

ISSN 0971 - 605X

POINTS OF VIEW

VOLUME VIII

NUMBER 2

WINTER 2001



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POINTS OF VIEW

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Annual Subscription rates are

India	Individuals	Rs.200.00 (by M.O.)	Institutions	Rs.400.00 (Collection charges for outstation cheques Rs.30.00)
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Overseas	Individuals	£10.00, \$15.00	Institutions	£12.00, \$20.00
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(Additional charges for supplying copies by airmail £4.00, \$6.00)

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CONTENTS

S. Viswanathan	The Profession of Playhouse and Player in the Shakespeare Inset	1
Basavaraj Naikar	The Jew in Marlowe and Shakespeare: A Comparative Study	14
Maqbool Hasan Khan	<i>Troilus and Cressida</i> : A Note	24
Prasenjit Maiti	On the Lute as Facilitator in the English Renaissance	31
M.S. Kushwaha	Decolonizing English Studies in India: Some Reflections	37
S.K. Sharma	Graham Greene's Millionaires	44
Rita Garg	Religious Faith and Practices in the Novels of Evelyn Waugh and R.K. Narayan	51
S. Padmini	Auden's Juvenilia	58
Mithilesh K. Pandey	Cultural Conflict in the Novels of Margaret Atwood	63
O.P. Budholla	Post-Colonialism and Textuality: A Critique of Three Indian English Novels	68
M. Adhikari	Re-Organizing the Lives of Women: Toni Morrison's <i>Beloved</i> and Alice Walker's <i>The Color Purple</i>	76
Ranu Uniyal	Return to the Imaginary: Shashi Deshpande's <i>The Binding Vine</i>	83

K.K. Kapoor	<i>A Suitable Boy as a Roman à Clef</i>	89
Gauri Shankar Jha	Amitav Ghosh's <i>Eden: A Probe into Possibility</i>	95
Prasanta K. Panda	Beyond the Freeze-Frame: A Conceptual Framework of John Barth's "On with the Story"	101

BOOK REVIEWS

R.K. Singh	<i>Kabir: Selected Couplets from the 'Sakhi' in Transversion</i> Translated by Mohan Singh Karki	107
H.C. Gupta	<i>Studies in Contemporary Literature</i> Edited by R.S.Sharma, S.B. Shukla and S.B. Talwar	111
G.P. Pradhan	<i>Indian English Literature – 1980-2000 : A Critical Survey</i> by M.K. Naik & Shyamala A. Narayan	115
Gulshan Rai Kataria	<i>The Folk Theatre of North Karnataka</i> by Basavaraj Naikar	120
K.K. Sharma	<i>Nissim Ezekiel: Dimensions of a Poetic Genius</i> by Surya Nath Pandey	122
Contributors		126

THE PROFESSION OF PLAYHOUSE AND PLAYER IN THE SHAKESPEARE INSET

S. Vasanathan

Shakespeare's implicit, unfussy commitment to drama and theatre as an institution and his exclusive allegiance to the Chamberlain's men which later became the King's men, as their star playwright, sharer and one of their actors, carries a suggestion of a notable professionalism, a governing sense of which marks all his plays early and late. True, a self-deprecatory attitude may be read into his Sonnet utterances such as

Alas! 'tis true I have gone here and there
And made myself a motley to the view

(Sonnet, 110, ll. 1-2)

O! for my sake do you with Fortune chide
The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
That did not better for my life provide
Than public means which public manners breeds

(Sonnet, 111, ll. 1-4)

However the lines are at the most an expression of a passing mood which has to be understood in the context of the address to the Friend; what emerges when we consider Shakespeare's career, profession and life as a whole is a tacit, happy, and not to mention profitable, engagement with playwriting, the playhouse and playing. His career synchronized with the phenomenal growth and flourishing of the professional commercial playhouse. More importantly, it coincided with the acquisition by the institution of not only social respectability but a political space and strikingly, alongside it, a rapport with the court if not the sovereign and with almost all sections of the general community, despite the then prevalent puritan and other antitheatrical prejudice. Such a development was contributed to in no small measure by Shakespeare's association with his theatre which can be said to rank highest among the companies of the times in many respects. It was the time when several categories of people associated with the now fully institutionalised theatre gained status besides material prosperity. The professional actor especially acquired a sense of identity, a kind of social recognition and esteem and above all a certain dignity in

place of the earlier indignities he was subject to, as Muriel Bradbrook showed in her book *The Rise of the Common Player* (London, 1964). An expression of Shakespeare's apprehension of aspects of this ongoing development with regard to the theatre in his time may be traced particularly in the insets across the plays, such as the play-within-the-play and other inserted, enacted performances where there are frequent contexts for such reference. The paper takes a look at the implications which such insets in the plays carry in this regard.

An abiding sense of Shakespeare's quiet pride, and also faith, in the presentational resources of his stage and theatre and in the talents and accomplishments of his actors, which facility informs his drama as a whole, would seem to come through especially in the insets referred to in several plays. First, there is an irony apparently directed against amateur acting and dramatics and in favour of the professional drama and acting. Secondly, there runs a suggestion of both the problems and deficiencies of court drama as against public theatre drama. There is also an implied contrast made between the tradition of the gild, artisan actors of late medieval religious drama and the popular moralities and the actors of the early years of institutionalised London public theatre, on the one hand, and the professional actors and acting of Shakespeare's theatre. Yet, perhaps the irony should not be taken as entirely one-sided; it also cuts both ways to some extent. Also, Shakespeare takes every opportunity to defend and assert the dignity of the professional player. Above all, with his informing sense of the legitimacy of the profession of theatre and of acting to the fore in his insets, Shakespeare takes occasion frequently to raise, in terms of the processes and dynamics of the inset 'devices' or performances, issues and questions of acting, verse and delivery, of the attitudes and assumptions in regard to stage, conventions and properties and of audience response and of the kind of 'multi consciousness' which should govern the whole enterprise. An approach to some examples of the Shakespeare inset in terms of the modes, mechanics and processes of play presentation on stage, issues about which are implicitly raised in these will be in place.

The difficulties, and indeed the perils and disasters that amateur drama is heir to and the difference and superiority of professional drama such as Shakespeare's are amply indicated in the insets in *Love's Labour's Lost* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and suggested in the charade between the two of Prince Hal and Falstaff in *Henry IV*, Pt. I. In *Love's Labour's Lost* both in the Muscovite masque of the King of Navarre and his cohorts and in the pageant of the Nine Worthies the calculatedly and wilfully hostile reception accorded to the performances in the respective cases spoils the show to the general comic effect primarily intended by the playwright. But the comic effect is also at the expense of amateur theatricals. The efforts and trouble which the amateur performer has to go through in learning and memorising their 'parts' and lines and in the stage delivery are underscored. In an age when memory was actively cultivated, sheer habit and practice would have made the task not so formidable for the repertory theatre player to whom it would be second nature to speak his lines 'audaciously'. ('Audacity' and 'audaciously' were the terms used in this then different sense, by Shakespeare, Thomas Heywood in his *Apology for Actors* and also Milton later to denote the quality of fluent, bold and clear enunciation.) The actor was generally 'perfect' in this respect. That is why the actor who forgets his part is cited as an example of extreme discomfiture. Boyet reports how the king and company instructed and prepared Armado's page, Moth to act as their herald in the Muscovite masque

 Their herald is a pretty knavish page,
 That well by heart hath conn'd his embassy;
 Action and accent did they teach him there;
 'Thus thou must speak, and thus thy body bear.'
 And ever and anon they made a doubt
 Presence majestical would put him out;

Love's Labour's Lost (5.2. 97-102)

Moth in the actual enactment is unable to resist his bafflement by the concerted adverse response of Boyet, the Princess and her companions despite his brave attempt. And he is 'out' of his part.

Moth: They do not mark me, and that brings me out.
Barowne: Is this your perfectness? Be gone, you rogue!

(5.2. 173-74)

But the king and his companions' masking enterprise despite their sedulous conning and delivery is pitifully rebuffed by the princess and her friends.

The Nine Worthies' pageant, planned and 'fitted' by the pedant Holofernes with himself, the curate Nathaniel, Costard the rustic, Armado the 'fantastic' and Moth his page, the village types thus intending doubling or trebling the parts meets with no better fate. Costard, however, steals the show with his performances, 'armed as Pompey,' and more with his interventions on his own. He could say

...I hope I was perfect. I made a
little fault in 'Great'.

(5.2. 559-60)

Nathaniel the curate gets much put out by interruptions and is forced to retire, with Costard commenting

A conqueror, and afeard to speak! run
away for shame, Alisander!

but adding, with sympathy,

There, an't shall please you; a foolish
mild man, an honest man, look you, and
soon dashed! He is a marvellous good
neighbour, faith, and a very good bowler;
but, for Alisander, -- alas you see
how 'tis, -- a little o'erparted.

(5.2. 579-85)

The schoolmaster Holofernes presenting Judas Maccabeus the prophet himself and Moth as Hercules 'in minority' as a child, in spite of his competent delivery and presentation, schoolmaster that he is, is subjected to a battery of verbal harassment by the king's companions and Boyet. He retires retorting

This is not generous, not gentle, not humble.

(5.2. 628)

Incidentally, in contrast to the adverse response of Navarre and his court, when Queen Elizabeth in the course of one of her triumphs across the country found a village schoolmaster drying up totally awestruck by the Presence in his attempt to read a welcoming address to her the Queen picked up the paper from him and herself read it out for him. Armado the fantastic in his role as Hector meets a worse fate than Holofernes, concerned as he is in several ways.

The pedant and the fantastic are both addicts to the word, though the wrong way round.

Moth: They have been at a great feast of
languages and stolen the scraps

Costard: Oh! They have lived long on the
alms-basket of words

(5.1. 39-42)

Yet their verbal fluidity is of no avail, when they attempt dramatic utterance. Shakespeare would seem to suggest that the shaping and enunciation of the dramatic word demands unique skills on the part of both playwright and player.

Similarly, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Quince the carpenter rattles off the Prologue to 'Pyramus and Thisbe' which he directs and stage manages, without punctuation or pauses or proper linkages. It is as though Shakespeare the professional has the point raised and discussed by Theseus and his companions for some space (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 5.1. 118-128). No wonder Hamlet exhorts the First Player

Speak the speech, I pray you,
as I pronounced it to you,
trippingly on the tongue; but
if you mouth it as many of
our players do, I had as
liefe the town-crier spoke
my lines.

Hamlet (3.2. 1-4)

Falstaff's attempt to speak in the part of King Henry IV in his charade with Prince Henry, 'in King Cambises' vein, though he has his fan as actor for the nonce in Mistress Quickly is not much of a success in roleplaying, provoking the prince to assume the role himself and give his to Falstaff (*King Henry IV*, Pt.1, 2.4. 482-483). Incidentally, Shakespeare though Falstaff's phraseology here is able to parody the euphuistic style of Lyly in his plays as well as in his romance.

Tackling dramatic speech, especially verse-speaking, is always a challenge, as the problems which arise in the rendering of verse in the case of even the very best actors in the flourishing present-day Shakespearian theatre often shows. But probably Shakespeare's actors in his day could meet the challenge.

Shakespeare has in mind the tradition of the court drama of the fifteen-eighties, mainly represented by Lyly's comedies, especially in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Love's Labour's Lost*. In the first he makes an ironical exploitation of the friendship convention dear to Lyly and in the latter the conception and presentation of Armado and Moth has ironical reference to Lyly's *Endymion*. It is not so much of a relationship of influence as reaction. As the leading force behind the public playhouse tradition, Shakespeare and his theatre vindicated this tradition and it is noteworthy that his company came to perform their public theatre plays at court regularly and often before the ruling monarch; and came to be in the good books of the Privy Council. In the insets in *Love's Labour's Lost* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the risks of mounting a play and playing at court are hinted at. Though the fears of the artisans in their rehearsals (1.2. 73-84) about the lion-like roaring causing offence by frightening the ladies at the court and hence resulting in the hanging of the artisans, are ludicrous behind it there is the problem of the player's risk of incurring the court's displeasure. Let alone the theory that Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was intended for court performance at a court wedding, Shakespeare's drama and company would keep their head on its shoulders if not hold the head high, successfully negotiating between the twin perils of censorship and of licence. The lone instance of Queen Elizabeth's anger at a particular performance of *Richard II*, put up on the eve of the Essex rebellion by his supporters is an exception to this rule. And even in this case no punishment or particular disadvantage whatever to the company ensued.

The artisan players with Quince the carpenter for their leader and Bottom the weaver their star performer, and their rehearsals and production of 'Pyramus and Thisbe' in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* remind us of the strong old late medieval tradition of the trade guilds' artisan members performing the Mystery plays and the Moralities. By Shakespeare's time and tradition of the Mysteries had been practically suppressed in the new climate of the Reformation, although the boy Shakespeare could well have seen one of the very

last enactments of the Mystery cycle at Coventry in 1571. For aught we know, the artisan actors in the heyday of the tradition could have been competent enough to do justice to the dramatic qualities of many of the Mysteries. However, Shakespeare writing for the public playhouse actors at a time of the coming of age or real arrival of the professional actor could well have not thought much of the old practice of amateur artisan acting. By the same argument, he unfavourably contrasts with his playhouse productions and practices, the early plays and their actors in the initial years of the London playhouse, the late seventies and eighties of the sixteenth century, as ironical digs at 'Ercles' vein,' and 'King Cambises vein,' espoused by Bottom and Falstaff for their acting, and at the lumbering fourteener lines of that drama, with Bottom going one better than the fourteener proposing to make it 'eight and eight' (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 3.1. 26).

In the matter of playhouse practices and conventions and stage conditions in general Shakespeare institutes in his insets an implicit ironical contrast which sometimes cuts both ways, Quince the director-manager of 'Pyramus and Thisbe' in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has their 'parts' ready written up for his actors, he 'fits' them and will also get a bill of properties ready. When he says

This green plot shall be our
stage, this hawthorn-brake our
tiring-house, and we will
do it in action as we will
do it before the duke.

A Midsummer Night's Dream (3.13-7)

or

when Falstaff sets out the charade of impersonating King Henry IV to the Prince, saying

...this chair shall be my state, this
dagger my sceptre, and this cushion
my crown

evoking the prince's retort

Thy state is taken for a joint-stool,
thy golden sceptre for a leaden dagger,
and thy precious rich crown for a
pittiful bald crown!

King Henry IV, pt. 1 (2.4. 419-425)

the contrast with the vastly superior resources of the Shakespearian professional stages also implies a correspondence at another level. That aside, far from being 'a bare board,' as it was once thought, the Shakespearian stage whether that of the Globe or the earlier Theatre, was colourfully equipped especially in its stage-facade for all its being a non-illusionistic and hence conventionalistic theatre, as the design of the New Globe in London now demonstrates. In the matter of stage properties and stage adjuncts and ornamentation the Shakespearian theatre must have if anything compared favourably with Henslowe's Rose theatre and proved superior. It is not surprising that Shakespeare mockingly introduces the comic improvisations of the Lion and the Wall in 'Pyramus and Thisbe'. The attempt of Quince to ensure moonshine in the Duke's chamber on the performance night is meant to expose the absurdity of realism taken to its extreme. By the same argument, when Bottom suggests a prologue, in order to reassure the ladies and keep them from fear, to the effect

...I, Pyramus, am not Pyramus,
but Bottom the weaver: this
will put them out of fear

A Midsummer Night's Dream (3.1. 19-22)

it raises thoughts about the cruciality of the inherent quality of the 'multiconsciousness' governing the whole popular tradition of drama including the Shakespearian theatre, the quality which S.L. Bethell wrote about in 1944 (*Shakespeare and the Popular Dramatic Tradition*). The awareness and consciousness on the part of the spectator of 'the actor as character' and 'the character as actor' at once may be missed by some involved in the dramatic transaction or may be disturbed or dislocated as by Bottom. Such a double consciousness would have been second nature to the citizens and villagers who witnessed the mysteries enacted by their artisan and craftsman neighbours in their day. Such multiconsciousness, Shakespeare seems to imply, has to arise and operate spontaneously and instinctively. It is his sureness of touch and finesse in exploring the heritage of this 'multiconsciousness' which enables Shakespeare to use the stage-world similitude most meaningfully, and to exploit modes of self-conscious theatricality

in his later plays. Or for example, when he reminds his *Hamlet* audience that Burbage who played Brutus in *Julius Caesar* is Hamlet now and the player of Polonius was Julius Caesar in the earlier play.

Polonius: I did enact Julius Caesar
I was killed i'the Capitol;
Brutus killed me.

Hamlet: It was a brute part of
him to kill so capital
a calf there.

Hamlet (4.2 104-112)

It is true that in *Henry V* through the self-apologetic Chorus utterances by way of admitting the inadequacies of his stage to represent the epic scenes of great battles or for that matter the sea or horses, Shakespeare craves the indulgence of the audience.

On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
So great an object; can this cockpit hold
The vasty fields of France? Or may we cram
Within this wooden O the very casques
That did affright the air at Agincourt?

Henry V, First Chorus, ll. 10-14.

This repeated request of the Chorus to 'eke out our performance with your mind' is Shakespeare's way of not only or merely disarming disbelief and evoking a willing suspension of it on the part of the spectator but a signal of a confidence that with the existing resources of theatrical language effectual dramatic communication will be established. A similarity may be found in the way the present-day viewer with the awareness of the unseen hand of computer graphics at the back of his mind responds to the performance on the television or cinema screen where, for example, a few soldiers in the filming are made to appear as thousands on the screen in a battle scene.

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Theseus avers with tolerant indulgence towards the players of 'Pyramus and Thisbe' that even 'the best in this kind are but shadows.' It is an admission and a warning that even the gifted professional actors may fall short. However, if anything Shakespeare's success is partly owing to his confidence in his actors and in their theatrical and stage practices. For instance, the overzealousness of Bottom to take on many roles

if not all in the play being planned (1.2.) besides the simple ridicule intended behind it, carries the stage problem of 'fitting' an actor and some in double, or treble, roles. The Shakespearian playhouse developed good working traditions in this respect. Though the idea advocated by T. W. Baldwin once of the actors being cast on certain habitual 'lines' or special kinds of roles for them may not be valid, in all probability the actors did not take on too much and a judicious use was made of doubling dictated by the limited number of professional players available in the company. This went alongside the versatility of the Shakespearian player. Burbage's appears to have been remarkable in this regard. He also played the lead role which was acted by Alleyn earlier when older plays such as *The Spanish Tragedy* were revived by Shakespeare's company. The elegy to Burbage notes his amazing versatility. The average professional actor though not attaining very high levels of accomplishment would avoid such clumsiness in stage business as Shakespeare seems to have mockingly implied in Thisbe in 'Pyramus and Thisbe' stabbing herself with the butt-end of her dagger, a clumsiness mocked at later at a second level in Edward Sharpham's *The Fleir* (1607), a self-consciously theatrical exercise of a play carrying parodying reminiscences of situations and utterances in earlier plays. Through Hamlet's instructions to the player, Shakespeare underscored such common vices the actor was prone to as the intrusive gags of the clown or the fool such as Tarlton's, the adoption of postures, gestures and tones of ranting, etc. 'out Heroding Herod.'

In general, Shakespeare's attestation of the dignity of the actor and of his status and legitimacy in society comes through in the insets. He was himself an actor, although we know little about his actor career except for a tradition that he played old Adam in *As You Like It* and the Ghost in *Hamlet*, and the fact that his name figures in the players' lists of a couple of the Ben Jonson plays of his company. Shakespeare's Sonnet 87 line

In sleep a king, but waking no such matter

taken with an Epigram of his contemporary John Davies of Hereford, 'To our English Terence, Mr. Will. Shake-speare',

Some say (good will) which I, in sport, do sing,
 Had'st thou not plaid some kingly parts in sport,
 Thou had'st bin a companion for a king.
 And, beene a king among the meaner sort

The Scourge of Folly (1611) 76-77.

would suggest his having acted kings. Whether in the early *The Taming of the Shrew* or in *Hamlet*, there is an assiduous insistence that a dignified and hospitable treatment should be accorded to the players as guests.

The Lord: ...take them to the buttery,
 And give them friendly welcome every one;
 Let them want nothing that my house affords.

*(The Taming of the Shrew,
 Induction, 1.102-104)*

and

Hamlet: ...Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed?
 Do you hear, let them be well used; for they are the abstracts
 and brief chronicles of the time....

Polonius: My lord, I will use them according to their desert,

Hamlet: God's bodikins, man, much better; use every man after his
 desert, and who should 'scape whipping? Use them after
 your own honour and dignity....

Hamlet (22. 553-563)

The enjoined warmth and courtesy in the reception of actors, the affection with which Hamlet responds to the players and his keen remembrance of the particular roles and speeches of the actors in their plays as well as the *The Shrew* Induction Lord's command and his recalling with admiration of a certain Soto the wooer's role 'aptly fitted and naturally perform'd', by a particular player--all these bespeak Shakespeare's warmth of feeling and fellowship towards the actors. No wonder his fellow actors Heminge and Condell were the ones who edited and brought out the plays in folio, the First Folio (1623) years after his death, and Shakespeare remembered them in his last will and testament.

Shakespeare's fellow-feeling for the actor-community would seem to extend to travelling troupes as well. The troupes in the two plays mentioned are examples. True, he takes occasion in *Hamlet* (F) to bemoan the challenge of the newly revived boys' companies, felt by the 'great Globe itself,' forcing the actors on to the road in

search of playing venues. But that does not point to any prejudice against travelling players. Travelling troupes from London visited Stratford fairly regularly in the 1580s, and it has recently been also suggested by E.A.J. Honigmann in his *Shakespeare the Lost Years* (Totowa, N.J.; 1985) that Shakespeare perhaps began his theatre career by joining one such travelling troupe elsewhere as actor when he was attached to a noble household as a young man. This if true cannot of course be taken as the only factor, making for his sympathy and fellow-feeling travelling actors. For according to a tradition started by Shakespeare's fellow actor William Beeston, Shakespeare was a schoolmaster in the country in his youth but probably his portrayal of schoolmaster characters in the plays is hardly complimentary.

Shakespeare's handling of his boy-actors and his attitude towards them deserve some attention. He perhaps made the subtlest and most effective and fruitful use of the convention of the 'boy-actress.' But what is interesting is that as well as exploiting in several ways the androgynous potentialities of the boy-actresses' he could enable, almost inspire, them to execute their roles in accordance with their talents, with natural ease, vivacity, the right economy of effort, and convincingness. No wonder an English traveller expressed his admiration for young girls' performance of female roles in an Italian play which he saw in Italy, saying that he was pleased that the girls performed their roles as naturally as the 'boy-actresses' on the English stage of the time. Also, Shakespeare refrains from using the boy-actors for producing the kinds of deliberate incongruity, parody, disorientation and distortion of scale dear to a playwright like John Marslon who wrote mainly for the children's companies. For aught we know, Shakespeare's company did not treat their boys with the harshness sometimes discovered in the way the child-actors were recruited and treated by the children's companies.

On the whole, Shakespeare's dramatic career is a story of happy collaboration between himself as playwright, as part owner of his company and its actor, on the one side, and his company, its playhouses and its players, on the other, not to mention his

various well-pleased audiences. With these last, he had a rapport and none of the reservations and occasional displeasure entertained by playwrights like Ben Jonson. It was almost a model of healthy partnership, a camaraderie, that made for mutual enrichment and creative crossfertilisation. Shakespeare himself is not known to have instructed his players in rehearsals in the way Ben Jonson is recorded to have done, and Ben Jonson seems to have had a reputation as a good instructor. But we can safely presume Shakespeare to have enjoyed free and ready lines of communication with his actors. To an extent, Shakespeare seems to have intended certain character roles and parts for particular actor-colleagues of his vestigial. 'Enter' stage-directions bearing the actors' names in place of the characters' as well as other evidence amply show this. His was an exclusive bond of loyalty to his company, in contrast to the practice of other playwrights. He refrained from taking to the writing of court masques, though he incorporated some masque elements in his last plays and though his public playhouse plays were performed at court and noble households at regular intervals by the company. All this stands testimony to Shakespeare being not only the complete man of the theatre but every inch a man of his theatre. A most striking factor about Shakespeare the poet-playwright is the sustained unity of roles between the poet-dramatist, the playhouse sharer and the actor in Shakespeare.

THE JEW IN MARLOWE AND SHAKESPEARE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Basavaraj Nalkar

That the character of a Jew was an important constituent of the Elizabethan drama is a matter of common knowledge. The treatment of the Jew in Elizabethan literature, especially drama, is the result of the Elizabethans' reaction to the Jews not only in England but on the Continent, intensified by the historical sketches and references to the Jews in the past and coloured by the mythical exaggerations and generalisations. The historical core of the character of the Jews with a mythical halo around them was thus part of the common imagination of the Elizabethans and seems to have attracted the attention of great dramatists like Marlowe and Shakespeare. The racial hatred between Jews and Gentiles has been well-known in the European history right from the *Old Testament* days. Both Marlowe and Shakespeare tried in their own ways to transform the common Elizabethan obsession into dramatic art according to their individual light. Although the figure of a Jew common to both the writers, the dissimilarities outnumber the similarities as far as characterisation, contextualisation and philosophy of life are concerned.

As far as the sources of the two plays (i.e. *The Jew of Malta* and *The Merchant of Venice*) are concerned there is no documentary evidence to pin down the characters or events upon which the dramatists based their plays. Although Marlowe was, indirectly influenced by the historical figures of European Jews, there is no printed source to be pinned down. Professor Tucker Brooke, therefore, opines that it is unlikely that "the main theme of the tragedy was founded upon printed material.... "I believe that from rumours and gossip, emphasized and exaggerated by contemporary feeling about Jews, that Marlowe derived his inspiration. Once again the idea of depicting a Jew, raised to power as well as to influence, we can leave Marlowe's own gifts to provide the rest. Out of a haze of surmise and unreliable report he clearly enough the main lines of his character. His reading and general knowledge of

recent and current history gave him the rest."¹

Similarly, Shakespeare's Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* cannot be traced to any one definite source in history or literature because of the presence of several sources. As pointed out by John Russell Brown,² the printed source closest to *The Merchant of Venice* is the first story of the fourth day in Ser Giovanni's *Il Pecorone*, though Shakespeare has departed from it in many details. Shakespeare is also said to have been influenced by Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*. As usual Shakespeare transmutes all the diverse sources into his own gold and gives it a distinct stamp and colour of his own.

Although the figure of a Jew is at the heart of these two plays of Marlowe and Shakespeare, the settings are strikingly different from each other. While *The Merchant of Venice* is set in Venice and Belmont, *The Jew of Malta* has a wider and exotic setting of the island of Malta and Turkish Empire. Comparatively speaking, Shakespeare's Italy appears to be more familiar than Marlowe's Spain. Whereas Shakespeare concentrates on the commercial and legal aspect of Jewish life, Marlowe includes not only the commercial, but the social and the political aspects also involving their interrelationship. Thus Marlowe's world appears to be larger than Shakespeare's geographically as well as thematically.

There is a remarkable difference between Marlowe's play and Shakespeare's as far as their characterisation of the Jew and the consequent contextualisation are concerned. Whereas Shakespeare's Shylock is preoccupied with his anti-Christian feeling, Marlowe's Barabas is obsessed with anti-Christian and anti-Turkish feeling almost bordering on the misanthropic.

In spite of the difference of settings and contexts between the two plays, there are certain features of Jewish sensibility common to both the protagonists. Both Barabas and Shylock are rich merchants capable of lending money to people at an exorbitant rate of interest. But they, at the same time, suffer from a consciousness that they are disliked and even hated by Christians and consequently have developed a vindictive attitude towards Christians. Both Barabas and Shylock share this trait of personality with each other.

The main action of the plays is triggered off by the same reason i.e., ill-treatment by the Christians (either in the past or in the present). Shylock, for example, was humiliated and insulted by the rich Antonio in the past. Whereas Shylock was insulted in the past as well as is in the present, Barabas is caught in a comparatively greater dilemma in the present. The vengeance between Shylock and Antonio is triggered off by purely economic necessity on the part of Antonio, while the hatred between Barabas and Ferneze is basically occasioned by political emergency involving partial or total loss of property by Barabas. When the Turkish Emperor sends Selim Calymath to the Governor of Malta urging for the clearance of tribute pending for the last ten years, Ferneze orders that the tribute money must be paid out of Barabas' wealth. Ferneze makes no bones about the Christian hatred for the Jews. He orders that the tribute money of the Turks should be levied among the Jews and that each one of them has to pay one-half of his estate. He further orders that he who refuses to pay should become a Christian and that he who refuses to become a Christian should lose his entire wealth. The open hostility of Christians towards the Jews exasperates Barabas beyond measure and he, therefore, interrogates as follows:

What, bring you Scripture to confirm your wrongs?
 Preach me not out of my possessions.
 Some Jews are wicked, as all Christians are;
 But say the tribe that I descended of
 Were all in general cast away for sin,
 Shall I be tried for their transgressions?³

Thus the mutual hatred between Christians and Jews happens to be the general cause for the ill-will between Shylock and Antonio and between Barabas and Ferneze, the Governor of Malta, although the immediate contexts sparking off the racial hatred are local and contingent. They, therefore, decide to have recourse to revenge. Vengeance thus becomes the common denominator of their behavior.

Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* wants to take revenge upon Antonio lending him three thousand ducats against the security of a bond which states that he can cut off a pound of flesh from Antonio's person in case Antonio fails to return the money at the end of three months' time. Antonio who is badly in need of money

accepts the conditions of the bond and takes the loan only to give it to Bassanio thereby enabling him to make a trip to Belmont for courting his would-be wife Portia. Similarly revenge happens to be a means for Barabas in *The Jew of Malta* of redressing the wrong done to him by Ferneze, the Governor of Malta. When forced by the Governor, Barabas loses his entire property. His house being converted into a nunnery, he grows desperate and, therefore, hatches many a machiavellian plan to venge himself upon the Christians. Barabas, who used to boast of his riches and call himself richer than even the Biblical Job, feels now utterly humiliated. Although his property has been confiscated, Barabas wants to salvage at least some gold and Jewellery that he has hidden in his mansion. He, therefore, employs a cunning method of sending his daughter Abigail in the guise of a nun to the nunnery and getting the hidden gold and jewels for his livelihood.

Although vengeance happens to be a common feature of these two Jews, there is a marked difference between the two in the execution of their plans. Whereas the Jew in *The Merchant of Venice* is more legalistic, the Jew in *The Jew of Malta* is more opportunistic. Whereas Shakespeare's Jew is more sober and sophisticated, Marlowe's Jew is more scheming and action-oriented. Shylock remains passively vindictive until the expiry of three months period for Antonio's forfeiture of bond, but Barabas works busily like an activist marshalling all the means of vengeance. He, for example, knows that Mathias and Lodowick are in love with his daughter. But he is so callous that he sets the two lovers against each other and succeeds in getting them killed mutually in a treacherous manner. He hires a Turkish slave called Ithamore and sends poisoned rice-porridge to the nunnery and causes the death of all the nuns including his own daughter. He is so callous that he does not mind killing his own daughter Abigail who had changed her affection for him on account of his treacherous murder of her real lover Mathias. Abigail reveals the secret of her father's treachery to Friar Barnardine in her last confession to him. Barabas is happy under the illusion that nobody knows about his treachery. But when Friar Barnardine and Friar Jacomo go to his house and accuse him of the treacherous

murder of all the nuns in the nunnery he is shocked to learn that he is betrayed by his own daughter. Now Barabas hits upon another callous plan of wriggling out of the crisis. He, therefore, orders his slave Ithamore to strangle Friar Barnardine and shift the blame of murder on to Friar Jacomo thereby dragging him to the court of justice. Later when betrayed by his own slave to Bellamira, the courtesan, Barabas poisons Bellamira and pilia-Borza by offering them poisoned flowers. Finally when Barabas is imprisoned by the Governor after the revelation of the former's crimes, he takes a narcotic drug which induces sleepiness in him. The Governor mistakes the sleeping Barabas for dead and orders his body to be thrown out of the city-walls for providing a feast for vultures. But Barabas recovers his senses after a few hours and helps Selim Calymath to destroy the city of Malta by betraying the Governor and becoming himself the Governor of Malta. Thus Barabas' Machiavellian tactics like cunningness, callousness, opportunism, betrayal and turning tables, etc. to wriggle out of the crises and to achieve his malicious ends. The play, therefore, degenerates from tragedy to farce, as T.S.Eliot has pointed out.⁴ Barabas' career of evil deeds is a hectically busy one, whereas Shylock's is one of eager and quiet waiting for the moment of legal judgment. Comparatively speaking, Shylock appears to be a greater gentleman than Barabas.

Another common feature of these two Jews is that both of them have a daughter each who falls in love with a Christian youngman. But again there is a striking difference between their contexts. There is a remarkable difference between two fathers' behaviour towards their daughters and their irritating and insulting love-affairs. Although Shylock's daughter falls in love with the Christian youngman called Lorenzo, he never goes to the extent of punishing his daughter or his son-in-law. All that he does is to complain about it to the public and remain helpless. His anti-Christian feeling never goads him to take any drastic step to prevent the love affair. But Barabas, as his very name phonetically suggests, behaves in a barbaric and unscrupulous fashion in killing the two lovers of his daughter first and his own daughter later. In the process of wreaking vengeance

against his enemies in a machiavellian manner, he loses his very humanity. He thus becomes an incarnation of pure evil without an iota of good in him. That is why David M Bevington⁵ compares him to 'Vice' of Morality Drama. But Shylock impresses us as basically a human being in spite of his hatred of Christians on account of his willingness to understand the sophistries of legal argument and judgment and gentlemanly acceptance of his final defeat. Shylock, thus, emerges as a rounded character whereas Barabas strikes us as an incarnation or pure of mere evil. Whereas Shylock is more reasonable in his behaviour, Barabas is simply unscrupulous and shameless. In this sense he becomes a complete embodiment of the Machiavellian philosophy of life. But comparatively speaking, Shylock appears to be more gentlemanly as he is ready to admit his folly and the inadequacy of his legal argument when the judge, i.e. Balthazar, asks him to cut off his pound of flesh from Antonio's body without shedding even a single drop of blood or an ounce less or more of flesh than his share of one pound. When he is asked by the judge to sign a bond to the effect that he is ready to gift away half of his property to his daughter and her Christian husband, he agrees to oblige them simply because he has to respect the Law and its sanctity. Although he knows that the letter of the Law is on his side, he is convinced by the judge's sophisticated argument that the spirit of Law is not on this side.⁶ He is sharp enough to realise the limitation of his claim and, therefore, accepts the judgment unconditionally. But Barabas does not respect any law whether it is legal or moral and goes on betraying everyone treacherously until the moment he is himself betrayed by Ferneze and trapped into death. In a way Barabas' life is an allegorical picture of the self-destructive nature of evil.

Comparatively speaking, Shylock's fight with Christians in general and Antonio in particular is legal or juristic, but Barabas' fight with Ferneze and other Christians is financial, emotional and activist. Whereas Shylock learns his lesson at the right moment before losing his entire wealth, Barabas does not learn his lesson until the last moment of life because of his apparent success in all the previous misadventures. "He has a plan for every emergency."

But finally he is defeated by the moral and metaphysical law of life. Part of the difference between the two is ascribable to the difference in their age. Whereas Barabas is a hot-blooded youth with exuberant energy in him, Shylock is an old man with a relatively more mature mind than Barabas.' Part of the difference between the two is attributable to the density of their evil philosophy. Shylock's hatred, for example, is directed against Christians only but Barabas' hatred goes beyond Christians to Turks and even others, and makes no discrimination between daughter and servant, or nun and friar. All the callousness is, perhaps, caused by his philosophy which recognises no sin in the world. The spirit of Machiavelli behind says:

I count religion but a childish toy
And hold there is no sin but ignorance.*

His machiavellianism is expressed in his clear-cut advice to his newly bought Turkish slave Ithamore:

First, be thou void of these affections,
Compassion, love, vain hope, and heartless fear;
Be mov'd at nothing, see thou pity none,
But to myself smile when the Christians moan.*

All these details of behaviour testify to the fact that he is a callous opportunist and sadist who delights in evil for its own sake. His description of his youthful career marked by multitude of evil deeds indicates his demoniac quality. As Barabas' confession clearly indicates, he is a whole-hearted devotee of evil who does not differentiate between good and evil. He appears to be a true descendant of Satan and takes delight in immoral activities. His motiveless malignity inspires him to trouble or murder even the innocent beings including priests, orphans and women.

Barabas is not only extraordinarily able to exercise his destructive powers, but is lucky enough to have the services of equally efficient Turkish slave Ithamore who is a vehement hater of Christians. There is, thus, a good deal of similarity between Barabas and Ithamore as far as their evil nature is concerned. Both of them are united in their hatred of Christians and can do anything or everything. In addition to utilising the services of Ithamore, Barabas takes the active help of his daughter also for his machinations. Compared to Barabas, Shylock is very simple,

straightforward and honorable person who does not have a rich history of evil deeds and who has no efficient salve like Ithamore and whose daughter does not offer any help to him. All his struggle with Antonio is only legal. Whereas Barabas' evil is multidimensional, Shylock's evil happens to be one-dimensional.

In both the plays there is mutual accusation between Jews and Christians about the values of their religions. In *The Jew of Malta* Barabas' hatred of Christians is motivated by his jealousy for the political power enjoyed by the Christians who become kings by the law of inheritance. Likewise the Christians have their own complaints against the Jews. Ferneze, the Governor of Malta, for example, explains the reasons for his special ill-treatment of Barabas by attributing it to his covetousness which is a sin according to Christianity:

Out, wretched Barabas:
Sham 'st thou not thus to justify thyself,
As if we knew not thy profession?
If thou rely upon thy righteousness,
Be patient, and thy riches will increase;
And covetousness, o, 'tis a momstrous sin;¹⁰

Similarly Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* gives vent to his hatred of Christians by pointing out how the Christian vindictiveness masquerades as humility. Likewise the Christians have their own complaints against the Jews. Antonio, for example, comments upon Shylock:

Mark you this Bassanio,
The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose,—
An evil soul producing holy witness
Is like a villain with a smiling cheek,
A goodly apple rotten at the heart.
O what a goodly outside falsehood hath!¹¹

The complaints against the inimical race is mutual. Each party to justify the values of its own religion by laughing at or denigrating those of the other.

In *The Merchant of Venice*, the judge tries to change the heart of Shylock by asking him to exercise the divine-like mercy. The judge, thus, tries to highlight the value of mercy which is an important value of Christian faith. But when Shylock refuses to

exercise such a divine mercy, he is defeated in his own coin of strict justice thereby made to lose half of his property.

Barabas is proud of his race and wealth. He is out and out materialistic and hates not only the Christian spirituality but the internal contradictions of Christianity:

Who hateth me but for my happiness?
Or who is honour'd now but his wealth?
Rather had I, a Jew, be hated thus,
Than pities in a Christian poverty;
For I can see no fruits in all their faith,
But malice, falsehood, and excessive pride,
Which some hapless man hath conscience,
And for his conscience lives in beggary.¹²

There is a deep-seated jealousy in Barabas against the Christian establishment, but he has the satisfaction of belonging to a wealthy community.

In addition to accusing the inimical faiths, both Barabas and Shylock quote scripture in support of their financial achievements. Whereas Shylock cites the Biblical example of how Jacob increased his wealth by exercising his commercial cleverness (MV, I, iii, 65-85), Barabas refers to Job's loss of wealth when his own property is confiscated by the Governor of Malta (JM, I, ii, 185-202). Thus both of them are conversant with the Biblical details which are relevant to their personal contexts.

Both the plays of Marlowe and Shakespeare are dramatic metaphors of the authorial vision or philosophy of life. There appears to be a remarkable difference between Marlowe and Shakespeare as far as their philosophies are concerned. Marlowe's Jew is a machiavellian and an incarnation of pure evil or 'Vice' figure of Morality Drama. His evil nature is multi-dimensional and he is more enthusiastic and energetic than Shylock. He has a plan to get out of every emergency. He can take the guise of a fiddler and offer poisoned flowers to Bellamira and others. He is successful all through his evil career until finally he is defeated almost by chance. Thus there is no growth in the character of Barabas although he is quite lively in his maladventures. As David M. Bevington rightly points out, "there is no development of motivation at all. Each

variation on the theme of vice casts additional light on the nature and operation of evil. The process does not logically unfold, but elaborates and intensifies by repeated example."¹³ All these details of characterisation prove beyond any doubt that Marlowe's philosophy is rather negative or at best "morally neutral."¹⁴ In spite of all the full-blooded liveliness of the character of Barabas, he is an embodiment of pure evil who, therefore, represents only half the truth of life without the other half of good forces of life. Thus Marlowe's vision of life appears to be amoral if not immoral and partial as compared to Shakespeare's vision which recognises both the evil and good elements of life by showing the defeat of evil and triumph of good in the life of Shylock. No critic has failed to notice the essential 'humanity' of Shylock in spite of his anti-Christian feeling. Shakespeare shows the growth in Shylock's personality by depicting his realization of folly and acceptance of the court judgment in a gentlemanly fashion. Shakespeare's vision is positive, humanistic and comprehensive.

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TROILUS AND CRESSIDA: A NOTE

Maqbool Hasan Khan

Troilus and Cressida seeks to clarify the area of human experience where realized inadequacies of conduct focus attention on the taut ambivalence between tragedy and comedy. It is a "problem" play in the sense that it defies easy categorisation and demands from the audience a peculiar alertness of response and a readiness to question assumptions. The play has been variously interpreted. Coleridge had found it "hard to characterise." In our own age it has evoked an unusual diversity of response: it has been described as "a tragedy of disillusionment" (Chambers); a play with "a comprehensive comic purpose" (Alice Walker); as a comical satire (Campbell); as a kind of dialectical drama in the manner of Chapman's *Byron's Conspiracy* (Ornstein); and also as a heroic farce with implied parallelism in the Theatre of the Absurd (Foakes). In the great tragedies or in comedies like *Twelfth Night* we are seldom in doubt as to the way we should interpret a particular character. At least the number of difficult characters in a single play is never more than one – Proteus, Malvolio, Shylock or Hamlet. The case of Hamlet is perhaps to the point since, as with the main characters in *Troilus and Cressida*, he too has evoked not only a diversity but a divergence of response. Thus, while to some Troilus is the archetype of passionate lover, others have found him awkwardly close to the earlier Romeo. Cressida, who represents frailty in love to most has, however, had her defenders. Her fall has been regarded as tragic since it has been brought about by her profound realization of Troilus's inadequacy as lover. Hector, a noble character to most, has yet been considered by some to be a study in human failure and inadequacy.

It may be possible to trace some of this diversity of opinion prior to critics' pre-conceived notions and prejudices with regard to the characters and situations in the play. Foakes has drawn attention to Shakespeare's exploitation of his audience's knowledge of the traditional Trojan lore outside the play's frame of reference, and he has shown how this assumed knowledge might have

modified Shakespeare's shaping of the play. We may question Foakes's conclusions from this but it is interesting to see how Shakespeare manipulates his audience's expectations, transforming limitations into artistic freedom, using traditionally assigned roles – mere abstractions – as starting-points for character-realization, and discovering new significances in familiar situations. In a way, the play is a re-enactment of proverbial formulations: Helen's beauty ("a pearl/Whose price hath launched above a thousand ships"), Troilus's constancy ("As truth's authentic author to be cited") and Cressida's faithlessness. The elements are the same as sanctified by tradition but in the complex of the play's accomplished structure Shakespeare has put unique contemporary and personal significance.

The audience would expect a great and well-known love story. They would also expect the story to be framed by a great and heroic action. Shakespeare does exactly the same but, surprisingly enough, the Prologue omits all reference to the love story. Attention is focussed only on the frame, on the right ethos. Shakespeare did so perhaps because he knew the love story would be assumed from the title, and would be known from the appearance of Troilus in the opening scene. Or, perhaps, he was conscious that the public theme of the Trojan war and the conduct of some of his major characters needed prior notice so as to broaden the scope of audience expectation. What, however, is more likely has a deeper significance and involves a consideration of the tone and rhythm of the Prologue's speech.

The beginning is straightforward enough: "In Troy there lies our scene. The pompousness and sonority, however, of what follows strikes, one feels, a false note:

From Isles of Greece

The princes orgulous. Their high blood chafed,
Have to the port of Athens sent their ships,
Fraught with ministers and instruments
Of cruel war.

(Prologue 1-5)

Not that there is a suggestion of irony or implied censure in "the princes orgulous, their high blood chafed" but there certainly is an unexpected detachment. The implied rhetoric of honour, looking

forward to similar textures in the rest of the play, seems to suggest subjective assessments of honourable conduct viewed, however, objectively. This becomes apparent when the Prologue comes to the cause of the prolonged armed struggle:

their vow is made

To ransack Troy, within whose strong immures

The ravished Helen, Menelaus' queen,

With wanton Paris sleeps – and that's the quarrel. (Prologue 7-10)

The vernacular shock of "sleeps" and the jerky summing up of "that's the quarrel" have a ring of anti-climax about them. In itself the insight may not mean much since the spectacle of great and renowned men killing each other for a petty cause could be designed to frame a story of pure and innocent love. The sordid ethos would in that case serve as contrast. Ophelia's is a case in point. Cressida's, however, was a known story of faithlessness, and hence parallelism rather than contrast may indeed be expected.

Troilus, as he appears in the opening scene, is not much different from Duke Orsino in love with Olivia or Romeo in love with Rosaline. He is perhaps closer to the earlier Romeo than to Orsino. The Duke's indulgence in luxurious thoughts of love is no doubt a form of impercipience but in his case there is not much confusion between romantic love and sensuality. With Romeo there is Mercutio to highlight the gulf between his pose and the reality of youthful urges. In *Troilus and Cressida* the counterpoint is more subtle, embedded only in the juxtaposition of characters and situations. The romantic lover for whom, as Ornstein notes, the "performance of his heaving spleen" is a metaphysical value, "cannot come to Cressida but by Pandar." There is a certain urgency of sensual desire unknown to himself or, perhaps, lost in the pose of transcendent passion but betrayed through tactile images such as

Her bed is India, there she lies a pearl

(I.i. 100)

or,

Her eyes, her hairs, her cheeks, her gait, her voice;

Handiest in thy discourse....

There is hardly any incongruity between the impassioned poeticising of Troilus and the earthly culinary images of Pandarus. Pandarus perhaps has an edge over Troilus since he seems to know what

he is talking about.

Troilus's soliloquy near the end of the scene is significant since, among other things, it looks forward to Troilus's conduct in the Trojan Council scene:

Peace, rude sounds!

Fools on both sides. Helen must needs be fair,

When with your blood you daily paint her thus. (I.i. 89-91)

"Fools on both sides" has no implied censure. There is, on the contrary, admiration for the glorified egotism of men who, unmindful of the intrinsic worth of the cause, are willing to sacrifice material existence. Helen's beauty is authenticated by the struggle and not vice versa.

I cannot fight upon this argument,

It is too starved a subject for my sword. (I.i. 92-93)

This is in keeping with his opening words:

Call here my varlet, I'll unarm again,

Why should I war without the walls of Troy

That find such cruel battle within? (I.i. 1-3)

It is part of the pose of unrequited love but is, at the same time, consistent with Troilus's position throughout – both in love and war:

What's aught but as 'tis valued.

(II.ii. 51)

The real Cressida might be whatever she is but Troilus would prize her in accordance with his own needs – as a mirror for his narcissistic self-dramatization.

By contrast Cressida is a realist and in a sense free from illusions. Her realism is a product of her shallow nature combined with a deep-seated sense of insecurity. She is a creature of compromise equally willing to play the lady of high romance or be the object of much forthright physical passion. Though in her soliloquy she does affirm love for Troilus yet there is a strange lack of conviction about her affirmation coming as it does after her elaborate reasons for "holding off":

Then, though my heart's content firm love doth bear,

Nothing of that shall from mine eyes appear. (I.ii. 290-91)

On the night of her union she shows impatience of the ritualistic

posturings of her lover, and immediately after Pandarus's departure she confronts Troilus with

Will you walk In, my lord?

(III.iii. 61)

The words are repeated again at line 101. In Shakespeare such repetitions are never without significance. She is, however, willing to participate in the ritual if Troilus insists on doing so. She knows he is playing a game. She joins in but the difference is remarkable. For Troilus the game is serious; the role is his alter-ego. Cressida's is one of expediency. Here is a despairing vision of masculine desire ("Achievement is command"), and so the only way she can authenticate her existence is through the sensation of being wooed. To her the rhetoric of constancy is hollow not only because her personal scheme of values has no room for it but also because she can see through Troilus and discover the real drift of his desire.

All this is not to deny the pain of Troilus's discovery in Act V, scene ii. Let us, however, note the rather unsuccessful attempt on Troilus's part to generalise from his shocking experience:

Let it not be believed, for womanhood.

Think: we had mothers. Do not give advantage

To stubborn critics, apt without a theme

For depravation to square general sex

By Cressid's rule.

(V.ii. 131-35)

This is countered with

What hath she done, prince, that can soil our mothers? (V.ii. 136)

The interlocutor, of course, is Ulysses with his famous wisdom. Troilus's vision of general depravity fails in convincing us of its truth while Hamlet's succeeds because in the latter's case the disillusionment had been preceded by genuine faith in a universal scheme of values and not by attitudinising about sexual passion.

The contrast that the play as a whole offers to *Hamlet* has seldom been studied in detail. Both the plays deal with the need for action, and highlight, from opposed angles, the relationship between cause and agent. Hamlet's cause is honourable and yet he procrastinates because his greatest need is for moral illumination. *Troilus and Cressida*, on the other hand, is a study of men haunted

by illusions, either ignorant of or indifferent to the ethical implications of their actions and yet ready to act. The result is anarchy and confusion, serious enough to go beyond comedy but, at the same time, incapable in its enactment of leading to tragic catharsis.

In debunking the Greek heroes Shakespeare might have been following the example of late medieval writers but his portraits of the much more agreeable Trojans are not in essence much different. Hector has been much praised for his nobility and faith in reason. In the Trojan council he pleads on behalf of "the moral laws / of nature and of nations." His persuasiveness and perception are indeed admirable but all it comes to is

I am yours,
You valiant offsprings of great Priamus. (II.ii. 205-206)

When it comes to an ultimate choice "honour" is as magical a word for him as for Troilus. He reminds Troilus of Cassandra's prophecies in the Council scene but brusquely dismisses them himself in the last Act. When it helps him in chivalric self-dramatisation he boasts of his wife as "a lady, wiser, fairer, truer / Than ever Greek did compass in the arms" but later harshly rebukes her:

Andromache, I am offended with you.
Upon the love you bear me, get you in. (V.iii. 80-81)

Hector's willingness to defy death:

Life every man holds dear, but the dear man
Holds honour far more precious—dear than life. (V.iii. 27-28)

is a far cry from Hamlet's: "There's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow.... The readiness is all." Hector's nobility cannot be saved by questioning the textual authenticity of the closing scenes. It is equally difficult to agree with Pettet that Shakespeare had a whole-heartedly anti-romantic purpose in writing the play.² The portrait of Hector is too sympathetic for that.

This is true Ulysses too. It is difficult to believe how his speech on "degree" could ever be regarded as reflecting the positive core of the play. In character not the content of a speech but its occasion and the character of the speaker should be given prime consideration. Ulysses is to be summed up in expediency, not wisdom. His

inadequacy lies precisely in his taking expediency for wisdom. His is the most dangerous kind of illusion since it is the product of disillusionment with most ideals. His speech (III.iii.139-74): "Time hath, my lord, a wallet at his back..." is, along with Jacques's on the seven ages of man, a profound expression of cynicism.

Thyrsites' "choric" commentary is not in any obvious sense indicative of Shakespeare's intentions. The play's ironies are focussed as much on him as on others. His scurrility is the despair of a man on whom the doors of perception are irredeemably shut. If in spite of this he is somehow central to the play's meaning it is through the extraordinary sense of discomfort we feel in his company. It is through the negation of his negation that the possibilities of retrieval are suggested to us.

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ON THE LUTE AS FACILITATOR IN THE ENGLISH RENAISSANCE

Prasenjit Maiti

It expresses the patterns by which the severalties of the cosmos fit together, links the eternal with the sublunary, and represents discourse, social concord and erotic union. As the risen soul, and as its musical descendants the mandolin and guitar, it may be masculine and feminine coextensively. It pervades the literature with which it is contemporary, and provides a key to puzzling imagery. It is the lute, an important mediational object in the literary and artistic representation of the English Renaissance.

As Leo Spitzer insists, the representation of the universe as a divine instrument or ensemble is commonplace in the literature of our period (36). Milton's "At a Solemn Music" expresses the general figure of a "celestial consort" (line 27). And a plate in Robert Fludd's book *Utriusque Cosmi Historia* represents the universe's spheres, elements, and mathematical relationships as a gigantic cosmic dulcimer tuned by a divine band (in Hollander, fig. 3). Naturally, then, the doughty lute-proponent Thomas Mace addresses his Creator with these words from *Musick's Monument*:

A Unison (at First) I was in Thee;
An Octave (now at Last) I hope shall be.
To Round Thy Praises in Eternity,
In th' Unconceiv'd Harmonious Mystery. (269)

The lute is part of this iconographical tradition of harmonies, cosmic strings, and "celestial consorts." We can best see the lute representing cosmic concord in the Madonna and Child and *sacra conversazione* paintings of the Italian Renaissance. Masaccio's *Enthroned Madonna and Child*, from the polyptych of Santa Maria del Carmine, Pisa (now in the National Gallery, London), presents the Virgin and child adored by four *putti*. Two of them flank Mary and the infant Jesus, while the two in the foreground, bathed in heavenly brilliance, play a lute duet. Masaccio's work comes early in the fifteenth century; it is completed in 1426. Yet Mantegna repeats the motif with variations in his *Enthroned Madonna and Child with Saints* (from the San Zeno altarpiece, 1456-59). Here more *putti* crowd around

the serene Madonna and her Child, singing, while two *putti* in front of the throne hold lutes. The little fellow on the right plays his instrument, while the *putto* on the left attentively tunes a string on his lute in order to praise Mary and Son in perfect concord. Piero della Francesca's *Nativity* (National Gallery, London; approximately 1470) also employs a heavenly choir accompanied by two lutes in its serenade of the Virgin and Babe, though this artist removes the lutenists from the foreground and makes them less child-like; and Giovanni Bellini's *Enthroned Madonna and Child*, from the San Giobbe altarpiece, approximately 1480 (now in the Accademia, Venice), uses a triad of divine musicians to balance the triangular configuration formed by Mary and the four saints in this *sacra conversazione*. On the left, an angel bows a rebec; on the right, another plays a half-hidden lute; and in the center, an angelic lutenist raises the instrument as it is plucked in order to catch some heavenly light and reflect it out to us. That lute thus dominates this heavenly consort because of its position and coloration. It is integrated into a Universal Harmony expressed also in the geometrical organization of the paintings. Here and in related paintings, the lute is the great communicator, both embodying cosmic harmony and transmitting it to us.

If the lute figures prominently in representations of divine concord, we might also expect it to occur in depictions of the human link with the heavenly. Filippo Picinelli, writing in 1653, remarks that the lute emits a penetrating tone which carries all the way to heaven, even as the voice of one tormented who petitions God (my translation; 529). But the lute can also represent the well-tuned soul receiving divine inspiration. We notice this metaphor in Donne's "Hymne to God, my God, in my sicknesse"; it also appears in Herbert's poem "Easter," where the notion of the stretched body of the suffering Lord and the lute-strings stretched on wood is reinforced by the stretched-out lines of verse. Here an analogy emerges between Christ on the Cross; the tension of the speaker's soul, vibrating in sympathy; the lute as vehicle of the comparison; and the poem's formal expression of sympathetic tension. In his lute instruction book, *Musick's Monument*, Thomas Mace discusses the connection between divine

ecstasy and the lute, asserting that lute-playing should be for those "who have their Should Divinely Bent/To Serve their God, with Hearts Intent" (33).

Not only does the lute figure discourse between the divine and the person; a related metaphor equates the lute with social discourse as well--perhaps with Rhetoric itself, as John Hollander notes (194-206). Herrick's "The New-Yeere's Gift" employs such a comparison in its opening stanza, in which lutes are substituted for laudatory human voices in praising the arrival of the Christ-child (lines 1-3). Marvell's "Musicks Empire" also employs the lute as an instrument of speech to be used in human accolades of heavenly triumphs, reserving the honoring of earthly accomplishments to wind instruments (lines 13-16). Yet the authors of the Renaissance see nothing amiss in equating the music of the lute with discourse about and between persons. A lyric of Thomas Campion neatly parallels the lute and Corinna's song; both human and stringed voice carry the same burden, whether of joy or mourning (Fellowes 587). The Latin, Spanish, and Italian editions of Andrea Alciati (1548, 1549, and 1549 respectively) all depict a lute and two opened music books resting upon a cushion; the captions all mention alliance or confederation, and the poems each equate the lute with internal, social and political cohesion. The speaker in each case addresses a young noble and advises him to be "in accord" like the lute when he enters the greater harmony of society and politics (*Emblemas* 19-20, *Emblemata* 13-14, *Imprese* 11-12).

The lute as social communicator because of its tones and melancholy speech also appears in Francis Pilkington's madrigal in which the lute and tearful lover agree in discourse (Fellowes 182). Or consider the title page of Burton's 1638 edition, depicting a melancholy innamorato moping at his music and his lute (Dell-Jordan edition frontispiece). Falstaff himself, according to Prince Hal, is melancholy in this sense (2.2. 68-70). The lute's close identification with human speech and its ability to convey the deepest feelings is an enduring concept, the lute having yielded this role to the guitar in current iconography.

And like the modern guitar ("masculine" when played by Jimmy

Page, "feminine" when played by Joan Baez), the lute's connection to the erotic is fraught with ambivalence. The lute is a mediator between men and women – and as a mediator, has remarkable ambivalence of gender. This is not to say that the lute is genderless, but that it possesses, metaphorically, both genders. (It might remind us of the Elizabethan boy-actors playing women's parts, or the contra-tenor singing voice so fashionable in the Renaissance--also ambiguously--gendered media of dialogue).

Shakespeare's Richard III evokes this ambivalence at the outset of his saga when he proclaims that noble, stirring war has become effeminized, capering "nimble in a lady's chamber/To the lascivious pleasing of a lute" (1.1.9-13). Is the lust of men for women effeminate? What is this discordant concord? George Wither explains that the lute, as love, will make contraries, or discords, "much the sweeter, farre" as love – or the lute – will "cause a thousand quaverings in your breast" (82). Gerard van Honthorst's painting *The Supper Party* (in the Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence) enacts the sort of scene that Wither describes. Framed by other diners who are not interacting with them, the rapt young woman and the dashing lad playing the lute are only involved with each other. The young man leans toward the girl, elevating his lute unmistakably and directing its sound to her. She appears to have those "thousand quaverings" in her breast. The lute here is quite masculine.

But a masculine lute can talk to – and excite – a feminine lute. An example of such sympathetic vibration occurs in Jacob Cats' emblem book, *Silenus Alcibiadis*. Here, only the gentleman is present; on the table in front of him is a lute, and in his hands is another lute which he tunes to the precise frequency of the first instrument. When the two lutes are in accord, the one on the table vibrates as the other is strummed. The appropriate caption reads "Quid Non Sentit Amor!" (in Hollander, figure 5).

In fact, something with a phallic neck and a romantic rosette is bound to enter the realm of satire, where it can be exploited as a representation not just of discourse between lovers, but of commonality of lust. The lute is so used in Aretino's dialogues, of course, but also in Cyril Toumeur's play *The Atheist's Tragedy*,

during a burlesque of sleazy erotic love. Sebastian, waiting for Levidulcia in the bawdy house of Cataplasma, takes a lute lesson from the formidable madam, who pronounces: "Precious! Dost not see *mi* between the two crochets? Strike me full there. – So – Forward. This is a sweet strain, and thou finger'st it beastly. *Mi* is a laerg [sic] there, and the prick that stands before *mi* a long.... Observe all your graces i' the touch" (4.1; Tourneur 271). Aside from titillating a Jacobean audience, the doubled references to music and foreplay ridicule the more elevated emblem tradition of the lute and juxtapose interesting ambivalences: the male is captive of a dominating taskmistress highly critical of his abilities.

This curious blending of the ideal and the tawdry also appears in Francesco del Cossa's fresco *April* (from the Palazzo Shifanoia, Ferrara) – another satire which, in this instance, lauds the triumph of Venus. To the left, young men and women exchange conversation – and more, as the rabbits nuzzling beneath their feet imply. In the center, Venus, demurely draped, glides toward the viewer on a barge. To the right, gentlemen and ladies chat, accompanied by fecund rabbits in the underbrush. And in the lower right, a young man fondles a kneeling girl. Facing the aroused couple stands a woman clasping a lute to her stomach so that its belly points outward, imitating pregnancy. Behind the couple, another woman holds a lute so that its front faces us, suggesting a "sympathetic string" motif. We might read this painting as a parody of the idea that the lute embodies and which is incorporated in the divine harmony expressed by Bellini. Here, instead of spiritual harmony within geometrical unity we see sexual urges evoked within a skewed geometrical frame enshrining a pagan goddess. The lute steps down from its role as speaker in the sacred conversation and becomes instead an icon of procreation and sexual allure.

In evoking the sacred or the profane mysteries, the lute finds wide employment in the Renaissance precisely because of its built-in ambivalence. Its coexistent male and female qualities refer to an Aristophanic (Rouse 85-87) or Hermetic (Copenhaver 4) sense of harmony in which opposites are united – as they are to be in "true love." Because music is communication beyond speech, the lute

can represent transcendent cosmic joy, deeply-felt discourse, or primeval, unspoken urges – all simultaneously, and with grace.

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DECOLONIZING ENGLISH STUDIES IN INDIA: SOME REFLECTIONS

M.S. Kushwaha

It is neither possible nor desirable to treat the question of decolonizing English studies in India in isolation. Colonization is a vast and complex phenomenon which is not confined to English studies but extends far beyond them. The decolonizing of English studies would, therefore, not only involve but necessitate decolonizing in other spheres and activities of life.

It is worth remembering that colonization is not a physical event but a psychological phenomenon. Subjugation or domination by a foreign power in itself does not amount to colonization. India, at least the greater part of it, remained under the Muslim rule for quite a long time, but the question of decolonizing is never linked with it. Why is it that whenever we talk of decolonizing, we invariably refer to the British rule? This cannot be explained only by saying that the British rule was more extensive and powerful. The reason lies somewhat deeper. We accepted British rulers not only as our masters but also as superior to us, intellectually and culturally. This was not the case with Muslim rulers whom Hindus never considered culturally or intellectually superior. The Raj introduced us to the ideas of 'progress' and western 'civilization', to science and technology, which deeply influenced us. Gradually we developed a feeling of inferiority, and began to imbibe the British modes of thought and life-styles. And this is exactly what colonization implies. A country is colonised only when its people internalize their defeat and start imitating or following their rulers willingly. In other words, the rulers are not only masters but also role-models and guides. Thus both the colonizer and the colonized are implicated in the process of colonization.

The foremost single factor that contributed to the rise of colonialism in India was the introduction of English education. As devised by Lord Macaulay it was calculatingly based on the colonial agenda of the so-called "white-man's burden." Macaulay made it amply clear when he noted that his intention was to raise "a class

of persons, Indians in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect."¹ In the beginning this move was resisted by orthodox Hindus and Muslims, the native *pathshalas* and *madarsas*, but gradually they gave in to the pressures of the English-educated Indians. There were people like Raja Rammohan Roy who not only welcomed the advent of English education but pleaded for its expansion with the rulers. Writing about the impact of English education on Indians, Macaulay notes with satisfaction: "Our English schools are flourishing wonderfully. The effect of this education on the Hindoos is prodigious. No Hindoo, who has received an English education, ever remains sincerely attached to his religion. Some continue to profess it as matter of policy, but many profess themselves as pure Deists, and some embrace Christianity. It is my firm belief that if our plans of education are followed up, there will not be a single idolator among the respectable classes in Bengal thirty years hence. And this will be effected without any effort to proselytise, without the smallest interference with religious liberty, merely by natural operation of knowledge and reflection."²

This note of Macaulay's is significant for several reasons. First of all it throws light on the process of colonization. It points out clearly that colonization is a cultural process, and it is carried out by means of knowledge, not by force. In other words, it is a process of substituting one set of ideas with another set of ideas. Secondly, these ideas are primarily concerned with religious beliefs and values, for it is they that lie at the root of one's culture. This explains also why colonization had had greater effect on Hindus than on Muslims whose religion is far more dogmatic and rigid.

And Macaulay's calculations about the over-all impact of English education proved amazingly true, not, of course, literally but metaphorically. Though idol-worship of Hindus continued, their cultural icons were progressively submerged and replaced with those of English culture. It was the proselytism of the Indian psyche, not only of creed, that the English education wonderfully succeeded in inculcating in our country. There grew up a class of Indian Anglophiles who were "so brainwashed that they would harangue

and argue that India would be a chaos if the British left, and called Mahatma Gandhi a demagogue and mischief-maker.³ The struggle for Independence was primarily a political struggle. As Fakrul Alam shows convincingly through his post-colonial reading of R.K. Narayan's fiction, even as Indians battled against British rule, they wittingly or unwittingly accepted many aspects of the colonizer's culture.⁴ It was only Mahatma Gandhi who, amongst the freedom fighters, understood the full implication of freedom. His *Hind Swaraja*, written originally in 1909, stands till today as the most radical, forceful and clear-cut document of anti-colonialism. He clearly, and of course rightly, perceived that it was not enough to get rid of the British; we must also get rid of British civilization. In fact, he finds British civilization more pernicious and harmful than British people. At one place he openly states: "I bear no enmity towards the English but I do towards their civilization."⁵ For English civilization, to him, is identical with modern civilization that "takes note neither of morality nor of religion."⁶ And when religious and moral values are discarded or ignored, people easily fall prey to slavery under the lure of lucre. "Formerly men were made slaves," writes Gandhi, "under physical compulsion. Now they are enslaved by temptation of money and of the luxuries that money can buy."⁷ According to him, the continuing slavery of Indian people is not to be attributed to temporal power but to our own fascination with English civilization. This is what he implies when he says: "The English have not taken India; we have given it to them. They are not in India because of their strength, but because we keep them."⁸ This idea is reinforced by the following statement which makes also his meaning absolutely clear: "It is my deliberate opinion that India is being ground down, not under the English heel, but under that of modern civilization."⁹

These statements of Gandhi show that he correctly diagnosed the roots of colonialism in India. They lie deep in our conscious or unconscious cooperation with, and adoption of, modern civilization that the British brought with them, and which they propagated in India mainly through English education. Here we may also remember what Gandhi himself says on the effects of English education. "It is worth noting," he writes, "that, by receiving English education,

we have enslaved the nation. Hypocrisy, tyranny, etc. have increased; English-knowing Indians have not hesitated to cheat and strike terror into the people."¹⁰

However, Gandhi does not plead for a total rejection of English education. He accepts it as a necessary evil, and calls for a limited and judicious use of it. English may be used in "our dealings with English people, in our dealings with our own people when we can only correspond with them through that language, and for the purpose of knowing how disgusted they (the English) have themselves become with their civilization...." But English should be taught to a child when he has grown up; his early education ought to be imparted through the medium of his/her mother-tongue. And even at this stage of learning English, "we shall have to consider what we should learn through it and what we should not."¹¹

But so far as western civilization is concerned, Gandhi makes no compromise. In the chapter entitled "How Can Indian Become Free ?" he categorically states: "Why do you forget that our adoption of their civilization makes their presence in India at all possible? Your hatred against them ought to be transferred to their civilization."¹² His own rejection of modern civilization was so total that it left no room for doctors, lawyers and machines – the chief instruments of modern civilization – in his conception of free India.¹³

Such an extremist view of nationalism was not shared by other Indian political leaders, especially Jawaharlal Nehru, who associated western civilization with progress and development. Gandhi's voice was lost in wilderness. No genuine effort was made to contain colonialism which not only continued unabated after Independence but gradually grew up in proportions. Only the form changed. While during the Raj colonialism was apparent and palpable, after Independence it became, like the mythical god *kamadeva*, invisible and bodiless. Now it is so pervasive and entrenched that we seem to have lost the power of independent thinking. I shall cite only two recent incidents that will suffice to show how much we are guided by western opinions and mores. The first relates to the award of Bharat-ratna to Prof. Amartya Sen whose genius we recognized only after he had been conferred the Nobel Prize. The second is

the case of celebrations of the New Millennium without realising that we had entered the 21st century of Vikram Era more than fifty years ago. These examples demonstrate respectively our lack of self-confidence and self-respect and our cultural amnesia.¹⁴ And these are the dominant traits of the colonial mindset.

It is against this background that we will have to think of the ways and means of decolonizing English studies. One of the most obvious, and surely necessary, steps is to decanonize English syllabi. Without being rigid or dogmatic, some specific suggestions may be made in this regard. I think that fifty percent of the text in poetry, drama, fiction and prose at the undergraduate level should be drawn from English translations of the works written in Indian languages, including Sanskrit. There may also be an independent paper on Indian Writing in English, including English versions of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* by C. Rajagopalachari. At the postgraduate there should be a full-length paper on "Indian Literature in Translation" (It has already been introduced at Lucknow University). Indian poetics and Indian linguistic thought should be incorporated in the existing papers on "Literary Criticism" and "Linguistics" respectively. We may also introduce papers on "Comparative Literature" and "Theory and Practice of Translation." Translation, to my mind, should be encouraged in a big way, for it has the potential both for decolonizing English studies and making them relevant and meaningful. I would like to go to the extent of asserting that translating of a significant text from an Indian language, with a critical introduction and notes, should be allowed as a valid topic for dissertations in M.Phil. and Ph.D. programmes. Some progress in this direction has already been made. Jawaharlal Nehru University (New Delhi) permits a candidate to take up translation for his/her dissertation at the M.Phil. And I learn that Vikram University (Ujjain) allowed one research scholar to undertake translation of Dharma Vir Bharati's *Suraj ka Satwan Ghora* for his doctoral dissertation. But there is still a need for wider recognition and acceptance of translation as a fruitful and apposite mode of research in this country.

But, at the same time, I would like to point out that mere changes in syllabi are not enough. We should not forget that there

is a far greater need for reorienting the attitude of English teachers. For it is the teacher, not the syllabus, that ultimately matters. An enlightened teacher can teach even a western text in a decolonizing spirit. Just to take an example, while teaching Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*, the concept of martyrdom with Indian concepts of martyrdom (*shahid*) and sainthood (*santatva*). On the contrary, a good Indian text may be taught in an inspiring manner by an ill-equipped and uninterested teacher. If taught mechanically, even Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* would appear outdated and worthless. It is, therefore, necessary to emphasize the role of teachers in this process of decolonization. They will have to decolonize themselves before they are able to decolonize English studies.

And this requires both introspection and a rigorous training of the mind. The Indian English teacher (and this applies also to the teachers of other subjects) will have to examine critically his (implying both sexes) modes of thought and behaviour, and bring about suitable changes in them. At the same time, he should also strive to familiarize himself with his cultural and literary tradition. This, of course, implies an acquaintance with the Upanishads, the Gita, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and Sanskrit literature in general. For this one need not study Sanskrit; the necessary knowledge may be acquired through the medium of English. The following books may be recommended for preliminary reading: Sri Aurobindo's *The Foundations of Indian Culture* (Pondicherry), Radhakrishnan's *The Hindu View of Life* (OUP), *Our Heritage* (Orient Paperbacks) and *Eastern Religion and Western Thought* (OUP), and Swami Prabhavananda's *The Spiritual Heritage of India* (Sri Ramakrishna Math).

The knowledge of this kind should be complemented by a good knowledge of the literature of one's mother-tongue. All this is necessary to make one rooted in one's tradition. But this does not mean that one becomes a traditionalist. That would defeat the very purpose of this undertaking. For the underlying idea is that unless one is rooted in one's tradition, one cannot interact with another tradition. It implies neither total rejection nor total acceptance of another tradition, but freedom to choose what is relevant. A colonized

mind simply follows and imitates; a decolonized mind interacts and discriminates.

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¹Cited Arun Shourie, *Missionaries in India*.

²*Ibid.*

³R.K. Narayan, *A Writer's Nightmare* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1988), p. 225.

⁴See Fakrul-Alam, "Reading R.K. Narayan Postcolonially," *Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics*, XXI:1-2 (1998), pp. 9-34, especially his reading of *Swami and Friends*. The fictional world of some of Narayan's novels reflects faithfully the social and political realities of Indian life during the Raj.

⁵"Hind Swaraj," *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (New Delhi: The Publications Division, Govt. of India, 1985), Vol. X, p. 64.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 56.

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 40.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 26.

¹⁴On "cultural amnesia" see G.N. Devy, *After Amnesia: Tradition and Change in Indian Literary Criticism* (Orient Longman, 1992).

GRAHAM GREENE'S MILLIONAIRES

S.K. Sharma

The novels of Graham Greene are popularly known for their exciting action and religio-political themes. Critical attention also has been largely focused on the socio-political and religious dimensions of his work. If one end of the spectrum of Greene criticism is represented by critics like James L. McDonald¹ and V. Ivasheva² whose emphasis is markedly socio-political, the other extreme is represented by critics like Harold C. Gardiner³, Robert A. Wihert⁴, A.J .M. Smith⁵ and Marie-Beatrice Mesnet⁶ whose reading is overtly theological or Catholic. Religion and politics, no doubt, are among Greene's abiding interests as a novelist, but a narrow identification with those twin-obsessions has often led to a relative neglect of Greene's manifold concerns and the rich variety of his work. One must remember that Greene's interest in the religious man, the economic man or the political man is ultimately subsumed into a holistic concern with man. Like D.H. Lawrence, Graham Greene would like to view the novel as a "bright book of life" that touches upon not merely some aspects of living, but the whole man alive. The present paper proposes to rescue from critical oblivion a fairly recurrent figure in Greene – the millionaire – to show how Greene frequently breaks through his major obsessions to come to terms with the biggest modern epidemic – money-mania.

Greene has painted quite a few portraits of the fabulously rich in his novels. These portraits may not be flamboyant or charming, but they are sufficiently interesting to find a place in the gallery of Greene's saints and sinners, priests and policemen, comedians and crooks, pimps and prostitutes, salesmen, clerks, lawyers, journalists, diplomats and double agents. However, Greene's business tycoons and industrial magnates have seldom received the critical attention that they deserve. This neglect is surprising in view of the fact that some of these millionaires are important characters who embody the novelist's profound comments on love and life. There is at least one who is central to the novel in which he figures and even finds a place in the title "Doctor Fischer of

Geneva". These characters, each different from the other, share the common quality of possessing enormous wealth and the influence that goes with it. And yet, they are so alone, insecure and unfulfilled. They alienate sympathy for they symbolise the rampant addiction to money.

Erik Krogh (*England Made Me*) heads the list of Greene's millionaires both in seniority and substance. Krogh is the richest man in Europe. He controls the world of international finance from his office in Stockholm. He presides over a large industrial empire: "Use Krogh's. Krogh's are cheapest and best."⁷ His goods enjoy a vast market. The bronze doors of his office – "the cube of glass and steel" – bear the stamp of his mechanical correctness. His "success" is a tribute to his cold efficiency: "Success: he was quite certain that he deserved it..."(35). A stranger to ethics Krogh measures honesty with figures: "Honesty was a word which had never troubled him: a man was honest so long as his credit was good: and his credit, he could tell himself with pride, stood a point higher than the credit of the French Government. For years he had been able to borrow money at four per cent to lend to the French Government at five. That was honesty – something which could be measured in terms of figures" (35-36). This, of course, is the cool confidence of a man who is at home in the world of money, shares and figures. But his anxious manner occasionally betrays the shallowness of his confidence and success. Completely conditioned by his career Krogh is no longer free. He has to keep up appearances and play his role even when it is uncongenial to his nature. When he was poor, life was harsh and shabby, but it was friendlier and more human. That is why memories of his past life always "left him with a sense of loneliness, of dryness, as if his life now were narrower instead of infinitely enlarged" (46).

Krogh has no eye for beauty, no ear for music and no taste for art or literature: "I don't understand these things" (43). The world is too much with him indeed. He is completely alienated from nature and man. He thinks that he possesses money, but he is more possessed than possessing. Even at the opera, "he sat always in a small wilderness of his own contriving, an empty seat on either

hand" (36). He discovers to his dismay that he can no longer smile or feel; he has simply lost the "amiability, the power of getting on with his fellow men" (48). As a victim of his own success, Krogh is surrounded by himself:

He rose and his coat caught an ash-tray and spun it to the floor. His own initials were exposed, E.K. The monogram had been designed by Sweden's leading artist. E.K. – the same initials endlessly repeated formed the design of the deep carpet he crossed to the door. E.K. in the waiting-rooms, E.K. in the board-room, E.K. in the restaurants; the building was studded with his initials. E.K. in electric lights over the doorway, over the fountain, over the gate of the court. The letters flashed at him like the lights of a semaphore conveying a message over the vast distances which separated him from other men. It was a message of admiration; watching the lights he quite forgot that they had been installed by his own orders. E.K. flickering across the cold plateau a tribute from his shareholders; it was as close as he got to a relationship (37).

Krogh is so alienated that human beings are just not his territory; he belongs to the world of figures: "there was nothing he didn't know about figures, there was nothing he couldn't do with them, there was nothing human about them" (131). Faced with the impending strike at his works he doesn't know how to speak to the workers or their leader, Anderson. He has been so much taken up by finance that his human side has been sadly starved. Conscious of this deficiency, Krogh wonders whether there ever was a time when he was at ease with other men. There are only two characters in the novel who enjoy any closeness to Krogh. One is Hall, his robot-slave, who merely follows Krogh with a dog-like devotion. Krogh's habitual dependence on his secretary-cum-mistress, Kate, does carry some traces of emotion, but even this relationship is doomed to sterility. Kate is more attached to her vagabond brother, Anthony, for whom she has an incestuous attraction. Anthony, consciously contrasted in the novel with Krogh, reveals the horrible extent of Krogh's corruption. If Krogh has touched the very bottom of corruption, there are limits beyond which Anthony would not go: "...he was dishonest, but he was not dishonest enough....There were things he would not do" (11).

Doctor Fischer, our next example of Greene's millionaires, is the central character in *Doctor Fischer of Geneva* (1980). The

famed doctor, who made a fortune with the invention of the Dentophil Bouquet tooth-paste, is as rich as Erik Krogh. He is equally lonely and alienated. He too has no interest in music, men or nature. Like Krogh again, he can't love anyone. The novel opens with this reflection of Alfred Jones, Doctor Fischer's son-in-law: "I think that I used to detest Doctor Fischer more than any other man I have known.... But it was not for his money that I detested Doctor Fischer. I hated him for his pride, his contempt of all the world, and his cruelty. He loved no one, not even his daughter."⁸ But *Doctor Fischer of Geneva* is essentially a study in inordinate greed and its bearing on love and happiness. The novel brings out the vulgarity of cupidity. It shows how greed destroys self-respect. Enormous wealth promotes not love but hatred and disgust. He has already driven his wife, Anna, to death and ruined her friend, Steiner – the poor music buff whose company she liked. He hated his wife because "she preferred his company to mine" (107). He gave fifty thousand francs to that man's employer and had him unceremoniously sacked.

Like Jay Gatsby (*The Great Gatsby*),⁹ Doctor Fischer is also known for his fabulous parties. The novel feature of Doctor Fischer's parties is that the guests are first humiliated and then rewarded. The guests whom Fischer's daughter, Anna Luise, calls "Toads", are all rich. And yet, they ignore the insult and crave for the precious "prizes". So Doctor Fischer rules them "as a man might rule a donkey with a whip in one hand and a carrot in the other" (10). Doctor Fischer got a "very funny and very cruel" book written for children. The book, duly illustrated with cartoons, was called *The Adventures of Mr. Kins in Search of a Dollar*. Mr. Kips, in this book, was shown bent double and "always seeing coins people had dropped on the pavement" (42). Doctor Fischer knows his friends: "All my friends are rich and the rich are the greediest. The rich have no pride except in their possessions. You only have to be careful with the poor" (43).

Life is drained out of purpose for Jones after the death of his wife, Anna in a skiing accident. He tries to commit suicide by drinking twenty aspirins dissolved in whisky. The attempt fails and he is left to devise new ways of escape. A meeting with Doctor Fischer is followed by another invitation to his party. Doctor Fischer

means it to be his last party and calls it the Bomb Party. The absurdity of his life takes Jones to that Absurd Party. Doctor Fischer admits that the greed of his guests "was greater than any humiliation that I had the imagination to invent" (123). The Bomb Party, his last research, is the extreme test of "their" greed. Of the six crackers placed in a bran-tub, five contain cheques of the value of two million francs each. The sixth cracker contains a bomb. Of all the guests, Jones alone is greedy for death and not money. Jones's conduct disturbs Doctor Fischer's world – an alienated one-man-world. So far, the millionaire has been despising others, but now he begins to despise himself. Just then, Steiner, the poor clerk who had an innocent affair with Fischer's wife (shared company, shared love of music), comes to have his revenge. His hate gives way to pity, but the pitiless Doctor Fischer wouldn't be pitied. He kills himself. Jones holds the mirror not only to the "Toads" but also shows up the cracks in Doctor Fischer's creed. The power of money wilts before the power of love. Already conscious of the grievous wrong he had done to his wife, Doctor Fischer now despises himself more than anyone else. He is neither left with any love for money nor life. Unable to bear the humiliation, he puts a bullet into his own head.

Sir Marcus, the owner of Midland Steel in *A Gun for Sale* (1936), is perhaps the most diabolic of Greene's millionaires. Very old and sick, he is one of the richest men in Europe. His skeletal frame has to be propped with air cushions and propelled in Bath chairs. He speaks in a whisper and gives the effect of "having withered inside his clothes like a kernel in a nut."¹⁰ He doesn't smoke; he doesn't drink; he lives on a diet of milk, dry biscuits and hot water. Sir Marcus gets a pacifist Minister of War murdered to promote the sales of Midland Steel. His action precipitates an international crisis that threatens to flare up into a world war. The value of armament shares zooms up. The boom in steel is worth over half a million pounds to Sir Marcus, but he pays only two hundred fifty pounds to Raven, the hired killer, in stolen currency. In fact, old age has made him ruthlessly self-centred: "The deaths he had ordered were no more real to him than the deaths he read about in the newspapers. A little greed (for his milk), a little vice

(occasionally to put his old hand inside a girl's blouse and feel the warmth of life), a little avarice and calculation (half a million against a death), a very small persistent, almost mechanical, sense of self-preservation: these were his only passions" (165). In cool cunning and dark designs, Sir Marcus is as sinister as Muller in *The Human Factor*.¹¹ Sensing trouble from Raven, Sir Marcus visits the Chief Constable, Major Calkin, and asks him to kill rather than catch Raven. When the moment of reckoning comes, money and influence fail to shield Sir Marcus from Raven's bullet. Sir Marcus is betrayed by his own valet who seems to hate "the old bastard" (166). Even Mr. Davis, who owes all his wealth, comfort and authority to Sir Marcus, deserts him: "It's you who've got us into this. I only acted for you" (166). Raven, however, kills both before he is himself shot dead by the police.

If Sir Marcus is the most diabolic, Herbert Dreuther of *Loser Takes All* is the most genial of Greene's millionaires. This whimsical but hearty old man is cultured, courteous and kind. As the Director and shareholder of a prosperous business house, he wields a lot of authority, but he is not alienated like Krogh, Doctor Fischer or Sir Marcus. He is rather interested in people and poetry (Baudelaire is his favourite poet). He has read Racine. The other shareholders in the company are also millionaires, but they dwarf into insignificance in front of Dreuther because they lack his generosity, his human touch. A.N. Bowles, for instance, made his money through a hardness and meanness of spirit. Sir Walter Blixon, who holds shares equal to Dreuther is "small, spotty, undistinguished and consumed with jealousy."¹² How little he cares for rank is obvious from the fact that he was offered knighthood, but he declined it.

Bertram, the ageing assistant accountant, learns this lesson but not before he becomes a millionaire himself. With bitter memories of a broken marriage and an unsuccessful life, things start looking up for Bertram when he falls in love with Cary, a beautiful girl, twenty years younger than him. They are going to be married and have even planned their honeymoon at Bournemouth when the Gom makes Bertram switch his honeymoon to Monte Carlo. At Monte Carlo, curiosity carries Bertram to the Casino where he loses all

his money at the gambling table. Thanks to his flair for figures, after initial losses and long calculations, he is able to invent the system that works. His winnings amount to millions of francs. At one stage he is nearly at the point of buying out all the shareholders in his own firm, when he notices that Cary, his wife, doesn't love him any longer and has decided to marry a hungry-looking young man called Philippe. The Gom hits upon the clever plan of gifting gambling tokens to Philippe. The young man now becomes an avid gambler; like Bertram before him, he becomes oblivious of Cary. Having thus exposed Philippe, Bertram throws away his system and wins back his love. The Gom, however, doesn't approve of Bertram and Cary's romantic rejection of money. Through the Gom, Greene seems to advocate a balanced attitude to money. It is true that money alienates man, but it is equally true that poverty also alienates man.

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RELIGIOUS FAITH AND PRACTICES IN THE NOVELS OF EVELYN WAUGH AND R.K. NARAYAN

Rita Garg

Faith is the core of every religion. This faith, according to both Evelyn Waugh and R.K. Narayan is reposed in God, although He may bear different names in different religions. Except this difference of names, the religious behaviour of both the Christians and the Hindus is essentially similar, the fundamental goal of both the religions being the pursuit of good. Both the novelists see religion in a wide perspective and discuss its dark and bright aspects. Guy Crouchback, the last hero of Evelyn Waugh, comments that all "differences are theological differences"¹ – differences manifested in the superficial outward trappings of organised religions but not basic, or essential. R.K. Narayan's philosophical mouthpiece, Master the *Sanyasi* in *A Tiger for Malgudi*, preaches his tiger what "we must not forget that He may be everything we imagine and more. In *Bhagavad Gita* He reveals Himself in a mighty terrifying form which pervades the whole universe in every form of life and action. Remember also he is within every one of us and we derive our strength from Him...."²

Every aspect of the two writers' religious character is tinged with God's mercy, His omnipresence and blessings. Cordelia in Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* and Jagan in R.K. Narayan's *The Vendor of Sweets* are such characters whose life is dominated by religion, and this makes them moral, firm and simple. The non-religious or irreligious characters are immoral, fashionable and criminal. Evelyn Waugh conveys this impression through some of the members of his 'beaumonde' described in his early novels. Adam Fenwick-Symes, a non-religious person in *Vile Bodies*, sells his girl friend Nina Blount to his rival. She gets married to someone else, but prefers to continue her relationship with Adam Fenwick-Symes as well. Similar is the story of Virginia Troy in *The Sword of Honour* who is not at all repulsed by her relationship with many men. Diametrically opposite to her character is that of Julia in

Brideshead Revisited who is wholly converted to Catholicism and finds it impossible to remarry. The latter, too, develops the same reluctance after his conversion to Catholicism.

Mali in *The Vendor of Sweets* belongs to the tribe of irreligious characters. He returns from America with a half-Korean, half-American girl friend and declares her as his wife, but after the failure of his business scheme, forgets her conveniently and lets her go all alone. In the same way, Ramani in *The Dark Room*, being non-religious, in adulterous and destroys his marital bliss. He is married to Savitri, a religious and God-fearing woman and she saves her domestic life but Shanta Bai, in spite of education, has no one but Ramani with whom her relationship is nothing but adultery. Raju, too, in *The Guide* suffers so much till he really takes to religion and God.

Such is the force of religion that it changes the feelings and emotions of an immoral *Devadasi*, Rangi, in *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*; she decides to take the life of her lover, Vasu, the taxidermist because his plan is to kill the temple elephant. But in conformity with the Hindu belief, God the saviour comes forward and Vasu dies of his own fists struck on the forehead to remove mosquitoes. A devotee of God is saved from perpetrating the horrible crime of Vasu's murder.

Evelyn Waugh's mysticism also runs along these lines. Unfortunately, Paul Pennyfeather, a student of theology in *Decline and Fall*, gets associated with a criminal, Mrs. Beste-Chetwynde, and she wants to marry Paul on the approval of her son who is a student of the latter. But such is the mercy of the Almighty that Paul is arrested and jailed at the last moment. In the same way, Guy Crouchback is also saved by God when he is succumbing to temptations in the company of his once divorced wife Virginia Troy. While the two are in a hotel, they are continuously disturbed by the ringing of the telephone, which helps Guy Crouchback get rid of his momentary weakness. Evelyn Waugh pointedly says in *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* that "God never tempts us beyond our strength...."³

Somehow, life is a rigorous ordeal for the race of religious.

God-fearing and moral beings. Tony Last in *A Handful of Dust* is a religious simple character. Evelyn Waugh comments that Tony's wife Brenda teased him "...whenever she caught him *passing* as an upright, God-fearing gentleman of the old school and Tony saw the joke but this did not at all diminish the pleasure he derived from his weekly routine, or his annoyance when the presence of guests suspended it."⁴ This religious and simple hero is in the habit of loving and believing his wife Brenda Last, but she falls in love with John Beaver. Not only this, her behaviour with her son also is unnatural. John Andrew is religious like his father, but he dies in an accident. Brenda separates from the Lasts. Tony Last cannot tolerate the betrayal and goes in search of a 'City'. His companion dies and he, in a state of delirium, is captured by a barbarian and 'condemned' to read Dickens' novels all his life. He is dead for the world. The family of Crouchbacks in the *The Sword of Honour* is another religious family which faces the ordeal of extermination.

R.K. Narayan's religious characters also face similar loneliness or death. Master in *A Tiger for Malgudi* is a man who had a good family life but mysticism shrouds his life and, like Tony Last, his association with the family becomes impossible. He seeks the company of a tiger and goes to live in a jungle where he passes for a distinguished *sanyasi*. His wife follows him there, but he refuses to go back to the city. He says that she still sees him in his "old shell; inside it's all changed" (148). The society is not suitable for him and the day is not far when time shall be ripe for his *samadhi*. Raju in *The Guide*, too, becomes a real *sanyasi*, and he goes on a long fast, jeopardising his life, for the welfare of mankind and on the last day of the fast sags down. Jagan in the *Vendor of Sweets* is another religious being living in the materialistic world. He is all alone with no one around to understand him. His fellow shopkeepers unite against his business policies which have no scope for profiteering. His son Mali is interested only in his wealth and his wife had died a long time ago. Finally, he has to seek shelter in God. He informs his cousin:

I am going to watch a goddess come out of a stone. If I don't like the place, I will go away somewhere else. I am a free man, I've never felt more determined in my life. I'm happy to have met you now, but I'd have gone

in any case. Everything can go with or without me.⁵

These characters are misfits in their societies where morality and religion lead to a dead-end road with the mockers of death treading upon it. In *The Loved One*, Evelyn Waugh describes the scene of death in America where it is a money-making business; people are emotional about their loved ones and those who run embalming-rooms and crematoria make use of a situation. This full-fledged business runs on the lines of any other business:

'Squadron Leader the Rev. Dennis Barlow begs to announce that he is shortly starting business at 1154 Arbuckle Avenue, Los Angeles, All Nonsectarian services expeditiously conducted at competitive prices. Funerals a speciality. Panegyrics in prose or poetry. Confessions heard in strict confidence.'⁶

These panegyrics are so ludicrous that the whole scene becomes a big joke. One of these is that 'Your little Arthur is thinking of you in heaven today and wagging his tail.' R.K. Narayan, too, is unable to tolerate the fun made of death which is so pious. In *The Financial Expert*, some emotionless cunning people catch hold of the abandoned dead bodies, collect a lot of rent for their burial and thus encash the situation, saying: "An orphan's body, Sir, Have pity, help us to bury him."⁷

Conscious of the spirit of religion as distinct from its outward trappings, Evelyn Waugh depicts sincere as well as dishonest priests. In *Vile Bodies*, the innocent, moral Rector has to pass the whole Christmas week-end in darkness because the immoral beaumonde of Evelyn Waugh is too dominant. In *Brideshead Revisited*, Evelyn Waugh tends to denounce both the non-spiritual sensual tendencies of men and women operating against the sacred bonds of marriage and the hypocrisy of the priests of the organised religion (the Roman Catholic Church) who care more for money than for the spiritual content of their faith. Another hypocritical saint called Guru Brahmin in *The Loved One* is used to excessive drinking of wine and smoking of special cigars which often keep him out of senses and coughing half of the day. His disciple Aimee Thanatagenos is not married by either of her boy friends. So she looks forward to Guru Brahmin for consolation. He, in a state of drunkenness, suggests her to take lift to top floor and jump from there. She blindly follows his advice to meet her end. The episode

reveals not merely the erosion of the spirit of religion in the saints, not merely their vile habits and practices, but also the total and blind ignorance of their followers.

Such corrupt situations, involving astrologers and hypocritical *sanyasis* in their superficially religious attitudes, are also depicted by R.K. Narayan. In *The Financial Expert*, Balu's marriage provides the occasion for such a situation. His greedy father Margayya is very keen to marry his son with the daughter of a very rich planter. The astrologer, consulted on the matter, does not agree with the union. Margayya gets rid of the astrologer without making payment. His friend Dr Pal helps him "find a different astrologer who rearranges the stars of Balu to suit the circumstances" (154). The astrologer is paid seventy five rupees. Besides these astrologers, there are *sanyasis* who can be classified as honest and dishonest, those having genuine religious faith and those without it. In *Mr. Sampath*, Srinivas the selfish, money-minded landlord always pretends to be a *sanyasi*. He says that he is a *sanyasi* and no true *sanyasi* should eat more than once a day, but immediately afterwards saying so he eats the cakes with great relish. He is an excellent example of hypocrisy in religious faith and practice.

In *A Tiger for Malgudi*, the Master is a true *sanyasi*. He tames the tiger, Raja, which could not be controlled by the hunter or the ring leader of a circus. The tiger plays an important role in the life of this *sanyasi* and stays with him till the moment of his *samadhi*. The *sanyasi* does not permit his wife to stay with him in the forest, but the tiger is allowed to stay in order to keep the disturbing crowds away. It is not surprising to read Lady Marchmain's remark to Charles Ryder in *Brideshead Revisited* that animals 'are always doing the oddest things in the lives of the saints' (123).

Blasphemy is another dark aspect which is much ridiculed by both the novelists. In *Decline and Fall*, the college sports are in progress and the bandmaster is not playing any tune other than 'Men of Harleck.' Fagan, the principal, does not like it and he asks the bandmaster to change the tune. But the bandmaster refuses to do so since Margot Beste-Chetwynde is smoking and so it would be blasphemous to play any religious tune. Fagan cannot stop

Margot Beste-Chetwynde but he makes extra payment to the bandmaster who starts playing the tune, "In thy courts no more are needed Sun by day and Moon by night." R.K. Narayan, in *Mr. Sampath*, describes the blasphemous scene of film production. Some people are producing a film on Lord Shiva, but their personal lives are totally unworthy of God's name. The heroine and married Mr. Sampath fall in love and plan to get married.

In addition to blasphemy, deep-rooted superstition also is a blemish which stains the world of religion. In *Brideshead Revisited*, some superstitious beliefs are beyond the understanding of Rex Mottram, a new convert to Roman Catholicism, who asks, "And what about the Pope who made one of his horses a cardinal ? And what about the box you keep in church porch, and if you put in a pound note with someone's name on it, they get sent to hell" (187). Such superstitious practices and beliefs also find place in *The Painter of Signs* by R.K. Narayan. A young lawyer is to start his office and for that he depends on an astrologer who has calculated the auspicious time for it. Also, he directs Raman to paint slanting letters on the board because "a left slant is auspicious for his ruling star which is Saturn." Likewise, Swami, a young boy, in *Swami and Friends*, in his moment of need, prays to God... "to convert the two pebbles into three-pie coins...."⁹

Hypocrisy dominates the religious practices no less than superstitions. Evelyn Waugh in *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* writes that Gilbert Pinfold can commit suicide. "He really doesn't believe in his religion, you know. He just pretends to because he thinks it aristocratic" (101). R.K. Narayan also presents hypocrisy in *The Bachelor of Arts*. He comments: "...as she turned the beads, her lips uttered the holy name of Sri Rama, part of her mind busied itself with thoughts of her husband, home, children and relatives, and her eyes took in the delicate beauty of coconut trees waving against in starlit sky."¹⁰ This middle-aged woman is not calm and quiet enough at heart to concentrate and get relief. Notwithstanding the dominance of hypocritical persons like those described above, there are men who find real consolation in religion because its genuine practice not only relieves the tension-laden heart but also

builds character. The Marchmains in *Brideshead Revisited* have two sons. Bridey, the elder son, is religious and he leads a happy and settled life. His younger brother Sebastian, who is non-religious, becomes a drunkard and leaves his parents' house. Thus one brother finds relief in the religious atmosphere, while the other does not. In *The Bachelor of Arts*, Chandran, who is running away in desperation, is relieved and consoled at "Kapaleeswara temple... against the morning sky" (104).

As the foregoing illustrations from Evelyn Waugh and R.K. Narayan indicate, genuine religious faith which imports concord and happiness into the life of man is no less important than political belief which brings national freedom. The world without genuine religious faith and spirituality will be a world of citizens with unfulfilled desires staring them in the face as ghosts and spirits. Rex Mottram in *Brideshead Revisited* believes if the Pope speaks of the clouds raining and there is no rain, his speech implies a 'sort of raining spiritually' (185). This spiritual rain is visualised by Raju in *The Guide*. He says, "Velan, its raining on the hills. I can feel it coming up under my feet, up my legs."¹¹

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AUDEN'S JUVENILIA

S. Padmini

Though the problems of freedom and necessity, thought and sensuousness are predominantly present in Auden's poetry of every phase, few readers would today share this view and deny the significance of the religious and intellectual concerns that disturbed the juvenile Auden, his imitative but anxious poems of the "pre-pubescent" period. Auden's poetic career demonstrates that his later poetry is simply a fulfilment of his earlier beliefs. He feels the ardours quivering there:

Spring with its thrusting leaves and jargling birds is here again to remind me again of the first real Event, the first genuine Accident, of that Once when, once a tiny corner of the cosmos had turned indulgent enough to give it a sporting chance, some Original Substance, immortal and self-sufficient....

(Collected Poems 659)

While his juvenile verses anticipate the later, his later poems also offer an insight into the earlier.

Dying into life, dissolving one's self to attain to a higher and richer plane of existence is a persistent motif in the early phase and in the later poetry and is implicit even in the middle phase. Auden's later poetry is "the form" that his juvenilia has "blindly, fitfully glassed," "the finish" of his "bright vow." Day Lewis, while pointing out the young Auden's different nature and his needs, portrays him: "As a child setting out to colour a black-and-white picture book, / A priest entering into the spirit of dead ceremonial..." (*Collected Poems* 314).

Moreover, Auden's early verses show an equal sensitiveness to sound, and especially to the co-operation and contrast of sound and silence. He recalls:

Aesthetic trills I'd never heard before
Rose from the strings, shrill poses from the cor;
The woodwind chattered like a pre-war Russian,
'Art' boomed the brass, and 'Life' thumped the percussion.

(The English Auden 194)

The juvenile poems of Auden are too conventional to evoke any significant experience.

The sight of an actual woman at the public school may have

been the immediate occasion of his school verse, "Woods in Rain", contained in *Public School Verse* for 1923-24. The memory of the verses of Thomas Hardy and Edward Thomas, "the sun" and "the rain," continued to haunt the boyish mind of Auden:

While trees shake hands as grave and slow
As two old men I used to know,
And hold out smiling boughs to find
Whence comes this sweetest breath of wind.
But now the sun has come again
And he has chased away the rain.
The rain has gone beyond the hill
But leaves are talking of it still. (44)

In the Wessex poems Hardy conveys, with much greater formal discipline, his agony and blisses induced by love. The burden of Edward Thomas's poem, "Sedge Warblers," is the poet's loss of freedom: the passion, of which he feels himself a helpless victim, obliterates all other sights and sense-perceptions. Auden's juvenile verse is "talking of these identical developments in rhythm, in "aesthetic trills", and in the use of antithetical balance.

Auden's next verse "Allendale" recalls, with an added touch of irony, the poetic manner of Hardy and Thomas: "So under it stand we, all swept by the rain and the wind there... (*New Verse* 5). In "Allendale," a conventional dream-world is built up by a series of images borrowed from Edward Thomas, Hardy, and Walter de la Mare: "the smelting-mill stack...crumbling," "the fell-folds... desolate, crag-scarred," "the chimney still...at the top of the hill." Light, colour, and music fill Auden's universe which is immune from Thomas's "earth-turns," Hardy's "world face" and de la Mare's "Nature thither." He looks for:

What look you for, creatures that die in a season?
We care not, but turn to our dreams and the comfort we find there,
Asking no reason. (New Verse 5)

Auden's early reflective lyrical poem "The Carter's Funeral" is imitative in both substance and manner of de la Mare's homiletic poem *Motley and other poems*. It repeats the generality that life on earth is a dream and that death or extinction of personality is an awakening into reality:

Little enough stays musing upon
The passing of one of the masters of things,

Only a bird looks peak-faced on,
Looks and sings.

(New Verse 5)

This is in sharp contrast with Hardy's usual attitude to life besides it anticipates the pursuit of myth and reality, "pilgrimage as pain," and death-in-life paradox that is recurrent in Auden's poetry.

Auden's juvenile poems, included in Isherwood's autobiographical novel *Lions and Shadows* (186-88), indicate duality in his response to his contemporaries' verses. His reading of the poems of his contemporaries and of Robert Frost were two important events in the development of his poetic mind. There was an awareness, however inadequate, which was in contrast with the reverie of his contemporaries: Rex Warner, Day Lewis, Stephen Spender and Louis MacNeice. It is his contemporaries' poems of personal pattern and romantic vision that led him to intellectual concerns resulting in moral earnestness and seriousness of purpose.

What is emphasized in Day Lewis's poem *Beechen Vigil* and *Other Poems* and Warner's "Spring Song" is not "overshadowing sorrow," "dark looming," but sorrow distilled into a pleasurable sensation. Spender's "Ovation to Spring," and MacNeice's poems "The Creditor" and "Trains in the Distance" affirm that the human mind is capable of absorbing and transcending suffering. "The Traction Engine," the earliest of Auden's known poems, is a record of his reaction to Day Lewis's *Beechen Vigil*. The sensory details in Day Lewis's description reveal his absorption in the voluptuous beauty and the mythological pattern of Warner.

Auden's poem "The Engine House" defines Spender's response to the challenging communication problems of the day. D. H. Lawrence's lyrics, *Look We Have Come Through*, stimulated Spender to form his liberal views in politics and freedom of thought. "The Engine House" shows, however, that Spender's concern is more with spiritual freedom:

He turned the wheel;
The flapping of the driving-belt increased
And the hum grew shriller. He wiped a steel
Rail with a lump of waste. "And now," he said,
"I'll show you the slimes -house and the vaning shed -
This way."

(186-87)

The poem is seen as a symbolic counterpart of the liberated self, "a hungry fledgling's cry" (188), withdrawing itself from an oppressive environment.

The poem "Rain" is conceptually related to MacNeice's poems. But if despondency is the predominant note, the poem also shows MacNeice's grasp at hope. He seeks assurance and inspiration in the rich poetic heritage of Robert Graves and Frost, in the verbal music created by his contemporaries, Auden, Spender, Day Lewis and Warner:

...yet for this brief hour or so
I am content, unthinking and aglow,
Made one with horses and with workmen.... (Lions)

"Rain" becomes for him a cherished symbol disclosing his craving for the felicities of a dream-world: "this careless striding through the clinging grass...."

The poem "The Rookery" is thematically close to Warner's poem, but here Auden strikes a deeper note. It posits an ideal world beyond "past sick memory," "imperfect body and imperfect mind." Auden builds up Warner's private world made of dream, memory and beautiful objects connected with the plane of actual experience:

...but no one dreamed
That aught was wrong until we came downstairs
And looked, as we had done these many years,
At the huge wall of elms that flanked the lawn
And shouted every time a wind was born. (Lions)

The lines, while recalling the typically fanciful image of Browning's Childe Roland, convey the genuine aesthetic sensibility of Warner.

The young Auden, on the whole, tried to interpret the human self of his contemporaries from a different perspective. The way he integrates a dream vision into literary tradition and nature and assimilates them into his personal consciousness is best exemplified in these juvenile verses. He could "lay bare"

...that primitive mural
Whereon I am superimposed,
What boldness of line and colour, what pure quaint moral
Emblems might be disclosed! (Day Lewis 248)

Auden's juvenilia shows a controlling rule and energy that transforms sentimental luxury into a genuine experience and gives a foretaste

of his maturer manner. Moreover, he initiates his modernity by writing verses of conversational and parabolic tones as opposed to the romantic lyricism of his contemporaries. Suffering is what is avoided in his contemporaries' dream of perfectibility, suffering that de la Mare chose voluntarily as an act of purification, suffering that the juvenile Auden understood as essential for the sake of reconstruction and illumination. "Their tops still glittering from last night's rain" (*Lions*).

An interpretive study of Auden's juvenilia, thus, suggests an existentialistic feeling that is almost religious. It is natural that such a religious sensibility would respond only to serious poetry, to the existential poetry of de la Mare. Auden acknowledges:

When pre-pubescent I felt
that moorlands and woodlands were sacred:
people seemed rather profane. (*Collected Poems* 671)

The writings of the juvenile and the later Auden might appear to some critics as the works of two different men (Nelson 145), but it is worth noting that the common point between the two phases is Auden's quest for meaning and purpose in life as well as his search after the possibilities of poet's happiness. Although Auden makes a genuine break with his juvenile verses to reach out into a new, complex vision and idiom, he wrestles with the basic issues of free-will and determinism, the Christian myths or "Nature's grammar" and the "rival myths of Being," and this recurrence of historical love in contrast with the selfish or false love shows both growth and continuity.

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CULTURAL CONFLICT IN THE NOVELS OF MARGARET ATWOOD

Mithilesh K. Pandey

Margaret Atwood has been regarded as one of the prominent pioneers in the history of Canadian literature who has tried very hard over the past few decades to demonstrate man's right to exist. In most of her novels, she problematised the whole history of Canadian Literature, from the resolute denials of its existence to the determined assertion of its distinctive growth. It is obvious that Canadian writers living in a specific geographical boundaries work under specific socio-political, historical and cultural conditions of the land but they articulate sharable human concerns and situations, while responding to their 'situative anxiety' and 'situative tendencies.' However, the ambience and milieu of the land co-mingles with the creative urge of its people before shaping the contours of its literature and Atwood is not an exception. As a representative novelist of the contemporary world, she is aware of the real problems facing Canadians. She vigorously exhorts her countrymen to abandon their collective inferiority complex and to face their problem of a divided culture realistically and prudently.

Most of Atwood significant novels deal with the idea of colonial consciousness as well as cultural conflict of the Canadian people. As a versatile genius, Atwood explores the various interrelated physical, psychological and social anxieties of the people who invariably belong to the land of Canada. In a similar spirit, in her poems, she finds out an understanding of the present through the mirror of the past, transforming a historical pioneer into an icon of Canadian consciousness: "We are all immigrants to this place, even if we were born here."² As a consequence, these complex pressures add to the psychic burden of the nation and make Canadians "conscious of their marginality to the centre."³ Therefore, due to the cultural anxiety and self-division, they consciously think of themselves either as "separatists" in their struggle for identity or as "shares" of the global human values.

However, Atwood in her novels exposes one of the many

contradictions in the Western cultural of femininity. In the English tradition, women are often criticised and punished for the sin of narcissism, for loving their own images and selves above all especially males. Atwood in her fiction challenges this traditional image of women presented by patriarchy. In *Lady Oracle*, mirrors symbolise not the moral and psychological limitations of the female protagonist, but rather the crippling emphasis the society places on the female images as a consumer item. The novelist reveals in the novel that the mirror, long a literary symbol of female narcissism and childish self-absorption, more truly reflects a culture where women are objectified and packaged for the consumer society. She attacks romantic fiction which is one of patriarchy's primary tools for indoctrinating women into the religion of beauty and promising them the happy ending of inclusion into society if only they learn to be beautiful, slim, tender with an estate and if they learn to market themselves properly.

In *Lady Oracle*, Joan Foster, the female protagonist, is big and fat at the age of merely nineteen. At school she is asked to do a teddy bear dance, not the butterfly dance. Her mother advises her to purchase garments that would make her less conspicuous. Joan Foster does not want to hide her body, she deliberately buys peculiar, offensive and violently coloured dresses which she gets only in maternity shops. Her mother always quarrels with her and the dispute is only on the territory of her body. It is obvious that Atwood challenges the customary positions of women as mother, wives and mistresses, and tries to liberate them from their usual associations in a discourse inscribing hierarchy and possession.

While it is true that Atwood is mainly concerned with deconstructing gender-politics in *The Edible Woman* as in other novels, she does not adopt an extremist stance as a feminist and hold men alone responsible for the subjugation and inferiorisation of women. According to Atwood, as obvious in *The Edible Woman*, woman like Marian are responsible for perpetuating gender-related inequity in allowing themselves to be colonised and exploited. As Linda Hutcheon scholarly remarks, "As both a Canadian and a woman, she protests any tendency toward easy passivity and

naivety; she refuses to allow either Canadians or women to deny their complicity in the power structures that may subject them."⁴ Marian, for instance, did not want to adopt the posture of powerlessness. It is her passivity and naivety that allow others to subjugate her. She would rather be dictated than to assert her independent will. When Peter proposes to marry her, she sees him as "a rescuer from chaos, a provider of stability."⁵ The marriage of Marian with Peter, thus, implies having some one who would always make decisions for her. She tells about her dependence-complex quite clearly to Peter that she would like to leave the big decisions on him. Moreover, Peter's imperialistic designs and Marian's self-willed subservience are both condemnable. Therefore, in Atwood's exposition of gender-politics, woman is as much implicated in the processes that perpetuate male hegemony as is man. Not only this but in the novel *Bodily Harm*, the Rennie Wilford also realises towards the end of the book, "Nobody is exempt from anything."⁶

Atwood's conflict in her fiction, however, is not only to expose women's complicity in the processes that lead to her victimisation. She wants, rather, to explore the possible ties of combating patriarchal structures of power and domination that refuse female's equal claims as an individual in society. In *The Edible Woman*, for instance, she de-constructs Marian's fictional journey from an adopted posture of self-negation and self-effacement towards one of self-certitude and self-assertion. Therefore, in the introduction to the novel, Alan Dawe pertinently comments that "*The Edible Woman* is a novel about choices."⁷ According to him, Marian can either be the "scheming super female" like Ainsley or she can be like Clara, the earth-mother and like the "office virgins." But these alternatives are, however, not acceptable to Marian. In fact, Atwood implicitly makes out a case against each of these possible alternatives by quite consciously making them out to be unsocial (Ainsley), undesirable (Clara) and unwise (the office virgins). As Coomi Vevaina observes, Atwood is "neither a hard-core feminist nor an anti-feminist but a clear-sighted humanist."⁸ Keeping in mind the Canadian culture, she can, therefore, neither accept the radical and extremist feminist attitude of Ainsley nor the submissive-earth-

mother stance of Clara. The office virgins, on the other hand, represent a kind of opportunism that is self-destructive and counter-productive. If it is the nature of Atwood's heroines, they must obstinately search for another and a more acceptable alternative.

But Marian, the representative of modern Canadian female culture, hadn't made any decisions whatever she could feel; she was only about to make one. In the novel, what she eventually decides to do is to bake a cake in the shape of woman and offer it as a woman-substitute to Peter to eat in an apparently ritualistic manner. Hence, she tells to the fully confounded Peter: "You've been trying to assimilate me. But I've made a substitute, something you'll like much better. This is what you wanted all along, isn't it?" (*The Edible Woman*, p. 271). However, this symbolic ritual is suggestive of Marian's release from what George Woodcock calls "emotional cannibalism."⁹ And it also appears that the novelist has forced *The Edible Woman* to an overtly ritualistic close to achieve a 'climactic' finish in the style of traditional romance. Apart from this, in her recent book, *Cat's Eye*, Atwood's preoccupation with deconstructing the dialects of male-female binary opposition and examining hegemonic structures of power and domination issuing within interpersonal relationships remains constant and unmitigated. Her universe, of course, becomes progressively more wide and elaborate but she does not "become essentially different."¹⁰

However, it has become obvious that most of the novels of Atwood are replete with the theme of victimisation and survival, the part of cultural life of Canada, and with problems that are not just national concerns but are also the social, political and traditional issues that will determine the survival of their country. Though as a woman writer, she draws our attention deliberately towards the issues of suffering and survival as conditions both the Canadian experience and female experience. She also finds a similarity between the status of Canada and of woman when she tells, "I have always seen Canadian nationalism and the concern for woman's rights as part of a larger, non-exclusive picture."¹¹ As a novelist, Atwood discovers the anomalies of Canadian civilisation in which women are not allowed to make any strategy of grabbing the male

space.

In the long run, Canadian literature took decades of struggle and persistent efforts to come into visibility in stages and was first recognised politically as an area to enquire into the value systems of the land or to study the distinctive features of cultural nationalism. If the problems of culture and belief created a cultural self-consciousness in Canada on the one hand, they paved the way for a synthetic and holistic thinking on the other. As a consequence, Canadian literature, according to Margaret Atwood, has come to acquire the advantage of plurality of voices contending to be free from the dying traditions. Further, its cultural polarity between Anglo-phones and Franco-phones and between multi-racial global communities settled there besides the native population of Canada, creates a unique "mosaic culture" of unprecedented diversity. And really it is Atwood, who, by her own creative writings in Canada, endeavours to project the "total cultural renewal" standing in perfect harmony with Frye's theory of "cultural revolution" and advancing firmly towards transcultural, global preoccupations.

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POST-COLONIALISM AND TEXTUALITY: A CRITIQUE OF THREE INDIAN ENGLISH NOVELS

O.P. Budholla

Post-colonialism or Post-colonial discourse is a recent movement of thought or literary theory that deals mainly with the effects of colonization on the culture and thoughts of the colonized societies. After the Second World War, the historians used the term to denote the former European colonies as the post-colonial states. Gayatri Spivak, in her collection of interviews which were published in 1990, first used the term post-colonial, although Ashcroft had used this term long before it was coined by Spivak. The term was extended to signify extensively the political, linguistic, and cultural effects on the former European colonies. In short, the post-colonial studies in literature characterize the nature and impact of inherited power relations between the colonizer and the colonized people, and their persistent effects on modern global culture, historiography and social and political system of a nation.

Post-colonialism or Post-modernism in literature forces out symbolically the reactions of a nation against the colonizing forces after its independence. The interviews and the theoretical writing of Jacques Lacan, Michael Foucault and Edward Said, published as texts, brought this term to be applied extensively to post-modern literatures. Post-colonial theory decodes the hidden myth of sub-text within the text. Post-colonial theorists like Homi K. Bhabha, Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak, Ranjit Guha and Ania Loomba analyse the effects of such texts. They also work on to decolonize the Euro-centric textuality in their theoretical principles.

The colonial rule brought into being the concept of binarism, and also brought some radical effects on the colonized society. The theory of binarism makes a combination of two things together, i.e. the relations between the colonizer and the colonized subjects. In Post-colonial literature, the binary entails a violent hierarchy of the domination of the one over the other. It is, in fact, a transcultural process with some definitive effects on the colonized society. As

post-colonial writers strive to accomplish their own identity, they use the indigenous myths and images in their writings. They generally avoid to imitate the style and language of the former colonizer, but they try to develop the pattern of their own English, which is known as 'english' or 'englishes'. This paper is restricted to analysing the texts of three contemporary novels in relation to post-colonial discourse: *Bye-Bye, Black bird* by Anita Desai, *The City and the River* by Arun Joshi and *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy.

Bye-Bye, Blackbird deals with the psychological trauma of exiles. In post-colonial literatures, the concept of exile involves the idea of a separation or distancing from literal homeland or a cultural and ethnic origin. Adit and Dev are two exiles of Indian origin. Adit materializes his dream when he finds a suitable job and an English wife, Sarah, in England. Dev comes to England in order to be "an England-retained teacher" in his homeland—an unconscious desire that reflects Dev's colonial consciousness. Adit has become used to the manner and method of his former colonizer, England, and hardly notices "the few drawbacks".¹ Sarah is the third character who as a European lady fulfils her identical question of womanhood with a blackbird of Indian origin, Adit. She transcends the barriers of nation, race, ethnicity, culture and her inhibition as a European lady. She becomes "a lost maiden" but earns a name as a wife. The society of England as a former colonizer works on the living entity for revealing the inner changes in Adit and Dev. The theme of ambivalence, the cognitive process of the minds, and the inner analysis of Dev and Adit exhibit the cultural and educational superiority of the former colonizer. Adit as an exile in England feels happy and contented. England too as an organic entity lets Adit to avail every opportunity for his future existence. But Desai knows the inside and the inhibitive mode of Adit; she makes him recall his quest for identity. Adit is informed through newspaper about the war between India and Pakistan. As a resident of West Bengal, he remembers gruesome blood-shed during the partition of India. The news of war stirs the inner fibres of his mind. Before coming to India, the novelist awakens in him the slumbering desire for nativism. The theoretical norms of nativism make one desirous for returning to

indigenous practice and cultural aspects as they existed in pre-colonial society. The term nativism is frequently used to refer to the rhetoric of decolonization which argues that colonialism must be replaced by the recovery and promotion of pre-colonial, indigenous ways. Standing on the bridge of the river Test, Adit becomes oblivious of his place and recollects the glorious past of India and seriously thinks of coming back to India. Sarah is surprised as how Adit "had kept this amount of yearning shut up and enclosed inside him" (184). The long repressed desires of unconscious mind are now being released like "a dam that releases its water when it is full to bursting" (184). The lucrative opportunity mashes Adit to suppress continuously the call of his conscience. The incessant suppression of his conscience breeds a habit in him to endure "occasional slights and insults directed against him" (184) in England. The breaking of war simply enkindles his latent and slumbering desires of the unconscious mind for seeking his 'self' in his own native land.

Sarah is yet another character who fulfils her existence as a European lady. Her marriage with Adit also decolonizes the colonial concept of gender inequality and racial superiority. Ania Loomba analyses the gender and racial discriminations which become an apt example for the identity of Sarah :

The sexuality of blackmen, and especially that of black women becomes an icon for deviant sexuality in general. Thus black women are constructed in terms of animals, lesbians and prostitutes; conversely, the deviant sexuality of white women is understood by analogies with blackness.²

Momentarily, Sarah thinks of evading her domestic responsibilities, as she feels her European identity receding and fading in following her husband to India. In fact, her Englishness becomes an inherent and integral part of her identity. She finally agrees to the proposal of Adit : "English, she whispered, and then her instinctive reaction was to clutch at something through her fingers already" (221).

Arun Joshi in his last novel *The City and the River* (1994) presents such a political ideology which decolonizes the concept of the ruler and the ruled and the elites and the common people of the city. The novel through its chosen pattern analyses two contrary aspects: The Seven Hills elites of the administration and

the mud-huts populace. The Seven Hills group consists of Grand Master as a ruler, his adviser, The Astrologer, The Minister of Trade and the Commissioner of Education. The other thread of the story includes a group of common people like Bhumi Putra known as Master Bhoma, Professor, Dharma, a Police Inspector, the Head Boatman who is a lady and other boatmen. Representing the mud-huts area of the city, this group symbolizes the concept of *Dalits* or *subaltern* in the words of Gayatri Spivak. The concept of subaltern, according to Spivak, includes "men and women among the illiterate peasantry, the tribals, the lowest strata of the urban sub-proletariat."³ In a word, subaltern refers to the oppressed and the marginalized group of people. The city in *The City and the River* symbolizes the colonial consciousness through the autocratic rule of the Grand Master. The suppressive and oppressive policies of the Grand Master against the boatmen as *Dalits* of society make them insurgents. The Head boatman as a lady brings into focus the equal share of women in the political affairs. The Head boatman with the help of intellectuals like Master Bhoma, Professor and the Hermit rebels against "the laws of dragnet" which were enacted by the Grand Master for suppressing the rebellion of the boatmen.

The Seven Hills of the city are symbolic and suggestive of egoism, corruption and social disparities; they also lay open the snobbery and hypocrisy of the so-called high society. The Hermit was deeply shocked by seeing the monstrous egotism that lies behind the buildings of the pyramids, "for years the Hermit had wandered the world in agony wondering if his beloved city was destined to be nothing better than the foot stool of one *asuric* ruler after another."¹¹ The dream of Grand Master becomes symbolic of loosing his kingdom by the united powers of the boatmen, for his dream unfolds the secret that the future king would appear from the river. The river as the mother of boatmen becomes symbolic of boatmen's rebellion. The river as mother also symbolizes the feminine power (*narishakti*) – a power that was more especially marginalized and exploited by the European colonizers in this country. Thus, the river as mother and as an instrumental cause justifies the efficacy of *karma*. Bhoma's deeprootedness to the

loyalty of the river as mother makes him shelter in the waters of the river. He thinks of an objective *reality* and realizes the colonial consciousness in the oppressive and suppressive laws of the Grand Master.

If the Seven Hills of the city symbolizes the post-colonial perspectives, the movement of the river too symbolizes the collective consciousness of the common people (Dalit chetna or "subaltern consciousness") Thus, the Hermit sees an unusual "movement" (227) in the river. Master Bhoma observes an ethnic relationship between the boatmen and the river:

Boatmen are children of the river, they have learnt more from her than meets the eye. Each moment the river dies and each moment she is reborn. Death is certain for all and here is reason to die. (228)

The ethnic relationship with the river as mother beyond memory makes the boatmen to celebrate the festival of the river every year; but the Grand Master restrains them from their fundamental rights. For supporting the cause of rebellion, ethnic relations of boatmen with the river can be defined in the context of post-colonialism:

A group that is socially distinguished or set apart, by others and/or by itself, primarily on the basis of cultural or national characteristics.⁴

The ethnicity of the boatmen symbolizes their cultural unity or national consciousness. Thus, the suppression of their traditional rites becomes symbolic of the suppression of their cultural or national identity. Therefore, even the massacre of two hundred boatmen during the festival of river by the brutal force of the Grand Master does not deter them from waging war against the king. Even the Hermit advises them that they should not think of the future king. The chief objective before them should be to fight "the falsehood at its very roots" (112). To achieve the real freedom is to understand the genuine cause or the real existence of life. So, they decide to

let the boatmen fight it in *their ancient way*. The beast we now face is deaf and dumb and blind and is set on a single purpose; the Astrologer's Oath. The king that was naked is naked still. Death, I say, is preferable to surrender to this king. (208)

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997) is a remarkable novel for two aspects: the reflection of colonial consciousness and revealing a feminine question for identity. Ammu, as a wife of drunkard deputy manager poses a dilemma of feminine sensibility

to an extent that it brings forth the colonial perspectives of society. Gayatri Spivak in the text of her paper, *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, analyses the question of female subaltern, whom she describes as doubly marginalized subjects in colonial/post-colonial discourse:

Within the effaced itinerary of the Subaltern subject, the track of sexual difference is doubly effected.... It is rather, that, both as object of colonialist historiography and as subject of insurgency, the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant. If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the female as female is even more deeply in shadow.⁵

The insurgency of four characters – Ammu, Velutha, Rahel and Estha--against their social norms is dealt skilfully with the subaltern consciousness in *The God of Small Things*. Ammu as a wife of drunkard deputy manager realizes just after her marriage "the slightly feverish glitter in her bridegroom's eyes."⁶ Mr. Hollick, the Manager of Tea State, acknowledges the fortunes of his deputy manager: "you're lucky man, you know, wonderful family, beautiful children, such an attractive wife.... An *extremely attractive* wife" (41-2). Mr. Hollick, having already fathered many children illicitly, wishes that Ammu should be sent "to his bungalow to be looked after" (42).

Gayatri Spivak's statement quoted in the text of this paper for female subaltern as "doubly effected" in colonial literatures comes true with reference to Ammu's life. Ammu as a wife of drunkard deputy manager resists against her husband's whims to be offered as a "gift" to Mr. Hollick, and also she fights for feminine sensibility in her own family. After this incident, she divorces her husband and comes back an unwelcomed guest to her parents in Ayemenen. She reports Pappachi about this incident, but he does not believe her story "not because he thought well of her husband, but simply because he didn't believe that an Englishman, *any English man*, would covet another man's wife" (42). Thus, Hollick's demand for Ammu's body presents an example of "otherness" in post-colonial literature.

As a divorcee, Ammu's quest for her feminine sensibility transcends the barriers of caste and social inequality. Ammu is at least the master of her body. She destines to "set aside temporarily

the morality of motherhood and divorcehood"(44). Once, she evades the call of her body and refuses to give herself to Mr. Hollick, but now she realizes a flow of life-force that emanates from her body. The chapter entitled "God of Small Things" becomes an example of some perversions in Ammu when she treats her children with cruelty:

She wanted her body back. It was hers. She shrugged her children off the way a bitch shrugs off her pups when she's had enough of them. (222)

The chapter named "The Cost of Living" shows Ammu's consummation with an untouchable, Velutha, in a dream. Both of them understand the meaninglessness of life, for "they had nothing. No future. So, they stick to small things"(338). Velutha thus symbolizes the form of God to these small things. This change in social values through Ammu and Velutha invites a fine parallel with Amrit Lal Nagar's *Nachyo Bahut Gopal* wherein the reader is told some points of view for social change through the character of Nirgunia, a high caste married woman. Her mismatched marriage with an old man makes her rebel against her social norms, and she runs away with a sweeper just to fulfil her libidinal call and the search for her unfulfilled womanhood.

The textual analysis put forth in this paper in relation to post-colonialism unfolds the following aspects of it: the revelation of transculturation and 'a phenomenon of the contact zone'; the question of identity and the subaltern consciousness, especially the feminine sensibility; and the anti-colonial national movement against the textual perspectivism. There still remains a hope for the creation of more and more indigenous texts for decolonizing the colonizer/colonized relationships.

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**RE-ORGANIZING THE LIVES OF WOMEN:
TONI MORRISON'S *BELOVED* AND ALICE WALKER'S
*THE COLOR PURPLE***

M. Adhikari

Traditionally, women's lives have been organized and manipulated by patriarchy in all ages, all cultures and all countries by establishing values, norms roles, gender perceptions, and idealism that prescribes unequal means, methods and routes to achieve the so called 'wholeness' for women. It is uniformly believed that motherhood and wifehood are the dual crowns of womanhood and man has defined it in unequivocal terms. The images based on social conditions of women drawn by male writers are either idealized versions close to angles of monstrous in their essence permitting no moderate pictures real but different from the extreme. What patriarchy demands of woman is very different from what women demand of women. The history gives his story and not her story. Adrienne Rich emphasizes the absurdity of the situation by pointing out that though motherhood is the experience of women, the institution of motherhood is under male control and the physical situation of becoming a mother is disciplined by males (!). This glorious motherhood imposed on woman conditions her entire life.¹ Ironically, the experience unique to women is interpreted for them through male authorities and structures, through religions, myths, science, politics, economics.² And when women begin to interpret and articulate their experience, they are condemned as reactionaries out to destabilize society. This revolt of women never goes unpunished.

Initially, women writers realising that they must narrate their stories or others would do it incorrectly, were interested in determining and picturizing the lives of women 'as they have been living, as they live and as they are led to imagine themselves' but now they seem to be concentrating on 'how women can live afresh.'³ This revised version of woman's world through a fictional text, I term as a re-organization of woman's life. The defeat of a spirited woman, by 'a return to the fold' or release through 'self-slaughter' is no longer the point of reflection, distillation, organization or imagination. In

extreme conditions, her death is turned into an act of victory as we find in Jean Rys's *Sargasso Sea* or Toni Morrison's *Sula*. Often it is a progressively winning situation wherein the female protagonist in her search of wholeness, identity, fulfillment recreates her world on novel terms. Toni Morrison in *Beloved* and Alice Walker in *The Color Purple* design the lifestyle of their protagonist as initially, fragmented, disorganised but ultimately whole and organised. Different, significant and apparently insignificant situations are created to establish the process of self-encounter that finally brings about the metamorphosis. The analysis of the entire exercise is interesting.

I

The Color Purple is the story of a girl Celie who ultimately manages to overturn the conventional definition of good and evil in relation to women by emphasizing that she exists primarily as and for herself and not merely, to be a mother or the lover of man. Celie begins her life as a physically and psychologically oppressed young girl raped by her step-father, and later becomes the wife of Mr. A, a widower with three children and a beautiful mistress Shug Avery who also continues to exploit her in different ways. In short, she is born to be the 'mule' of the family. From near complete degeneration, she fights against sexist and racist definitions of herself and enables the other women to realise that the entire black community's attitude towards women need to be revised and revealed. The interesting point of the novel is Celie's process of regeneration that begins with an overt exploration of sexual relationships with Shug Avery, friendly and at times not so friendly, but definitely constructive.

Celie as a woman 'muted and silenced' by society/patriarchy/step-father can write to God only and speak to none else. She can no longer consider herself to be a 'good girl.'⁴ She is forced to none become a 'girl-woman.' Her experiences as a daughter are not happy. The dying mother had died 'screaming and cursing' (p.3) her because she is 'big' with the child in her womb. Soon after she is married to the grudging Mr. A who ultimately marries her because she is a good worker, he can do anything with her and she has a cow to take as a part of the dowry (p.12).

She is turned onto a slave. Her step-children bully her, her husband beats her because 'she my wife. Plus she stubborn. All women good for...' (p.23). Her sister advises her to fight, 'You got to fight' (p.18) but 'I don't know how to fight. All I know how to do is stay alive' (p.18), says Celie. Alice Walker through an intricate design of the plot reveals repeatedly Celie's desperate condition. It is also the traditional picture of women performing the roles of daughter, wife and mother. In fact, a woman is equated more with animals than with humans. She is crippled by a sense of 'inferiorization'⁵ 'non-entity' and of 'guilt.' Celie considers herself to be useless in everyway because she is 'ugly' (p.48). A woman's appraisal in terms of physical beauty is an ancient tradition accepted and followed till today. Walker picturises the inadequacies of women, viewed by men, from different angles. Celie is unable to fight the world and reorganizes her life because her personal experience has not yet translated itself into self-conscious self-encounters. Being unaware of the inherent creative power of women she is made to act as a stereotyped female. She had suffered in life and thus is happy when her husband asks Harpo to let Sophie know their daughter-in-law 'who got the upper hand. Nothing can do that better than good sound beating' (p.37).

Celie's process of rehabilitation begins with the arrival of Shug Avery, her arch-rival, and Mr. A's mistress. Walker gives an interesting twist to the story by indicating that the 'other' woman, can really be the enemy of the wife as is traditionally portrayed in the fiction of male writers. A woman of that class does not fragment but recreates from the decimated element. In *The Color Celie's* liberation begins with the help of three strong women of the community: Shug, Nettie (Celie's sister) and Sophie. The motif of liberation through one's sisters is to be found in Shange's *Sassafras*, Morrison's *beloved*, Andre Lorde's *Zami* and many other novels written by Afro-American female writers. Walker insists on the possibility of black women's empowerment through a community of sisters.

Sophie acts as a catalyst for Celie's transformation. Despite all odds, she refuses to succumb before Harpo's beating. In fact, she stands alone to pay him back. Celie the weak woman cannot but admire her and it is from her daughter-in-law she learns the

language of revolt, and successful resistance. Later Sophie comes to know about her plight and advises her, "You ought to bash Mr. —" (p.44). If Sophie provides the atmosphere for the restructuring of Celie's life, it is Shug Avery who finally teaches her to become psychologically and financially independent. Shug's gracious act of dedicating one of her songs to Celie as 'Miss celie's song' enables Celie to appreciate her worth. 'First time somebody made something and named it after me' (p.77). Shug continues with the process of mending Celie by making her love herself. Walker suggests clearly that a woman should learn to respect the 'self' before she can demand respect from others. Shug teaches her to sew pants and wear them too and finally comes a stage when Celie convincingly asserts before Mr. A: 'I'm pore. I'm black. I may be ugly and can't cook, a voice say to everything listening. But I'm here' (p. 214, emphasis added). She, at this point, has reorganized her life, achieved economic liberty and gathered the knowledge of meaningful things and relationships to create a new Celie. Walker takes us through different stages of Celie's life to pinpoint the various factors that finally recreate Celie as a whole: confident, self-aware woman with an identity.

It is also interesting to note that Walker's protagonist in *The Color* has an uncommon attitude towards religion. She begins with confiding in God. He appears to be a friend but when her repeated requests go unheard she explodes 'anyhow, I say, the God I been praying and writing to is a man. And act just like all the other mens I know. Trifling, forgetful and lowdown' (p. 199). The rigidity of religion is very casually eliminated. Further in the novel, Shug enlightens Celie by commenting 'God love them feeling' (p. 203) meaning the uncommon sexual love between women. But God cannot be limited in erotic emotions only. He is annoyed if 'you walk by the color purple in a field somewhere and don't notice it' (p.203). This broadening of religious attitude, not sanctioned by theological categories, includes new religious dimension. Religion preached by male priests to limit women is negated. Thus Walker introduces new spiritual connotations in the novel to order women's life. It is a progress from ignorance to knowledge in the process the roles of the wife and mother are considerably modified.

II

The planning of *The Color Purple* being very straightforward it is not difficult to perceive the manipulation that has been carried out by Alice Walker to organize her protagonist's life. But in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* the design of personal growth and development directed toward creating a whole self is neither simple nor direct because of the complexities of the narrative technique.

Sethe the protagonist of Morrison's *Beloved*, despite the double enclosures of racism and sexism, begins her life quite normally in 'Sweet Home' a plantation as a slave worker. The master being very kind and considerate, she is neither raped nor tortured by anyone. Though through her memory we come to know about her mother, a slave who had been branded, raped repeatedly and ultimately hanged. This shattering experience has negative impact on her. It makes her more protective towards her children which ultimately culminates in the murder of her own daughter whom, by this act, she had tried to save from the terrible experience of being a 'chattel', a slave. Paul D, the voice of patriarchy, condemns her by stating 'you got two feet, Sethe, not four'⁶ but her confident reply is 'It's my job to know what is and to keep them away from what is terrible. I did that' (p.202). Fragmentation of Sethe's personality begins with the coming of the school teacher and his nephews as masters. They make a 'chokecherry tree on her back by a cowhide whip' (p.21), and 'steal her milk meant for the baby daughters' (p.20). Celie had experienced the dark side of the Black men but not Sethe. Sethe had also not grown down with marriage and family life. She did not experience any dwarfing or maiming after marriage. Marriage did not become an 'enclosure of patriarchy'⁷ for her as it did for Celie. She is not made to feel inferior as a woman. Things change when the prevailing definition of women, of mother and wife is challenged by the racist masters. The school teacher asks his nephews to 'put her human characteristics on the left; her animal ones on the right' (p.237).

Sethe is no ordinary woman. Her decision to escape to the free zone of America is doggedly carried out. She leaves her husband Halle behind and considers him to be dead because he had failed to protect her milk and a husband who fails to protect his wife is no husband. Morrison through Sethe challenges the concept of a

traditional husband; she consciously questions the ideological codes of married life and investigates the sensibilities of her protagonist against the rigid interpretation of marital codes. For twenty-eight days, after the shattering experience of escape, Sethe remains fragmented and gradually begins to mend thereafter. But she faces another setback when she kills her child to protect her from the slave master. She is jailed. On her release, she is not broken but she emerges as a determined woman who feels no guilt for her act. She believes 'I took and put my babies where they'd be safe' (p.201). On her return from the jail, she takes up a job and continues with the act of living. Later when Paul D questions her conduct her confident statement is 'No more running—from nothing. I took one journey and I paid for the ticket, but let me tell you something Paul D Garner it cost too much' (p.18).

Deciding to go alone, all the way is a wrong decision taken by Sethe and when her ghost-daughter Beloved manipulates to kill her it is Denver, the other daughter who seeks the help of the community to liberate her mother. Morrison with the fictional situation insists that the role of the community sisters in developing a character is pertinent. Sethe was abandoned by the community because of her pride to go all alone. As the women of the community comment 'she — (was), trying to do it all alone with her nose in the air' (p.312). It is with Denver's effort that Sethe is brought back to the fold; she regains her peace and stability. Morrison's view is: a woman should not stand apart from the community and be an outsider while battling with the problems of life. The protagonist's life in the novel is fully and finally organized by this awareness. Sethe is made aware that as an outsider, with a destiny in isolation, she cannot succeed in solving her problems. Though she has to move through a process of intensive introspection yet she finally has to establish a meaningful relationship with other people. Sethe's journey is an internal as well as an external one. Her external journey remains chaotic in the absence of the self-realisation. In this pursuit, she is assisted by her uncalled, unrobed, unanointed mother-in-law Baby Shug (p.106) who repeatedly advises Sethe to 'lay'em (Eerrible memories of the past) down; Sethe, sword and shield' (p.105). She preaches to all black men and women to love their 'flesh' (p.108) 'hard because it is flesh that weeps; flesh that

dances...' (p.108). This vision of religion or rather the re-vision of religion is thought to be an essential ingredient of the self. Morrison too, like Walker, presents a new version of religion wherein the mother has the right to love the 'self.' In fact, deprived of this self-love, women cannot attain selfhood. Thus women are not envisioned only as the sacrificial goats, the mule of the world, the symbol of chastity and nobility but as human beings who have a right to organise their lives.

In both the novels it is interesting to note that the protagonists rise from the condition of nothingness to the position of self-empowerment, it is not a miraculous change coming suddenly but a gradual reorganisation of the broken threads. It brings out a pattern that is meaningful and worthwhile. Women's quest for self-identity, self-awareness, self-empowerment is made possible by their creator's intense desire to construct organised lives of women free from all forms of liminality – physical, material, spiritual, emotional and social. The difference between these two writers is: one suffers from over-enthusiasm and the other enjoys to record the facts of life. In *The Color* all women triumph in the battle but in *Beloved* the victory is to the protagonist and her living daughter. Morrison seems to stress that if Baby Shug has been defeated others have won the war. This is the pattern of life. Women need to reorganize their lives to develop and promote new systems, new attitudes towards the 'woman's question.'

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RETURN TO THE IMAGINARY: SHASHI DESHPANDE'S *THE BINDING VINE*

Ranu Uniyal

What do I want I ask myself.
The mind-slate wiped clean
Mocks me with its blankness.¹

Urmila is the woman who has just gone through a traumatic experience and that is the death of her infant daughter. The baby is no more and the mother is inconsolable. Death is final. Death is terrifying. How does one cope with the invincible – by writing about it – by giving it a name and a history? As a first person narrative *The Binding Vine* unfolds a series of events which we see through the eyes of Urmila. Devastated by grief she seems to have lost interest in the world around her. In an attempt to come to terms with her own grief she finds herself lost in the poems of her mother-in-law. A past is unfolded as Urmila begins to recreate it. It soon becomes apparent that Mira who is an unsung figure in these poems was actually a budding poet, an unwilling bride, a disappointed wife who had to live through the unpleasant experience of surrendering herself unwillingly to the husband.

The Binding Vine explores the underlying tensions between women's aspirations and their cultural identity. The desire to perform is subsumed by the desire to conform. Mira is unable to relate to the man who falls in love with her at first sight and later gets married to her. Marriage to her is not simply moving away from one home to another but as a member of a patrilineal society she now acquires a new name "Nirmala." Mira resists this change and writes about it in her poems. Whatever little one comes to know of her is through her writings. The most conspicuous feature of "Nirmala" is that she, despite the change in her subject position, is "Mira."

Nirmala, they call, I stand statue-still.
Do you build the new without razing the old?
A tablet of rice, a pencil of gold
Can they make me Nirmala? I am Mira.

A refusal followed with an assertion and a desire to preserve her identity as Mira remains suppressed. Mira has a passion for books and it is in books that she hopes to hide and rediscover herself.

Through her poems she chooses to meet herself on her own terms. The writer in her yearns for a separate identity and yet she is forced to become her mother "Mother I always wanted to ask, 'Why do you want me to repeat your history when you so despair of your own?' But she died and I will never know her answer now." (p.126). The above ensemble betrays the daughter's distrust and disaffiliation. The mother has no life of her own and the daughter aspires for a different life. She is not interested in marriage. All her anger, disillusionment and frustration is expressed in her writings. The only way to fight out the tedium of her marital life is to write about it. And Mira chooses to write in secrecy.

Rape, both in and outside marriage, and incest are common subjects in Deshpande's fiction. Both become signs of violence and aggression, a violence uncalled for, a subjection against "her" wish. In her inevitable struggle against the conventions of marriage and motherhood and love, the protagonist in Deshpande's fiction is a victim of male hegemony. Through her three main characters Urmila, Mira and Kalpana, Deshpande brings into focus the plight of the female trinity – the mother, the wife and the daughter. Urmila is conscious of the fact that she defied her father, she turned her back on her mother's hopes by not marrying into a "pearls and chifbons" but an ordinary boy next door. She laments, she feels guilty, she is sad that she was unable to give the freedom that she wanted to – to her daughter. Anu's death has crushed her hopes. Overcome by grief Urmila turns to her mother-in law's poems and tries to locate the much longed for "spring of life."

According to Lacan a child goes through two significant phases in its development. "The Imaginary corresponds to the pre-Oedipal period when the child believes itself to be a part of the mother, and perceives no separation between itself and the world"(p.99 Moi). The mirror stage is one where the child is able to see itself as a distinct individual, different from the mother. The second phase is the Symbolic Order which signifies the child's entry into the world of language, culture and civilization. Lacan argues that the entry into the Symbolic Order is problematic for the girl-child. In order to do so she must give up the mother and since the identification with

the father is never complete this process is full of complexities. The girl is so much like the mother and it is not possible for her to be able to reject the mother. The father remains an outsider. In psychoanalytic terms it could be argued that the girl-child is alienated from the process of being and becoming. The failure to identify with the father and the inability to get rid of the mother leads to a regression of sorts. Occasionally it means succumbing to the pressures of the Symbolic. Hence there is a retreat into the Imaginary.

This paper argues that having been exposed to the male gaze the patriarchal value system this lapse into the imaginary is never complete. If on one hand it provides a means to escape, it also becomes a state of anomie. In *The Binding Vine* the return to the imaginary is symptomatic of the return to the mother. It is symbolized by a complete loss of the daughter. Recovery is impossible, hence the lack. And, then at the back of it is Mira's voice:

Green saree draped about me
Green bangles encircle my wrists,
Fill your eyes with the sight, mother,
Look at me, fruitful and green....
But, oh mother. I stumble, I fall
My arms sink heavily by my sides.... (124-125)

Is it not a voice full of anguish, a voice of a woman that has been forced to wear the gauntlet of marriage? Here green is not the colour of fertility or fruition. Green is the colour of defeat, of hurt, of a life devoid of joy or lasting satisfaction. Unlike her mother-in-law Urmila has married the man of her choice, pursues a career, is free to move in society and yet there is a point when her people do not wish to leave her alone. She is not allowed to grieve, to mourn. The absence of daughter Anu has left a permanent void.

The text mediates between the past and the present without creating a proper distance between the two. As a novel about mothers it challenges the binary opposition between order and flux, meaning and language. It is important to note that repression of the mother and the daughter's unsatisfying relationship with the mother are some of the major issues in Shashi Deshpande. What distinguishes Deshpande's treatment of the subject is the manner in which motherhood becomes a metaphor for writing; the symbolic

has been usurped by constant raiding of the law of the father. Just as a woman's experience of life and living is marred by the violation to her body, that is rape, both in the case of Mira and Kalpana. Mira struggles to fight her unhappiness and isolation. Through her writing she creates a site which will allow her to redefine her fears.

But tell me, friend, did Laxmi too
twist brocade tassels round her fingers
and tremble, fearing the coming
of the dark-clouded, engulfing night? (p. 66)

In the above lines we see a sense of uncertainty mingled with fear, and this is the fear of the unknown. It is also the fear of violation which is associated with the "virgin bride". Mira's fear and trembling is in part associated with her inability to answer questions like "What is it he wants from me? I look at myself in the mirror and wonder, what is there in me? Why does it have to be me? Why can't he leave me alone?" (p.67). Patriarchal culture has failed to sustain her interest in marriage, in sexual communion. She has in fact been alienated from her body. Mira is averse to male gaze and is resentful in the role of a wife. "Brocade tassels" become synonymous with noose round her neck. Mira has been denied the space to be herself in her husband's house. She does not share her isolation with her mother. She knows she cannot be like her mother. She would not want to become her mother.

In her refusal to be her mother the daughter somehow seeks a different place and a space of her own. The mother's role is what she dreads, despises and refuses to accept. Yet little comes out of that refusal. Patriarchy forces her into that role and in the process happiness eludes her. She leaves behind a set of poems and notes from a diary, but none give her recognition. It is only when her daughter-in law begins to see her grief objectively that she makes an attempt to resurrect her. The language of poetry gives a productive insight into a woman's history. It also chooses to highlight her anger and despair at her inability to disrupt the existing pattern. Unlike Mira, Venu another young aspiring poet of her times gains both merit and recognition. Mira mentions her only meeting with him. She is bold enough to express herself to him. And Venu's answer "Why do you need to write poetry? It is enough for a young woman like

you to give birth to children. That is your poetry. Leave the other poetry to us men" (p127).

It is important to note the outcome of this encounter. While Venu is "everywhere" through his poems, Mira's voice is "silenced." Paradoxically, she has been asked to give birth to children while men like Venu give birth to poems. However much she disliked she could not evade her duty as a wife. Mira has to pay a price for the betrayal of the symbolic order by death. The lapse into the imaginary has not been fulfilling. Childbirth leads her to death while poems bring fame and awards to Venu. It seems that by wanting to become a poet Mira has transgressed the patriarchal domain which is satisfied only by excluding and suppressing the poet in her.

The Binding Vine is not only about sexual temptation and sexual repression; it is also about relationship between refusal and acquiescence, between desire and lack and also the relationship between language and culture. *The Binding Vine* focuses on strained marriages followed by unhappy, unsatisfying mother daughter relationships.

Kalpana is a young girl from a labouring class who is brought to the hospital in a terrible state. She is a victim of an accident and has been raped badly. Unlike Mira who wrote verses and diary to assuage her dreams, Kalpana is not in a position to tell her story. She dared to live life, she was young and beautiful and chose to walk out with "gaily painted nails and lips, brightly coloured clothes and sleek, shining hair, proclaiming the miracle of 'her' existence." She has to pay a price for this freedom. A woman in any society and certainly so in an Indian society must "know fear." She must accept she is vulnerable. She must be afraid to walk out alone. She must not highlight her "femininity" for in doing so she would also be subjecting herself to danger – like Kalpana. It is perhaps necessary to mention that the chief perpetrator of violence is her aunt's husband. Kalpana has been ridiculed first by her father (who leaves her mother for another woman) and then by Sulu's husband, while Sulu looks at her as her own daughter. The law of the father privileges the father as the signifier without which it is impossible to get across the multiple constructs of law, language and social

institutions. While the son is always welcome both within the social and cultural matrix the daughter stands "dispossessed." Thus in her search for identity and a socially sanctioned role, as a young woman aspiring for love and happiness Kalpana makes a futile bid to get close to her father, but fails. The repressed relationship with her mother is unsettled by "her state of coma," later on her becoming a "piece of news." It is in Kalpana that we see a complete lapse into the imaginary. Once again the mother has failed to save the daughter from falling into oblivion. Neither Kalpana nor Mira's mother had the courage or means to defy the symbolic. One begins to write and the other begins to work. One dies in childbirth and the other is made to suffer a living death. It seems as if both the mothers and the daughters have been united in their suffering and pain. Neither marriage nor motherhood can save these women. We see the collapse of social institutions like marriage and family in Deshpande. In her inimitable irony she seems to be questioning the existing modes of patriarchy. The novel opens with an affirmation: "We all of us grow up with an idea of ourselves, an image rather, and spend the rest of our lives trying to live up to it" (p.7). Consequently, all the three women have made an attempt to go beyond themselves. And it is only by sharing her mother-in-law's anxiety, by trying to understand her and Kalpana's mother that Urmila is able to reach her sanity. As a selfless interpreter of Mira's poems and a constant support to Kalpana's mother Urmila has tried to cope with her personal loss. Paradoxically, by looking at other women's marriages she is able to analyse her own. Deshpande resists closure in this woman centred text. Very much like Anita Desai whose women seek recourse to landscape, Deshpande's women seek an entry into the imaginary through their mothers, through female friendships, through their careers. And yet life is much more intriguing than death. And so is grief.

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A SUITABLE BOY AS A ROMAN A CLEF

K.K. Kapoor

Vikram Seth's ambitious mega-novel *A Suitable Boy* is a multi-dimensional work, almost impossible to slip into a comfortable slot, to thrust into a convenient niche. Basically it is a novel which displays an attitude—flippant, irreverent, even cynical. Seth maintains an ironic stance throughout the novel, gently mocking at the follies and assumptions of the rapidly 'modernizing' Indian society of the 1950's. At its core it remains a novel of manners à la Jane Austen, focusing on the unique South Asian phenomenon of 'arranged' marriage. Like a typical Austen novel, it opens with one marriage and ends with another. Again, as in Jane Austen, the very first sentence goes to the fable: " 'You', too, will marry a boy I choose', said Mrs. Rupa Mehra firmly to her younger daughter."¹ This imperative is uttered at the wedding reception of Mrs. Mehra's elder daughter Savita, who has tied the knot with Pran Kapoor, a young college lecturer. However, her elder son, Arun Mehra, has married a Bengali Brahmin Girl, Meenakshi Chatterji, much against his mother's wishes. The 'Pran-Savita' arranged marriage, and the 'Arun-Meenakshi' love marriage are held in juxtaposition throughout the novel. To put bluntly, the arranged marriage works in spite of the fact that Pran lacks any kind of glamour and brings home a meagre salary. Contrarily, the love marriage is in a shambles with numerous escapades and mutual recriminations, though Arun is glamorous, classy, and a real 'box-wallah' brown sahib. Lata, too, toys with the idea of a love marriage, first with the dashing young cricketer, Kabir Durrani (Salim Durrani?); and later with an Indian poet-novelist, Amit Chatterji (Vikram Seth?). However, finally she agrees to her mother's choice, the self-effacing Haresh Khanna who works as a foreman at the Praha Shoe Factory. The cobbler is a far more 'suitable boy' than the flashy cricketer of the snooty poet.

At another level, the novel functions as a satiric campus novel popularized by the 'angries' of the 1950's. Kingsley Amis launched the genre with *Lucky Jim*, a hilarious fable of a young History lecturer, Jim Dixon. Other well-known such novels are Malcolm

Bradbury's *Stepping Westward*, and David Lodge's *Changing Places*. In *The Suitable Boy* Pran Kapoor is an aspirant for Readership in English at Brahmipur University. His Professor and Head of the Department, Dr. O.P. Misra, cannot bear his irreverent erudition. The Professor and the young lecturer first cross swords at the issue of the inclusion of Joyce in the University syllabus. However, a Joycean short is accepted on the syllabus as a compromise formula.

The selection committee meeting for the Reader's post is held much later in the story. Dr. Misra tries to manipulate the experts and have a man of his choice selected, but he finds an insurmountable obstacle in one expert, Dr. Ila Chattopadhyay, who refuses to bypass merit on extraneous grounds. Finally, she has her way and Pran is elevated to the Reader's post. The whole incident reeks with the filth of corruption and nepotism that has contaminated the institutions of higher education in India.

A Suitable Boy also functions a political fable, a *roman à clef*, showing the emerging polity of the newly independent India. Seth has used a variety of characters to show how in the very first decade after independence the mood of the people changed from euphoria to despondence. While debating the role of students in politics, Seth briefly mentions his central theme thus:

Their post-independence romanticism and post-independence disillusionment formed a volatile mixture. (p. 815)

His diagnosis – vote-bank politics and communalism as an election tool have corroded the soul of the fledgling Indian democracy.

The political characters Vikram Seth uses fall into three categories. In the first group there are certain national figures like Jawaharlal Nehru, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, and Rajrishi Purushottam Das Tandon who appear in their real names. Vikram Seth minutely observes their role in Indian politics, and points out their feet of clay. In the second category are some leaders who appear with changed names but their personalities are identifiable. There is the Purva Pradesh (Uttar Pradesh?) Chief Minister called SS Sharma who looks like a spitting image of G. B. Pant. Then there are two state ministers – the secular Mahesh Kapoor who seems to be dramatized version of Damodar Swaroop Seth, and L. N. Agarwal who echoes

the personality of C. B. Gupta. In the last group are fictional characters who represent the emergent forces in the Indian polity. Among these the two important figures are the successful subaltern, Waris Khan, and the doomed idealist, Abdur Rasheed.

Mahesh Kapoor, a freedom fighter and an idealist, stands at the core of the political fable in *A Suitable Boy*. He is a fictionalised version of Damodar Swaroop Seth, a Nehruvian from Rohilkhand whose memory is preserved in Bareilly at a park consecrated to his name. He is, in essence, a symbolic figure representing those idealistic Congressmen who were hugely disillusioned by the decadence of the post-Independence Congress. The tragic denouement of his political career is the culmination of a rapidly rotting culture when manipulation, nepotism, and communalism totally perverted the Indian political value system. As Mahesh Kapoor ultimately resigns from the Congress and joins the KMPP, he reminisces about the genesis of the Congress infighting, and the resultant dilution of political ethics. Since Independence the Congress had been split between the leftist followers of Nehru, and the conservative right-wing led by Sardar Patel. The Patel loyalists saw "Nehru as rootless deracinated Indian whose sentimental creed was a pro-Muslim secularism and who was divorced from the majority of his Hindu citizenry" (p.955). The challenge to Nehru's supremacy arose in the form of Purushottam Das Tandon who fought for, and won, the office of the Congress President in spite of Nehru's strong opposition. The inevitable Nehru-Tandon clash was set into motion by the constitution of the new Congress Working Committee. Tandon packed the CWC with his conservative colleagues, and "did not include – and had indeed refused to include – either his defeated opponent – Kripalani – or Kidwai, who had planned Kidwai's campaign." (p.954). The Nehruites and the Tandonites differed on ideological grounds, but most of all on the Muslim question. Nehru emerged as an astute political strategist. Outmaneuvered by the Tandonite party-bosses, he played his trump card. He resigned from the membership of the CWC. Nehru's move caught the Tandon faction by surprise. They lost confidence, fearing a rout in the forthcoming General Elections. To save face,

Tandon offered his own resignation from the Congress Presidency. Nehru caught the main chance and mounted a fresh offensive. Vikram Seth admires Nehru's charismatic leadership, but he is not blind to the fact that even great men like Nehru have feet of clay, and that wrong means cannot be justified on ground of noble ends. Nehru regains the reins of power, but he does so at the cost of alienating a huge body of Hindu Nationalists, and thus sows the seeds of a communalised polity. Vikram Seth supports the common perception that Nehru stood like a huge banyan tree under which nothing could grow.

Let us cast a glance at the political fortunes of those whom Nehru's political somersaults left in the lurch. JB Kripalani never regained his political eminence; Rafi Ahmed Kidwai survived as he played a double game; and Mahesh Kapoor was ruined. In the novel, Mahesh Kapoor goes back to the Nehru led Congress, but his electoral prospects are hugely damaged by his days in political exile. He is defeated by a rank outsider, Waris Khan, by dubious means, and is broken by his ignominious defeat.

Mahesh Kapoor's benefactor, the Purva Pradesh Chief Minister SS Sharma, is another interesting political person in *A Suitable Boy*. He is shown as a fictionalised version of the former U.P. Chief Minister, Pt. Govind Ballabh Pant:

Sharmaji was a rather hulking man with a perceptible limp and an unconscious and slight vibration of the head, which was exacerbated when, as now, he had a long day. He ran the state with a mixture of guile, charisma, and benevolence. Delhi was far away and rarely interested in his legislative and administrative fief. (p.17)

He is a good administrator; honest and impartial, with impeccable secular credentials. Yet, after the General Elections he is kicked upstairs and called to Delhi. His successor, though he seems to be grooming Mahesh Kapoor for the job, is L.N. Agarwal, a rank political opportunist who plays the Hindu-Muslim card for political gains. Yet this entire clamour amounts to nothing in the world of real politik, and LN Agarwal, at the end of the novel, is all set to occupy the Chief Minister's chair in Purva Pradesh.

In the political success of people like LN Agarwal lies the significance of *A Suitable Boy* as a political fable. Seth finds the

emergent Indian polity sliding towards two black holes – communalism and lumpenization. The shadow of communal politics looms large in this novel, objectified as a mosque-temple dispute. The Alamgiri Mosque standing cheek by jowl near an ancient Shiva Temple, is a fictional rendering of the Kashi Visvanath-Gyanvapi Mosque dispute in Varanasi, with echoes of the Babri Masjid cacophony in the background. Seth introduces his readers to the incendiary situation in Brahmipur. As the resurgent Hindus try to rebuild the temple to consecrate the holy linga once again, Brahmipur goes up in flames. A huge riot engulfs the city fuelled by rumours and aggravated by the mismanagement of the security forces. The villain of the piece is the controversial Home Minister, L. N. Agarwal. Events reach the flash point as that year, unfortunately, Dusseharra and Moharram coincide in the coincide in the lunar calendar. The Bharat Milap procession intersects the route of a Tazia procession, and all hell breaks loose. The actor playing Rama is injured in the altercation, and the crowd goes berserk. The denouement of the temple-mosque controversy in *A Suitable Boy* is typical of Vikram Seth's flippant irreverence. The huge linga is hauled out of the Ganga bed, and dragged up the stairs of a ghat by a cartful of labourers.

The threat of lumpenization of the Indian polity is objectified in the meteoric rise of Waris Khan in electoral politics. Waris is a village bumpkin, uneducated and uncultured. The Nawab of Baitar puts him up as a dummy candidate in his area during the Assembly elections to cover up the possibility of Mahesh Kapoor being denied the Congress ticket. As the elections draw near, Mahesh Kapoor's son is involved in a violent act, injuring the Nawab's son. Waris deems him now an enemy of his Nawab, and decides to defeat Mahesh Kapoor by hook or by crook. He refuses to withdraw vote to his favour. Finally, he manages to beat Mahesh Kapoor by the proverbial whisker. As Waris Khan, the newly-crowned MLA, visits the Baitar Fort, his erstwhile boss – the Munshi – prostrates himself at his feet, begging pardon for a thousand obscenities and indignities he may have hurled on Waris in his days of servitude. Waris is generous: "All right, you sister-fucker, I bless you" (p.1281). As

Mahesh Kapoor reads his character, Waris is not as much a rogue as a fool. He would make a perfect servant, but a horrid master. He is not evil per se, but is ignorant of all that is good and noble in human character, social values and political culture.

Vikram Seth's worry is that if people like Waris are going to hold the reins of power in Independent India, she will hardly need any enemies to ruin her. It is no use blaming an individual, broods Vikram Seth, the fault lies within the system that India has chosen to govern her people. A huge crop of Waris Khans has erupted all over India, snuffing out the promising idealistic youngsters like Abdur Rasheed. Rasheed, the only truly tragic character in the novel, is a secular and educated Muslim boy who fights for the rights of the landless labourers in a feudal society. He is hounded by his people, rejected by his family, and driven to suicide. His death-scene evokes true pathos, and a tragic sense of 'waste'. The brief scene differs from the generally mocking tone of the novel:

Rasheed walked along the parapet of the Barsat Mahal, his thoughts blurred with hunger and confusion...

No Satan, no God, no Iblis, No Gabriel.

Endless, endless, endless, the waters of the Ganga.

And the stars above, below.

...and some were seized by the cry, and some

we made the earth to swallow, and some we

Drowned....

Peace. No. prayers. No. more prayers.

To sleep is better than to pray....

A spring in paradise.

O God, O God.

(p.1315)

The triumph of Waris and the suicide of Abdur Rasheed are objective correlatives that point to the dead-ends of India politics as it grew in the 1950's. Hence my assertion that *A Suitable Boy* is a *Roman à Clef* presenting a thinly-disguised realistic picture of the Nehruvian polity. Vikram Seth does hold on to a fictional garb, but it keeps slipping to reveal living historical personages.

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All subsequent references are to this edition only and the page numbers have been given in parenthesis.

AMITAV GHOSH'S EDEN: A PROBE INTO POSSIBILITY

Gauri Shankar Jha

The phenomenal emergence of Amitav Ghosh, with his first novel, *The Circle of Reason*, known for its inventive, brilliant, complex and purposeful nature, places him next to Salman Rushdie. R.S. Pathak, in his essay entitled "Contemporary Indian Fiction in English: Some Recent Trends in Themes and Technique" observes:

Probably the sensational literary event...took place in 1980 in the form of publication of 'Midnight's Children'. Rushdie's novel inspired a generation of Indian novelists including Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Allan Sealy, Upmanyu Chatterjee, Shashi Tharoor, Farrukh Dhandy, Rohinton Mistry and Firdaus Kanga.

(*Points of View*, Vol VIII, No. 1, 47)

R.S. Pathak quotes from *The New York Times* (16 Dec. 1991) designating these novelists as 'Rushdie Children', their purpose being to relate private lives to public events and to expose the limits of individuality in a country as vast and populous and variegated as India. Perhaps Rushdie clarifies his mission in *Midnight's Children*:

Reality is a question of perspectives; the further you get from the past, the more concrete and plausible it seems but as you approach the present, it inevitably seems more and more incredible – tiny details assumed grotesque proportions (first); (then) the illusions dissolves – or rather, it becomes clear that the illusion itself is reality. (Rushdie, 1980, 197)

Talking of the technique, he says,

I build imaginary countries and try to impose them on the ones that exist. I, too, face the problem of history: what to retain, what to dump, how to hold on to what memory insists on relinquishing, how to deal with change. And... I haven't managed to shake myself free of it completely. (Rushdie, 1983, 88)

Ghosh, too, judiciously sorts out events, providing imaginative colour, as Aristotle points out, differentiating a novelist from a historian.

In post-colonial literature Ghosh's novel may be taken as both Indian and global in perception and treatment, probing into the chronicles of nation and private lives. As John Thieme puts it in his essay, "Doesn't Anybody Live Here Any More? Recent Developments in Postcolonial Studies":

Following in the wake of Benedict Anderson, Greenblatt's MLA talk put a

further nail in the coffin of the European conception of the discrete nation-state, along the way interrogating the notion of 'local knowledge' and illustrating the overlapping of supposedly separate national cultures in the Renaissance period. It is hard to disagree with the argument that cultures have interpenetrated one another throughout human history and that the illusion of 'separate development' promoted during the last couple of hundred years has been the aberration not the norm. (ALR, Vol.1, No.2)

John Thieme cites the evidence of Ghosh's *In an Antique Land* (1992), where the writer suggests that the frontier between Europe and Asia went largely unrecognized by the mercantile culture which traded from the eastern Mediterranean across the Arabian Sea to India. His *The Shadow Lines* (1998) moves effortlessly across national frontiers, as Robert Dixon puts it, not inhabiting "a culture rooted in a single place, but a discursive space that flows across political and national boundaries, and even across generations in time" (Dixon, 1996, 9).

His first novel, *The Circle of Reason*, too, travels across the border – from a small village in Bengal, moving via Kerala to a fictitious state in the Middle East, reaching ultimately the Sahara desert. Like any Indian scripture, it rises from Satwa (Reason), travelling through Rajas (passion) and culminating in Tamas (Death) with ultimate realization: 'Hope is the beginning' (Ghosh, 1986, 423). It is not an ordinary journey, rather a voice of the eternal reformer with a compassionate insight; some of us call it farcical, elegiac, whimsical and grotesque, 'structured web of fantasy and fable, politics and philosophy.' Its unsaid end is that of

...mocking grey smudge hanging on the horizon, pointing to continents of defeat...defeat at home, defeat in the world...and he shut his eyes...turned to face the land before him, now grown so real, and dizzy with exultation he prepared to step into a new world.... But Boss was looking the other way towards the Atlantic.... (Ghosh, 1986, 423)

Ghosh's journey is his discovery of new world, altogether new and one.

The Shadow Lines deals with the core issue of post-colonial debates, illustrating through practices that are representational in nature, carved out of experience of actual life. His ulterior wish is to construct a 'looking glass border' in theorizing the partition. It brilliantly illustrates the arbitrariness of the cartographical shadow lines that separate India from the rest of the world. John Thieme

is of the view that,

Shadow lines are far more than just the borders constructed by politicians. They are also that separate colonized and colonizer, present and past, self and image. Ultimately they are the signifying acts that construct notions of discrete identity.
(Theime, 1994, 65-66)

It is a story of our times, shading the relevance of geographical boundaries and historical dates and times as the demand of reality. As Rama Kundu explains,

...the narrator looks at the destruction, violence and terror perpetuated in each of the chronotopes...be it war times England in the '40s or riot scathed Khulna in '64, or terror stricken India in '80s...it seems to be like looking into the glass.' It seems as if all lines so fastidiously imagined and charted by man across time and space, have been but illusory. Again, even the concept of unique distinctiveness of an individual seems to be an extension of the above illusion. S/he appears to get merged into other individuals like, 'stepping into the mirror.' Similarly, the frontier between fictionality and reality, past and present, subject (the narrator) and object (the narrated) surface only to get dissolved again and again.
(Kundu, 2000, 16-17)

The protagonist Tridib (signifying God or 'Tridev') is a supreme reality, permeating throughout the work, with the vision of divinity, demolishing all artificial divisions of mankind. Here again we have the old Jethamoshai, having the same vision, implicit in his refusal to have his ancestral house, afraid of another line of decision beyond the house. Grandmother's departure is, in fact, a 'home-coming' to her ancestral house, and so the domestic partitions proves to be meaningless.

It is through evocation of globality and endless placements across the globe that we are reminded of the existence of globe as one total and single phenomenon immunized by the changing borders and frontiers imposed through several wars and violence. *In an Antique Land*, a factual work, the transnational nature of the medieval mercantile culture is exhibited, blending anthropology, travel writing, cultural theory and fiction. Possibly it is an authentic account of subaltern history as found in the letters of a Jewish merchant, a master writing to his slave in the eleventh century. It is intended to recuperating subaltern history, based on imaginative recreation as archival scholarship. Here, Ghosh is remarkable for the reality of the fictional and fictionality of the real, the empirical

space as projected by the Atlas and the subjective space as surfaces in the individual's memory and consciousness, specific dates and events and the fluid continuity and repetitive sameness of events through times. It is a 'seamless work of imagination' constructed through 'deft and irreverent use of devices.'

The Glass Palace is the recent book of Ghosh that deals with 'a turbulent family saga of epic proportions set in Myanmar, India and Malaysia' and also about anti-colonial struggle. Ghosh admits:

It is not written just from my imagination or from historical sources but was based on conversation I had with a lot of people who lived through it. I felt I had a duty towards them. (Ghosh, 2001)

The Glass Palace has the autobiographical elements, no doubt, his family history, his uncle's experience, and his meetings with Myanmarese rebel leader Aung San Kyai twice during his trip to Myanmar. His deep felt experience is his belongingness to the world community and so he says, "To be an Indian is also to be a part of the global community." The world of Ghosh is the world of his vision, his Eden, created out of chaos; it is an honest move from disorder to order, from diversity to uniformity and from fragmentation to solidarity. It is here that Ghosh stands as utopian like Plato, More, Rousseau, Proudhon, Kropotkin and Marx. We have to explore the possibility of such status. As prof. S. Ray defines in his book, *A New Renaissance*:

A utopia by definition is nowhere; it exists only in human imagination; but since in is conceived as a desirable alternative to the social order that currently exists, it is both a critique of that order, and an incentive to change that order. This is what makes utopianism a dynamic force in human history.

(Ray, 1998, 101)

An urge for the transformation of the whole world, an incessant quest for an alternative and to have a uniform pattern throughout the world are some of the innate desires of human beings right from the dawn of civilization. Ghosh gives a new twist to an age-old theme. At the same time, it also adds a new dimension to the concept of nationalism.

The possibility of such a world, devoid of racism, imperialism and class exploitation is a possibility only. In *The Shadow Lines*, the two parts 'Going Away' and 'Coming Home' become ironical because Ghosh makes us feel that one can neither 'go away' nor

'come home'. Possession/dispossession, belonging/not belonging, nearness/distance and meeting/separation pervade throughout the novel illustrating no difference. To use Steven Connor's term Ghosh's 'internationality' differs from Graham Greene's use of varied spatial contexts. The Grandmother finds herself a foreigner in her own birthplace. Borders seems to be legacy of history which keeps on shifting as per politico-military contingencies and becomes irrelevant in the world of imagination. Ghosh's treatment of space and time appears at once concrete and fluid showing his flexibility and ambience – time and space as an unbroken continuum. *The Glass Palace* is the human interest story of the great Indian diaspora, its loss and longing in terms of war and colonialism, and displacement as permanent state of the dreamer, ending with liberating resistance of Aung San Suu Kyai. The fall of the Glass Palace of the last King, his last journey to Ratnagiri as his last resort, the King as compassionate prophet, soldier caught between loyalty and conscience – all form a part of the existential grammar of the living of the Republic of Ghosh. In his world of imagination loyalty, communality and faith are as essential and as fragile as the muscles of human heart; easy to destroy, impossible to rebuild.

In Ghosh, the division between that which is lived and that which is narrated and heard appears frequently, and so the themes become romantic, memory/history being its shaping force, compelling A. N. Kaul to call it 'The Growth of a Poet's Mind' (but with the 'Mind' understood as private refuge from a world with whose historical and political realities it either cannot or does not wish to cope).

In the book review of *Socialism and Democracy with Human Face* (by Baren Ray, Gyan Sagar Pub., New Delhi, 1998) by Eric Gonsalves titled 'Can Utopia be Achieved?' the reviewer traces utopia as "faith and belief of the masses – their willingness to make enormous sacrifices for achieving this goal" (LIC., 1998, 160). Ghosh's Eden is a possibility that tortures, his utopia is something that teases, and we are left with no option to remain as a mute spectator and ask: What is going on there, Sir?

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BEYOND THE FREEZE-FRAME : A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF JOHN BARTH'S "ON WITH THE STORY "

Prasanta Kumar Panda

That which produces and manipulates the frame sets everything in motion to efface its effects, most often by naturalizing it to infinity, in God's keeping.... Deconstruction must neither reframe nor fantasize the pure and simple absence of the frame! (Derrida, "The Parergon")

The metaphor of freeze-frame, taken from the story in question by Barth, in the title of this paper may in fact prove a useful way of setting forth the question of what critical theory is and how it is linked to the study of literature. Theory is a way of delimiting what qualifies as a literary work, or describing how it is built, what and how it signifies, and where it connects to what gets defined as 'outside' the text – its author and tradition. In this sense theory is always at work, however inadvertently, in the provision of such backgrounds as gender genre and a plethora of other matrix fashionable at the moment of discussion. Even aesthetic, formalist, and rhetorical criticism require a concept of art, an idea of the difference between form and matter, and a distinction between trope and reference before they can go forward. There really is no way to read a text in and for itself and hence there is always a way to reframe the text as one Barth exemplifies in his story "On with the Story."

Like the beginning of John Barth's story this is not the beginning of my paper. But this can serve as an approach to the foregrounding of my paper on the basis of the aforesaid theoretical dynamics of deconstruction. To elaborate my stance I would like to put forth Derrida's strategy of 'double reading' as a corollary to Barth's 'double writing' and reading from the tradition of "doubling commentary," the latter being defined as an effort to marshal textuality into understandable concepts. The double reader or writer seeks to exhibit the 'signifying structure' informing such concepts, to display the impairment "writing" (Derrida, 1976, 158). In case of Barth this 'double commentary' can be summarised as his preoccupation with the concept of narratology in narrating his stories. In the beginning of his story peculiarly titled "On with the

Story" one encounters the conceptual framework of the story in the following lines:

The writer of this line is another, and a third is the above mentioned (reader) Alice; chief character of this story in progress, whose attention has been caught in this passage, that you and she together have just read. (1997)

In this passage the fictional reader and the actual reader are put at par with each other to encounter the authorial exercise of narration. This gives me an opportunity to begin in the middle. Reading as mode or sharing experience, as proposed by Barth gathers mass when we go through the story I have selected to foreground my present paper.

In this connection the theory of reading tension as Bertrand Gerralo points out comes to confront as an appropriate mode of reading that Barth himself propounds as apart of narrative dynamics: "In literature, reading is often the object of a limited, because highly specialized, conception, There are great number of texts, an infinity of readers, of diverse competences, complex encyclopedias but only one act of reading described" (1995, 835), In other words, Barth's story suggests a similar view point regarding the nexus between the author and the reader as participating in the same act of individual competence against the existing encyclopedic context to which a reader cannot possibly be exposed to at a given point of time.

Barth begins the story with a small passage in Italics and forces the reader to believe; the passage is in fact written by somebody else. This invites the fictional reader as well as the actual reader, now reading the story (you and me included) to interfere with the double space provided by the story to judge the point of view of the author as well as the reader in question, as a single activity. This debate about the fictional vs. real reader has been beautifully argued out by Raman Selden in the following words:

Fiction asks us to be members of the authorial audience (the audience addressed by the author and which understands that the work being read is fictional) at the same time we are asked to pretend to take the role of the narrative audience (the audience addressed by the narrator, either implicit, an audience that believes that the events portrayed are real). Many literary effects are created by the interaction of these two audiences. (1995, 379-80)

If it is an occasion to read theory in Barth's story I am reminded of James Phelan presenting a similar interpretation of narrative

theory that leads to address the same problem as Selden does. Phelan presents the interaction of the two audience in terms of "instabilities" (on the narrative level) and what he calls 'tension' (which engages us as authorial audience) (1995, 36).

It goes without saying that Barth subscribes to this theoretical implication as Phelan propounds. This is clear from the initial lines of the story:

In our collective headlong flight toward oblivion (Alice reads), there are a few among us still, remarkably, who take time out of this to read a made-up story. Of that small number, dear present reader, you are one. (1997, 65)

Alice's experiences in the story as a reader that Barth presents (which we know much later) as well as her escape from reality as a personal, in the inlight 'Freeze Frame' story, is quite similar with the theoretical aspects of the doubly displaced position of the protagonist. Barth seems to suggest that reading is not an abstract act of engaging in interpretation but an activity, like washing the clothes or going to work that takes place in a particular social context as a process and rewards.

Janice Roadway views

picking of a book serves as a literal escape (Parallel to the figurative escape in the story) for certain women, allowing them to diversify the pace and character of their habitual existence. This activity so engages their attention that it enables them to deny their physical presence in an environment associated with responsibilities, that are accurately felt and occasionally experienced as too onerous to bear. (1984: 89,93)

In this context Barth's presentation of the story becomes an explanation rather than a narrative as traditionally conceived as a sequence of events for the sake of informing the reader the course of action of the character involved in the story. The other reason one can attribute to this observation is the shift of subjective factors being presented as objective paradigm for the perception of the reader to evoke a need, desire, or demand of exploratory act. In this regard, interpretation of Barth's story 'On With the Story' presents an occasion for resymbolization of reader response and in this scheme becomes a temporally separate act "that involves an effort to indicate the sensed, felt, thought nature of the evocation while at the same time applying some frame of reference or method of abstracting in order to characterize it" (Roseblatt, 1978,135).

It goes without saying that the recurring appearance of 'Freeze Frame' story in the inflight magazine that Alice picks up from time to time provides her as well as the reader with a frame of reference that simultaneously works and bridges the gap between abstract and temporal and puts Alice in position of a character interpreting both for herself as well as the readers' subsequent readings referred to by Barth in the beginning of the story as Alice's co-readers. This approach reminds one of Barth's story in the collection *Lost in the Funhouse* titled 'Life Story'; that the authorial presence is a sadistic practice of writing and hence be taken care of by the real author by putting a balance in the form of the co-author.

He concluded and caused the 'hero' of his story to conclude that one of three things must be true, 1) his author is his sole and indefatigable reader, 2) he was in a sense his own author telling his story to himself, in which case, and or 3) his reader was not only tireless and shameless but sadistic, masochistic of he was himself. (1968, 127)

This being the psychic residue of an authorial presence Barth makes it manifest in the story by presenting a co-reader/co-author as character in the story. One can trace the story 'Title' that represents the same viewpoint of Barth which he wished to manifest in a story of his own:

The technique is advanced, as you see, but the situation of the characters is conventionally dramatic, that being the case may one of them or one who may be taken for one of them make a longish speech in the old fashioned manner, charged with absolute emotion. (1968, 110)

Barth seems to advocate a middle path between story as a narration on the old fashioned manner of 'once upon a time' and 'lived happily ever after' and 'the blank of our lives' (1968, 113). For he believes as reflected in the story 'Lost in the Funhouse,' "If you know all the stories behind all the people in the broadwalk, you'd see that nothing was what it looked like" (1968, 91).

At first sight it may sound outrageous a notion to think what Barth has done in beginning his recent collection 'On with the Story' as not merely a coincidence as he refers to this way back in his collection of story titled *Lost in the Funhouse* in the year 1968. In this collection he mentions in the story 'Menelaiad' about the much rehearsed story of Proteus and tries to convince the readers about the framework he has in his mind for a future project to take the

shape of what we find in the present series of stories which invariably dictate the term to the concept of theory as a part of the story in itself. An initiation to this effect can be felt in the following lines: " 'prophets get their tenses mixed.' I replied, 'not impossibly it's now that Mrs. Odysseus goes the rounds, while her son's away. But I think he knows what a tangled web his mother weaves; otherwise he'd not sit silent, but call me and Proteus false to run for Ethaca' There I had him, someone, on with the story 'On with the Story.' 'On with the story', I said to proteus" (80). By doing this he has inadvertently referred to the concept of the metadigetic nature of the revelation of the narrative pattern in the postmodern mode of story telling.

Considering all this we cannot overlook the fact that Barth has deliberately prepared an architectural blue print restructuring the art of story telling, we have been acquainted to refer to in the deconstructive trend or 'bricolege.' This results in the reoccurrence of the same matter in the framework of a story that develops to entice the reader in the long run; for a serious reconsideration or rather a re-reading of the different 'freezeflames' as manifest in Barth's story titled "On with the Story." In short, John Barth indulges in a practice of writing that assimilates, peculiarly enough, intended reading, responses – cognitive, attitudinal, and emotive in the story itself. This in turn asks us to be members of the authorial audience (the audience addressed by the author and which understands that the work being read is fictional): at the same time, we are asked to pretend to take on the role of narrative audience (the audience addressed by the narrator, either implicit or explicit, an audience that believes that the events portrayed are real). Many literary effects are created by the interaction of these two audiences. For instance, by the interplay of instabilities on the narrative level and tensions which engage us as authorial audience.

Finally, when one responds to the questions I have tried to explore for an implied answer given by the author himself it would not be an exaggeration to say, most literary quarrels are not disagreements about response, but about a response to a response. What happens to one informed reader of a work will happen, within

a range of non essential variation to another. But Barth would not allow this quarrel as he does not leave room for interpretation of a response to the story by mixing all the responses within the story itself.

To sum up my notion of Alice as a protagonist in the story titled "On with the Story" Vs. the protagonist (author) as one among the authorial audience, the imagined reader for whom Barth designs his text is really a reflection of authorial choices made manifest in the story. In radically different ways, Barth conceives the 'narrative audience' and inscribes these readers, opinion who actually appear in the text. In extension one can say Alice is Eco's model reader, who cooperates with the author in the generation of the text. That is, every text is made of two components: the information provided by the author and that added by the 'model reader.' But we can not forget that Alice is not an equal partner of the author in the production of the text. Like Prince's 'narratee' or 'addressee' – that is, a reader foreseen by the author with whom he or she shares the ensamble of codes relied upon by the author (1980, 7). This addressee is not simply assumed by Barth but is actually created with the help of a reader in the text as a prerogative of the author.

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BOOK REVIEWS

MOHAN SINGH KARKI (TR.), *KABIR: SELECTED COUPLETS FROM THE 'SAKHI' IN TRANSVERSION*

(Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2001), pp. 160 + XV, Rs. 195.00

R.K. Singh

Mohan Singh Karki, a Robert Frost scholar and English literature teacher, has attempted to expose to the English-knowing readership an important 15th century Awadhi (a dialect of Hindi) poet, Kabir, who is still a challenge to litterateurs and critics for his (dubious) simplicity, depth of understanding, immensity of vision, and sense of divinity in the smallest and weakest. Himself an illiterate, Kabir composed *dohas* (couplets) in dialect and created world literature. Karki must have faced a tough job in rendering 408 selected *dohas* in iammic tetrameter stanza form.

As a devotional, mystic, sufi saint-poet, committed to socio-religious reform and harmony in society, Kabir appeals to the masses, to the enlightened and the ignorant alike. Philosophically, he is a monotheist and venerated by Hindus as a *Vaishnav* and by Muslims as a *Pir*. As Kabir himself says:

I did not touch ink and paper;
Nor a pen in hand did I hold;
Essence of Four Ages wisdom
By words of mouth I did unfold. (p.xv)

Kabir is endowed with the broadest vision of oneness of humanity; universal love, unity and equality; Truth of God and oneness of religions; universal peace, harmony and brotherhood; purity of heart and freedom from prejudices and superstitions; happiness in spiritual pursuits, without being callous, apathetic or indifferent to one's surroundings but seeking joy in His Path; compassion for animals and nature; devotion to God through service to fellow creatures; humility, truthfulness, righteousness; and self-realisation are some of the salient features of Kabir the poet and God's messenger. With his powerful rhetorical art and universal poetic and moral appeal, he has attained a very high stature in Indian Poetry and remains unparalleled in the 1200 years old history

of Hindi Literature.

To translate such an accomplished poet in English stanza form, rhyme and syllable, could not have been easy. The translator is honest in admitting in the Preface that "all the qualities of the original cannot be transversed. Alliteration, assonance, and pun in the original become the first casualties in translation. Meaning has been the main consideration so the best possible attempt is made to keep the meaning faithfully conveyed. *A limited free play becomes unavoidable*" (pp. vi-vii).

Karki's exercise of "free play" makes me think that a literary translator, besides being a specialist, is also an interpreter, a mediator, telling the target language (TL) readers what the 'message' of the source language (SL) poet or writer is. He is in a bilingual/bicultural situation, trying to provide them with the 'core' of the original, grappling with both the surface and deeper structures of the text. He may even lean towards the side of either the SL or the TL, according to convenience, or ease of translation, and create a new version of the original with his interpretative genius. And this is what Karki ultimately does. He is respectful to the SL as also true to the structures, culture, context, ideology, and content of Kabir. He tries to bring out fairly clearly the meaning of the original verses despite stylistic differences in form and construction, be it SL or TL.

At textural level, however, it is simply too much to expect Karki to translate the original style, myth, parable, allegory, metaphor, meter, rhythm, tone, colour, sound, word-play, etc., though he does try to provide a possible substitute for the original imagery and symbol, or even idiomatic expressions, including Kabir's "reversed way of saying" (p. 9), howsoever inadequately, since he understands the inner thoughts of the poet.

Karki has tried to transcreate Kabir in English verse form, with literary quality of its own. He seems to draw on Kabir's communicative pragmatics and translates him with a certain heuristic flexibility even as he is apparently inspired by Fitzgerald's *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* (Preface). However, he is constrained by his own choice of iambic tetrameter for a possible musical effect, matching with the original. To cite a few examples:

1. For the sake of my own I may
Rather die than ask for alms,
But for the well-being of others,
Of my shame I have no qualms. (p.107)
"Maroon per maangoon nahin, apne tan ke kaaj;
Parmarth ke kaame, mohi na saway laaj." (Kabir)
2. All woods are not of sandalwood,
There aren't troops of the chivalrous;
All the seas do not contain pearls,
So in the world are the righteous. (p.63)
"Sab ban to chandan nahin, shoora ke dal naahin;
Sab samudra moti nahin, yo sadhoo jag mahin." (Kabir)
3. "Why art thou asleep," says Kabir,
Greatly thy sleep may thee damage;
When Time maketh thundering sound
Even Brahma's throne starts to shake. (p.23)
"Kabir soota kya karay, sootan hoi-akaaj;
Brahma ka aasan khisay, sunat kaal ki gaaj." (Kabir)
4. An ass's better than a brahmin,
A dog's better than alien God;
Awakening a sleeping town
Much better proves a crowing cock. (p.47)
"Brahman te gadaha bhalaa, aan dev te kutta;
mulnaate murga bhalaa, shahar jagaawe sutta." (Kabir)

As the translator notes in his Introduction, the bases of selection of *dohas* from the original *Sakhi* ('the witness') for translation are: Kabir's proverbial wisdom, analogy-finding gift; richness and variety of imagery; recurrent theme of death; gift for satire; and rhetorical powers.

I had thought writing for the 21st century audience, Karki would avoid using archaic expressions like 'why *art thou* asleep?', "Death *doth* stand just over *thy* head," "*thou wilt...*," "*thou wilt...*," "*thou wert...*," "*thine*," *thither* from/*hither* from," etc. It also spoils his texture to use the unpoetic/difficult botanical name, *butae frandosa* for the indigenous "tesoo" flowers (p.33). However, "thievish-heart," "skyey clime" and "Mammon's band" seem to me some of his good choices.

Mohan Sing Karki is readable and comparable with the original as the publishers have arranged the Hindi couplets of Kabir and Karki's four-liners side by side. To facilitate better understanding, Karki has appended at the end 7-page explanatory Notes (on his

translation) and an 11-page Glossary (of Hindi Words), followed by a selected Bibliography which shows his literary awareness and responsibility as translator. The *Index of First Half-lines* in Hindi and corresponding *index of first lines* in English make the book easier to handle and cross-referencing possible.

**R.S. SHARMA, S.B. SHUKLA & S.B. TALWAR (EDS.),
STUDIES IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE**

(New Delhi: Sarup and Sons, 2000), pp. 266, Rs.475.00

H. C. Gupta

The book, *Studies in Contemporary Literature*, comprises eighteen studies in all, including one radio-talk and one Interview, on five pioneering contemporary writers in Indian English in four well-known literary forms – Amitav Ghosh and Shashi Deshpande the novelist, Ruskin Bond the story writer, Jayanta Mahapatra the poet, and Girish Karnad, the dramatist. The title *Studies in Contemporary Literature* could be elusive without the explanatory subtitle – *Critical Insights into five Indian English Authors*, which defines the nature of the work. The editors have preferred "the text-based or theory-based discussion and analytical approach rather than broad generalizations and opinions.

The contents of the book fairly reveal the matter of the work: "The Question of Indianness," "On Literatures in English," "Unwholesome Feelings and Religious Differences in Amitav Ghosh's Fiction," "Interrogating the Multi-Layered Lines in *The Shadow Lines*," "Collage of Myths: Amitav Ghosh's *The Circle of Reason*", "The Technique of Focalization in Shashi Deshpande's novel, *A Matter of Time*", "Beyond gender [sic] Consciousness: Reading Shashi Deshpande's novel, *The Dark Holds No Terrors*", "Adventure and Nostalgia: *The Room on the Roof Revisited*," "Ruskin Bond's Treatment of Indian Reality in the Short Stories," "Mythology of Landscape: The Fiction of Ruskin Bond," "Jayanta Mahapatra and Neo-Modernism in Indian Poetry in English," "The 'Glocal' Element in Mahapatra's Poetry," "Relationship, Jayanta Mahapatra's Search for a New Direction," "Jayanta Mahapatra's 'Hunger': A Study in Binary Oppositions," "The Theatre Idiom of Girish Karnad," "Girish Karnad's *The Fire and the Rain*: Analysis and Interpretation," and "The Theme of Hypergamous Marriage in *Tale-Danda*". Gender equality has been maintained in all the fields of the work – authorial, critical and editorial. "On Literatures in English" has three sub-divisions: The Rise of the Indian Novel: An Introductory Talk (which titles the other two divisions

atop pp. 15-50); Can Indian Writing in English Replace English Literature in our Colleges?; and Literature in the Global Village: An Inquiry into Problems of Response.

The following examples are illustrative of the writing material and critical acumen in general. Mr. Prabhat K. Singh in the fashion of a creative critic lays down in the opening sentence of his study: "Approaching literature with an eye on the male or the female identity of a writer or a writing is basically fallacious because a writer is primarily a writer and a writing is a writing, no matter by a 'poet' or a 'poetess,' a 'novelist' or a 'woman novelist' (p. 101). Prof. S.R. Jatole in his study quotes Karnad: "I wrote *Tale-Danda* in 1989 when the 'mandir' [sic] and 'Mandal' movements were beginning to show again how relevant the question posed by these thinkers were for our age....how dangerous it is to ignore the solutions they offered" (p. 258). And he is right in proving him wrong in his assertion: "Though the 'Mandir' and 'Mandal' movements might have inspired Karnad to write *Tale-Danda*, the theme of the play is neither the 'Mandir' movement nor the 'Mandal' movement as is mentioned by Karnad in the Preface to the play.... Instead the theme of *Tale-Danda* is the marriage of Brahmin girl with an untouchable boy which spurted out violence and bloodshed in the city of Kalyan" (pp.258-259).

Errors of omissions and commissions are unwelcome and regrettable everywhere. More so if they outnumber the number of pages in a book and if its get-up be so attractive, its title so inviting and its matter so enlightening as in the present case. The divergence between the titles of 'papers' as they appear under Contents and as they are given the book atop each paper/page tells its own sad tale: such divergences are in S. Nos. 2,7,9,11,12,14,15 and 17. Titles of the works have been written differently on one and the same page or on different pages: for example the title *Nag-Mandala* (p.233) and *Nag-Mandala* (p.235). I have intentionally illustrated my point from one article. Its variations exit elsewhere as well. Other such variations are found in the printed forms of the titles – *Tale-Danda*, *The Fire and the Rail*, *The Cat and Shakespeare*, *The Vagrants of the Valley*, *The Flight of Pigeons*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Natya Shastra* written italicized or unitalicized, in the use

of small and capital letters, and the inclusion or the omission of the article 'the'. Proper nouns spelt two ways are: Dutt, Tripathy, Choudhary, Mishra, Brahma, Sharans, Yavakri, Moksha, Paniker and so on. The Agreement slips are: 'preoccupations boils' (p.33), 'these assumption' (p.33), 'so many other detail' (p.68), 'first decades' (p.73), 'talent...suggest' (p.84), 'the activities...is' (p.88), 'preponderance...are' (p.89), 'three quarter' (p.97), 'the volatile high spirit...possess' (p.144), *A Face in the Night* reveal (p.151), 'perception...are' (p.153), 'It watch' (p.186), 'ironic refection...yield' (p.188), 'an eternal trends' (p.256). Few baffling sentences: "we are introduced in a series of beautifully imagined and crafted came to the author's family, friends, and various other people who left a lasting impression on him." (p.142); "This is the other extreme of the Indian poet's time consciousness, the other being largely a historical." (p.184); "Yavakri has a sense of being loved and lost than not to be loved at all like her husband" (p.250).

Then there are these unclassified discrepancies: 'Poetry: Since 1950' (p.13); 'there is his entrails' (p.24); 'prefer... than' (p.46); 'zindi & Zindi' (p.87); 'heroine' (p.95) & 'heroines' (p.96) *in quotes*; 'who were judge' (p.122); 'fascination for... with' (p.133); 'a insightful' (p.155); 'It' for 'I' (p.157); 'he is closure' (p.158); 'the missionary wife' (p.158); 'but when comes back' (p.160); 'an world' (p.204); 'in the ms' (p.205); '19 Mav.' (p.236); 'snared...from' (p.245); 'it' for 'if' for 'if' (p.263). Finally there are the misspelt/wrongly printed words which are given here as they have appeared in the book: *brackets show their page numbers*: victimation (9), serpent & Course (10), a propounded & practiced (11), wile for 'wild' (15), (.) for (?) & socieity (17), allright & mahagany (20), oncle (25), Amitab (51), in Ghosh & In Ghosh, literary Theory, & envelope (64), calender (65), Chornotopes twice & meta-narrativies (66), nattater's & flim (68), migrtory (70), posisible (72), Robert young (73), bring imagined (75), between onself & I Had (76), himsmelf (78), desparate & streches (79), leassons (80), odessey (81), relicence & circle (86), catastrophy (88), magai (89), yeats & Alu (90), herculean (91), protagonists personality (94), chairoscuro & nover (99), narrating (100), eclips (102), there-fore & around (103), dimention (105).

percieves (106), preferable (109), lap (113), 'is' for 'it' (114), ues (123), many for Many & Guardina (127), thier (131), gardner (137), Himalayas (138), age old (142), en h (142), pyzamas (144), delinquet & envelopes (148), anglo-Indian & an Lishaped (149), eerie & yearing (151), or for 'of' (152), pastrol (153), lamention (154), unhygenic (159), can not (160), object for 'abject' (162), actualy, last for "Last" & its perhaps (159), its got (168), intenational (176), verification twice for 'versification' (178), pound for Pound & intensions (179), enertia (180), noe-symbolists (181), gratituous (183), acuienscence & looses (188), persipiquity (189), reuptation & affilition (192), reativistic (199), maya (200), *Quartely* (204), guage (208), extarordinery & anexatra ordinary & poets protagonist's (213), time for Time (215), with in, reeson, fifteen-years old (219), metophorically (220), Avrasu & dropeth (226), Anrasu (227), condemend & In Hayavadana (228), cartesian (230), irreconceivables (231), personal for personae (234), ecoutered (237), ever fore even (239), kamad (244), enemity (246), enlightenment (248), priviledged, Pravashu & actros (252), spueriority (255), classessed (259), disasterous (262), out for 'our'. The list is not complete.

But the uses of the book are there and cannot be overlooked. If one can dive below, ignoring the flaws that 'like straws on the surface flow', one is sure to get gems therein. Whether the writers will go into the pages of the history of Indian English writers as immortalities or as mere historical curiosities, it is for time to decide. However, they deserve applause as they are sensitive to the burning issues, contemporary and age-old and 'glocal,' which have been artistically presented and logically tackled in their writings. Bereft of any common literary creed with their fragmented personalities, they are highly subjective and autobiographical, and fairly representative and 'glocal'. The explanatory sub-title highlights the contents and in no way exaggerates the studies which are analytic and well illustrated from text, subjective in matter and treatment, revelatory and enlightening, logical and convincing, explorative and evaluative, and interesting and inspiring. All interested readers will find the book more rewarding than their money and time spent on it.

M.K. NAIK & SHYAMALA A. NARAYAN,
INDIAN ENGLISH LITERATURE – 1980-2000 :
A CRITICAL SURVEY

(Delhi: Pencraft International, 2001), pp. 303, Rs. 495.00

G.P. Pradhan

Indian English Literature is a complex phenomenon, which has been analysed in different ways by eminent critics. Indians who have studied either in England or in U.S.A., or who have migrated to either of these countries, have no difficulty in giving expression to the creative urge through the medium of English. Owing to the significant achievements of many Indian writers in English, Indian English Literature has been accepted in the realm of English Literature as one of its remarkable branches.

Dr. M.K. Naik and Dr. Shyamala Narayan have written a critical survey of Indian English Literature of the last two decades of Twentieth Century. Prof. Naik has written *A History of Indian English Literature*, which was published in 1982. The present work is a sequel to the earlier book. In the Introduction, the writers have sketched the turmoil in India's political, economic and social life from 1980 to 2000, and have rightly stated that the intellectual ferment caused by these different events was bound to have an impact on the creative writers of the period. The new challenges and changes were naturally reflected in Indian English Literature of these two decades. Eminent Indian writers, while writing in English, brought fresh perspectives to bear on their experience of India, the West and the World.

In the chapter 'The Twilight of the Old Masters,' there is a fine critical evaluation of the novels of Dr. Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao. Dr. Naik and Dr. Shyamala Narayan have pointed out that Raja Rao's *The Chessmaster and His Moves* is an ambitious undertaking. But it has little action and innumerable philosophic discussions. The spirit of vagueness and drift and unprecision have also affected the style of Raja Rao. In R.K. Narayan's *Talkative Man* the usual Malgudi ambience is very much there. *The Cactus Country* by Manohar Malgonkar has been appropriately mentioned

as a remarkable novel which has made the Indo-Pak war of 1971 very real in human terms and has highlighted the tragedy of our sub-continent torn asunder twice during three decades.

The first of the new novelists was Salman Rushdie, and his *Midnight's Children* was the beginning of a new era in Indian English fiction. Rushdie, who was born and brought up in Mumbai (Bombay), was influenced as much by Hindu myths as by Muslim attitudes. *Midnight's Children* has been acknowledged as a masterpiece and was awarded the prestigious Pulitzer Prize. Dr. Naik and Dr. Smt. Shyamala Narayan have described the book as 'an autobiographical picaresque fiction, a political allegory, surrealist fantasy and a daring experiment in form and style.' But what makes it an outstanding work is the fact that it has a distinctly existential dimension. There is the overarching theme of 'Identity and its plight in a hostile world.'

Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses* evoked a violent protest from the devout Muslims. Rushdie's two other novels *Moor's Last Sign* and *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, in spite of the usual striking features of his writing, fail to make a unified impact on readers. Among other practitioners of Magic Realism are Amitav Ghosh and Shashi Tharoor. *The Circle of Reason* by Ghosh and *The Great Indian Novel* by Tharoor, in spite of some remarkable features, do not rise to great heights. While evaluating the novels of social realism, it has been aptly stated that Upamanyu Chatterjee's *English August – An Indian Story* is the most appealing. His novel *The Last Burden* is an inward looking narrative in which bitter memories of the past are blended with tensions of the present.

In the chapter on Indian Women Novelists Dr. Naik and Dr. Smt. Narayan, by referring to a number of novels written during 1980 to 2000, have emphatically stated that these women novelists, through their significant contribution, have earned a place of respect in the realm of Indian English Literature. The salient features of the novels of Kamala Markandeya, Jai Nimbkar and Ruth Praver Jhabvala have been mentioned. A warm tribute is paid to Anita Desai with special reference to *Clear Light of Day* and *The Village by the Sea*, which won Guardian award for children's fiction. Nayantara Sahgal is the leading writer of political novel in India and

it has been aptly stated that *Rich Like Us* – portraying life in India during the Emergency in 1975 – is by far the best of her novels. The importance of the Domestic Novels of Shashi Deshpande and Githa Hariharan has been rightly emphasized, with a special mention of Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence* – the Sahitya Academi award winning novel and Githa Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night* which was awarded the Commonwealth Writer's prize.

Regional Fiction is popular with women writers and Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* put Kerala on the fictional map. No wonder the novel won the Pulitzer prize. Dina Mehta's *And Some Take a Lover* gives an insight into Parsi mores. Namita Gokhale's *The Book of Shadows* is also a very remarkable novel and in its first section Namita Gokhale has effectively recreated the times of the British Raj through the journals of a missionary. This chapter ends with an appropriate evaluation of Children's Fiction by women novelists and includes Shashi Deshpande's *The Narayanpur Incident* (a story of India's struggle for Independence) and Neelima Sinha's *The Chandipur Jewels* and *The Yellow Butterfly*. This is the finest chapter in this critical survey.

The chapter, 'In their Own Voice: Women Poets', is equally absorbing. There is a reference to the poems of a group known as Bombay Poets, which grew under the influence of Nissim Ezekiel. There is a probing analysis of the poems of Eunice de Souza, particularly of the poems in the book *Women in Dutch Painting*. Imtiaz Dharker is a remarkable women poet, reacting to experiences as a sensitive and intelligent Muslim woman. An appropriate reference has been made to the Surrealistic imagery of Menka Shivdasani as reflected in 'Nirvana at Ten Rupees.' Meena Alexander's strong political awareness is the striking feature of her poetry. A compliment has been paid to the poems of Debjani Chatterjee, who is a committed feminist poet and her poem, 'I was that woman' is a celebration of womanhood.

In the chapter 'Swan Song,' Dr. Naik and Dr. Smt. Narayan have brought out the significance of the contribution of Nissim Ezekiel to Indian English Poetry and have made the following observation: "As a major pioneer of modernism in Indian English

Poetry, as a poet with a luminous clarity of perception and as a Father figure who inspired several younger poets, Nissim Ezekiel's place in Indian English Literature remains secure." The analysis and appreciation of the poems of Dom Moraes, A.K. Ramanujan and Jayant Mahapatra is very penetrating and perceptive.

In the chapter on the younger poets, Dr. Naik and Dr. Smt. Narayan have done justice to poems of Vikram Seth, particularly to his *The Golden Gate*, which is a spectacular technical triumph. It has been pointed out that in spite of his living in U.S.A., Agha Shahid Ali's heart is in India, particularly in Kashmir. Similarly, there is a South Indian ambience in the poetry of E.V. Ramkrishnan and G.J.V. Prasad.

Most of the writers of Indian English Fiction have also written short stories. The title of the chapter, 'The Chips from the Fiction Workshop – Short Story,' is very appropriate. Short stories by these writers have almost all the salient features of their fiction. Amid the few short story writers who have tried to experiment with the form, Amit Chaudhary is perhaps the most notable. Among the women writers, Shashi Deshpande is equally adept in both forms – the novel and the short story. Many of Gauri Deshpande's stories have a welcome touch of humour. Manjula Padmanabhan is another outstanding short story writer and her collection of short stories, *Hot Death, Cold Soup*, is notable for its mordant humour. Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies – Stories of Bengal, Boston and Beyond* won the Pulitzer Prize. Equally effective stories with strong plot have been written by two women writers who live in India – Meher Pestonji and Tara Deshpande. Susan Visvanathan in her collection of stories, *Something Barely Remembered*, has portrayed the life in a Christian fishing village in Kerala in a realistic manner. Failure and unrequited love are the main themes of her stories, which have a strong local colour and which also depict the stranglehold of the Church.

In the chapter on Drama, Dr. Naik and Dr. Smt. Narayan have rightly paid tributes to the eminent Indian writer, Girish Karnad, who has translated his own plays originally written in Kannada. The analysis of his plays *Naga-Mandala*, *Tale-Danda* and *The Fire and*

the Rain is very perceptive. While evaluating the contribution made by Dattani to Indian English Drama, it has been pointed out that social and political realities are his favourite subjects and his drama, thus, compliments that of Karnad, who has mainly focussed his attention on history and mythology.

While mentioning some plays such as Zahida Zaidi's *Burning Desert* – based on the Gulf War of 1991 – and to plays on Gandhi by T.S. Gill, V.D. Trivedi and Prema Sastri, attention has been drawn to the fact that none of the experimental plays has been successful. Dr. Naik and Dr. Smt. Narayan have stuck a pessimistic note saying, 'Indian English Drama remains a sad Cindrella, waiting for her Prince.'

Prose has been aptly described as a 'Many-Branched Tree,' and Dr. Naik and Dr. Smt. Narayan have given a comprehensive account of the significant writings of eminent Indian English Writers handling different forms – autobiography, biography, travel literature, letters and personal essays, literary criticism and books on different social sciences.

In the concluding chapter, 'At the Millennium Dawn: Conclusion', Dr. Naik and Dr. Smt. Narayan have emphatically – and rightly so – stated that Indian English Literature and other Indian Literatures in regional languages have many common traits because the authors have grown from the same soil. Even those writers who have permanently migrated to the West or America, have not severed ties with cultural and social heritage.

Dr. M.K. Naik and Dr. Shyamala Narayan have, in this critical survey of Indian English Literature 1980-2000, portrayed the literary scene in an unbiased manner and have done justice to contribution made by different creative writers and thinkers to Indian English Literature during the last two decades.

BASAVARAJ NAIKAR, *THE FOLK THEATRE OF NORTH KARNATAKA*

(Dharwad: Karnatak University, 1996), pp.114., Rs. 50.00

Gulshan Rai Kataria

Basavaraj Naikar's monograph on the Folk Theatre of North Karnataka is a commendable effort in the direction of propagating knowledge about the theatre of that region as also an attempt at correcting the misperception spawned by Balwant Gargi's book, *The Folk Theatre of India*. Gargi's book, as Naikar notes, prompted him into doing this monograph. Gargi's cursory reference, to what in Naikar's opinion is a vibrant presence in North Karnataka, is probably due to oversight or inadequate information or both.

The Folk Theatre of North Karnataka reveals how well entrenched the theatre has been on both the sides of the Sahyadri mountain range for centuries; it was the only source of entertainment for the starved imaginations of the area. With motion pictures and T.V. now acquiring fighting potential, survival of the folk theatre all over India has been in danger and North Karnataka is no exception. Nevertheless it continues to thrive in the teeth of all odds.

The folk theatre of Karnataka, known in native Kannada as *bayalata*, manifests itself mainly in two forms: *bidiyata* and *attadata*, meaning street play and stage play respectively. But each of these categories has several sub-categories and even sub-sub-categories. While *bidiyata*, has an open form and can be played both by professionals (called *bahurupis*) and amateurs (called *pagaranas*), *Attadata* on the other hand, too, has two categories: *Paduvalapaya* (western mode) and *Mudalapaya* (or eastern mode). While the former of this category is played more commonly in coastal Karnataka, the latter is more prominent on the other side of the Sahyadri range, viz. in North Karnataka. The two forms are not only geographically distinct but also deal with different themes. As regards the categories, *Mudalapaya* can be subdivided into the *Dodatta* (or grand play) and the *Sannata* (or the small play). Likewise *Paduvalpaya* may be seen to manifest into two sub-categories as *Yaksagana* and *Tala Maddale*.

Naikar's monograph details these categories and sub-

categories. He goes into the depth as also into the ritual and religious roots of these folk art forms. The influence of classical drama based on Bharata's *Natya Sastra* on Karnataka's folk dramaturgy is also traced. It is seen that the principles of *Natya Sastra* are adapted to suit the folk theatre and the understanding of the folk audience. *Sutradhara* and *Sarathi* devolve into the folk theatre and perform important roles. *Sutradhara* is a key figure who performs the ritual worship and takes the audience into confidence about what they are going to watch. It is he who starts the dialogue with *Sarathi* and the two together, acting as choric figures advance the action of the play to its logical climax. They keep the audience regaled with jokes, pranks and snatches of songs. *Sarathi* in fact is the darling of the crowds.

Another important feature of the folk theatre of Karnataka, as of all folk theatres, is the regular use of songs and musical dances. As music is sacred to gods, the musician and the dancer know best how to communicate with the gods. The themes played in the folk theatre are generally derived from the ancient epics, the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* as also other religious books and legends. While the main characters generally stick to the well-known story line and the thematic context, the *Sarathi* and *Sutradhara* often weave in the local and contemporary strands by commenting on the political, social and cultural scenario.

The *Sannata* (also called *Dappinata*) as against the *Dodddata* which is serious, dignified and upright was evolved to give expression to the *rasas* of eroticism, (*sringara*), pity (*karuna*) and humour (*hasya*). Naikar has towards the end of the monograph listed several popular folk plays and reproduced some of the scenes in the form of photographs. Naikar feels that the purity of the folk art form should be maintained and *bayalatas* should not employ film songs in the plays.

Naikar has given English equivalents of the vernacular and Kannada phrases, ideas and concepts bringing the *bayalata* closer to the non-Kannadigas. This is a signal service for which his effort needs to be commended.

**SURYA NATH PANDEY (ED.), *NISSIM EZEKIEL:
DIMENSIONS OF A POETIC GENIUS***

(Delhi: Doaba House, 1999), pp.232+VIII, Rs.400.00

K.K. Sharma

Nissim Ezekiel is doubtless the greatest Indian English poet of the post-Independence era, and one of the distinguished poets who have written in English during the second half of the last century. After T.S. Eliot, no poet has influenced Indian English poetry as much as he; he has been the model to a whole generation of younger poets. No wonder Surya Nath Pandey has made a sincere endeavour to measure and highlight the varied dimensions of this unique, legendary poetic phenomenon of India.

An established, perceptive poetry critic, Surya Nath Pandey has been very choosy, as he states in the "Preface" (VII), about the competent critics to evaluate the genius of Nissim Ezekiel, and thus the list of fourteen contributors includes such eminent scholars as M.K. Naik, J. Birjeatil, James Wieland, D. Ramakrishna, R.S. Pathak, A.N. Dwivedi and Jagdish V. Dave. The volume is invaluable, for it critically examines almost all the basic aspects of Ezekiel's mind and art — viz. Indianness, cultural conflict, marginality, stylistic innovations, etc.

This critical miscellany begins with a very useful "Introduction" by the editor himself in which he focuses on the poet's concept of culture, as well as his Indianness, alienation, Jewish heritage, sense of religious marginality, etc. A noted academic critic of modern poetry in English, S.N. Pandey refers to Eliot, Ezra Pound, Auden and others to accentuate Ezekiel's attempt at broadening the scope of culture, and reproduces his famous assertion that culture consists of not only literature, philosophy, art and past convictions but also of 'universal human standards'.

Section A of the volume, entitled "Recent Essays", opens with Birjeatil's brilliant article, which first appeared in *Literary Criterion* in 1976. It is an insightful exposition of the interior cadences of the poet's mind which make his poetic achievement outstanding. His inner cadences emanate from his belief in 'aesthetic and metaphysical discontinuities'. Then the learned critic points out the

affinities and differences between Auden and him, and also traces the confessional strain in his poetry which is very much like that of Robert Lowell and Sylvia Plath who express themselves directly without the mediation of a persona. What is remarkable about Birjepatil is that he classifies Ezekiel's major poetry into three clear-cut divisions: first, there are poems that deal with 'low pressure' events having archetypal force; the second category of his poems is marked by "a discontinuous simultaneity when time is fractured and past and present telescoped to catch the self, striving to rearrange itself with images plucked from the factitious world" (24); and the third group of his poems stems from his commitment to India. According to Birjepatil, the second type of his poems constitutes his best work.

In the article, originally written for H.M. Prasad's book entitled *Indian English Poetry* (1983), James Wieland concentrates upon Ezekiel's vision of the future which forms the core of his later poetry. The poet endeavours to build a dynamic, uninterrupted relationship between man and his world. In fact, the poet, to quote the critic's words from the concluding paragraph of the essay, "embarks on something of a renaissance, reclaiming the mind and creativity of the Hindu past and projecting it into the future" (43). M.K. Naik, perhaps the most illustrious scholar of Indian English literature, dwells upon Ezekiel's alienation which is the most distinctive feature of the poet's mind and art. He rightly points out the limited scope of Ezekiel's conception of alienation, for the modern Indian English writer's alienation does not spring from his use of an alien language alone, but is quite a complex and many-faceted phenomenon (47). Inevitably, he infers that Ezekiel does not fully succeed in "transmuting his alienational experience into major poetic utterance" (52).

The next three articles — "Ezekiel's Credo" by D. Ramakrishna, "Wit in the Poetry of Nissim Ezekiel" by Zerin Anklesaria and "Self within the Self: A Study in the Poetry of Nissim Ezekiel" by N. Mohanty — are well-written, but do not attain the excellence of the essays, discussed above. However, the next two critical pieces by R.S. Pathak and A.N. Dwivedi are certainly first-rate. R.S. Pathak

evaluates Ezekiel's poetry from linguistic and technical points of view. He convincingly proves that his journey as a poet is synonymous with his quest for the 'word', and naturally his language undergoes well-marked changes during his progress as a poet. Ezekiel incessantly experiments in his endeavour to choose and use the right idiom, the exact name for expressing his thoughts and feelings. R.S. Pathak's definitive conclusion is that by virtue of "his expressive words, mobile phrasing, highly original imagery and successful exploitation of the resources of his medium, Ezekiel has established himself as one of the most important Indian poets in English" (113). A.N. Dwivedi brilliantly brings out Ezekiel's functional use of imagery. The learned critic holds that the poet's later poetry is especially remarkable for the purposeful, artistic use of imagery. He appropriately begins his essay by citing the following beautiful lines from Ezekiel's *Latter-Day Psalms*:

The images are beautiful birds
and colourful fish: they fly,
they swim in my Jewish consciousness....

Section B, titled "Later Essays", is not as impressive as Section A. The only articles that can emulate the critical pieces, commented upon above, are those of S.N. Pandey and Jagdish V. Dave. Pandey examines Ezekiel's much debated work, "Background Casually", an 'encapsulated autobiography' which is central to a closer understanding of the poet's art and ideas. However, Pandey has not examined this work of immense importance in detail. Professor Dave evinces originality when he disproves Bruce King's assertion that modern Indian English poetry is not suitable for pre-Independence poetic themes like 'spirituality and Sanskritic classical tradition' by demonstrating that Ezekiel's poetry embodies an Indian pilgrim's progress, his spiritual journey — i. e., his poetry is steeped in Indian philosophy and shows a path which leads to liberation from worldly shackles.

To conclude, the book, under review, is a useful addition to Nissim Ezekiel criticism, though its division into two sections A and B, entitled "Recent Essays" and "Latest Essays" respectively, is rather odd and arbitrary; the essays, contained in it, should have

been arranged in consonance with the aspects of the poet's mind and art. What makes this volume all the more meaningful is the annotated Bibliography given at the end of it. The hard cover get-up is impressive, and the computer laser setting is good by any standard. Neatly printed, it is refreshingly free from printing errors, but its price is a bit exorbitant for Indian students.

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POINTS OF VIEW

Declaration under Section 5 of the Press & Registration of Books Act, 1867

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Place of Publication | Ghaziabad |
| 2. Periodicity of Publication | Biannual |
| 3. Printer's Name
Nationality
Address | K.K. Sharma
Indian
KH/127, New Kavi Nagar
Ghaziabad--201 002 |
| 4. Publisher's Name
Nationality
Address | K.K. Sharma
Indian
KH/127, New Kavi Nagar
Ghaziabad--201 002 |
| 5. Editor's Name
Nationality
Address | K.K. Sharma
Indian
KH/127, New Kavi Nagar
Ghaziabad--201 002 |
| 6. Owner's Name | Mrs. Kuhu Chanana
KH/127, New Kavi Nagar
Ghaziabad--201 002 |

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