *There is a talk that* the Chandrababu Naidu group might give election tickets to all the sons and daughters of NTR. (*The Hindustan Times*)
S7. So if you want to 'patao' somebody don't talk about *getting the celestial star* try something intelligent. (*The Hindustan Times*)
S8. *Only son* of a senior bank officer. (Matrimonial Advertisement)
S9. *Wheatish complexion.* (Matrimonial Advertisement)
S10. Many of you must be annoyed considerably everyday by the amount of *boot licking* that you have to do daily. (Personal Observation)

In all the sentences quoted above, we notice that there are phrases which have been literally translated from either Hindi or some other Indian native language. In S1, 'sling mud' relates to the common saying, *Ek doosre par kichad uchaalna.* A typical Indian phrase and its literal translation is what we have in S2, *mera khoon ab bhi khaul uthta hai*—'my blood still boils.'

Choti choti baten has been translated into 'small small things' in S3 and 'Aurat par apne haath uthana' gets changed to 'raise my hands on a

woman' in S4. S5 is closely related to Indian culture and hence the translation from—*Koi aurat kabhi bhi meri nazaron mein itna nahin giri.* 'There is a talk that' (S6) comes from *eisa kaha jata hai ki. Aasman ke tare lana* is translated into 'getting the celestial stars' in S7.

In S8 *Akela beta* is 'only son' which has a specific significance in Indian cultural milieu as it is a highly attractive proposal for the girl's family in finalising a marriage. While choosing a bride, some of the parents give a significant weightage to the complexion of the girl. A fair girl is preferred, normally, over a darker one. This fact is exhibited through the advertisement. S9 deals with the complexion of the girl. Here *gehuan rang* has been translated into 'wheatish complexion.' In S10, *joote chatna* has been directly translated into 'boot licking' which means appeasing someone by degrading yourself. Thus, we note that the translated phrases in these sentences are closely related to the Indian sensibility and do not have any English equivalent.

Code Mixing

As I have stated earlier, the Indian users of English have English as their second or third language. They are very efficient in switching languages—shifting quickly from the mother-tongue to English and from English to the mother-tongue depending upon the context of situation, the topic of discourse, the relation between the speaker and the listener. It is often a result of the inability to find an apt term in the code being used to convey their view or feeling. In the professional environment where specialization is often acquired in English, everyday mother-tongue discourse regarding the work is often interspersed heavily with terms and expressions borrowed from English. And vice-versa—when a discourse is being carried out in English which deals with daily life. Hindi or the mother-tongue expressions are often interpolated in the English sentence(s). In this process they might completely switch over from one code to another (called 'code switching') or they might borrow a few words or phrases from another code and use in between the code being used (called 'code mixing'). While former is mostly found in oral communication, the written communication shows an abundance of the latter.

S1. He was back in a trice, saying *Kuch nahin hua . . . Khali pair toot gaya budhey ka . . . chalao gadi . . .* and we were off again, at the same hair-raising pace! (*Woman's Era*)

S2. There was a big crowd of foreign tourists waiting for *darshan* in the courtyard. (*Woman's Era*)

S3. I am *mulayam* towards Mulayam Singh. (*India Today*)
S4. Govinda: "Pehlaj says he is my godfather. *Agar* Godfather *ki kadar karni hai to*, he has to behave like one. Does he expect me to do *pooja* to him?" (*Cine Blitz*)
S5. As Amit Khanna, Managing Director of Plus Channel, says it is "seeing people who are not quite boardroom boys from Nariman Point, but are not *lalahs* from Lalpur either!" (*Business India*)
S6. It is meant solely and wholly for the citizens of Ahmedabad, a city which boasts of being the safest in the world; in spite of its *bindaas* traffic. (*The Times of India*)
S7. "*Arre bhai*," I said "one would think you'd wanted to go as far as possible from the dreaded place." (*The Hindustan Times*)
S8. Pretty *gori*, well versed in household affairs. (Matrimonial Advertisement)
S9. *Yehi hai* right choice, baby. (Pepsi)
S10. "*Arre*, the entire *junta* has *hazaar* enthusiasm about the inaugural ceremony *par mujhe nahin lagta* it will be such a grand affair," one of the students remarked. (Personal Observation)

S1 has code switching where Hindi phrases are interspersed in the English sentence while reporting what the other person said in Hindi. *Darshan* (S2) has a specific significance in the Indian socio-culturo-relilgious environment and English word 'sight' cannot serve here as a replacement. S3 has the word *mulayam* (soft) to emphasize the meaning and intent and also to bring some wit in the remark. S4 has code switching as well as code mixing—a rare occurrence in the written mode. It is to emphasize the idea that a part of the sentence is rendered in English while the other part is in Hindi. This Hindi phrase would not be so forceful if recorded in English—"If you want to respect." The same is applicable to *pooja* which is "prayer" in English but the Indian connotation of *pooja* cannot be aptly captured by the English equivalent. The last sentence has a sociocultural related term *lalah*—a fat businessman would be a near but not the exact meaning associated with lalah and hence the word is irreplaceable by any other English word.

In S6 'free and fast' moving traffic has been called *bindaas*—a word so frequently used in the sense that it immediately creates a picture so clear and apt that no word in English can. The next sentence is from a playful article where attention is attracted by starting the sentence in Hindi. This phrase has a wide currency in Indian usage and address and any English substitute would not be so effective. The occurrence of *Gori* in the advertisement in S8 is an ample evidence of the importance of this in Indian marriages. Replacing *gori* by 'fair'

would not have conveyed the typical Indian ethos. In S9, 'this is the only' is written in Hindi as *yehi hai* which is more precise and attractive than the English equivalent. In S10, there is code switching as well as code mixing. *Aree, junta, hazaar* and *par mujhe nahin lagata* are used in the English sentence. It is not as if these words do not have any equivalents in the other language but because these words have become so widely used that the speakers inadvertently use them instead of making an attempt to find their equivalents.

Translation from Indian Idioms

An idiom is an expression peculiar to a language. An idiom may, at times, be irrational, untranslatable, even ungrammatical. Webster defines Idiom as a language peculiar to a people or to a district, community or class and the expressions in the usage are peculiar either grammatically or have a meaning that cannot be derived from the conjoined meaning of its elements. When an attempt is made to express any culture related idea, then these idioms best and most efficiently serve the purpose. These idioms are limited or associated with only one culture and cannot be easily interpreted by members of the other society. Naturally, a non-native or a foreign language would not carry such ideas and hence while using a non-native tongue, the speaker would be forced to fall upon the repertoire of his/her native language to convey his/her idea precisely. Furthermore, such ideas or idiomatic expressions cannot be easily translated into any other language.

S1. *The tiny hair over his body stood on end at once.* (*Woman's Era*)
S2. "You must be able to differentiate between fair weather friends, hangers on, social climbers, and those who indulge in *vicious back stabbing.*" (*Woman's Era*)
S3. "*As you sow, so you reap!*" shrugging his shoulders the old man turned away. (*Woman's Era*)
S4. "Now I can find a job and *stand on my own feet.*" Radha wrote. (*Femina*)
S5. He took some time to *fix his feet* in Test Cricket. (*Sport Star*)
S6. Bhajan Lal refutes charge of *having a hand* in hawala deal. (*The Times of India*)
S7. But he discards the *frog-in-the-pond* attitude of a typical traditional musician. (*The Times of India*)

Idioms reflect the culture of a society and when translated into another language lose their flavour, intensity and precision. This is what we ob-

serve from the examples listed. In S1, the Hindi idiom, *ekdam rongte khade ho gaye* has been translated. The sense of fear that is conveyed through the idiom is lost very much in its translation and there is no substitute for this in English. *Peeth mein chhura ghopna* has the sense of betrayal and hurt. The precise connotation is lost in the translation. A popular saying is *jaisa bowoge waisa hi katoge* (S3). Again, this idiom does not have any English equivalent and to convey the idea, translation is the only means.

When a person becomes self dependent he is said to be *apne pairon par khada ho gaya.* In the absence of any equivalents in English, this has to be translated. The translated idiom here (S5) is from daily life *pair jamana* which means 'making a place of your own.' Though an equivalent exists in English, the Hindi idiom has been retained perhaps because it is so deeply rooted in the psyche that it automatically comes when the particular idea is to be expressed.

'Not having any participation' is idiomatized in Hindi as *haath no hona* in S6. A person who does not have any interface with the outside world is called *koop-mandook*, 'a frog in the pond' (S7) who knows only about what is inside and does not know anything of the outside.

Collocation and Usage

Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English defines collocation as 'grouping together or arrangement, especially of words.' *Dictionary of Language and Linguistics*, on the other hand, more elaborately and precisely describes collocation as 'Two or more words, considered as individual lexical items, used in habitual association with one another in a given language.' Usually, every word in a language has its range of collocations which limits its meaningful usage. Furthermore, equivalent words in different languages rarely have same range of collocations so that one's pattern of collocations cannot be applied to another language's. What happens many-a-time, the user falls back upon the word collocation of his native language. This process causes confusion and leads to mistakes because there is no one-to-one correspondence between languages in matters of collocations. As such, collocation is not a rule governed activity and every pair that goes together has to be individually learned by the user. This is more a matter of appropriateness and usage than of correctness.

S1. An early reply will be *highly appreciated.* (Official Document)
S2. The undersigned will not be able to *engage his classes* as he would be out-of-station from—to—. (Official Document)
S3. Please do not *rub the blackboard* after finishing your presentation.

(Personal Observation)

S4. As Madhu could not *clear the exams* last year she is *giving* the exams again this year. (Personal Observation)

S5. If you *feel* any *difficulty* in solving the problem, you can ask me to *clear* your *doubts*. (Personal Observation)

S6. He is on leave today as his cousin *expired* last night. (Personal Observation)

S7. He does not want to *join politics* but wants to work as a social worker. (Personal Observation)

'Appreciate' collocates with *greatly* or *warmly* and not with *highly*. Indians most frequently use *highly* in this association. 'Engage' is used in the sense of *attention* or *time* but not in the sense of *class*, which is quite frequently used by the Indians. 'Blackboard' does not collocate with *rub* or *wipe off*. It goes only with *clean* but in India it is frequently used in the former sense. 'Exams' go with *sit for* or *take* and not with *give* or *appear*. It is the latter (S4) which Indians most frequently employ in the context of 'exams.' Another collocation in context of 'exams' is that of *passing*. Indians often use *clearing* in this associate. 'Difficulty' (S5) collocates with *clear away, find, have*, etc. but not with *clear* or *feel*. 'Clear' collocates with *air* or *way* but not with *doubt* or *difficulty*. But these associations are very common in the Indian usage.

In S6, 'expire' is used in the meaning of *to die* whereas in the British usage, 'expire' collocates with items as *driving license, terms of office* or *lease*. This usage of 'expire' is very common in India and is widely accepted as a highly formal expression of anyone's death. S7 has 'joining politics' as joining any other profession but in the British usage 'join' does not collocate with *duty, politics* or *hospital*. 'Join the duty' is another such phrase used frequently in India. Most of these collocations listed here are the result of transference from the mother tongue.

This paper shows the wide range of changes that have been brought about as a result of long and intense interaction between English and the Indian languages. It is evident that English is deep-rooted in Indian psyche and it would not be wrong to assume that in the near future Indian English would be considered as a major variety of non-British English.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Ruskin Bond, ed. *The Pelican Book of Indian Railway Stories.* New Delhi: Penguin India, 1994. 184 pp. Rs. 125.

With the total route length of 62,570 km. and handling two-thirds of goods traffic and forty percent of passenger traffic the railways have come a long way since 1853, when the first train steamed off a distance of 54 km. in India. This expanding backbone of the country has prised open the door to hills, spanned river courses, linked inaccessible and remote parts and underpinned cross-regional contact, and triggered untold possibilities of manysided interaction. The novelty of the "iron horse" and its halts caught people's imagination even as trains criss-crossed the country.

The excitement of railway journey has been caught alive and recorded in literary pieces by many writers since the earliest days of travelling along steel tracks. Ruskin Bond's anthology of Indian Railway stories offers intimate accounts of journey by railway buffs and writers like Jules Verne, Rudyard Kipling, Jim Corbett, Manoj Das, Intizar Husain, Khushwant Singh, Satyajit Ray, R.K. Laxman, Bill Aitken, Victor Bannerjee and others. Besides, there are anonymous pieces and lively excerpts from the *Indian State Railways Magazine*. These stories unfold the romance of the railways from their humble beginnings with slow-moving wood-fired engines to the latter-day diesel locomotives. In all these stories the railways as an effective backdrop vitalise the action. We notice the variety and beauty of landscape, passengers, porters, pedlars thrown into a new social whirl.

The anthology opens with the itinerary of Phileas Fogg—Jules Verne's quintessential Englishman in "Around the World in Eighty Days." He has bet his entire fortune with the confidence that he can cross the nineteenth century world in exactly eighty days without any special arrangement. Armed with a copy of Bradshaw's Continental Railway, Steam Transit and General Guide and a carpet bag containing twenty thousand Pounds in Bank of England notes, he arrives in Bombay with his servant, passepartout. Fogg goes to the Bombay terminus of the Great Indian Peninsular Railway while his servant is chased by irate worshippers of a Hindu temple for entering the holy place with his shoes on. However he manages to join his master aboard the moving train. Mr. Fogg's fellow-passenger, Sir Francis Cromarty, sees in Fogg's wager "a useless eccentricity, and a lack of sound commonsense." (8) He finds the eccentric traveller "a product of the exact sciences" in that he is not travelling but "traversing an orbit around the terrestrial globe, according to the laws of rational mechanics."

The conversation between Sir Francis and Mr. Fogg is interspersed with ironical observations by the former on the British policy of respecting the Indian religious customs. But the latter is unruffled by his servant's offence and sees no impediment in his plan. When the train terminates at a point called Kholby and passengers are asked to get off, Mr. Fogg discovers that the line is still incomplete for fifty miles upto Allahabad. He has to choose among such modes of conveyance as "four-wheeled Palkigharis, waggons drawn by zebus, carriages that looked like perambulating pagodas, palanquins, ponies, and what not." (12) Least deterred by the interruption, Mr. Fogg is ready to move on foot but passepartout suggests that they hire an elephant. When the bargain for the pachyderm gets tougher with the shrewd and "sharp-eyed" Indian, Mr. Fogg decides to buy the animal outright. The deal is eventually settled for two thousand pounds, much to the surprise of Sir Francis at the scandalously high amount. But the impending bet has got the better of both the master and the servant. After engaging a young Parsee guide, the twosome continue the journey through the Indian forests. The extract in the anthology ends here but we gather from the unabridged piece that Mr. Fogg did overcome all obstacles and reached London in the nick of time to claim his bet.

This story gives a glimpse of the Indian railways in the 1870s and shows the gradual penetration of the forests, farmlands and mountains by steel tracks. More importantly, the travails of early travelling across villages and settlements marooned in old mores, customs and rites are noted by the writer. For instance:

> The travellers crossed, beyond Malligaum, the fatal country so often stained with blood by the sectaries of the goddess Kali. Not far off rose Ellora, with its graceful pagodas, and the famous Aurangabad capital of the ferocious Aurang-Zeb, now the chief town of one of the detached provinces of the Kingdom of the Nizam. It was thereabouts that Feringhea, the Thuggee Chief, King of the stranglers, held his sway. These ruffians, united by a secret bond, strangled victims of every age in honour of the goddess Death, without ever shedding blood; there was a period when this part of the country could scarcely be travelled over without corpses being found in every direction. The English Government has succeeded in greatly diminishing these murders, though the Thuggees still exist, and pursue the exercise of their horrible rites. (10)

Such descriptions of the orient are fodder for postcolonial polemics but they do not detract from the fact that the trains were railroading vast tracts of India into modern ways and civilized mindset, and became in

the process the necessary engine of economic integration. "No story more potently illustrates the extent to which steam trains and steam boats girdled the world in the nineteenth century,"[2] say Jeffrey Richards and John M. Mackenzie in their book *The Railway Station: A Social History*.

The anthology includes two pieces by Rudyard Kipling: "The Man Who Would Be King" and "The Bold 'Prentice." The former is a railway story to the extent that it is at Marwar junction that the narrator of Kipling's tale passes a mysterious message from his fellow passenger in the Mhow train to a red-haired man. The two ex-soldiers—Brother Peachey Carnehan and Brother Daniel Dravot—off on a madcap adventure to carve out a Kingdom beyond the Khyber Pass. The story turns out into "an allegory of Empire in which the epic, the tragic and the farcical are finely balanced."[3] Also, the story supplies a wealth of illustration to class gradations and relative discomfort in trains, the British prejudice against the native, or Eurasian, passengers, the unkempt junctions and above all, to the dirt and splendour sitting cheek by jowl in Native States. "They are the dark places of the earth, full of unimaginable cruelty, touching the Railway and the Telegraph on one side, and, on the other, the days of Harun-al-Rashid." (18)

Kipling suggests that the Railways have not led to any social liberation or a new dispensation in these hermetically sealed states. His uncanny understanding of Indian caste system is built into "The Bold 'Prentice" revealingly. A dynastic succession of sorts was seen in railway companies in which young apprentices stepped into the shoes of their elder relatives after learning the nuts and bolts of the job. But their chance, as young Ottley's dogged and hard learning shows, did not come till they were well-grounded in practical knowledge of the subject. The story graphically captures the quotidian grind of railway drivers in the days of inadequate support system and proud moments of their eventual placement.

The compilation has three anonymous pieces: "By Cow-Catcher and Trolley," "The Bygone Days," and "The Coolie." The exciting journey on cow-catcher and strenuous life of stokers in wood-fired engines are movingly detailed. "The Coolie" tells the story of an old porter dislodged by the conspiracy of other coolies and finally rehabilitated by a Mem Sahib whom he rescues from a fall. This class of workers living by the sweat and slog owes its formation to the railways and remains unchanged in many ways from the late nineteenth century till now. With "The Bygone Days" we come to the operation of the Eastern Bengal State Railway when train journey has become fairly fast, convenient and dependable. Lines have been laid farther afield. With the bridge on Padma, Siliguri is connected to Calcutta, cutting down travelling hours taken earlier by Bhagalpur-Karigola-Pankhabari route. "Khus-Khus tat-

ties" for electric fans and "leaky castor oil lamps" for light are things of the past. The reference to Darjeeling Himalayan Railway indicates that the piece must have been written after 1881.

Flora Anne Steel's "Snow-Leopard" recounts strange encounters in trains leading to unforeseen exposure to things far beyond the immediate experience of many passengers. Alongside the expansion of the lines, the railway employees began to feel the pinch of creature comforts which were in short supply, as John Fernandez, an engine driver, finds. The story "The Luck of John Fernandez" taken from a 1932 issue of the Indian State Railways Magazine, brings out how engine drivers make do with low salary. However there is no reference as yet to any unrest or agitation and John Fernandez gets over his financial worries for celebrating Easter with a chance catch of injured dogs and venison on Western Ghats.

Part II of the anthology includes railway stories published after independence though Jim Corbett's "Loyalty," Victor Bannerjee's "The Cherry Choo-Chhoo," and Ruskin Bond's "The Woman on Platform 8" have their setting way back in pre-Independence India. Jim's story of handling the movement of trans-river cargo at Mokama Ghat in Bihar in the early years of the twentieth century is replete with a different perception of India and the Indians. He took on the challenge of a dead-end job and excelled in it by befriending the native railway functionaries in the lower hierarchy and winning over the loyalty of the local workforce. He identified himself unmistakably with Indians and did not allow his white skin to bar a close rapport with them. The story suggests that the British could command the loyalty of Indians as their benevolent patrons, as Jim did in sorting out the bedlam in the shed.

"The Cherry Choo-Choo" takes us to the arrival of steam engine in the Teesta valley in the north-east of India. The story refers to the short-time experience of the Sikkimese and immigrant Tibetans with "shining metal bird with a long winding tail, descending flightless" along the banks of Torsa beyond the Teesta valley. The track in the tropical outback pioneered by Master Bridges fell into disuse as it had no commercial back-up to sustain the operation of trains. Ruskin Bond's story with its scenic backcloth of Ambala station in 1946 shows how strange characters have found their prime patch around platforms. The inscrutable interest of an old woman in mothering the twelve-year-old narrator in his lonely moments forms the mainstay of the story.

The finest railway story in this collection is Khushwant Singh's "Mano Majra Station" extracted from *Train to Pakistan* (1956) at a very tense and moving moment in the novel. The railway train running between India and Pakistan bears marks of the partition trauma by carrying the influx of migrant population across the Punjab border. The spon-

taneous combustion sparked by communal hatred between two parts of the subcontinent has put the Punjab on the verge of vivisection. The story revolves round the arrival of a ghost train at Mano Majra where people of the village cutting across religious communities gather in a state of curiosity, awe and apprehension. They are asked by the headman, Banta Singh, through a policeman to pile up wood and kerosene oil at the station. Communal relations in the village have not suffered a wrench in that Imam Baksh, the Mullah of the mosque, still commands respect of the villagers. Towards the end of the story the dazed villagers discover that the train carried dead bodies from Pakistan. The whole village including Imam Baksh pouring into the station premises since morning gets "stilled in a deathly silence."

Another interesting railway story in Bond's anthology is Satyajit Ray's "Barin Bhowmik's Ailment" in which two kleptomaniacs happen to travel twice together after a gap of nine years by an incredible coincidence and indulge their compulsive urge to steal. Barin Bhowmik bumps into Pulak Chakravarty on board a Delhi-bound train whose beautiful clock he had lifted when the train pulled up at Patna station in 1964. Both are again fellow passengers but the latter does not recognize him now. Yet Barin Bhowmik grows suspicious and fears identification. He feels so guilty that he pretends ignorance of their common acquaintance, Nitish Bhowmik, whose name is dropped by Pulak. Gradually, during the course of journey, struck by remorse and moved by the nice behaviour of his travelling companion, Barin finds it too difficult to dismiss his conscience and makes a clean breast of his act, restoring the clock to its owner. The climax of the story reaches when in a conversation Nitish Bhowmik recalls Pulak as a compulsive thief. Barin discovers to his discomfiture that he too is relieved of a few things. Both of them break even by outwitting each other in the course of train journey.

While R.K. Laxman in his "Railway Reverie" catches a moment of feverish hurry to board trains and then leisurely pace of life at loose ends therein, Manoj Das and Intizar Husain in "The Intimate Demon" and "A Stranded Railroad Car" respectively narrate variegated experience of their encounter with the motley crowd of passengers, pedlars and pilgrims that has begun to encamp platforms and crowd into trains. Husain migrated from India soon after the partition in 1947, but he grounds his stories in the locale, ambience and tradition of the undivided subcontinent. His nostalgia and resort to memory gives a tantalizing quality to this railway story. Manojit Mitra's "99 Up" too evokes the picture of gossipy social crowd at stations, activating little nonplaces with the arrival and departure of trains. The rumoured arrival of a film star by 99 Up electrifies the whole village. People mill around and

jostle at the platform as the train steams in. But they are eventually disappointed as the disembarking passenger is none but their all too familiar cinemahouse owner.

In his "Balbir Arora Goes Metric," Bill Aitken, a railway buff and journalist, recounts his ride across the desert on the newlook steam hauled Palace on Wheels under the pseudonym of Balbir Arora. This relatively recent write-up on railways in this compilation reminisces about "unfrazzled life" and soothing access to wider cultural circuit along metre gauge. Bill prefers the music of metre gauge to the speed of fastline BG track, even at the cost of being cramped in plebeian circumstances. He has captured the romance of "palatial pickings" aboard the POW and interwoven captivating vignettes of the Rajasthan desert and the rugged scenery surrounding it.

These stories offer eloquent evidence of the fascination that writers have for the teeming and varied life in and around trains. Surely the Indian literature of railways must be in millions of words lying in novels, poems, films and travelogues and await further compilation and fuller evaluation. Unlike Australia, where "the railway has not caught the imagination,"[4] trains and stations have gained considerable narratological advantage in India. The journey along railway tracks is a fine vehicle for these writers to convey the diversity and richness of Indian life. The variety of Indian landscape, its changing contours and the mobility evoke a vibrant India in the throes of phenomenal change. Mark Tully, in his review of Ian J. Kerr's book, *Building the Railways of the Raj*, notes the pre-eminence of the railways: "It was the Railways, not the Indian Civil Services, that formed the steel frame that held India together under the Raj. They moved goods to integrate the economy admittedly all too often to integrate it with the British economy."[5]

By opening up the interior of the subcontinent and allowing play with new ideas, the railways introduced an element of novelty in the Indian situation. The railway stories have captured the essence of this novelty with the changing flavour of the milieu and the landscape. Quite a few stories in Bond's anthology pulsate with the rhythm of the rails; those that do not, reflect nevertheless, as Paul Theroux and Steve McCurry have said, a dynamic, energetic and powerful ingredient in Indian life.[6]

NOTES

1. *India, Country Profile, The Economist Intelligence Unit* (London, 1994-95), p. 44.
2. Jeffrey Richards and John M. MacKenzie, *The Railway Station: A Social History* (Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 348.
3. Mark Pafford, *Kipling's Indian Fiction* (London: MacMillan, 1989), p. 32.

4. Russel McDougall, "The Railway in Australian Literature," *World Literature Written in English*, Vol. 28, No.1 (1988), pp. 75-82.
5. Mark Tully, "Railway Raj," Review of *Building the Railways of the Raj* by Ian J. Kerr, *India Today*, July 15, 1995, p. 147.
6. Paul Theroux and Steve McCurry, *The Imperial Way: Making Tracks from Peshawar to Chittagong* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1985), p. 15.

D.S. College, Katihar **MURARI PRASAD**

M. Sarat Babu, *Indian Drama Today*. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1996, 160 pp. Rs. 300.

Indian Literature in English Translation happens to be a neglected field on account of both paucity of translators and indifference of Indian English critics. It is, therefore, high time for Indian English critics to rectify the situation. In a multilingual and multicultural country (shall I say subcontinent?) like India, the responsibilities of the community of critics is very great. There is a great need for bridging the gap between Indian Literature in English Translation and Indian English Literature in order to enrich the over-all Indian critical sensibility and to see the essential unity in the bewildering diversity. Both in Indian Literature in English Translation and in Indian English Literature, fiction enjoys the lion's share of critical attention whereas drama has suffered undeserved critical indifference. The number of critical anthologies and books on these two fields can be counted on fingers. Scholars like M.K. Naik, Sudhakar Pandey, Freya Barua, Krishna Bhatta and Veena Noble Das have done admirable pioneering work in this direction. M. Sarat Babu's book is a very welcome addition to the realm of Indian Drama in English Translation.

The most important aspect of the book *Indian Drama Today* is its freshness of approach so rare in the field of Indian research. Unlike many books on Indian literature which are hung up on sleek studies of plot and characterisation and vague impressions, the present work captures our attention by its interdisciplinary approach. Sarat Babu has a beautiful and acceptable conceptual framework borrowed from the 'transactional analysis' school of psychology which believes in the view that human beings suffer from alienation on account of six kinds of cultural deformities like gender deformity, mental deformity, physical deformity, social deformity, political deformity and spiritual deformity. Sarat Babu illustrates this socio-psychological theory with appropriate examples from the plays of Mohan Rakesh, Vijay Tendulkar, Badal Sircar and Girish Karnad. All these plays take on a new look and significance when viewed against such a backdrop of social psychology and

enable the reader to think afresh on them. Logical organisation, clarity of explication and lucidity of language are evident on every page of the book. Sarat Babu deserves our hearty congratulations. Behind the systematic organisation of ideas and tidiness of presentation can be felt the presence of an able supervisor like Professor K. Venkata Reddy. One wishes for many more fresh approaches like this from other Indian scholars in future.

Karnatak University, Dharvad **BASAVARAJ NAIKAR**

Vikram Chopra, ed. *Shakespeare: Varied Perspectives.* Delhi: B.R., 1996, 468 pp.

If contemporary collections of critical essays on Shakespeare were to be characterized each by the particular excellence which distinguishes it from other collections, we must allow the Chopra volume the praise of variety. Hence, the appropriateness of the title: *Varied Perspectives.* There are thirty articles in all which have been brought together under three different categories: the cultural perception of Shakespeare; his vision and art and his individual works. Most of the contributions are by Indian scholars of Shakespeare and quite a few contributors happen to be foreign scholars. This in itself lends variety to the *Varied Perspectives.* The volume carries a perceptive foreword by Kenneth Muir, to whom it is dedicated.

The first eight articles are devoted to the cultural perception of Shakespeare. For D.C. Biswas 'Shakespeare has given distinct speech habits, pronunciations, mannerisms to make the typical racial specimens come alive on the stage.' A.H. Hoenselaars concentrates on Shakespeare's non-English characters who have attracted a considerable amount of critical attention in their own right. Extending Johnson's dictum that 'Shakespeare's Romans are not sufficiently Roman' one can venture to suggest that his foreigners are not sufficiently foreign. Johnson's point is that Shakespeare's characters are human beings first and then Romans or Englishmen or something else afterwards. One of the greatest paradoxes of the Renaissance as a movement was that while the Englishmen maintained a distinct national identity, they were willing to bury their insular characteristics when it came to the question of absorbing cultures and influences other than their own. This is evidently reflected in Shakespeare's presentation of foreigners and national ideologies. Hoenselaars is most convincing when he argues that at times 'it is not nationality that determines the language spoken, the language spoken determines the stage nationality, as in *Henry V* and *Henry VIII.* In the vast palace called Shakespearean Drama, K.N. Iyer unlocks for us

many mansions with the 'open sesame' of 'Shakespeare as Brahmajnani.' While none can deny that there is something in Shakespeare which is analogous to the vedantic philosophy, treating Shakespeare as a Vedantin seems to be a little far-fetched. Yoshiko Kawachi is in a position to study how Shakespearean plays got absorbed and assimilated into Japanese literature and culture. Shweta Khanna shows how the ancient occult science of astrology forms an integral aspect of Shakespeare's works. R.A. Malagi has traced the classical antecedents like Plato, Homer, Virgil, Dante and Petrarch by absorbing which Shakespeare became the classic of classics. B.S. Naikar traces not only thematic similarities but a few technical similarities between Kalidasa's *Shakuntala* and Shakespeare's *Pericles*. Jyotsna Singh examines the reception of Shakespeare in colonial and postcolonial India.

In the second section, devoted to Shakespeare's vision and art, there are seven articles in all. Asloob Ansari offers an existential view of Shakespeare's characterization by resorting to Sartre's terms like 'sympathetic antipathy and antipathetic sympathy' and applies this to Shakespeare's comedies as well as tragedies. Viswanath Chatterjee, while analyzing Shakespeare's tragic heroines, finds the key to Ophelia in her weakness, to Cordelia in her fortitude, to Lady Macbeth in her wickedness, to Desdemona in her virtue. Amaresh Datta demonstrates how in his last plays Shakespeare transforms the tragi-comedy of the Beaumont and Fletcher variety into dramatic romance, in which 'the idea of the dying discord and emerging harmony' is reinforced by strange and solemn music and musical imagery. R.A. Dave concentrates on Shakespeare's vanishing characters; for him 'Vanishing in Shakespeare is more than a dramatic device. It is a metaphor of the eternal cycle of life and death and rebirth.' Howard Felprin focusses against a background of editorial controversy and a backlog of accumulated commentary the romantic bardolatry of Shakespeare. Ruth Vanita examines how 'elegy and epitaph in *Much Ado* and *Cymbeline* work to shift attention from the question of female chastity to the question of the presence or absence of male remorse.' Robert Weimann shows that 'whatever authority was associated with the world of play's text as a dramatically represented and performed world would, after its ending . . . be absorbed as part of an oral culture of memory.' Dramatic representation would now be at the disposal of the audience as they are about to return to a different system of discourse and authority.

The third section consists of fifteen articles devoted to individual works. Vikram Chopra reconsiders L.C. Knights's famous essay 'How many children had Lady Macbeth' with reference to Lady Macbeth's breast-feeding and Macbeth's desire for progeny. R.K. Kaul points out

that the title of Rymer's essay 'A Short View of Tragedy' is misleading because Rymer questions *Othello*'s right to be called a tragedy. It is more like a farce. Sikander Lal argues that Iago's tragedy is that of 'a deliberately sealed surface.' Swapan K. Mukherjee subjects to scrutiny Hamlet's conscience which makes a coward of him, though he does wreak vengeance on his uncle with due honour. S. Nagarajan interprets some aspects of love in *All's Well that Ends Well* in the light of Vedic myth, Platonic philosophy and Zen Buddhism. K. Venkata Reddy studies the dispute between Othello and Iago as that based on class conflict. Marvin Rosenberg re-interprets *King Lear* by going beyond the Freudian concept of dream-wish opposites by exploring in depth the archetypal fantasy involved in child-parent relationships. Divya Saksena responds to the incomprehensible and illogical behaviour of Troilus and Antony who take into account points of view which are supplementary, complementary and multifarious aspects of the same vision. Bupendranath Seal examines the pervasive life theme in *King Lear* in which Lear is not only a part of a family to which Goneril and Regan belong but also a part of the entire kingdom. S.C. Sengupta approaches the ethical dimension of *The Winter's Tale* with reference to the values of Beauty and Truth. Poonam Trivedi offers a feminist reading of the Greek camp welcome scene in *Troilus and Cressida* with special emphasis on androcentricity. Rajiva Verma focuses on winners and losers in *Macbeth* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. For him Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are failures, whereas Antony and Cleopatra make a success of their relationship even if they fail somewhere. S. Viswanathan examines *Antony and Cleopatra* by paying attention to Shakespeare's deliberate dramatic self-consciousness through the deployment of theatrical devices and metaphors like performance, play-acting, role-playing, aesthetic distancing and disengagement. Stanley Wells recaptures for the readers Barry Kyle's 1986 production of *Two Noble Kinsmen* at the Swan Theatre. He shows how Barry Kyle demonstrated the relationship between the play's main plot and its sub-plot which considerably enhanced a critical understanding of the play. Vikram Chopra sees in *King Lear* a synthesis of two varieties of compassion, Christian and Hindu. He demonstrates how Shakespeare's inclusive vision combines the purely beneficent mode of compassion as symbolized by Christ and the benign as well as the valiant mode of compassion as symbolized by Krishna.

The greatest merit of the volume is its comprehensiveness and it must be pointed out that most of the articles in the volume are delightfully free from academic cant, theoretical bias and critical jargons. The volume shows that Indian scholars, like their western

counterparts, have certain well-defined perspectives on Shakespeare which scholars cannot willingly ignore.

Bombay **S. KANDASWAMI**
Chennai **USHA MAHADEVAN**

P. K. Rajan, *Mulk Raj Anand: A Revaluation.* New Delhi: Arnold,1995.

Since the publication of *Untouchable* (London: 1935) sixty years ago, the fictional craft of Mulk Raj Anand has attracted a host of academic critical assessments, of which the latest and perhaps the last, is the recent appearance of *Mulk Raj Anand: A Revaluation* by Dr. P. K Rajan (New Delhi: Arnold Associates, 1995). This criticism pairs off various fictions by offering a thematic link to them as a connection to further comparative comments. It brings *Untouchable* and *The Road* (1960) together as realist and fabulist, *Coolie* (1936) and *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937) are joined as tragic and romantic, *The Big Heart* (1945) and *The Old Woman and the Cow* (1960) unite under linear and parabolical, *Private Life of an Indian Prince* (1953) and *Death of a Hero* (1963) combine as political and Lyrical whilst the Lalu Trilogy is treated as historical and mythical. It excludes any discussion of the prolific autobiographical series, *The Seven Ages of Man* and *Lament on the Death of a Master of Arts* (1938).

Raian reveals in. his introduction the perception of a basic conflict in the author's political position, overtly advocating a revolutionary Marxist approach but covertly allowing himself to be positioned as the "representative voice of Indian liberal democratic tradition" (151). He enlarges on his perception that this split in Anand's political allegiance prevents unequivocal endorsement of either strategy for change and produces an overarching humanism which is conditioned by an allpervading ambivalence. This humanism also divides itself into two parts, proletarian in the early fiction of the preIndependence era and decidedly universalist in Nehru's India. Anand's humanism also subsumes the rationalism of scientific materialism and the emotional intensity of religious metaphysics.

He identifies Anand as a synthesiser of narrative forms based on social realism and tragedy from the West and the epic, the moral fable and the folktale of the Indian classical tradition. His novels express this process of synthesisation and indicate the tension induced by the tentative melding of these sources. Rajan echoes Bhabha's theory of hybridisation here. The question then arises whether he has adequately researched this important postcolonial criticism, but this seems can-

celled out by his interpretation of Anand's fictions as metaphoric rather than metonymic. Rajan claims *Untouchable* (1935) as a carefully crafted aesthetic combination comes closest to achieving this themeform unity.

This is a well-researched work of scholarship. Dr. Rajan has thoroughly covered earlier critical commentary by incorporating the views of such noteworthy Anand scholars as Saros Cowasjee, Alastair Niven and Marlene Fisher. He comes quite close to the issues and problems presented by Arun Prabha Mukherjee in "The Exclusions of Postcolonial Theory and Mulk Raj Anand's 'Untouchable': A Case Study" in *Ariel* (July 1991). His analysis problematises the very same concerns of voice, subject position and agency that she articulates. The five year delay between the completion of his thesis and its production in book-length form in this publication indicates his analysis of these ! issues preceded Mukherjee's critique but unfortunately lagged behind her article in bringing this discussion to a wider audience.

Although humanism and ambivalency underpin Rajan's argument, he often conflates the two terms into either humanistic ambivalency or an ambivalent humanism. Are these two so easily interchangeable? His stress on ambivalency again points to Homi Bhabha's critical perceptions. He then compounds this shifting of signifiers in describing Hari Shankar of *Private Life of an Indian Prince* (1953) in this statement, "he projects the novelist's universalist, ahistorical humanism, by emphasizing the Hellenistic view of man, irrespective of class or creed, as the supreme of all creators." (161) This mention of universalism finally finds more explicit expression in Rajan's summing up when he inadvertently slips this comment into his conclusion, "the alternation in Anand between a class humanism with its championing of the proletarian cause, and a humanist universalism with its ubiquitous compassion regardless of class considerations, is well manifested in the novels discussed." (176-77) This slippage into universalist theory overrides previous intentions that seemed determined to avoid universalist standards and seriously undermines an admirable attempt to assert a new dimension to critical overviews of Anand's writing.

This book is a valuable addition to the critical catalogue of Anand's work and provides a welldocumented research aid for scholars and students. Its lucidity and coherence of structure make it one of the better guides to investigation and clarification of Anand's unconscious motives and purposes. Its advocacy of hybridity and ambivalence contributes substantial support to certain postcolonial critiques. One would have hoped for more development of Third World connections, especially an African one, to widen the postcolonial perspective to this analysis.

University of Wollongong, Australia **MARVIN GILMAN**

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