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COUSIN WESTMORELAND IN SHAKESPEARE'S HENRIAD

S. Viswanathan

Of the numerous subordinate characters in Shakespeare, a few call attention to themselves in some ways. There are several characters who start as functions but emerge as persons of sorts in due course. Among such, there are a few to whom the playwright lends an individual touch. Westmoreland who appears, as several other figures also do, in the two parts of *Henry IV* and *Henry V* is interesting in certain ways. To mention a few other examples, Antonio in *Twelfth Night* shows himself to be an inveterate Platonist with his commitment to friendship with Sebastian and his faith in ideal beauty entailing goodness. Lafeu in *All's Well* strikes us with his queer mixture of worldliness and wisdom.

Westmoreland's closeness to King Henry IV and to Prince John and Prince Hal and later to Hal as King Henry V is strong in the plays. It is he who serves as Henry IV's eyes and ears, receiving and processing all the news and intelligence, and sets the priorities for the steps to be taken by the king to meet the situation of rebellion by the Lords. Even Falstaff is shown as writing letters presumably of state to Westmoreland in order to keep his pretence of fulfilling the role of a knight that he is (*Henry IV* pt. 1, 3.3. 218; pt. 2, 1.2. 72-73). Henry IV, Prince John and Prince Harry even after he becomes king always addresses him as 'cousin Westmoreland' or 'my cousin', 'our cousin' and 'good cousin Westmoreland' and it is a relationship of mutual endearment, commitment and trust. He is with Prince John in the Battle of Shrewsbury, and more prominently in the Gaultree Forest encounter and also with Henry V in his ways in France. Though as a counsellor he is a perennial handy, Shakespeare does not give him any role as an actual fighter in battle and makes him very much a 'ground' rather than a 'battle' figure. But Westmoreland's role and behaviour become particularly interesting in two scenes: first, in *Henry IV*, Pt. 1(4.2) where he in Prince Harry's company runs into Falstaff at the head of his ragged army, and, the second time, in the Gaultree Forest scenes (4. 1 and 2) in

Henry IV Pt. 2.

When Westmoreland meets Falstaff and the ragged recruits pressed by him, in Prince Harry's company, Falstaff sensing that the staid courtier will take him up on still tarrying in Warwickshire instead of joining the king and his men in their war camp, tosses the query at him why he should still be seen in Warwickshire while it was high time for him to be with the king, taking for granted his companion Prince Harry. Westmoreland agrees only too well he is yet to reach there, though he has sent his army there in advance. But when the Prince comments on the travesty of what Falstaff calls his scraggly troop, Westmoreland's remark with its tone meant to confirm the Prince's words exhibits a queer combination of naivety, primness, demureness and lack of aliveness to Falstaff's nature and situation.

Ay, but, Sir John, methinks they are
Exceeding poor and bare, too beggarly

Henry IV, Pt. 1 (4.2. 75-76)

It shows how the seasoned courtier is stiff-minded and hence out of touch with what is on hand. The dramatist means to suggest an effect of contrast between Westmoreland's limitations of mental horizon and Prince Hal's ease in responding to Falstaff on his wavelength, his mastery of the art of good mixing, mingling with all sorts and conditions of men and speaking to them in their own language and his achievement of a sufficient understanding and hence control of them for the timely use of royal power when it is called for. Perhaps Westmoreland's attitude and utterance can be looked at another way. It can be taken as Westmoreland employing a typical English understatement out of politeness towards the addressee. But it looks as though Shakespeare meant to create the effect of contrast with Prince Hal, mentioned earlier.

The way Shakespeare depicts the role of Westmoreland in the treacherous war-stratagem practised by Prince John and party on the rebel lords led by the Archbishop of York at Gaultree Forest is notable in a few respects. Despite the key role Westmoreland takes in the affair, Shakespeare leaves the question how far Westmoreland is responsible for the trick 'gingerly in doubt'. The dramatist does

not adopt the majority view held by chroniclers such as Holinshed that it was Westmoreland who originated and hatched the trick of making Prince John pretend to agree to satisfy the terms set up by the rebels in their schedule of grievances, win over them, thus to drink with him and Prince John in a sham display of reconciliation and friendship get them to disperse their armies, finally thus trapping them and arresting them for high treason. Shakespeare gives Westmoreland a key role in the negotiations of the affair but problematises the question how far he is responsible.

First of all, there is the broad question whether the subterfuge can be justified even in a war situation. Among critics there have been several apologists for the employment of such trickery though fraught with perfidy in such a context. Among these are Paul A. Jorgensen and Geoffrey Bullough.¹ Jorgensen cites extensively from the works of the 1590s in which measures of this kind are justified in terms of both the ethics of war and religion. Bullough is of the view that there is no 'moral turpitude' involved in Prince John's luring of the rebel leaders with what turn out to be false promises.

Westmoreland who broaches the proposition to the rebel leaders, meeting them in their camp, succeeds in convincing them. He displays considerable skill in the presentation of his argument and his persuasion, keeping his ground. He starts by expressing his sense of being scandalized by the Archbishop, of all persons coming to wage a war against the king. When the Archbishop responds by insisting on his being compelled to join the rebellion on account of the non-redressal of his and other rebels' grievances and the non-hearing of these by the king, Westmoreland very cleverly invokes the argument that it is time rather than the king which makes them feel victimized. At this point Shakespeare brings up the theme of time which figures across the play 'Time' with the theme underlying it, comes to be characterized as 'necessity' in the terminology that Shakespeare puts into the mouth of King Henry IV

Are these things then necessities?
Then let us face them like necessities;
And that same word even now cries out us.

Henry IV, Pt. 2.

Again when Mowbray speaks about Richard II stopping the sword fight at the tilts at Coventry between his father and Bolingbroke and banishing the latter which led to Bolingbroke's coming back and becoming the king, Westmoreland again cleverly points out that the popularity of Bolingbroke was such that the older Mowbray would have been lynched by the masses after his victory, had he killed Bolingbroke at the tilts. Thereby, he shrewdly albeit indirectly reminds the rebel lords that the king has the commons very much on his side. He is able to convince the lords, so that the Archbishop on their behalf hands him a schedule of grievances to be redressed by Prince John who has the authority to do it, relegated to him by the king. When Westmoreland brings back message that Prince John has agreed to settle their grievances, they go to meet him in his camp. Prince John also convinces them, and the two sides settle down to drink together. The rebel lords decide to order their troops disbanded. Under the pretence of asking his troops on the king's side to march past him, Prince John brings his soldiers on to his presence. At that moment, it is Westmoreland who springs the fatal surprise on the Archbishop and all the rebel lords by arresting them for high treason in their vulnerable state. Westmoreland is so much inured to a faith in the king and royalty's unquestionable supremacy and authority and so deeply committed to his loyalty to the king that any idea of defiance of the king or resistance, worse still, rebellion against him, is totally anathema to him. Such unswerving loyalty is in his blood, and this relationship is reinforced by the strong and unbreakable bonds of family which bind him to the king and his sons as cousin. No wonder then that he participates in the elaborate stratagem though, basically, it is Machiavellian policy rather than ethics proper that governs it.

In *Henry V* Westmoreland is seen constantly in close company with Henry V. His remark on the hypocritical appearance of innocence and loyalty of Grey, Scroop and Cambridge whose letter to the French king offering betrayal of Henry V to him while in France has been intercepted and seized by Henry V, unbeknown to them, makes it appear that he is a stranger to courtly hypocrisy.

How smooth and even they do bear themselves

As if allegiance in their bosoms sat,
Crowned with faith and constant loyalty.

Henry IV, 2.2. 6-8

Or, Shakespeare for the nonce uses him as a choric commentator, when Henry V clinches his decision to invade France, it is Westmoreland who reads the situation well, and gives the strategic advice that a sizable fraction of the army should be retained in England to deter Scotland from seizing the opportunity to invade England in the absence of Henry V and his army when the same Westmoreland expresses a passing regret to Henry V.

O! that we now had here
But one ten thousand of those men in England
That do no work today

It fixes Henry V in his determination that he should carry on the fight with the men available with him and leads him to make the inspiring 'St. Crispin's day' speech.

Shakespeare, thus, invests Westmoreland with an intriguing role. The role is a fairly demanding one with the character put into different situations, and is an opportunity for an actor who can provide such a cameo. The character emerges as strong delineation of the old world ideals of loyalism and familism, indeed a blend of these two values in a changing world.

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'In Paul A. Jorgensen, 'The "Dastardly Treachery" of Prince John of Lancaster' *PMLA*, 76 (1961), 488-492 and Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, 1962, 258-59.

Quotations from Shakespeare in this article are from the old Oxford Shakespeare, ed. W.J. Craig (London: OUP, 1954).

ROLE OF CHILDREN IN THE LAST PLAYS OF SHAKESPEARE

Iffat Ara

Shakespeare's last four plays explicitly reveal the experiences of the major characters while the children get involved in a variety of adventures. Hence the old and the young finally present a comprehensive view of life. Life and death, spring and winter, the ideal and the real, the young and the old also reflect various shades of human existence. The old characters get involved in dire situations on account of their recklessness but human endeavour symbolized by their children never fails to reinstate them.

Like Prince Hal in *King Henry IV Part I* the royal children in the last Plays are somehow linked with the lower strata of life. It enables them to humanize themselves. Now from a common platform they can have a bird's eye-view of things. Also an exposure to the elemental forces of Nature chastens their existence and they can grapple with the problems of life with greater earnestness.

What distinguishes the Last Plays from the other writings of Shakespeare is the fact that the protagonists after going through a process of tribulation are restored to their former position. This moral development is possible on account of their self-control and the redeeming influence of their progeny. Miranda brings together Alonso and Prospero, Perdita and Florizel unite their estranged parents, Imogen and her brothers win the heart of their indifferent father and Marina inspires love in Pericles whose absence had reduced him into a pessimist. The heroes in Shakespearean tragedies turn away from life but in the Last Plays they acquire a new perspective of it.

The heroes in the Last Plays are either confined or isolated for a specific period of time. They undergo a ritual of regeneration usually initiated by their innocent children. Their presence or intervention enlighten their existence. The use of rituals pertaining to nature are very well employed by Shakespeare in the Last Plays. In *Pericles* Marina is found adorning her nurse's grave with flowers:

No, I will rob Tellus of her weed,
To strew thy green with flowers; thy yellows, blues,
The purple violets, and marigolds,
Shall as a carpet hand upon thy grave,

While summer - days doth last. (Act IV, Sc. i, 13-17)

Like Perdita in *The Winter's Tale* Marina also appears as a flower-maiden carrying flowers in a basket. In *Cymbeline* Imogen is covered with flowers whose apparent death is mourned thus:

With fairest flowers
 Whilst summer lasts, and I live here, Fidele,
 I'll sweeten thy sad grave: thou shalt not lack.
 The flower that's like thy face, pale primrose, nor
 The aszur'd harebell, like thy veins; no, nor
 The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander,
 Out-sweet'ned not thy breath: the ruddock would,
 With charitable bill (o bill, sore shaming
 Those rich-left heirs, that let their fathers lie
 Without a moment!) Bring thee all this;
 Yea, and furr'd moss besides. (Act IV, Sc.ii, 219-228)

In *The Winter's Tale* during the celebration of the sheep-shearing festival Perdita assumes the role of the 'fertility goddess' and distributes flowers to the guests:

Here's flowers for you:
 Hot lavender, mints, savory, marjoram,
 The marigold, that goes to bed wi'th' sun
 And with him rises, weeping: these are flowers
 Of middle summer, and I think they are given
 To men of middle age. (Act IV, Sc. iv, 103-108)

In *The Tempest* the masque of Ceres is also an enactment of the ritual of fertility:

Earth's increase, foison plenty,
 Barns and garners never empty;
 Vines, with clust' ring bunches growing;
 Plants with goodly burden bowing;
 Spring come to you at the farthest
 In the very end of harvest!
 Scarcity and want shall shun you;
 Ceres' blessing so is on you. (Act IV, Sc. iv, 110-117)

This constant emphasis on the renewal of life suggested by the rites of fertility keeps the notion of awakening to reality very much in view. It inspires the birds to mate, the plants to grow and the human folk to proceed on pilgrimage for the purification of their souls. Their quest of truth will redeem them.

The children in the Last Plays were constantly involved in their quest like Ulysses to explore new shores. This was an exciting experience for them because they did not stick to old concepts and beliefs. Animated by new thoughts they were always awake and

watching and looked forward to probing deep and further. In *Cymbeline*, Imogen's role is significant. Unlike her thoughtless father who almost neglected her and banished Posthumus from Britain she exhibited Amazonian courage and went in search of her husband. Her experience during the course of her adventures revealed to her the subtleties of both life and love. Her encounter with the lost brothers had a deep impact on her mind. Their gentlemanly code of conduct made them excel the countiers:

How hard it is to hide the sparks of Nature!
 These boys know little they are sons to th' king,
 Nor Cymbeline dreams that they are alive.
 They think they are mine, and though train'd up thus meanly,
 I' th' cave wherein they bow, their thoughts do hit
 The roofs of palaces, and Nature prompts them
 In simple and low things to prince it, much
 Beyond the trick of others. (Act III, Sc. iii, 79-86)

Giderins and Arviragus exhibit their noble birth through their savage upbringing. The noble sentiment of compassion and help that they extend to others is ever present in them. Misguided by the wicked Queen Cymbeline was responsible for disturbance and discord both in his home and in Britain. Also he stopped payment of tribute to Rome. The combined efforts of the children along with divine Providence saved the characters from a state of despair:

The benediction of these covering heavens
 Fall on their heads like dew, for they are worthy
 To inlay heaven with stars. (Act V, Sc. v. 351-352)

In *Pericles* Marina's closeness to nature, her innocent faithfulness and the wonderful effect of music like the image of Orpheus whose power of music tamed ferocious animals also restored Pericles to normalcy:

She, questionless, with her sweet harmony
 And other chose attractions, would allure,
 And make a batt'ry through his deazen'd ports,
 Which now are midway stopp'd. (Act V, Sc.i, 44-47)

In *The Winter's Tale* when Leontes Strank away from the warmth of love towards his wife he was deprived of both his children:

Apollo's angry, and the heavens themselves
 Do strike at my injustice. (Act III, Sc.ii, 146)

The one was lost forever while the other like a natural flower grew up without the assistance of art. Nature is designed according to the vision of the artist but it can never diminish the potencies of nature.

When the pious love of the younger generation absorbs the intensity of hatred found among the old all shackles are broken and removed. In *The Tempest* both Ferdinand and Miranda who are best specimens of nature and nurture counterbalance the decadence of the sophisticated countiers:

I warrant you sir;
The white-cold virgin snow upon my heart
Abates the ardour of my liver. (Act IV, sc. i, 54-55)

And when Miranda looked upon Ferdinand for the first time she confessed:

I might call him
A thing divine; for nothing natural
I ever saw so noble. (Act I, sc.ii, 414-415)

The children nullify the effect of bitterness and exercise the healing powers of spontaneous love.

A misappropriation of the word 'love' by the old generation is the cause of all imbalance and disruption in the Last Plays. The children with their advanced vies and flexible natures offer a telescopic view of this truth. By keeping away from known surroundings and men they learn to judge things more objectively. Love is handled by them like the outline sketch of a painting. The mixing of colours, the vision of the artist, the technical skill are the various modes that bring perfection to art. Love is likewise interpreted by them in a variety of ways and one cannot draw a line of demarcation to confine this boundless truth. Marina explains it through her power of music:

Proclaim that I can sing, weave, sew and dance,
With other virtues, which I'll keep from boast;
And will undertake all these to teach. (Act IV, sc. vi, 181-184)

Imogen goes in quest of it:

This attempt
I am soldier to, and will abide it with
A prince's courage. (Act III, sc.iv, 184-186)

Perdita inspires love in the hearts of men through her role of a fertility goddess:

This your sheep-shearing:
Is as a meeting of the petty gods,
And you the queen on't. (Act IV, sc. iv, 2-4)

And Miranda is an epitome of love whose existence permeates affection:

The very instant that I saw you did,
My heart fly to your service; there resides,
To make me slave to it. (Act III, sc. i, 64-66)

And yet these young men and women are fair enough to their elders who are regenerated into rare combinations.

It is an amazing truth that despite all upheavals the children in the Last Plays are guarded by powers above for they are the agents of change who like saint Joan are never crushed:

Knowing by Paulina that the Orache
Gave hope that thou wast in being, have preserv'd
Myself to see the issue. (Act V, sc. iii, 126-127)

Saint Joan was burnt alive for her enlightened views on religion that were not heeded by the men of her times. But her heart, a symbol of truth and love, would not burn like the hair-breath escape of the children in The Last Plays: They are the saviours like Christ who was responsible for the safety of others:

Now, blessing on thee! rise; thou art my child.
Give me fresh garments. (Act V, sc.i, 212-213)

As the triumph of nature over art is very well brought out in the Last Plays similarly the glorification of love is also made known through the assignment of adequate roles to the children. Ferdinand's father is not lost as Ariel's song conveys the thought that nature takes care of him:

Fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes;
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange. (Act I, sc. ii, 304-309)

Miranda manages to escape from all ordeals along with her father who is a source of comfort to her:

Here in this island we arriv'd; and here
Have I, thy schoolmaster, made thee more profit
Than other princes can, and have more time
For vainer hours and tutors not so careful. (Act I, sc. ii, 171-174)

Marina is united with her grief-stricken father:

I embrace you.
Give me my robes; I am wild in my beholding.
O heavens bless my girl! (Act V, sc.i, 220-222)

Imogen is rejuvenated on her final recovery:

Cymbeline: how now, My flesh, my child?
Imogen: your blessing, Sir. (Act V, sc. v, 24-266)

Perdita and Ferdinand enrich others by their mutual love:

Welcome hither,
As is the spring to th'earth. (Act V, sc. i, 150-151)

The only armour that the children employ in the Last Plays is that of disguise. Imogen, Marina, Perdita, Florizel and Posthumus change their identities to achieve their ideals in life. Even Miranda appears to be like a goddess whom Ferdinand could not help admiring:

Most sure, the goddess:

On whom these airs attend! Vouchsafe, my prayer,

May know if you remain upon this island. (Act I, sc. ii, 418-420)

Hence such deception required to maintain discipline and order in life, to turn sorrow into joy and meant for beneficent purposes is approved by Shakespeare.

In the Last Plays the girls outshine, the boys as spring prevails over winter and yet these combinations cannot be disturbed for they make up the cycle of life: "If winter comes can spring be far behind." Together they renew what is colourless and incomplete. Leontes will regain a son and a daughter when he unites in love with his Queen. When Ferdinand and Miranda are found playing chess all ugliness of life is removed. Posthumus's moral education is complete when he is united with Imogen and comes to terms with her father and brothers. Marina's endurance and sufferings result in her final victory over falsehood. One therefore concludes that despite all lapses men and women in the Last Plays are capable of loving one another:

Give me your hands:

Let grief and sorrow still embrace his heart,

That doth not wish you joy!

(Act V, sc. i, 213-214)

And like Browning Shakespeare also held the notion that when united in marriage the celebration of true love takes place. The Princes and Princesses therefore proceed from a state of innocence to that of experience and this helps in the growth of their personalities. Also they sufficiently educate their elders and together they rejoice in their success. The parents' role is no less relevant than that of children in the Last Plays for like all sensible beings they value the child's safety as a compensation for all their bickerings and losses:

Here is this island we arriv'd; and here

Have I, thy schoolmaster, made thee more profit.

Than other princes can, that have more time.

For vainer hours and tutors not so careful. (Act I, sc. ii, 171-173)

The motifs of the sea-voyage, death by water or other losses and rebirth all suggest the 'great elemental cycle'. Marina a creative artist, Perdita a flower-maiden, Imogen an adventurer and Miranda

educated in the lap of Nature are all reflections of Wordsworth's ideal of English maidenhood presented through the character of Lucy.

The children in the Last Plays help their parents to overcome an unnatural state of affairs in which they are all trapped. It is made possible through their 'artistry' and 'grace', their special powers and 'mysterious force'. Their 'healing gifts' prove effective and all the children are recognized as 'healing figures' whose various sense organs and innate natures make possible the spiritual growth of their parents. They are embodiments of Hope which brings revelation of truth to the seemingly impercipient parents. In most of these plays either sea-change or change through the intercession of Powers above or even through knowledge the lives of characters are transformed.

The Last Plays with the key-role played by children end on a note of hope because ultimately the artificialities and sinful stubbornness of the countiers is merged with the natural simplicity of the nobly born children who are brought up in the healthy surroundings of the countryside. The lost children also symbolize natural goodness and grace that has to be reached:

Prithee, speak;
Falseness cannot come from thee, for thou look'st,
Modest as Justice, and thou seem'st a palace
For the crown'd Truth to dwell in. (Act V, sc. i, 119-122)

The loving relationship of children and parents in various modes ends in blessing and forgiveness and nature seems to express its fecundity and fruitfulness through them. Thus the bondage of sin is replaced by the freedom of nature.

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³*Pericles*. The Arden Shakespeare, edited by F.D. Hoeniger. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1969.

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INDIAN SYMBOLS IN T.S. ELIOT'S POETRY

A.N. Dwivedi

Eliot who was deeply influenced by the French Symbolists wrote scintillating verses abounding in images and symbols. Some of the symbols employed by him in his poetry are characteristically Indian in origin and application. Such Indian symbols are: the lotus, the wheel, the darkness, the light or sunshine, the purification by fire, the river and the sea, and the bird. Well, it has to be pointed out that while the lotus, the wheel and the darkness are typically Indian symbols, others fall within the purview of universal application. Here in this paper I shall discuss these symbols *vis-à-vis* Eliot's poetry in detail.

The lotus is a symbol of purity, fertility and birth. The mud out of which it grows stands for the womb and the water around it for the maternal procreative vitality. On a higher level, there is the Cosmic Lotus about which Heinrich Zimmer writes thus:

When the divine life substance is about to put forth the universe, the cosmic waters grow a thousand-petaled lotus of pure gold, radiant as the sun. This is the door or gate, the opening or mouth, of the womb of the universe. It is the first product of the creative principle, gold in token of its incorruptible nature.... According to the Hindu conception, the waters are female; they are the maternal, procreative aspect of the Absolute, and the cosmic lotus is their generative organ. The cosmic lotus is called "The highest form or aspect of Earth", also "The Goddess Moisture", "The Goddess Earth". It is personified as the Mother Goddess through whom the Absolute moves into creation.¹

The symbol of the lotus is thus generally used to indicate productivity, both in its limited and cosmic senses. The noted critic, Herbert Howarth, rightly maintains that the lotus is one of the Hindu images which have been "naturalized in the Western imagination and languages."² This image or symbol is well within the Buddhist tradition too and is taken over particularly in "the iconography of Mahayana Buddhism by the universal savior Padmapani ("Lotus in Hand"), the greatest among the Bodhisattvas or the immortal helpers of the Buddhas."³ The *Gita* tells us that the lotus is an object of purity:

He who acts offering all actions to God, and shaking off attachment remains untouched by sin, as the lotus-leaf by water.⁴

In another place, it pictures Brahma, the God of Creation, as "perched on his lotus-seat."⁵ Elsewhere Arjuna wants to see Lord Krishna's four-armed shape "bearing the conch, *chakra*, mace and lotus."⁶ It is to be recalled that Lord Krishna is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu.⁷

Eliot employs this symbol in the first movement of "Burnt Norton":

Dry the pool, dry concrete, brown edged,
And the pool was filled with water out of sunlight,
And the lotos rose, quietly, quietly....

Here the lotos is pictured as floating on the surface of the dry pool. According to Kristian Smidt, its import may be phallic, but its Buddhist associations are far more immediate. He feels that it is "a symbol of complete reality of which sensible things (the concrete pool) are only a part."⁸ Zimmer thinks that the lotus plant is a product of the vegetation of India proper, and that it was foreign to the Aryan invaders who poured in from northern homelands.⁹

Another fundamentally Indian symbol¹⁰ used by Eliot is the wheel. The *Gita* has frequently used it in its texture.¹¹ This symbol stands for birth, death and rebirth. The terrible wheel may be an illusion, yet it holds us prisoners in this world:

Maya makes all things, what moves, what is unmoving.
O son of Kunti, that is why the world spins,
Turning its wheel through birth
And through destruction.¹²

The noted critic, Louis Martz, opines that Eliot uses this symbol to show the "eternally decreed pattern of suffering."¹³ The symbol is to be seen in "Gerontion", *The Waste Land* (1922), "Ash Wednesday", "Burnt Norton", *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935) and *The Family Reunion* (1939).

Eliot has also used the symbol of darkness in his poetry, and this symbol is essentially Indian, as Philip Wheelwright has aptly suggested.¹⁴ The *Gita* gives us the following:

In that which is night to all things, therein the self-subjugated remains awake,
but where all else is awake, that is night for the knower of the self.¹⁵

Compare it with the following in the *Isa Upanishad* (9):

Into blinding darkness enter those who worship ignorance and those who delight in the knowledge enter into still greater darkness, as it were.¹⁶

Obviously enough, the darkness signifies both 'ignorance' (*avidya*) of the unilluminated and 'knowledge' (*vidya*) of the illumined. That's why the ignorant as well as the knower is said to be moving in the dark. It is definitely an ambivalent symbol. It is first applied in "Gerontion":

Signs are taken for wonders. 'We would see a sign!'

The word within a word, unable to speak a word, swaddled with darkness.

This symbol is emphatically employed in "Burnt Norton" and "East Coker". In "Burnt Norton", we find:

Descend lower, descend only
Into the world of perpetual solitude,
World not world, but that which is not world,
Internal darkness, deprivation
And destitution of all property....

And "East Coker" offers us the following:

O dark dark dark. They all go into the dark,
The vacant interstellar spaces, the vacant into the vacant,
The captains, merchants, bankers, eminent men of letters.

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

The repeated application of this symbol by Eliot convinces the reader that the poet is trying in his *Four Quartets* (1943) to spread a network of systematic symbolism.

At times Eliot has employed physical symbols to express his spiritual ideas. The symbol of the light or sunshine is of this nature. In the poem "La Figlia Che Piange", Eliot writes thus:

Stand on the highest pavement of the stair —
Lean on a garden urn —
Weave, weave the sunlight in your hair.

A remarkable use of the symbol is to be had in the fourth movement of "Burnt Norton":

Time and the bell have buried the day,
The black cloud carries the sun away.

And again in the same place:

After the kingfisher's wing
Has answered light to light,
And is silent, the light is still
At the still point of the turning world.

And once again:

Sudden in a shaft of sunlight
Even while the dust moves
There rises the hidden laughter
Of children in the foliage.

As we know, the symbol of light or sunshine stands for the spiritual consciousness in man. It is this consciousness which leads him from ignorance to real knowledge (that is, Brahman). This symbol is beautifully used in *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* (1. 3. 28) where the seer prays to Brahman to grant the 'light' – 'Tamaso ma jyotirgamaya'.

The purification by fire is one of the recurring symbols used by Eliot in his poetry, and this, according to Smidt, is "a Hindu symbol."¹⁷ Of course, the fire has been frequently referred to in the Hindu scriptures as a purifier of sins. Thus the *Rig Veda* offers us the following hymns:

Shining brightly, Agni, drive away,
Our sin, and shine thou wealth on us.
Shining bright, drive away our sin.

For good fields, for good homes, for wealth,
We made our offerings to thee.
Shining bright, drive away our sin.

May he be the best of these praisers,
foremost our chiefs who worship.
Shining bright, drive away our sin.

.....
Carry us across, as by a boat
across the sea, for our good.
Shining bright, drive away our sin.¹⁸

In an identical tone, the *Chhandogya Upanishad* says as follows:

He who knowing this meditates (on the fire) destroys sinful actions, becomes possessor of (this) world, reaches full life, lives brightly. His descendants do not perish. Both in this world and in the yonder we serve him, who knows this, meditates (on the fire).¹⁹

The *Gita* also informs us thus:

The blazing fire turns wood to ashes –
The fire of knowledge turns all *karmas* to ashes.²⁰

In this very holy text, Lord Krishna reveals his nature to Arjuna in

this way – "I am the sacred fire, and I am verily the act of offering oblations into the fire."²¹

"The Fire Sermon", which sees the human world as 'burning' in the 'fire' of lust and passion (and hence suffering inescapably), suggests implicitly the practice of asceticism to put out this fire. It is at this critical juncture that Eliot collocates Lord Buddha and St. Augustine. This symbol has been used very effectively in the fourth movement of "Little Gidding":

The dove descending breaks the air
With flame of incandescent terror
The one discharge from sin and terror.
The only hope, or else despair
Lies in the choice of pyre or pyre –
To be redeemed from fire by fire.

.....
We only live, only suspire
Consumed by either fire or fire.

The passage evidently refers to two kinds of 'fire' – "the fire of desire or the fire of love" and "the fire of becoming or the fire of being."²² It is the latter that purges human existence on earth. In fact, "Little Gidding" abounds in this symbol, and that's why critics and scholars have invariably called it 'a poem of fire'. In this connection, Miss Helen Gardner has remarked as under:

"Little Gidding" is a poem of fire, the fire which is torment to the self-loving, purgation to the penitent, and ecstasy to the blessed, and it closes with mortal and immortal life united in the resurrection symbol of the rose of heaven.²³

K.N. Sinha is of the opinion that "Little Gidding" is "a poem of fire which is the crown of the whole sequence."²⁴ A close look at the poem reveals that the different polarities of the 'fire' symbol are reconciled in the superior drift of love. Thus, 'frost and fire', 'pentecostal fire', and the communication of the dead which is 'tongued with fire beyond the language of the living' of the first movement, 'the death of water and fire' and the restoration of the exasperated spirit by 'that refining fire/ Where you must move in measure, like a dancer' of the second movement, the two fires of 'desire' and 'becoming' of the fourth movement: all are gathered up in perfect unison in the closing lines of "Little Gidding":

And all shall be well and
 All manner of thing shall be well
 When the tongues of flame are infolded
 Into the crowned knot of fire
 And the fire and the rose are one.

The 'rose' here is the symbol of human love and is not essentially different from divine love or *bhakti* to God. The 'infolded flame' is the Supreme God without form. The 'rose' is inseparably fused with the 'fire' of divine love which resolves all the paradoxes of life.

The 'river' and the 'sea' have been the old possessions of the literary world. They also constitute an integral part of the rich heritage of Indian symbolism. They usually signify the short and temporary life of man on earth and the eternal life of the Absolute (or Brahman) respectively. They are closely interconnected to each other. Like the river flowing into the sea, the individual human soul flows into the 'Oversoul' (a phrase used here in the Emersonian sense), and thus both become one and the same. When the soul (*atman*) merges into the Oversoul (*Paramatman*), it starts dancing in perfect measure and singing in complete ecstasy, forgetting all about its temporal world. In other words, it then tastes Divine Bliss (*Brahmananda*).

The image of the river or of the soul losing its individuality and dissolving in the timeless realm of Being is a part of the traditional Vedantic vocabulary. Reaching the realm of Being, a person "becomes (transparent) like water, one, the seer without duality," declares the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*.²⁵ The confluence of the finite and the infinite finds a natural expression in the poetic meeting of the waters. In *Chhandogya Upanishad*, the father enlightens the pupil-son as follows:

These rivers, my dear, flow the eastern toward the east, the western toward the west. They go just from sea to sea. They become the sea itself. Just as these rivers while they do not know 'I am this one' 'I am that one'.²⁶

In the *Gita*, Lord Krishna tells Arjuna: "Among the seats of water, I am the ocean."²⁷ Again the same scripture offers us the following:

Water flows continually into the ocean
 But the ocean is never disturbed;
 Desire flows into the mind of the seer

But he is never disturbed.²⁸

These symbols have been nicely used by Eliot in "The Dry Salvages":

The river is within us, the sea is all about us;

The sea is the land's edge also....

And this is followed by:

The sea has many voices,

Many gods and many voices.

The second movement of this poem gives us the following lines:

We cannot think of a time that is oceanless

Or of an ocean not littered with wastage.

Obviously, the 'oceanless' here suggests the Timeless. And the ocean throws up signs of both life and destruction ('wastage'). The third movement of this poem treats human beings as 'voyagers' and 'seamen', and the sea is shown sitting on the judgement throne:

O voyagers, O seamen,

You who come to port, and you whose bodies

Will suffer the trial and judgement of the sea,

Or whatever event, this is your real destination.

The river, personified as a 'strong brown god', connotes man's dark tide of primitive savagery – the heart of darkness; it represents also the inexorable movement of temporal history. The sea, which is 'all about us', is the great unfathomed reservoir of the world's dateless evolution, encroaching on ordered society, constantly tossing ashore 'hints of earlier and other creation', and often engulfing men by reversion in its abysses. It has never been subdued, never been mapped. It cries with the voices of 'many gods'. Grover Smith rightly thinks that together the river and the sea "allude to the Hindu parable of the life cycle – the drop of water lifted as vapor from the sea, deposited as rain upon the Himalaya, and carried again seaward by the Ganges."²⁹

The symbol of the 'bird' signifies "bondage and liberation"³⁰ at the same time. In the *Rig Veda* (I. 164. 20) and in two of the major *Upanishads* — *Mundaka*, 3. 1. 1 and *Svetasvatara*, IV. 6-7 — two birds, inseparable companions, are shown clinging to the self-same tree. Of the two, the one eats the sweet fruit and the other looks on without eating. The first is the human soul in all its unwisdom, while the second is the Lord in all his compassionate calm. The foolish

bird contemplates Him and is liberated. Thus, the 'bird' is at once the unfreed soul and the Glorious Lord. In the *Svetasvatara Upanishad* (VI. 15), the latter is referred to as 'the one bird in the midst of the world', knowing whom 'does one pass over death'. Eliot makes a very fine use of the bird symbol in his *Four Quartets*. The ambiguous bird in the rose-garden, like its Upanishadic twin dissatisfied with the fruit of the senses, invites the attention of man for exploration of 'other echoes' and goads him on to 'find them', but unlike the Upanishadic twin, Eliot's bird announces that 'humankind cannot bear very much reality'. More particularly, it can be the thrush of deception as well as the kingfisher of the aspiring spirit. With an inspired duality of symbolism, the bird becomes the pentecostal dove of "Little Gidding" sending down the 'flame of incandescent terror' and declaring 'the one discharge from sin and terror'. The duality of this symbol is contained in 'the dark dove' of the second movement and in the dove aflame of the fourth movement in "Little Gidding".

To conclude, Eliot is a refined artist having drawn upon diverse sources to enrich his poetic produce. One such vital source of inspiration was the poetic practice of the French Symbolists, so far as the technique is concerned. But for his content, he explored the entire world, including India. As he was well-versed in Indian philosophy and literature, he knew of the typically Indian symbols as employed in the Hindu texts. In the process of composing his own poetry, Eliot made use of such symbols in an impressive way.

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AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ELEMENT IN T.S. ELIOT'S PLAYS

Sumitra Kukreti
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The pivotal viewpoint of T.S. Eliot as a literary critic is that of 'impersonalism' which states that an artist should strive for "continual extinction of personality"¹ while creating a work of art (and also that one should remain unaffected during this process of creation.) But it remains a fact that either consciously or unconsciously a writer's own beliefs and thoughts are expressed through his writings and sometimes some of the characters become the mouth-pieces of the writer, where his personality gets transfused with the characters. Alan Weinblatt explains, "In so far as 'feeling and emotion are particular, whereas thought is general: every instance of form at least from a metaphysical perspective will prove in adequation to the experience it seeks to capture and therefore, impersonal. Yet the eventual failure of adequation spurs the poet on to renewed quest, so that every work of art, although impersonal, will also bear the stamp of a unique personality and display the shape of an authentic self. In this way Eliot can declare a work of art to be impersonal while maintaining at the same time, that it reveals the imprint of a personality."²

Eliot's life and his growth as a person as well as a writer or an artist is well reflected in his works and characters that he creates. There is always a tone of self-confession and self-revelation in his immensely personal poetry and plays. Donald Hall writes in this regard, "the marriage, the conversion, the separation and years of devotion and self-denial, and the re-marriage all parallel events in Eliot's poems and plays. I do not suggest that the life explains the poems, I suggest that Eliot's doctrine of impersonality was the purest camouflage, whether he was aware of subtlerfuge or not."³ This is clearly reflected in his drama. Particularly the characters of Harry Monchesey in *The Family Reunion* and Lord Claverton in the *Elder Statesman* resemble him in many ways. "*The Family Reunion*

proved to be a spiritual autobiography in which anyone familiar with Eliot's life can catch personal echoes."⁴

Eliot shows his positive attitude towards religion not only by his own conversion into the Anglican church but also in providing a right kind of solution for Harry, disillusioned by the ugliness and spiritual emptiness of the machine age. Both Harry and Eliot had similar kind of problems to cope with. Both of them were in their thirties when they found the right way in their spiritual journey. Eliot was born with a sense of sin quite similar to Harry who had inherited the sin. He was brought up in a much-disciplined atmosphere where everything was arranged. He too never had freedom like Harry, and he always was told what to do and what not to do. He was not allowed to play outside and was brought up under the watchful eyes of his mother like Harry. The role of the dominating, authoritative and over-protective mother was present in their lives. Harry's reminiscences of his childhood reveal the dominance of his mother. Both of them rejected the imposed roles (by their mothers) and aspired for freedom from their emotionally dependent mothers. They reacted in a puerile way by getting into another kind of influence or control of their wives, which again proved to be a failure.

Eliot, like Harry, tried to become independent and left his birth-place in quest of something else. The wives of both of them had semblances with each other. Both were possessive and demanding in their nature. Harry's wife, just like Vivienne, "wouldn't leave him out of her sight."⁵ Eliot's marriage with Vivienne, who would never have become one of his family, is similar to the marriage of Harry. He, too, carried the same opinion about his wife. To describe his married life with Vivienne Eliot had used the same words written for Harry when he exclaims "O that awful privacy / Of the insane mind."⁶ Both Harry's wife and Vivienne died in peculiar circumstances. Vivienne was admitted into a mental asylum after being deserted by her husband and lived there until her death in 1949. Although Eliot had helped her financially to some extent, he always had a guilty

conscience owing responsibility for her condition. This sense of sin was also generated in Eliot as he regarded himself a failure' in his father's eyes. He was a disobedient son who defied his parents by settling down in England, by marrying a British girl and choosing a low profession (low in comparison to his noble heritage). This feeling of failure and consequent guilt and pain tormented him constantly.

In a similar fashion, Harry was 'a terrified spirit' and undergoes suffering to a great extent. He rejects the offer of love from Mary in spite of his love for her since he knows that earthly love cannot lead him to salvation. He detests whatever the relationship of marriage stands for because of his loathing for his wife. Mary's character comes closer to that of Emily Hale in Eliot's life as they both played the roles of 'watchers and waiters.' They spent time together in their youth but he could not marry her in spite of his love for her. She kept waiting for him, while pursuing a career in the field of education like Mary who wanted to do the same.

Thus, *The Family Reunion*, as Lyndall Gordon avers, is "a play which grew out of the facts of his life...."⁷ The scene where Mary pleads Harry to depend on her, offering him his new hope was written exactly at that time when Eliot met Emily in England. Both Harry and Eliot shared some of their ecstatic moments with their childhood friends. Harry soars upward from his hellish past experiences by accepting them in the right spirit and he also realizes that he cannot get the childhood innocence back. With this realization, both Harry and Eliot reject the offers of love from Mary and Emily respectively.

Though Harry can be seen as the mouthpiece of Eliot, representing his alter ego, his own obsessions and characteristics, the chorus too projects his ordinariness. Even Eliot's condemnation later in his life that Harry was an unsufferable 'prig', reveals his guilty conscience, which condemns his own self. Eliot's feelings about Vivienne and his thoughts regarding how far he was responsible for her death are quite similar to the feelings of Harry who had vague apprehensions about his role in his wife's death. Eliot had a mission in his life of making people aware of spirituality like Harry who suffered for the redemption of humankind, and carried it out through his writings.

Confession to the loved ones, which is seen as one's road to

salvation in *The Elder Statesman*, can also be attributed to Eliot's personal feelings. Through this play he favours the affirmative way to salvation which is responding and reacting positively to love and affection of the external world. One should not only be concerned about the spirituality in their life but also about the affairs of the world and should be able to receive and reciprocate love.

Eliot's personal life seems to be reflected in the play in innumerable ways. Eliot after his second marriage was a happier and rejuvenated person, receiving the love that he has missed in his past. Reflecting these emotions he projects the power of love in taking one towards divine peace or salvation. Like Lord Claverton who was followed by the spectres from his shady past, in Eliot's life of constant struggle Vivienne had followed and haunted him like a discontented ghost from his horrifying past. His personal secretary Valerie Fletcher with her love, care and affection brought him out from the enchantment of his past and the suffering that he has endured. Eliot completed writing the play after his marriage; it was the time when "Eliot opened his heart to Valerie Fletcher, as Claverton confesses to his daughter in the certainty of her unshakeable love."⁸ Reawakened by her love he had found a new beginning in his life akin to Lord Claverton's new birth in his death: their ends became their beginnings. They both are people who have reached this consciousness through the road of contemplation. Eliot had always thought those people to be superior and exceptional who followed renunciation and austerity (sacrificing the physical world). But he discovered towards the end of his life, after much thought, that human love was, in fact, a reflection of divine love in this world. He also believed that it could become an instrument in an individual's final attainment of eternity.

Eliot had firm belief that a character "might speak 'in unison' with the author, even call out his latent potentialities and through Claverton, he returned to the most intractable material in his life."⁹ Lord Claverton's character echoes Eliot's personality on many accounts. When he was young, Eliot was not clear about the goal of his quest, wearing a mask upon his private self, he tried to escape from his own self. The masks he wore in his self-escape were of Sweeney to Prufrock in his own personal wasteland. He at last, it

seems, came to terms with himself and accepted himself as both an artist and a man by reconciliation. They both were public figures in their old age and concerned about death and salvation. They both were haunted by their sense of sin and guilty conscience which was an impact of their past on their present (at that moment). They had suffered immensely with a sense of boredom and futility carrying with them the ghosts of their past, though what they had done was unpunishable by law. Eliot himself, like Claverton, had spent his whole life in exile, away from his country and family. He became a distinguished personality, acquiring fame, wealth and prosperity. But he was apparently an unhappy and depressed person in search of his own identity, which is reflected in his works. Even after accomplishing public laurels, there was a sense of private failure inherent in him. "In Claverton, Eliot voices the cynicism which was still his at the height of his literary success."¹⁰ He too, like Claverton, had this sense of guilt for betraying his first love Emily Hale. Eliot and Claverton suffered from a sense of isolation all through their lives even after getting married. Eliot's first marriage with Vivienne was an unsuccessful one. There was no bond of love between them and his wife died later in solitude. Claverton's marriage was an equally unsuccessful one as revealed by himself that there was a distance between them, and his wife died in loneliness. Emily Hale, who was an important figure in Eliot's past, met him before his second marriage similar in the way in which Mrs. Carghill meets Lord Claverton before his redemption. Emily too loved Eliot truly like Mrs. Carghill who admits that Dick had touched her soul.

Eliot was admitted in the London Clinic to rest like Lord Claverton, who went to Badgley Court. Eliot at the fag end of his life found his lost peace through Valerie Fletcher's compassionate love. She looked after him in times of illness like Monica, who took care of her father. Valerie Fletcher becomes the 'one person' whom Eliot loved and to whom he could confess everything and whose power of love saved him. Human love became a mode of freedom both to him and Claverton. The last long speech of Lord Claverton expresses the essence of Eliot's philosophy at the consummation of his days.¹¹ The speech runs as follows:

I feel at peace now.
It is the peace that ensues upon contrition
When contrition ensues upon knowledge of truth.
...I've only just now had the illumination
Of knowing what love is
I have been brushed by the wing of happiness.¹²

Eliot expresses his love for his lady by dedicating this play to her:

Who think the same thought without need of speech
And babble the same speech without need of meaning :
To you I dedicate this book, to return as best I can
With words a little part of what you have given me.
The words mean what they say but some have a further meaning
For you and me only.¹³

To sum up, Eliot, the greatest advocate of the theory of impersonality, personalises his works, and his characters have a clear resemblance with his personal life. His experiences, thoughts and incidents have repeatedly been portrayed in his plays. The shadow of his personality hovers around his protagonists and they remain but his mouthpieces. Thus, his dramas are a celebration of personality and he has not turned his theory into practice.

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THE DRAMATIC ART OF EDWARD BOND WITH REFERENCE TO *BINGO*

Jyoti Kala

Edward Bond is one of the most significant playwrights of New English Drama, particularly of the 1960s. The range of Bond is wide and varied, but because of his controversial political and social views he remains one of the most understaged playwrights. He started his career under the influence of Brecht. Like Brecht, he was a communist in his belief in the early phase of his career. He was also influenced by the dramaturgy of Brecht and his Epic theatre. But Bond has always been innovative and despite the strong influence of Brecht on him, his drama moved away from that of Brecht in new directions.

As a playwright Bond is an enigma; for if his plays have brought him recognition and won him laurels, they have also brought him much hostile criticism. He is committed to the cause of society. Right from the beginning his drama has expressed grave concern over the workings of an unjust society. He has emphasized the need to establish a 'rational culture', and reiterated his own commitment to social change.

Bond is a breaker of icons and his attitude to all icons is reflected in what Tony Coult says of Bond's attitude to religion:

...his fundamental objection to religious belief is that it takes responsibility away from human beings.... Bond's plays urge us to resist despair, to take responsibility for our lives, and to create the society that will make that possible.¹

Bond is of the view that social institutions with their laws and religion, morals and morality are designed to mould individuals to serve their needs. These institutions, which are supposed to protect the individuals, have become self-perpetuating. His plays therefore expose the problems of our times. His dramatic strategy is devoted to the interpretation of the world. He rejects the assumption that art must mirror life. And in his earlier plays, he rejects the bourgeois technique of bringing the drama to a neat conclusion. He strongly feels that art must interpret the world, and not merely mirror it.

Bond's theory of art is quite radical and compelling. He sees

art as a powerful weapon in the struggle for a better society. Enunciating his theory of art, he says in his Preface to *Bingo*:

Art is always sane. It always insist on the truth and tries to express the justice and order that are necessary to sanity, but are usually destroyed by society. Art creates history in a way in which life cannot, because art is a revelation of truth; life is blinded by the illusions of a corrupt social system.²

Bond calls his works "rational theatre", and perhaps the best way of understanding this notion of his is by comparing him with Brecht who has also called his theatre rational. On the surface, the links are clear: Bond began at the Royal Court with different exercises on Brechtian dramaturgy (for instance he arranged an evening of Brechtian songs). But whereas in Brecht rational objectivity is a calm presentation of factual content, for Bond it is different in some measure. The latter believes that there is no more time for discursive dramaturgy and a calm presentation of factual content. Therefore he rejects Brecht's rational objectivity for violent images that would arouse immediate emotional reaction. Bond demands a "rational theatre"; such a theatre is epic because it subjugates the individual's psychological pattern of behaviour to social and political truths. He has been concerned with analysing the cause of human misery, and not merely mirroring human misery.

Both Brecht and Bond argue that the modern equivalent of the hero is 'social man'. Individuals are still individuals in the plays of Brecht and Bond, but they express a social phenomenon. Their passions and their fate are an expression of their historical moment, and are therefore social concerns and not personal. Bond therefore rejects Shakespeare's *King Lear* on the ground that it operates upon personal premises, and is oblivious of the content of his historical movement.

Like Brecht, Bond believes in the historical aspect and span of the society. He says in the Introduction to *Lear*: "Literature is the interpretation of human life in its fullest social sense-which includes the indissoluble union between society and individual. That is why literature is always an expression of the historical circumstances in which it is created."³ In the same Introduction he further asserts:

"Drama embodies human experience into its descriptions of history."⁴ He goes on to say that drama "includes the artist's motive as well as the object in its portrayal of human events."⁵

Bond evolved his dramatic technique in consistency with his ideas and beliefs which his drama embodied. The structure of his plays is decentralized so that both plot and character development may be reviewed on several levels. Time structure in his plays is not used with any intention of adhering to a dramatic unity for the sake of classical unity itself; rather, it is used to orchestrate the events and to throw light on the individual relationship to history.

Bingo is Edward Bond's third play on historical figures. It was in April 1973 that he began writing it and on November 14 in the same year the play was produced at Northcott Exeter. It is one of his anti-Shakespeare plays. *Bingo* portrays William Shakespeare towards the end of his life. It reflects Shakespeare's age and also judges it. The play analyses the function of the creative artist as a responsible member of society. The theme of the play is the responsibility of a creative artist towards his fellowmen.

In *Bingo* Bond is concerned with the relationship between the artist, his art and his society. Art is not cosmetic, but is an essential element of human culture which was displayed in the 19th century through the elitism of the ruling class. Bond states in his Introduction to *The Fool* and *We Come to the River*.

Art is usually taken to be a very private experience. This goes back to the nineteenth century, the first age that tried to take art away from the masses of people. The nineteenth century pursued a lop-sided development, not the mutual co-operation of technology, politics and art, which is essential to culture. ... all art is realism. We are the product of material circumstances and there is no place in art for mysticism or obscurantism. Art is the illustration, illumination, expression of rationality...⁶

Bond brings into question the bourgeois notion of culture of art as isolated from social reality. In *Bingo* he relates his concern to the historical figure of Shakespeare. Shakespeare has been assimilated into a bourgeois cultural mode of thinking to the extent that the problems he discussed at a particular moment in history can be misunderstood by the common means of 'cultural appreciation', employed by the middle class audience. Such a situation, in Bond's

view, has reduced Shakespeare to nothing more than a game of Bingo. Thus the modern dramatist Bond gives an explanation for the title of his play: "Art has very practical consequences. Most 'cultural appreciation' ignores this and is no more relevant than a game of Bingo' and less honest."

The sub-title of the play is "Scenes of Money and Death". Bond shows the unscrupulous mercenary world which bred Shakespeare. He believes that Shakespeare misrepresented the society of his time. He was inhibited by his own financial security which blinded his concern for society. Bond takes the matter of a writer's responsibility to his society very seriously. He finds Shakespeare seriously faulty on the score of representing the society of his time realistically and unnecessarily paying attention to individuals. Hence in *Lear* Bond represents Lear as responsible to the society of his time and suffering due to his failure to be just to that society, whereas Shakespeare in his *King Lear* focuses mainly on the tragedy of Lear as an individual, thereby betraying the society of his time.

An important idea embodied in *Bingo* is Shakespeare's concern about his own financial security which blinded his concern for justice. Bond represents Shakespeare as a man who wished to avoid the bankrupt fate that befell his father, and therefore invested his earnings from the theatre in land. This land, however, became the subject of exploitation by Combe the capitalist, who wanted to introduce the enclosure system. Shakespeare knew the implications of such a policy very well, but he connived at it for his own profit. He signed a document which allowed Combe to exploit others whereas Shakespeare's own investment in the land was protected. This kind of selfish behaviour was absolutely unworthy of a great writer like Shakespeare. The play examines the consequences of such an action.

Shakespeare betrays his art for economic considerations and panders to the bourgeois ideals of the middle class and their dominant morality. In *Bingo* Ben Jonson is shown questioning Shakespeare about his writing and there is a good bit of highly compressed dialogue in the play between the two writers:

Jonson : What are you writing?

Shakespeare : Nothing

They drink

Jonson : Not writing?

Shakespeare : No.

Jonson : Why not?

Shakespeare : Nothing to say.

Jonson : Doesn't stop others. Written out?

Shakespeare : Yes.

They drink.

(Scene 4)

Thus, Bond creates a kind of myth about Shakespeare by involving him in a situation of blatant selfishness and financial cupidity. By projecting him as a willing agent of capitalist values, Bond wishes to shock his audience. But the play also displays a sympathy for the protagonist in conflict with himself. This seems to be the unconscious intention of Bond and it mitigates the shocking effect in some measure. We know that an important tenet and feature of his dramaturgy is to shock the audience in order to bring home to them the message of his play.

Bond ends up forging many myths about Shakespeare that largely view him outside his historical context. He, however, refuses to absolve Shakespeare of his responsibility in the historical moments of those myths. In this sense, both Shakespeare, a purely private person ensuring his security, and Shakespeare the successful playwright, are seen as one. The implication is that Shakespeare never tried to rise above or transcend his circumstances. In projecting Shakespeare as a social being, Bond airs his views on the function of the artist.

Shakespeare's intellectual world is shown to be slowly but steadily degenerating. Because of his selfish desires he fails to communicate with those about him. He has little time or love for his family. The question raised in the play is whether a man can really reconcile himself to a way of life that is nihilistic. Bond, however, stops short of total condemnation of Shakespeare. He is concerned that he should not denigrate Shakespeare totally. He is an instinctive dramatist who knows his art and his audience. To reject or ridicule Shakespeare outright would be to invite a rejection of his play rather than a consideration of the myth of Shakespeare by the

audience. Bond also understands the problem Shakespeare faced in being caught at a specific moment of time.

For Bond Shakespeare was a significant dramatist at a particular period of history. His plays have to be seen as part of bourgeois art which he raised to its highest form. In this Bond sees degeneracy of that art of which the Theatre of the Absurd is a result. We know that Bond strongly disapproves of absurdist drama for its occupation with nihilistic and hopeless outlook on life.

Shakespeare's suicide in the play leaves the structure of the play open ended. The play leaves many questions unanswered, since it is not a play about Shakespeare in which his subjectivity is appraised psychologically. The themes in the play are clearly brought out, but the questions these themes raise are unanswered in Bond's own mind. His art should be acclaimed for the imagery and some impressive metaphors. Some of these images and metaphors can also be seen in *Lear*, another play which shows Bond's occupation and concern with Shakespeare. In a word, *Bingo* is a fairly complex play which represents Bond's art at a high point of excellence.

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- ¹Tony Coult, *The Plays of Edward Bond* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1977), p.35.
- ²Edward Bond, "Introduction," *Bingo* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1974), p.VIII.
- ³"Introduction" to *Lear*.
- ⁴*Ibid.*
- ⁵*Ibid.*
- ⁶Edward Bond, "Introduction," *The Fool and We Come to the River* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1976), p.XIII.
- ⁷Edward Bond, quoted by Malcolm Hay and Philip Roberts in *Bond: A Study of His Plays* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1980), p.197.
- ⁸T.S. Eliot, "The Elder Statesman," *The Complete Poems and Plays of T.S. Eliot* (London: Faber & Faber, 1969), p.581.
- ⁹*Ibid.*, p.522

HAMILTON HITS HOLLYWOOD: THE LITTLE GUY AND THE BIG PICTURE OF SCREENWRITING

Leonard R.N. Ashley

If my books had been any worse, I should not have been invited to Hollywood;
... if they had been any better I should not have come.

— Raymond Chandler in a letter to Charles Morton, 12 December 1945.

This is a story of, among others, Cosmo Hamilton (1879 - 1942), a story about the relationship between writers and motion pictures of all sorts, from Hollywood to Bollywood. It is the story of a minor writer who did not make it into *Who Was Who*, but it is not really a biography nor is it literary criticism of Hamilton's Broadway plays or Hollywood screenplays, neither of which rank very high in those genres. It is something more unusual than literary biography and literary criticism: an examination of the difference between writing for the stage and writing for the movies. As such, it ought to be of interest to all those concerned with literature or film, though not at all with the likes of Cosmo Hamilton.

Hamilton receives, for once, top billing, although this article is essentially a larger picture of writers of early motion pictures, their nature, their narratives, their relation to Broadway theater when Hollywood was a village that had attached itself to Los Angeles (in 1910) to get water and sewer service. Even then Hollywood was a movie mecca or, as Scott Fitzgerald said, "a mining town in lotus land". Hollywood saw early histories such as Terry Ramsaye's two-volume *A Million and One Nights* (1926) and Benjamin B. Hampton's *History of the Movies* (1931), neither read today even by film historians. Hollywood was out to make money, not history, and Hollywood gradually became the most powerful American cultural force in the twentieth century, deeply affecting films made elsewhere in the world as well. The various national film cultures are today getting ever more interconnected. Think of the marriage of Hollywood and Bollywood in *Bride & Prejudice*, in which Indian tradition meets American musicals.

Film has shaped all our acts, arts and aspirations. As a character sings in *Thoroughly Modern Millie*,

Have you seen the way they kiss in the movies?
Isn't it delectable?

Millions saw how movie stars kissed and courted. Millions tried to model their wooing on what they saw at the matinee. Hollywood wrote scripts for their lives, reflected in and shaped by mass entertainment. Popular entertainment was always so. As Dr. Johnson had David Garrick proclaim at The Theatre-Royal in Drury Lane in the mid-eighteenth century:

The Drama's Laws the Drama's Patrons give,
For we who live to please, must please to live.

The Hollywood movie moguls and their hirelings attempted to read American society and to provide what it wanted in escapism or education. The "little people out there in the dark", as the big stars were wont to think of them, dictated the content of films. Even when Hollywood lacked artistic achievement it shaped our thought, for better, for worse, for marketing success. Hollywood beckoned the talented, too. Cosmo Hamilton was just one New York playwright who went out to The Coast. Even cineasts today don't know that. Cosmo Hamilton's work in Hollywood, adapting his own and other material for the silver screen, or being adapted by others, is forgotten. The scripts were thrown away, the celluloid (as Hollywood used to say) was "made into mandolin picks". It was just product, like most of the stage plays of Shakespear's time; most early motion pictures were not recognized as worthy of preservation, too popular to be culture, discarded. Of the Elizabethan plays whose names we know from the Stationers' Register (copyright protection), fully 80 percent are lost.

Much was indeed worthless. I cannot agree with Goodman that the twenties were golden and that it has been down hill all the way since the silents. I don't accept that all the purest cinema predated "words, words, words". Only from the talkies onwards has there been any concentrated critical attention to film as art, at least in terms of scenario writers. Writers have never counted for much. Goldwyn called them "typewriters". Stars are money makers. Directors are *auteurs*, authors. "The movies," people say, "is a director's medium".

The early writer Hamilton gives us a piece of his mind about Hollywood, back when writers thought they were more important than the stars who said their words or directors who moved those actors around the set or told the cinematographer where to put the

camera. Cosmo Hamilton goes back to the silents, motion pictures which told all the stories in images, not words. Then the writers were creators of scenarios for action rather than the masters of dialogue, though at last Hamilton had, as did everyone in The Industry, to cope with the new talkies of the twenties. It was then when writers of dialogue found work.

Cosmo Hamilton was prolific if somewhat shallow writer, published in both the US and Britain. He wrote many novels. Some were: *Adam's Clay* (1908), *Who Cares? A Story of Adolescence* (undated), *The Princess of New York* (1911), *The Door that Has No Key* (1913), *The Sins of the Children* (1916) *Joan and the Babies and I* (a supposed autobiography of a novelist called John Mainwaring, 1916), *Scandal* (1919, also a Broadway play) and *Another Scandal* (1923), *Confessions* (1926), *Thy Lamp, O Memory: A Novel with a Plot* (1939). He wrote a novelized version of his play (written with Anthony Gibbs) *The Aunt of England* (1942). He also wrote short stories for the popular magazines, some collected in the *Little Gold Ring and Other Stories* (1929) and *Nature's Vagabond and Other Stories* (1906), and *Jerry and a Sunbeam*. He wrote advice on divorce *People Worth Talking About* (1933) and about Charles II (*His Majesty the King*, 1926), romance (*Discord and Harmony*, 1938), reminiscences (*Unwritten History*, 1924), *Adam and Evelyn in the Garden of Edenbridge* (1936), and more. He wrote vaudeville skits such as *Wanted — A Valet: An Original Ethiopian Sketch* (undated), *The Wisdom of Folly* ("a ridiculous piece in three acts ... an episode in the life of a fluffy-minded lady," 1903), *A Sense of Humour* (collaborating with Beryl Faber, 1911), *The Rustl of Silk* (1922, made into a movie by Paramount), *Damned Little Fool* ("a tragic comedy," 1931), *Pickwick* (from Dickens, collaborating with Frank C. Reilly, 1927), *Short Plays for Small Stages (In the Haymarket, Toller's Wife, Why Cupid Came to Earl's Court, St. Martin's Summer, and A Soldier's Daughters*, 1911), and of course Hollywood picked up some work for films. He churned out screen material (such as for *The Exile*, 1947), including the apparently unproduced screenplay with the working title *Man and Wife* with Lawrence Arnold. His story *One Week of Life* was adapted for the screen by Willard Mack to

star Pauline Frederick in two roles, the wife and her replacement. The silent *Sacred and Profane Love* was based on one of his stories and *Photoplay* (July 1921) said "the story is rather muddled". His three-act farce *The New Poor* (staged in New York) was published as *Who Are They?* (1929). He wrote for the *London Magazine* abroad and such magazines as *Argosy* and *Photoplay* in the US. He thought of himself as a jack all writing trades but principally as a Broadway dramatist. Like many Americans of his era, Cosmo Hamilton tried to take on a European sophistication, to look like a London gentleman.

Hamilton did make money on Broadway. His openings on what they liked to call because of all the lights The Great White Way included *The Proud Laird* (24 April 1905), *The Catch of the Season* (it wasn't, 28 August 1905), *The Belle of Mayfair* (3 December 1906), *The Hoyden* (19 October 1907), *The Master Key* (4 October 1909), *The Blindness of Virtue* (28 October 1912, something of a hit), *Flora Bella* (11 September 1916), *The Star Gazer* (26 November 1917), *Scandal* (12 September 1919, well received), *An Exchange of Wives* (26 September 1919), *The Silver Fox* (5 September 1921), *Danger* (22 December 1921), *The New Poor* (7 January 1924), *Parasites* (19 November 1924), and *Pickwick* (23 December 1927).

One can read the anonymous *New York Times* "The Screen" reviews with brief notices of a few films of Hamilton's heyday (though he continued into the thirties) even though the reels have vanished. Here are some movies: *One Week of Life* (1919) was a Hamilton story adapted for the screen by Willard Mack. "It is another story about an unhappy marriage, only this time it is the wife who makes the unhappiness, and the husband who escapes from her into the arms of another." The film had to compete in New York at that time with "the airplane view of the Panama Canal" packing them in at The Strand. *Midsummer Madness* (1920) was based on Hamilton's story *A Friend of His Wife* and produced by William DeMille, Cecil B.'s brother. Olga Printzlau did the screenplay to star "Cuddles" (Lila Lee) with Jack Holt, Conrad Nagel, and Lois Wilson in "a mere piece of conventional fiction", according to the *Times*. *The Rustle of Silk* (1923) was Sada Cowan & Ouida Bergere's Screen treatment of the Hamilton novel of the same title. "With a less impossible story ...

[it] might have been a production worth remembering," opined one critic. Director Herbert Brenon's efforts were "Lost on a yarn that flops like a house of cards," the critic added. *Parasites* (1924) was a typical Hamilton stage play, described by the *New York Times* critic (20 November, 1924) as "a puppet comedy of an old type considerably brought to light by the acting". Stars again. It was Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth* "somewhat modernized and simplified" and resembling "a facile novel or a story from the *Red Book* magazine," with Clifton Webb playing "every inch of his lines". *Exchange of Wives* (1925) was adapted for the movies to star Lew Cody and Renee Adoree (A big star after appearing opposite John Gilbert in *The Big Parade* that year). It played in New York with a Mutt & Jeff cartoon, etc., and was judged to be a "mildly amusing, frivolous photoplay". Hamilton's stage play was credited with "sophisticated comedy," but the critic said that had been "brought down to earth, or popularized, by the inoculation of movie ideas, with the result that although a number of scenes are apt to make one smile they are silly. This is a very frothy affair." *Paradise* (1926) based on a Hamilton plot (set on a South Sea island) featured pretty Betty Bronson, Noah Beery, Ashley Cooper, and monkeys throwing dice — "some ancient conceptions of humor," the *Times* sniffed.

This clearly evidences that Hamilton was a busy, professional writer; "a professional makes the pot boil," as Henry James remarked. Money was the aim of both the legitimate stage and the new Industry out west, but times were good and prices were not prohibitive. The entertainments that clicked could bring in considerable profits. You must note that in Hamilton's day mounting a Broadway production or making a Hollywood movie did not involve expensive union members and too outrageously overcompensated and overpublicized actors, so plays and movies were cheaper and easier to do. They came and went very fast. You didn't have to have a blockbuster, as you do today, not even on Broadway, not even in Hollywood.

Hollywood seduced many. When Hamilton headed for The Coast (as if we had but one) to branch out in the entertainment business, Hollywood was well established. What brought Hamilton to Hollywood was not relaxed retirement that had made Southern California

a new Iowa. Nor was it the bohemian atmosphere. (H.L. Mencken remarked that if you tipped the US "everything loose would roll into Los Angeles".) What drew him were the bustle and career possibilities. Also, perhaps, there was the conviction, shared by many of his writing friends, that the place was full of idiots and anyone with brains could turn on the cash spigot in The Industry. Hollywood by the twenties was already making money hand over fist. It was at the same time being denounced as soulless, crass, commercial, and corrupt. It was already being condemned for its morals and its product which, understandably, was made for mass taste. Business is business. If Hollywood was glamorous, that was packaging. You spent money and you made money. Hamilton may possibly have told himself and others that film was a new art form crying out for artists, but he was wrong. Culture may have been in the east; the west was about entrepreneurship. It was chiefly Hollywood that opened its doors not only to the talent of Flyover Country but to cinema people from abroad.

In fact, Hamilton also had a sharp eye on what, centuries before, Sir Richard Steele, himself no chump when it came to appealing to the reading and theater public, called the Main Chance. Hamilton was little different from the West Coast real-estate speculators who were covering the landscape with cheap bungalows or the oil barons who as the twenties began to hit gushers. He was little different, except in having some stage training, from the hordes of Hollywood hopefuls. Thousands upon thousands of young people were arriving in Never-Never Land every month in the twenties. They were hoping to be "discovered".

Hamilton saw no impediment to his becoming a glamorous and rich writer, and in a business where writers were mostly back-office, minor and ill-paid members of the production line. In literature, see Ludwig Bemelman's gently satirical Hollywood novel *Dirty Eddie*. See the biographies of writers such as Raymond Chandler. In films see the hack writer of the forties in *Barton Fink*. For writers and all other Hollywood movie makers as portrayed in fiction, see Bud Schulberg, and for an annotated bibliography see how Brooker-Bowers followed up her doctoral dissertation of 1983. Carolyn See has

a briefer bibliography on the same topic. In Hollywood films we are shown producers (Humphrey Bogart plays a drunk one in his first comedy role, *Stand-In*, 1973). There is *Show Girl in Hollywood* (1930). There is the mob influence (to produce a masterpiece out of a fairly trashy novel eventually in *The Godfather*). There are directors (*White Hunter, Black Heart*, 1990, with a John Houston type getting off track while filming in Africa, or the life of Rainer Werner Fassbinder in *Ein Mann wie Eva*, 1983) and a terrific filmmaker (Preston Sturgis' *Sullivan's Travels*, 1941). There is pop and there is porn (*Body Double* and *It's Called Murder, Baby* and many others, many exploitive, *The Last Porno Flick* being wryly funny).

It is in that sketchy but rather wordy context, then, that we deal here, with the plight of Cosmo Hamilton, comparatively little noted but leaving an articulate record. The movies started more or less by photographing stage plays and in the early days the movies attracted theater people to the new art of the cinema rather than students who had gone to film school and never written anything but movie scripts. Cosmo Hamilton, a Broadway playwright in Hollywood, was not a worker in the movies who realized "I can do that!" and started to write screenplays the way that today actors graduate to being directors. Hamilton was not aspiring to do anything but write screenplays and he remained rather un-Hollywood in not wanting to act or direct. Had he done his homework, he would have had a firmer grip on what he would run into in Hollywood and how scripts are handled by studios and directors. He should have considered Henry Leon Wilson's trenchant satire, *Merton of the Movies*, first a serial in the *Saturday Evening Post* in the spring of 1922, then a novel that summer and a play that fall (a George S. Kaufman & Mark Connelly hit). By 1924, Kaufman & Connelly's play was a film (with Glenn Hunter, who had starred on stage). Maybe from such as that Hamilton simply figured that Broadway success could always be translated into Hollywood success. Hamilton should have known of the personal travail. In 1922 they actually made Wilson's *Ruggles of Red Gap*. *Merton of the Movies* was remade in Hollywood (which seldom heeded Kaufman's quip that "satire is what closes on Saturday night") with Stuart Erwin in 1932 and with Red Skelton in 1947.

Notice that the names of the writers who worked on those scripts you would be very hard pressed to find.

Today's students of film know nothing of the early twentieth-century plays that once kidded and prodded Hollywood. On dusty shelves are plays such as Achard's *Hollywood Pirate*, Birchard & Bard's *The Greatest Find Since Garbo*, Cain's *7-11*, Chodorov & Fields' *The Schoolhouse on the Lot*, Cormack's *Hey Diddle Diddle*, Fagan's *Hollywood Be Thy Name*, Jerome's *Limelight*, McEvoy's *Stars in Your Eyes*, Wiley's *On Location*, Weinberg's *Double Features*. The list is obscure, extensive undistinguished. In their days, a Broadway season had many times more openings, and quick closings, than today. These plays are all forgettable stage history. All they really tell us is that news of Hollywood's success had reached New York, as Broadway playwrights had reached Hollywood.

Had Hamilton researched the situation he would have gone to Hollywood to write not in the system but to attempt to write against it because a terrific potential existed for a satire or diatribe on the subject of the dream factory. That is why we must make so much here about satire of The Industry. The magazines in the east had already published masses of attack pieces. Springer mentions a great many of those articles as well as fiction. Writers such as Nathanael West and even a few film makers of independent mind found grist for their mills in Hollywood.

The Hollywood writer is a stereotype of fiction, not nearly as interesting as the Hollywood mogul, the epitome of egotistical and colorful nogoodnik, on screen and in life. The writer's pain is a convenient basis for the complaints of part-time Hollywood hacks, whether James Agee, James M. Cain, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ben Hecht, Adlous Huxley, or lesser talents. Other writers took the money and ran. William Faulkner is a prime example of that. Faulkner is said in Hollywood legend to have penned the immortal line "OK, Pharaoh" in an Egyptian supershow. Then he fled.

Hamilton, according to Pollock (p. 103) in 1919 told *Photoplay*, "I detest the movies." By 1921 Hamilton wrote for *Photoplay* about going west and discovering Hollywood, rather than having it discover him. He went from New York (financing and distribution) to

Hollywood (factory). He apparently was under the misconception that he was going from the business end to the creative end of the industry. He was merely suppressing the standard east coast view that Broadway was the legitimate theater — although it has always lost more money on individual productions than Hollywood ever has — and Hollywood the bastard. Broadway was class and Hollywood was crass, snobs said. They money in the Golden State appears to have blinded Hamilton.

Hamilton's suave and sometimes simple-minded, Anglophile and non-violent examinations of chatty domestic situations belong to an older time, now almost completely gone. We have returned to splash and sensation, cheap thrills. We generally avoid glamour and sophisticated dialogue. We are back at the beginning of motion pictures, images of action. Screenwriting these action epics is a business, not a California vacation for run-of-the-mill playwrights, or fiction writers who want to abandon the lonely art of storytelling for the give and take world of movie making.

Today narratology, in popular culture and in high culture, has a high place among critics. The cinema has, in ways literary and film critics both have never fully explored, introduced new ways of telling, new ways of seeing, from simple devices such as double exposures, jump cuts and montages to subtler things. Just as MTV has altered the way we see the world so screenwriting has altered the way we conceive of narrative, the way we read reality. Today a lot of literature is described as cinematic. This has altered the way we interpret the real world. But screenwriting is not to be read even to the extent that drama is to be read, because a screenplay is an instigation more than a thing in and of itself. There are closet dramas written to be read but not staged. There is no such thing — at least in the writer's intention — as a screenplay that is to be read and not produced.

Prefacing Ian Hamilton's survey of screen writers, Paul Schrader identified exactly why writers like the novelist, short-story writer, playwright and critic Cosmo Hamilton was essentially wrong for Hollywood. Schrader explained why screenwriting would become a specialty, not a sideline for Broadway playwrights or writers of books.

Schrader said:

I am not a writer. I am a screenwriter, which is half a film-maker ...

But it is not an art form, because screenplays are not works of art.

They are invitations to others to collaborate on a work of art.

Screenplays are not in and of themselves works of art and yet they may lead to works of art, even genius. They at their best have had immense impact on society, powerfully molding ideas and ideals. True, motion pictures do not win any Nobel Prize for Literature but the best talents in the motion picture industry make a great deal more money and have a far wider reaching influence than even the most lauded and laureled of "serious writers". There is good reason for those who want to understand modern culture to see and think about films as well as to read novels and poetry and attend plays. Some of the most respected modern writers of "serious literature" are very elitist and have far more impact on literary critics — whom Gore Vidals deprecates as "bookchat" people — than upon the general public. Some independent film writers of today aspire to be equally respected and equally obtuse. The fact of the matter is that movies tend to be majoritarian, revealing the mass mentality. That, for this critic, is the greatest reason to pay close attention to them. There can even be a case for looking closely at the small fry such as Cosmo Hamilton.

The tiny but illustrative case of playwright Cosmo Hamilton succeeding on the stage and in the novel, at least to the extent of reaching popular audiences consistently, and yet more or less failing in the dream factory of Hollywood points up the necessity for giving motion pictures an important place of their own as a unique contributor to popular culture.

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DYNAMICS OF THE REAL AND THE UNREAL: A STUDY OF TENNESSEE WILLIAMS'S *THE GLASS MENAGERIE*

Sunita Siroha

Mikhail Bakhtin has a point when he says:

... in drama there is no all encompassing language that addresses itself dialogically to separate languages, there is no second all-encompassing plotless (non-dramatic) dialogue outside of the (non-dramatic) plot.¹

It is true that Bakhtin is primarily concerned with the primacy of the novel which has virtually become a 'pocket theatre' in the hands of novelists like Henry James and D.H. Lawrence; he actually suggests how a novelist imbibes the primary virtue of drama — a plurality of possibilities. It is, therefore, logical for a dramatist like Tennessee Williams who views himself as a poet to choose a form which easily releases its pluralism of meanings. *The Glass Menagerie* (1945) foregrounds the very process of theatre as it defamiliarises the real by dramatising the manner in which the very concept of reality, which, in the words of Henry James, may be described as "solidity of specification", is constituted. In fact, the questions regarding the meaning/perception of reality/ unreality have always haunted the creative imagination of the artists, and every creative writer in his/her own peculiar and particular way has tried to capture the very colour and rhythm of life, but the vital problem regarding the rendering of subtle nuances of reality in a work of art still keeps on eluding the common man.

Describing an artist's attitude towards his work, Tennessee Williams rightly says: "It is only in his work that an artist can find reality and satisfaction, for the actual work is less intense than the world of his invention and consequently his life, without recourse to violent disorder, does not seem very substantial."² What Williams says about the vocation of the artist and what he says about the representation of reality/ unreality in a work of art may well be equally applied to *The Glass Menagerie*. While giving a verbal formulation to his raw experience the dramatist has to critically analyse his

obsessive interest in human affairs with a moral conviction as his primary purpose is to explore the fathomless meaning/ meanings of reality/unreality. In other words, this world of human relationships does demand from the artist to unearth the very meaning of reality because what seems to be real may be unreal and what appears to be a happening in the past may well be an integral part of the present.

All the prominent characters in *The Glass Menagerie* try to explore the reality of their world with a certain minimal effort with a purity of heart. They are extremely sensitive to their surroundings. But they find satisfaction only in their imaginative world created or invented by them. They invent something unreal, a lie, a dream, a fiction, anything that can hold the real world at bay. Such an effort in their case is necessary because it is only by inventing a fictional world that they are able to sustain the pressures of the real world.

The Glass Menagerie is partly an autobiographical play set during the Depression. The major characters represent Williams's mother Edwina, his elder sister Rose and himself as poet narrator. The structure and style of the play are determined by the dynamics of the real and imagined/unreal worlds. To express certain truths about family relationships and socio-economic conditions of the time Williams created a new style of drama — plastic theatre. This distinctive style of drama implies the use of setting, music, sound and visual effects to produce an artistic entity that Williams describes as 'lyric' and 'dynamic'. Williams has a point when he writes in the "Production Notes":

The Glass Menagerie can be presented with unusual freedom of convention. Because of its considerably delicate or tenuous material, atmospheric touches and subtleties of direction play a particularly important part. Expressionism and all the other unconventional techniques in drama have only one valid aim, and that is a closer approach to truth. When a play employs unconventional techniques, it is not, or certainly shouldn't be trying to escape its responsibility of dealing with reality, or interpreting experience, but is actually or should be attempting to find a closer approach, a more penetrating and vivid expression of things as they are.... The straight realistic play with its genuine frigidaire and authentic ice-cubes, its characters that speak exactly as its audience speak, corresponds to the academic landscape and has the same virtue of a photographic likeness. Everyone should know nowadays the unimportance of photographic in art: that truth,

life or reality is an organic thing which the poetic imagination can represent or suggest, in essence, only through transformation. (*TGM*, p.ix)

In the above observations, Williams was not only describing the play's dramatic tactics, but he was, in fact, suggesting a lively interplay of the real and the unreal in the play. The thematic design of the play is a correlative of the resistance to real which characterises the characters of the play. The characters of the play refuse to believe in the real unless it is transformed by imagination. It is ironical to note that the imagination which sustains them by allowing them to live in a world of past, fiction or art also isolates them from the real world. The real world threatens them while the unreal becomes a principal resource.

Williams's opening stage directions point to a tension between the prosaic setting and the characters' attempt to transcend the constraints of the physical setting by taking recourse to various imaginative strategies. The Wingfield apartment is a case in point. It is true that the apartment is both literally and metaphorically a trap. The Wingfields, inhabitants of this closed world, are the victims of social and political forces. But this world is quite unreal in the sense they are no more present in this world than the father who abandoned his responsibility vis-à-vis the real world. But he is very much present there because his image dominates the room. The same can be said of Amanda, Laura and Tom. Amanda has escaped to the mythical world of past, Laura to the timeless world of imagination, and Tom to the world of movies or, more importantly, his poetry. They have been denied "fluidity and differentiation" in the real world. So they are struggling to discover meaning by escaping to the unreal world of fictions which provides consolation at the cost of freedom and mobility.

Williams transforms reality through stage magic in the play. Tom's opening words are:

Yes, I have tricks in my pocket, I have things up my sleeve. But I am the opposite of a stage magician. He gives you illusion that has the appearance of truth. I give you truth in the pleasant disguise of illusion. (*TGM*, p.4.)

Tom, as well as other characters in the play, flare into life within the magical circle of their invention. Williams's attempt to catch the organic nature of truth, life or reality by an act of imaginative trans-

formation implies a denial of this force as a part of realities that determine a man's life.

The play is an attempt by Tom, the narrator, to recall the key moments in his past life. Like Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman*, he recalls the past because he feels guilty for having abandoned his mother and sister to follow his avocation as a poet. The fact that he "writes" the play is an indication that he has not been able to achieve that escape from the past which had been his motive for leaving the house. The characters find themselves stranded in a void. Since they cannot relate themselves either to their setting or to the times, they try to fill the void with distorted memories of the past. It is unreal because it is invented by them. Amanda turns to her past because it represents her youth. Retreat from the harsh reality of the Depression to the illusion of herself in the legendary South makes present bearable for her. Memory has become myth, a myth of gracious living, family tradition and chivalry. Laura understands that the unreal past is an escape from the real present.

Laura, based on William's sister Rose, is a delicately drawn figure with a crippled foot. Unable to face this brute reality she has withdrawn into a world of her own creation — the glass animals of her menagerie. This unreal world grants her immunity from the rush of time. It is precisely this pressure of time which promotes the unreal or imagined evasions 'the gay deceivers' which became the cause of 'desperation'. Williams and his characters have an unappeasable fear of time. It is time that renders experience and people inconsequential. The suspension of time gives a special meaning to chaos and dignity to those lives which have been rendered meaningless by the 'rush of time'. Art ascribes meaning to the moment. It creates a world in which "emotion and action have a dimension and dignity that they would... have in real existence, if only the shattering intrusion of time could be locked out."³

Theatre is a place where the 'shattering intrusion' of time can be successfully locked out. It operates in the present tense and this presentness is a part of its methodology. It foregrounds its process. The very concept of time and the nature of reality/ imagination do indicate that everything is in flux and in a process of creation. Com-

paring the world to an unfinished poem, Williams rightly observes:

The world is incomplete, it's like an unfinished poem. May be the poem will turn into a limerick and may be it will turn into an epic poem. But it's for all of us to try to complete this poem and the way to complete it is through understanding and patience and tolerance among ourselves.⁴

This sense of incompleteness is, in fact, central to his creative work. It is this sense which determines the contours of reality/ unreality/ imagination. This makes him a natural victim of the socio-economic forces he is trying to resist by creating fictions. Williams in the preface to the play says that he was trying to catch the organic nature of reality by an act of imaginative transformation, but it is ironical to note that his act of writing is actually an escape from these objectives.

In the harsh world of brute reality theatre offers a grace. That is why theatrical metaphor is central to the play. Appearance and reality, real and unreal co-exist in the world of theatre in the same way as they co-exist in the real world of flesh and blood. Amanda and Tom, though marginalised in the real world, invent a stage where they occupy central positions. The world is remade after a cruel exposition of illusions. The real world which Williams presents is so relentless that it has to be transformed and restaged by the imagination. It is only then that it can be tolerated. Time is something dreaded by Williams's characters but at the same time its reality cannot be denied. So they invent something unreal which gives them a momentary consolation and also makes the real bearable. Even the most realistic character in the play whom Williams describes as "an emissary from a world of reality" has to play his role on the public stage. So he is learning public speaking. But his words carry no conviction. As an actor he is not convinced of the role he is supposed to play.

The fact that Tom is as lost in the real (supposed) present as he had been in the imagined (recalled) past indicates that he is not a confident narrator. His narrative of other characters' lives does not generate meaning, the meaning ascribed to those lives by past, myth or imagination. So they generate their unreal fictions and try to find meaning by ascribing metaphorical significance to them. This is the only way to preserve the unreal from assault by the real. Tom and Laura seek some meaning in art (Laura arranges her glass ani-

mals with the touch of an artist) which grants them some 'real' refuge from the rush of time and fundamental determinism. She echoes what her creator has said about himself that he was "creating imaginary worlds into which I can retreat from the real because... I've never made any kind of adjustment to the real world."⁵

Literature at one level becomes an act of renunciation. It demands withdrawal and abstinence. At the same time, the creative writer has to struggle very hard in order to grasp the subtle nuances of the real/ unreal world. The grace of the theatre lies in the fact that the drama is conceived privately but it is created publicly. It may be seen as a re-entry into the world. It gives back to the writer what he has sacrificed in order to write. Tom, the dramatist's surrogate, embraces his mother at the end of the play whom he had otherwise blamed for his suffocating years at the warehouse. It is his sense of guilt which makes him reconstitute the events of the play and return, in memory, to St. Louis where he had abandoned his mother and crippled sister. The play conceived in a denial of community (abandoning the mother and failure to redeem the sister from her isolation) ends with a restoration of community. Herein lies the greatness of theatre. It offers truth real through lies unreal. It contributes to the emergence of a kind of understanding in which both the real and the unreal might be contained and related if not resolved. Thus unreal is used creatively as a medium of understanding the real and *The Glass Menagerie* amply demonstrates that the creative artist is always engaged in the process of unearthing the constituents of the real by way of transforming it into the unreal.

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SYLVIA PLATH — AN ENCOUNTER WITH FEMINISM

Raihan Raza

It is impossible to give a definition of feminism with which all feminists would agree. So it seems sensible right at the outset to say that there are many feminisms. In spite of this, there is a lot that is common between these feminisms. Some poems of Sylvia Plath lend themselves remarkably to the argument that she was a feminist. William Freedman rightly observes: "Like the women in the writing of Anne Finch and Anne Elliot, Emily Dickinson and the Brontë sisters, the persona in a few of Plath's poems - in 'In Plaster,' the Bee Poems, 'Lady Lazarus' and 'Daddy' - articulates what virtually her entire body of poetry represents: the striving of the fundamentally powerless woman for autonomy."¹ In some of her most powerful and well known poems, the personae adopted by her express great anger towards men. A number of them can be classified as poems of power, of threat, of aggression, of rage, and of the struggle of the powerless woman for power, for freedom at every level. It is fine for a male writer to express his anger and aggression. But if a female writer does so she must be hysterical. This happens often in the case of Sylvia Plath. By frankly giving vent to her anger and aggression Plath places the female writer on an equal footing with the male writer.

'Daddy', 'Lady Lazarus', 'The Couriers', 'Purdah', 'The Applicant', 'The Jailor' are some poems in which Sylvia Plath, or the personae adopted by her express their dissatisfaction and anger towards men. Plath's complete rejection of the father plus husband plus male figure in 'Daddy' has outraged many a sensibility. The outrage is a consequence of not just the rejection, but also the manner of rejection chosen by Plath's persona in 'Daddy'. Right at the very beginning the persona expresses dissatisfaction with her father in a parody of Christian marriage vows :

You do not do, you do not do

Any more, black shoe

Insult is compounded with injury right at the end when the persona gets rid of the father plus husband plus male figure by calling

him a vampire and a bastard and putting a stake through his heart:

If I've killed one man, I've killed two —

The vampire who said he was you

And drank my blood for a year,

Seven years, if you want to know.

Daddy, you can lie back now.

There's a stake in your fat black heart

And the villagers never liked you....

Daddy, Daddy, you bastard, I'm through.

'Daddy' is a dramatic monologue. The black shoe becomes the replica of the father figure in the first stanza. Such was the dictatorial attitude of the father that the persona imagines herself as a 'poor and white' foot that has led a cloistered suppressed existence, for thirty years, inside the shoe with no freedom what so ever:

...black shoe

in which I have lived like a foot

For thirty years, poor and white,

Barely daring to breathe or Achoo.

Consequently she declares, in continuation with the above thought, that she has had no choice except to kill him in order to have some dignity and freedom :

Daddy, I have had to kill you.

The daughter calls her father a Fascist, which serves as a universal symbol of aggression, abuse and torture. She herself identifies with the Jews. She sees her relationship with her father in terms of a victim and victimizer :

. . . I thought every German was you.

And the language obscene

An engine, an engine,

Chuffing me off like a Jew.

A Jew to Dachau, Auschwitz, Belsen

I began to talk like a Jew.

I think I may well be a Jew.

The abused psyche of the daughter persona in 'Daddy', abused by the dictatorial attitude of the father, does have some love and affection for her father. She even admires him and has put him on a pedestal:

I made a model of you....

Thus, the traditional love-hate relationship becomes complete.

The image of the black shoe which symbolizes the father stands for the phallus. She talks of the cleft in his chin which is the penis as well as the cleft in the vagina and the entire imagery is that of sexual congress. Towards the end of the poem the image of the father fuses with that of her husband. The husband is called a vampire who, like her father, has also abused her. By killing one she kills both. The rejection is complete and final. Even if the daughter persona is considered to be obsessive and neurotic, yet the anger and rage against the male figure can not be denied. The chosen form of the dramatic monologue gives objectivity to the emotions expressed, though there is a lot here which is autobiographical.

In another significant poem 'Lady Lazarus' the female persona adopted by Plath expresses great anger towards her oppressors who are male, and at the end of the poem rises from the dead like Lazarus, the friend of Christ, and like the phoenix and threatens to kill her male tormentors:

Out of the ash
I rise with my red hair
And I eat men like air.

'Purdah' is a poem about male domination, and develops the theme of repression and male oppression which builds up a violence that burns on outside rather than being self-destructive. The female plots against the bridegroom who has oppressed her all these days. The poem has a violent climax constituted by the assassination of the male ego by one who has long been a mere member of the harem and in purdah. In this poem the female speaker revolts against her conventional image. She wants liberation from her trapped condition in marriage. In a laconic manner Plath first describes the 'enigmatical' posture of the jeweled bride. The bride wearing jade which is the 'stone of the side' is also an agony of the youthful bride: 'green Adam'. The bride with her enigmatical posture 'shifts' her 'clarities' which are 'so valuable' to her. She in her traditional role offers herself as a bride sexually to her bridegroom. Her eyes reflect the orgasmic pleasure of the husband. However, the woman speaker develops in her simmering revolt against the traditional sexuality of woman being exploited by the male. She starts 'unloosing' the stere-

otypes attached to her one by one. She finally prepares herself to unloose a 'lioness' out of her traditional 'doll' image at the next sexual assault on her by her groom:

.... And at his next step
I shall unloose
I shall unloose —
From the small jeweled
Doll he guards like a heart —
The lioness,
The shriek in the bath,
The cloak of holes.

The concluding lines of the poem represent a powerful expression of feminism in Sylvia Plath. The image of the unloosing of the lioness embodies a forceful and violent reaction against male oppression as well as against the image of a conventional female figure. This image links *Purdah* with a number of other poem of Sylvia Plath with the help of the common motif of a woman emerging as a predator to counterbalance the male ego. The poem has a double pattern of bridal imagery and that of the victim and the predator. It is also informed by passion, characteristic of Sylvia Plath.

'The Applicant' explores the idea of woman's entrapment in marriage. The applicant has come for selecting a woman as a wife. Throughout the poem the woman has been treated like a commodity which will be useful to the applicant:

... It can sew, it can cook,
It can talk, talk, talk.

In keeping with her status as a useful commodity she is addressed as 'it':

....To bring teacups and roll away headaches
And do whatever you tell it.
Will you marry it...

The woman is also described as a doll with parts that can be replaced. The exaggerated humor of the lines

.... It is waterproof, shatterproof, proof
Against fire and bombs through the roof....

serves to ridicule the prevalent social attitudes towards women. The feminist idea of woman's exploitation in the institution of marriage is well taken up. She is kept in a cupboard and sold as if she is a set of clothes. She serves just like a utility item without any

identity of her own.

'The Couriers' is another poem which attacks the institution of marriage and has a feminist stance. The poem begins with the image of 'a snail on the plate of a leaf ?' which from a woman's point of view serves as a symbol of monotony in married life. Such a life is rejected outright. Then there is the image of 'acetic acid' which stands for the sourness involved in marriage from the woman's point of view. This acetic acid is in a sealed tin which symbolizes her lack of freedom. Such a married life is also rejected. The image of a ring of gold with the sun in it stands for the great chasm which exists between the promise of marriage and the reality of it. Though marriage has been presented as a failed institution, the poet declares here that love is not present in marriage but it can be found nevertheless.

Jeannine Dobbs opines that "Plath frequently explores what it means to be a woman in terms of the traditional conflict between family and career. Plath's life and her writing are filled with anxiety and despair over her refusal to choose and instead to try to have - what most males consider their birthright — both."² In Plath's novel *The Bell Jar*³ at the beginning Esther Greenwood is in New York, working on a magazine and spending her free time attending parties. She is at this stage supposed to have all that she needs to be happy. She describes herself as a 'numb trolley bus' and a 'zombie' and feels very 'empty'. She wants to be a poet. Esther Greenwood vacillates between getting married and having children and not having them because of the demands made by children on one's time and energy. Esther wants to see for herself what she wants instead of what society wants of her. However, Esther breaks down under the pressures of conformity. After her nervous break down and consequent stay at the mental, home her boy friend Buddy Willard, whom she is expected to marry and has been avoiding, says that he wonders who will marry her now, referring to her diminished chances of marrying well because she is now a girl who has experienced a psychic breakdown. This highlights the attitude of society towards women.

The Bell Jar can be read as an early feminist text. The title of the novel brings to mind confinement in a glass object for the purpose of being observed. Obviously, this is a discriminatory and negative

attitude towards women. *The Bell Jar*, as Diane S. Bonds holds "dramatizes a double bind for women in which, on the one hand, an authentic self is one that is presumed to be autonomous and whole, entire to itself and clearly bounded, and yet in which, on the other hand, women have their identity primarily through relationship to a man."⁴

In a significant poem 'Stings', Plath "... identifies with both the drones and the queen, and reveals the conflict between her domestic and her poetic— her queenly — selves."⁵ She writes:

... I stand in a column
Of winged, unmiraculous women,
Honey-drudgers.
I am no drudge
Though for years I have eaten dust
And dried plates with my dense hair.
And seen my strangeness evaporate
They thought death was worth it, but I
Have a self to recover, a queen....

A large number of Plath's poems use embryological and obstetric images and metaphors. The poem 'Childless Woman' begins with the image of the womb:

The womb
Rattles its pod....

Similar imagery is used in 'The Munich Mannequins':

Perfection is terrible, it cannot have children.
Cold as snow breath, it tamps the womb
Where the Yew trees blow like hydras.
The tree of life and the tree of life.
Unloosing their moons, month after month, to no purpose.
The blood flood is the flood of love....

In the poem 'Medusa' the persona adopted by Plath calls her mother an 'Old barnacled umbilicus' and further 'Fat and red, a placenta'. In 'Nick and The Candlestick' the embryo is addressed:

.... O embryo
Remembering, even in sleep,
Your crossed position.
The blood blooms clean

Then, 'Moonrise' alludes to pregnancy with reference to Jesus Christ.

A pigeon rudders down. It's fantail's white
Vocation enough : opening, shutting

White petals, white fantails, ten white fingers.

Enough for fingernails to make half-moons
 Redden in white palms no labor reddens.
 White bruises toward color, else collapses.

Berries redden. A body of whiteness
 Rots, and smells of rot under its headstone
 Though the body walk out in clean linen.

Death whitens in the egg and out of it....

It may be stated that women in Plath's poetry "have come a long way from the fastidious spinster who hid behind her barricade to guard herself against the 'curse, fist, threat/ Or love' of some 'mere insurgent man'". In the course of the poems, the woman has suffered the onslaughts of the man on all four accounts, and her final triumph must be the triumph over fear, the final power to break out of her own barricade and confront chaos directly, affirmatively, willfully. She gathers her forces in these poems, and, if her final position seems outraged and violent, it is also affirmative and powerful."⁶

To conclude, Sylvia Plath may not have had the makings of a rabid feminist, but her work does take up issues which are women specific. There are images of women being dominated, women exploited, and women viewed as private possession and objects. There are women who feel imprisoned and tortured, but strive for an identity of their own. Plath is aware that the equation tilts in favor of men. She wants to set the balance right. Complete equality may be a mirage, but it must be sought.

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AGIT-PROP TRADITION IN AFRO-AMERICAN POETRY: LEROI JONES (AMIRI BARAKA) AND DON L. LEE (HAKI R. MADHUBUTI)

Rajendra Nath Mishra

The early American Negro poetry was influenced by the views of the master race. Poets like Phillis Wheatley, G. M. Horton, James Madison Bell, Alberry A. Whiteman and F. W. Harper wrote about protest. But their style was imitative. The first person who spoke of Black pride was Dunbar, who started using dialect in verse. Then came W.E.B. DuBois who wrote about race discrimination. Poets like Claude McKay, Langston Hughes and Countee Cullen followed his footprints.

In the 1960s there came a strong influence in the form of LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka) who advocated change not only in the subject matter of Afro-American literature, but also in language and form. He was to be strongly supported by yet another poet-critic, Don L. Lee (Haki R. Madhubuti), who spoke of Black revolution and Black identity. The revolutionary tone of these two stalwarts frustrated many white critics. While referring to the following poem of Lee in his introduction to the volume *Think Black*, Eugene E. Miller, a white critic, finds it difficult to comment on the poem with the help of the established critical tools:

America calling.
negroes.
can you dance ?
play foot/baseball ??
nanny ?
cook ?
needed now. negroes
who can entertain
ONLY.
others not
wanted.

(Lee 1967:6)

These two young energetic Black-American writers, with the audacity to refuse all white norms of literature, started with a new approach to creative writing in which they created their own poetics and syntax. Their poetic licence led them to start an agit-prop tradition of literature

African imagination, the Black man should destroy the present set-up of Black suppression and create a new atmosphere of Black pride. In a poem "ka' Ba" he expresses this:

We are beautiful people
with african imagination

.....
We have been captured,
brothers....

... we need magic

... to raise up

return, destroy, and create....

(Jones 1979:117)

When we come to Lee, we find that his poetry is concerned with Black identity, Black beauty and Black bravery. Describing Langston Hughes as America's Pushkin, he portrays Hughes' bravery in the poem "Only a Few Left" in these words:

The time has come
when bravery
is not he
who is abundant

.....
Bravery is that
little Black man/over there
surrounded by people/ he's talking...
bravery lies in his words,
he's telling the truth....

(Lee 1968:17)

For LeRoi Jones and Lee poetry became more than bitter protest. Lee taught the Black folk to awaken Black consciousness and Black pride. Lee recognizes enormous power in the Black people to reverse the impossible:

I can clear a beach or swimming pool
without/touching water

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

I ALONE can make the word of god have
little or no meaning to many,
in Sunday morning's prayer hour.

I have power,

BLACK POWER.

(Lee 1967:8)

Through his poetry he attempted to rekindle this Black power. The following words of Lee provide an example; here he advocates to kill the white who endanger the Black and their offspring:

if a rat is chewing at yr. baby's skull
 you don't negotiate
 you kill it.

(Lee 1973:27)

Thus Lee responds to his surroundings strongly and directly. He declares the English to be "oppressive, dehumanizing, stifling" with reference to Blacks. So he opposes the language and the cultural entity which block the growth and liberation of Black consciousness. The following lines from Lee's poem "The Black Christ" can be used as a touchstone which mourns the death of Malcom X:

without doubt
 rome did the whi
 te thing when it
 killed christ.
 it has been proven
 that j.c. was non-whi
 te in the darkest
 way possible.
 xxxxxxxxxx
 history repeats
 it-self ask
 st. malcom
 all because, j.c.
 was a nigger

(Lee 1968:22-23)

Lee is also an innovator of new poetic style. One of his important techniques is his use of broken words and another is his hyphenation. Similarly, LeRoi Jones also feels the urgency to communicate when he feels his language and tradition in danger:

If you ever find
 yourself, some where
 lost and surrounded
 by enemies
 who wont let you
 speak in your own language
 who destroy your statues
 & instruments, who ban
 your omm bomm ba boom
 then you are in trouble
 deep trouble

.....
 probably take you several hundred years

to get / out !

(Harris 1985 : 152-153)

Looking at the revolutionary lines of LeRoi Jones and Don L. Lee initially one may have the idea that they are agit-prop masters. But they are quite aware of the fact that they are using propaganda as literature. They started this agit-prop tradition in the 1960s with a purpose. LeRoi Jones has to say the following in this connection:

We want to make sure that our propaganda is art, that you have a unity of form and content, of artistic form and political content(Sollors 1978:252)

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"THE KRAKEN SLEEPS": INNER TRAVERSE IN KEKI DARUWALLA'S *NIGHT RIVER*

Asha Vivas

Keki Daruwalla is a traveller and if we look at his poetic topocosm, we find that it is made up of many worlds and sub-worlds. For a couple of miles (early poetry) he takes us to a space of human experience, at times claustrophobic, with all its anomalies and injustices, decay and destruction. The journey continues and he reaches another world of past civilizations and societies. Time is slower here. A whole civilization takes much longer to be destroyed as compared to an individual. The poet dives deep into this elusive past and comes up with a few fragments from the rubble. The poet's search for permanence brings him to the world of nature (*Landscapes*). But nature has only guided him. In *Night River* Daruwalla, once again, changes his route from nature to human imagination. Kant's "Third Critique" describes imagination as a process in which "material can be borrowed from nature ... but worked up by us into something else – namely, what surpasses nature."¹ Human consciousness is eternal, it flows forever, *Night River* forces a comparison between the indestructibility of consciousness and the indestructibility of the physical world. In fact, a quasi-mystic chord is touched by him in his intuition of the indestructibility of mind and matter in the midst of decay. Orpheus-like, he descends into the darker depths of what we call the subconscious and unconscious layers of consciousness.

Most of the poems in this volume were written in 1997-98. As to the title of the volume, the poet says,

Earlier, I wanted to call this volume "On a Dying Millennium" but then I thought it would be too apocalyptic a title, too gaseous. So I chucked it, though not the poem.²

Another title, "Living on Hyphens" met the disapproval of the poet's friends Harish Trivedi and Rukmini Bhaya Nair. For them it was a flog word in critical parlance. Once again the poem "Living on Hyphens" was retained but this title was rejected.³ The present title is taken from the very first poem of this collection "Exile and the Chinese Poets".

When they travelled down the night river

They became the night river.

(11.1-2)

One sees the river stretched in the moonlight and one wonders at the infinity of the elements — water and the sky. At first glance the reader sees a map of the world unfolded — China, Greece, Spain, Helsinki, Egypt, Persia, Doha, Russia and of course, India. However, these poems are not just touristic notes, but much more. One has to stand back from this world map and with narrowed eyes look at the small dots (poems) on it. One would, then, feel the flow of the river of consciousness under night skies (the dark recesses of the unconscious). Different countries only emphasize the sameness of the workings of the unconscious irrespective of space and time. Consciousness is universal and eternal.

It was Aristotle who pointed out the similarity between the dream world and water:

Dream Pictures, like pictures in water, are disfigured by the motion of the water, so that he hits the target best who is able to recognize the true picture in the distorted one.*

The volume is Daruwalla's quest for these darker depths of psyche. In "Small Space" the poet gropes

... for this patch of darkness

with a lighted match.

It is so private

That I can't locate it within myself

...the cave of the self is small

And "Just One Small Dream" comes to the surface of the conscious mind "like nocturnal fish / adrift in a grotto". The world of *Night River* is a world of intuitions, premonitions, dreams, and reverie. The conscious mind, with all its logic, sits moiled in the backyard while the subconscious, equipped with its own logic, takes over. In a letter Daruwalla confesses:

I am, of course, trying half-consciously to plum depths — of consciousness and solitude ... the stream of consciousness as manifested in the dream world becomes the night river. But it is not as if I set out to convey a certain meaning with predetermined blue print in my hand... the cave within is one's inner-most core. Recall and premonition — shadows slanting back and leaning forward ... when you pass a light, your shadow changes — that is the image I am trying to project. Obviously, when the light is behind you, the shadow leans ahead. I am, somehow trying to blend the past with the

future, to juggle with tenses.⁵

One of the most important sequences of poems in this collection, associated with inner traverse, is "Dream Log". There are four poems in this sequence — "Dream Log", "The Room", "The House" and "Melons". These four poems are part of a log that the poet maintained in 1976-77 of his dreams. He maintained this log for about six months and then gave it up. The reason for abandoning the writing of these dreams was, perhaps, the knowledge that while one is writing a dream a part of one's conscious mind, in a parallel way, tries to hold on to the memory and some artifice may be added to the mysterious workings of the unconscious.⁶

Coming to the four dream poems, these are narrated in the present tense and these dream statements are first person autobiographical statements. The truth of these statements is to be accepted as we accept any other autobiographical authentic statement. As far as location is concerned, if we can talk of a location in a dreamer's mind, it is a river in three of these poems while in the fourth one, it is an old house. All the four dreams fall in the category of reminder dreams, dreams which reinforce the worries, stresses and wishes of the conscious mind. Such dreams are a sort of collection of psychic remnants and memory traces. One regular dream is that of looking into water and not finding his face. This lost face is, eventually, found in the fourth poem — 'Melons'. This part — "of finding his face reflected / in a shallow scoop of water" was added to the dream in waking consciousness.

A reader can use the Freudian frame to analyse these four innocent looking poems, specially "The Room" and "The House". Our dreams behave like prince Hamlet who has to pretend to be mad and we may apply to dreams what the prince said of himself: "I am but mad north — north west, when the wind is southerly" (Act II, Sc. II). In "The Room" the dreamer finds himself on "a hill in a large room / with only three walls." In Freud 'room', 'hills', 'mountains', 'Walls' and 'No.3' have sexual connotations (Brill pp.371-374). A young girl of lower class (Shepherd girl), relatives (old man of the poem), animals (two Bhotiya dogs) have the same implications for Freud (Brill, pp.373, 401). Some one has said about Freud

that anything that is longer than it is shorter is a sex symbol. Hence, we need not take this interpretation seriously.

The third poem of this sequence is entitled "The House". The dream runs thus:

...I home in like a pigeon
to a place where we stayed for six years,
mother, father and I.
The same doors that squealed!
The same large brass bolt,
...what delight in finding the old house,

If one applies a strictly freudian interpretation, then a house implies a location that has a special significance of 'Deja Vu'. The poet's desire for the warmth and security of 'the house' is a trekback to roots. The poet's father moved from place to place living in rented houses.

According to Freud our unconscious wishes are indestructible: Nothing can be brought to an end in the unconscious; nothing is past or forgotten ... the dream process is ... admitted as a wish-fulfilment of the unconscious.⁷

Rejection and suppression of the unconscious wishes, associated with pleasure, result in pain. The suppressed wishes take the shape of anxiety dreams.

In case the reader does not intend to bring Freud in this interpretation of dreams, then we can simply say that anxiety dreams are anxiety problems. This anxiety in this sequence of dreams may have resulted from loneliness and a sense of anonymity. The poet confesses:

It is a disquietude, being a little unsure. Temperamentally too, I keep away from the lime light. I take after my mother. When I dreamt of the bearded fellow and Melons lying around him, I wrote a comment in the Dream Log — "This is my luck ... I wait for the tremor ("The House") it does not come. I am looking for melons, I seem to find nothing. I do not find the melons. I do not find my face. This is a sign of being unsure, insecure.⁸

The ending of "Melons", that he has found his face, was not a part of the dream. It was added. It is not only in these four 'dreams', but in some other poems too, we find the translation of the same dream content about 'anxiety'. The same "search for the centrality of the whirlpool" from the fringe:

Live on the fringe, but die at the centre
 A good aphorism is one
 Which is true on the flip side as well
 So die on the fringe but live at the centre
 But don't for pete's sake

Live on the fringe and die there too.

(Sidelines)

Although there are no precognitive dreams in this collection, yet in some of his poems, Daruwalla talks of such dreams as indicate fore-knowledge of events. In "Letter from Helsinki" he regards his premonitions as a legacy from his mother:

Do you remember, Mama,
 The night I broke my tooth
 Playing Hockey on roller skates?
 A night earlier you had a dream; remember?
 You've left it to me now,
 this frugal legacy
 of meaningless premonitions.

While he wrote down his dreams, he noticed that these were becoming premonitory:

This dreams foreshadowed many events — for instance while in Delhi I started dreaming of landscapes. Hill, rice terraces, the ones I had lived amongst when I was in Kumayun and Garhwal for five years (63-68), I was transferred to Kashmir. There was another dream — people coming into the house and a dead body lying there. In real life my domestic help dies.⁹

Many poems in *Night River* present the dream motif in its various aspects. In "Island Notes" 'recall and reverie' are expressed as 'ego' nimbus blotting out the sky". In "Of Fullness" the non-corporeal mind churns up dreams from the material body:

...the sea rolls
 and wrings the dreams out
 of the wet rag of your body....

Since dreams, in a complicated way, are associated with the most remote past, they hold a key to the collective psyche of mankind. The poem, "A Dream is also", is a part of the sequence of four poems entitled "Vignettes". It presents the difficulties involved in the interpretation of a dream and dream symbolism:

...A dream is also an allegory,
 only, I distrust its hierarchy of veils,
 and the masks nailed to the doors
 ...by the time

You have decoded the allegory,
 dream and the memory of it
 have both swept past
 like a fish shoal wrapped
 in a darkening current....

In "The Nets Wait" the unconscious is likened to a cave within water, yet aloof from it while the dreams are like the "Silver fish" and "silver dust hauled up" from the sea floor. This poem also presents the third type of dream — Lucid dream — "a moment so vivid, you would think it travelled to the eyeball / on a surge of blood."

Besides dreaming consciousness couched in emblems and symbols (primordia language of the unconscious), the poet presents another neighbourly world — the world of reverie, the world of imagination. Art, specially poetry, is the creation of the human mind when it withdraws itself from the world of sense and rambles in the realm of reverie. Genuine poetry suddenly bubbles from the same dark caves of the unconscious from where dreams peep. Instinctive will is the source of poetic inspiration. Prescott, a British psychologist, regards art "as analogous to dream, and Kant calls dream as involuntary poetry."¹⁰ In dreaming separate and distinct images are brought together to produce a sequence of events in which the dreamer takes part. This harmonization of separate and diverse images is an act of poetic creation too. Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" and Robert Burns' "Vision" were created in dreams. Shelley was aware of the mysterious depths from which poetry emerged:

It is I think one of the higher transfigurations of the psyche beyond the mid-world of dream, in that phase where it is creator that poetry is born ... It is in the inner foundry of sleep that poetry is produced."

It is, in fact, in this context, that Daruwalla writes poems like "Exile and the Chinese poets", "Stalking Mandelstam" and 'Dareios'. The Chinese poets Tu Fu and Su Man Shu, the Persian poet Phernazis and the Russian Poet Osip Mandelstam are different links of the same chain. Except Phernazis who is an imaginary poet created by Kavafi, the poet and historian, all the other poets were real characters. What unites all these poets, is their exile, voluntary or forced. It is an exile who knows best what nostalgia for home is, hence his refuge in the world of reverie and dream.

These poems of rumination and reverie belong to the same area of dark depth of the unconscious. In "Exile and the Chinese poets" nostalgia for the native land is presented through the image of a diver. While Tu Fu (712-770), one of the greatest poets of China, was not actually exiled by the Chinese government, yet he spent much of his youth travelling. Daruwalla had translated one of Tu Fu's poems and published it in a *Summer of Tigers*. It was entitled "Night Thoughts while Travelling". This poem expresses Tu Fu's loneliness and deep melancholy. Daruwalla had read about these Chinese poets from a book by Czeslaw Milosz, the nobel prize winning poet from Poland. Their genuine feelings and loneliness touched some string in Daruwalla's heart. In the fourth section of this poem there is reference to Su Man Shu, a modern Chinese poet (1884-1918). Daruwalla's account of this Buddhist monk is based on his (Su Man Shu's) poem "Ben Shi" (original account). Another poem related to an exiled poet is "stalking mandelstam". Osip emilevich Mandelstam was a Russian poet (1892-1938). He was arrested in 1934 and exiled. These poems show how a poet is crushed in a communist regime. They also show how powerful a poem can be and how it is created. "Dareios" is based on Constantine P. Cavafy's poem "Dareios" written in 1917, and translated into English by Theoharis Constantine. The scene of the poem is imaginary and is set in 74 B.C. in Amisos on the Coast of the Black sea. The crucial point of Daruwalla's poem is, once again, the fate of a poet in a foreign land and the fate of poetry in a war-worn country.

Another important sequence in this collection is "Island Poems". These poems were written when the poet, just before his retirement, went to the Andaman Islands for a week. The islands, surrounded by water, are a tool to describe the conscious thinking level, snared by the unconscious:

A dream is also an island
surrounded by the swirling waters
of myth-memory.

Water stands not only for the constant flow of consciousness but also as the symbol of birth. Poetry also comes out, like the golden fleece, from the depths of the sea of consciousness. These Island

poems present landscape and waterscapes, but invariably they get linked to dreamscapes.

All these poems clearly show how far Daruwalla has travelled from his earlier world of modernism. The poet confesses:

There has always been a Romantic streak in my Poetry. The Romantic poets that one read earlier, are always remembered. But I don't think I am moving to Romanticism. I am moving to reverie. I hate the word Postmodernism. I am moving away from the strictly modern poetry — the clinical, the harsh and the unmusical part of it. There is more (in this volume) of looking inward than looking at the outer reality.¹²

Reverie is a part of Romanticism. The Romantics entered the realm of dreams and even tapped at the doors of Eternity.

Before Freud, the Empiricists regard memory as a mechanical casual based on the law of association of ideas. Freud regarded it as a complex activity of projection, introjection and identification in the solution of conflicts. He compared the mental apparatus to an organism floating in water. Daruwalla retains this Freudian image. But he does much more. Consciousness for him becomes a defence — against time, decay and even death. He does not regard it as an attribute of the divine influence, but with his bodily eye closed, he dives, like the Kraken, in search of this mysterious process.

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³Interview with Asha Viswas.

⁴A.A. Brill, Trans. & ed. *The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud*, trans. & ed. A.A. Brill (New York: Random House, 1938), p.189.

⁵K.N. Daruwalla, Letter to Asha Viswas, Nov. 8th 2000.

⁶Interview with Asha Viswas.

⁷*The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud*, pp.518-19.

⁸Interview with Asha Viswas.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰P. Agrawal, *Symbolism: A Psychological Study* (Banaras: Manovigyan Prakashan, 1955), p.112.

¹¹A.E. Further, *Song and Its Fountain* (London: MacMillan, 1932), p.120.

¹²Interview with Asha Viswas.

MNEMONIC METAPHOR AS SEMINAL ANALYSIS IN BHARATI MUKHERJEE'S *JASMINE*

O.P. Budholia

The theoretic postulations of mnemonic metaphor work out adroitly the organization and disorganization of unconscious mental forces as the gross properties of synthetic memories. The unconscious as past is merged with the conscious as present for the motif of stability as future in the seminal analysis of the protagonist. The teaming up of semantic and episodic memories for the total flux of time gives a sensory effect to the visual phenomena of symbols and metaphors as the seminal analysis for the semiotic text of *Jasmine*. The protagonist of the novel becomes a symbolic study for encoding and decoding the semantic and episodic range of memories. Each episode flowing out from the text of *Jasmine* herself provides her each time a new name with definitive obsessions for the question of her identity.

As a village girl of India, *Jasmine*, (not Jyoti of Hasnapur), undergoes the metamorphosis of her personality with severe afflictions on the quest of her identity as an exile. She faces episodes after episodes along with the semantic inscriptions writ large in her psyche. Thus, the new sensibility in an alien land and an inborn inheritance from *sanskars*, translocation, the trauma of an exile and the collective effects of memories illustrate the symbolic relationship of literature and some definitive trans-cultural issues. *Jasmine's* ethnic inheritance from Hasnapur of Punjab as semantic memory, and the murder of her husband Prakash by Sukkhi, a Sikh terrorist, in India as episodic memory become symbolic and suggestive of the seminal analysis that is to be structured as semiotic text in the narrative of the novel, *Jasmine*.

In the analysis of Freud, there emerge two kinds of processes for human thought: the primary process, and the secondary process. The primitive mode of thinking is the subject of the primary process, while the secondary process brings into being the signifier and the signified objects, images, myths, metaphors and symbols for the extension of the unconscious as semiotic text. This way the creative energy is directed by the total properties of ideas into written

signs. There might be some modulations and variations in the written signs due to a clash between semantic and episodic memories.¹

The device chosen for the narrative of the novel is so designed as to make an appropriate association of time present through conscious and unconscious mental forces. Born and brought up at Hasnapur, Jyoti, renamed as Jasmine, is the seventh of nine children in her family. She exemplifies and brings to light the injustice and exploitation of the feudal society of India when she says that "daughters were curses"² in the society. Hasnapur as a subtle metaphor becomes the semantic memory of the protagonist. The oft-repeated metaphor of Hasnapur as the unconscious mental force of Jasmine, the protagonist, weaves the semiotic text of the novel. The new Freudian psychologists divide the unconscious into two parts: the personal and the collective mental forces. The personal unconscious forces are meant to reveal the individualistic obsession of human personality; but the collective unconscious forces are symbolic of the higher motifs and higher norms of life. Thus they correspond to the seminal analysis of human psyche.³

Thus the repetition of memory creates a metaphoric and seminal analysis of the text. At least twenty times the repetition of Hasnapur as semantic memory make ethnic and metaphoric effects on the conscious level of Jasmine's psyche. The astrologer at Hasnapur combines time present and time future, the foretelling about her "widowhood and exile" (3). The chuckling of the astrologer on Jasmine's face creates a permanent scar which later serves the purpose of the third eye — a divine symbol for scaling the distance of time and space. Jasmine marries Prakash Vih at Hasnapur. She marries a man who is rebuilder and idealist. It is Prakash who has renamed her as Jasmine. Symbolically, the physical property of energy is being re-shaped: "You'll quicken the whole world with your perfume" (77). Prakash converts a feudalistic girl, Jyoti, into a modern Jasmine, for this name is common both in India and Europe. Prakash wishes that Jyoti should be relieved of the obsessions of her unconscious mind: Hasnapur and its feudal set-up. To Prakash, Jyoti of Hasnapur "is dead" (78).

The union of Jyoti and Prakash as husband and wife symbol-

izes some convertive reactions, especially in the behaviour of Jyoti as Jase and Jyoti as Jasmine. Jyoti as light achieves her final conversion into an enlightened being due to an ever present influence of Prakash. Jasmine recollects her semantic memory which is written in the interior regions of her psyche in her associations with Prakash. After the death of Prakash, she thinks that "our highest mission... is to create a new life" (97) — a life far away from the feudalistic society of Hasnapur. She acknowledges candidly a chain of the seminal influences on her: "Later I thought we had created life. Prakash had taken Jyoti and created Jasmine and Jasmine would complete the mission of Prakash, Vijn and wife" (81).

After her husband's murder she develops the narcissistic mode of her behaviour, and emotionally surcharged she comes to America for the pragmatic mission of her husband. On the way Half-Face man rapes her first in the boat and then in a hotel. Finally, she comes to a missionary lady, Lillian Gordon, who helps Jasmine and sends her to New York. Here Jasmine finds the job of Day's mummy after very hard persuasions. She begins to live with her master, Taylor, and finally she arrives at Iowa, a small place at a distance from New York. She comes in close contact with Mr. Bud, an agriculturist, and she becomes pregnant by him and he also promises her to marry soon. At the same time Taylor also reaches Iowa. Bud loves her much but because of his age difference he is a father-like figure. When Jasmine meets Taylor again, she stops to think of herself as Jane — a name given to her by Bud.

With narcissistic vision she sees the complexity of life and experiences it as an exile in America. She undergoes the metamorphosis of her personality in association with Taylor, for she finds herself relieved of the trauma of exile. Moreover, she begins to love Taylor. However, the semantic memory of Hasnapur remains operative in her mind. The unconscious memories (semantic and episodic) of Hasnapur weave the thin threads of composite culture between the East and the West, and they make her aware of fulfilling the identity of her womanhood. Hasnapur as an organic force uncovers the unconscious motifs of Jasmine and exhibits the time-linearity and spatial chasm.

Bath robes, dark glasses, whisky, and cigarettes: these were short hand for glamour that we Hasnapuris were meant not to have. I have triumphed. But how can I explain such small odd triumphs to Bud? He's always uneasy with tales of Hasnapur just like mother Ripple Meyer. It's as though Hasnapur is an old lover. Even memories are a sign of disloyalty. (231)

The female awareness for her identity becomes a postmodernist phenomenon in the text of *Jasmine*. The feudalistic system of India and the concept of colonized society were equally fatal and harassing so far as the oppression and exploitation of women are concerned. Mukherjee exhibits the opinion about Jasmine's aunt for showing the postmodernist perspectives in this novel:

that big city men prefer us village girls because we are brought up to be caring and have no minds of our own. Village girls are like cattle, which ever you lead them, that is the way they will go. (46)

Well-acquainted with the sufferings and miserable plight of women before and after the independence of India, Bharati Mukherjee reveals them skillfully in *Jasmine*. Being treated as cattle and having no identity in society, the girls of the village are considered as the second rate citizens. Women are considered as the subject for social and individual exploitation; they are treated with the concept of "otherness". Jasmine works out these feministic trends as the social, economic and moral discursiveness. She reports to the readers about the 'sameness' of women so far as the oppression and exploitation of women are concerned: "The men in our village weren't saints, we had our incidents. Rape, ruin, shame. The women strategy was to stick together. Stragglers, beware" (55).

The seminal approach to her future development comes through the constant motivations of Prakash. She breaks the tradition of her family and marries Prakash. She also experiences that if anyone breaks tradition, "all other traditions crumble" (75). She breaks the tradition after traditions for realizing the dream of Vijn and wife; she wraps herself up in many forms of a woman (Jasmine, Kali, Jassy, Jase, Juhane and Jane) according to the situational and contextual reality. As a typical Indian woman, she covers herself in the garb of goddess *Kali* and kills her rapist. Thus, with the mythic character of *Kali*, she becomes symbolic of representing the power of women (*nari shakti*). At Hasnapur she was injured due to the thrush of the

astrologer and got a scar on her forehead. She regards this scar a third eye—the divinity enlarged symbolically for the destruction of evil. No more a feudal and weak girl of Hasnapur, Jasmine becomes a woman with super-consciousness in the quest of her existential pursuits. As Jase she acts as mummy for the adopted son of Taylor. Lillain renames her as Jassy. She gradually casts off the ethnic memory and the racial premonition, and becomes used to the American way of life. The nature of a young lady forces her to realize femininity, but the idea of remarriage is out of question "with in the normal community" (147). She swings between the question of right and wrong on the one hand, and between her milieu and the fulfillment of her womanhood on the other. The dislocation of place and the constant movement of the wheel of time make the encoded memory of her mind recede gradually. Thus the retrieval of memories decays, and with the passage of time there emerges a natural desire in Jasmine to re-construct the new ways of life.

Jasmine's stay with Prakash's teacher Devendra Vadhera in America reflects two major concerns: the sense of belongingness and the question of her female-centric ideas:

... I would find myself in the bathroom with the light off, head down on the cold, cracked rim of the sink, sobbing from unnamed, unfulfilled wants. In flushing I feel immured. An imaginary brick wall tapped with barbed wire cut me off from the past and kept me from breaking into the future, I was a prisoner doing unreal time. (148)

Her association with Taylor as Duff's day's mummy gives a new definition to her female sensibility and a hope for accomplishing some new norms of life to be realized in America. She remembers the role of Jyoti — Jyoti of Hasnapur.

But Jyoti was now a sati-goddess; she has burned herself in a trashcan-funeral pyre in Florida. Jasmine lived for Vijn and wife. Jase went to the movies and lived for todayfor Every Jasmine, the reliable caregiver, there is a Jase, the prowling adventurer thrilled to the tug of opposing forces. (177-77)

Jasmine and Jase (the two forms of Jyoti of Hasnapur) symbolize the linearity of time — past and present. She feels herself rooted in the company of Taylor, his wife Wylie and his son Duff. Jasmine resolves the trauma of an exile and finally decides America

as her permanent home. She as Jase undergoes the metamorphosis of her character and becomes the part of American life for her future: "I was landed and was getting rooted" (179)). She thus unites time — past as unconscious with the conscious level of the mind as present —, and recreates a new consciousness which can be termed as mnemonic metaphor of memories for her future identity. She moves from the house of Taylor because of Sukkhi's presence in the city to Iowa and finds job in the house of Mr. Bud. After some time she begins to love him and carries his baby. As a strong lady, she realizes now her female-centric viewpoints in the company of Bud: "Bud calls me Jane. Me Bud, you Jane" (26). She also expresses her willingness to marry him. Taylor comes to Iowa and invites Jasmine to follow him to New York as his life partner. Again, she undergoes the realization of an existential dilemma: to stay with Bud or to follow Taylor for her future. She begins to sob and puts her head on Taylor's shoulder and leaves everything to the movement of the wheel of time: "Time will tell if I am a tornado, rubble-maker arising from nowhere and disappearing into a cloud" (241).

Myth becomes the prime source for the cross-cultural analysis in this novel; it is another form of cultural signification because it includes in it the signifier and the signified objects for a global sign or the universal elements for working out the concept of human nature and culture. Hasnapur as the unconscious is linked with the process of culture and with the seminal analysis of the protagonist. The clash between her culture and nature produces the concept of cross-culturalism. The gross memories (semantic and episodic) of Hasnapur become her national identity which comes in clash with European culture. In spite of some social and psychological differences of nationalism, the unification of the two creates the third one — the composite culture of the East and the West. This process of cross-culturalism articulates such *sign* as symbolizes Derrida's concept of *trace* — an objective delineation of human nature and culture. It is the cultural awareness which becomes suggestive of national literature. National literature as an identity of a specific ethnic group opens many possibilities for global aspects of behaviourism and structuralism. The unconscious as the historicity of history or

the myth as unconscious mental force brings into light a particular mode of behaviour. The trauma of exile, too, extends the possibilities of multi-culturalism.

Bharati Mukherjee, with the sensibility of Diaspora, highlights the obsessive pattern of the protagonist for multi-cultural phenomenon and its impact on the seminal analysis of the text. With a puckered scar on her forehead, Jasmine tries to make Taylor understand the mythic signification of her *third eye*: "... enlightenment meant seeing through the third eye and sensing designs in History's muddles" (156). With an objective expression and with the divine pattern, the phrase of "third eye" creates the notion of sign which includes in it the muddles of history, ethnic and racial paradigms. Thus Mukherjee combines through the character of Jasmine, the historic sense, the heterogeneity of signs, myths, metaphors and symbols for the expression of higher human motifs. Through the cultural signifiers, Mukherjee professes the cultural obsessions of Jasmine as an exile in Europe:

I could not imagine a non-genetic child. A child that was not my own, or my husband's, struck me as a monstrous idea. Adoption was as foreign to me as the idea of widow remarriage (170)

The genetic process and an obsessive idea for widow remarriage stamp the ethnocentric and logocentric viewpoints of Indian sensibility in *Jasmine*. The unconscious mental force as past gives a sense of unreal time. When the unconscious recedes through the retrieval process of memories, the protagonist treads the way for the re-creative process. Jasmine, too, acknowledges candidly some psychological changes that she realizes in the inner regions of her psyche: "I have had husband for each of the women I have been. Prakash for Jasmine, Taylor for Jase, Bud for Jane, Half-Face for Kali" (197). Jasmine also brings to our notice the Hindu metaphysical theory of *Karma*. As "mystery inscrutability", Jasmine does not regard herself a subject in her seminal development. She acknowledges that she is a "catalyst, not a cause" Hence, the active operation of the subject in the process is denied and therefore as a "catalyst" she is not responsible for the consequences of doership. She remains an enquirer "who I am" (200). Thus, she finds an object,

a sign or to use the term of Derrida, "a trace" in which both the signifier and the signified coalesce together for the universal vision of humanity. Indian philosophy regards the mystery and the inscrutability of woman as *maya* (illusion). Jasmine is also a helpless being to understand her own nature:

I still think of myself as care giver, recipe giver, preserver, I can honestly say all I wanted was to serve, to be allowed to join, but I have created confusion and destruction wherever I go. As Karin says, I am a tornado...How many more shapes are in me, how many more selves, how many more husbands? (215)

The inner conflict and trepidation, the unconscious yearning to know her nature and the universal culture make Jasmine theorize the basic principles of human nature. She swings between binaural intentionality — the love of Taylor and the would-be wife of Bud. She confesses the inner motifs of a woman before Karin, the wife of Bud:

We have stowed away on boats like Half-Face's, we have hurtled through time tunnels. We have seen the worst and survived like creatures in fairy tales, we've shrunk and we have swollen and we've swallowed the cosmos whole (240).

With the tunnels and rebuffs of time and space, scenes and situations, creation and destruction, remembering and forgetting, fantasy and reality, Indian and European cultures, Jasmine experiences the higher dialectics of history and the Hindu metaphysics of human nature. The fluctuating intentionality as a woman comes off when she convinces the reader of her inner motifs before Taylor, leaving assumed identities of Jyoti, Jasmine, Kali, Jassy, Juhane and Jane behind. The linear configurations and the unconscious as semantic memories merge together to form the wholeness of human life. Thus, the protagonist herself becomes a semiotic text in the seminal study of *Jasmine*.

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AMITAV GHOSH'S *THE HUNGRY TIDE* : MYTHOLOGY OF DISCOVERY

Smita Jha

Amitav Ghosh's latest novel, *The Hungry Tide*, is both easy reading and a provocation: easy reading, because the main story, relating to Piya (Piyali Roy) and Fokir (Fokirch and Mondol), is narrated, more or less, in a firm sequence; a provocation, because the other stories, the subsidiary ones, lend it a kind of complexity that has its own significance and suggestiveness. In fact, like Ghosh's other books, this novel too begs more questions than it answers. And by the time we come to the close of the book, we are necessarily, almost by the sheer force of compulsion, reminded, differences apart, of such other novels as Melville's *Moby Dick* (the name of the white sperm whale does actually occur in the novel), Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* and Patrick White's *Voss*, chiefly because what we find in all these novels is man's encounter with Nature in the course of his determined bid to unravel its secrets, magic, terror and mystery.

It is not at all surprising that this novel makes us think of several issues that are nearly inseparable from our initial impression of the book: (a) Is *The Hungry Tide* an adventure novel, a vivid account of the dolphin expedition that is carried out in the tide country, in the region called the Sunderbans? (b) What kind of importance does the Nirmal-Nilima story have in the novel? (c) How are we supposed to assess the value of Nirmal's notebook which is intended only for Kanai Dutt and which covers a sizable part of the book, ending almost always, chapterwise, with lines from Rainer Maria Rilke's *Duino Elegies*? (d) How should we try to co-ordinate myths and legends with recent history, timelessness with time? (e) Is this novel "a memorial"¹ to that illiterate, self-effacing, but all-knowing, tenacious and truthful boat man, Fokir, who lays down his life in order to protect Piya against *The Hungry Tide* and who, in effect, is the hero of this novel? (f) Is this novel a glorification of 'a Dalit' (191), a subaltern? (g) Is it a "twenty-first century" novel (240)? In all fairness, we have to look into these questions, both

separately and collectively, perhaps more collectively than separately, in order to be able to offer a workable critique of the present novel.

In the "Author's Note" Ghosh says that the 'characters of this novel are fictitious as are its two principal settings, Lusibari and Garjantola' (401) but that 'the secondary locations such as Canning, Gosaba, Satjelia, Morichjhapi and Emilybari do indeed exist' (Ibid.). He further informs us that he could learn a good deal about the dolphins from the two cetologists, Professor Helene Marsh of James Cook University and her student, Isabel Beasley. Apparently, *The Hungry Tide* is exploratory in nature, highly informative, full of all relevant details. And we have to accord due credit to the novelist for the reason that he gives us larger-than-life pictures of people, places and situations, thereby successfully impressing upon us the basic fact that a cetologist, a researcher working on the marine mammals, whales or dolphins, for the most part of his or her life, is a lonely person, exposed terribly to the hazards of Nature. Piya or Piyali Roy is one such character.

Piya is an American, but an Indian by descent. She is born in Calcutta, but her parents migrate to the States when she is just a year old. Though her parents retain their Indian manners and habits and speak in their mother tongue, she knows only English and no other language, not even Bangla. Now in her late twenties, she comes to the Sunderbans, the tide country, for a survey of 'the two species of river dolphin known to inhabit these waters — the Gangetic dolphin and the Irrawaddy dolphin' (32). She is a graduate of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography of California and has worked on river dolphins in the Mekong Delta, Cambodia and Philippines. Her encounter with Kanai Dutt, that takes them from Dhakuria to Canning, does have its own importance, for they are to meet once again at Lusibari where his Mashima, Nilima Bose, has been actively engaged in social reconstructions programme for nearly five decades and from where she further carries on her exploration with renewed zeal and vigour. However, it is the young boatman, Fokir, a crab catcher with 'a muscular quality of innocence' (99), who is a character of exemplary heroic stature and is the hero of this novel.

Fokir or Fokirchand Mondol, besides being a competent boatman, is also an extremely dependable guide, and in spite of an utter lack of linguistic communication between the two, he does understand Piya and rows his boat to a spot in the river where, to her great delight, she discovers a number of Irrawaddy dolphins (*Orcaella brevirostris*). Naturally, keeping in view the flow and ebb of tide, she collects the desired data about their behaviour and choice of habitat. She has been sent to the Sunderbans for only a fortnight to do a small survey there on a meagre budget, but she comes to realize that 'the universe of possibilities' (125) which the tidal ecology opens to her as a cetologist may demand the whole of a lifetime. She has opted for her present discipline or vocation as much for the life it offered as for its intellectual content because 'it allowed her ... to have no fixed address, to be far from the familiar, while still being a part of a loyal but loose-knit community' (126). Almost involuntarily, at this moment she thinks of such distinguished field biologists as Jane Goodall and Helene Marsh — Helene who conducted her operations in the the swamps of Queensland, and Jane who worked in the mountains of Kenya. Unlike them, as a field biologist Piya has so far worked only on a limited scale, but she decides to carry on her pursuit, in spite of all hardship and risks, with courage and hope. And it is with this determination that she, along with Fokir and his son, Tutual, reaches Lusibari where, once again, she meets Kanai Dutt.

Kanai is at Lusibari on the invitation of his mother's sister, Nilima Bose, his Mashima, who is also popularly called and known as Mashima in the village of Lusibari. He had been sent off to this place earlier in 1970 at the age of ten as punishment for publicly humiliating one of his teachers in Calcutta. He is forty-two now and language is 'both his livelihood and his addiction' (4). He knows six languages, excluding dialects. He is "a translator..., an interpreter as well, by profession" (10), and runs a bureau of translators and interpreters in New Delhi. He is unmarried, but is rarely single: 'over the last many years several women had drifted in out of his life' (16). Piya's stay with Kanai at the Lusibari Guest House for a few days arouses in him a keen interest, not really in her, but in her expedi-

tion, and in spite of his anxiety for his business in New Delhi and his desire to go back there as soon as possible, he decides to accompany her on her renewed exploration. And even though Piya and Kanai avail themselves of Horen Naskor's *bhotbhoti* (diesel boat) for their onward journey, Fokir too is with them in his own boat.

Finding themselves utterly helpless in the face of the howling, hungry and devastating tidal cyclone, Piya and Fokir take shelter in the forest and move deep into it, but in spite of all efforts and frantic struggles Fokir dies protecting Piya. And even as Horen comes back to the appointed place, as the cyclone subsides, for Piya's possible rescue, she gets back to Lusibari all on the own. Kanai has already left the island village; Piya too leaves the place, though only to return to it after a brief absence in order to pursue, on a fresh award, a project relating to Orcaella (river dolphins), to be named after Fokir, her martyred saviour. Kanai too is about to reach Lusibari from Calcutta; both he and Piya would be together there once again, and the options naturally remain open. The ending of the novel is dramatic; it may also appear to be rather melodramatic. Even so, it does bring out and celebrate Piya's sense of determination and Fokir's greatness as an individual.

This first narrative in the novel is smooth-flowing and consistent. However, it is the second narrative in the book, presented mostly through Nirmal's notebook, that takes us to a world of social, political and cultural turmoil. Nirmal writes, whatever he has to say either about Kusum or about the Morichjhapi itself and completes his writing in one stretch on the morning of May 15, 1979, only two months before his death. This notebook, precariously preserved and accidentally discovered, is meant solely for Kanai, and not at all for Nilima, first because Kanai has known Kusum as a girl, secondly because Nirmal goes to Morichjhapi without his wife's knowledge during her brief absence from Lusibari, and lastly because she has her own suspicions about her husband's relations with Kusum.

Nirmal and Nilima Bose first come to the island village of Lusibari in 1950 within less than a year of their marriage in search of 'a safe haven' (76). Nirmal Bose, originally from Dhaka, has been a college teacher of English literature in Calcutta (now Kolkata), and Nilima,

being one of his students and also his ardent admirer, is enamoured of him and marries him against the wishes of her prestigious and highly connected family. It is to ward off police action against Nirmal for his being a leftist intellectual that they escape to the tide country. Subsequently, Nirmal becomes the headmaster of the local Hamilton High School which he serves for nearly three decades, retiring in 1978, while Nilima, the village Mashima, 'legendary for her persistence... her doggedness and tenacity', (19) serves the village as the head of an organization called the Badabon Trust. Nilima is a practical person and 'a revoluntary' (80), while Nirmal is perhaps only a dreamer and though he is supposed to be 'a writer of promise', (76) he writes nothing until after his retirement.

Kusum is a remarkable character, 'a strangely self-possessed figure' (91), for though belonging originally to Horen Naskor's island called Satjelia, she is brought to Lusibari after her father is killed by a tiger and her mother is whisked off to an unknown destination for the lure of money. And though at Lusibari she is looked after by the local Women's Union, she, a growing girl, has to leave the place in a huff for fear of being carried off, like her mother, to an unknown place for prostitution. Ironically, it is Horen Naskor who brings Kusum to Lusibari for sustenance and, once again, it is the very same Horen who sends her off from there to pre-empt hot abduction. In a way, he covers Kusum's life from innocence to experience.

Luckily enough, Kusum does find out her mother in a *dhaba* at Dhanbad, and before the ailing, emaciated woman dies, Kusum marries Rajen, a *ghoogni* vendor, who has been living at Dhanbad for quite some time, but who, in fact, is a native of the tide country. And it is only after Fokir is born that his parents decide to return to their native region where the soil and the climate and the ambience itself are to their taste. However, as Rajen is killed in the train accident, Kusum and her little son journey back to Morichjapi along with a large band of fellow travellers heading for this very island for their settlement there. And it is here that Nirmal and Horen accidentally come across Kusum as they take shelter on this island to escape the fury of the local storm.

Morichijhapi has its own history. Along with India's partition in

1947 a large number of people from the erstwhile East Pakistan cross over to India, and similarly, during the 1971 war, leading finally to the creation of Bangladesh, there is a heavy influx of people into India from across the border. A large majority of these people — refugees or immigrants — are sent to Dandakaranya, an area deep into the forests of Madhya Pradesh, for resettlement there. However, these people find the whole region utterly uncongenial, and reach the island of Morichjhapi, almost desparately, by 1978 and get settled there. Morichjhapi is a protected forest reserve, and even the Left Government of West Bengal, with all its declared policy, wants these settlers to leave the territory. They resent the attitude of the government and resist its move, with the result that in 1979 a large majority of them are massacred on the island. Kusum too perishes in this very disaster. It is Horen who saves Fokir, then only five years of age, and takes care of him after his mother's death.

Besides these two narratives, there are three or four other strands in the plot of this novel, which do have their bearing on human nature or psychology. For instance, love consummates between Horen and Kusum, while Nirmal is writing his last words in her hut at Morichjhapi. Nirmal too tries to woo Kusum, but, as Horen puts it, "in the end it was me she chose" (363). As the two make love on the boat one night before the Morichjhapi massacre, there "was nothing to say and nothing to be said; there were no words to chafe upon our senses; just an intermingling like that of fresh water and salt, a rising and a falling as of the tides" (364). It is not unnatural that Piya and Fokir are suspects in the eyes of Moyna who is Fokir's wife. Similarly, even Fokir has his own suspicions about Kanai and Moyna: " ...it was as if he had noticed the wordless exchange between Kanai and his wife and was trying to guess its meaning" (265). Again, Nilima's suspicion about Nirmal's weakness for Kusum is not unexpected.

Written in two parts — *The Ebb*, *Bhata* and *The Flood*, *Jowar*, *The Hungry Tide* moves between the past and the present, and deals as much with fact and recent history as with the myth pervading the tide country. The myth relating to Bon, Shah Jongoli and Dokhin Rai, with all its evocative power, does have its own strange

appeal. And all that is said about Canning and Morichjapi, about Mr. Piddington who coined the word 'cyclone' and William Roxburgh who discovered the Gangetic dolphin, is surely an outcome of extensive reading and research. However, the novel is cluttered with so much of details that, in spite of the clarity and firmness of style, one may find it difficult to wade through it. Nevertheless, the novelist succeeds in tying up the various threads of the plot and maintaining its integrity.

In his recent article on the Sunderbans entitled "A Crocodile in the Swamplands,"² Amitav Ghosh comes out with an ardent plea for keeping the ecosystem of the Sunderbans, with all its crabs and crocodiles, snakes and tigers, swamps and mangrove forests, undisturbed and undamaged. The Sunderbans is 'an immense archipelago of islands...an archipelago, stretching for almost three hundred kilometers, from the Hoogly River in West Bengal to the shores of the Meghna in Bangladesh' (6).

Coming back to the questions raised at the very beginning of this paper, it may be said that *The Hungry Tide* is indeed a novel of adventure, both physical and psychological; that Nilima's rural reconstruction programme is a pointer to the idea of empowerment of women in a developing society; that the substance of Nirmal's notebook is an indictment of the Left Government's attitude towards the poor, homeless and deprived people of the tide country and his longing for the formation of 'a Dalit nation' (191); that this novel is indeed a tribute to a Dalit, Fokir, who lays down his life for Piya; and that it is truly a post-modernist twenty-first century novel in terms of approach and implications. As for the title of the novel, it speaks eloquently for itself, and the lines from Rainer Maria Rilke's *Duino Elegies* bring into sharper focus the topicality of Ghosh's book which is indeed the new mythology of discovery.

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¹Amitav Ghosh, *The Hungry Tide* (New Delhi: Ravi Dayal, 2004), p.399.

All further references to this novel are indicated in parentheses in the text.

²See *Outlook* Vol. XLIV (Oct. 18, 2004), pp.60-62.

GITHA HARIHARAN'S *THE THOUSAND FACES OF NIGHT*: AN ANALYSIS

Monika Gupta

The Thousand Faces of Night, which appeared in 1992, has won the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for the best first book. It establishes Githa Hariharan as a major writer of the twentieth century Indian English literature. Born and brought up in Mumbai, Hariharan has brought out some outstanding novels as *The Ghost of Vasu Master* (1994), *When Dream Travels* (1999), and *A Southern Harvest*, along with a collection of short stories, *The Art of Dying* (1993). Recently she has published her new novel *In Times of Siege*. Her need to act on her beliefs encouraged her to file a writ petition in the Supreme Court relating to a mother's right to be a guardian of her children in 1995, and after four years she won the case. Addressing in a students' seminar she affirms about the writer's goal thus:

Our work has to reflect the troubled times we are living in. The battering rams are at the door and we have to think of protecting the cushioned writer's space. You do not need a Rushdiesque example of *fatwas* to understand the threats.¹

In *The Thousand Faces of Night* Githa Hariharan has tried to tackle the problem of the suppressed and oppressed womenfolk in India. The question of female identity has become a real, palpable human problem in our modern Indian society. She registers her protest against the passive role of the fair sex as a wife and a woman. She advocates self-identification and condemns the treatment meted out to women, which is equivalent to doormats or pieces of furniture. *The Thousand Faces of Night* reacts against the traditional concept that every thing in the wife's life is shaped to the single purpose of pleasing her husband. Hariharan has been strikingly different from many contemporary novelists in the sense that her protagonist is neither a superwoman nor a helpless victim of patriarchal society. She erodes the age-old wisdom contained in the sayings, stories, myths and beliefs. She is a "conscious experimentalist"². In *The Thousand Faces of Night*, three women characters, namely Sita, Devi and Mayamma survive the dignities

of the males in their lives by tight rope walking and doing the balancing act. The novel presents Devi, a young and smart girl, completing her education in America. She presents the experiences of her life from past, present and future. Although the story and other characters move around her, even then she has not been described or projected by the author as a 'feminist' or a 'fundamentalist'. Her widowed mother, Sita, awaits Devi for her 'home-coming'. Having been unable to adjust in American culture, Devi chooses Dan, a black boy, instead of a white American, as her best friend in the university. She spends most of her time with Dan, but every time the burden of Indianness³ makes her lonely. Despite her liking for his company, she does not treat him worthy of her spouse. Her uncertain relations with him and inability to adjust herself in America, makes her decide to go back to India. Dan stops her, but she considers her mother's call more important. Her determination follows "a kind of equilibrium, unsteady but safe, between them"(6). Even when she comes back to India, her emotions for Dan take a new shape. Her thoughts for him are silent whisper:

Actually Dan reached into the past quite gracefully; He has slipped through my fingers and left no scar. I found I could talk about him easily and with the affection born of nostalgia for a safely closed chapter. (21)

Devi had lost her father at an early age and so her mother, Sita, provides paternal security and protection to her. She feels as if it "weaves a cocoon a secure womb that sucks me in and holds me fast to its thick sticky walls" (13). Sita plans to hold a swayamvara for Devi. Though Devi has come back to India, but the reason is not the issue of her marriage. Actually she feels her mother lonely and insecure. In order to make mother-daughter relationship stronger and friendly, she never protests against her mother's decisions. She continues her journey as her mother is always "an anchor-rock, never wrong, never to be questioned, a self-evident fact" (16) of their existence.

Hariharan presents mother-daughter relation in two dimensions. Devi, during her stay in America, finds that her friends have been behaving with their mothers in a very friendly manner which points to a new concept to her. Sita's character presents a multi-dimensional, strong woman who comes back to India from Africa after the

death of her husband. Without the help of any relative, she manages everything: "... good housekeeping, good taste, hard work. These were Sita's guiding mottos as she has taken charge as a young bride"(101). She got married at the age of twenty, and was welcomed by her husband's family as an "efficient, reliable daughter-in-law (102). She is a traditional Indian woman and her role as a good wife is perfect. Her husband Mahadevan feels about her:

A woman who did not complain, a woman, who knew how to make sacrifices without fanfare: Sita was such a woman, he thought and she had earned his unswerving loyalty(103).

In order to perform her duties of a wife and a mother, Sita gives up her deep love for music: "It was one straight path to a single goal, wifehood" (103). It was because of her dedication and support that her husband, a pure Brahmin, got promotions after promotions and did not look back. During this period, Devi is born and Sita "had found a new veena to play on and this time she was not going to give it up so easily" (104). After the tragic death of Mahadevan, Sita concentrates on Devi.

Every woman has to play the role of a mother, a daughter, a sister or a wife. As an individual, she is dependent upon her male counterpart because the psychological, social, economical and the emotional requirements force her to do so. Devi, too, is not an exception to it; she quietly accepts her role of a wife and agrees for marriage. After an intensive search, she accepts Mahesh as her husband. They settle in a palatial bungalow at Jacaranda Road in Bangalore. She likes Mahesh because of "his frankness, his willingness to be fair" (22). Her life is devoid of the excitement and color which she has imagined. Her husband is a matter of fact, unromantic, regional manager of a firm that makes detergents and toothpaste. Soon after their marriage, he turns out to be a typical Indian husband who takes marriage as a "gamble", "and does not believe in talking about ifs and buts, at least not with his wife" (49). Eventually her attitude towards her married life becomes monotonous. She tolerates and accepts everything, but after every tour Mahesh asks whether she is pregnant or not. Even he himself goes to the doctor for his check-up. He says: "I've been to the doctor. He says

I'm fine-I'm fine. I'll fix an appointment for you to see the gynecologist"(89). Her life changes totally when she visits the doctor. Check-ups, tests, nurses, medicines, etc. make her a new woman. She says:

I stood dumb, overwhelmed by this official reference to my sex life. Only a few years ago, I would have burst into laughter. But I seem to have lost, along with many other things, my sense of humour, even my girlish ability to giggle. I am someone else now. (91)

The boredom of her life is apparent when she remarks, "I spend hours every afternoon, opening dusty rooms and cockroach ridden cupboards" (59). Mahesh has to go for long official tours and this by and by separates them. Even the sexual life is enjoyed by Mahesh only, and not by Devi. She has to put aside her desire to take up a job because her husband snubs her by saying:

This is what comes of educating a woman. Your grandmother was barely literate. Wasn't she a happier woman than you are? What is it you want? (74).

Mahesh, as depicted by Githa Hariharan, carries the characteristics of the chauvinistic society, and hardly bothers about his wife's emotional needs. Even he lacks sentiments for her dead mother, although he loves her very much. Gradually Devi realizes that their nature are quite different. We feel pity and sympathy for her. Whenever he comes back from long tours, he asks usual questions about domestic affairs, spends a night with Devi and makes her more desperate and alienated. The most admirable part of his character is that he is not interested, unlike an average Indian husband, in Devi's past life.

Women today are faced with conflicting emotions. They are under great stress due to their quest for self-identification in a male dominated society. In such trying times, one wants to hold on to one's roots, and what can be better than the guiding force of religion. Literally speaking, religion is a belief in, and the worship, of a God or Goddess, and is as old as mankind. These guidelines have been changing and have the capacity to change the attitude of a perplexed mind. These guidelines are based on myths and age-old stories, whose credibility has not been left unquestioned by the curious mind. A parallel is drawn between these myths and actual life situations which lead to further complexities and confusions in

the mind of Devi. She, however, does not accept them in toto but surely does ponder on them. Hariharan has beautifully used these stories and myths to make the novel more interesting and that is what makes her work so different from many of her contemporaries and gives it a strong Indian identity. She delineates "significance and relevance of their suffering to the great epic periods of the Ramayana and Mahabharata because from them Indian women draw their life model."⁴ These stories are narrated by Devi's grandmother, Mayamma, an old caretaker cum governess cum cook and father-in-law, Baba. Once she explained the story of Gandhari, and in between she taught Devi a new lesson about what a real woman ought to be. Gandhari, a very beautiful princess was married to a blind prince and when she came to know the truth, she wrapped her eyes with a piece of cloth. Grandmother explained: "You will learn what is to be a real woman...a woman meets her fate alone...all husbands are noble, Devi. Even the blind and deaf ones" (82). The parallel that Devi draws here is with her mother who had also accepted the bitter realities of life. In contrast to the acceptance of blind Dhritrashtra by Gandhari is the anger and hatred that Amba nurtures towards Bhishma, who wronged her. It is only through penance that she could become an avenger. She was born as Shikandi to fulfil her mission. As a lesson grandmother taught, "a woman fights her battle alone...a woman without a husband has no home"(38). Devi rejoices herself as 'Durga' or 'Kali' to avenge the assault on her inner 'core'.

The attitude of Mahesh makes her take a keener interest in the stories of Baba, her gentle father-in-law. In fact, readers feel that he is the most fascinating character in the novel. She opines: "Baba is different. He is an attractive old man, a dignified patriarch; a gentle pharaoh in retirement" (50-1). Baba was a Sanskrit professor, but he is also fond of music. She behaves like a disciplined disciple of Baba, learns stories, music, and also the lesson of being 'Brahmin'. Her grandmother's stories have initiated her into numerous subterranean possibilities of womanhood which are defined to her by these stories. These fables succeed in making Devi crave for her identity, more so, after the departure of Baba to New York making her lonely

and redundant in the huge mansion. Contrary to his son, Baba has special kind of respect for women. Every story which he narrates to Devi has either religious or moral message. He says to Devi:

Father, brothers, husband and brother-in-law should honour brides, if they desire welfare. Where woman are honored, here are gods delight; where they are not honored, their all acts become fruitless. (65)

Mahesh fails to satisfy her intense longing for love and support, and she is left to solitude and silence. After the death of her father, Devi's life is protected and cared by her mother. His father-in-law fills up this vacuum. The very last lesson that she learns from Baba is almost decisive: "Whatever is dependent on others is misery; whatever rests on oneself is happiness" (68).

Unfortunately, Devi is not able to adjust herself fully to lead a traditional life because the modernism set in by the Western influence incites her to go against it. The experiences of the women Devi comes across provide only a framework of penance, protest, and suffering influenced by a male-dominated society. Even for the extremity of childlessness, she finds solace in the story of Mayamma. She was married at a tender age to a ruthless man who, "grew a little more crooked everyday" (80) after marriage. He was interested in devouring her body while her mother-in-law was keen in having grandchildren. As she did not bear children for over a year she became an object of ridicule to family members. So, she starts doing everything that can make God happy. After ten years of rigorous penance a male child was born to her on the auspicious day of Diwali. The son turns out to be wastrel and dies young.

Unlike Mayamma, Devi liberates herself from the pressure of feminine role. With so many conflicting stories adding fuel to the already perplexed mind, she finally, though a little late, decides to move out of the house of Mahesh "seeking a goddess who is not yet made" (95). She is now on a real journey to find substance and meaning in her existence. As she is not able to continue her relations with Mahesh, she finds solace in the company of Gopal, a professional singer. She meets him in a music concert and gradually they start loving each other. Emotionally starving, she, in search of authentic 'self', joins Gopal, a flashy man around forty years of

age, although she knows that she would not find happiness in his arms. He turns out to be a philanderer who has the artist's license to do so without anybody raising a finger at him. Through an image of a peacock and peahen, the novelist unveils the process of disenchantment of Devi in her relationship with Gopal whose music creates and evokes two types of sentiments in her:

When she heard his music again, the voice against the string of the tanpura trickling tentatively into the silent concert hall, Devi felt the taut muscles of her neck loosen. She felt a freshness down her spine like the first drizzle at the end of summer... As the raga swelled, she forgot, she was hypnotized into forgetting. (128)

Just as the bedraggled submissive peahen gets reflected in the thousand-eyed feathers of the peacock, Devi, to her dismay, finds herself reflected in the mirror-studded buttons of Gopal's kurta. In a symbolic gesture she throws her peacock coloured saree over the mirror to blot out the myriad reflection of herself. Gradually, she understands Gopal and his music loses its lustre:

But at the end of every concert, the voice grew fainter, and Devi thought of a kite that had snapped free of its string.... The power to be unleashed by Gopal's voice, the promises his music has made, had lost very little of their early potency. (129)

Now Devi realizes that her relationship with Gopal, without any name and bondage, cannot provide her a respectable life. Her life has come full circle with her decision to go back to her mother, and she is no longer on the run but in control of herself, better equipped to take the challenges of life as an adult with her mother. Her self-fulfilment does not lie in bearing and rearing of children, but in recognizing her own inherent potential to live with herself. She finally finds its roots not in husband or lover but in her mother only. She finds her mother's garden "wild and overgrown" not pruned anymore but, "lush in spite of its sand-choked roots", and hears "faint sounds of a veena, hesitant and childlike" (139). Sita receives a telegram from Mahesh, which reads "Devi has run away. All necessary action being taken" (108). It forces her to rethink on her choice, i.e., Mahesh as a suitable husband for her daughter. She broods over it:

She reaped after years of sacrifice years of iron-like self-control. After all those quarrels with her husband about discipline for a growing child won through silent, ferocious struggles and sleepless nights... the best of possible

lives offered to her daughter. Devi had torn her respectability, her very name, to shreds. (108)

As a mother, she has always performed her duties and responsibilities as well as possible, and now she prepares herself once again for "Devi to come back to her" (109). The concluding lines of the novel once again state the reinforcement of the mother-daughter relationship:

She rehearsed in her mind the words, the unflinching look she had to meet Sita with to offer her her love. To stay and fight, to make sense of it all, she would have to start from the very beginning. (139)

The novelist has highlighted the conflict in the minds of women using Devi as a model. Constant references to mythological occurrences and events only serve to bring out the inadequacy of their messages for resolution of present issues. Religion, as duties thrust upon women, becomes an opiate, and not a justification for their perpetual exploitation in a male dominated society. The ultimate satisfaction is derived not from the practice of self-abnegation or self-denial, but from self-realization. It is only after this that Devi can no longer run away from her life's contradictions but takes control of herself, and she finds herself better equipped to handle the challenges of her existence. For leading a full life, it is necessary to realize the realities of the world we live in and take such action as is necessary for resolving the contradictions faced by us. In an interview, Hariharan observes: "Some feminist readers asked me for instance, "Where is the feminist revolution?" And my answer of course was that I was not trying to make any sort of a blueprint for action."⁵

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NIRANJAN MOHANTY: A POET OF THE 'BHAKTI' CULT

R.K. Singh

Niranjan Mohanty, who has been writing for about three decades, registered his serious poetic presence with his first collection *Silencing the Words* (1977). Then, after about a decade in 1988, appeared his second volume of verses, *Oh This Bloody Game*, which is an attempt to understand himself, his life, and art. The volume also exposes the deeply human in him with concern for the down-trodden, beggars, lepers, prostitutes, rickshaw-pullers, victims of flood and drought, and others with marginalised and/or irrelevant existence.

Mohanty's basic commitment to the lot of humanity and life in general, his soul-struggle for a meaningful existence, his identification with the rich Oriyan culture and tradition, his creative awareness with Lord Jagannatha at the center, his observations of the collapse of values and norms of behaviour and attitude, and his consciousness of the 'shrinking space' for articulating himself as a poet continue to remain prominent in the volumes that follow: *Prayers to Lord Jagannatha* (1994), *On Touching You & Other Poems* (1999), *Life Lines* (1999), and *Krishna: A Long Poem* (2003).

In all his poems Niranjan Mohanty craves the romance of the past and indulges in celebrating loneliness; he explores himself against a fallen world, fraught with missed connections, loss, grief, fear, frustration, darkness, death-wish, self-pity, unrequited passion, and feelings of irrelevance. Emotions run from mild confession — often autobiographical — to bemused distraction. His verbal manoeuvres, lyrical and meditative, seem to dramatise the self rather than to explore, or expose, some higher reality, truth, or history.

The poet's *Prayers to Lord Jagannatha*, his first long poem in 840 stanzas of three lines each, is an exercise in meditation, devotion, exploration, and celebration of humanity and divinity at the same time. In fact, his poems of prayer — innocent, complex, and critical — reveal life and existence in its timeless continuity, in a mode of experience which is different from others and unique to his aesthetics. The force of his art, and the values and insight, lie in

Mohanty's socio-human reasoning which redeems, sanctifies, and ennobles. Intrinsically he turns the voice of a devotee, a poet of the Bhakti cult, talking to Lord Jagannatha so intimately that he can accuse, acquit, hate, love, provoke, pacify, ignore and adore him, though, in the process, philosophy (of existential relevance) appears intruding the design of the narrative: "Sometimes I'm not clear in what I write./I fail to grasp the meaning of what I chisel,"¹ admits the poet.

Mohanty's poetic vision manifests the all-embracing posture of the Lord of the universe, Jagannatha, whose massive arms signify His love for the whole humanity, never faltering or disappointing the poor, the downtrodden or the the ardent devotee. He is 'patitapaban' and nobody is untouchable; He provides peace to the troubled soul and cools down one's earthly woes; He fills the entire creation with various emotions, and nothing on earth can upset His firmness and stability; He is the culmination of man's quest for joy, love, and peace. The poet presents himself as a poet of faith, without being critical or interpretive, or making a bold statement.

Yet, Niranjan Mohanty confronts the presiding deity of Orissa as an object of flesh and blood who is not without human failings; he questions each action of the Lord that to the human eye is not infallible:

Whose turn is it now to sleep,
whose turn is it to weep? Whose turn is it
to murmur goodbye, to become silence?²

Enduring all, and participating in the Divine Game, Niranjan Mohanty's soul-whispering³ of *Prayers to Lord Jagannatha* extends to *Krishna: A Long Poem*, which is yet another way of introspecting, self-understanding, or knowing his own mind. Though the poet's muse is rooted in the carefully cultivated Bhakti cult of the past, his device is a kind of privileged access to himself, with a sense of discovery, resolution, and undoing. As he states at the end of *Krishna*:

I searched you here, there
and almost everywhere.
Nowhere I found you.
Woe-struck, I sculptured my loneliness
on the sleek back of darkness.

A voice from the dark told me
to look within. As I looked
within myself, I found you there, sleeping
like the trails of dreams
of my own making.⁴

It sounds well as an epilogue, since he starts with:

... I know not
Who creates the river, who the sea
how love and living make one
a silent part of everything.⁵

Interpreted at a higher level, the poet may appear to present an engaging picture of Purusha and Prakriti in action through Krishna and Radha relationship as man and woman. Both physically and spiritually, Krishna is incomplete without Radha, even in prayers, and hence the question:

Can we contract a silence, when
I'm all fires and you, all ashes?⁶

Mohanty's poetry, in the two long poems, lies in his attempt to negotiate the integrity of his own fragile self *vis-a-vis* the template of collective solidarity, moral vision, and metaphysical puzzles that the myths and legends of Lord Jagannatha and Krishna traditionally provide to show one a way through the shadows of a 'chaotic' existence.

Mohanty uses the metaphors of 'prayers' and 'love' to restore the disturbed balance, both externally and internally. These also help him reconstruct his Oriya identity via an in-look, apparently with a deeper purpose in the core of things. His psyche continues to be overwhelmed by "the storm of irrelevance/blowing past the fence/of my benign bones chanting ever/the songs of my morality," to quote from one of his earlier poems, 'A Winter Evening'.⁷ "With uneasy ashes" as he closes his eyes in solitude, which is prayer itself, Lord Jagannatha "guards his sanity" just as Krishna blesses him "to sing white hymns of love."⁸ In fact, Krishna, too, is his "intimate friend," an alter ego, experiencing and sharing love as a human. Krishna, himself the narrator of the poem, celebrates his love for Radha as a mortal, mythically implying the descent of divine to *humanise* all that may appear awesome or overwhelming. The poet

does not seek to divinise earthly existence or spiritualise human life. Rather, he views Krishna or Lord Jagannatha as he would view himself — an ordinary man with ordinary concerns, without sounding a reformist or idealist. His stance, tone and style, is secular rather than religious, just as his personal/individual experience is part of the larger community experiences.

What others before him cultivated as divine love remains intact but Mohanty intensely focuses on human love merging the radiant inner condition with psychological urges. True to the Krishna-bhakti cult, Mohanty, too, does not award any ultimate value to the ordinary rules of the society. He presents Krishna absorbed in Radha, respecting the (ultimate) union of husband and wife in the Original Couple. He sees human love as a reflection and re-enactment of Divine Love. His emotional and sexual urges coursing through the mind-body complex diffuse outwards to become love or bliss of bhakti, that is, adoration. In his long poem, Krishna adores Radha, showing the divine energy in humans as the sexual urge. The depiction of God as lover/devotee adds a note of mysticism, which may also be appreciated in terms of the bhakti cults of Vaishnavism.

The long poem, written in tercets in ten sections, is a fascinating poetry of human self-understanding and the divine becoming human to seek as well as challenge the matrix of faith *a la* happiness in various aspects of love and fellowship. For instance:

Nothing keeps me cool and quiet,
no order of things restores me to sanity
until I taste the immensities of your virginity. (p.12)

Would you never realize this tiny fact
that I sing only for you, if the time
stops or the wheeling universe, I never mind? (p.16)

I wish I could master the art
that allows men on earth to cuddle
their women under the rustic roofs. (p.20)

Time and again, I assume human form
to purify what is divine in me.
Time and again, I'm born on the earth. (p.30)

It's only to see you in all forms
that I make this earth so beautiful.
No ugliness can breathe in here. (p.37)

You were there in the beginning
with me. You shall be there until
one game gives birth to another. (p.47)

Never shall I go away from thee,
Never shall I wound thee with blue
arrows of my tactical absences. (p.70)

I'm the gardener of her dreams.
I'm the dream in her sleep.
I'm the gist of her silence and song. (p.78)

Krishna extols the corporeal glory of his beloved and articulates his desire for physical union with her without being erotic. There is more *jnana* than *yoga* in his articulation of emotions of love, even as he may seem to elevate and sanctify human by himself singing love tunes of the ordinary hearts, remaining human and questioning what is derided as absurd, silly, vulgar, banal, lumpen, or sinful. Love is not chained to "the language of time,"⁹ rather it is "the acme of human need,"¹⁰ "beyond time's talon."¹¹ The poet sees no sense in conceiving love as "abstract, distant, or dizzy," rather love radiates sanctity.

Mohanty seems to accept the ancient Hindu view that the force of sexual desire in a person is intrinsically divine; the sexual energy is converted into *tapas*, a radiant inner heat. He seeks to re-combine the male-female polarity into an energy within; he seeks to bring the individual and humanity closer to the centre of their polarized whole by focussing on a society with stable sexual relations. The personified Krishna and Radha have a real presence with focus on human passion and desire, including sexual desire. To quote Niranjana Mohanty from a recent interview: "Krishna unhesitating, nobly, humbly, honestly, goes on narrating, sculpting his love for Radha. The startling fusion of the mythic, the divine and the human in these two archetypal personalities subverts, dissipates and dissolves the archetypes and creates a space for the human, the mortal.

Because of the gravitational force of the element of mystery attached to the divine, the poem subverts the divine and celebrates what is human through love as the central metaphor."¹²

The poet's lyrical manipulation of the relationship between Krishna and Radha is inspired by his vision of the multifaceted Dark Lord, whose human potential or form, too, is rooted in the tradition of poets from Andal (9th century) to Bihari (17th century) who drew upon a wealth of myths and situations that have been part of a common cultural heritage of Indians. As a votary of Lord Jagannatha, a form of Krishna, who is widely worshipped in Bengal, Orissa, Gujarat, Rajasthan and other parts of India, Niranjana Mohanty reminds me of another contemporary poet from Orissa, Jamini Kanta Jayadev, who views the deity as his beloved, seeking His embrace like a passionate lover; his anguished soul seeks refuge in the infinite tunes of the flute on the lips of his Black Beloved. To both the poets, Jagannatha and Krishna are their dream and reality. In their own way, they both intone their verses with *bhakti*, weaving their own logic in neat, personal, direct responses that evoke poets like Jayadev, Vidyapati, Chandidas, Sur Das, and Mira Bai.

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SOCIETY AND THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE SHORT STORIES OF BASAVARAJ NAIKAR

O.P. Mathur

The short story, often regarded as a younger and perhaps inferior sister of the novel, "Chips from the Fiction Workshop", is genealogically its ancestor, for short stories in some form or the other – myths, fables, Biblical parables, fairy tales, etc. — preceded the novel. The short story is an autonomous genre of literature, cultivated practically in all important countries of the world, with its varying sets of rules and experiments, a storehouse of a nation's evolving culture and social or individual concerns, though in numerous slices much shorter, but generally more palatable and hence more popular than the novel. The portrayal of Indian culture as manifested in one of its important regions is the avowed objective of the short stories of Basavaraj Naikar also who clearly states in the Preface to his first collection of short stories, *The Thief of Nagarahalli and Other Stories*²:

The ten stories that I have selected here represent various aspects of human relationships in our life. They range from the elemental to the social to the mythical dimensions of life.

He again points out in the Preface to his second collection, *The Rani of Belavadi and Other Stories*³:

The themes range from the historical to the contemporary, from the religious to the secular, and from the elemental to the academic.

The references to the "elemental" in both the extracts indicate that Naikar wants to penetrate deeper into the underlying human impulses that shape and govern human character, thus broadening out its range from the regional to the universal.

The life of the people of north Karnataka in its various facets remains his basic material for which these tales provide the background of a triple perspective of values – human, religious and metaphysical. First, The inspiration of courage, bravery, generosity, patriotism and peace is provided by 'The Rebellious Rani of Belavadi' (*RRB*, pp.1-42) which narrates the events of the life of Rani Mallamma of the old kingdom of Belavadi, who fights with and ultimately humbles even the mighty Shivaji against heavy odds, and thus can be

applauded even by the so-called 'feminists' of today. The story 'The Golden Servant' (*RRB* pp.152-95) is a compressed account of the long life of Kanakadasa.⁴ His gradual attainment of the status of a saint, his unflinching devotion and the miracles performed by him enthuse us with reverence for religion and its spiritual values. Then there is a sort of mythical story entitled 'Mother's Husband' (*TH*, pp. 78-97) in which a celestial female scribe Setavi is shown as inscribing, in accordance with the divine Register of everybody's 'Karma' (actions of past lives), the destiny of each person to be born, including, to her anguish, her own daughter who is destined to copulate with her own son and to fulfill which Setavi herself has to take birth as a human being to produce that unfortunate daughter.

These virtues and beliefs are some of the foundations of our value-system which inspires all the stories of Basavaraj Naikar directly or tangentially through a fermentation caused by the interaction, sometimes a confrontation between the individual and the traditional or contemporary social conditions and channels of thought. Regardless of whether the individual may be victorious or vanquished, the values suggested are indelibly impressed upon the reader.

In a number of stories the inner and external social constraints on the individual make him or her court disaster. In 'She Wanted a Child' (*TH*, pp.112-30) Manjula's partly internal but mostly external compulsions to produce a child make her steal a newly born girl from a maternity ward. Her lack of resistance against evil leads to her losing the child and being arrested by the police. Another victim of society is 'Basavanti' (*RRB*, pp.139-51) whose 'bewitching beauty' and a rudely insensitive husband throw her first into the illegal arms of her earlier lover and then into the emotional torment of practically losing both her eye-sight and also, as a consequence, her lover. She has all along been facing life bravely, but poverty and physical helplessness make her commit suicide by slow starvation. But her courage in facing the barbs of society and to live and die in a courageously prolonged-self tormenting manner as a punishment for her own sin make her one of Naikar's most memorable characters – a model of true love, patience, repentance and acceptance of fate.

Three other stories of Naikar upholding the sanctity of mar-

riage vows are 'Fulfillment', (*TH*, pp.178-93), 'Her Husband Went to America' (*TH*, pp.78-97) and 'Cross-Roads' (*RRB*, pp.75-89). In 'Fulfillment' Bharati, a high-caste girl, falls madly in love with Chandrasekhar, a talented actor, and does not allow his poverty and low caste, when revealed, to dampen her love, and later, when he absconds after a criminal case, waits for him in a state of indeterminate widowhood till, after twelve years, he suddenly returns to her faithfully waiting arms. The story largely focuses on Bharati while suggesting the inevitable conflict with society. 'Her Husband Went to America' highlights this conflict, but suffers from one or two other flaws. The loving Girija's husband Rajasekhar goes to America for higher studies, secretly marries an American girl and has two children by her. He comes home on a short visit only to cheat his illiterate and devoted wife into signing a few papers, really pertaining to their divorce. The intended contrast between the essentials of the two cultures seems to have been carried a little too far.

A much more powerfully appealing story embodying both the themes of the sanctity of marriage and self-sacrifice for it is 'Cross-Roads' (*RRB*, pp.75-89) in which the two lovers Kalpana and Sivaraj, separated during the post-independence Razakar riots in the erstwhile Hyderabad state, happen to meet accidentally after fifteen years with Kalpana married to Sivaraj's old friend Mohan. Both of them, however, accept the situation, for "everything is the sport of time" (p.87). 'Cross-Roads' is one of those powerful stories in which Naikar has excelled in presenting deep emotional conflicts between passion and the acceptance of the norms of society finally resolved into tranquility.

In a few stories some systems or individuals representing them attempt to ignore or bulldoze enterprising individuals belonging to the academic or the bureaucratic world. In one of them the root of the conflict is an undeserving but overbearing Head of a University Department of English and in the other it is a sadistic Professor, a figurative counterfoil of this Head. The former in the 'The Anonymous Letter' (*TH*, pp.161-77) conspires against his junior colleagues by instigating the students to submit complaints against them. The teachers' united and strong protests and oral counter-charges put

the Head to shame for false character-assassination. In 'A Chronic Patient Became a Doctor' (*RRB*, pp.196-277) the Professor, like the Head of 'The Anonymous Letter' and, like him, a sadist and a non-Ph.D., tempts a brilliant scholar Nandiswar with the prospect of an early degree under his guidance at his University in the 'City of Rocks', a town well named for the candidate has a hard life there. At last, his thesis allowed to be submitted by the guide when rebuked by the Vice-Chancellor, ultimately fetches him the long-coveted degree after a travail of fourteen years. Both these stories located in north Karnataka, seeming to reflect a non-academic 'academic' world, written in the first person and thoroughly soaked in strong feelings – righteous anger in one and Kafkaesque suffocation in the other – tempt the reader to feel that the pen of the author, himself a University Professor and Head, is driven by his heart, full of sympathy for the victims of the negative aspects of the so-called academic world of today. Another story written in the first person, 'Felicitation' (*RRB*, pp. 110-19) also focuses upon the mental torture suffered by a well-known but unnamed writer invited to a function organized to felicitate him on his work from where, completely eclipsed by a politician's sudden arrival, he returns home depressed, unhonoured and unsung.

Another story, 'The Spider's Web' (*RB*, pp.131-38) shows the plight of an individual, Durgadas, who becomes the victim of the system of bureaucracy of which, at least in the later stage, he is a rather unwilling part. A Circle Inspector, he has to go on arranging for grand dinners for visiting V.I.P.s, who mostly leave the payment part to Durgadas who, on account of his domestic liabilities, has to resort to bribery for meeting all these heavy expenses. The repeated complaints against him make a visiting M.L.A., the third person sympathetic narrator of the story, publicly announce his suspension, causing him to collapse instantly of heart attack leading to death. This highly significant story, a pointer to a corrupt system devouring one of its own members, is a clarion call against the juggernaut of corruption prevalent in our society, which crushes even one of its own members showing a little recalcitrance.

Passing on from these narrow words of academics and bu-

reaucracy to the broad arena of society, we find that here too greed and lust as much as irrational customs and outdated or materialistic values of society create a havoc in the lives of many individuals leading to vengeance, murders and bloodshed in general. Both greed and lust are at the root of the story 'All for Gold'⁵ (*TH*, pp. 29-69) in which the wealthy Sangappa, literally with the help of his gold, is able to gain daily access to the intimacy of a pretty and till then absolutely faithful wife Ganga whose husband is away, but, returning unexpectedly one night, discovers the affair and within a few days murders Sangappa after bribing his friends. The story shows how widely prevalent evils like greed and lust bring out the worst side of man's character. A few other stories also deal with these basic themes out of which 'When the News Came' (*TH*, pp.131-47), 'Coffin in the House' (*TH*, pp.148-60) and 'Bloodbath' (*RRB*, pp.90-99) may be left out of detailed consideration as conveying no new message. 'Blood for Blood' (*RRB*, pp.52-74) arises from the irrational social custom of not marrying one's daughter into the family of a murderer, a custom that leads to a cycle of murders. 'The Circle of Vengeance' (*RRB*, pp.100-109) based on a feud between two parties in a village is a condemnation of small-mindedness. 'The Invisible Face' (*TH*, pp.98-111) is more artistic. It has elements of a detective story with an initially sympathetic doctor later committing in a clandestine manner the murder of his patient for which act he has been heavily bribed, the patient being an important witness in a case of duplicate currency. The group of all these stories can perhaps bear a common title of 'All for Gold or Lust'. 'Change of Heart' (*RRB*, pp.42-51) is a welcome exception in its depiction of the transformation brought about by Sivalila's advice to the dacoits, who have looted all her valuables, to use all this gold for settling down to a respectable life. Such transformations, though rare, are not incredible. Victor Hugo in his famous novel *Les Misérables* has also shown such a change in the heart of a thief.

Two of Naikar's best stories are completely individual-oriented, with their protagonists firmly maintaining their selfhood regardless of social reaction. 'Pilgrimage to Kashi' (*RRB*, pp.120-30) gives an ironical portrayal of Govindacharya, a Brahman who is a strict fol-

lower of all the traditional but wholly outdated rules of conduct not only in his own life, but also wanting the members of his family to follow them. Discontented with all of them, he proceeds on a pilgrimage. Perhaps he gets a glimpse of all the happiness he has missed when one of the pilgrims comments, "We have to generate happiness in ourselves. Happiness lies in being contented with whatever little we have. Happiness and sorrow are two states of our mind" (p.130). But by now it is too late, and Govindacharya remains an allegorical figure – an individual ever unhappy in confronting a progressive society and inevitably failing in trying to pull it back by a century or two.

The first story of Naikar's first collection, 'The Thief of Nagarahalli,' (*TH*, pp.9-27) is the last to be considered, for it is perhaps Naikar's finest portrait of a unique individual, Malla, technically a criminal, but one who truly deserves our admiration. He is constantly playing a sort of a game of chess with society, the game of stealing ('chaur vidya', one of the sixty-four arts to be learnt by a hero desirous of attaining perfection) strictly in accordance with his moral code, eschewing murder and minor thefts of the possessions of the poor, not using the stolen wealth for personal enjoyment, and finally retiring and disappearing from the place when he fails to win his bet. Malla is a memorable creation, a noble and artistic challenge to social norms, an enigmatic portrait of honesty in dishonesty, which alone would probably have been sufficient to ensure its creator a permanent place in the realm of Indian English short story.

The author's avowed objective is that of projecting the various dimensions of "the image of Indian life in some way or the other"⁶ – which in his case is north Karnataka with which he is rather emotionally attached. There are a few fleeting but charming references to nature making us wish for more:

The sun was a coconut tree away from the western horizon. The silvery clouds were trailing in the sky lethargically and assuming picturesque shapes every moment. (*TN*, p.29)

But the charm of such tranquility is often disturbed by an encounter between the individual and the society and its customs sometimes representing the modern and the traditional (as in 'Her

Husband Went to America' or stories portraying women marrying for love alone), as much as by violence, which to some extent is a part of rural society. The core of Naikar's achievement as a writer of short stories largely lies in his loving and leisurely painting of the details of the sociological background of the region, which, though apparently irrelevant, produces a convincing illusion of reality, as does Defoe in *Robinson Crusoe* on a much larger scale. A description of the ritual connected with death should suffice as an illustration:

On the fifth day after the death of Chennappa, Rudrappa was advised by the priest of Navilur to "welcome the spirit" of her husband ritually.... The priest, who was bare-bodied but clad in a buff coloured dhoti, came and seated himself on a wooden seat. He placed a coconut and betel leaves upon a brass tumbler and worshipped it with vermilion powder and flowers, to the accompaniment of mantras. It was followed by the ritual consisting of sajjaka, gravy and rice-chips... (TH, p.136)

For a more effective portrayal of the characters and their encounter with their sociological environment, the first-person or third-person narrations are discriminately used. In a majority of the stories the third-person device of narration is used because of the psychological distance between the author as the observer of the cavalcade of events and the characters involved, with few of whom the author, with his moralistic stance, can identify himself. But where he can do so with a character whose personal experiences blossom out into the message to be conveyed, the first-person narration is used. Such stories include 'The Invisible Face', 'Blood for Blood', 'Cross-Roads', 'The Spiders' Web', 'Fulfillment', 'The Anonymous Letter' and 'A Chronic Patient Became a Doctor'.

Another device is the use of appropriate symbols which intensify the effect of the narratives and crystallize the reader's response. This device, occasionally used in the titles of a number of stories or in the names of characters, as in 'Mother's Husband', has been effectively used in 'Cross-Roads' and 'The Spider's Web' which bear titles symbolic of the chance-meeting of two long separated lovers and of the chief character respectively. In the former the separated lovers are symbolized by the scattered King and Queen of a chess-board, and their long pent-up powerful emotions by the emergence of a powerfully writhing snake, ultimately killed, like their emotions

now forcibly suppressed (*RRB*, p.88). And at the end of the story Sivaraaj's determined acceptance of life and his decision to escape from the past is well expressed in the fast speed of the vehicle on which he quickly moves out of her life. Similarly, in 'The Spider's Web', the web is symbolic of the system in which an individual once caught becomes a helplessly doomed victim (*RRB*, p.134) or an insect struggling and dying in a glass of fruit juice, itself a symbol of richly sweet and attractive corruption (*RRB*, p.138). This doubling of symbols not only graphically portrays the fate of Durgadas but also widens his case into universality. These technical devices in particular reinforce the author's portrayal of the life, customs and manners of a particular region of India, a microcosm of the country, like R. K. Narayan's Malgudi and multifaceted interaction of the individuals residing there. It is from their tales of love, marriage, murder, torture, sacrifice, and the occasional encounter between the traditional and the modern as in Mulk Raj Anand's 'fiction-faction' (to use his own phrase) that a rich fragrance of values both Indian and universal emanates.

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¹The phrase is a part of the title of chapter 5 of M. K. Naik and Shyamala A. Narayan, *Indian English Literature, 1980-2000*, (Delhi: Pencraft International, 2001) p. 116. The phrase, though applicable to the earliest phase of Indian English Literature, seems to have lost at least some of its relevance in its later phases, for the distinguished authors themselves have listed dozens of names, some of them quite well known, of short story writers, both men and women, who never wrote a novel, or if some of them did, their short stories often preceded their novels.

²Basavaraj Naikar, *The Thief of Nagarahalli and Other Stories* (Calcutta: Writers Workshop, 1999). The book had the honour of being short listed for the Commonwealth Fiction Prize for the Best First Book from Eurasia. In this paper all further references to this book have been incorporated after its abbreviated title 'TN'.

³Basavaraj Naikar, *The Rebellious Rani of Belavadi and Other Stories* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2001). In this paper all further references to this book have been incorporated after its abbreviated title 'RRB'.

⁴Basavaraj Naikar has written a full-length biography of Kanakadasa (New Delhi: National Book Trust, 2001).

⁵Author's Preface to *The Rebellious Rani of Belavadi and Other Stories*.

⁶The story is based on a play *Sangya Balya: Betrayal* by Rayappa Pattar, translated by Basavaraj Naikar himself (London: Minerva Press, 2000).

PHOOLKUNWAR: THE VOICE FROM THE MARGINS

Shabnam Das

The history of India is a history of conflict between two cultures : the culture of the invading people (the *Savarnas*) and the original inhabitants of the country (the *Avarnas*). When two cultures of opposing value systems confront each other, the technologically and economically dominant one subsumes the other. The technique used almost universally by the dominant culture is to marginalize the indigenous people and label them despairingly as 'cultureless', 'uncouth' and 'uncivilized'. But in reality it is the marginalized who are the most cultured people in terms of their humane value system and behaviour patterns as they remain unspoilt by the so-called 'modernity'.

India is probably the country with the most diverse mixture of races. All the five major racial types — Australoid, Mongoloid, Europoid, Caucasian and Negroid find representation among the people of India. It has been a home to several castes and sub-castes, each having their own peculiar indigenous traditions. Just as the river Ganga cannot be imagined without her tributaries, in the same way the wonder that is India can never be comprehended without an insight into the culture and literature of her indigenous people. Indigenous communities are those that have a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies. They have a distinct culture and live in remote areas of the world. Indigenous people are divided into 5,000 categories ranging from the forest people of Amazon to the tribal people of India.

Situated in the south eastern part of India and considered one of the most backward regions, the present day Chhattisgarh was a part of ancient *dandkaranya* and a meeting ground of Aryan and non-Aryan cultures. A major chunk of the population of Chhattisgarh comprises the indigenous adivasis. Genealogically analyzed, these adivasis are found to be the descendents of the *Gonds* who came into prominence in the 15th century after the downfall of the Kalchuri dynasty. They lived in forests and their lifestyle was simple and rustic — sans hypocrisy and artificiality. The simplicity and rusticity

of the ancient *Gonds* of Chhattisgarh has survived in the adivasis of this region. Black Magic plays a significant role in the life of these so-called 'unenlightened people', still living in the dark ages. Ailments and calamities are supposed to be caused by the spell of an evil witch — a *tonhi* in local Chhattisgarh dialect and its antidote is the mantric chants of the village *baiga*, the local exorcist. The natural geographical barriers of Chhattisgarh have prevented the external influences of the cultured urbanity from touching these native adivasis and helping them in maintaining some of the pre-colonization linguistic, cultural and organizational peculiarities of the ancestors.

Within the indigenous communities of Chhattisgarh, women play a crucial role in securing the livelihood of their families. Despite being enormous assets to their groups, indigenous women suffer from multiple marginalization and triple exclusion: for being poor, indigeneous and woman. They are subjected to extreme poverty, violation of human rights, illiteracy, lack of access to ancestral land, and sadly also to violence in the private and public spheres.

Phoolkunwar is one such indigeneous woman. *Phoolkunwar* is the title story of the anthology of the same name authored by Ajit Jogi, the first Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh. Originally written in Hindi, it had been quite popular when published in the *Saptahik Hindustan* in 1989. The story is set in a small village called *Chukti Jhiriya*, situated in the Tarai region of the Maikal ranges, bordering Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. As the name suggests, this story is about Phoolkunwar — a typical native adivasi damsel of Chhattisgarh — and traces the journey of her life from childhood to womanhood and then to widowhood and death. In the process the author sheds light on the life and lifestyle of the natives of Chhattisgarh and offers us a rare insight into the native women.

Phoolkunwar was a ravishing rustic beauty whose virgin charm attracted young men from all the adjoining fourteen villages. Clad in a crimson *luga* (flared skirt), adorned from top to toe with *mohar*, *fulli*, *bahuta*, *kardhan* and *mundri* (the tribal ornaments), Phoolkunwar was the cynosure of all eyes. From her childhood Phoolkunwar was different from other girls of her age, and hence it did not come as a surprise when she decided to marry Baratiya, a middle aged wid-

ower with four children, and whose wife had died during childbirth. Ever since Phoolkunwar was a young girl she had secretly admired Baratiya, who was the farm manager of Mukhiya. He was dark, robust, well built and rustically handsome. It was Baratiya's authoritativeness that set him apart from other men and attracted Phoolkunwar. In the tribes of Chhattisgarh, marriages are solemnized very easily by a custom called *Churi-Pehnana*. As per this custom the groom slips bangles into the hands of the bride and thereafter they become man and wife. Phoolkunwar also accepted the bangles of Baratiya and became his lawfully wedded wife. This marriage between a teenaged girl and a middle-aged man created a stir and sensation in the village.

It is said that poverty and misfortune are synonymous, but in the case of Phoolkunwar, misfortune had tightened its tentacles the day she had married Baratiya. Epidemic struck *Chukti Jhiriya* that year and Baratiya lost his four children. Phoolkunwar, despite being a stepmother, tried her best to save them. As if this was not enough, Baratiya, who by this time had become frail and weak, also fell a victim to the deadly epidemic and died. The blame for this misfortune fell on the innocent Phoolkunwar. She was proclaimed an 'evil enticer', a *Tonhi* in local Chhattisgarh dialect, who kills and eats human beings. As per tribal beliefs, the only fit penance for a *tonhi* was torture. Phoolkunwar was dragged to the assembly and the village 'Baiga', the local exorcist, started inflicting tortures on her. She lost consciousness. When she woke up the next morning she was shocked to see her own reflection in the mirror. She was brutally beaten, burnt and bruised, but her spirits were still unbent. She decided to fight back and started walking toward the fields, resuming her normal routine as if nothing unusual had happened. The sight and plight of Phoolkunwar generated mixed reactions in the village. The men folk derived sadistic pleasure in seeing her in such misery. But there were a few who were genuinely moved and sad for her. One of them was a simple village lad named Sudhin. So moved was he to see her sad plight that gathering all courage, he proposed to her to run away with him to some distant town, far away from the clutches of the Mukhiya. What the simple Sudhin did not

realize was that it was only her body that had been mutilated; her ego and pride were still unbroken and intact. The once beautiful Phoolkunwar could never accept a non-entity like Sudhin as her mate, even if it meant staying in the proximity of Mukhiya's wrath. So she chided Sudhin, and asked him never to indulge in such audacity again.

The same night Phoolkunwar received a message from the old school master stating that if she were willing to surrender herself to him, the 'master sahib' (the village schoolmaster) in turn was willing to put an end to her miseries. Like a wounded tigress she growled back and refused Master Sahib's proposal, not realizing that this action could have detrimental counter reactions. The intensity and severity of torture to scare away the evil spirit that had supposedly gripped her were increased. When she did not surrender, the assembly came to the conclusion that it was her beauty and voluptuousness that had attracted the evil spirit. To get rid of the spirit, her body had to be destroyed and her beauty sacrificed. Her cottage was set on fire in an attempt to burn her alive. The wounded, weak and semiconscious Phoolkunwar decided that this was the time to act before it was too late. She accumulated her remaining strength, gathered the few remains of her burning property in a brass container and jumped over the flames like a doe. Standing in front of her blazing home, the enraged Phoolkunwar started shouting and crying till her reservoir of strength depleted. In her semiconscious state, she started evaluating the options that she had before her: Should she accept Sudhin's proposal and elope with him? Should she succumb and surrender before the Master Sahib? Should she resume work in the Mukhiya's fields and go on enduring the tortures till they meet their natural death. Just then she saw the rat poison that she had unknowingly brought along with her while trying to escape from her burning hut. She thought if it would not be proper that she should get decked up like a bride and consume the poison, so that she might once again be united with her beloved Baratiya, never to part again. Her entire life flashed by before she fell into a sweet slumber — perhaps lulled to eternal sleep by the endless tortures and agonizing pain.

At the substratum of the analysis of the story is the belief that the internalized modes of gender division and subordination constitute the socio-cultural matrix of the tribal society against which Phoolkunwar resists. 'Resistance' is a widely used term in its varied connotations and also a widely adopted means of expression: "... 'resistance' is a word which adopts itself to a great variety of circumstances, and a few words show a greater tendency towards cliché and empty rhetoric, as it has become increasingly used as a catch all word to describe any kind of political struggle. But if we think of resistance as any form of defence by which an invader is kept out, the subtle and sometimes even unspoken forms of social and cultural resistance have been much more common" (Ashcroft 2001:20). The oppressors of Phoolkunwar are the members of tribal patriarchal culture. Hence, she is doubly marginalized. Within the dominant culture of Chhattisgarh is the subgroup of the tribals and within this subgroup women are the gendered outsiders, the subalterns. Her resistance is directly against the already marginalized tribal patriarchal culture. It is, therefore, a resistance from the margins as well as within the margins.

The exploitative nature of patriarchy is articulated in the story in various ways. Phoolkunwar is subjugated and colonized by socio-cultural, economic and moral authority of men. As per the story analysed for this paper, the gendered 'other' is most directly and visibly constructed by considering and presenting the female body as a signifier of the natural subjugation of its possessor. The body, thus, becomes a site on which the colonizer and the colonized, the dominator and the dominated struggle for possession and control. Fanon's consciousness of the blackness of the body of the fellow negroes as a visible sign of their 'otherness' and 'denigration' is relevant in Phoolkunwar's context as the female body, too, is the site and sign of social and cultural inferiority of its possessor. The mutilation of Phoolkunwar's body is a desperate attempt by the patriarchy to subdue and control her. What is noteworthy here is that the ultimate control of the site/body lies not in with the oppressor but with Phoolkunwar as in a unique mode of resistance she is the one to annihilate her body and thus exercise and exhibit her author-

ity over it. By beautifying her body she articulates the difference which she celebrates. It is she who is the ultimate controller of her body and mind, and gets rid of her oppressors. Phoolkunwar's act is in support of Cudjoe and Harlow who consider resistance as an act or a set of acts that is designated to rid oneself of one's oppressors.

The voice of Phoolkunwar, the tribal, uneducated and uncultured adivasi damsel is a voice from the margins, the voice of the marginalized. Phoolkunwar is conscious of her marginality, but wants to transgress it. Throughout the story, we find a movement from the margins to the centre. She lives life without any male help and support, and this symbolizes the quintessential independence of her character. She is an egoist. She is proud, beautiful and proud to be beautiful. Phoolkunwar is an iconoclast. By deciding to marry Baratiya, a middle-aged widower and father of four children, she dared to make a decision that raised many an eyebrow. She respects and prizes her individuality. She represents the socially unacceptable and non-permissible aspect of the awakened feminine consciousness. She represents the predicament of a tribal woman placed between two poles — superstition and self-respect. Her struggle can be read as a heroic attempt that brings glory to the individual and adds dignity to the spirit of freedom. She had always been a fighter. She went down fighting as if procaliming with Robert Browning:

I was ever a fighter, so — one fight more,
The best and the last!

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BOOK REVIEWS

P. C. PRADHAN, *D.H. LAWRENCE'S NOVELS: A STYLISTIC APPROACH*

(New Delhi: Classical, 2002), pp. IX+230, Rs. 400.00

S.C. Mishra

In this book Prakash Chandra Pradhan blends theory and practice, i.e. he applies the theoretical tools of stylistics to the language of D.H. Lawrence's major novels for understanding them better. The author has analyzed the language as a social construct with a variable context-dependent significance to show that the features of language constitute acts of communication. His shift of emphasis has, therefore, been from the notion of the text as product to that of process. The book contains twelve papers incorporated in three sections — Theory and Technique, Analysis and Interpretation, Conclusion and Extension. The author has written two papers on lexis, two papers on syntax, one on metaphor, one on coherence / cohesion and two on discourse to give a complete coverage to analysis and interpretation in section II. Before analysis and interpretation, he has, however, discussed the theoretical aspects such as stylistics, text and discourse. In this section, he has elaborated "socio-linguistic theory of stylistics" and strongly pleads that such "Inclusive stylistics of Fiction" is rather more useful for understanding, teaching and interpreting fictional texts. In section III, a detailed discussion has been made on the meaning of discourse.

In analysis of lexis, Pradhan shows how Lawrence makes a subtle and effective use of complex range of vocabulary. In contrast to the simple style, "his passages are often dominated by long, polysyllabic words when the educated middle class characters discuss complex issues relating to spirituality, emotional crises and abstract concepts". The book explores how Lawrence uses some special words such as blood, cold, darkness, nature and their associated variants to bring out his central ideas and vision effectively. By bringing out the relational opposites into contrast and balance, Lawrence has established special aesthetic effects that adequately sug-

gest the crises of the human soul in a modern mechanized, demoniacal society. The author further shows how Lawrence brings out elegant variations in the text through the use of pregnant pauses, repetitiveness, transformational deletions, rhythmic resonance, isolated operating phrases, parallel, balanced, antithetical and contrasting structures thereby making the text stylistically rich and emphatic.

In paper 7, the author argues how metaphorical mode in Lawrence's style has become a mode of thought presentation resulting in a special aesthetic effect. Metaphors, symbols, images and similes are conceptual and organic entities of his language reinforcing meaning and tone rather than merely being additive and decorative. His language attains a high degree of poeticality as the metaphorical modes lend emotional intensity bringing additional imagery to the description and stirring the readers' imagination. Paper 8 shows how syntactic cohesion and lexical progression go together.

Papers 9 and 10 discuss the area of styles in relation to their social meanings. The insights drawn from pragmatics, speech acts, semantics, sociolinguistics and world knowledge have become very useful in these papers. The author has noted that dialogue in Lawrence is multifunctional and is an important technique. The different unmerged voices clash and interact during their conversation to give us different world-views. Paper 9 reveals that Lawrence employs "Free Indirect Thought" [FIT] mode to bring out the inner conflicts of the characters to make his narration lively, immediate and natural. The points-of-view of main characters and the authorial point of view sometimes overlap when Lawrence presents his characters sympathetically as in the case of Paul at the end of *Sons and Lovers* and Ursula at the end of *The Rainbow*. In paper 11 P.C. Pradhan discusses how the extra structures relate to the participant's utterances, actions and contextual references. Paper 12 is rather a postscript which makes a statement on D.H. Lawrence's life, art and vision.

The book explores new grounds in the field of stylistics. The critical comments of P.C. Pradhan are authoritative and authenticated through firsthand analysis and interpretation. I believe that the book is indispensable for those who are engaged in teaching / learning / researching in the field of "stylistics of fiction".

**K.M. PANDEY, *RHYMING WITH REASON:
THE POETRY OF THOMAS GRAY***

(Delhi: Adhyayan Publishers, 2004), pp. XII+214, Rs. 450.00

Charu Sheel Singh

Studying pre-Romantic poetry in a Post-modernist era may provide some sort of antidote to our study of (English) literature, but revisionist readings of authors and texts have yielded, and continue to yield, newer spaces, when meaning is newly founded and tradition discovered. The salvo was fired by Donald Davie who in *The Augustan Lyric* had declared that Wordsworth was not the first of the Romantic poets but the last of the 18th century poets.

K. M. Pandey rightly says that terms used for the 18th century such as 'the Age of Prose', 'the Age of Wit and Enlightenment' are fallen into disrepute. Pandey's revisionist reading does not find any truth in the statement that poets like Gray, Collins, Thomson and Cowper do not exactly belong to the 18th century or they revolt against the prevalent trends in poetry. He re-situates Gray in the context of the 18th century itself rather than considering him as a precursor of the Romantic Movement.

Pandey's book is divided into five chapters: Thomas Gray and His Age, Early Poems, An 'Essay' in Quatrains, Search for Tradition, and Straying into Satire. His line of argument is clear and strait: "He (Gray) felt and wrote like his great peers, Pope, Thomson and Johnson and shared many of the beliefs and assumptions which form the substance of what is commonly known as Neo-classicism" (p.2). Sufficient Gray scholarship is used to prove that he, by ethos, beliefs and style, is very much an 18th century poet. Pandey claims that the Augustan ideal of literature was a direct consequence of certain philosophical and ethical assumptions prevalent during the time (p.19). He brings in myths and beliefs of the Fall and disintegration of the universe. He uses statements of Pope and other poets of the period to prove this point. His analysis of poems, early as well as later, is a good example in revisionist reading.

Pandey's comments upon "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" are fascinating enough: "The *Elegy* should thus not be looked upon as an evidence of self-expression or a sentimentalist falsifi-

cation of the neo-classical postulates but as a poem dealing with those very postulates. The central questions of the poem are the same as those in the writings of Pope, Swift or Johnson" (p.71). Pandey avoids the Romantic vocabulary of "self-expression" or "self-revelation", although in arguing that Gray is much like Pope, Swift and Johnson he may miss a turn of emphasis here and there. His analysis and conclusion remain central to the poems that Gray has written. Pandey has a fairly commendable grasp of critical jargon which he successfully applies on the poems he studies. Gray's dominant mode is elegiac, but he also wrote satires, though Pandey concedes that Gray's reputation will rest largely upon his odes and elegies.

It is good to see a young scholar pursue a good line of argument. The book is published nicely, though few printing errors here and there certainly remain the bane of Indian publishing.

K. BALACHANDRAN (ED.), *CRITICAL RESPONSES TO INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH*

(ESSAYS IN HONOUR OF DR. A.P.J. ABDUL KALAM)

(New Delhi: Sarup and Sons, 2004), pp. xvi+269, Rs. 550.00

K.K. Sharma

A collection of twenty-three essays in honour of Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, the President of India, *Critical Responses to Indian Writing in English* is a good endeavour to bring to light the variegated aspects of Indian life as reflected in the creative writings of some distinguished Indian men of letters. The volume focuses on almost all the literary forms belonging to Indian English writing — viz. Poetry, Prose, Fiction, Drama, Autobiography, etc. The editor claims in the "Preface" to the book that both "well-established and upcoming writers have been chosen for study by the contributors" (v). But it is not true because Anita Desai, Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Jayanta Mahapatra, Keki N. Daruwalla, Girsh Karnad and several others have been completely neglected, and thus the volume is not representative of the best in Indian English literature. However, this does not detract from the merit of the book.

The book opens with "Voices in Indo-Anglian Poetry" by S. Natanam. The term 'Indo-Anglian' in the title is appalling, for dec-

ades back this expression was discarded in favour of 'Indian English'. Moreover, this sketchy survey of Indian English poetry from Toru Dutt down to Meena Alexander is not marked by newness and perceptiveness of approach. But the next article entitled "Decolonization of Imagination: Reflections on the Theory of National Literature — A.C. Mukerji's *The Hermitage of Bharadwaj*" is very good. The critic rightly asserts that English in India boosted national literature in India and that great art is indubitably nourished on national feeling. He discovers the poetic genius of A.C. Mukerji who is not even mentioned by Iyengar and M.K. Naik in their monumental works on Indian English literature despite the fact that he has written fine poetry on Indian cultural themes. Equally impressive is M.A. Nare's psychoanalytical analysis of Amrita Pritam's poetry which is quite close to that of Sylvia Plath and Kamala Das, but it is awkward on his part to raise the question: Is she like Saint Meera?

Usha Kalyani attempts to reveal Arun Kolatkar's 'self-conscious bohemianism' which places him beside Dadaists, Futurists, Surrealists and Beat Poets. But he does not seem to have succeeded fully in establishing his basic assertion. This is followed by A. Selvalakshmi's study of Kamala Das's feminist perspective with special reference to her three poems — "An Introduction", "My Grandfather's House" and "The Sunshine Cat". I donot see anything striking in this piece. The next article on Nissim Ezekiel's two poems — "Enterprise" and "Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher" — is an effort to vindicate the poet's statement that poetry "... is a mode of human speech, it inevitably contributes to man's knowledge of himself and of the world in which he lives." K. Chellappan is brilliant in his discussion of A.K. Ramanujan and Subramanya Bharathi as creator-translators. He argues that the inalinability of creativity from translation is central to the achievements of these two poets. In both there is a creative marriage of two cultures and idioms which unmistakably adds to their creative vigour. The last piece on Indian English poetry is in the form of an interview with R.K. Singh who has recently emerged as a major poet. What I feel is that this interview should have been exhaustive as in its present form it is a bit too sketchy.

In the book under review two articles have been devoted to

Indian English prose. The first one is on Sri Aurobindo's *The Renaissance in India* in which Lily Arun Sharmila accentuates the fact that Sri Aurobindo has been a perennial source of inspiration to the Indian and world community by highlighting the synthesis of Eastern and Western cultures and the great need for spiritual development, while the second one by R. Elavarasu is a study of the manipulation of transitions in the speeches of Swami Vivekananda.

The next eight essays are on Indian English fiction. C.N. Srinath concentrates on three neglected but significant novels, viz. Pratap Sharma's *Days of the Turban*, Raja Rao's *Comrade Kirillov* and M. Ananthanarayan's *The Silver Pilgrimage*. This is followed by an interesting study of Amit Chaudhury's treatment of servants in his two major novels. Perhaps the best critical piece in this book is Rama Kundu's analysis of Githa Hariharan's *When Dreams Travel*. She points out that the novelist "attempts to write a metafiction through an elaborate intertext that is made to foreground the feminist issue from a fresh perspective" (149). Githa Hariharan employs the narrative device of the story-within-a story for the purpose of connecting feminism with post-feminism. The next piece by N. Sethuraman has nothing new about Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence* which has already been overexamined from the feminist perspective. But S. Robert Gnanamony's article on Jyotirmoyee Devi is an excellent exposition of the novelist's masterly use of New Historicism, Intertextuality and Heteroglossia as techniques of narration in *The River Churning*. Then, the three papers on Arun Joshi's *The Foreigner*, Shoba De's *Sisters* and R.K. Narayan's *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* are just ordinary and repetitive of earlier studies on them without any marks of freshness of approach.

The last but one section of the volume, which is related to Indian drama in English, consists of three essays — two on Tagore's *Mukta-dhara* and *Chandalika* and one on Vijay Tendulkar's *Kanyadaan*. Apparently, this section is weak and imbalanced as it ignores several major playwrights like Sri Aurobindo, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya, Asif Currimbhoy, Girish Karnad, Mahesh Dattani, Nissim Ezekiel, Gieve Patel, and Uma Parameswaran. However, the saving grace is the insightful piece by Basavaraj Naikar dealing

with the conflict between bondage and freedom in Tagore's *Mukta-dhara*. The learned critic rightly concludes: "The rivalry between Uttarakut and Siv-tarai people for the exclusive possession of water has a great contemporary relevance to postcolonial India also. The people of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu quarrelling over the river water can learn a good lesson from Tagore's play. Since water is a gift of God for the entire humanity, no State should fight with another to possess it exclusively" (235). In "Quest Towards Light in Tagore's *Chandalika*" A. Vijayalakshmi demonstrates how the Buddhist Monk Ananda passes through several stages in his quest for self-knowledge that overflows a person with exaltation. The originality of the author lies in her proving successfully that no doubt Prakriti is the central figure of the play, "it is the character of Ananda which adds charm and fineness to the story of Prakriti" (242). Tamilselvi Kanakiah in her short critical piece evinces how Vijay Tendulkar in *Kanyadaan* effectively "presents an individual instance of a Dalit avenging the sufferings of his community for ages together When the society is prepared for the change, there will definitely be a panacea" (247).

The last section of the book pertaining to Indian English autobiography is, again, indicative of incompleteness and inadequacy, for it gives consideration to only two works in the genre and completely disregards the autobiographical writings by Gandhiji, Jawaharlal Nehru, Nirad C. Chaudhury, R.K. Narayan and others. While the first article is just mediocre saying nothing notable about Kamala Das's much discussed book during the last twenty-five years, while the other one by K. Balachandran interestingly traces the origin and growth of A.P.J. Abdul Kalam's lasting greatness as man and scientist. The essay fittingly ends with the observation: "When we read this really we are thrilled and thus he is infusing confidence in everyone.... In this way Kalam not only began to fly but also made others fly by giving wings (confidence and hope) to all" (263-64).

All in all, this critical miscellany is useful to both the common reader and the scholar. But among the plethora of critical studies on Indian English literature it is only the lower step of the ladder, and it fails to touch even the bottom of the height of the great personality in whose honour it has been brought out.

**M.K. MISHRA, *YOUNG AUROBINDO'S VISION:
'THE VIZIERS OF BASSORA'***

(Bareilly: Prakash Book Depot, 2004), pp. 134, Rs. 200.00

O.P. Mathur

M.K. Mishra must be congratulated on making from a fresh perspective a thorough and penetrating study of Sri Aurobindo's first play, *The Viziers of Bassora*, which, if not practically neglected, is usually dismissed by critics as a romance on the lines of Shakespearean drama. Sri Aurobindo wrote in *The Future Poetry* that dramatic poetry "must have, to begin with, as the fount of its creation or in its heart an interpretative vision and in that vision an explicit or implicit idea of life and the human being."

Mishra has convincingly shown that this play is an important first link in a long chain of works culminating in *The Life Divine*, as foreshadowing his belief in the gradual spiritual ascent of man towards Godhead. The first chapter of the book entitled "Life Divine" provides the key for the understanding of Mishra's approach: "At one level, it is a play that seeks to give a political message to the countrymen and at another level, it is a message to the people of the world that they can have Life Divine on earth." The protagonist Nureddene has been invested with a representative character standing for man, for he evolves from a wild youth to a responsible ruler, "sober and introspective", who fully surrenders himself to the will of God and is dedicated to the welfare of his subjects.

The above implied focus of the study has been strengthened and enriched by the author's highlighting the device of comparison and contrast used by Sri Aurobindo — the humane Vizier Affazal and his large-hearted son Nureddene contrasted with the evil Almuene and his debauched son Fareed. It is in the struggle of these and other characters that the plot thickens and is ultimately resolved. I have nothing but praise for the clarity of Mishra's perception of the transcendental overtones of the play and for the worldly labyrinth through which the poetic dramatist, a saint in the making, allegorically builds up his message. The book is undoubtedly a significant contribution to the understanding of Sri Aurobindo as a poetic dramatist and as a visionary.

**MOHIT K. RAY (ED.), *STUDIES IN ELT,
LINGUISTICS AND APPLIED LINGUISTICS***

(New Delhi: Atlantic, 2004), pp. 251, Rs. 495.00

P.C. Pradhan

The present book, consisting of thirty scholarly essays, deals with various aspects of the English Language, English Language Teaching, functional, national and communicative approaches to material production and syllabus design, different kinds of English, different uses of English in literary works, and application of linguistic theories to the study of literature, translation and semantics.

The first eight essays focus on the English language studies especially in the Indian context. Amiya Basu elucidates how languages often die like human beings. Mallikarjun focuses on the richness, flexibility and resilience of the English language in the next essay, and Sailendra Kumar Mukul views that the English language that we now speak has originated from "Anglo-Saxon prose and verse". Avadesh Kumar opines that the traditional teaching of English literature in India has lost its relevance and therefore there is a need to reorient our teaching with an eye on the contemporary Indian situation and experience. Amar Nath Jha shows how American English has been increasingly acceptable in terms of orthography, pronunciation, syntax and usage. Through his sociolinguistic study of the Indian variety of English Jayadev Sarangi identifies certain distinctive features in Indian English that make it both creative and resourceful, although it makes a significant departure from Standard British English.

The next twelve essays constitute the second part of the book that explores the various problems in English language / literature teaching and possible solutions. V.K. Jain points out how the regional and climatic factors affect the correct use of English living speech in regards to stress, intonation and rhythm. Sandhyarani Sahoo argues that the instructional materials are very much important to enable the learner to use the English language effectively and competently. To her view there is a great support from P. Bhaskar Nair who says that the transition from structural syllabus to semantic syllabus demands a necessary change of the instructional materials with an eye on the social relevance. Meenakshi Raman's

paper reflects on how ELT is acquiring global relevance. Prakash Chandra Pradhan holds that the play text is also a performance text for which we must try to bring in some sort of audio-visual communication to the access of the students for the better understanding of the play text. Subha Tiwari points out the areas of difficulty encountered by the students on account of the differences in the cultural hegemony between the world of *Paradise Lost* and the world of *The Ramayana*. Prathibha Gupta elucidates how an awareness of the socio-cultural factors operating in the speech act of the second language learners is essential for both effective teaching and second language acquisition, while R.P. Singh suggests that the teacher should try to exploit resources of the mother tongue in the pedagogical endeavour while teaching a second language. In the context of changed socio-political scenario of our country, Dipak Barua feels that there should be radical change in methodology for teaching English.

The last part of the book consists of ten essays on applied linguistics. Sisir Kumar Chatterjee closely analyses Rushdie's use of language in *Midnight's Children*. Santosh Chakrabarty's observations of distinct echoes of Joyce's linguistic devices in Arundhati Roy's use of language in *The God of Small Things* are interesting. Mukta Mahajan analyses the function of linguistic deviations in translation. Nandini Sahu is rather forceful in making a case for Indian Poetics as a significant body of critical criteria. Professor Rama Kundu's keen perception is evident when she examines Hopkins's concept of "inscape" in the light of Indian Theory of *Dhvani*. The scholarly paper by Amar Nath Jha shows how Panini anticipates most modern linguistic theories, while M.M. Sharma highlights the contribution of structuralism to literature. R.S. Pathak's research paper shows that teaching of language and literature attained high degree of excellence in ancient India, and Bhaskar Ray Burman offers a lucid exposition of the different theories of meaning in his essay on philosophy of language.

The book explores certain new idea and observations for which it will remain a milestone for those teachers and students who are engaged in teaching / researching / learning the English Language, ELT, Linguistics and Applied linguistics.

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