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THE THEORY OF PREDESTINATION IN WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S DRAMAS

B. D. Sharma

Predictions which come true have been made in several of Shakespeare's dramas including *Julius Caesar, Macbeth, Antony and Cleopatra, The Winter's Tale, The Tempest, Cymbeline,The Merchant of Venice* and *King John.*[1]

An important incident is foretold in *Julius Caesar* when a Soothsayer tells Julius Caesar: "Beware the ides of March" (*JC*,I,ii,17). And the prediction comes true as the day on which Julius Caesar is killed is the 15th of March (*JC*,III,i,11.1-2)

A number of predictions have been made in *Macbeth*: in the opening scene of the play the witches foretell that the "hurlyburly" going on between Duncan and his enemy will come to its end "ere the set of the sun" (*M*,I,i 1.5) and that Macbeth will reach the heath after the battle has ended so that they will be able to meet him there (*M*, I,i,11.7-8) in the third scene of the first Act the witches foretell that Macbeth will become Thane of Cowder and King of Scotland (*M*, I,iii,11.49-50); and that Banquo will be the father of kings though he himself will never get the throne (*M*, I,iii,1.67); and in the first scene of the fourth Act the witches tell Macbeth through the first apparition that he will be killed by Macduff (*M*,IV,i, 1.71), the man who kills him will be the man who has not been born of a woman (*M*, IV,i, 11.80-81), and that no harm will be done to him until the Birnam Wood comes to the Dunsinane Hill (*M*, IV,i, 11.92-94). Each of these predictions comes true: Macbeth reaches the heath after defeating the king's enemy (*M*, I,iii, the stage direction between lines 37 and 38), Macbeth becomes Thane of Cowder (*M*, I, iii, 1.105), and a little later king of Scotland (*M*, III,i,1.1), the Birnam Wood come to the Dunsinane Hill before Macbeth dies (M, V,viii, the stage direction at the close of the scene), who was not born of a woman but was "ripped from [his] mother's *womb untimely*" (*M*, V, viii,11.15-16).

Some of the predictions made in this play have been made about the period between Macbeth's death and king James' coming to the throne of England in 1603 as several descendants of Banquo became monarchs during this period.[3] Nay, the witches show to Macbeth that some descendants of king James I too will become kings of England, Ireland and Scotland as on watching the apparitions Macbeth says: " '....and some I see/That two-fold balls and treble sceptre carry' (*M*, iv,i, 11.120-21).These "some" came to the throne and became rulers of England, Ireland, and Scotland in the post-Shakespearean period.[4] This means that Shakespeare makes his witches foretell also the incidents which took place during the period which was future not only for Macbeth and the Witches but also for Shakespeare, though it is not future for us living in the last decade of the twentieth century of the Christian era. Even though the prediction is vague rather than pointed, as the dramatist has used the word "some" rather than a definite numeral like "two", "three", "four" and the like, yet it is a prediction which has come true, though Shakespeare left for his heavenly abode in 1616 and was not in a position to verify it in his lifetime.

Some predictions have been made in *Antony and Cleopatra* too. Here a soothsayer makes predictions about the future days of Charmian and Iras. He, for instance, tells Charmian: " 'You shall be yet far-fairer than you are' " (*A & C*, I, ii,11.322), " 'You shall be more beloving than beloved' " (*A & C*, I, ii,122), " 'You shall outlive the lady whom you serve' " (*A & C*, I, ii,1.30), " 'You have seen and prov'd a fairer former fortune/Than that which is to approach'" (*A & C*, I,ii 11.32-33), and " 'If every of your wishes had a womb,/ And fertile every wish, [you shall have] a million [children]" '(*A & C*, I, ii,11.36-37) meaning thereby that she is not going to have children. And he tells Iras that her fortune is "like" that of Charmian (*A & C*, I ii,1.51). All these predictions come true as both become fairer than they have been by remaining faithful to Cleopatra by not only serving her even in her bad days but also dying with her (*A & C*, V, ii,11.291-321), they are more beloving than beloved as they remain faithful to Cleopátra but neither becomes anybody's beloved, their fortunes in the past have been fairer than those in future as misfortunes of their Queen have already begun, and neither of them becomes a mother as they die unmarried. The fortune of Iras is not exactly the same as that of Charmian but like hers as Iras died a few moments before Cleopatra while Charmian dies a few moments after Cleopatra has dies (*A & C*, V, ii, 11.291,321).

A prediction is made in *The Winter's Tale* through the oracle which tells Leontes that he is not going to have an heir unless the lost one is found (*TWT*. III,ii,11.132-33). The prediction has been made when the King's son Mamillius is not only quite hale and hearty but also teases his mother so much that she finds his mischief to be past enduring (*TWT*,II, i,11.1-2). But soon after Leontes rejects the oracle the boy dies (*TWT*, III,ii, 1.142) and thus the king loses his only son, with the result that he can have an heir only if his daughter, whom he has ordered to be killed, is found. The prediction comes true as Leontes remains without an heir until his daughter Perdita comes back to him and is recognized, and we learn from the Second Gentleman: " 'The oracle is fulfill'd: the King's daughter is found' " (*TWT*, V, ii,11.21-22).

In *The Tempest* Gonzalo predicts that the Boatswain has " 'no drowning mark upon him; his complexion is perfect gallows' " (*The Tempest*, I, i, 11.27-28). This makes it evident that Gonzalo comes to the conclusion that the Boatswain is going to die from hanging, rather than from drowning, by studying his complexion and "marks" on his body. What these marks are and what kind of complexion indicates that the man is going to be hanged have not been given here. But Gonzalo has no doubt about the veracity of his observation and asserts: " 'I'11 warrant him for drowning, though the ship were no stronger than a nutshell, and as leaky as....' " (*The Tempest*, I,i, 11.43-45) and : "He 'll be hanged yet,/Though every drop of water swear against it,/And gape at wid'st to glut him' " (*The Tempest*, I, i, 11.34-36). Gonzalo makes such forceful assertions when even the Mariners have declared: " 'All lost; to prayers, to prayers all lost' " (*The Tempest*, I, i, 1.48). Gonzalo's prediction comes true in the sense that the Boatswain does not drown at the Enchanted Island though we do not know as to how he dies when he does. And when the Boatswain and he meet at the residence of Prospero Gonzalo boasts of his capacity to foretell incidents correctly: " 'I prophesied, if a gallows were on land,/This fellow could not drown' " (*The

Tempest, V,i,11.217-18). These facts indicate that according to Shakespeare the marks upon a man and his complexion can enable a man to foretell whether he is going to be hanged or to drown.

A prediction has been made also in *Cymbeline* when Posthumus Leonatus is assured through a written message, namely, "When as a lion's whelp shall, to himself unknown, without seeking find, and be embraced by a piece of tender air; and when from a stately cedar shall be lopp'd branches which, being dead many years, shall after revive, be jointed to the old stock, and freshly grow: then shall Posthumus end his miseries, Britain be fortunate and flourish in peace and plenty" (*Cymbeline*, V, iv, 11.138-43). In this prediction there are words which have not been used in their literal senses, and so one has to go to its interpretation given by the soothsayer in the following words:

> Thou, Leonatus, art the lion's whelp;
> The fit and apt construction of thy name,
> Being Leo-natus, doth import so much.
> [*To Cymbeline*] the piece of tender air,thy virtuous daughter,
> Which we call 'mollis aer', and 'mollis aer'
> The term is 'mulier'; which 'mulier' I divine
> Is this most constant wife, who even now
> Answering the letter of the oracle,
> Unknown to you, unsought, were clipp'd about
> With this most tender air.....
> The lofty cedar, royal Cymbeline,
> Personates thee; and thy lopp'd branches point
> Thy two sons forth, who, by Belarius stol'n,
> For many years thought dead, are now reviv'd
> To the majestic cedar join'd, whose issue
> Promises Britain peace and plenty.
>
> (*Cymbeline*, V, v, 11.441-56)

Thus the prediction means that the miseries of Posthumus Leonatus will end when he meets his wife without seeking her and is embraced by her, and when the long-lost sons of Cymbeline come back to their father again to join him.

This prediction comes true when Iachimo confesses his villainous deeds in the presence of Cymbeline, Leonatus and Imogen with the result that Imogen and Leonatus are reconciled to each other, Belarious confesses his thefts to the King and restores the two princes to their father and Cymbeline declares: " 'Pardon's the word to all' " (*Cymbeline*, V,v,1.422) and one can easily imagine that now Leonatus is going to have happy days as he has been accepted by King Cymbeline as his beloved son-in-law.

In *The Merchant of Venice* the lottery of caskets devised by Portia's father for her marriage is accepted by Portia on the understanding that since he was a virtuous man, he must have foreseen how Portia was going to become the bride of the man whom she would rightly love, as is evident from Nerissa's observation: " 'Your father was ever virtuous, and holy men at their death have good inspirations; therefore the lott'ry that he hath devised in these three chests, of gold, silver and lead--whereof sho chooses his meaning chooses you--will no doubt never be chosen by any rightly but one who you shall rightly love' " (*The Merchant of Venice*, I,ii,11.24-29). In other words, in the lottery of caskets that Portia's father devised for her marriage, when he advised her to marry only the man who chose the casket, containing her picture, was making a prediction that the right casket would be chosen only by the man whom she would 'rightly love' [*See supra*].

This prediction implied in the lottery also comes true because the right casket is chosen by Bassanio (*The Merchant of Venice*, III,ii,11.131-38) with whom Portia has long been in love, as is evident from her response to Nerissa's remark in the following exchange of remarks between Nerissa and her :

> Por. Yes, yes, it was Bassanio; as I think, so was he call'd.
> Ner. True, madam;he,of all the men that ever my foolish eyes look'd upon, was the best deserving a fair lady.
> Por. I remember him well, and I remember him worthy of the praise.
> (*The Merchant of Venice*, I,ii,11.102-04)

and by none of her former suitors including the Neapolitan Prince, County Palatine, Monsieur Le Bou, Falconbridge, the Scottish lord, and the Duke of Saxony's nephew, as she dotes on the very absence of each one of them (*TMOV*, I, ii,1.98), nor by the Prince of Morocco whom she does not like for his dark complexion (*TMOV*, II, vii,11.77-78), nor by the Prince of Arragon whom she regards as one of " 'deliberate fools' " (*TMOV*, II,ix,1.80).

In King John a prediction has been made by Peter the prophet of Pomfret who, as the Bastard reports to King John, tells the King: " "....ere the next Ascension-day at noon,Your Highness should deliver up your crown' " (*King John*, IV, ii,11.151-52). Peter also claims that he has foreknown the occurrence (*King John*, IV,ii,1.154). And the prediction comes true as is evident from the following observation of King John on the following Ascension-day:

Is this Ascension-day? Did not the prophet
Say that before Ascension-day at noon
My crown I should give off? Even so I have.
I did suppose it should be on constraint;
But,heaven be thank'd it is but voluntary.

(*King John*, V,i,1.25-29)

An incident can be foretold correctly only if it has been decided that it shall take place. and if the incidents of the future have been decided and human efforts cannot effect any change in them, they are predestined or predetermined. Since the incidents foretold in Shakespeare's plays do occur exactly according to predictions, it must be inferred that Shakespeare considers it possible for a competent soothsayer to foretell the incidents which are still in the womb of future. And this implies that Shakespeare believes in the theory of predestination.

If an incident is predestined the human participants in it must have in it the roles of simple tools or puppets. At least one of Shakespeare's characters, namely Hamlet, reports that while in the ship taking him and his two companions to England he was made to remain awake and to take out Clandius' letter from his companions by the invisible hand of the divinity, as he informs his friend:

Sir,in my heart there was a kind of fighting
That would not let me sleep. Methought I lay
Worse than the mutines in the bilboes. Rashly
And prais'd be rashness for it--let us know
Our indiscretion sometime serve us well
When our deep plots do pull; and that should learn us
There's a divinity that shapes our ends:
Rough-hew them how we will.

(*Hamlet*, V,ii,11.4-11)

The implication is that Hamlet was destined not to be killed in England while Guildenstern and Rosencrantz were, and that powers-that-be used Hamlet as their tool, did not let him sleep when he wanted to and made him change the sealed letter his two companions were carrying to the King of England. This is another proof in support of the fact that Shakespeare believed in the theory of predestination.

However, one should pay heed also to the fact that even the characters who make predictions about somebody give him certain instructions as to how he or she should act. For instance, the soothsayer in *Julius Caesar* instructs Julius Caesar *to beware* the ides of March (*JC*, I, ii,1.17), and the Witches in *Macbeth* warn the hero through an apparition *to beware* Macduff (*M*, iv,i, 1.71). The fact signifies that these soothsayers believe that if the person in question takes necessary precautions and behaves as they want him to behave the unhappy incident can be avoided. And since they can foresee the future,their opinion must be regarded as correct in the eyes of Shakespeare. If this is so, Shakespeare does not regard a man as merely a puppet but believes that he is free to behave as he likes. In other words, if this is so, Shakespeare believes in the theory of free will. Even in Shakespeare's tragedies the heroes are free to do or not to do the deeds which have far-reaching consequences. For instance, King Lear is absolutely free to give or not to give one third of his kingdom to Cordelia and it is another matter that he chooses to do a wrong. Likewise, Othello is absolutely free to kill or not to kill Desdemona on the suspicion that she is not faithful to him.

At this stage one may ask as to how one can be regarded as believing in the theory of predestination and that of free will at the same time as in the theory of predestination a human being is reduced to the status of a puppet while in the theory of free will a human being becomes the maker of his destiny. But the two theories, actually speaking, go together in the view that a human being is free when he acts but his action has a definite outcome with the result that in reaping the consequences of his action he is reduced to the status of a puppet and finds incidents to have been predestined. Since in his tragedies the heroes suffer for their own faults (as King Lear suffers for he subjects his youngest daughter to injustice), it can be taken for granted that according to Shakespeare a man himself is the maker of his destiny. On that logic it can be believed that a person's own doings are the root cause behind the incidents which are destined to happen. But in his dramas Shakespeare does not reveal as to what is responsible for an incident that is being predicted and is destined to occur.

REFERENCES

[1] The abbreviations for these titles in this article are *JC, M, A & C, TWT, C, TMOV* and *KJ* respectively.

[2] King James I of England and VI of Scotland.

[3] They were Robbert III of Scotland, King James I of Scotland, King James II of Scotland, King James III of Scotland, King James IV of Scotland, King James V of Scotland and Queen Mary of Scotland. (Herford has given this pedigree of Banquo and it has been quoted in *Macbeth*, ed. A.W. Verity [Cambridge: University Press, 1962], p.136).

[4] They included Charles I, Charles II and James II.

POST-STRUCTURALIST PERSPECTIVE, DECONSTRUCTIVE DESIGN AND SEMIOTIC VALENCE IN SHAKESPEARE

Kalyani Mathivanan

> From the moment that one admits that the work is made with writing (and draws the consequences from that admission) then a certain science of literature becomes possible.... This cannot be the *science of the conditions of content*, that is, *a science of forms* (my emphasis)....[1]

Shakespeare's ascendancy over other dramatists remains unchallenged. And he continually influences the mind and art of every other artist through his creative dramaturgy. And it is precisely because of his several literary strengths. With admirable skill he promulges universals. Hamlet mouths one such:

> There's a divinity that shapes our ends
> Rough-hew them how we will....[2]

The Elizabethan genius aesthetically comes to terms with the world. With dramatic directness, heightened poetic and emotional intensity and with serious intellectual depth and verve he expresses humanistic concerns. Moreover, there is in Shakespeare the metaphysical implications and emphasis. The *oeuvres* of this superb creationist never age and consequentially qualify to be the art of the sublime. The observation of Longinus in translation is worth quoting here:

> For a piece is truly great only if it can stand up to repeated examination... As a genealization you may take it that sublimity in all its truth and beauty is in such works as please all men at all times....[3]

Shakespeare's variegated plays mirror life adequately. Hamlet's assertion testifies to the point made:

> Suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature: for anything so o'erdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end both at the first and now, was and is, to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature, to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure....[4]

Furthermore, in the *tomes* of Shakespeare the discerning reader detects the great dramatist's studied application of the conventions of creative writing and elements of drama.[5] The playwright conforms to Freyatag's pyramid. Moreover, he achieves a rare combination of pure art and pure preaching. As such, each Shakespearean play is an aesthetic artefact, and a *tour de force*, with a deep centre of meaning. In addition, it is a *gestalt* with a form, structure and organization. At this point it is of profound value to record that Shakespeare's plays lend themselves to different media. Yet again they reach the continuing audience moulded by local influences. David A. Male pointedly observes:

> Peter Brook's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* influenced by a Chinese circus performance in Paris, demanded the performers executed cartwheels, somersaults, swung on trapezes, climbed ladders and ropes juggled and generally behaved in a lively athletic style....[6]

Therefore, in the modern and post-modern contexts of multivalence Shakespeare's plays are of engaging interest to the critically-oriented perceptive readers.

The shifting new accents cause alternative Shakespeares. Leavis' Shakespeare branches away from Bradleian Shakespeare. Similarly, a Saussurean, Barthian or Derridean Shakespeare appears quite different from Coleridgean or Eliotian Shakespeare. It is in this context the paper focusses on post-structuralist perspective, deconstructive design and semiotic reading.

To begin with, then, the modernist responsive reading concentrates on Shakespeare's deep concern for language and the effect it can create. He maximizes language. He stretches it to its limits. Christopher Norris, in this connection, makes a pointed observation:

> The metaphor of word play as a "fatal Cleopatra" (operates) to associate feminine wiles with mischiefs created by unbridled linguistic figuration....[7]

Yet again, Shakespeare employs language as the most effective linguistic vehicle for sense and sensation. The following passage of compressed expression is to the point:

> ...Men must endure
> Their going hence, even as their coming hither:
> *Ripeness is all* (my emphasis)....[8]

A careful examination of the lines quoted above reveals the dense richness of word consideration. According to Jamesian dictum less is more. And the focus, therefore, in the paper, is on signs, linguistic propositions, subversion and undermining of old structural order. It is because there is an erosion of the assumptions and presumptions thus far maintained by critics. Modes and categories inherited from the past do not fit in with the reality experienced by the new generation. Necessarily, there is a realignment of values. In this context, Alfred Herbage remarks:

> It may well be that Shakespeare idolatury is drawing strength from something other than its roots in the past....[9]

Leavis in his combative and charged piece of writing splinters away from Bradley who contends that character is the primary psychological reality. Bradley maintains that character is the real life analogue. Leavis argues that Bradley's Othello is a naive, sentimental idealist, and Bradley's Iago is one of baffling complexity and sinister appeal. Othello, as Leavis identifies him, is more rewardingly complex than Bradley's Othello and he partakes of Iago's destructive nature. Leavis observes:

> Iago's power, in fact, in the tempetation scene is that he presents something that is in Othello... the essential traitor is within the gates. For if Shakespeare's Othello too is simple-minded, he is nevertheless more complex than Bradley's. Bradley's Othello is, rather Othello's; it being an essential datum regarding the Shakespearian Othello that he has an ideal conception of himself....[10]

Yet again, Othello through the force of Shakespearean language has from the beginning the traitor within himself. Thus the manner in which Leavis treats Othello as a signifier differs from that of Bradley. And to the post-structuralist the shift from signifier to signifer constitutes the basic mode. Christopher Norris asserts:

> There is, as Leavis argues, a close and exemplary relation between Shakespeare's creative exploratory language and the process of anguished discovery through which the protagonists attain to authentic self-knowledge. This becomes the measure of Othello's characterizing weakness, his rhetorical evasion of the truths borne home by his own tragic predicament....[11]

Shifting the focus to deconstruction one appreciates it as a post-modern phenomenon. The text is no longer treated as a reflection of the world alone. It is considered a *construct* and thus available for deconstruction. It calls for an analysis of the process and conditions of its construction out of the available discourses. Malcolm Evans, quoting Jacques Derrida, argues:

> The movements of deconstruction... are accomplished not by a destruction of structures which is effected from outside, but by inhabiting them in a certain way, operating from the inside and borrowing all the strategic and economic reasources of subversion from the old structure. Holding to its article of faith that there is no outside, deconstruction locates itself in side, by postulating an inner old structure which may be recognized, exploited and undermined....[12]

The deconstructionist looks for jerks of information. He undermines and subverts the old structure of a literary piece with a view to deconstructing the concept of representation and perceiving a new concept in its place. At one level the deconstructionist examines how a text escapes tradition and at another level how it coheres to tradition. Moreover, he is not concerned with how things exist but why they should exist. Malcolm Evans observes:

> Frye, the prime theoretician of this order, compounds the Christian patterns with elements of the Greek Komos, Roman religious festivity, Judaism, and the Hindu *Sakuntala*, making the structure of the comedies mirror that of a collective psyche....[13]

For instance, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* wears the old structure of a medieval romance. This is undermined and in its place a collective psyche is visualised.

Yet again, a deconstructionist argues that a Shakespearean play does not allude to phonocentric preference for the written word. He is for the priority of the letter signifier over the spirit. Therefore the dense movement of words affirms the materiality of language itself. Thouchstone in *As You Like* It argues that the operation to recover the spirit from the letter usually produces only another letter. Thus it results in a linguistic *impasse* in which two or more signifiers get pinned together. Consequentially, a transcendent truth results beyond language:

> ...The heathen philosopher, when he had a desire to eat a grape, would open his lips when he put it into his mouth; meaning thereby that grapes were made to eat and lips to open....[14]

In *As You Like It* Hymen places the precondition that marriages must result in atonement. This points to the fact that truth is contained at the heart of truth. The statement, then, that truth holds true contents sounds tautological and suggests endless supplementation. The relevant lines read thus:

> Then is there mirth in heaven,
> When earthly things made even
> At one toghether.
>
> Peace, ho! I bar confusion;
> 'T is I must make conclusion
> Of these most strange events
> Here's eight that must take hands

> To join in Hymen's bands,
> If *truth holds true contents*
> (my emphasis)....[15]

But then such a textual process suggests a closure which can be as one likes it. Malcolm Evans conclusively argues:

> Hymen's tautologous demand that the truth should be true speaks from a masque-within-the play to the audience of *As You Like It* on the subject of a divided "truth" which is at once present and impossible in this most outrageous and threadbare of romantic fictions. This climactic utterance of the comedies comes, appropriately, from a *deus ex machina* with no serious function to perform but who mirrors the work of one of Derrida's favourite rhetorical devices -- also named the "hymen". In Derrida,as in Shakespeare, this figure marks the point beyond which interpretation has no jurisdiction: the limit to the relevance of the hermeneutic or systematic question, the violence of truth stronger than truth. This final coincidence completes the conspiratorial work of deconstruction in the comedies....[16]

Whether Antony in *Antony and Cleopatra* has uttered only empty words from the time he proclaimed that he would break the Egyptian fetters to the last minute when he boasted:

> ...a Roman by a Roman
> Valiantly vanquished

has to be analyzed as a departure from the traditional viewpoint of the play as a tragedy of the conflict between duty and love. He was a dissembler as Cleopatra has characteristically christened him, not only to others, Romans as well as Egyptians, but to himself too. Thus the deconstructionist has a sceptical view of the relationship between language and the world which itself claims a superior certainty. The case of Antony baffled critics who tried to escape from this reality by calling the play a problem play. A standpoint deviant from the traditional is a different interpretation

> in which an apparently transparent or 'reliable' relationship between text and world is attacked because the text can be shown to display all the signs of fictivity or literary convention, or metaphor....[17]

Of relative importance to deconstruction is semiotics, the sign of languages. Roland Barthes argues that any semiotic analysis must postulate a relationship between two terms, *signifier* and *signified*. This relationship is not one of equality but of equivalence. Furthermore, Barthes views that connotation represents the same kind of gearing up from denotation as myth does from ordinary signification. Terence Hawkes makes a pointed statement:

> In short, the *signifiers* of connotation are made up of the signs (signifiers related to signifieds) of the denoted system, and this makes connotation and so literature at large, one of the numbers of the *second order* signifying systems which we characteristically superimpose upon the first order system of language....[18]

In semiotic theories characters dissolve into textuality. For instance, Macbeth dissolves into ambition of the worst kind, Lear into misplaced affection, Othello into green-eyed jealousy and Hamlet into procrastination. Yet again, a Shakespearean play in a complex fashion is a literary sign. Alessandro Serpieri observes:

> A semiotic reading of the dramatic text must be aware not only of the cultural pragmatics in historical context, but also of the potential pragmatics of the stage relationships that are inscribed in the strictly verbal make-up of the text itself in accordance with the codes and conventions (both general and historical) of the genre. In a word, critical enquiry into the contextual values of the drama should be carried out with a view to its specific semiotic complexity, a complexity quite distinct from that of literary genres, which are not conditioned by directions for a more-than-verbal use....[19]

It implies, therefore, that more attention is to be paid to the signs in a dramatic discourse. In the play *Julius Caesar*, Cassius seduces Brutus to join the conspirators. He attacks the very heart of the symbolic word order, that is, the motivated Name: The relevant lines make interesting reading:

> Brutus and Caesar: what should be in that "Caesar"?
> Why should that name be sounded more than yours?
> Write them together, yours is as fair a name;
> Sound them, it doth become the mouth as well;
> Weigh them, it is as heavy; conjure with 'em,
> Brutus will start a spirit as soon as "Caesar"....[20]

The contention of Cassius is that Caesar has no right to interpret, for all, the sense of the world.

In the opening speech of Antony there is the constant shifting from one object of reference to another or from one addressee to another. In this speech get involved a wide range of diectic orientations. The speech runs thus:

> O mighty Caesar! dost thou lie so low?
> Are all thy conquests, glories, triumphs, spoils,
> Shrunk to this little measure? Fare thee well.
> I know not, gentlemen, what you intend,
> who else must be let blood, who else is
> If I myself. there is no hour so fit

> As Caesar's death hour, nor no instrument
> Of half that worth as those your swords,
> With the most noble blood of all this
> I do beseech ye, if you bear me hard
> Now, whilst your purpled hands do reek and smoke,
> Fulfil your pleasure. Live a thousand years,
> I shall not find myself so apt to die:
> No place will please me so, no mean of death,
> As here by Caesar, and by you cut off,
> The choice and master spirits of this age....[21]

The speech reveals that Antony ignores the conspirators. With authentic emotions he remains attached to Caesar and prepares to rail upon the conspirators. He balances his speech between Caesar and the conspirators and closes his speech with a homage to the conspirators. The semantic emphasis of the conclusion counterbalances his attachment to Caesar. Alessandro Serpieri comments thus:

> If Brutus moves only along this referential (logical demonstrative) axis of the communicational model, Antony when he takes over from him on the stage plays on all the functions of language in situation, unleashing multiple diectic orientations and illocutionary-prelocutionary modalities....[22]

Thus post-structuralist challenges deconstructive methods and semiotic valences help to bring out the hidden sense and sensation in Shakespeare.

NOTES

[1] Roland Barthes, *Critique et Verite* (Paris: Seuil, 1964), p.51.

[2] William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, V, II (New Delhi: S. Chand and Company Ltd., 1979), p. 265.

[3] T.S Dorsch, trans., *Classical Literary Criticism* (New York: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 107.

[4] William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, II, ii, pp. 53-54.

[5] See Cleanth Brooks and Robert Heilman, *Understanding Drama* (New york: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1945)

and

J.L. Styan, *The Elements of Drama* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1960).

[6] David A. Male, *Approaches to Drama* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.,1973). p. 26.

[7] Christopher Norris, "Post-structuralist Shakespeare: Text and Ideology," in *Alternative Shakespeares*, ed. John Drakakis (New York: Methuen, 1985), p. 51.

[8] William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, V, ii (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 151.

[9] Alfred Herbage, *Conceptions of Shakespeare* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 38.

[10] Christopher Norris, "Post-structuralist Shakespeare: Text and Ideology," p.63.

[11] Ibid., p. 65.

[12] Malcolm Evans, "Deconstructing Shakespeare's Comedies," in *Alternative Shakespeares*, p. 77.

[13] Ibid., p. 81.

[14] William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, V, i (New Delhi: S. Chand and Company Ltd., 1987), p. 99.

[15] Ibid., V, iv, pp.108-109.

[16] Malcolm Evans, "Deconstructing Shakespeare's Comedies," in *Alternative Shakespeares*, p. 83.

[17] Christopher Butler, *Interpretation, Deconstruction and Ideology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 64.

[18] Terence Hawkes, *Structuralism and Semiology* (London: Methuen and Co., 1986), p.113.

[19] Alessandro Serpieri, "Reading the Signs: Towards a Semiotics of Shakespearean Drama," in *Alternative Shakespeares*, p. 122.

[20] William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar* I, ii in *Complete Shakespeare* (London: Abbey Library, 1979), p. 801.

[21] Ibid, III, ii, p. 810.

[22] Alessandro Serpieri, "Reading the Signs: Towards a Semiotics of Shakespearean Drama", p. 131.

INDIAN MYTHOLOGY IN ENLISH ROMANTIC POETRY

K. G. Srivastava

Notwithstanding the fact that books on the English romantic literature seldom mention India or its religion, it is very interesting to note that India had dominated the romantic imagination of Europe in general and of England in particular. Describing the features of the imaginative literature of the Hindus, Abbey Dubois, as early as 1817, correctly observed: "Were Hindu literature better known to us, it is possible that we should find that we have borrowed from it the romantic style of our days which some find so beautiful and others so silly."[1] So far as the discussion of myths in the context of English romantic poetry is concerned, I think Professor Douglas Bush, in his famous book entitled *Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry* (1937), a sequel to his earlier book *Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry* (1932), has dealt with the subject quite comprehensively. But unfortunately, Professor Bush did not list any of the myths of India that the English romantic poets had used without any reservation or prejudice. I am quite convinced that the English romantic poetry was inspired, to a very large extent, by Indian philosophy and religion which lie buried in the native idioms of the poets who had absorbed the philosophical and religious thought of India that had become available to them through the efforts of the British orientalists like Alexander Dow, Nathaniel Brassey Helhed, George Foster, Thomas Maurice, Sir William Jones, Charles Wilkins, Henry Thomas Colebrooke and Edward Moore. The major romantics knew most of the works of these orientalists, as references to them in their own works clearly prove it. I think the most popular orientalist, favourite whith the romantics, was Edward Moore, the author of *The Hindu Pantheon* (1810). It is quite interesting to note that *The Hindu Pantheon* had its main title श्री सर्व्व देव सभा, written in the Devanagari script on the title-page. This work acquainted the younger romantics with the entire mythology of the Hindus, while the works of Dow, Maurice and Jones had already clarified it to the early romantics.

In the present paper I would not discuss Hindu thought in the works of the English romantics; I would like rather to confine myself to the treatment of Indian mythology by the English romantic poets. By the term "Indian Mythology" I mean the stories connected with the gods and goddesses and even the legendary heroes mentioned in the Sanskrit epics like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* and the myth-collections called the *Puranas*.

I begin with Wordsworth, who is generally regarded as the greatest poet of the Romantic era. He is usually taken to be a typically British poet, averse to the traditions of other countries. Robert Sencourt[2] does not find much in the poetry of Wordsworth alluding to India and her culture except for one reference to her in a rather insignificant piece. In his book *The Universal Gita*, Eric J. Sharpe[3] does not mention Wordsworth in his account of the Romantic poets who had been influenced by the Indian texts like the *Gita* that were being gradually made available to the Englishmen in their own language at the close of the eighteenth century through the efforts of the orientalists. Similarly, John Drew,[4] the author of *India And The Romantic Imagination*, chooses to ignore Wordsworth altogether in his list of English poets of the Romantic age who had been fascinated by India and her culture. But the fact of the matter is that of all the English romantic poets, Wordsworth seems to have been most deeply influenced by India. A mere look at Professor Lane Cooper's *Concordance to the Poems of William Wordsworth* (New York: Russel and Russel,1945) will make it clear that more than a dozen allusions to India have been made in his poems even if we ignore more than forty references to the East, Eastern, Orient and Oriental. He mentions Hindus in four places and the Ganges, too, in equal number of places. In the Third Book of his *Excursion*, he uses the myth regarding the divine origin of Ganga where he says:

> :then, as the Hindoos draw
> their holy Ganges from a skyey fount,
> Even so deduce the stream of human life
> From seats of power divine; and hope, or trust,
> That our existence winds her stately course
> Beneath the sun, like Ganges, to make part

> Of a living ocean;
>
> (11.254-260)

Wordsworth's closest friend and collaborator in the *Lyrical Ballads*, S. T. Coleridge, was steeped in the Indian lore. The measure of his knowledge of Indian philosophy and mythology is the long quotation from the *Bhagwat-Geeta* (chapter 10) in one of his philospohical lectures,[5] and his having characterized Spinoza as an 'adwaitmist'[6] (i.e., *adwaitin*-believer in the non-dualistic philosophical school of Vedant, founded by Shankaracharya).Of the innumerable gods of India, Vishnu seems to have impressed him most. In a letter to his friend Thelwall of 14 October 1797, he expresses his wish to attain the state of Vishnu whose name he mis-spells as "Vishna" (perhaps in imitation of Krishna):

> I should much wish, like the Indian Vishna,to float along an infinite ocean cradled in the flower of the Lotos, and wake once in a million years for a few minutes--just to know that I was going to sleep for a million years more.

In the passage from his said letter, cited above, we have several myths of India, suggested by a single image. There is the suggestion of the myth about Lord Vishnu's waking at the close of a *Kalpa*, a period of 432 million years of mortals, one day of Brahma, still commemorated in India in the form of the festival called *Devotthan-ekadashi*; then there is the allusion to the myth regarding *Kshirasagara*, the dwelling place of Vishnu. There is some confusion here regarding the bed of Vishnu who is usually depicted as lying on the body of the mythical serpent called *Sheshanaga*. But Coleridge has represented Lord Vishnu as "cradled in the flower of Lotos"—the usual pose of the Indian deity--Brahma whose another name is "Kamalasana" or one whose seat is the flower called Lotus. This kind of mythical transposition is not wholly unknown to the *Puranas* which quite often depict their favourite gods as assuming the attributes of some other god held in higher esteem previously. For example, many *Puranas* centring round Vishnu attribute to Vishnu not only his customary power of preserving creation but also appropriate to him the power of creation, generally ascribed to Brahma. However that may be, Coleridge was so enamoured of the pose of Vishnu that he used it in several of his writings. He put this very image of Vishnu into the mouth of the 'Moorish Woman'

Alhadra in his play *Osorio*:

> O would to Alla;
> The Raven and the Seamew were appointed
> To bring me food -- or rather that my Soul
> Could drink in life from the universal air.
> It were a lot divine in some small skiff
> Along some Ocean's boundless solitude
> To float for ever with a careless course
> And think myself the only Being alive.
>
> (Act V, Sc.I,11.49-56)

Again in another projected drama of his called *The Triumph Of Loyalty* we come across the following poetic utterance:

> Oh there is Joy above the name of Pleasure,
> Deep self-possession, an intense repose.
> No other than as Eastern sages feign,
> The God, who floats upon a Lotos Leaf,
> Dreams for a thousand ages; then awaking,
> Creates a world, and smiling at the bubble,
> Relapses into bliss....
>
> (Act I, Secene I, 11.311-318)

Very interestingly, in his *Biographia Literaria*, Volume I, chapter VIII, Coleridge evinces his knowledge of the Indian Pauranic myth regarding the position of the earth according to which at the lowest point there is huge tortoise which supports a big boar which in its turn supports eight elephants, helping the serpent *Sheshnaga* on whose hoods rests our earth. Coleridge observes:

> It would be easy to explain a thought from the image on the retina, and that, from the geometry of light, if this very light did not present the very same difficulty. We might as rationally chant the Brahmin creed of the trotoise that supported the bear that supported the elephant that supported the world, to the tune of 'This is the house that Jack built.'

Now we come to the younger romantics who had a great love for India and all that she symbolizes. P. B. Shelley was well-read in Indian philosophy, religion and mythology. His sources for this vast knowledge were the works of Sir William Jones, Lady Owenson's novel, dealing with India entitled *The Missionary*, Southey's *Curse of Kehama*, Elphinstone's *History of India*, James Mill's *History of India*, Sir James Lawrençe's novel *The Empire of the Nairs: An Utopian Romance* and, of course, Edward Moore's *Hindu Pantheon*. The Indian god of love called Kamadeva and the goddess of wealth called Luxmi occur in Shelley's letters to his close correspondent, Elizabeth Hitchner, and to his friend James Hogg. Dissuading the latter from forming an attachment to his (Shelley's) sister--Elizabeth—Shelley speaks in terms of sacrificing at the altar and of becoming an unreflecting votary at the shrine of "the Indian Camdeo, the god of mystic love."

In the seventh section of his philosophical poem *Queen Mab*, Shelley mentions two gods of Indian mythology--Shiva and Buddha:

The name of God
Has fenced about all crime with holiness,
Himself the creature of his worshippers,
Whose names and attributes and passions change,
Sheeva, Buddh,Foh, Jehovah, God or Lord,
Even with the human dupes who build his shrines,
Still serving o'er the war-polluted world
For desolation's watch-word; whither hosts
Stain his death-blushing chariot-wheels, as on
Triumphantly they roll, while Brahmins raise
A sacred hymn to mingle with the groans.
(11.27-37)

In the last four lines of the above quotation, there is also clear allusion to the Hindu festival of *Ratha-Yatra* dedicated to *Jagannath* or Lord of the Universe in which many enthusiastic pilgrims kill themselves by coming under the moving wheels of the Lord's chariot. I am sure Shelley was fully acquainted with the myths connected with Krishna, Balabhadra and Subhadra, whose images are taken out in a chariot during the ceremony called *Ratha-Yatra*.

For Shelley's profound interest in India, its religion and philosophy, I call the attention of my readers to an excellent article entitled "Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*: Why the Indian Caucasus?" by Joseph Raben in *Keats-Shelley Journal* (Vol.X11, Winter 1963, pp.95-106). The fully documented and profusely detailed article of Raben would convince the reader of Shelley's deep interest in India. And the poet's note to the passage from *Hellas* should strengthen the thesis of John Drew that the Demogorgon of the *Prometheus Unbound* is actually Neilanaga or Sheshnaga of Indian mythology.[23] In the opening lines of the play, Prometheus characterizes Jupiter as "Monarch of Gods and Daemons, and all Spirits/But One" and if this "One" is Demogorgon, then he must be one of the "many unsubdued" gods mentioned in the *Hellas* and since the features of Demogorgon agree with those of Sheshanaga, I feel inclined to accept the thesis of John Drew regarding Demogorgon. If that is the case,then Shelley has used the myth of Adi-Shesha in his *magnum opus* under the garb of Demogorgon.

John Keats was not far behind. Quite like Shelley, he evinces a keen appreciation of Indian philosophy and religion. In his long letter to George and Georgiana Keats, written between February 14 to May 3, 1819, he seems to be alluding to the vedantic conception of *Moksha* or Mukti (i.e., Liberation) when he says:

> As various as the Lives of Men are -- so various become their souls, and thus does God make individual beings, Souls, Identical Souls of the sparks of his own essence -- This appears to me a faint sketch of a system of salvation which does not affront our reason and humanity -- I am convinced that many difficulties which Christians labour under would vanish before it.[8]

Clearly, Keats pays a very rich tribute to Indian system of philosophy which, he asserts, can remove many of the difficulties in the way of the Christian system as Keats understands it. He uses in the above passage two vedantic concepts. First is the concept of *Jivatman* and its plurality so long as it is bound to the earth and the second is the essential unity of the individual soul with the Godhead--*Parabrahm Paramatman* or the Universal Soul after it receives enlightenment and gets submerged with the latter after a long suffering in various births that it undergoes for its purification that brings about its merger with *Para-Brahma.*

Later in the letter, alluded to, Keats mentions one member of the Hindu Pantheon -- the greatest of the gods -- Vishnu or Narayana. Paying a rich tribute to the religious system of the East, he observes:

> It is pretty generally suspected that the Christian scheme has been copied (sic.) from the ancient persian (sic.) and greek (sic.) Philosophers. Why may they not have made this simple thing even more simple for common apprehension by introducing Mediators and Personages in the same manner as in the hethen(sic.) mythology abstractions are personified -- Seriously I think it probable that this System of Soul - making may have been the Parent of all the more palpable and personal Schemes of Redemption, among the Zoroastrians, the Christians and the Hindoos. For as one part of the human species must have their carved Jupiter; so another part must have the palpable and named their Vishnu.[9]

It becomes evident from a perusal of the above quotation that Keats was familiar with the Hindu concept of *Avatar* or Incarnation according to which the Godhead assumes a bodily form from age to age and from country to country, for the protection of the righteous and the destruction of the vicious. So far as the use of Indian mythology in his poetry is concerned, there is a very beautiful use of one member of the Indian trinity, namely, Brahma, the Creator, in the description of the world-conquest of Bacchus in the fourth book of *Endymion*. Giving an account of how the gods of different countries meekly submitted before Bacchus, the Indian maid sings:

> I saw Osirian Egypt kneel down
>   Before the vine-wreath crown
> I saw parched Abyssinia rouse and sing
>   To the silver cymbals' ring
> I saw the whelming vintage hotly pierce
>   Old Tartary the fierce
> The kings of Ind their jewel-sceptres vail
> And from their treasures scatter pearled hail.
> Great Brahma from his mystic heaven groans
>   And all his priesthood moans;
> Before young Bacchus' eye-wink turning pale--
> (11.257-267)

Keats knows full well that each member of the Hindu trinity has a heaven allotted to himself. Vishnu dwells, for example, in the heaven called "Baikuntha" and Mahesh or Shiva lives in "Shivaloka," usually located in the mountain Kailasha. Brahma, likewise, resides in "Brahmaloka" which Keats calls "mystic heaven".

However, of all the romantic poets to Robert Southey goes the credit of having used Indian mythology on a very grand scale in his epic *The Curse of Kehama* (1810). Southey was interested in the mythologies of different countries and religions. He wrote a a long narrative poem on the mythology of the Mohamedans and entitled it *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801 ff.,2 vols.). Similarly, using the machinery of the Celtic mythology, he produced *Madoc* (1805). The Gothic mythology was fully exploited in *Roderick, the Last of the Goths* (1814). How could a poet of his wide interest leave the greatest and oldest of mythologies, viz. the mythology of the Hindus, unutilized in his poetry? No wonder that he wrote a virtual epic, employing in it the entire supernatural machinery of the *Puranas*, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. Southey seems to have mastered the entire mass of Sanskrit scriptures and imaginative literature that was being made available to the English people in their own language through the efforts of the orientalists like Wilkins, Jones, Maurice, Colebrooke, Wilson Kindersley and Moore. The mere number of the works cited in the notes to *The Curse of Kehama* is staggering. I would like to call the poem along with its lengthy notes nothing short of an encyclopaedia of Indian mythology, philosophy and religion. Practically every significant myth of the Hindus has been incorporated in Southey's "Notes" to *The Curse of Kehama*. The "Original Preface" to the poem introduces all the major gods of the Hindus: Brama (Brahma), Veeshnoo (Vishnu), Seeva (Shiva), Indra, Yamen (Yama), Pollear or Ganesa (Ganesha), Casyapa (Kashyapa), the father of the Immortals and others. The entire supernatural machinery of the *Puranas* will be found in the body of the text as well as in the "Notes"; Grindouver or Glendoveers (Gandharvas), Cinnaras, Apsaras, Asoors (Asuras), Swarga, Padalon (Patala-loka), Hemkoot, Merroo (Sumeru), Mandar, Anaant (Ananta), Vasuki, Airavat and Ucchihashravas, Maya, Kama, etc. The "Notes" to the poem provide all the famous episodes of the mythical past of India as narrated in the ancient Sanskrit texts.

The argument of this paper leaves one in no doubt whatsoever regarding the place of Hindu mythology in English poetry of the Romantic era. Thus in any discussion of "Mythology and English Romantic Literature," reference must needs be made to the mythology of the Hindus because it forms a very significant part of that literature; such a discussion should not be confined to Classical, Biblical, Egyptian and Norse mythology only as is the case with the discussion of the subject in the otherwise excellent book of Professor Douglas Bush. Indian mythology should be treated as what Frye calls "Contrapuntal symbolism, that is, the use of un-Christian mythology, usually classical, to supplement and round out a Christian poem."[10]

NOTES AND REFERENCES

[1] Abbe J.A. Dubois, *Hindu Manners, Customs and, Ceremonies*, p. 399.

[2] Robert Sencourt, *India in English Literature* (London, 1923), p. 303.

[3] Eric J. Sharpe, *The Universal Gita* (Duckworth, London, 1985). The second chapter of the book entitled "Romantics and Transcendentalists" (pp. 15-31) does not mention Blake, Wordsworth or even Coleridge; it concentrates mainly on the German romantics. However, a passing reference has been made to Robert Southey and to his *Curse of Kehama* (p. 17).

[4] John Drew, *India and the Romantic Imagination* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1987).

[5] Vide The *Philosophical Lectures of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by Kathleen Coburn (London, The Pilot Press Limt., 1949), Lecture III delivered on January 4, 1819, in the middle of which, Coleridge cites a long passage from *The Bhagwat-Geeta, Or Dialogues of Kreeshna and Arjoon* trans. by Charles Wilkins, from the work's pp. 91-93, forming part of *Gita* chapter X. See Coburn, pp. 127-129.

[6] British Library copy of Abbe J.A. Dubois, *Description of the Character, Manners and Customs of the People of India*, trans. (unnamed), London, 1817, pp. 323-4. In the marginalia to the book, Coleridge not only compares the *Advait* to the Eleatic school but actually writes of Spinoza as 'the sternest and most consistent of Adwitamists (i.e., Advaitins).

[7] *Biographia Literaria*, ed. by George Watson (Dent: London and Melbourne, Everyman's Library, 1975 edition), p. 77, see the lines at the close of the page.

[8] Vide Maurice Buxton Forman, The Letters of John Keats (first edition, 2 vols. 1931, fourth edition, one volume (Oxford University Press, 1952), Letter no. 123, p. 335.

[9] Ibid, p. 336.

[10] Northrop Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*, p.110.

DEVOTION TO A STATUE: THE MAUD GONNE POEMS OF YEATS

A. Raghu

Richard B. Young neatly describes the relationship between lovers in Petrarchan poetry thus:

> All Petrarchan poetry seems to share a fixed relation of lover to lady: the lady is always unobtainable--at least unobtained--the lover hopeless, or at least hapless; it is a parmanent impasse.[1]

Yeats and Maud Gonne make an excellent real life pair of Patrarchan lovers. He fell madly in love with her; to say that she did not fall in love with him at all would be untrue. He desired to marry her; she refused to marry him. He proposed to her a thousand times and a thousand times she rejected him.

For unbelievably long decades Yeats loved Maud Gonne passionately and devotedly, spent as much time as he could with her, did almost everything in his power to please her, immortalized her in his verse. Yet all was in vain. This passion, which was as foolish as it was stubborn, did exact a heavy personal price from him. But out of the suffering of the man was born the achievement of the poet; by failing in life he succeeded in literature; by being rejected as lover he gained acceptance as a great poet. After discussing the Maud Gonne poems, this paper attempts to show that there are striking similarities between them and the sonnets of Shakespeare.

II

It was on 30 January 1889 that Yeats, then a young man of twenty-three, first met Maud Gonne. Though Maud Gonne was to forget it, for Yeats it was a memorable meeting and he was to later recall:

> Her complexion was luminous, like that of apple-blossom through which the light falls, and I remember her standing that first day by a great heap of such blossoms in the window.[2]

Joseph Hone remarks, "the trouble of his life had begun."[3] But it is equally true that the meeting set in motion a relationship which, lasting Yeats's entire lifetime, was the single most powerful source of inspiration in his poetic career. As A.G. Stock says:

> Love concentrated all his emotions on a single image, it made him adept

> in the use of symbolism to weave together the diverse strands of his mind; above all, the long discipline of love balked fitted him to accept loneliness as his destiny.[4]

One would naturally expect a firm note of hope in the early love poems of Yeats, written with Maud Gonne in mind. But instead of hope there is an atmosphere of sadness, even of defeat, in them. On one level the rose in *The Rose* (1893) symbolises Maud Gonne and it is significant that the rose in "To the Rose upon the Rood of Time," the first poem in the collection, is not merely a red rose and a proud rose but a sad rose as well. There is a poem on "The Pity of Love" and another on "The Sorrow of Love." "When You Are Old," addressed to Maud Gonne, is projected into the future when she is no longer young and beautiful but old and grey and full of sleep, her love life far behind her. She has had many lovers, among them, one, obviously the speaker, who loved her for both her spiritual grandeur and her physical beauty. At the close of the poem Maud Gonne is advised, "Murmur, a little sadly, how Love fled/And paced upon the mountains overhead/And hid his face amid a crowd of stars" (*The Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats*; London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1969, p. 46). While in "The White Birds" the speaker voices the desire to transform himself and his beloved into white birds on the foam of the sea, in "A Dream of Death" he dreams that she has died in a strange place.

The ambience in the Maud Gonne poems in *The Wind Among the Reeds* (1899) is even more defeatist than in *The Rose*. What was earlier love, devoted love perhaps, now becomes outright worship though Maud Gonne continues to deem constant love but want of wit. "My devotion might as well have been offered to an image in a milliner's window, or to a statue in a museum,"[5] Yeats was to confess later. "A Poet to His Beloved" is more a poem of worship than a poem of love: "I bring you with reverent hands/The books of my numberless dreams" (*CP*, 70). A similar observation can be made of "He Gives His Beloved Certain Rhymes":

> You need but lift a pearl-pale hand,
> And bind up your long hair and sigh;
> And all men's hearts must burn and beat;
> And candle-like foam on the dim sand,
> And stars climbing the dew-dropping sky,

Live but to light your passing feet.

(*CP*, 71)

"He Tells of the Perfect Beauty" says that poets labouring all their days are overthrown by a woman's gaze. The agony of desperate frustration becomes unbearable in "He Hears the Cry of the Sedge." Yet, it is typical of Yeats that he is able to think of Maud Gonne in a very protective manner as he does in the poem which follows immediately, "He Thinks of Those Who Have Spoken Evil of His Beloved."

Half close your eyelids, loosen your hair,
And dream about the great and their pride;
They have spoken against you everywhere,
But weigh this song with the great and their pride;
I made it out of a mouthful of air,
Their children's children shall say they have lied.

(*CP* 75)

If "A Poet to His Beloved" was a poem of worship, "He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven" is a poem of surrender:

Had I the heaven's embroidered cloths,
Enwrought with golden and silver light,
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths
Of night and light and the half-light,
I would spread the cloths under your feet:
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;
I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

(*CP*, 81)

Yeats himself remarked of this poem that it was the way to lose a woman. It is true that occasionally a positive note of hope is struck as in "The Song of Wandering Aengus," where the speaker declares that he will find out where she has gone and kiss her lips and take her hands, or in "The Cap and Bells" which forms a sort of diptych with "He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven." But it is significant that Yeats is able to strike that note only when he takes refuge in myth.

Maud Gonne married John MacBride in 1903, Paris being the venue of the wedding. The news reached Yeats in Dublin when he was about to deliver a lecture. He did not cancel the lecture but spoke like a somnambulist and was never able to recall afterwards what he had said. There is nothing of the proverbial fury of the rejected lover in "Old Memory" which opens thus:

O thought, fly to her when the end of day
Awakens an old memory, and say,
'Your strength, that is so lofty and fierce and kind,
It might call up a new age, calling to mind
The queens.'

(*CP*, 86)

It is remarkable that while reeling under the most shattering blow that a woman can deliver to a man who is her lover, Yeats has nothing to say against Maud Gonne. Instead, in "Never Give All the Heart," he ventures to advise others on the basis of his own bitter experience:

Never give all the heart, for love
Will hardly seem worth thinking of
To passionate women if it seem
Certain.

(*CP*, 87)

He had indeed paid a terrible personal price to learn the simple lesson that in love one should at all times give, but at no time give all: "He that made this knows all the cost, / For he gave all his heart and lost." Cathleen in "Red Hanrahan's Song about Ireland" stands for Maud Gonne. She is purer than a tall candle before the Holy Rood and "we have all bent low and low and kissed the quiet feet/ of Cathleen, the daughter of Houlihan" (*CP*, 90). Understandably, this was Maud Gonne's favourite poem by Yeats on herself. He returns to the theme of lost love in "O Do Not Love Too Long":

Sweetheart, do not love too long:
I loved long and long,
And grew to be out of fashion
Like an old song.

(*CP*, 93)

The poems in *The Green Helmet and Other Poems* (1910) and *Responsibilities* (1914) demonstrate exactly what was revealed by *In the Seven Woods*: no fundamental change has taken place in the attitude of Yeats towards Maud Gonne as a result of her marriage to MacBride. He had been her devoted lover; he continues to be her devoted lover. Naturally, she walks into poem after poem. In "A Woman Homer Sung," he expresses the hope that posterity would say of his poetry that it mirrored her body:

For she had fiery blood
When I was young,

> And trod so sweetly proud
> As 'twere upon a cloud,
> A woman Homer sung,
> That life and letters seem
> But an heroic dream.
>
> (*CP*, 100)

However, in "Words," he realizes the truth that immortalizing her beauty in his poetry is hardly a substitute for possessing her body in real life: "I might have thrown poor words away/And been content to live" (*CP*, 101). Strange though it may seem, in "No Second Troy" he springs to her defence. Indeed, she has played havoc with his life. But how can he blame her? What else could she have done, being what she is? Was there another Troy for her to burn? In "Reconciliation" he recalls the moment he received the news of her marriage, how his ears were deafened and how his eyes went blind. Her faith and vow are alluded to in "King and No King." She is the theme of "Peace" and the Abbey audience's hissing at her rouses his fury in "Against Unworthy Praise." Among the things that are spoken of in "All Things Can Tempt Me" as capable of tempting him from this craft of verse is a woman's face. She is mentioned in "The Grey Rock" as a woman none could please. Some woman's yellow hair has maddened every mother's son in "September 1913." In "A Memory of Youth,"

> Believing every word I said,
> I praised her body and her mind
> Till pride had made her eyes grow bright,
> And pleasure made her cheeks grow red,
> And vanity her footfall light.
>
> (*CP*, 138)

"Fallen Majesty" celebrates the street through which Maud Gonne has walked as "the very street/Whereon a thing once walked that seemed a burning cloud" (*CP*, 138). "The Cold Heaven" speaks of love crossed long ago.

In 1916 the Easter Rising broke out and MacBride was executed for participating in it. The relentless lover that he was, Yeats proposed yet once again to Maud Gonne and yet once again she proved to be a *la belle dame sans merci*. He then proposed to Maud Gonne's natural daughter Iseult Gonne, who too rejected him. Yeats married Georgie Hyde-Lees on 21 October 1917 and thus a long and frustrating chapter of his life appeared to have finally come to a close. One would expect Yeats to forget Maud Gonne now, once for all. But the parting, if at all there was one, seems to have been of the kind in Michael Drayton's famous English sonnet, "Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part," and he does not fail to return to Maud Gonne in the poems in *The Wild Swans at Coole* (1919), *Michael Robartes and the Dancer* (1921), *The Tower (1928), The Winding Stair and Other Poems (1933), A Full Moon in March* (1935) and *Last Poems* (1936-39). In "To a Young Girl," addressed to her daughter, Maud Gonne is referred to as the one who broke his heart. She is the theme of "Her Praise" where Yeats admits that even after all that has happened, she is the foremost of those that he would hear praised. If the poem proves anything, it is that Yeats is as much in love with her as before. She is the phoenix in "The People" and "His Phoenix." "A Thought from Propertius" which mentions her great shapely knees testifies to the continuity of the existence of the physical dimension in Yeats's love for Maud Gonne. In "Broken Dreams" comes the realization that she is no longer as young and as beautiful as she had been. There is grey in her hair and young men no longer suddenly catch their breath when Maud Gonne is passing. Yet she is " 'that lady/That poet stubborn with his passion sang us/When age might well have chilled his blood' " (*CP*, 173). A poem inspired by the birth of his daughter Anne Butler Yeats on 26 February 1919 does not appear to him to be incongruous a context for remembering a love lost years ago and she is recalled in "A Prayer for My Daughter" as the loveliest woman born out of the mouth of Plenty's horn. He is unable to forget her even when as a sixty year old Senator of the Irish Free State he visits St. Otteran's School, Waterford, in "Among School Children." The third stanza of the poem goes:

> And thinking of that fit of grief or rage
> I look upon one child or t' other there
> And wonder if she stood so at that age--
> For even daughters of the swan can share
> Something of every paddler's heritage--
> And had that colour upon cheek or hair,

> And thereupon my heart is driven wild:
> She stands before me a living child.
>
> (*CP*, 24[illegible]

It is pointed out, in "A Dialogue of Self and Soul," that the most fecund ditch of all is the folly of wooing a proud woman not kindred of one's soul. Maud Gonne is spoken about in "Quarrel in Old Age" and in "Two Songs Rewritten for the Tune's Sake" comes the pathetic admission that he is little more than

> a rhymer
> Without a thing in his head
> But rhymes for a beautiful lady,
> He rhyming alone in his bed.
>
> (*CP*, 326)

though he hates it and would be anything but he is. He remembers her in "Beautiful Lofty Things" at Howth Station, waiting for a train, like Pallas Athene in that straight back and arrogant head. Inspired by Lawrence Campbell's bronze painted plaster bust of Maud Gonne, "A Bronze Head" is Yeats's last full-length poem on her. It contrasts her forms, present and past: she had been no dark tomb-haunter once. But even then, when all sleek and new, he had seen the wildness in her and had wandered murmuring everywhere, "My child, my child!" She is alluded to in "Why Should Not Old Men be Mad?" and "The Circus Animals Desertion." "Politics" concludes with the pathetic cry, "But O that I were young again/And held her in my arms!" (*CP*, 393)

Maud Gonne visited Yeats for the last time at Riversdale, late in the summer of 1938. He died on 28 January 1939. It can never be known for certain what his last thoughts were, but it is highly probable that they were of Maud Gonne. As early as 1915 he had written in "A Deep-Sworn Vow,"

> Yet always when I look death in the face,
> When I clamber to the heights of sleep,
> Or when I grow excited with wine,
> Suddenly I meet your face.
>
> (*CP*, 174)

Discussing "The Wild Swans at Coole," written in 1916, Norman Jeffares speaks of "the death of his (Yeats's) love for Maud Gonne,"[6] but one is unable to accept the occurrence of such a death if one is to believe the tale and not the artist. Going by the poems, it appears that Yeats's attitude towards Maud Gonne remained, at least on a fundamental level, static throughout. He fell madly in love with her at his first meeting with her, but even then it appears to have been a case of hopeless love. The affair came to an end when Yeats died as an old man of seventy-three, still passionately, still hopelessly in love with Maud Gonne. Her attitude to him appears to have been more complex and also more fascinating. When Yeats proposed to her in 1891, she rejected him. But she also held his hand in silence. After that he proposed to her at every possible opportunity and he was rebuffed with equal relentlessness. She was definitely less kind to the poet than to Lucien Millevoye, the French politician who became the father of her two children. If she did not love Yeats, why did she not firmly discourage his devotion? If she really did love him, why did she so consistently refuse to marry him? If she was not of the marrying kind as she often claimed, why did she marry MacBride? What made her refuse to accept the poet as her husband even after MacBride's death? Perhaps these are questions which can never be answered satisfactorily.

III

Does the imagination dwell the most
Upon a woman won or woman lost?
(*CP*, 222)

The life of Yeats provides a resounding answer to this famous question in "The Tower." Had Maud Gonne consented to marry him, in all probability, his passion for her would have worn itself out in due course, their relationship would have lost its dynamism and his poetry might have grown stale. In fact, Maud Gonne is reported to have told the poet that the world would thank her for rejecting him. Similarly, the Dark Lady of the sonnets would have proved a very unsatisfactory wife to William Shakespeare. He would probably have found her tantrums impossible to put up with. Her nymphomaniac interest in other men would perhaps have driven him mad. Exciting mistresses seldom make excellent wives.

There are scholars who believe that far from being Shakespeare's mistress in real life, the Dark Lady was a daughter of his imagination. Edgar I. Fripp remarks,

> It amused Shakespeare, under circumstances we can only conjecture, to weave his strange, sometimes gross fancies, as it has pleased the sentimentalists to manufacture out of them, the 'Dark Lady' fable. There is no history in one or the other.[7]

On the other hand, in *Shakespeare*, Walter Raleigh argues that Edward Dowden is right when he says that Shakespeare's Sonnets express his own feelings in his own person.[8] The Dark Lady is too powerfully drawn a character to be a rabbit pulled out of the hat of a poet's imagination, even when the poet is Shakespeare. The Elizabethans saw the sonnet form as fit vehicle for personal feeling not fantasy. Besides, Raleigh feels that there is external evidence to support the theory that the sonnets are thematically rooted in the personal life of the poet. If the Dark Lady was no mere figment of Shakespeare's imagination, who is she? According to Frank Harris, she is Mary Fitton, the Queen's maid of honour, least worried about losing her honour. G.B. Harrison champions the candidature of the notorious London prostitute, Lucy Morgan. A.L. Rowse thinks that she is Emilia Lanier, the Lord Chamberlain's mistress of Venitian Jewish extraction with music in her blood. A poem is not a report. There is no photograph of the Dark Lady hidden behind the lines of the sonnets, much less are they a blow by blow account of the tempestuous love affair between her and their author. Yeats has said,

> A poet writes always of his personal life, in his finest work out of its tragedy, whatever it be, remorse, lost love, or mere loneliness; he never speaks directly as to someone at the breakfast table, there is always a phatasmagoria.[9]

When as an old man Yeats made this observation, he had his own life and his own work in mind. But it appears to be a fairly accurate description of the relation between the life of Shakespeare and the Dark Lady sonnets.

There are strong parallels between the Dark Lady sonnets and the Maud Gonne poems. In the first place, both conclude on more or less the same note. As has already been observed, the speaker in the late Maud Gonne poems appears as infatuated as in the early poems. The penultimate sonnet goes thus:

> Cupid lay by his brand , and fell asleep:
> A maid of Dian's this advantage found,

> And his love-kindling fire did quickly steep
> In a cold valley-fountain of that ground;
> Which borrow'd from this holy fire of love
> A dateless lively heat, still to endure,
> And grew a seething bath, which yet men prove
> Against strange maladies a sovereign cure,
> But at my mistress' eye Love's brand new-fir'd,
> The boy for trial needs would touch my breast;
> I, sick, withal, the help of bath desir'd
> And thither hied, a sad distemper'd guest,
> But found no cure: the bath for my help lies
> Where Cupid got new fire,-- my mistress' eyes.[10]

Ian Wilson says of the Dark Lady that "she continues to haunt him (Shakespeare) like an unremitting malaria."[11] The statement would be even more true of Maud Gonne and Yeats. No other English poet has placed a lifetime of poetry at the feet of one woman. Yeats's strange devotion to Maud Gonne withstood repeated rebuffs, her marriage to MacBride, her involvement in areas of activity not fully approved of by him, the passing of decades and the near total loss of her youthful beauty. Meanwhile, Yeats himself grew famous as a poet, married and had a son and a daughter. Yet the girls he meets as a sixty year old Senator of the Irish Free State on an official visit to a school remind him, in "Among School Children," of Maud Gonne. His heart is driven wild and she stands before him "a living child." The malaria he caught at twenty-three has definitely not been cured.

One of the things which make the Dark Lady sonnets stand out from among the sonnets of the age is the strong dose of realism which Shakespeare has injected into them. Far from glorifying the Dark Lady as a beautiful angel, the speaker debunks her as an ugly witch. Sonnet after sonnet makes it clear that there is hardly a shred of physical beauty in her. George Bernard Shaw once remarked that Maud Gonne was an outrageously beautiful woman and in this she offers a contrast to the Dark Lady. But love is a blind fool, beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder and both the speaker in the Dark Lady sonnets and the Maud Gonne poems look at their women through the eyes of an infatuated lover. Sonnet 147 concludes:

> For I have sworn thee fair, and thought thee bright,
> Who art as black as hell, as dark as night.
>
> (*CW*, 1061)

Thus goes the closure of "Fallen Majesty":

> A crowd
> Will gather, and not know it walks the very street
> Whereon a thing once walked that *seemed* a burning cloud. (emphasis added)
>
> (*CP*, 138)

The operative word in the last line of the poem is "seemed." The Speaker in Sonnet 147 frankly admits that he has attributed beauty and brightness to a woman who possesses neither for the simple reason that she is his lover. The speaker in "Fallen Majesty" is less open and more subtle. He does not say that his woman is a burning cloud. The crowd that gathers many years later will not know that Maud Gonne seemed a burning cloud to the speaker. The probable implication is that to the speaker she appears to be what she is definitely not. It is significant that Yeats refused to change the operative word "seemed" despite being advised to do so.

In Sonnet 141 the speaker admits that he notes a thousand errors in the Dark Lady. Hence it cannot be said that he loves her with his eyes. She is repulsive to all the five senses, to the speaker's sense of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. The oft- quoted Sonnet 130 dwells at length on the Dark Lady's lack of beauty:

> My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
> Coral is far more red than her lips' red:
> If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
> If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
>
> (*CW*, 1058)

The errors that the speaker in the Maud Gonne poems notes in his woman are intellectual rather than physical. There is a strong self-destructive streak in her character. She carefully chooses to marry the wrong man. Political hatred has corrupted her mind. She is determined to ruin her own happiness by devoting her life to the pursuit of crazy political goals. To quote from "A Prayer for My Daughter":

> While that great Queen, that rose out of the spray,
> Being fatherless could have her way
> Yet chose a bandy-legged smith for man.
> It's certain that fine women eat

A crazy salad with their meat
Whereby the Horn of Plenty is undone.
(*CP*, 211)

A few stanzas later, Yeats asks:

Have I not seen the loveliest woman born
Out of the mouth of Plenty's horn,
Because of her opinionated mind
Barter that horn and every good
By quiet natures understood
For an old bellows full of angry wind? (*CP*, 213)

There may be umpteen reasons for a woman to lose interest in her man after a spell of intense passion. But the man who breaks the first rule of love that one should at all times give but at no time give all can almost be certain of rejection. In Philip Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella 31*, the speaker asks the moon,

Then ev'n of fellowship, O Moone, tell me,
Is constant Love deem'd there but want of wit?
Are Beauties there as proud as here they be?
Do they above love to lov'd and yet
Those lovers scorne whom that Love doth possess?
Do they call Vertue there ungratefulnesse?[12]

The speakers in both the Dark Lady sonnets and the Maud Gonne poems are the captivated calves of their women and their infatuation tends to evoke their lovers' scorn. In Sonnet 142, the speaker calls his love a fever for that which nurses the disease. His reason has left him and the patient is past cure. In Sonnet 149 the speaker addresses the woman as "O cruel!" In Sonnet 140 the speaker advises the woman to be as wise as she is cruel. Sonnet 131 goes:

Thou art as tyrannous, so as thou art,
As those whose beauties proudly make them cruel;
For well thou know'st to my dear doting heart
Thou art the fairest and most precious jewel.
(*CW*, 1059)

Of the early Maud Gonne poem, "He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven," it has been said by the poet himself that there could not be a better way to lose a woman. The speaker in the poem wishes to spread the cloths of heaven under the feet of his beloved. But he is poor and has only his dreams. He has spread his dreams under her feet. She is requested to tread softly because she treads on his dreams. In "O Do not Love too Long," the speaker admits that he loved long and long. Hence he grew to be out of fashion like an old song. Thus ended an affair so passionate that through the years of their youth the lovers could not have known one's thought from that of the other. They were so much at one. But in a minute the woman changed.

Sonnet 143 contains the homely but powerful image of a woman running after a farmyard bird after setting down her child. The child does not reject his mother who has no attention to spare except for the escaping bird. On the other hand, the infant tries to chase the woman but is left far behind her. The closure of the poem could faithfully reflect the attitude of Yeats to Maud Gonne, when she went in chase of farmyard fowl:

> But if thou catch thy hope, turn back to me,
> And play the mother's part, kiss me, be kind:
> So will I pray that thou mayst have thy *Will*,
> If thou turn back, and my loud crying still.
> (*CW*, 1060)

NOTES

[1] Richard B. Young, "English Petrarke: A study of Sidney's Astrophel and Stella," *Three Studies in the Renaissance: Sidney, Jonson, Milton* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1958), p. 10.

[2] W.B. Yeats, *Autobiographies* (London: Macmillan, 1965), p. 123.

[3] Joseph Hone, *W.B. Yeats* (London: Macmillan, 1962), p. 67.

[4] A.G. Stock, *W.B. Yeats: His Poetry and Thought* (Cambridge: UP, 1961), p. 51.

[5] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p. 399.

[6] Jeffares, *Commentary*, p. 156.

[7] Edgar I. Fripp, *Shakespeare, Man and Artist*, Vol. 1 (London: Oxford UP, 1938), p. 262.

[8] Walter Raleigh, *Shakespeare* (Madras: Macmillan, 1982), p. 87.

[9] Qtd. by Harold Bloom, *Yeats* (New York: Oxford UP, 1970), p. 64.

[10] William Shakespeare, *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* (London: Spring Books, 1978), p. 1061. All further quotations from Shakespeare are from this edition. The citations are incorporated within the text of the paper giving the abbreviation "CW" followed by the relevant page number.

[11] Ian Wilson, *Shakespeare: The Evidence* (London: Headline, 1993), p. 152.

Philip Sidney, *The Poems of Philip Sidney*, ed. William A. Ringler Jr. Clarendon P, 1962), p. 180

THE MODERN LONG POEM

M.C. Saxena

The poetic impulse has always remained 'lyric' although practically all notable modern poets have attempted long poems. Walt Whitman, with his *Song of Myself*, remains a pioneer and trail-blazer in this field. Edward Proffitt calls this poem an "epic lyric."[1] The tradition of the long poem has flourished on both sides of the Atlantic: T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Ezra Pound's *Cantos*, Yeats' Irish Civil War sequences, Hart Crane's Voyages, Wallace Stevens' *Notes Towards a Supreme Fiction*, Charles Olson's *Maximus Poems*, John Berryman's *Paterson*, Basil Bunting's *Briggflatts*, Robert Lowell's *Life Studies*, Ramon Guthrie's *Maximum Security Ward*, Austin Clark's *Mnemosyne Lay in Dust*, John Wain's *Wildtracks*, John Ashbery's *Rivers And Mountains*, James Merrill's *Nights and Days*, Ted Hughes' *Crows* and many more.These are works of varied quality but all are serious efforts from their authors. These exemplify a compelling process on the part of the poet's psyche to express something at once lyric and at once imaginative and significant.

That a long poem is an anachronism had been stated by Edgar Allan Poe as far back as 1848 in his seminal essay, "The Poetic Principle": "I hold that a long poem does not exist. I maintain that the phrase 'a long poem' simply is a flat contradiction in terms."[2] Even earlier Poe had been thinking in terms of long poem. In the essay "The Philosophy of Composition" written two years earlier he said:

> What we term a long poem is, in fact, merely a succession of brief ones — that is to say, of brief poetical effects. It is needless to demonstrate that a poem is such,only in as much as it intensely excites, by elevating the soul; and all intense excitements are, through a psychic necessity, brief. For this reason, at least one half of the *Paradise Lost* is essentially prose -- a succession of poetical excitements interspersed, inevitably, through the extremeness of its length, of the vastly important artistic element, totality, or unity of effect.[3]

Within less than a decade, however, a fellow American of Poe, Walt Whitman, published the *Leaves of Grass*, which had as its counterpart, an indisputably long poem *Song of Myself* consisting of 1346 lines and divided into fifty-two sections.

Poe has not been the only critic to pronounce judgement against the long poem. As a poet Allen Tate was suspicious of the thing called 'long poem.' In 1926 Tate said that a long poem was a contradiction in terms. At that time Tate's friend Davidson was engaged on an ambitious long poem, *The Tall Men*, which in certain parts resembled Hart Crane's *The Bridge*. Allen Tate knew both the poems at almost every stage of their composition and he remarked to Davidson: "I am convinced that Milton himself could not write a *Paradise Lost* now. Minds are less important for literature than cultures; our minds are as good as they ever were, but our culture is dissolving."[4] Then in 1966, Denis Donaghue, writing about the long poem, opined: "The thing is a freak in nature, a contradiction in terms, a monster of disproportion, like the nurse's breast in Brobdingnag. In the nature of things, it cannot be poetry much of the time: when it is not, it is absurd, pretentious, provincial."[5]

Whatever the critics might say, the fact remains that the long poem is flourishing because it gives the poet an opportunity to express his most considered opinions on a wide variety of subjects in a fairly sustained manner. It provides the poet an opportunity to express himself more forcefully than in prose or in a short poem.

The mention of Milton's *Paradise Lost* by the opponents of the long poem brings us to the central question of the organic unity of a poem. Coleridge was the first major English critic who voiced his opinion on the organic structure of a work of art. Defending Shakespeare against the charge that he was a wild, untutored genius, Coleridge said that such a mistake arises when we confound

> ...mechanic regularity with organic form. The form is mechanic when on any given material we impress a pre-determined form not necessarily arising out of the properties of the material.... The organic form, on the other hand, is innate; it shapes as it develops itself from within, and the fullness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form. Such is the life, such the form.[6]

Organic form does not arise from metre, it arises in the mind of the poet where parts mutually support and explain each other. In the older epics like *The Aeneid* and the *Paradise Lost*, the narrative sequence provided the organic structure. In these epics the events are recounted in such a way that they attain cause and effect relationships. These poems, so to say, work within the sequential view of time in which 'A' always comes before 'B'. The long poem may start in the middle of the events but the causal chain is always there which binds the narrative in an organic whole. But modern poets do not take such a narrative pattern for their creations. There may be narratives within the poems, but the structure of the modern long poems is never determined along the narrative lines as seen in earlier epics. Temporal sequence and causalty are the notions which are anathema for the modern poets and they have abandoned these in favour of the 'interior' sequences. Just as mechanistic theory has given way to the probability theory, just as linearity of time has yielded place to synchronous time, in the same manner temporal sequence has been displaced by the 'interior' sequence. This 'interior' sequence may be defined as teleological view of experience in which common sense view of cause and effect does not matter at all.

The earlier epics were concerned with 'clock' time but Einstein's theory of relativity suggests that there is no such thing as absolute time. Time is relative. Bergson also suggested that there are two kinds of time: relative time in the mathematical sense and relative time in the human sense. Clock time, consequently, appears longer or shorter, according to the circumstances in which a person finds himself placed. In *As You Like It* Shakespeare speaks about "the lazy foot of Time " as well as of "the swift foot of Time." Rosalind is confident that "time travels in diverse paces with diverse persons." With some people it 'ambles', with some it 'trots', with some it 'gallops' while with some people it 'stands still.'[7]

Thus in the physical universe any given action or event occupies a measurable quantity of clock time but in the world of the mind time is not measurable -- it is relative to events. Some events or actions endure for a considerable time while other events have a very brief span. Naturally, experiments with the reproduction of thought patterns have necessitated experiments with time duration in the human rather than in the clock time. Quite a number of contemporary works cover extremely brief periods of time -- in some cases it is a matter of some hours -- instead of the years and decades commonly employed in classical works.It is so with fiction as with poetry.

This makes it fairly evident that the modern concept of time is not based on the theory of cause and effect as it did in the past. If a poet is to provide a living order to his ideas, it is necessary that he must employ a structuring method which is at variance with the old organic structure on which the older epics were structured. This structuring method in the words of Rosenthal and Gale is lyrical:

> The modern sequence ... is a grouping of mainly lyric poems and passages, rarely uniform in pattern, which tend to interact as an organic whole. It usually includes narrative and dramatic elements, and ratiocinative ones as well, but its structure is finally lyrical. Intimate fragments, self-analytical, open, emotionally volatile, the sequence meets the needs of modern sensibility even when the poet aspires to tragic or epic scope.[8]

The same conclusion is reached by Edward Proffitt. Commenting upon the solution arrived at by the modern poet, he said:

> The solution has been a lyric solution (as opposed...to a narrative solution): however different the long poems... all emerge out of the juxtaposition of short lyrics and/or fragmented scenes, images, meditations, descriptions, comments juxtaposed so as to produce wholes greater than the sum of their parts by association.[9]

The lyrical solution has brought about another result. In the older epics there was always a heroic or semi-divine figure through whose exploits the narratives were bound into a coherent whole. Now this heroic or semi-divine figure has disappeared to yield place to the poet himself who writes about himself, his aspirations, his exploits or his comprehensions. While the epic heroes marched through peril and struggle towards their quest,the journey of the modern hero-poet has been a journey through the states of the mind, from, so to say, chaos and darkness through struggle to enlightenment. Since the first priority of the poet remains the portrayal of his own psyche and experiences, this has resulted, many a time, in the lack of plot either traditional or associative. But it is the personality of the poet which provides whatever thin plot there is.These poets feel that the poetic personality behind a poem is a sufficient organising and unifying device. Hence, modern long poems do not possess that inevitability, that carefully articulated formal structure, which we come across in the traditional epics.In these poems there is an overflow of unrealized action. Jonathan Culler remarks:

> Ideally one should be able to account for everything in a poem and among comprehensive explanations we should prefer those which best succeed in relating items to one another rather than offer separate and unrelated explanations. And poems which succeed as fragments or as instances of incomplete totality depend for their success on the fact that our drive towards totality enables us to recognize their gaps and discontinuities and to give them a thematic value.[10]

Although, as the name suggests, the long poem should be 'long' yet length is not the sole criterion on which such a poem should be judged. For example, T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* does not come anywhere near to the *Paradise Lost* as far as length is concerned, yet in the "span of its implications, the assurance of an imperious vision"[11] it is nearer to Milton's grand epic. Then, the modern long poem does not have themes like Milton's -- "to justify the ways of God to men" -- but rather common man and his aspirations, desires, problems and frustrations. These poems are doctrinal to the age. Further, modern long poems are not written in the 'epic style' -- the style which we traditionally associate with older epics; it is a personal, familiar style in which the modern poet addresses his audience.

When we read a traditional epic there is a particular response in us. We comprehend it through our faith in the temporal causality and narrative. The poem is organized in such a manner that we can explore its meaning fairly easily. However, a modern long poem does away with such traditional trappings -- there is no temporal causality, there is hardly any narrative, and the organization of every part of the poem is different. When we read a poem (or for that matter any literary piece) we bring to bear upon it certain expectations and predispositions. Reading is not an activity undertaken in vacuum. Jonathan Culler says: "To read a text as literature is not to make one's mind a *tabula rasa* and approach it without preoccupations; one must bring to it an implicit understanding of the operations of literary discourse which tells one what to look for."[12] So there has to be some method by which we could discover the structure of a modern long poem. We cannot read a long poem in the way we read a lyric. The density of ideas and language which we come across in a short poem would be intolerable for us if this density is maintained by the poet for, say, three or four hundred lines. Herein lies the veracity of the argument of Edgar Allan Poe. Still we must be able to determine whether a poem is well-structured or not, whether the poem possesses any organic unity or not. If the long poem remains merely a succession of brief lyrics, it has not served its purpose. While reading a long poem, we must feel the harmonious totality of the whole. The concept of totality is central because it is only in these terms that we can define the action of a long poem.

To comprehend the total meaning and action of a long poem, the gaps become very significant. Density for too long may come in the way of proper understanding and become intolerable. So the poet has to bring variety in the long poem. But too much variety may lead towards incoherence. The poet has to do some tight-rope walking to avoid the twin pitfalls of intolerableness and incoherence. Hence a long poem must have unity with variety, coherence with diversity. Most modern long poems come true to this criterion. The long poems remain the central fact of poetic composition today.

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THE CONCEPT OF THE POETIC NOVEL

Kuhu Sharma

The novel, as Anthony Burgess rightly asserts, is a Protean art-form[1] which is a mixed genre, having its origin in different forms of literature. No wonder it has several elements of poetry, and this accounts for the emergence of the kind of fiction labelled the "poetic novel." The term "poetic novel" is used not for a tale told in poetry or for a verse novel, but for a prose narrative conceived poetically, having some of the basic ingredients of poetry. Though it is not in the form of prose-poetry or consistently rhythmic prose, yet it possesses the very essence of poetry, the very soul of it, despite its apparently conventional novel-form. It is no longer anything strikingly new like "the comic epic poem in prose" of Henry Fielding in the eighteenth century. Used sparingly in the first half of the present century notwithstanding Virginia Woolf's authentic and convincing cogitations upon its nature and spirit and E.M. Forster's spontaneous support and elucidation of it, in the fifties it assumed definite, well-accepted dimensions with the publication of Leon Edel's famous book, *The Psychological Novel,* which contains a brilliant chapter entitled "The Novel as Poem," and Walter Allen's monumental study, *The English Novel,* which has numerous statements about the nature of the poetic novel. Around the middle of the century F.R. Leavis in *The Great Tradition* and *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist* also made some pregnant observations regarding it, particularly in his discussion of Henry James and D.H. Lawrence; he called Henry James a "poet-novelist,"[2] Lawrence a "lyric novelist,"[3] and *The Rainbow* a "dramatic poem."[4]

In fact, the novel is a work of art in the same way as a poem, a musical composition, or a painting is, for the same eternal beauty permeates it. As a form of art, it aims at satisfying our aesthetic sense. The poetic novel is perhaps the highest manifestation of this art. Since it contains the very essence of poetry, it is necessary to understand clearly the essential spirit of poetry in order to comprehend this type of the novel. In fact, the essence of poetry is neither its versification nor its music but its power to express the truth of life feelingly and beautifully. Form, metre and rhyme are not the real determinants of poetry, for they are just "the outer shell of the house; the important, the significant thing, is the spirit dwelling within"[5] Speaking of this spirit of poetry, "the essential poetic quality," De Selincourt aptly affirms that "we must seek it not in alliance with music, nor in alliance with prayer, but in the perfect rightness of its language to convey a passionately felt experience."[6] True, the captivating, unforgettable poetry of a true poet is not intended to lull the reader to sleep but to enkindle his entire being so as to enable him to look into the "truth of things,"[7] as Shelley avers. This is the reason why works in prose like the English Bible, the Psalms and the Lament of Job have, even in their austere simplicity, all the passionate grandeur and emotional intensity of great poetry. On the contrary, a poetical work like Wordsworth's *Excursion* is only prose put into metrical form.

Every great novelist as an artist is a maker of a model of life as he perceives it. But when the qualities of a novelist's art derive their strength from the profundity of the seriousness of his interest in life, his works become poetic. Through a fusion of art and life, the novelist is able to convey his interpretation of life meaningfully. He seeks to grasp and reproduce the fluctuating and mysterious rhythm of life—its goodness, frailty, aspirations, joys, sufferings and tragedies. His persuasive mood makes the reader trust his observations and emotional responses. This he achieves by adopting some of the basic ingredients and technical devices of poetry. It is in this way that he casts the complexity of human life in an aesthetically meaningful shape, and absorbs the action completely and remoulds it as a pattern of imagery. Consequently, the action of the novel moves through a lyrical progression, from one image to another in conjunction with the narrative. *Little Dorrit, Shirley, Far From the Madding Crowd, The Rainbow*, and *To the Lighthouse* are poetic in this respect.

A poetic novel emulates a poem, which, in Shelley's words, "is the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth."[8] The intuitive poetic vision of a novelist helps us in understanding not only the reality of life that falls within the range of his experience, but also helps us in discovering new truths about ourselves. He lays bare before us the hidden beauty of the world in such a way as strange things look familiar. Thus, Hardy's view of life is implicit in every sentence of his novels; his characters reflect his vision of human existence. Similarly, Dickens's view of the world is conditioned by his vision of human beings. Charlotte Bronte, too, views life and its experience with a passionate intensity. And *Wuthering Heights* is a perfect delineation of Emily Bronte's apprehension of man and life. The same is true of D.H. Lawrence and his poetic fiction.

The poetic novel recognises the living relationship between art and life. It is this bond that the novelist explores and describes in his novels. To achieve this, he depends on the working of the imagination, the creative power of human mind. He possesses creative imagination in a supreme degree, and apprehends the human world in such a way as he creates out of it a new world, based on the real one. Therefore, highly imaginative scenes and situations endow a novel with poetic qualities. Sometimes the imaginative things become superior to the perceptions of senses. Thus the unseen flowers and their beautiful surroundings are seen not with the corporal eye, but with the imaginative one. The music unheard but imagined is more melodious than our sensual ear has the capability to hear. The writer of a poetic novel, therefore, expands and opens out; he goes into the strange, unknown world. The effect is similar to what we get after reading a book like *War and Peace*: "great chords begin to sound behind us."[9]

Like the Romantic poets, the writer of a poetic novel shows a remarkable interest in the individual. He keenly studies his introspectiveness, and explores the working of the conscious as well as the subconscious mind. To express the atmosphere of the individual's mind and the glowing light of the innermost flame, the novelist uses the medium of poetry. Through this mode he seeks to combine man and world in a strange inward form, a fusion of both the aspects of reality. Obviously, such a novel also becomes an illuminating exploration of different aspects of human situation.

In a poetic novel, the manner of narration is more important than its form. It is in this respect that the stream-of-consciousness technique becomes an easy narrative method of poetic fiction. Through the poetic use of this device, associations of the mind give rise to a design of images and motifs. Thoughts, feelings and impressions are turned into images by the novelist's poetic sensibility, and are depicted in the novel with the same vividness and immediacy as colours are thrown on a screen. This technique enables the reader to enter the inner life of a character straightaway to get a peep into his soul. Modern psychological novelists like James Joyce, Marcel Proust, Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Woolf use it in their works as a method of psychological exploration for lyrical purposes. In one of the most poetic novels in English, *The Waves* by Virginia Woolf, the soliloquies of various characters make one poetic design.

A novel's complex inner material can be rendered only by the use of evocative prose-poetry. The novelist produces poetry in prose as he pursues his dancing and flowing thoughts. His inner feelings become an impressionist painting. Thus, the artist, trying to paint his picture in prose, becomes one with the poet in him. His words convey what a painter expresses through colours or a musician through melodious sounds. Such words transmit the feeling which our inner self receives; they convey beauty which our inner eye perceives. This we see happening in the novels of Henry James, Virginia Woolf, and D.H. Lawrence, besides the Bronte sisters. Let us take one example from Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* where the novelist pushes more deeply into the minds and feelings of his characters:

> When they turned the corner of the path she stood still. In the wide walk between the pines, gazing rather frightened, she could distinguish nothing for some moments; the greying light robbed things of their colour. Then she saw her bush....
>
> It was very still. The tree was tall and straggling. It had thrown its briers over a hawthorn-bush, and its long streamers trailed thick right down to the grass, splashing the darkness everywhere with great split stars, pure white. In bosses of ivory and in large splashed stars the roses gleamed on the darkness of foliage and stems and grass. Paul and Miriam stood close together, silent, and watched. Point after point the steady roses shone out of them, seeming to kindle something in their souls. The dusk came like smoke around, and still did not put out the roses.[10]

The novelist here exploits the resources of the language and calls upon the devices of prosody to make the word fit the thought. His language creates a suggestive and evocative atmosphere. The mysterious charm of nature and the magic of physical attraction are brought together through a vocabulary pregnant with meaning. By bringing in the imagery of nature, the spiritual relationship of the kindred souls is stressed. The power of imagery acts through a peculiar medium of its own, and it intensifies the feeling as well as the situation. The images of roses that "gleamed on the darkness of foliage and stems and grass" and "shone out of them" and the dusk that "came like smoke around" emphasise the nature of the lovers' relationship.

As in a poem, so in a poetic novel, the writer exploits all the communicative aspects of language. He evokes poetry to enhance the force of his prose. He uses words with a fine sense of their rhythmical and musical potentialities. Most proper words are used in their proper places. Resources of language are remoulded in a creative manner for embodying the novelist's impressions of life. The suggestive power of words has a force to express a variety of moods and thoughts of the characters. Language-tones are well adapted to depict their behaviour. Sometimes suggested words have a sensory effect. The rhythm of the evocative language presents before us a whole landscape. Through its subtle and astonishing force the novel surges toward greater intensity. It stirs the senses rather than the mind. The novelist seeks to achieve a total merger of sound and sense. He creates not a walking but a dancing experience so as to apprehend intensely human emotions and life as a whole.

The poetic atmosphere in a novel is usually evoked by the use of symbol and metaphor. The words which are connotative, emotive and creative are used as symbols to give the suggestivity of poetry to the novel. They not only enhance the artistic significance of the novel, but also convey the ideas and feelings of the novelist fully well. Symbols also reveal the depth of the meaning of the writer by giving us a special insight into the things he portrays. They suggest varied states of emotions and feelings, and carry a rich aura of associations and memories. The novelist conveys through them the complex mental states and beliefs which cannot be expressed through ordinary prose or simple actions, and this enhances the importance of what is symbolised. Dickens's later novels are highly poetic because of his rich use of symbols. In novels like *Jane Eyre* of Charlotte Bronte and *Wuthering Heights* of Emily Bronte, the novelists use symbols to express themselves fully where words are not adequate to give vent to their feelings and impressions. Virginia Woolf uses symbols to suggest the inexpressible element of human psyche, and the same is true of Lawrence. Hardy's poetic power imparts symbolic value to his characters who are governed by their elemental emotions, while Meredith's characters symbolise ideas and passions.

In order to communicate the world of his imagination in prose narrative, the poet-novelist weaves a fabric of images. The splendour of imagery gives poetic intensity to his novels. Fresh and vivid images are used frequently to intensify, clarify and enrich the pictures of internal life. They suggest the novelist's grasp of the object or the situation with precision, vividness, force and economy. Quite often images are drawn from nature to symbolise emotions and states of mind of the characters. Atmosphere, landscape, seascape and skyscape are used to symbolise the moods and reactions of the characters. The poetic beauty of nature is closely related with their emotional life. This poetic use of correspondence between an external scene and the internal mind is often used by the poet-novelists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Thus the splendour of imagery and the melody of the language give poetic intensity to the novel. Like lyrical poetry, the poetic novel suggests the expression of feelings or themes in musical and pictorial patterns. The images evoked by poetic metaphors are vivid and startling. Sights and sounds are transformed into a poetic experience through the use of visual and auditory images. The poetic use of alliteration, assonance, cadence, personification, apostrophe, inversion, similes and metaphors contributes to the music of the novel. The sweet and majestic rhythm of the language moves with the thoughts and feelings of the characters. A novel that employs such techniques becomes a subtle poetic work.

To sum up, a novel, being poetic, does not mean that it is written in poetry or poetic prose having a certain rhyme scheme and rhythm. It is not the mere manipulation of words or highly imaginative and intensely emotional expression which makes a novel poetic, but it is the intensity of situation which imparts it the true poetic effect. This poetry of situation arises from the depiction of intense moments with the help of language rich in evocative power and suggestiveness. The characters, conceived and delineated poetically, are recognised by their distinctive emotional power. The extensive use of symbols, figures of speech and imagery enables prose fiction to achieve poetic heights. In addition, it is the novelist's creation of a certain atmosphere or the "persuasive mood," as Virginia Woolf asserts, which lends poetic quality to a novel. All these qualities can be traced in the novels of distinguished poet-novelists, such as Dickens, Emily Bronte, Hardy, Meredith, Virginia Woolf and D.H. Lawrence. For instance, there is remarkable poetry in the scene in Hardy's novel, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, where Captain Troy displays his sword-play round Bathsheba. The opening scene in Dickens's *Bleak House*, and the description of Miss Havisham's room in *Great Expectations* are just two of the many examples of this kind in English fiction.

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ESOTERIC EXPLORATIONS: A STUDY IN THE NEW HORIZONS OF ANITA DESAI WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO *JOURNEY TO ITHACA*

J.P. Tripathi

The possibilities of a powerful writer cannot be exhausted so long as he or she lives. The general trend noted in the case of the best writers of the past was that they developed towards a more serious and profound vision in their later days. This has been the case with Shakespeare, Hemingway, Hardy, Eliot and Yeats. Raja Rao has developed from a humanistic cum philosophical writer in *The Serpent and the Rope* to an overwhelmingly philosophical novelist in *The Chessmaster and His Moves.*[1] A perusal of the latest novel of Anita Desai, *Journey to Ithaca,*[2] proves her tremendous evolution from a humanistic to a spiritual writer. I had some kind of premonition of this type while I published my book on Anita Desai. Some words of its last paragraph are worth quoting: "Her dynamic search of change in theme and spectacle may tempt her to explore newer regions of human experience. If per chance, her artistic sensibility and resourcefulness were devoted to a spiritual, or still another ethical or rural region, her miracle work of art may be the result."[3] Though it cannot be conclusively said that her latest work is a miracle work, because she can always surpass herself, as have all the great writers of the past done, yet it can be said that this is her best novel uptodate.

The trend to undertake subtler, more intense expositions of the human psyche is notable in her latest work. *Clear Light of Day*[4] dwells on the keen and highly strung heart strings of Bimla Das, a college teacher, who sacrifices all personal ambitions and joys for family upkeep and survives on higher motives and acts. *In Custody*[5] indulges in the explorations of the artist-art-lover relationship, the esteem in which the artist is held by the art-lover and vice versa. Literary devices used are pathos, bathos and mild sarcasm. *Baumgartner's Bombay*[6] gives evidence of another pinnacle of her art in focusing on the mental and emotional states of an European Jewish migrant to India. The feelings of the migrant are presented as though through a supra-sensitive mental vision. This focusing on the states of human consciousness so faithfully and keenly has already hewn out a great place for the novelist in Indo-English fiction.

It is well-known that literary works are the reflections of the emotional, mental and spiritual states of their authors immediately before the work was written, or those preserved in the writers' subconscious for long durations of the past. Anita Desai's genius is in close proximity with deeply religious and spiritual states felt by men and women all over the world and more particularly in India. *Where Shall We Go This Summer* mentions the miracle cures of Sita's father who is a mini-Gandhi figure and very close to a saint:[7] "He looked very much a saint". *Fire on the Mountain*[8] presents Nanda Kaul's dream of a place "Where springs not fail" and 'where no storms come'; in fact, she waits for peace which fails her. Deeper experiences and spiritual states are mentioned in *Clear Light of Day*, particularly in Bimla Das's spiritual elevation in so far as she sacrifices common human joys for family upkeep. The words from *The Life of Aurangzeb*: "Strange that I came with nothing in the world, and now go away with this stupendous caravan of sins!" have brought about transformation in Bimla Das.[9] Similarly, there are significant references to the religious devotion of a lady who takes out holy processions very early in the morning chanting prayers to God with a reformist zeal in the novel *In Custody*.[10]

The above points are mentioned simply to draw attention to the religious and spiritual areas of Anita Desai's sensibility, which found only passing mention in earlier works. In the work under reference she has devoted herself heart and soul to the religious and the spiritual theme. In the treatment of this theme she has achieved an admirable balance of tradition and moderniy, fact and fiction, plot and character, style and symbolism and has created a monumental novel that rises above all earlier ones. And so now we devote ourselves to the evaluation of *Journey to Ithaca*".

It is a well-constructed novel of about three hundred pages with a few lines of poetry quoted by way of epigraph at the beginning from C.P. Cavafy's *Ithaca* translated by Roe Dalven and two lines from Milan Kundera's 'Immortality'. The main structure of the novel like a drama begins with a "Prologue" of thirty pages, giving an account of the childhood and background of Matteo, his higher interests, attraction for Sophie in the German Banker father's visit to Matteo's parents' house. It gives a brief account of Matteo and Sophie's walk after food, followed by their marriage and journey to East. Like in a Greek drama, the "Prologue" supplies introduction to the main action in so far as the early childhood and youth of the hero, Matteo, are described.

Then begins the main plot of struggle, pursuits, conflicts, tensions, misunderstandings, sufferings, grumblings and pleasant and unpleasant incidents in the life of Matteo who occupies the centre stage in the action. Sophie is only a subsidiary character, considered significant in so far as she is always devoted to Matteo. However, the struggles of Sophie occupy centre stage in the drama of the novel after its first half.

Matteo and Sophie struggle for peace, wisdom, truth and perfection all through the course of the action. Their struggles are divided into four well-balanced chapters, like acts of a drama and are followed by an "Epilogue". The "Prologue" and the "Epilogue" appended to the structure of the plot furnish a new feature in the plot pattern, bringing it close to old dramas. The "Prologue" and the "Epilogue" are not redundant, they are a vital part of the action. Why has the novelist used these devices? To me it appears that pursuit of spiritual perfection and bliss, thematically, is very old yale. And it was to be presented in the life of a modern European couple in a wholly modern context. These structural devices bring the novel close to classical dramas and the technique of chorus used in them. So these put the theme and plot in proper perspective.

The first part of the plot, chapter I, presents Matteo and Sophie's adventures in India in search of spiritual light. The attitudes of Sophie being realistic and corrosive present a counterpoint. Matteo is after divine love; Sophie is after getting Matteo's love. Many unpleasant skirmishes are the result. Matteo is determined to attain spirituality in all conditions, seeing divinity even where it is not. Sophie is rebellious, nagging and almost shattered till she gets pregnant. Her pregnancy brings about a turning point in her conduct and a relief to Matteo. Matteo moves from place to place in search of wisdom and in one ashram his living with wife is resented and he is advised to go North to the ashram of 'Mother' where families are allowed to live.

Act II of the drama, i.e. Chapter II takes Matteo and Sophie from Bihar to the Ashram in the North where "Mother" gives bliss to people by her words and spiritual experiences. But, Sophie the doubter does not reach, symbolically, the Ashram and is hospitalised under Dr. Bishop. Mother talks to Matteo and takes the disciples on a hill to a riverside and shows a yogi in 3'x3' cave. Matteo is taken in Mother's inner circle and given the work of writing letters. He is assigned kitchen duty and press work, printing of a book on the 'Master', tiresome to him in the beginning but his spiritual joy received from the Mother sustains him. After recovery Sophie comes to the ashram, they are allotted a cottage. Sophie persists in her view that Matteo is enslaved by a woman in India and goes home. She goes to Europe. All standards of the world revolt her. She is inquisitive about the past of the Mother. Even her father-in-law's and father's place give her no solace. She hurries back to Matteo in India.

Act III, i.e., Chapter III, is preceded by Lorca's poem on 'Death' as epigraph. It begins with Sophie's attempt to disillusion Matteo about 'Mother' who was only an Egyptian dancer in the beginning. The chapter runs for one hundred and ten pages and is significant as it presents the story of Laila, the daughter of Alma and Hamid, born in Alexandria in Egypt, a child with peculiar nature sent to Cairo for reading and then to Paris wherefrom she picks up a new course in life, becomes a dancer in 'Krishna' Lila dance and goes to Venice and from there to America. Discovering 'Krishna' the dancer's real professional and material motives, Laila breaks away and is brought to India; by Vijaya's family she is enabled to reach an ashram in the Himalayas and divinity dawns on her through the Master. She becomes 'Mother' from Laila and attains sainthood. The narrative device here is changed constantly; later events are described earlier and earlier ones are described later. A detective mystery and suspense surround the tale till the end of the chapter when Laila's story is connected with Mother's. Laila becomes Mother.

Chapter IV, running for about twenty-eight pages only, presents the last phase in the life of Mother or Laila by Sophie's tracing of the 'Krishna' and learning his remarks and finding a diary in which Laila describes her attainment of the Master in the Himalayas, preceded by her experience of ecstasy in the Himalayas and union with the Master in the temple. Henceforth Laila becomes Mother; Hagdah's foretelling in Ramadan in Cairo comes true: god and goddess unite by river in North and later go to East in an ashram where after Master's death, the Mother also dies.

"Epilogue" furnishes a conclusion to the story of Matteo and Sophie. Matteo has left India; he has become a monk, a fakir after Mother's death: Sophie has no purpose in life when Matteo is not found in the hospital, she too will begin her journey of quest. The instruction of the *Rig Ved* to Rohit to travel to attain truth becomes Sophie's instruction also. India, Indian life, Indian philosophy are eulogised and established in the novel.

The edifice of the above plot and story is built on the life of the central characters, Matteo and Sophie, parents of both, Laila and her parents, her movements and persons she contacts at different places and then men and women in the ashrams and finally the Master who brings ultimate enlightenment and redemption to Laila and makes her Mother. The theme of experience of bliss and ecstasy and Light and liberation are established through these characters. This new facet, new horizon in Anita Desai's mind and art, is peculiar in modern Indo-English fiction, most of which dwells on mundane human relationships. Raja Rao is a great exception and his latest work *The Chessmaster and His Moves* is more philosophy than novel whereas *Journey to Ithaca* is a novel and an artistic work in the true sense of the term.

The esoteric exploration for spiritual light is primarily represented by the struggles of Matteo who as a boy was silent, flighty and unusual. He is at home when alone; he fails as a player at school and does not like crowds. When he is taken off school, the tutor helps him become spiritually ambitious by lending him the book

The Journey to the East by Herman Hesse. He moves about searching God and calling "where are you?"[12] He prefers to eat bread only in loneliness. When he is married to Sophie, both leave for India "dressed in identical blue jeans and T-shirts and sports shoes" on foot with a copy of Herman Hesse's book. Thus they begin life as young explorers and at the close of the book are also explorers of truth.

Matteo acts according to inner instincts, "I have always waited for signs."[13] He will take the path of joy rather than pleasure.[14] Sophie is for worldly pleasure also and Matteo regards sex as a work of children.[15] Sophie has the typical European notion about India as full of superstition, poverty. When Sophie is angry, she requests to take her to Goa. He is adamant in his inner pursuits and Sophie comes to seek his help only when shattered. Matteo sups on spirituality and is full of delusions and visions. There is permanent tension between the two on Matteo's faith, and being a woman she has to surrender as she has no great strength to keep on fighting. She is reconciled to Matteo but not to the Mother whom she regards as a "monster spider who had spun this web to catch these silly flies."[16] The world outside the ashram is so violent and revolting that Sophie accepts Matteo's standards.[17] In company with shallow Paolo in Europe she regards Matteo as a god-- "He--he is a god."[18]

Sophie is sceptical and antagonistic to Matteo in so far as his inner explorations are concerned. She thinks Matteo is mistaken and she makes a determined bid to find out the history of the Mother. And the sceptical pursuit ends in turning Sophie into a devout convert. She follows in the footprints of Matteo and renounces worldly life for going on a pilgrimage like the Mother. She says, 'I'll have to', and adds, 'what else?'[19] Matteo himself has become a roving Jesus figure -- " 'Father has a beard', he remembers.'He looked like the painting of Jesus in church.' "[20]

The search for spiritual perfection in the novel results in a strange intertwining and interdependence of characters. At the end of the novel Matteo becames Sophie's idol. All along Mother is the idol of Matteo and similarly Master is the idol of Mother. And in turn Mother is the fully blossomed saintly form of the young Egyptian girl Laila.

A perusal of the character of Mother is necessitated to do justice to the explorations of the mystical phenomenon of divinity. From a common girl of strange nature she turns out to be a perfect saint figure. We get an outline of Mother in her own words: "I am the one the Master left here on earth to show you the way into His Divine Presence."[21] Born an Egyptian, she reminds one of the "Sphinx, and Cleopatra."[22] She is an enigma and a mystery and she has the bewitching powers of a Cleopatra. Laila is the daughter of Alma and Hamid, both teachers with University Degrees, but she is averse to all scholarship.[23] She has the nature of a gypsy, a foundling. The charm of going to Cairo and Paris alone makes her interested in studies. At Cairo she becomes a friend to Fatima, connected with freedom fighters and revolutionaries and is in danger of being expelled.[24] She is a girl with strange passions. She meets the hagdah in a hotel in Ramadan who predicts, "In the north, a city stands in water. There god and goddess meet."[25] Laila takes it for a foretelling about her life.

In Paris she refuses to eat meat to the chagrin of her uncle and aunt there.[26] She gives them a speech on the cruelty of all killing. Laila shares with all the heroines of Anita Desai the sense of revolt at the sight of caged animals.[27] In her Parisian explorations she discovers Lacan's Indological bookshop where she comes across Vedas and Upanishads and photograhs of Krishna Lila.[28] She discovers her spiritual impetuosities through these. She is enamoured of the Krishna Lila troupe and wants to join it as a dancer. Krishna Lila dance now occupies her soul in full. She feeds pigeons. First she feels she is an outsider in the troupe with the Indians. She falls in love with Krishna of the dancing troupe as though he were the real Krishna -- "Her skin tingled with the recognition of Krishna's love, with her awareness of it. He looked towards her continually."[29] Krishna is in love with her -- 'The bird is beautiful, as beautiful as you, rani.'[30]

She succeeds in making people spellbound by her dance as Radha or Parvati. Laila's dance as Radha or Parvati is an aid to her exploring the divine emotions felt by the divine figures like

Radha and Parvati.

Because she is deeply involved in Krishna, she dreams in Venice about his being overrun by a gondola and a stream of bright blood flowing through the lake.[31] It is a dream of premonition; Krishna the adored dancer is going to fall very low in the eyes of Laila although Krishna is very affectionate to her and in the gondola in the lake in Venice calls her, "My princess, my rani". Laila's real disenchantment with Krishna begins in America where the dancing troupe practically fails to catch up with the American spirit. Laila concludes that Krishna has only commercial and mercenary motive and cannot be her model of divine love. So she stops dancing and breaks off. Krishna follows her to New York. There is a peculiar tension and emotional tug of war between them. "Laila did give a sob then, Krishna did relent, and they embraced."[32] In his last phase of life when he is approached by Sophie for information about Laila, he bursts out in anger, malice and rage and comments on Laila's pursuits in India: "Here she began running after gurus. She said dancing was not for her, she wanted to live a spiritual life. What is dancing, I asked her, if not spiritual? But she was mad. The Mother. Oh, too good, too good...."[33] Sophie compares him to a "grinning gorgoyle". The final revelation about her character is found in the pages of her diary, quoted in the novel in the last twenty-one pages of Chapter IV. Her true mettle and significance are revealed here.

Now a word about Krishna before we discuss the central issue of the article. Krishna was a boy in 1910 and gave performances in Los Angeles and San Francisco when the exotic and mystical sound of Swami Vivekanand was still resounding in the ears of the Americans after he lectured in the Congress of Religions.[34] Then in the nineteen twenties he gave performances in Europe between the wars. "The nineteen twenties, that is when I toured Europe. Between the wars you understand."[35] When Sophie meets him he is toothless and foundering in old age. A little pathos and bathos are aroused when Laila discovers Krishna's true self of being only a dancer -- "Oh Laila, I know you wanted to dance with me and be the leading dancer. Why did you fall ill instead?"[36] In disgust Laila closes her eyes. Her real motive of dance was search of divinity in the dance and the dancer and this Krishna is unable to perceive. But the egotistical, coarse, worldly man in Krishna is revealed when Laila talks to him of search of "Eternal Truth" in India. "Then he turned into a madman, stamping about the room, laughing and mocking my words, then tearing his hairs and shouting at me."[37] Laila's search of a Master in Krishna ends in smoke.He is a false master. Laila has yet to continue her exploration for a true Master away from him.

The central issue in the novel is search for truth, ultimate reality, beauty, joy, ecstasy or whatever form truth has. The persons in pursuit are Sophie, in the last stage of her life, Matteo and Laila during the whole of their lives. The search is embodied in explorations of places and persons and books. The mine of truth, visions, spirituality, mystery, miracle, divinity is India. Everybody comes to this place. The central issue is placed among a number of other issues which are important to the plot of the novel; they overlap and converge and sometimes differ from the central issue.

We discuss them first. Sick Matteo does not need medicine or physical cure. Francis says, "Matteo doesn't need a doctor,he needs a guru."[38] Why? Because Matteo is all along in hot pursuit of divinity and truth. He has delusions and visions. A stone kept in the cleft of a tree to him becomes a 'circle' containing many circles- "they were infinite." "The stone glowed now, became brilliant in Matteo's eye, refulgent with what was, he felt certain,divine light."[39] Then he dances ecstatically before the funeral procession of a dead girl mistaking her for a goddess going to her wedding.[40] He is forcibly taken out of the way of the procession and locked in his room when he is regarded as an insect by Sophie. His other delusion is that he regards the sea in high tide as Ganga under eclipse and is brought out of it by a fisherman.[41] It is here that Francis diagnoses his real ailment as the want of a guru.

He thinks that his esoteric explorations are helped by the Mother. He says, 'what matters is--is the search. She takes me with her on her search.'[42] The Mother aims at transforming people and exhorts them to change themselves. The novelist enhances the central issue of the book by presenting the guru as the beehive of divinity and love: "You must know I mean honey made from spiritual nectar, nectar to nourish your soul. All organisations are useless... if they do not contain the nectar of the spirit. I want it to be rich, rich, rich with this nectar."[43] What a beautiful blend of idea and language: sublime theme presented in so simple but beautiful words, most of them almost monosyllabic, bare. Implications of the idea are infinite and the tone so serene and tranquil.

Multiculturalism is an important modern theme well-expressed in the novel. In her aunt's house in Paris rooms and windows are gaudily decorated. "Laila had not known before that windows were objects to be dressed as opulently and lavishly as rich women might be dressed."[44] This is a mark of European culture. Another crosscultural theme is in evidence in Krishnaji of the Krishna Lila troupe not ready to accept Laila as a student of dance if not offered by her parents according to Indian custom.[45] Another multicultural theme is in evidence in Krishnaji not accepting Jal Bhambani's offer of a dinner in New York. "However, Krishna turned down very firmly his invitation to dinner at a restaurant: none could be trusted in New York to offer them vegetarian fare untainted by meat."[46] The outlandish adventure of the exotic dancers is variously commented upon by Newspapers.

There is an ironical contrast between the classical and ascetic grandeur of the Krishna Lila dance offered by the Indians and cheap entertainment demanded by the American audiences. Mrs. du Best is unable to give Krishna in America the same help as was given by Signora Durante in Venice because the former's economy is shattered by prohibition.

Supporting the central issue is the quest theme." O where is my Lord whose calm face shines only with the pure light of truth?"[47] Laila yearns for spiritual perfection: "Am I to perish in the darkness? Why this punishment, Lord ?"[48] She has faith in a perfect Master, "Somewhere there must be one who can show me the luminous wisdom I know exists, the vision that I crave, the answer to my questions that will assuage my hunger and thirst with love and joy."[49]

The theme of spirituality is continuously established through the persistent spiritual passion of Matteo causing him delusions and visions. He kneels before a girl carrying a basket of eggs to Market and says "Don't you see? are you all blind? The divine manifests itself in everything, everybody."[50]

His esoteric experiences are inexplicable, often presented as unity between the physical and the spiritual. When Mother speaks nature seems to mix with her words and become still. His mysterious experience is hinted at expressionistically as "the opening up of petals and the revealing of a great luminous bloom which was what he experienced that evening."[51] Mother preaches that the esoteric presence of the divine should be allowed to enter one's existence thus leading to total transformation of one's existence.[52]

In the novel Anita Desai has led the readers to a wonderland of mystery where anything may happen. All the foreigners including Sophie, Matteo and Pierre are assembled in a large pink room where an elderly woman rubs her hand and a peculiar smell fills the room and everybody is greatly delighted and elated.[53] Sophie in her corrosive manner reduces it to a magic trick and Matteo regards it as miracle done by the elderly woman to enforce faith in divinity in the people. Another miracle that surprises Sophie is the dance of the peacocks near the samadhi of the Master where Mother is sitting in yogic posture of meditation watching the peacocks and the peahens dance to please the Mother.[54]

In the miracle land of spirituality presented in the novel visions are a common occurrence.It was already mentioned that Matteo saw a stone turning into a vison of the infinite.[55] The other vision Matteo sees is the Mother's fingers tapering into the "stars that show above."[56]

One of Laila's mystical experiences is rendered into words of peculiar significance. She has a craving for the sight of divinity and truth. At one of the stations she prays for it to a saintly figure meditating under a banyan tree and lo ! the experience does come—"the banyan tree bursts into light, and I saw light travelling, pouring through the veins in its leaves, its twigs and branches and the very trunk itself so that it was transformed into an earthly sun... I was on fire, the tree was on fire,light blazed and the whole sky was illuminated. I cried out and covered my face with my hand."[57] Having had this vision of Eternal Light, Laila is dragged by the fellow passengers into the train and she "wept openly."

At the Himalayas Laila has an experience of release, expansion and opening out of her soul -- "I began to dance in ecstasy, the ecstasy of knowing my time had come."[58] Laila in her ecstatic dance and vision has 'darshan' of her Master--

And all at once
The heavens burst into light and music
Of joyous celebration.
And the stars sang their jubilee
The Moon its blessing gave. [59]

Bathing in the water of love, Laila has an experience of emancipation- "The river flows and carries my past away and leaves me pure and joyous as the new-born fit to meet with the divine."[60] She is elated at the sight of the Master in the temple among basil pots. "He spoke of Divine Love and love filled my every limb with its nectar and I was Radha who beheld, at last, the true Krishna."[61] Laila's last resolution is: "Here I dwell now where I was always meant to dwell and where I resolve to live, never leaving His side, His true Devotee and Lover."[62]

The novel deals with this ware of divinity and mystical experiences, very peculiar in modern fiction though not so peculiar to Anita Desai because she touches upon similar themes in *Where Shall We Go This Summer* and other novels. But the focussing and concentration on esoteric explorations only is new in this novel. Most of the characters are convincing because they are trying to rise from the humanistic to the spiritual. The tensions and conflicts of emotions and skirmishes on the way give the novel a grip and popularity that will make it peculiar.

The plot is perfect with its division in several parts and chiselling of short scenes of action and dialogue in excellent language. Resources of prose are enlarged; when the idea is so esoteric that it cannot be expressed in prose, it bursts out in verse and some sublime verses are notable in the last part of the novel. The prose writer turns into a poet.

As the main theme is esoteric exploration of mystical experiences, the imagistic language of the earlier novels is relinquished in favour of a language as simple as in the Bible. Only rare symbols and images occur and they point to sublime themes. Narrative perspective is third person epic form consummating in—to documentary technique as that is the only form fit for expressing the personal experiences of Laila becoming 'Mother'. Her transformation from womanhood to sainthood is an unparalleled achievement of the novel. In my view, no modern novel has achieved the blend of humanity and spirituality to such sublimity as *Journey to Ithaca.*

Multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism, internationalism and universalism are phrases synonymous to one another and together they express the type of sensibility that Anita Desai possesses. There is no denigration of the European, American or Western cultural tradition in the novel but the mystical charm and delicacy of Indian tradition is brought out without any cheap note. Sainthood is a cosmic and universal phenomenon. It transcends caste and creed. Spiritual enlightenment comes from a perfect Master, irrespective of nationality, but mostly in the wonderland called India. Laila is a Muslim girl, born and brought up in Alexandria, educated in Paris and Venice, getting spiritual emancipation in India. Divinity, sainthood, godhood are a universal phenomenon. The form and texture of the novel is so modern and western and the theme, spiritual emancipation, is so ancient and oriental. The novelist achieves a peculiar balance of tradition and modernity, East and West, humanism and spiritualism, realism and mysticism in the novel. She deserves to be placed in the line of great Indian novelists like Narayan, Raja Rao and Kamala Markandaya.

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[12] Ibid., p. 27.
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[14] Ibid., p.32.
[15] Ibid., p. 40.
[16] Ibid., p.121.
[17] Ibid., p. 144.
[18] Ibid., p. 149.
[19] Ibid., p. 297.
[20] Ibid., p. 301.
[21] Ibid., p. 100.
[22] Ibid., p. 127.
[23] Ibid., p. 160.
[24] Ibid., p. 166.
[25] Ibid., p. 169.
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[35] Ibid., p. 268.
[36] Ibid., p. 279.
[37] Ibid., p. 283
[38] Ibid., p. 67.
[39] Ibid., p. 65.
[40] Ibid., p. 66.
[41] Ibid., p. 67.
[42] Ibid., p. 84.
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[44] Ibid., p. 173.
[45] Ibid., p. 201.
[46] Ibid., p. 252.
[47] Ibid., p. 275.
[48] Ibid., p. 280.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid., p. 69.
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[53] Ibid., p. 37.

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[55] Ibid., p. 65.

[56] Ibid., p. 100.

[57] Ibid., p. 286.

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VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: INSCRIPTION IN ANITA DESAI'S NOVELS

Madhumalati Adhikari

Sexual, physical and psychological violence against women is an integral constituent of all patriarchal cultures and societies of the world. Philomela's debasement by Tereus or Daphne's attempted rape by Apollo or Draupadi's physical, sexual and psychological degradation by the Kauravs or assault on Sita's chastity by Ravana and the washerman are some of the very explicit and archetypal examples of violence perpetrated against woman. Society has never condemned such defilement of the female sex very strongly, as it is ultimately presented as a concealed mode of punishment of the erring woman who has disobeyed the norms of the patriarchal society. Surprisingly, such violence is often projected as an illustration of courage and right to conquer. The most famous example is that of Apollo.

Manusmriti has very clearly demarcated the role of women as a wife, mother and daughter; she is always secondary to man. The subordination of Indian women by law, sacred ilterature and practice is a well-known and accepted fact. A woman who conforms to the norm is loved and protected; in opposite cases, notions of female desobedience are related with social degeneration and contribute to silencing any ideas of disobedience.[1] In this paper Anita Desai's method of portraying the various forms of violence, often practised against women, would be investigated. The reasons behind such violence, overt and covert protest against specific forms and ways of combating this violence would be highlighted.

Literature invariably has its genesis in society, is nurtured and nourished by society and ultimately mirrors society. The ancient male writers of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* and the present day male writers like Tagore, Premchand and Sharad Chandra, etc., directly or indirectly, have scripted the violence on women. Modern male writers like R.K. Narayan also could never overlook this problem. In *The Guide*, *The Dark Room* and many other novels, he has etched the subordinate position of women. The violence on women, a disquietening problem of society, naturally finds expression in all realistic fiction. Narratives depicting sexual violence against women are termed as 'rape trauma archetypes.'[2] by Annis Pratt. One of the reasons of this violence against women, their subjugation to the male conscience and presence is the feminine quality that becomes a prized elixir to be sought, usurped and conquered. This subversive element creates the imagery of 'maiming, dwarfing and suffocation of women in general.'[3] Violence, a form of oppression, is inflicted on women to keep them firmly chained to the underpriveliged class that has no right to self-determination. 'The paranoid and violent attempts to control female independence, property rights, movement and sexual autonomy indicate that the fears generated by the possibility of female transgression are *real* and *actual*, even when such subversions are only potential.'[4] The violence against women is intensified to deprive and to reduce the significance of their productive and reproductive labour. It is also to enforce the changing ideologies of their subjection. Moral values of women are conveniently altered to suit the demands of men who treat them as their 'objects,' 'possession' to be ruled and controlled by psychological insecurity nurtured in them through myths, customs and societal discourse. The problem is aggravated by the concept of women being the repository of power who can successfully challenge the interplay of socio-psychic complications. This imaginary obsession on the part of men further increases the distance between the dominant and the peripheral.

Anita Desai does not claim to be a feminist and yet she clearly portrays the various forms of violence and gender prejudices against women practised routinely in society. Against the traditional concept of marriage as being the ultimate haven for women, she more often than not treats it as a 'matrimonial enclosure'[5] where women have to face variations of violence. Sita in *Where Shall We Go This Summer*?, greatly perturbed by the violence around her attempts to escape to the magic island of her childhood, Manori. Her condition, psychologically, is very delicate. She is pregnant, yet she has a strange desire: 'I mean, I want to keep it [the child in her womb] -- I don't want it to be born' (p. 35).[6] Fragmented by the physical and psychological violence around her, she desires to keep her child well-protected in her womb. Nervously she exclaims, 'What I am doing is trying to escape from the madness *here*, escape to a place where it might be possible to be sane again'(p. 35).[7] Her fear of violence that she perceives in the materalistic city of Bombay compels her to take this unusual step. She has been battered by psychological violence. It is not accidental that Desai has christened her Sita. In fact, she faces the problems of archetypal Sita; she epitomizes Sita's confrontation with physical, sexual and psycholo-gical violence. Mythical Sita's ordeal by fire symbolizes the brutal act of man against woman, through the ages, to enforce his moral standards. For the modern as well as the ancient Sita matrimony becomes an enclosure wherein the experiences are neither fulfilling nor comforting. Yet Desai seems to insist that life of a woman, despite its betrayals, treacheries and violence, has to be lived and conquered.

In Desai's novels, the reader becomes a witness to the sufferings of tormented and abused women. In an age of lost values, lost men and lost gods, women have lost their mythical protector. Her total unpreparedness in this direction has jeopardized her very existence. Desai has the inclination to describe than to prescribe and thus in *Fire on the Mountain* she describes the violence inflicted on women and in a muted language prescribes some remedies. The novel revolves round Nanda Kaul and her mentally retarded grand-daughter, Raka. Raka is a product of a broken home; she has been an eyewitness to her mother Tara's maltreatment at the hands of her inhuman father. Because of 'the affair he had, his drinking and brutality, she [Tara] was reduced to a helpless jelly, put away out of sight and treated as an embarrassment.'[8] The physical violence effected directly against Tara and indirectly against Raka has fragmented them psychologically and physically. Tara experiences violence without any deviation and Raka is the product of such bestiality. Raka experiences 'emotional deprivation' in the absence of a 'mothering personality.'[9] The consequences are very grim. She turns her back on humanity, develops a destructive personality and becomes interested in 'ravaged, destroyed and barren spaces in

Kasauli...' (p.91) and it is she who finally sets the mountain on fire and rejoices in it: 'Look Nani I have set the forest on fire. Look. (p.145).[10] Raka's experience of her father's violent behaviour wrecks her completely and her mother's story is an oft-repeated narration of an Indian woman's tale.

Nanda Kaul in the same novel is violated psychologically and not physically. Her marital life with a selfish husband is anything but compatible. Despite being ruthlessly dominated by her husband, she performs her duty faithfully towards her family. But her selfless devotion is appreciated neither by her children nor her husband. His deliberate insults to her dignity is achieved through his blatant affair with another woman: 'Nor had her husband loved and cherished her like a queen--he had only done enough to keep her quiet while he carried on a lifelong affair with Miss David.... (p.145).[11] Naturally, Nanda Kaul reaches a psychological condition that is most frustrating. Her passionate and precise interrogation is: 'Have I not done enough and *had enough*? I want no more. I want nothing. Can I not be left with nothing? (p.17).[12] She feels the pressures of the oppressive machinery that is out to violate her feminine identity. In the same novel, Anita Desai introduces Illa Das, a social worker and a friend of Nanda Kaul. Her violent death at the hands of Preet Singh is significant as it concretizes a confrontation between man and woman. Miss Das is raped and then strangulated by this local goon because she had been opposing a match between his daughter and a landlord; it was a commercial transaction of human flesh than marriage. Preet Singh is the representative of the phallocentric culture who cannot bear a challenge to his power that has been conferred on him by society. Nanda Kaul's friend Illa Das is violated sexually and ideologically to emphasize male control and power over the so-called trespassing woman. The treatment meted out to Nanda Kaul, Tara, Raka and Illa Das is a commonplace measure used to intimidate woman.

Voices in the City projects three women prominently: Nirode's mother and his two sisters, Monisha and Amla. Despite the tenets of Manu, the mother, illtreated by her alcoholic husband, abandons him and begins life afresh with an army officer. The relationship is happy but Nirode, the typical male, cannot accept it and Hamlet-like feels that his mother has gone to an incestuous bed. The violence against the mother is physical, sexual and psychological. The gender discrimination is also activated against her. Despite these hazards, the lady in question protests and in her own way survives. Monisha, a sensitive, artistic and educated girl, is married to an uncouth, callous man who constantly insults her as she can not be a satisfying wife and a mother (p.113).[13] Repeatedly Monisha feels, 'there is no escape from it (p.113).[14] Because of this constant psychological torture, she ultimately commits suicide. She disintegrates under the pressure and, unlike her mother, fails to search for an alternative way of life. She is a victim of the worst type of marital abuse. Amla is illtreated by a married man Dharma—an ironical name--whom she loves. Desai clearly describes Amla's weakness and yet suggests that undesirable men are constantly in search of women who can be violated and exploited conveniently. In this novel Desai does not indicate the means of defeating the male domination that can turn out to be a violent act.

Clear Light of Day has a tragic picture of a widow Mira mashi who is customarily exploited by her relatives and society. Because of her early widowhood, she is illtreated and rejected by her in-laws; deprived of her property and her èconomic independence. Thus, she is brought into the family by Bim's parents. Treated as an unpaid maidservant, she gradually disintegrates, becomes an alcoholic and dies as an insane person. Mira mashi is a glaring example of the violent victimization of widows, 'she is obsessed by the well... the bridelike cow ... that had drowned' (p.99).[15] Her situation is exactly like the cow who is trapped and suffocated by the problems of life. The younger daughter of the family Tara also feels the pressures of marital life, 'a strain,' 'always pushing against her grain; it had drained her of too much strength....(p.18).'[16] It is clearly recognized that her individuality is completely crushed by her dominating husband. This is man's archetypal power over woman. Only Bim survives and remains healthy complete, whole, individualistic, self-aware, the master of her own self. As an educated unmarried working woman, she enjoys economic liberty and nullifies the power of male violence in any form. Anita Desai seems to indirectly demonstrate that violence against women can be reduced if women are economically self-sufficient, and self-assured. The contrast between Monisha the married woman, Mira mashi the widow and Bim the independent champion of womanhood is ven evident. Here, Desai is creating awareness of the forces that oppress and suggesting the means of transforming or neutralizing the power.

It is normally accepted that Maya is a neurotic character but it seems that she becomes so because her finer sentiments are not appreciated by her husband, otherwise a considerate person. The temperamental incompatibility finally destroys Maya. In her childhood her sheltered life had provided a bliss of solitude, but she had never realized that the over-protectiveness of the father had destabilized her presonality for good. Protectiveness towards woman is a sugar-coated pill that is often administered to her for her wellbeing that turns out to be a drugging medication to destroy her identity and confidence. This is an indirect form of violence against womanhood. Maya's feeling of inferiority is a product of this lack of self-assurance. She ultimately turns insane as she feels that she is not loved by her husband. Insanity is the result of some form of oppression that develops into a complex. Ti- Grace Atkinson's *Amazon Odyssey* poses the question whether love is not itself the key to woman's inability to break free from patriarchal bondage. The concept of love for woman is created to keep her permanently hooked to societal norms. 'I propose that the phenomenon of love is the psychological pivot in the persecution of women...'[17] The patriarchal code of conduct creates an internal coercion within the female to maintain a womanly role which is more psychological than biological. The role of the mother, wife, daughter framed by the androcentric culture exercises multidimensional pressures on women. Maya's barrenness has a negative impact on her very existence. The confrontation between male/female roles is intentionally continued to reduce the power of women.

In other minor novels of Desai like *In Custody*, a typical case of violence against woman is executed by Nur Saheb who rejects his uncultured ugly wife for the more glamorous temptress, Imtiaz begum. Here woman's physical beauty is extolled at the cost of his first wife's feelings. As mentioned earlier, Desai is keen to describe than to prescribe remedies. Expectedly, in her novels, we see different forms of violence that are experienced by woman. Man expects to have a faithful wife even if he is a lecherous tyrant. To force his power and to satisfy his lust and ego he abuses woman. He may do so for some perverted pleasures also. His manliness is insulted if woman questions him or disobeys him. In such cases, he can torture her physically and psychologically to subjugate her. Desai has inscribed violence by men on women in her novels to remind the female sex that in society, she is inferior and must always remain so. In society, the master-slave relationship is encouraged. Intentionally, the fear of the man is cultivated. Education or lack of education has nothing to do with the atrocities that are commited against women. Educated males are refined in their torture and illiterates are coarse. Desai projects various forms of violence that are continued even at the end of this century. The desire of dominance in the male is a disease that is nurtured and nourished by the society. Desai has suggested a few remedies to fight the evil system: the first is the economic independence for women; the next is education that may reduce the problem by creating self-confident women though education is not a foolproof measure. Inner strength in women like that of Bim has to be cultivated to confront the violence of men. To make a protest is as important as the final victory. Desai has handled the issues of violence against women artistically and realistically. Sexual, physical and psychological abuse of women can be re-etched by moderating the male dominant/ female submissive structures in society.

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[3] Pratt, p. 46.

[4] Loomba, p. 82.

[5] Pratt, p. 45.

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THE RHETORIC OF HORROR IN RUSHDIE'S *SHAME*

O.P. Mathur

"If humanity dreamt collectively, it would dream Moosbrugger."
Robert Musil

The Moosbrugger referred to by the famous writer of *A Man without Quality* is an embodiment of eccentricity, mental retardation, perversity and homicidal urges. Lukacs remarks that in the 'protest' of such modernist writers "the starting point (the corrupt society) of our time is inevitably the main source of energy"[1] which culminates into psycho-pathology expressing itself in phenomena like perverse sexuality, existential angst, sadism, masochism, suicide and homicide. Salman Rushdie too has dreamt a sort of Moosbrugger in his *Shame*. In spite of his family having migrated to Pakistan, he has dreamt of that country as a sort of 'a nation without quality' and has woven around it a "legend,"[2] which is at least partly "a horror story" (p.216), reflecting reality in "fragments of broken mirrors" (p.69) which give to the novel a wide spectrum of pure fun, pungent irony, bizarre exaggeration and gory melodrama bordering on tragedy.

In *Shame* the superficial realities of Pakistani life, society and politics have all been delineated with a clear transparency or a comprehensible translucency, as has already been shown by a number of critics and so needs no repetition. What perhaps needs to be pointed out is that the novelist has delved beneath the surface and has discovered the basic reality, the quintessential spirit of Pakistan which to him appears to be as repulsive and horrifying as the reality of the Bangladeshi fundamentalist Muslims does to Taslima Nasrin. But while she attacks reality through straightforward narration or factual documentation, Rushdie attempts to make it more powerfully incisive by veiling it beneath a number of artistic devices like exaggeration, symbolic portrayal, pretention and denial. Like the legendary Proteus, he frequently shifts his role as a narrator from a mere occasional objective chronicler to Thackeray's puppetmaster, Dickens's displayer of human eccentricities, Anderson's teller of fairy tales, Fielding's delightful interpolator, Swift's allegorist, Poe's creator of mystery and the Elizabethan tragedian's reveller in bloodshed and revenge. Moreover, he is not always to be taken at his word, for sometimes while, like a fundamentalist condemning the 'stone-washing' Indians who engineered the partition of Pakistan, he is playfully adopting this point of view only to ridicule it.

With his tongue in his cheek, he even denies that he is writing about the actual Pakistan. His 'Pakistan' is not that of the school atlas, where his youngest sister is studying engineering (p.68), and where corruption, ignorance, violence, censorship, fundamentalism, drug trafficking, etc. are so rampant that "Realism can break a writer's heart" (pp. 69-70). To avoid such a sad contingency, Rushdie clothes this reality in the avowed garb of a "modern fairy-tale" (p.70), which begins as such but soon acquires other contours as well, but without erosion of the element of fantasy.

There is something abnormal, something weird, about this country which is "not Pakistan or not quite" (p.29): it is rather 'Peccavistan' (p.88), a land of sin, off-centred from reality, "floated upwards from history, from memory, from Time" (p.87) and existing only in a time-scape of two different calendars six hundred years apart, the Gregorian twentieth century over which the shades of the Gregorian fourteenth century (in tune with the present Higerian fourteenth century) are falling. It is "a miracle that went wrong" (p.87), "a failure of the dreaming mind," (p.87) an almost legendary creature "divided into two Wings a thousand miles apart, that fantastic bird of a place, two Wings without a body.... joined by nothing but God." (p.178). In such an upside-down country, everything, even the most strange and the most horrifying is possible. Its protagonist, a "translated" man (p.29) himself born upide-down and, though structurally occupying a central place, he is only a "peripheral, inverted, infatuated, insomniac, stargazing" hero (p.25). The name of the town where the protagonist is born is aptly named Nishapur, with all the connotations of night, darkness, confusion, evil, nightmares and horror.

Thus both the spatial and the chronological backgrounds of the novel are in harmony with the strangeness, abnormality, weirdness, bloodshed and suggestions of the supernatural that characterize the events and the persons inhabiting this world set at an angle from reality. The shamelessness of this world creates among the sensitive a feeling of shame or "sharam" (the various nuances of which have been detailed by the novelist on pp. 38-39) and then horror. These feelings are scattered all over the novel, the resultant imagery of which is constituted by its twincolours, red and black--the eternal shame of the secession of Rushdie's Pakistan and the darkening pools of the blood of the minorities and of its own erstwhile citizens inhabiting the "Eastern swamps," the evil treason which results in the spluttering of red. This twin imagery in a way crystallizes the negation, the contrast between the Beauty and the Beast, as the novelist himself has done more than once in the novel.

There are varieties of horror and its intensity in the novel, which reveal facets of different characters and convey different aspects of its meaning. At the most delightful level for the reader it is the juvenile horror of the vast and labyrinthine castle (perhaps suggestive of the limitlessness incomprehensibility and awfulness of the universe) in which Omar Khayyam Shakil, the would-be protagonist of the novel, roams about, like a 'wolf-boy' or a bat, or maybe like a benighted soul amidst the horrors of an existentialist universe, in which he can come across only three mysterious women, all claiming to be his mothers. This is an unenviable situation with both comic and serious dimensions.

Another 'horror scene' which the reader can enjoy for its comic exaggeration is the interview between the chief Martial Law Administrator Raza Hyder (Zia-ul-haq) and Iskander Harappa (Z.A. Bhutto) deposed by him. As soon as Raza Hyder enters Harappa's room, the latter starts abusing him in the choicest words:

> Seducer of your grandmother's pet mongrel bitch, seller of your daughters at low prices to the bastard offspring of pimps, diarrhoeic infidel who shits on the Quran--Isky Harappa cursed Raza for an hour and a half without permitting any interruption. Betel-juice and the absence of tobacco added to his already enormous vocabulary of imprecations a deadlier rancour than he had even possessed in the days of his rakehell youth. By the time he finished the walls of that room were spattered from top to bottom with betel-juice, the curtains were ruined, it looked as if a herd of animals had been slaughtered in there, as if turkeys or goats had been struggling wildly in their

> death-throes, rushing around the room with the blood spewing from the red smiles on their throats. Raza Hyder came out with paan-juice dripping off his clothes, his moustache was full of it and his hands shook as the red fluid dribbled off his fingertips, as if his hands had been washed in a bowl of Iskander's lifeblood. His face was paper-white. (p.225)

Though highly comic to the reader at least in its earlier part, the experience must have been horrifying to Raza Hyder who then and there decides what Iskander's doom would be. With a paper-white face and moustaches and hands red with 'blood,' he is made to appear like an apparition of a ghost or a murderer. This description, like those of the wandering Omar Khayyam Shakil, referred to above, are examples of comedy for the reader dove-tailed with seriousness or horror for the character. There are at least two other scenes in which the nightmarish horror experienced by dying characters is for the reader an ironical satisfaction, for such a death seems to him to be fairly well-deserved. One is that of the old Mr. Shakil, the father of the three joint-mothers of Omar Khayyam, who in his delirious monologue launches out in "long passages of obscenity, oaths and curses of a ferocity that made the air boil violently around his bed" (p.11), while the other is the vision of Mecca being covered with shit seen by the fundamentalist Maulana Dawood (p.206)

There are, however, a number of other 'nightmares,' not of dying men, in which the reader partly shares the horror felt by the characters. One of them is the illogical sequence of reflections of and visions seen by Iskander in jail where he has forgotten names and with cockroaches three inches long falling down upon his head he does not know whether he is dreaming or is in somebody else's dream, may be Raza Hyder's whom he had brought from the wilderness into the world, but who is now turning him into his son:

> His son. Who emerged dead from the womb with a noose about his neck. *That noose seals my fate.* Because now he understands the cell, the throbbing walls, the smell of excerement, the drumbeat of a foul invisible heart: death's belly, an inverse womb, dark mirror of a birthplace, its purpose is to suck him in, to draw him back and down through time, until he hangs foetal in his own waters, with an umbilical cord hung fatally round his neck. He will leave this place when its mechanisms have done their work, death's baby, travelling down the death canal, and the noose will tighten its grip. (p.231)

Omar Khayyam Shakil too in his fever has similar nightmarish deliriums during which he swings many times between consciousness and unconsciousness, visited by frightful dreams, with the breeding "germs of claustrophobia" (p.272) swarming within him, and the fever having "burned away the barriers between consciousness and sleep" (p.273). He heard cries that the hotel was on fire--"Ash everywhere, what an idea" (p.274). The nightmare goes on, "He persisted in his belief that the world was changing outside, old orders were passing, great structures were being cast down while others rose up in their place. The world was an earthquake, abysses yawned, dream-temples rose and fell, the logic of the Impossible Mountains had come down to infect the plains...." (p.274). In this state he imagines his three mothers talking that the whole house is shrinking, the rooms are disappearing one after another, "Soon the whole house will be smaller than a matchbox and we will be out on the street.... We will turn to dust and be blown away by the wind" (p.275). He has also visions of the political future of his country:

> Quarrels between three Generals. Continued public disturbances. Great powers shifting their ground, deciding the army had become unstable. And at last Arjumend and Haroun set free, reborn into power, the virgin Ironpants and her only love taking charge. The fall of God, and in his place the myth of the martyr Iskander. And after that arrests, retribution, trials, hangings, blood, a new cycle of shamelessness and shame. While at Mahenjo cracks appear in the earth.... Stories end, worlds end; and then it's judgement day.
> (pp. 276-77)

In another bout of sickness soon following the earlier one, Omar Khayyam Shakil enters into a dialogue with an interrogator asking him for his written confession. The interrogator in his nightmare turns out to be his brother-in-law Talvar Ulhaq who shows him "the terrible exhibits, pieces of Raza Hyder, neatly sliced, his moustache, his eyeballs, teeth." (p.248). The dream continues:

> 'You are damned,' Talvar Ulhaq said, and raising his pistol, shot Omar Khayyam Shakil through the heart. The cell had begun to burn. Omar Khayyam saw the abyss open up beneath his feet, felt the vertigo come as the world dissolved. 'I confess', he cried, but it was too late. He tumbled into the black fire and was burned. (p.284)

The delirium is partly true and partly false. Omar Khayyam Shakil has not been shot: he wakes up. But the more harrowing part of it, the display of parts of Raza Hyder's body is somehow true in an uncanny manner, for Raza Hyder had met a remarkably similar end, but not before he had himself had a premonition of it in his own nightmare:

> At that very instant Raza Hyder awoke from a sick dream in which the several pieces of the late Sindbad Mengal had appeared to him, all joined up in the wrong way, so that the dead man's head was in the middle of his stomach and his feet stuck out, soles upward, like asses' ears from his neck.
> (pp. 272-73)

The premonition is translated into reality soon after Raza Hyder wakes up, for the three mothers of Omar Khayyam Shakil and Babar Shakil, like the three Furies, immediately appear to take revenge for the murder of their younger son Babar and, fully armed, force Raza Hyder and his dead wife into the 'Dumb Waiter', a terrible contraption quietly waiting to be used for decades. The 'waiter's' day has at last arrived and

> The image of Sindbad Mengal flashed into Raza's mind as the three sisters pulled down the lever, acting in perfect unison, so that it was impossible to say who pulled first or hardest, and the ancient spring-releases of Yakoob Balloch worked like a treat, the secret panels sprang back and the eighteen-inch stilleto blades of death drove into Raza's body, cutting him to pieces, their reddened points emerging, among other places, through his eyeballs, adam's apple, navel, groin and mouth. His tongue severed cleanly by a laterally spearing knife, fell out on his lap. He made strange clicking noises; shivered; froze. (p.282)

All this is horrifying enough, but the really eerie episodes arise from the mentally retarded but physically strong, vigorous and lusty daughter of Raza Hyder, Sufia Zinobia, whose hot and singing displays of shame, beginning at her very birth, provide its title to the novel. It is not only that the novel is about her, she is "about the novel" (p.59) haunting it like a ghost, enveloping it with a creepy atmosphere. She is a symbol rather than a creature of flesh and blood. Rushdie himself says about her:

> I suppose Sufiya Zinobia came about because I wanted some kind of incarnation of the ideas the book deals with. You have to make the connection between shame and violence. If you humiliate them too greatly, then a kind of violence bursts out of them. I wanted somehow to embrace that idea inside one person.[3]

In fact, her qualities and actions, incredible if taken literally, are meant to signify deeper psychological and political truths. The exaggerated description of the feeling of shame, beginning at her birth, seems to be the shame of the secession of Pakistan and the massacre and arson that followed it. Thereafter Sufiya's humiliation stands for the humiliation of the people of Pakistan at the hands of its military rulers and her sexual suppression can be the suppression of the masses--all this bursting out in a wild fury, the Beast coming out of the Beauty. This Beauty-Beast, the wild spirit of Democracy, asserting itself violently is the child of despotism symbolized by Raza Hyder, the father of Sufiya. "Shamelessness, shame: the roots of violence" (p.116). One of the ghosts that Rushdie's Sufiya embodies is that of a boy who had "simply ignited of his own accord," for "we are energy; we are fire; we are light." (p.117). Quoting from Franz Kafka's *The Trial* (" 'Like a dog!' he said: it was as if he meant the shame of it to outlive him", p.118) Rushdie hints at Sufiya being the shame of the people of Pakistan, soon broadening out the hint into an unambiguous statement that Sufiya's mother called her shame (p.119). Sufiya becomes "Time's ghost, the future stalking the forests of the past" (p.252). The reminiscential reference of this sentence to Blake's "The Tiger" can hardly be missed. Democracy, the 'bright' angel is transformed occasionally into Time's ghost, the prophecy of the future, a co-existence of, as Omar Khayyam Shakil, her husband, notices, "two beings occupying that air-space, competing for it, two entities of identical shape, but of tragically opposed natures" (p.235). Democracy has two faces: frightful for the tyrant and gentle for the people. It is the former on which the author concentrates, because there is a military ruler in position who has created this violent reaction, his own progeny.

There are descriptions of the bright incandescence of liberty filtering through blood-red violence in a state of somnambulism. When "twelve years of unloved humiliation" have taken their toll, Sufiya starts sleepwalking almost like a ghost:

> Afterwards nobody could work out how the girl had escaped, how she managed to sleepwalk through an entire houseful of government furniture and sentries. Shahbanou would always say that it must have been quite a wind, it sent soldiers to sleep at the gate and wrought a somnambulist miracle of such potency that Sufiya Zinobia's passage through the house, into the

> garden and over the wall acquired the power of infecting anyone she passed, who must have fallen instantly into a wind-sick trance. (p.138)

Her victims are as many as two hundred and eighteen turkeys; "Sufiya Zinobia had torn off their heads and then reached down into their bodies to draw their guts up through their necks with her tiny and weaponless hands" (p.138). But on waking up Sufiya herself fainted "on seeing the devastation around her" (p.139).

Sufiya's next orgy of violence arises from her anger at her husband's affair with Shahbanou and her own suppressed feeling of sex. The Beast starts stirring within her. Four adolescent boys are missing till their headless bodies are found:

> Shame walks the streets of night. In the slums four youths are transfixed by those appalling eyes, whose deadly yellow fire blows like a wind through the lattice-work of the veil. They follow her to the rubbish-dump of doom, rats to her piper, automata dancing in the all-consuming light from the black-veiled eyes. Down she lies; and what Shahbanou took upon herself is finally done to Sufiya. Four husbands come and go. Four of them in and out, and then her hands reach for the first boy's neck. The others stand still and wait their turn. And heads hurled high, sinking into the scattered clouds; nobody saw them fall. She rises, goes home. And sleeps; the Beast subsides. (p.219)

This is shame converted into shamelessness, suppression of sex into a gruesome revenge, gentleness and beauty into ferocious witchery and beastliness.

Sufiya had already attempted to kill Talvar Ulhaq, her sister's husband, by trying to twist his head around his neck (perhaps for fathering 26 children), but he was saved by five people, but not before she had bitten off a morsel of the skin and flesh of his neck between her teeth and "sending his blood spurting long distances across the gathering" making it appear a slaughterhouse (p.171). She might have failed in this case, but the stories of "the white panther" with "black head, pale hairless body, awkward gait" (p.253) committing murders of animals and even men start spreading all over the country. It was soon mythologized: "There were those who said it could fly, or dematerialize, or grow until it was bigger than a tree" (p.254). As such murders "formed a ring around the city," Raza Hyder began helplessly to realize that "this nemesis had been stalking him all along" (p.257). But the murders continued striking terror all around. The "human guillotine" (p.244) of democracy begins to close round Raza Hyder's house making him "fatalistically convinced" that either he or her husband was the ultimate target (p.260). Raza Hyder perishes, as we have seen, in the Dumb Waiter, and the real target of the Beast proves to be Sufiya's faithless husband, Omar Khayyam Shakil, who was not on any one side at all, proving, if one might make a guess, that after the really guilty the next are those who are neither here nor there, neither on this side nor on the other. The fence-sitters are no less guilty than the evil ones. Here is the white panther's last visitation:

> They were strange screams. He [i.e. Omar Khayyam Shakil] heard them rise to their peaks and then he knew what was coming into the house, something that could freeze a shriek in the middle, something that petrified, something that would not, this time, be sated before it reached him, ...he heard it roar.
>
> He stood beside the bed and waited for her like a bridegroom on his wedding night, as she climbed towards him, roaring like a fire driven by the wind. The door blew open. And he in the darkness, erect, watching the approaching glow, and then she was there, on all fours, naked, coated in mud and blood and shit, with twigs sticking to her back and beetles in her hair. She saw him and shuddered; then she rose up on her hind legs with her forepaws outstreched and he had just enough time to say, 'well, wife, so here you are at last,' before her eyes forced him to look (p. 285-86).

Incapable of struggling against the hypnotic power of her eyes, "he stood before her, unable to move, her hands, his wife's hands, reached out to him and closed" (p.286). This is the end of the Beast too, for "the fire was just gathering its strength, and on the day of reckoning the judges are not exempt from judgment, and that the power of the Beast of shame cannot be held for long within any one frame of flesh and blood, because it grows, it feeds and swells, until the vessel bursts" (p.286).

Everything has now perished. The evil, the neutral and the good have all ceased to exist in an 'apocalyce':

> And then the explosion comes, a shock-wave that demolishes the house, and after it the fireball of her burning, rolling outwards to the horizon like the sea, and last of all the cloud, which rises and spreads and hangs over the nothingness of the scene, until I can no longer see what is no longer there; the silent cloud, in the shape of a giant, grey and headless man, a figure of dreams, a phantom with one arm lifted in a gesture of farewell (p.286).

In this 'agni pralaya,' resulting in a sort of nuclear holocaust, everything has been burnt down, devastated--not only 'Pakistan,' but the whole universe, the Past, the Present and the Future. The nuclear cloud can also be the cloud of a galaxy of light from which a newclear cycle of creation can start--clear of all evil--political, social or moral--and hence clear of all 'shame' too.

The imagery of fire, of burning--with all its multiple suggestions of ghostly evil, crimson bloodshed, scalding savagery, singing shame and purifying sanctity--dominates this novel. One is unmistakably reminded of Blake's

> Tiger! Tiger! burning bright
> In the forests of the night,
> What immortal hand or eye
> Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

The Tiger, a part of the "fearful symmetry" of God's universe, with its angelic 'brightness' burns down the darkness of the nocturnal forests of evil, clasping them with its "deadly terrors." But it also devours the Lamb (with capital 'L', a symbol of Christ, or of goodness). The Tiger too possesses the brightness of the angels, and in killing the lamb it is only fulfilling God's design of a "fearful symmetry" (is it the modern 'ecological balance'?). But all the same, should not the Tiger have a feeling of shame in killing the Lamb? Does this novel embody such a wishful feeling? The "white panther" in this novel is also hinted at as being a "saint" (p.141) with his splendour like that of the kingly majesty of Christ resembling that of a tiger. Or is it the Goddess Durga's tiger, her instrument for the destruction of evil?

One has to wade through numerous ambiguities of statements and suggestions to arrive at any sort of meaning of this novel, not far less complex than *Midnight's Children*. It may perhaps be suggested that, less sprawling and more organic in structure than its predecessor, *Shame* puts forth an 'avenging angel' to burn and destroy all moral and political evil in Rushdie's 'Pakistan', as contrasted to India which he regards as his spiritual homeland (for he was very angry when he learnt that his family's Bombay house had been sold), and for a property in which (Anis Villa), which he is not likely to use, he successfully fought a long-drawn-out legal battle, while probably he would never have done so for even a square inch of Pakistani property. The Pakistan of reality may be different, but Rushdie's consciousness is saturated with the essentially tolerant, democratic and humanitarian values of Indian society to which its counterpart provides for him a convenient contrast to heap his anger on and to cry 'shame' upon it.

Suprisingly enough, Rushdie calls *Shame* "a document about myself in India."[4] The statement can be better understood in the light of what he writes about the two countries in *Midnight's Children*:

> ...maybe this was the difference between my Indian childhood and Pakistani adolescence--that in the first I was beset by an infinity of alternative realities, while in the second I was adrift, disoriented, amid an equally infinite number of falsenesses, unrealities and lies.[5]

In *Shame*, he brings out the reality of 'Pakistan' through a dual strategy of mockery and horror. In fact, the unconscious path from mockery leads through shame to horror, with shame as a vital bridge and horror at the reality as the ultimate goal. Rushdie has effectively and graphically employed this strategy to create horror culminating in revenge and destruction, breaking "this sorry scheme of things entire" and providing firm ethical foundation to the novel.

But there is an affirmative side to it also, revealed in a casual talk between Omar Khayyam Shakil's three mothers with Bilquis Hyder. Bilquis says, " '...Pygmies pygmies everywhere, also insects and ants--shame on the giants isn't it? Shame on them for shrinking. That's my opinion.' Three old ladies nodded gravely while Bilquis made her lament; then they hastened to agree with her. 'Quite right,' Chunni pronounced gravely, and Munnee chimed in, 'Giants, how true, there must have been,' and then Bunny Shakil concluded: 'Because after all there are angels also, they are still around, oh yes, we are sure of that' " (p.271). The ladies might have been referring to whom they knew and what they knew, but the dialogue brings out the universally recognized fact that the 'angels,' the good, is always around, waiting to assert itself. Though ending in a sort of universal devastation, which is but figurative, the novel points to certain 'angels,' the eternal and universal values of social and political life which India embodies for both Salman Rushdie and Taslima Nasrin, the author of *Lajja*, the title of which, interestingly enough is a translation of *Shame*. Lajja concludes with the following lines:

> ...It was almost dawn and through the cracks in the window, sunlight streamed in. Sudhamoy said, 'come, let us go away.'
>
> Suranjen could not conceal his surprise. Where will we go, Baba, he asked.
>
> Sudhamoy said, 'India'.
>
> And his voice cracked as the shame swept over him. But he had said it, he had forced it out, he had compelled himself to say that they would go; and he had realized that that was the way it would have to be because the strong mountain that he had built within himself was crumbling day by day.[6]

With the beacon light of the essentially Indian values, Rushdie and Nasrin, both with strong Indian ideological roots and so forced to live abroad, seem to agree that the horrors of their breakaway countries, the cause of 'Shame' or 'Lajja,' can be made to disperse and evaporate and allow the sunlight of Love to flood their respective countries, the whole subcontinent, or even the world itself, if we only realize and put into practice the eternal verities expressed in the simplest of words by Taslima Nasrin, "Let Another Name for Religion be Humanism" (Epigraph to *Lajja*).

For the 'rational' and highly 'civilized' man of today, the shameful and depressing alternative to his ignoring of the warning of *Shame* could well be the putrefaction of the souls of men and the slow but certain oozing out of goodwill, virtue and peace, ultimately leading to the extinction of mankind itself, as Rushdie has so graphically portrayed through his symbols of terrifying nightmares, mindless bloodshed and the final cloud of nothingness itself.

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EGO-SELF CRISIS IN MARGARET LAURENCE'S *THE STONE ANGEL* AND SHASHI DESHPANDE'S *THAT LONG SILENCE*

Adesh Pal

With the social and cultural change in the post-independence India, women find themselves standing at a cross-road. The consciousness of a changed time on the one hand, and the old traditional values that have encaged them in straightjacketed roles of daughter, sister, wife and mother on the other, lead them to fragmentation, psychic and moral dilemma. Predicament of these changed women of a changed time has given rise to a formidable line of women novelists like Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande in the contemporary Indian fiction in English. Similarly, Canadian women writers, such as Margaret Atwood and Margaret Laurence, deal with the predicament of the women who suffer from consciousness of cultural incongruities and what Atwood says an "inescapable doubleness of vision"[1]. Their's is a pioneer literature, an expression of a transplanted culture. Threatening chaos and darkness of the new land demands from them a persistent search for their name, language and identity.

Now and then Shashi Deshpande and Margaret Laurence, both, have been labelled as feminist writers despite the fact that they themselves refuse the label. In an interview Deshpande says, "When a man writes of the particular problem a man is facing he is writing male propaganda. Nobody says that, why is it said about women writers?"[2]

It is true that Deshpande's protagonists raise their voice against the straightjacketed role-models and refuse to be the objects of cultural, social oppression of age-long patriarchal society. They feel encaged and suffocated in the male-defined codes of life, and revolt against the social taboos, the cramped, wrinkled values of their ancestors and feel an urge to redefine human relation ship and behaviour. They do feel the necessity to have a place to stand on and strive to attain the ideal of freedom and completeness. Their's is a quest for the self, i.e., the search for identity.

Similarly, Margaret Laurence's primary concern in Manwaka narratives in general and *The Stone Angel* in particular is to lay throadbare the fragmented psyche of her protagonist, torn between old prairie Scots-Presbyterian background and consciousness of the challenges on a new vast land with its silence, darkness and terror. Her protagonists undergo psychological journey-- a journey from fragmentation to completeness, from darkness to self-awareness. Their journey confirms the Biblical quest myth pattern of bondage, yearning, sojourning, quest and release.

But the protagonists of Deshpande and Laurence find it difficult to cope with the challenges they are faced with and their resentment, their anger does not, however, bring them any satisfaction, rather it leads to maladjustment, meaninglessness and frustration. A sense of alienation seems to sap up their energy, the vital part of their being. Their rebellious spirit, the anger which would liberate them, turns out to be the 'demon', the destructive force.

Actually speaking, Deshpande and Laurence's concern is to explore the root cause of the fragmentation of their characters and explore what happens in the psyche of the protagonists in the process of individuation. Their protagonists suffer from "ego-inflation". Ego-inflation is the result of "ego-self" separation in Jungian terms. Ego (consciousness) is born out of self (unconscious). Ego is completely identified with the self, which is "the centre and totality of being."[3] As the child grows, with the experiences he gains in his encounter with conscious reality, ego develops and goes farther and farther from the self (unconscious). Gradual development of ego (consicous) under the constant and sheltering control of self is necessary for child's proper mental growth. Self is "deity" and mother is the first representative archetype of the self, i.e. deity. In youth or maturity religion representing the self controls ego. Absence of mother, i.e. the first archetype, means the lose of self's control over ego and results in "ego-inflation."

The Webster dictionary defines the state of inflation as: "blow up, distended with air, unrealistically large and unrealistically important, beyond the limits of one's proper size, hence, to be vain, pompous, proud, presumptuous."[4] In other words, crossing proper human limits is a symptom of ego-inflation, which finds expression in spells of anger, power motivation of all kind, intellectual rigidity, lust, an excessive sense of guilt and suffering. Anger, protest or resentment is the most natural symptom of ego-inflation. In most of the cases outburst of anger is a reaction to frustration. Psychologically speaking, expression of anger in any form is living out an attribute of deity, i.e., transcending proper human limits. Edward. F. Edinger asserts, "the attempt to force and coerce one's environment is the predominant motivation in anger. It is a kind of Yahweh complex. Urge to vengeance also is identification with deity."[5]

The problem of inflation starts right from childhood. In childhood, ego is born, but is identified with the self. He experiences himself as the centre of the universe. Mother, representing the self, answers his demands and encourages his feelings that his wish is the world command. Mother's commitment to the child's demands is necessary for as he matures he is exposed to the reality -- encounters of life, which constantly contradict unconscious assumptions. At this time the essential link between ego and self is to be maintained for a balanced mental health. If this link is broken "ego-self" separation increases which finds an outlet either in direct outburst of anger or in "displaced anger".[6]

The paper aims at exploring anger motive as an expression of ego-self crisis in Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence* and Margaret Laurence's *The Stone Angel.* As it has already been mentioned that there are two ways of the expression of anger i.e. direct outburst of anger or displaced anger. Jaya in *That Long Silence* fails to give a direct outburst to her resentment. Not finding a language to express herself, she goes on repressing her anger and silence becomes the language of her expression

Jaya is a victim of "ego-inflation" on account of her improper child rearing. She is a convent-educated girl with a sense of being unique and extraordinary. In her childhood her father's commitment to the demands and encourgement to her inflated ego, on the one hand, and the traditional archetypes of Sita, Gandhari and Maitreyee which reside in her unconscious mind, and form the other self of her being, on the other, create tension in her married life. Being a convent-educated English-speaking girl, she feels suffocated and trapped in the traditional Sita-role, defined in patriarchal society. She refuses to surrender her name Jaya (victory) for Suhasini, given to her by her husband Mohan at the time of her marriage. But she cannot afford to insist on for long because, quite at an early age, she was taught that her husband is a tree of protection, a security. Jaya, therefore, shuts her door from outside darkness and disaster and confines herself in the straightjacketed role of a traditional wife, repressing her resentment.

In Jaya's case expression of anger is not direct outburst as it is with Saru and Indu. Her first and the only outburst with Mohan, soon after her marriage, results in days of Mohan's silence. Since then, she adopts the silence stratagem and withdraws under it. She turns the direction of her anger on herself and her anger becomes self-destructive.

It is, psychologically speaking, a displaced anger or reaction. In the case of displaced aggression the person "directs his hostile feelings towards some object or person other than the one actually causing frustration."[7] Thus, the other person who is not the actual cause of frustration is used as scapegoat. Sometimes the expression of anger may not find any scapegoat and "may turn his hostility inward and blame himself for his failure."[8]

Jaya belongs to this category. Patriarchal home, her conformist husband Mohan, the very concepts of marriage and sex are the actual objects, the expression of her resentment should be directed to. Her convent education and her vision of women, liberated from male-chauvinism, flare up her sense of anger against these real causes of her frustration. But the traditional Sita, Gandhari role-model archetypes, which form the other part of her psyche, force her cling to Mohan, a traditionalist. The mounting pressure of revolt, which is sapping her energy like a cancer in a bud, turns upon herself.

In her parental house Ramukaka (Jaya's paternal uncle) sketches the family tree: "Look Jaya, this our branch. This our grandfather -- your great grandfather -- and here is father, and then us -- Laxman, Yasu and me. And here are the boys -- Shridhar, Jaanu, Dinkar, Ravi..." Jaya questions this patriarchal tree: "I'm not here!" Ramukaka gets irritated and says, "How can you be here? You don't belong to this family. You have no place here" (142-43). The loss of place in the family tree is symbolically the loss of identity which wounds her self. She wants to find a place in Mohan's family and heal up her wound. To her surprise she finds that she is taken for granted and Mohan fails to be a "sheltering tree".

In the moment of crisis when Mohan is in danger of being caught and defamed for some malpractice in his office, he, being a traditionatist, expects Jaya to share his anxiety, and, as Indira Bhatt opines: "Wishes to use his wife as buffer, an opiate to soften the impact of the forces he has set into motion against himself."[9] But Jaya reacts to the situation differently. She finds that Mohan has lost interest in her. The storm in the office seems to disturb their peaceful family life. And now in her old ancestral house at Dadar she analyses her "self" and her relations with Mohan.

She has given up writing for the newspaper column "Seeta" which means symbolically giving up her traditional role-model of wife. Mohan persuades her to continue writing for the column but now she inwardly refuses to be Mohan's wife, Rahul's and Rati's mother " (69). Like Gandhari, she had earlier bandaged her eyes to become blind like her husband. She says: "I bandaged my eyes tightly. I didn't want to know anything. It was enough for me that we moved to Bombay, that we could send Rahul and Rati to good schools, that we could have the things we needed..." (61-62).

But all that she revolts is in silence. The difference in their outlook fails them to understand each other and the lack of communication damages their relationship. Jaya suffers silently. She would not express her feeling lest it should spoil her relationship with her husband. She had been brought up with love and care, "she was a child who used to get angry very soon. But after her marriage she tolerated her anger. She realizes that to Mohan anger made a woman 'unwomanly' (83). When Kamat points out lack of anger in her writings, she replies, "Because no woman can be angry. Have you ever heard of an angry young woman?" (147).

Expression of anger in silence is best evident in an incident when Mohan accuses her for no fault of her. She wants to burst out in anger. But she fails to break her silence: "I was full of a sense of angry confusion. What was he charging me with? And, oh God, why couldn't I speak? Why couldn't I say something? I felt foolishly inadquate having nothing to offer him in exchange for all the charges he was pouring on to me... I could say nothing. I sat in my place, pinned to it by his anger, a monstrously huge spear that went through me, excruciatingly painful, yet leaving me cruelly conscious" (120-121).

Sense of failure to fit in the role of traditional wife, which she tried to conform to with inwardness, and to break silence develop fear consciousness in her. Somewhere in her unconscious there is a fear of some disaster. Kamat makes her aware of her fear of failure. He awakens her anger which she has to bring out from the long suppression and face wonder to articulate her predicament as a writer.

Psychologically speaking, when repression of anger continues for a long time, ego-self crisis reaches its climactic point (i.e. ego's identification with self is at its climax) and there is a danger of extinction. Encounter with death is the possibility. It may sometimes lead one to suicide. This stage may also result in the re-orientation of the total personality. A new consciousness may emerge. In psychological terms, a fresh relationship between ego and self may be established.

Jaya undergoes the same experience when Mohan angrily leaves the house. She feels deserted. An utter loneliness darkens around her. Silence fails to be the protective shield and there is close contact with death. But she is conscious of Kusum, her alter ego whose madness led her to death. Jaya escapes suicide but goes hysteric: "I must not laugh, I must not laugh" (122). It is at this stage that the ego-inflation dissolves. Out of her anguish,her long suppressed anger, she goes out of her house and in an unconscious state walks aimlessly in the streets of Bombay. But her hysteria as defence mechanism fails and ends in futility. "Finally, totally exhausted, I'd gone back home" (191).

But a change has occurred to her. All her defense mechanisms broken, she comes face to face with her "demon" fear. Now in her terrible loneliness she realizes and understands, what Kamat said to her, that "percuit happiness is meaningless" and loneliness is the essential condition of human existence. Everyone has to fight his own battle. The novel becomes a self-critique of Jaya. She understands that she also contributed to her victimization. Others can't be blamed all the times. Neither total extinction of the ego, nor complete conformity can bring her realization of her true identity. Balanced relationship between ego and self can give balanced outlook of life. Anger or protest is not a convincing weapon for fighting our battle and realizing peace in life. She has fathomed the darkness of her self and has learnt to articulate her predicament. When she hears the news that all ends up well in the office of Mohan, and Rahul also comes back, she is again in danger of falling entrapped in the prison-house of marriage. She breaks her silence and refuses to be led by nose. Now she will continue as writer and would not look up at the face of Mohan for an answer he wants.

Similarly, Hagar in *The Stone Angel* suffers from "ego-self" crisis and falls a victim to "ego-inflation". She is stubborn, a defiant woman, filled with rage for life. Clara Thomas decribes: "Hagar wanders in a wilderness, and like the stone angel in the Manawaka cemetery she was doubly blind, not only Stone but unendowed with even a pretence of sight. At ninety, when the book begins, she is grotesque with the fat, ugliness of her old age and her nature is twisted and distorted by the self-willed tragedies of her life. She is proud,often sick, and frightening old woman, with a whip-lash tongue to cut and mock even at herself."[10]

Hagar's rebellious pride refuses to accommodate to the facts of time. At ninety she stubbornly refuses to go to hospital and leave home. It is her pride only that makes her live in battle against her father, her brother, husband and later on her beloved son John.

Actually speaking, she inherits pride from her authoritarian father. She lost her mother when she was born. Loss of mother-figure, the representative archetype of the "self" and improper child rearing, result in ego-self separation and her compulsive inclination towards her father. Father, the authority figure replacing mother-figure, the first representative of the "self", dominates her psyche to the extent that she starts equating father with God and stops going to church. Jason Durrie's initials suggest the Saviour but his donation to the church proceeeds from no religious piety but rather from a desire to broadcast his financial superiority and the importance of the angel tomb-stone of Hagar's mother is that it had been brought at a terrible expense.

Hagar says about her mother's angel -- "...my mother's angel that my father brought in pride to mark her bones and proclaim his dynasty, as he fancied, forever and a day."[11]

Her father fails to represent spiritual authority-figure, for her. She says: "Auntie Doll was always telling us that father was a God fearing man. I never for a moment believed it, of course. I couldn't imagine Father fearing any one, God included, specially when he didn't even owe his existence to the Almighty. God might have created heaven and earth and the majority of people, but Father was a self-made man as he himself told us often enough."[12]

So, the voice Hagar inherits is the voice of her father with prairie Scots- Presbyterian background. Her inflated ego denies her any possibility of communication and she forges chains and builds psychic walls.

This lack of communication results in her desertion of Bram Shipley, death of her favourite John and Arlene. Her final self-knowledge accompanies the breaking of these bonds, as Hagar is released into love, death, and life, suggested by images of rebirth and transformations. At Shadow Point, Murray Lees's story of losing his infant son in a fire releases her memories of John's death, and she speaks to Murray the apology she owes to her son. Murray plays John's role and in this replaying of the past Hagar is permitted to tell John/Murray that his lover Arlene is, after all, welcome in the house. Hagar's descent into her shadow self ends with repentance, confession and peace. In the hospital she assures Marvin that he has been a better son than John: "Now it seems to me that all his strength, and bargaining. I will not let thee go, except than bless me. And I see I am thus strangely cast, and perhaps have been so from the beginning, and can only release myself by releasing him." (*SA*, 304). Hagar's lie has been spoken in love. She welcomes Dr. Tray also and tells Doris that he has done her good. Hagar's pride is banished. She says: "Pride was my wilderness. and the demon that led me there was fear, I was alone, never anything else, and never free, for I carried my chains within me, and they spread out from me and shackled all I touched" (*SA*, 292).

Hagar's moment of truth comes only when she comes to terms with her "Self". Dr. Troy, the clergyman, becomes surrogate God-figure by chanting hymns in the hospital. By attaining "ego-self" axis, all the psychic walls are overcome, and she is permitted to establish communication with all around her in the hospital. Her secret journey into the "self", a journey from bondage of pride, fear and rage to freedom, to love, from fragmentation to wholeness, completeness is complete.

Thus Jaya and Hagar, both, attain their selfhood, their identity neither by withdrawing into silence stratagem and burning within nor by raising walls of pride, anger, rejecting all around, it is attained by the realization of the "self". Self-knowledge permits them redefining themselves and the world around them. Acceptance provides them a new awareness of their redefined relationship with their people and the society they live in.

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'A SLICE OF EVERYDAY TAKEN AT RANDOM': MARGARET ATWOOD'S *THE HANDMAID'S TALE*

Urbashi Barat

When the narrator-protagonist of Graham Greene's *The Comedians* begins to analyse the terror and the violence of Haiti in which he lives, he realizes with a shock that Papa Doc's handiwork is not unique,or confined to one particular place at one particular moment in time,but an image of the human condition itself: 'Haiti was not an exception in a sane world: it was a small slice of everyday taken at random' (130). I would like to suggest that Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, too, is more than a cautionary tale, a 'horrific vision of things to come based on an extrapolation from things as they are' (Gayle Greene 1986:14): it is also a portrait of today and every day, past, present and future. Atwood's Gilead, that is, is no imaginary dystopia but a small slice of everyday taken at random.

Literature as a social product inevitably reflects,however obliquely,the society which gave it birth: any imaginary world must be built on the creator's personal response to his or her own environment. Indeed, Freud suggests that just as the daydreams and wishes of ordinary people 'make use of an occasion in the present to construct, on the pattern of the past, a picture of the future,' the imaginary/imaginative world of the creative writer is a projection, through an 'incentive bonus' or 'forepleasure', of personal experience and memory, and so a portrayal and a recreation of his or her everyday life (1989: 39-42). Utopias and dystopias are particularly clear examples of the present seen through the filter of a concretely visualized 'nowhere': as Darko Suvin puts it, 'utopia explicates what satire implicates and vice versa' (1973:138). So does dystopia: after all, if 'utopia' is at once the good place (*eutopos*) and no place (*outopos*), 'dystopia' is at once the bad/unnatural place and no place,the Greek prefix *dys*- (ill, bad,abnormal) including within its ambit the Latin *dis*- (not,a reversal, indicating a removal or a deprivation). The 'there' and 'then' of utopia/dystopia are a version of the 'here' and 'now' of the narrator, the author and the reader.

Readers and critics have often remarked about the obvious parallels in *The Handmaid's Tale* with the Moral Majority movement, the rise of fundamentalism in Khomeini's Iran, the extreme positions often adopted by contemporary cultural feminists and their opponents alike, and so on. Atwood herself has called her novel 'speculative fiction' because its milieu is not an invention but an 'extrapolation':

> There is nothing in *The Handmaid's Tale*, with the exception maybe of one scene, that has not happened at some point in history. I was quite careful about that. I didn't invent a lot.I transposed to a different time and place, but the motifs are all historical motifs. (Qtd in Linkous 1986:6)

Thus Elaine Kendall comments on Atwood's 'deliberate subjugation of imagination to demonstrable fact. Only the form of *The Handmaid's Tale* is fiction,as the form of *Mein Kampf* was autobiography' (1986:12), and Peter Prescott describes the novel as a metaphor for the warning *Caution: The author has concluded that present social trends are dangerous to individual welfare* (1986:70)

The novel is in fact a metaphor also for what has happened and continues to happen whenever and wherever society and human relationships are dominated and governed by power-politics, a metaphor for the continuing victimization and exploitation and the struggle for survival at the bottom of most social and personal structures throughout time and the world. The title of the novel, as Professor Pieixoto's jocular remarks at the end make clear, with its deliberate and ironic echo of Chaucer's great poem, is a significant pointer in this direction. The *Canterbury Tales*, Prescott notes, 'incorporated precisely what has disappeared from Gilead: the juice and joy of living' (Prescott 70); but it is relevant to a reading of *The Handmaid's Tale* for other reasons too. Chaucer's pilgrims, and the tales they narrate, quite evidently belong to a unified but highly stratified world, in which each social and moral type has its place and role and from which little mobility and within which little flexibility is possible. This hierarchical world makes an ironic reappearance in Atwood's Gilead, with its clearly defined categories of people, between whom communication and its concomitant, fellow-feeling, are deliberately discouraged, so that everyone is isolated from and distrusts everyone else, feeling secure only in the maintenance of his or her particular role. 'Divide and rule' has after all been the primary tool of the powerful everywhere and always; witness, for example, Machiavelli's comments in the third chapter of *The Prince* and Bacon's essay 'Of Empire', or, closer home, K.R. Malkani's recent remarks in 'The Role of Morals in Public life':

> ...as civilisation advances,there is diversification, there is specialisation, there is hierarchy. That is why man has been defined as *homo hierarchicus*. Cows and goats don't have hierarchy: they are all equal; but "civilised" man has always had an[sic] hierarchy....
>
> And here human nature comes into play: man's innate to grab what is not his. Shall we call it human nature? Or just nature? (1996:10)

No wonder, then, that the names of neither Chaucer's pilgrims nor the members of the lower rungs of the Gileadean hierarchy are important. Indeed, the patronymic designations given to the Handmaids, 'Offred', 'Ofwarren', 'Ofglen', and the like, are not very different from the title 'Mrs' and the patrilinear/patriarchal surname that the twentieth-century woman bears. What is important, and has always been important, in the social structure, especially for women, is not personhood but role and function, laid down by usage, custom, religion and history.

Like the Chaucerian pilgrims themselves, moreover, who are social types rather than individuals, their Tales are a retelling of old traditional stories, from all over Europe and the Orient, from the ancients and from the poet's near contemporaries (the medieval world did not care for originality, which is a mark of individuality). This is especially the case with the Tales of the three women pilgrims; in a male-oriented society, which depends on the suppression of the woman's story in order to maintain the power equation, an authentic female voice is rare. Not surprisingly, the Prioress and the Second Nun are too inhibited and circumscribed by their social roles--they are, after all, part of the religious establishment, which controlled everyday life in medieval England just as it did in twentieth-century Iran and attempted to do in seventeenth-century New England, and just as it does in Atwood's future society in Gilead--to think, to search and to question. Characteristically, all three women examine, more obviously than the men, the relationship between love and power. If the Second

Nun's Tale is a nondescript life of a (notably, female) saint, the Prioress's one, as it re-creates the mother's anguish at the loss of a child (note its relevance to the Handmaid's situation in Atwood's novel), reinforces the gender/racial stereotyping that Atwood's work militates against.

It is only the Wife of Bath who dares to be different, and that, too, not so much in her Tale as in her own 'story' in her Prologue. As such, she appears to be a new social type, a woman of the nascent bourgeoisie. But even as she is the object of good-humoured satire, and in no way a role-model, she and her story—which includes her Tale -- are as old as humanity itself. The issues that she raises, and her challenge to the established social modes and power games of her time, are part of the long tradition of flytings between man and wife, contentions for mastery between male and female, that have expressed themselves in some form or the other throughout the history of Western literature, in the Noah's Ark play of the Chester cycle, for instance, in the Restoration comedies of manners, in the problem plays of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and above all in women's novels all over the world. Atwood's Handmaid's Tale, too, is a version of the old unchanging story; that is why women are silenced in Gilead, why ancient patterns of power are garbed in the robes of religion, and why there are the constant allusions to the Bible, particularly to the Old Testament. Hence, too, the epilogue, set more than a century after the Handmaid's story, which with its sexist jokes reinforces the same old sexual gender stereotyping of Gilead, of the Bible and of the world of the reader. Thus it is that the historians of the future fail to establish the Handmaid's identity but can hazard a guess at her Commander's. The masculine response to the Wife of Bath's story thus foreshadows their attitude to the Handmaid's one. Further, and significantly, ' This closure device as epilogue resonates with the acknowledgements Atwood makes to academic granting agencies and to universities for the time and place to get this story written' (Bartkowski 1989:155). *Plus ca change, plus c'est la meme chose.*

That is why it is so important that the Handmaid finds a voice and begins to question the nature and meaning of her experience through her playing with words :

> This is the kind of touch they like : folk art, archaic, made by women, in their spare time, from things that have no further use. A return to traditional values. Waste not want not. I am not being wasted. Why do I want? (17)

Words are indeed her path to selfhood, to equilibrium, in her 'minimalist life':

> I sit in the chair and think about the word *chair*. It can also mean the leader of a meeting. It can also mean a mode of execution. It is the first syllable in *charity*. It is the French for flesh. None of these facts has any connection with others.

These are the kinds of litanies I use, to compose myself(120). This sensitivity to language is a characteristic of all Atwood's protagonists, for they are all survivors in the battle for freedom and authenticity; it is through words, language, self-expression, that the weak can become strong, can reject the victim's role and fate and become, in Atwood's phrase, a creative non-victim (*Survival* 38). Here lies the significance of the mock-Latin inscription left behind by Offred's predecessor, *Nolite te bastardes carborundorum* (62). She herself may have committed suicide, but her defiance adds to Offred's own resilience and sense of self and to hope of survival as she realizes the power and the hope of her predecessor's graffiti: 'I can feel its power, the power of the words it contains. Pen is Envy' (196): note the deliberate wordplay. As Janet Todd puts it, 'Women's existence under patriarchy has excluded them from power. This exclusion has often been productive -- it has, for example, forced the woman writer to create, so that she can *take* the power' (qtd in Gomez 1994:76).

This introspection and self-awareness is absent in Chaucer's women, who address their stories to a predominantly male audience; the narrator of Chaucer's poem is after all a man, who is unaware of what the politics of gender has done to the woman's psyche. Atwood's Handmaid, however, records her tale for an unknown, unseen audience, revealing and reliving her pain as she does so:

> I'm sorry there is so much pain in this story .... it hurts me to tell it over, over again. Once was enough: wasn't once enough for me at the time? But I keep on going with this sad and hungry and sordid, this limping and mutilated story, because after all I want you to hear it as I will hear yours too if I ever

> get the chance... By telling you anything at all I'm at least believing in you. I believe you're there, I believe you into being. Because I'm telling you this story I will your existence. I tell, therefore you are. (278)

Offred repeatedly reminds her reader/ audience that her story is a 'reconstruction', and therefore necessarily inaccurate, for language is only approximate when it comes to descriptions of feelings(144). Nevertheless, she knows that she must narrate her story, creating not only her audience as she does so but also herself, and through her story reviving the voices of other women, whom she will perhaps never see again. Telling her tale, therefore, is important for all those silenced into non-existence throughout history. Whether or not she survives in person at the end of it all, her voice and her story do, and this is what matters.

Like the stories of Chaucer's women pilgrims, then, the Handmaid's tapes are discovered, reconstructed and edited by a male archivist (the fictional technique employed to establish verisimilitude and universality in, for example, *Don Quixote* and *Robinson Crusoe*), who has, moreover, centuries of patriarchal conditioning behind him. This has further distanced her tale from her imagined audience: there is necessarily a variance between her narration and his reading, as there was between experience and description of that experience. If it is the reader who creates the text of a novel, Atwood's novel juxtaposes two different texts, one masculine and one feminine. Offred herself explains the difference between the masculine and the feminine responses to her discourse when she observes:

> But if you happen to be a man, sometime in the future, and you've made it this far, please remember: you will never be subjected to the temptation of feeling you must forgive, a man, as a woman. It's difficult to resist, believe me. But remember that forgiveness too is a power. To beg for it is a power, and to withhold or bestow it is a power, perhaps the greatest. (144)

A further point about the Wife of Bath. She wears red, the colour prescribed for Gilead's Handmaids, and thus, like them, is associated with the Scarlet Woman of Revelation 17 and with the folk/ fairy tale of Red Riding Hood with its sexual undertones. Throughout history, legend, folklore, tradition, religion, there has been considerable ambiguity about femininity and sexuality, which are feared, revered and repressed at the same time, for they force patriarchy to question its own role and function. The Wife of Bath represents one such challenge to the male psyche; through her the male fear of woman's sexuality is externalized, made the object of satire and amusement, and contained within the limits that the man can grasp. In Atwood's Gilead the woman's point of view, the woman's challenge, projects itself as Moira and all the other subverters of the establishment, who like the Wife of Bath use the oppressors' weapons to attack it. Both Wife of Bath and Handmaid wear the same nun-like attire (the nun's habit is really the medieval woman's dress) that emphasizes the ambiguous role of women in society: the nun stands for chastity and self-effacement, but she is also the bride of Christ and yearns for her marriage with the Lamb. When, moreover, the Wife of Bath addresses her male audience:

> Thou seydest week that ther been thynges thre
> The whiche things troublen al this erthe
> ('Prologue to the Wife of Bath's Tale', 362-3)

she is clearly referring to Proverbs 30:21-8, and using religion to make her point, which is characteristic of patriarchy:

> For three things the earth is disquieted,... For a servant when he reigneth; and a fool when he is filled with meat; For an odious woman when she is married, and an *handmaid* that is heir to her mistress. /Emphasis added/

The relevance of her remark to Atwood's novel is obvious.

The term 'Handmaid' in Atwood's title and text is therefore of considerable significance. Offred is first of all a handmaid to her unseen and imaginary readers, for whom she re-creates her world. She enables them to participate in her experience and to understand how it is important for them to relate it to theirs. Because the man who reconstructs her reconstructed tale is as much a product of the politics of gender as the people of Offred's world, male or female, his comments evoke a sense of *deja vu* and are a reminder of the continuing validity of her story. The Wife of Bath's Tale is thus a version of Offred's, which continues to be retold in the future.

The term 'handmaid' is, of course, a Biblical one, and when Atwood uses it in her title, her first epigraph and her text, she alludes to the familiar story in Genesis of Rachel's envy of the fertility of Leah, her sister and co- wife, and her use of her maid as a surrogate mother. The word frequently occurs in the Bible in the context of a woman's fear of the social stigma of barrenness. It was this fear that had led Sarah, Abraham's wife, to demand that her husband impregnate her handmaid Hagar in her place (Gen 16), and the widowed Tamar to lie with her father- in- law (Gen 38); when Leah, too, became infertile she used her handmaid likewise, because she herself was jealous of Rachel's children through Bilhah (Gen 30). The stories of Ruth (Ruth 3-4) and Hannah (1 Sam 1) are similarly the products of the same fear, envy and insecurity that childless women are made to feel in a patriarchal society. When Mary is chosen by God to be the mother of the Messiah, she accepts the divine will because she is 'the *handmaid* of the Lord' (Luke 1:38; emphasis added).

Then there is the statement about the women of New England—the setting of *The Handmaid's Tale* -- by the seventeenth century Puritan Cotton Mather: 'Those Handmaids of the Lord, who tho' they ly very much Conceal'd from the World, and may be called, The Hidden Ones, yet have no little share in the Beauty and the Defence of the Land'. Mark Evans, who quotes this remark, comments: 'Cotton Mather here employs a typically patriarchal sleight-of-hand, emphasising woman's importance, but at the same time advocating their self-effacement and effective subordination. This is a device that will be repeated in Atwood's fictional world' (1994:182). The 'Salvaging' of Ofcharles bears an uncanny resemblance to Cotton Mather's 'Salvation' and his and Perry Miller's accounts of witch-hunting (Miller was a Canadian expert on seventeenth-century Puritan New England and Atwood's dedicatee); to salvage or to save is to kill. The novelist's first dedicatee, Mary Webster,her ancestor, was accused of witchcraft and similarly attacked in Mather country, renamed Gilead in this novel. These narratives of Mather and Miller lie behind the 'Particicution' in the novel of a male political prisoner falsely declared guilty of raping a pregnant Handmaid, so that he could be torn apart in a ritualistic female frenzy ironically reminiscent of the Greek maenads participating in fertility rituals.

Atwood's use of the term 'Handmaid', accordingly, helps to establish the reality of a puritan society in a part of the world which had already witnessed the excesses of Puritanism, so that Gilead is at once a part of the Biblical tradition of oppressing its women and a newer society in which religious fundamentalism becomes the face of patriarchal repression. The name Gilead, too, is particularly appropriate, for in Hebrew it means 'Hall of Witness': the Handmaid's tale is a record, after all, of a society rooted in the Old Testament and the Puritan past. The Biblical reference works as a sign, as always, that present, past and future, East and West, are inextricably bound up with each other, so that each is a mirror-image of the other, and there is no breaking free except through individual rejection of victimization and assertion of selfhood. In Kauffman's words:

> Apocalypse depicts what has been, what is, and what will be. Atwood depicts what "woman" has been in the Judeo-Christian tradition,from biblical times through the 1980s to the end of the next century. From Medusa to the Virgin Mary, from the biblical handmaid Bilhah to Hester Prynne, from Mary Webster to Maryann Crescent Moon in 2195, the novel assembles the constructions of "woman": monster, madonna, witch, womb, whore, revolutionary, heretic, prostitute, servant, mother. Atwood's purpose is to show that revolutions can come and go, but women's fates remain wholly unchanged. (Kauffman 232-3)

Indeed, the Indian/Hindu tradition is not very different either. If Genesis 1:27 declares that men and women are both created in God's image and are equal in status and worth before Him, the Church has usually indentified woman with Eve as interpreted by Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian, or St Thomas Aquinas. Similarly, the Hindu worship of Shiva-Shakti, Ardhanareeshwara and Yoni-lingam is accompanied by the worship of Manu, so that woman the goddess is effectively a subordinate and slave and the pedestal her prison.

As Kathleen Coyle puts it, then, 'Ancient myths identifying *[woman]* with chaos, darkness, matter and sin, echo clearly in christian interpretations of concupiscence (well-entrenched in the classical interpretation of original sin) of sexuality as contaminating and therefore of woman as dangerous and a temptress, and a symbol of sin' (qtd by Shanti 1993: 38). Thus the repression of human desire and of women in Gilead came about, the Commander tells Offred, because men began to feel irrelevant (219). Power obviously derives from and depends on oppressing others. Only by suppressing and persecuting the weak and the 'deviant' can patriarchy find a sense of meaningful existence; only by suppressing Eve could the race of Adam triumph. That is why Gilead rejects such devices as artificial insemination, in-vitro fertilisation, GIFT and the like; the insistence on a return to traditional methods of conception in a back-to-the-future society implies that the woman's suffering is part of her divinely ordained position since the Fall (Gen 3:16) from which, accordingly, there is no escape. And what greater suffering and humiliation for both Handmaid and Wife to be inseminated in this fashion for the sake of a child for the Commander? (106-6) The *niyoga* system of conception in ancient India often had much the same effect on women: the condemnation of and the curse on the mothers of Dhritarashtra and Pandu, for instance, is testimony to this.

In *The Handmaid's Tale* Atwood examines, accordingly, the implications of the kind of motherhood projected by tradition and exemplified in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's utopia, in which 'Every woman...placed motherhood not only higher than other duties, but so far higher that there were no other duties...' (*Herland* 140). Motherhood for the woman should, that is, achieve the status of religion. Elsewhere, however, in the short story 'The Yellow Wallpaper' and in *Women and Economics* Gilman appears to think differently. The 'matriolatry' in *Herland* itself must be evaluated against the fact that the narrative voice in the novel is a man's, through whose vision the feminine utopia is filtered; and his text is written from memory, and meant to be regarded as flawed, misrecorded, misremembered, misconstrued. Atwood's novel thus seems to be built as a response to *Herland*, as it is also a development of the ideas in Suzy McKee Charnas's *Walk to the End of the World* and *Motherlines*, with their fems and their Unmen, their environmental and ecological disasters, for which women have been blamed and enslaved, their portrayal of the backlash to twentieth-century feminism, and their narrative of forbidden knowledge of paternal origins. Both Charnas's novels and *The Handmaid's Tale* posit a world frighteningly close to the one presented by Namita Bhandare in an article in *Sunday*. She quotes the eminent in-vitro fertilisation expert Dr Indira Hinduja as saying, 'We live in a society where women who don't have children are ostracised and barred from participating in auspicious occasions. The desire to have a child is so strong that people will sell everything from gold to land'. Elsewhere in the article Lalita Badhwar points out that male infertility -- on the rise in urban areas in particular— is a sensitive issue with men 'in a society where a man's virility is judged by the number of children -- particularly sons -- he has' (Bhandare 1996:36-39). Does the maternal instinct really exist? Or is it a product of patriarchal conditioning and societal pressures? Woman writers have usually been ambivalent about motherhood in their fiction, and this ambivalence lies at the core of the differences in the faces of motherhood that are so carefully juxtaposed in *The Handmaid's Tale*: Offred's own, her mother's, Serena Joy's, Janine's, the Wives' and the Econowives', even those of the Aunts, who are, as it were, surrogate mothers of a kind.

The ambiguities and ironies of the Gileadean world surface especially when motherhood, sexuality and related feminine/feminist concerns are explored. Flowers, traditional symbols of femininity and fertility, bloom in sterile Gilead; Moira escapes one kind of sexual exploitation only to be caught up in another. Offred's mother, a militant feminist of pre-Gileadean days, had chosen to conceive her at the relatively late age of thirty-seven, when most women are near menopause, and had refused to give any importance to the baby's father; in Gilead, however, infertility is the biggest fear and problem, and if woman's choice is irrelevant so is man's; impregnation is his duty to the State, regardless of who the recipient of his seed. Patriarchy diminishes everyone, regardless of gender. As Offred participates in a Birth Ceremony she remembers how hard her mother had struggled to establish a woman's world, and now that one has apparently come into being she is banished to the lethal toxic wastes of the Colonies. Her postfeminist daughter addresses her silently: 'You wanted a woman's culture. Well, now there is one. It isn't what you meant, but it exists. Be thankful for small mercies' (137). There is, after all, considerable truth in the Aunts' constant reassurance that women are safer and more protected now under this new dispensation, and if women are walking wombs, men are little better than studs.

There is no balm in this Gilead, which in Old Testament Israel was famous for its balm and its healing medicines (Jer 8, 46, 51); its 'balm' is now a 'bomb', as Moira puts it (230). Balm for the Handmaid, therefore, is the rancid butter that she rubs her dry skin with, the tiny acts of communication with others that remind her of her humanity, her yearning for a better day. It is this hope that keeps her alive, even though her reconstructed tale merely brings grist to the mill of academia a century later, even though, that is, nothing has changed. This is underlined by the last words of the novel, Professor Pieixoto's 'Are there any questions?' There is, then, no neat ending to the novel; it leaves the reader with disturbing questions rather than comforting solutions or answers, for this is a tale that has been told through the centuries and will continue to be told as long as the struggle for power remains the basis of all relationships. Clearly, then, *The Handmaid's Tale* is no more a cautionary tale than Swift's *A Modest Proposal* (from where the novelist derives her second epigraph) is an argument for cannibalism; Atwood's Swiftian irony shocks her reader into examining and exploring the nature and result of patriarchal power-games. It is a Swiftian portrayal of everyday life rather than of a possible future; it is a small slice of everyday taken at random.

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GIRISH KARNAD'S DRAMATURGY: A REVALUATION OF *TUGHLAQ*

Sandhya Tripathi

Girish Karnad wrote his plays in his native language, Kannad, in the dramatic tradition of the folk theatre. Naturally, in his plays he taps the mythical, legendary and historical resources for his themes and stories. His chief achievement lies in his making his plays relevant to the contemporary reality of India in particular and humanity at large. He is a dramatist whose artistic hand is deep-dyed in his native as well as western stage conventions. His plays, therefore, exploit the technical strategies of naturalistic, anti-naturalistic and folk theatres. Our concern in the present paper is a close scrutiny of Karnad's *Tughlaq* to offer some useful comments on his dramaturgical skill. The source of this play is history. Karnad himself has introduced the play thus: It is the story of a fourteenth-century Sultan of Delhi, "certainly the most brilliant individual ever to ascend the throne of Delhi and also one of the biggest failures. After a reign distinguished for policies that today seem far-sighted to the point of genius, but which in their day earned him the title, 'Muhammad the Mad'; the Sultan ended his career in bloodshed and political chaos."[1] The story of Tughlaq is well-known to us through its proverbial meaning of impractical idealism, and his decision to move his capital from Delhi to Daulatabad and introduction of the copper (popularly believed to be leather) coins are a part of the repertoire of the Indian folk-wisdom. In *Tughlaq* the contemporary Indian reality--political, social, and religious--is unmistakably present.

Tughlaq is written in thirteen scenes with alternation or sometimes continuation of the 'deep' and 'shadow' scenes which are carefully arranged. The exposition is very brief and to the point. It is dramatically cut short for the appearance of the hero on the stage. The crucial decision taken by Tughlaq is suddenly announced by himself at the very start of the dramatic action, which bewilders the 'crowd,' representing the general public. However, people used to the conventional ways of being governed would not favourably respond to Tughlaq's idealistic radicalism and call his decision to shift the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad "mere madness" or "tyranny". The second half of Scene One is given over exclusively to the street-characters. The First Scene, thus, amply demonstrates Karnad's deft dramaturgical craftsmanship in using the conventional technique of a realistic play: here the main themes, characters, situations and issues have been introduced.

The drama of Scene Two shifts to the 'deep scene,' the reality of which is contrasted with that of Scene One. Here the action relates to power-politics, diplomacy and conspiracy. Tughlaq's earlier lieutenant and old-time friend, Ain-ul-Mulk, is now "marching on Delhi" with an army of thirty thousand against the Sultan's army of hardly six thousand. The situation is serious and the problem is almost impossible to be solved through normal arrangements of defense. Tughlaq knows that the Sheikh resembles him, and it is this resemblance which will bring the solution to the present crisis of imminent civil strife on account of the guilty source of Tughlaq's ascent to power and of his certain subjugation by Ain-ul-Mulk. The next situation continues in the 'deep scene.' Here the expected 'murder' of Skeikh Imam-ud-din is announced.

The scene which follows shows the fructification of Ratan Singh's diabolic plan of betrayal. The attempt on Tughlaq's life is foiled. But the killing of Shihab-ud-din would certainly invite the wrath of his powerful father. Tughlaq's mind is the alertest at the moments of crisis. He immediately thinks of his strategy to tide over the present crisis. He makes a public announcement that there was a rebellion in the palace to assassinate the Sultan during prayer, and that the Sultan was saved by Shihab-ud-din who died a martyr's death defending him. Tughlaq, in his furious impatience, orders the complete evacuation of Delhi immediately. He even forbids prayer about which he has been so fanatic in the past. His humanitarian and creative instinct becomes perverted now. This paradox, like the other contradictions in Tughlaq's character, is a pointer to his truly complex personality.

So far two dramatic tensions are created and resolved. A third crisis, with a strong potential of dramatic tension, is hinted at by the shrewd Najib. Najib says that Tughlaq's decree to forbid praying in the kingdom would only lead to a possible opposition by the Ulema. His suggestion to modify the decree--"no more prayers till Ghiyal-ud-din Abbasid, the descendant of the Khalif visits us,"--creates another suspense. Tughlaq acquiesces silently to Najib's diplomatic suggestion. Scene Six closes with Barani's covering the corpse of Shihab-ud-din with a silken cloth which "Muhammad casts aside," and declares in a tyrannical voice, "don't cover him Barani. I want my people to see his wounds." This scene presents a climax in Tughlaq's growing tyranny.

The next scene begins with choric commentary by the two Watchmen on the top of the roof of the fort at Daulatabad. The time of action is "five years later," the end of the gorgeously inglorious reign of the Sultan. The Old Watchman makes a significant ominous forecast--"if this fort ever falls, it will crumble from the inside"--which forebodes the predicament of Tughlaq in the near future. The conversation of the two Watchmen gives a pathetic picture of the feeling of uprootedness among the populace of Delhi, who survived the ordeal of the journey to Daulatabad.[2] The rest of the scene presents a Tughlaq whose inside seems to be tearing into pieces because of his visionary and ideological obsessions producing only the opposite results. Later in the play, Tughlaq continues in the same vein of despondency in his "confessing his self-pity" to Barani. Even the natural bond between man and the rhythm of nature is perversely severed from him.

Tughlaq feels an increasing sense of alienation from his people, from nature, as well as from himself. The once titanic hero seems to be crumbling under the pressure of time and circumstances which appear like malignant supernatural forces, out to humiliate and vanquish him. Barani, symbolising the inner voice and conscience of Tughlaq, advises him to abdicate. Tughlaq confesses, "I have often thought of that myself--to give up this futile see-saw struggle and go to Mecca. And sit beside the Kaaba and search for the peace which Daulatabad hasn't given me."[3] But his conscience would not permit that: "It isn't as easy as leaving the patient in the wilderness because there's no cure for his disease. This patient, racked by fever and crazed by the fear of the enveloping vultures, can't be separated from me."[4] The only way to abdicate for him is by killing himself.

Scene Nine introduces another interesting complication which only leads to a speedy close of the dramatic action. Ghiyas-ud-din, whose imminent arrival was announced, on the suggestion of Najib, as a temporary solace to the Ulema, outraged at the banning of the prayer, is comically trapped by the roguish Aziz, who murders him so that he can go to the palace impersonating him, with the latter's "turban on his head." The Step-Mother confesses that she got Najib, the evil and destructive advisor of the Sultan, killed by poisoning him. She had done it in the interest of the people of the kingdom and the restoration of the earlier image of her stepson. Tughlaq justifies to his Step-Mother his indulgence in bloodshed which "gave me what I wanted--power, strength to recognise myself."[5] Tughlaq gives his last cruel order for his Step-Mother to be taken to prison and stoned to death for adultery.

Scene Ten closes with Barani's "bringing the joyful tidings" which, he believes, would revive the drooping spirit and morale of the Sultan: Ghiyas-ud-in Abbasid, the Holy descendant of the Khalif, is arriving soon into Daulatabad. This scene closes with Muhammad being overwhelmed by the pressure of guilt on his soul. The scene ends with Tughlaq's tortured self, expressed in his bewildered exclamation: "I am teetering on the brink of madness, but the madness of God still eludes me. (Shouting) And why should I deserve that madness? I have condemmed my mother to death and I'm not even sure she was guilty of the crime...."[6]

The 'shallow scene' gets fully entrenched into the 'deep scene' in the last three scenes of the play. Scene Eleven announces the arrival of Aziz, in the guise of Ghiyas-ud-in, accompanied by his disciple, the thieving Aazan. For Tughlaq the last straw to catch onto is Mercy of God through reviving the banned prayer which will keep his people together. His once-abandoned faith in religion is revived with all its earnestness and sincerity when, imploring divine intervention in the present chaos created by him, he falls to the feet of the impersonating Aziz. A kind of peripeteia takes place here when the situation veers round to the opposite of what was expected. Tughlaq had expected that the revival of prayer would make his people happy and satisfied. But the scene, which shows the vast panorama of wasteland created by Tughlaq, shows that people do not want solace in religion any more. The action of the 'shallow scenes' reaches its climax when people refuse to listen to the Sultan or the religious leader and begin riots, showing total anarchy in which the kingdom is now engulfed. Thus there is no further need for the dramatist to retain the disparateness of the 'shallow' and 'deep' scenes.

The dramatic action now acquires an accelerated pace. Aazan, while escaping through the secret passage of the palace with two horse-loads of coins, is killed by the sentry on guard. Tughlaq in a flash perceives that his earnest endeavour to undo his mistakes has only resulted in a farcical denouement. He can only laugh at the whole situation. Ghiyas-ud-din is dicovered to be the mean, treacherous and scheming dhobi, Aziz. Tughlaq's brief altercation with Aziz shows how the latter has by now replaced the former as the intellectual centre of the play. He, as a true 'disciple' of tughlaq, outwits him in the game of real politik -- a game too familiar to the Indian watchers of this game going on in the country, especially during the last fifteen or so years, a downward development in Indian politics from the Nehruvian idealism to real politik.

Tughlaq is now exhausted, helpless, and with a sense of philosophic serenity of acceptance seeks shelter in "all I need now is myself and my madness." Finally, the 'shallow scene' dominates and replaces the 'deep scene,' when the loud call to prayer is heard. This implies the appearance of Aziz on the stage as the sole master, presiding over the denouement of the history of Tughlaq. The final stage direction is significant:

> As the Muezzin's call fades away, Muhammad suddenly opens his eyes. He looks around dazed and frightened, as though he can't comprehend where he is.[7]

This is how the all powerful, learned and wise man of history ends up as an ordinary mortal for whom man's destiny remains a mystery beyond comprehension. Besides this philosophic dimension of the play, Karnad shows tha* man's harmonious existence cannot remain divorced from the natural rhythm of life. Tughlaq, the man and not the ruler, can now have undisturbed sleep.

Thus, what appears to be a history play, with its characteristic linear structure and selected events relevant to the dramatic purpose of the play, is, in fact, a contemporary drama of post-independence India. From the thematic point of view, it is this contemporary relevance of the play which chiefly accounts for its continued popularity. The play also has an appeal to the larger global sense of hostility to autocracy and preference for the rule by the hitherto oppressed masses. Aziz, the representative of the people in the street, replaces the autocratic ruler at the end of the play. The play, as our analysis above has demonstrated, is presented in the largely realistic mode with the folk-theatre conventions at the dramatist's back of mind. The historical events and their surprising turns certainly constitute the story and the outer drama of the play. But the play is a powerful psychological probing into the mind of its hero, is a mysterious bundle of contradictions in his psyche. The inner dissension of mind has been shown with a masterly craftsmanship in the most stage-worthy dramatic convention. Girish Karnad's *Tughlaq* remains a trend-setter for meaningful, serious-minded popular dramatists in our country.

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[1] Girish Karnad, "Author's Introduction," *Three Plays* (Oxford: O.U.P., 1994), p.7.

[2] Ibid., p. 52.

[3] Ibid., p. 55.

[4] Ibid., p. 56.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid., p. 68.

[7] Ibid., p. 86.

BOOK REVIEWS

IFFAT ARA, *THE CONCEPTS OF NATURE AND ART IN THE LAST PLAYS OF SHAKESPEARE*

(NEW DELHI: ABHINAV PUBLICATIONS, 1997), pp. 128.

Sandhya Tripathi

In *The Concepts of Nature and Art*, Dr. Iffat Ara has competently explored Shakespeare's continuing concern in almost all his plays with the need of harmony and balance for a meaningful human existence. The presence of the antithesis between Nature and Art—one vying with the other for supremacy--has always been basic to human life. This antithesis is discernible between impulse and reason, instinct and rationality, humaneness and animality, rural simplicity and courtly intrigue, between reality and illusion, or, in simple terms, between the natural and the artificial. The first ones of the pairs above are the basic, innate human attributes which are sometimes clouded by the second ones when the human pursuits are grossly mundane. Art would, however, mean something deliberately cultivated. It manifests itself in man's thought, behaviour and deeds. The implication will be that it is outside of man. But the Elizabethans, whose ethos Shakespeare represented in his plays, knew that man was the creation of the joint acts of God and Satan. The Satan in man is as innate as God and hence an integral part of man's total reality. It depends which of the two constituents dominates over the other. Harmony or balance in man's life depends upon the relative prominence of the two constituents over each other. Shakespeare's plays work out the operation of Nature and Art and show their eventual balance.

Ms Iffat Ara's explication of the concepts of Nature and Art has utmost flexibility and variety, which can, in fact, be used as a critical framework for the study of any good play. Before coming to the main thrust of her critical investigation (Shakespeare's Romances), the writer demonstrates how Shakespeare in dramatic actions and characters of his comedies and tragedies has presented the conflict between Nature and Art. In all these plays Nature eradiates only when it comes in conflict with Art. In comedies the antithesis between Nature and Art is shown as one between reality and illusion, between self-realisation and self-deception, or between spontaneity and hypocritical artificiality. This is best exemplified by *Twelfth Night*. In tragedies this antithesis is between virtue and vice, between simplicity and hypocrisy, between natural right and legal rights, between light and darkness or sight and blindness, between the essential man and the artificial man. The polarities are synthesized where positivism triumphs over negativism and there is victory in defeat, or life in destruction.

The pattern, as pointed out by Ms Iffat Ara, in the last plays of Shakespeare is similar to that in the comedies and the tragedies. However, the difference lies in Nature being treated in more elemental aspects in the comedies and the last plays. All, Perdita, Imogen and Miranda, are the children of the soil with elemental purity, simplicity, integrity and urge for love and life. Caliban is the best exemplar of Nature in its raw, unrefined form. Prospero, similarly, exemplifies a balance of Nature and Art.

The whole study is characterised by perceptiveness of insight into Shakespeare's presentation of the complexity of human character and behaviour. The textual analysis lends authenticity to the generalizations made. Readers may usefully exploit the theoretical framework of the study to analyse the other plays of Shakespeare.

SUSHEEL KUMAR SHARMA, *THE THEME OF TEMPTATION IN MILTON*

(NEW DELHI: INTELLECTUAL PUBLISHING HOUSE, 1996), pp. 176.

Shrawan K. Sharma

The book under reference, which is a slightly modified form of author's doctoral dissertation and which studies categorically Milton's treatment of the theme of temptation in his great works, *Comus, Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes*, is an absorbing work that compels serious consideration. It is a book which the scholars of Milton cannot afford to ignore. They are likely to find here several new answers to the questions posed in the fields of ethics and literary criticism.

Packed with oriental and occidental ethical views of Jesus Christ, Gautam Buddha and Vedantic ethical thinkers of India, it deals with the tempter and his devices. It studies the characters of Milton and demonstrates how they floodlight his theme and ethical code. In *Comus*, the Lady, who combines in her personality knowledge with morality and withstands the lures offered by Comus, illustrates the view that rigid virtue and absolute avoidance of vice leads one to Heaven. Comus, who makes use of knowledge to gratify his own voluptuousness and fails to withstand the Lady's Brothers, signifies that knowledge sans morality leads to ruin. Jesus's story in *Paradise Regained* is a perpetuation of the ethical view as contained in *Comus* that knowledge with a strong moral aspect not only redeems one from temptation but also leads to heights of glory and pain. In *Paradise Lost*, Adam, who is actuated by an urge to acquire knowledge without the moral fibre and as a result of which he along with Eve falls, offers a good example of the ethical code that knowledge without the adjunct of morality is ruinous. Similarly, the character of Satan in *Paradise Lost* and Samson in *Samson Agonistes* contributes to the view that inordinate ambition issuing forth from ego and pride is a moral deviancy which results in disaster. As a whole, the present study is a confirmation of the belief that every ethical code presupposes the existence of sin in the order of the universe or in the Great-Design, from which one has to free oneself in order to lead a virtuous life.

It is interesting to note that a perceptible change in Milton's attitude to the theme of temptation is discernible in his four works undertaken for the study. *Comus* carries a simple theme which everyman at his young age may experience; *Paradise Lost* comparatively conceives a serious problem, i.e., the 'breach of trust' and 'conspiracy', *Paradise Regained* has the problem as to whom a person must follow, God or Satan; and *Samson Agonistes* deals with the vices and sins the hero must have committed in his lifetime as a man towards the end of his life does.

S.K. Sharma's book, based on a close scrutiny of the mastermind of Milton in his great works, is painstakingly documented and generously acknowledges the vast body of accumulated work done in this field. Milton was neither a mystic nor a metaphysician, yet he shared a good deal of both the oriental and the occidental ethical views as far as the theme of temptation is concerned. Many an obscure corner in the dark, stupendous, shadowy monolith constructed by Milton in his works becomes illuminated when he is read in the context of ideas by which he was inspired and stimulated. This attempt at elucidating Milton's theme of temptation was worth undertaking and would bring rich dividend in its wake.

R.K. AGRAWAL, *THE POETRY OF EMILY DICKINSON*

(NEW DELHI: RADHA PUBLICATIONS, 1993), pp. 392, Rs. 400.

Kajali Sharma

Dr. R.K. Agrawal's book, *The Poetry of Emily Dickinson*, makes an interesting reading. Like the great Romantic poets, Emily Dickinson was endowed with the eye of a genuine creative genius. The beauty that Nature holds up is in the beholder's perspective rather than in Nature herself. To her Nature is within the mind of the beholder, and that is why the poetess remarks: "Why travel to Nature, when she dwells with us." No wonder a large part of Emily Dickinson's poetry deals with Nature themes. There are frequent references, direct and indirect, to various phenomena of Nature. She has written on flowers, bees, birds and spiders, on caterpillars and butterflies, on lightning and volcanoes, on mountains and daisies, and on innumerable other things found in Nature. True, Nature is too complex and bewildering to comprehend. Obviously, Dickinson's philosophy of Nature is very complex, and some critics do not credit her with any originality in this regard. Her poetry postulates no final truths, and she "dwells in possibility" and looks at truth from different poetic angles. It becomes dificult for a scholar to examine a paradoxical vision like that of Emily Dickinson. It is a ceaseless quest for ultimate truths in various aspects of life and human experience. She would repeatedly say that "her business is to love". She wishes to comprehend life in all its complexities by loving everything or creature that makes life. She sings whether anyone listens to her or not. It is through love and poetry that Emily Dickinson wishes to reach the transcendental truth which she calls "Circumference of Truth".

In order to explore fully Dickinson's vision, Dr. Agrawal has drawn five circles that converge on one point and paradoxically make one circumference. As Dickinson has explored all the circles that form the circle of complete life, the author divides the study into different circles, viz. the Eternal Circle (Three Chapters), the Circle of Phenomenal world, the Circle of Emotional world. the Circle of the Poetic world (one chapter each). The major circle, i.e., the Eternal Circle focuses on the themes of Life, Death and Immortality. Keeping the mind at the centre of the quest, she expands her consciousness with her poetic imagination till it radiates enough light to sense the Circumference. Dr. Agrawal rightly observes: "Emily Dickinson looks at things not from a set angle or attitude, but views them from different angles in different moods, and adopts different moods to explore the truth above them. This accounts for the dominance of the paradoxical mode not only in her perception but also in her expression" (p. 365).

The Circle of the Phenomenal world deals with the themes of Reality, Illusion, Evanescence and Perceptibility, Transience and Perpetuity, Finiteness and Infiniteness, and Mutability and Immutability. The Emotional Circle deals with the theme of Love in its exciting varieties. The Spiritual Circle explores the themes of Faith, Man and God, Body and Soul, Heaven and Spiritual Bliss. The last circle, i.e., the Poetic Circle delves deep into the themes of Truth, Beauty, Perception and Experience, Inspiration and Expression, and Subjectivity and Objectivity. All the circles, put together, form what Dickinson calls "The Circumference". Her paradoxical approach to life also helps her in knowing the ultimate truth. She is essentially a poet and not a thinker or a philosopher. Her poems reveal her versatile genius and her full grasp of the art of poetry.

On the whole, the book is very well-written, and Dr. Agrawal's presentation of the material and documentation deserve admiration. But I very much wish that the book should have been free from glaring printing errors. Also, I hold that had this doctoral dissertation been published in the form of a treatise and priced moderately, it would have been extremely useful for the students and young scholars of American poetry.

O.P. MATHUR (Ed.), *SRI AUROBINDO: CRITICAL CONSIDERATIONS*

(BAREILLY: PRAKASH BOOK DEPOT, 1997)

Suresh Nath

This book edited by Prof. O.P. Mathur, a dedicated scholar and renowned teacher of English, is a compendius study of Sri Aurobindo's multi-faceted genius. Aurobinda Basu rightly calls Sri Aurobindo "scholar, journalist, educationist, politician, statesman, revolutionary leader, nation buildor, poet, philosopher, lover of humanity, lover of God, Yogi, guru and Master." Sri Aurobindo "shares the fundamental nature, the comprehensiveness and the depth of divinity itself." He shares the profundity of thought and loftiness of spirit of poets like Valmiki, Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton and Tulsidas, the sages and seers like Confucius, Lao-Tse, Mencius, Adi Shankracharya and J. Krishnamurti. A milestone in Indian philosophy and poetry, he has thrilled his readers all these years. He wrote a number of short lyrical poems, sonnets, *Savitri* in epic-mould, *Urvasia* on the love of a mortal king with a divine being Uravashi, mystic, reflective, symbolical verse on a large variety of subjects, plays, essays, books on philosophy, most notably his *Life Divine.* Apart from his interpretation of the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita, the whole of his intuitive grasping of the knowledge of God and the fervour of his desire for union with the universal spirit is to be seen in his *The Life Divine*, which offers to the world the original thinking of a practicising philosopher. His philosophy is an original individualistic approach to unravel the riddles of the world; it is purely a personal way of life. He, time and again, turns to poetry which capacitates him to express his inner complexities and subtleties of the soul and the poised, harmonious and calm states of mind.

After an exhaustive Introduction by Prof. Mathur, Late Prof. Gokak's article presents a lucid study of Aurobindo's reflective poetry along with that of J.Krishnamurti, Dr. Karan Singh and Anandacharya: Dr. Karan Singh, a renowned scholar of history, religion and philosophy deals with Sri Aurobindo's spiritual thoughts. Prof. Verma in his essay exhaustively deals with the progressive spiritual evolution of man. Prof. K.K. Sharma makes a lucid presentation of a very difficult subject, namely, the poetics of Sri Aurobindo in his article, "Poetry as Mantra of the Real." Nirodbaran, G. Nageswara Rao, Prema Nandkumar and R.K. Singh present a thought-provoking and exhilarating study of *Savitri*, the masterpiece of Aurobindo. Prof. Iyengar's essay, "Milton and Sri Aurobindo", presents an animating account of Sri Aurobindo's response to Milton. Prof. Mathur's essay, "Sri Aurobindo as a Poet of Love", has profundity of thought and lucidity of style. He discusses different types of love. As envisaged by the great Master. L.N. Mishra studies to dramatic genius of Sri Aurobindo, while Dr. U.C. Dubey succesfully surveys Sri Aurobindo's contribution to philosophy, his concept of the Super-mind, Integralism, his reconciliation between contradictory aspects of reality and his Integral Advaitism. The last article in the book by K.D. Sethna, "What Sri Aurobindo Means to Me", reminisces his quest for the Master, his success in meeting "the cosmic consciousness", his days at Pondichery Ashram and his close association with him.

It is not possible to comprehend fully the rainbow colours of a personality like that of Sri Aurobindo. Dr. Mathur's attempt in collecting and presenting various articles authored by eminent scholars at one place is admirable. These essays help the reader to discover his quintessential personality. Dr. Mathur's humble claim with his characteristic humility and courtsey is judicious. He writes: "The present anthology can, at best, claim to have explored only a small fraction of the amplitude Sri Aurobindo is, though the writers are also specialists on Sri Aurobindo and quite a few of them are among the most eminent scholars and thinkers of modern India" (p.10).

The book is a valuable collection of inspiring and scholarly essays on different aspects of Sri Aurobindo's versatile genius. The book is exceptionally free from typographical errors. It is moderately priced, and as such is well within easy reach of Individual students and scholars of Sri Aurobindo. It will also prove immensely useful for all those who venture to explore Indian English poetry, drama, prose and Indian philosophy.

MICHAEL SHARKEY, *STRANGE JOURNEY: POEMS*
(ARMIDALE : KARDOORAIR PRESS, 1995)

Subhas Chandra Saha

To turn everyday existence into memorable lines of poetry is undoubtedly an artistic feat. This feat can be achieved only by a poet with talent and skill. As a poet with talent and skill, Michael Sharkey is a refreshing discovery from the land of kangaroos and peacocks.

Sharkey's art derives its fresh plangency from a set of colloquial words and phrases that capture the hint of the extraordinary in an ordinary quotidian situation, be it based on feeling, observation, or reminiscences. This liberation of poetic art from the shackles of ornate poetic phrases has been achieved by this Australian poet who has not only liberated the art but also extended the range of poetic themes from the metaphysical and philosophical to the physical and the ordinary.Thus in the book under review, Sharkey encapsulates the ordinary events of life, and turns the events inside out, to find out and frame the element of extraordinary in them. This becomes a very refreshing creative process in Sharkey's apparently common poetic articulations.

This creative process of unwinding the common into the uncommon, though the poet fixes his attention on the quotidian, strikes the reader right from the beginning of the first poem of the volume:

> The days seem longer over there:
> a trick of the light or distance, or
> of being inured to streets of stone
> familiar as the feel of bone
> beneath the skin. ('In Aachen')

Sharkey's poetry is replete with the cameos of the commonalties of life. 'In Aachen' ends as if nothing has happened.

Even the theme of love doesn't evoke high-sounding words nor romance postures. Sharkey has pruned down the poem 'The Reattachment' to an artless colloquial confession:

> I supposed that others travelled
> to your heart the way I'd known
> but they had not--
> or like a novice, I forgot.

Modern poetry has alienated common readers by its obfuscating verbal collocations. Poetry can become common people's reading once more if Sharkey's direct speech patterns are adopted by poets at large. Collocation of common words acquires an uncommon plangency in Sharkey's poetry:

> and in this rented world we spend
> our rented time and rented love:
> I celebrate in rented lines,
> as if the rented words were mine. ('Rent')

The title of a poem 'Elegy for an Average Man' is expressive of the attitude of the audience who prefers Sharkey's poetry. His is the poetry of the average man -- no posturing, no idea-pandering, no high-falution gimmicks. The poem describes the man:

> he joined the public service
> where clerks melt away like wax,
> and didn't harm a person:
> paid his rent and paid his tax.

'Poem for Wilton' celebrates the common average man, his innocent joys and sorrows.

Sharkey's lines make silence speak. 'Poem in the style of Andre du Bouchet' transforms the inarticulate feelings into articulate symbols. Another poem 'Poem of Translation into Any other Tongue' gives us the simple tantalising lines. In 'The Commonwealth of Loss', Sharkey evokes the pastoral loss, the loss of the old world in the countryside and small towns of Australia. However, sorrow alone isn't what Sharkey celebrates; he welcomes the spring in the Australian farm:

> Air's sweet,
> with sap and tang
> in spring. ('Clark's Farm')

'Taking It Easy' is another poem that looks at the ordinary with sense of wonder.

Sharkey is bent on bringing about a change in the poetic style of Australian poetry -- from the rhetorical, metaphorical and symbolic style of A.D. Hope, James McAuley and Judith Wright to the plain, direct and ordinary style. Sharkey's style is welcome, as it would bring poetry back to the taste of the people at large.

In this volume of poetry under review, Sharkey has started a verbal game between the ordinary and the extraordinary -- a game that invites both the senses and the psyche of the reader, seducing him/her into the game between words and silence, inducting him/her in an extraordinary voyage towards a fresh set of sensations, reminiscences and reflections on the far extended horizons of reality. Unreality is shut off by Sharkey but he creates a world where sensations of romance dawn and expand,taking the reader back into his/her own internal world.

ANURAG SHARMA, *A DIMENSION OF THE ANGEL: A STUDY OF LES MURRAY'S POETRY*

(JAIPUR: BOHRA PRAKASHAN, 1997), pp. 201, Rs.400.

K.K. Sharma

Dr. Anurag Sharma's book, *A Dimension of the Angel*, is a revealing study of the distinguished modern Australian poet. Leslie Allan Murray, who is especially remarkable for transcending the confines of race, nation and class. It presents a penetrating study of Les Murray's distinctive themes from the viewpoint of an Indian reader. An outstanding analysis of Murray's wide range of subject matter and poetic technique, Dr. Sharma's book has successfully brought out the poet's central concern with integration.

Australia is a land of paradoxes, as Dr. Sharma remarks: "...the flattest of the continents, and yet its flatness is too mysteriously wide, too awesomely far-stretched to let a traveller mistake the land for a soft drink: it puts him to the hardest ordeal and very often renders him a lost child; the oldest of the land masses, and yet the latest to be discovered; a continent-turned-country, a country-turned-continental. Its history, myths and legends are all fresh and young, yet not vociferous and volatile; a land of kangaroos, it is coming out of its own pouch, galloping, groping through the outback, its heart-land" (p.6). It is a land which poses a dilemma of existence and identity of new settlers. The problem of identity has been a crucial one to almost all the writers and social philosophers of the nation, as is quite evident from the works of Furphy, Brennan, Herbert Mc Auley, Patrick White, John Lehmann and Murray. They do not belong to a particular school of poetry or movement; they have written individually -- every one of them writing in a personal and distinctive style of his own. Murray exemplifies the great paradox, regional in attitude and yet cosmopolitan to the core. He has been able to produce poetry of the highest quality. His works reveal his keen interest in Indian myths and legends. The title of the book is suggestive of Murray's belief in Art being "A dimension of the Angel."

Murray has, to his credit, more than a dozen volumes, three collections of prose pieces and a lot of expository writings. His treatment of some recurring themes reveals the distinct pattern of development and growth of his poetic genius. His deep-felt personal experiences, particularly of his youthful war days, have an abiding impact on his mental make-up. His interior and exterior sing together. His poetic credo has given his poetry a harmonious pattern and a integrated design. He is against all those who oppose integration. He has not only propounded cultural fusion , but also has practised it.

Murray's poetic life can be divided into three phases. The first phase covers his creative period upto 1965 during which he mainly dealt with a large variety of experiences and produced poems of moods with his experience and the self merged into each other. The second phase spreads over the period from 1965 to 1976 which marks his poetic growth, evincing his deep insight into the life around him and his intimate relation to the outer world. Dr. Sharma remarks about this period thus: "As a result he seems to find a parallel between his private self and his public self: the within and the without seem to collate and co-relate with each other"(p.181). The third phase covers the period from 1976 to 1997. His latest poetical work, *Subhuman Redneck Poems*(1997), offers us a blending of the universal with the local. The "I" of the previous phases becomes the cosmic "We". Also, it presents a fusion of cultures in art, and this enables Murray to attain international stature.

Dr. Anurag Sharma, a discerning scholar of Australian literature, evinces a genuine understanding of the complexities of the dilemma of Australian authors. An illuminating study, the book is the first full-length evaluation of Murray's poetic genius. It, as envisaged by the author, successfully achieves the twin objectives of introducing Murray to Indian readers and bringing out Indian element in his poetry.

On the whole, the book is a very fine specimen of competent doctoral research. But one thing about it makes me slightly unhappy; it is costly and is not within the reach of an average student. I think a cheap paperback edition of it will certainly prove a major stride towards the introduction of Australian literature to the young scholars of the world.

POINTS OF VIEW

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