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THE INTERPLAY OF SHAKESPEARE PERFORMANCE AND CRITICISM: AN OUTLINE SKETCH

S. Viswanathan

There has been an abundance of studies of Shakespeare performance, past and present, on the one hand, and there have been a number, though somewhat less, of books and articles on Shakespeare criticism of the different periods, on the other. However, of studies which correlate the two or of examples of sustained examination of the interrelation of the two subjects, performance and criticism, there have been very few or none. True, there are incidental comments on the relationship in historico-critical accounts of performance history. But there has been not much consideration of the important interaction and intercommunication between critical or academic and theatrical Shakespeare, and of the patterns that emerge in a juxtaposition of stage history with critical history.¹ What I attempt here is a preliminary sketch of some ways of operation of the processes of the age long give-and-take between stage and study. It is not as though (it cannot be so by the nature of the case) the patterns that emerge are neat or clear-cut either of close mirroring of each other by academic and theatrical Shakespeare or of their adversarial stances. It is more in the nature of a complex and true 'dialogue' and sometimes of harmony in discord.

A collateral evolution between the two would seem inherent in them, almost inevitable, given their common ground in the sensibility and cultural energies of the age which theatre and criticism occupy; both are, to an extent, socially and culturally instituted. But it may be worth considering how performance and criticism relate to each other in their incorporation and manifestation and also formation and alteration of the taste and sociocultural ethos of their times caught up as they are in the circulation of cultural energies between them. Especially, in the context of Shakespeare criticism having all along acted as a shaping force and arbiter of general cultural trends in line with shifts of sensibility, Shakespeare in the theatre has both registered and played its part in such shifts in ways which are those of inducing as well as absorbing the developments mutually between the two. While such patterns of exchange have

not been much attended to, the resentment of critics or academic scholars against actor-managers' and actors' ways with Shakespeare over the eras has often been dwelt upon. A reason for this may be a long prevalent general antitheatrical bias among critics or the absence of an adequate awareness of the theatrical dimensions of the drama generally on their part. In spite of the situation having changed and Shakespeare scholars and critics exhibiting a familiarity with contemporary performances, not much sustained thought has been bestowed on the retroactive relationship of performance and criticism in history.

Some of the different kinds of interplay between critical and the stage expression of Shakespeare may now be indicated in this sketch with a look at examples from the Romantic and Victorian periods and from the twentieth century. Detailed investigation which is due will have to be undertaken elsewhere. Notable first are the changes that can be traced in actor-managers' conceptions of the plays and characters and in the acting styles and performance methods and presentation, both ushered in by, and ushering in the Age of Sensibility and the Romantic age. From Thomas Betterton through the central eighteenth-century figure of David Garrick who inaugurated the star system to John Philip Kemble, Sarah Siddons and Edmund Kean and subsequently William Macready, the acting interpretations and the conceptions behind them, exhibit several features which either anticipate or participate in the changing critical views of Shakespeare. To an extent, the Shakespearian theatre of the closing decades of the eighteenth century carried forward the character analysis of the character criticism offered by critics such as Lord Kames, Whateley (1774), Morgann (1777), Richardson (1788) and others. But, more significantly, the theatre heralded and in a sense introduced character study by way of psychological analysis with Kemble's presentation of character with an inwardness of its subjectivity. Such character study became a staple of Shakespeare criticism in the Romantic and later periods. For instance, there is an instructive shift from the all too lively and 'enterprising' Hamlet of Betterton through Garrick's active Hamlet presented with histrionic virtuosity and versatility to Kemble's portrayal of the character

with a stress on introspection and 'philosophy' from within the character. Edmund Kean's conception of character was basically similar in that he also envisaged the character as a real human being, as something of a person. But in his presentation, especially of villains which was his forte, he specialized in telling flashes and sudden turns and spurts of facial expression and quick transitions of feeling conveyed through them, suggestive of a Gothicization of taste. He, also like Kemble, made an impact on critics and criticism.

One of the seminal contributions of Coleridge to Shakespeare criticism consists in his insights into the characters, as in his famous analysis of Hamlet ('I have a smack of Hamlet myself'). He did write a few plays for the stage, of which only one was performed for a few days. But he did not review stage performances as Hazlitt and Lamb did. Nor was he as regular a playgoer as the latter two; yet developments in Shakespearian character portrayal in the theatre were by then part of the air for much more than merely derivative absorption, and for original transformation, by Coleridge in a process of cultural osmosis. Lamb did speak of the lack of fitness of Shakespeare's tragedies for stage representation and expressed his anger against the stage representation of Lear in the storm. But he was an eager playgoer, as Hazlitt also was, and it is probable that his aversion to the stage Lear was a consequence of his witnessing of Kemble in the part as he portrayed Lear as a weak, old man tottering about on the stage with a walking stick. Though Hazlitt had his reservations about Kemble, as, for instance about his Macbeth and about the actability of Hamlet, he came to be impressed by Kemble's Hamlet, as he also was by Edmund Kean's Shylock.² His character analyses in his *Characters of Shakespeare's Play* (1817) are in the same vein of character interpretation.³

Lamb's striking interpretation of Malvolio of *Twelfth Night* as 'essentially tragic' and as becoming 'comic only by accident' owed itself considerably to Robert Bensley's enactment of the role.⁴ It is a characteristic of the circulation of ideas between stage and study that Samuel Phelps, a devoted Shakespearian as an actor-manager with a mission, a few decades later presented his Malvolio on the lines of Lamb's interpretation. It may be noted at the same time

that, typically of the complexity of the stage-study interchange, Maurice Morgann's historic study and defence of Falstaff in 1777 was in itself meant to be a counter to the stage representation in his time and earlier of the character as a mere comic butt, which he considered a debasement of Falstaff.

'I cannot act Macbeth without *being* Macbeth', said William Macready. The inwardness in character portrayal he sought to achieve with his studiously cultivated restraint about facial expression and gestures gave his interpretation what a contemporary called a 'metaphysical quality.' If it was Edmund Kean who in 1823 restored the tragic ending of *King Lear* on the stage a long gap in which Nahum Tate's 'happy ending' *Kind Lear* ruled the roost but for partial modification as by Garrick, it was Macready who, although hesitantly, reintroduced the Fool played in his production by a young actress. Equally, if not more, interestingly, it is possible that Macready's conception of the play and of Lear, and the primeval Stonehenge-like setting he introduced together with the metaphysical suggestion of his enactment of Lear, served to prepare the ground, rather set the scene, for the metaphysical and universalized view of the play which came to be in vogue in the later nineteenth century and for many decades in the twentieth. Dowden's conception of the play as 'the Redemption of Lear', Bradley's further development of this view and various other redemptionist and universalist or relatively optimistic readings of the play marked the period till new-historicising and pessimistic if not ritualistic interpretations arose in the later twentieth century.

The tradition of spectacular staging which can be said to have been started in a way by Kemble and accentuated by Charles Kean, son of Edmund, was taken to its extreme by Henry Irving and Beerbohm Tree in the later nineteenth century and the initial years of the twentieth. Irving, moreover, imposed his subjective constructions on Shakespeare's characters and almost recast them on his lines. Tree tended to use the plays as pegs on which to hang his whimsies and as excuses for as much of a display of the spectacular as possible. Both Irving and Tree provoked critics like Shaw and Bradley though the latter expressed his views only in his corre-

spondence. Spectacle for its own sake tended to prove a distraction, and so it put away scholars and critics. But the twentieth-century Shakespearian stage came to employ setting and design as calculated to serve the meaning of the play or as metaphor for central ideas and the themes of the plays. The stage designs devised by Gordon Craig, Komisarjevsky, several continental stage designers and those of the later twentieth century, are of this kind. So much so that the development in stage design ran parallel to the emphasis on metaphysical or moral or socio-political themes in interpretation in the study.

The distortions of Victorian stage representation also provoked William Poel, producer and critic, to come forward with his movement for Elizabethanising Shakespeare on the stage. He pioneered what J.L. Styan called the 'Shakespeare Revolution' in production the principles of staging behind which came to inform a good deal of twentieth-century production and scholarly critical work on the plays. The principles were basically those of a certain conventionalism or 'non-illusionism,' an area like the apron stage serving as the main playing space in order to be rid of the boxing-off effect of the proscerium stage and the consequent intimacy thus brought about between stage and auditorium, the stress on verse speaking and the tempo of the play's seamless movement from scene to scene. Above all, though Poel himself may not have been quite aware of it, it all meant an attempt at the revival of the implied idea of the 'multiconsciousness' of the spectators and actors in the Elizabethan theatre. The suggestions for the ideas of the Elizabethan staging of the play, came to Poel not only from the use of some of these before him by two German producers Immerman (in 1840) and by Savits (in the 1880s) a production of which latter Poel witnessed in Berlin, but also from the Sanskrit dramatic traditions which by then had come to be known in the West. Indeed Poel mounted an experimented production of Kalidasa's *Sakuntalam* at Oxford on such principles.⁵ And the scholarly discovery of the de Witt sketch of the interior of the Swan theatre in 1888 lent corroboration to Poel's envisionment of the Elizabethan stage and theatre.

Even before he formally set up his Elizabethan Stage Society

in 1894, he had started putting up productions on the lines indicated. His views and productions attracted the favourable attention of leading Shakespearians of the time such as F.J. Furnivall, Stopford Brooke, Sidney Lee, Victor Gollancz, W.J. Lawrence and also, partly, Bernard Shaw, another instance of the mutual fertilization of stage and study. Though Poel himself will have to be judged as too much of the antiquary and as somewhat fanatical and rigid, his legacy had an abiding influence on twentieth-century production and indirectly on criticism and scholarship. Granville-Barker refined upon his principles and his productions accomplished a 'Shakespeare revolution'. Nugent Monck practised Poel's principles in the Maddermarket Theatre at Norwich which he set up and carried on with regular productions, though with local talent, for three decades from 1919. Some of the Poel principles were adopted by the SMT/RSC directors at Stratford-upon-Avon. Tyrone Guthrie extended the apron stage in the RSC theatre to project further into the auditorium, and the same principle has governed the stage of the new Globe in London. It was Poel's premises and logic of an Elizabethanism that served as the justifying principle for Shakespeare in modern or contemporary dress or in an eighteenth-century or Victorian or quite another setting.

The two-way traffic if anything grew busier in the twentieth century between criticism and mainstream theatre. The elaborate picturesqueness of stage setting and design of the Victorian Shakespearian theatre came to be replaced by setting and design which sought to suggest meanings as we saw earlier. This development paralleled a growing interest in criticism and scholarship in the role of the visual elements of Shakespearian drama which later in the century became both wider and closer. If it was thought by scholars and critics like Coleridge that Shakespearian stage was but a 'bare board', Victorian producers crammed it with spectacle. Immediately after, scholars found evidence of a conventionalistic use of stage properties and items of setting from sources such as the Henslowe diary and papers. If, for instance, G.F. Reynolds the American scholar of the Elizabethan theatre⁶ laid emphasis on the prevalence of 'simultaneous settings' (which convention William Poel also tried, to revive in his productions) in Shakespearian stage practice, the visual

possibilities of suggestiveness of such a setting came to be explored in the theatre. (Incidentally, Reynolds also like Poel before him found confirmation of the use of the principle in Sanskrit drama like Kalidasa's *Sakuntalam*.) For example, the throne was left on the stage as a continuing presence for all scenes in the presentation at Stratford of each of the plays of the *Richard II* tetralogy in the early fifties; so it was by Tyrone Guthrie in his Stratford *Henry VIII* (1949), by Margaret Webster in a production in the US of *Macbeth* in 1949 and also in John Barton's RSC *Hamlet* in 1980. Indeed, it may be said that the principle of 'simultaneous settings' has worked effectively behind many of the examples of more or less permanent setting designed by twentieth-century directors specifically for individual plays as Peter Brook did with his white box for his *Midsummer Night's Dream* (1970).

Setting and design came to be deployed in the theatre as a primary means of projecting the 'director's Shakespeare', the director tending to impose his meaning on the play, which led to critics chastising them for their distortions and calling for a campaign to 'free Shakespeare'. By the same argument, there are two sides to whatever impact scholars' or critics' interpretations of plays as a whole or particular points in them made on actual production. Dover Wilson's views on details in *Hamlet* were put to practice in some productions of the thirties. His rather moralistic interpretation of Falstaff in *The Fortunes of Falstaff* (1944) governed the Falstaff of the early 1950's Stratford production of the tetralogy so much so that it had a debilitating if not disabling effect on the execution of the role. The Ernest Jones Freudian line on *Hamlet* was taken by Laurence Olivier in his stage production as well as in his film version of the play which later provoked Peter Alexander to come out with his counter in the form of his work, *Hamlet: Father and Son* (1955).

Brief mention may be made of some revealing instances of production which are paradigmatic of the academic-theatrical Shakespeare nexus. Peter Brook's Stratford *Titus Andronicus* (1955) helped to effect an academic and theatrical rehabilitation of the play usually regarded as 'a bloody farce' till then. Critical recognition of the play's value was in process at the time with, for example, Hereward

T. Price's and Eugene M. Waith's commentaries.⁷ Brook, with a more than double-billed star cast showed on his own through his presentation that the play has a telling dramatic structure and movement and was meant to be executed with a stylized, distancing, and rhetorically embellished and elaborate rendering of all the violence it is full of, and was thus more Ovidian than Senecan in spirit. These were the points being made by the critics mentioned. More interestingly, Brook's *Titus*, performed at Warsaw, was witnessed by the critic Jan Kott who came to be influential for quite some time, and inspired him to write on the role of violence and cruelty, a pressing preoccupation of the twentieth century, which continues in modified ways, in Shakespeare's tragedies and histories. Kott published his *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* in a Polish version first before the English one came in 1964. In it he offered a stark and nihilistic interpretation of *King Lear* likening it to Becket's play, *Endgame*. Influenced by Kott, Brook came forward with his historic, Stratford *King Lear* production (1962) on those lines. With that, the pessimist's *Lear* so to say, almost dislodged the redemptionist one for a long period in study and stage.

Kott's theory, expressed in his book, of history being a 'Grand Mechanism' rather than a manifestation of Providence, influenced in a way Peter Hall's production of parts of the plays of the history cycle under the title *The Wars of the Roses* at Stratford in the early sixties. An instance of a marriage of minds between critical and theatre practices is the seventies Stratford production of *Richard II* and *Henry IV* of John Barton. It was closely based on the views of his critic wife Anne Barton on the metadramatic conception which informs Shakespeare's play in her book published in her former name Anne Richter [*Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play* (1962)]. A providence of drama governed the whole action. Two actors between them played Richard and Bolingbroke, alternately on successive nights, with an apparently surprise assignment of the role on stage every night.

The curious but revealing phenomenon has occasionally been noticed⁸ of several leading producers and actors of Shakespeare having been students of F.R. Leavis. The highly influential critic

himself if not antitheatrical showed little interest in the theatre or in the theatrical dimensions of Shakespeare in his criticism. But Sir Peter Hall, John Barton, Trevor Nunn and Ian McKellen were all his students. They imbibed Leavis's strong persuasion about the life of the dramatic verse and its working through its tone, movement, diction and imagery. They were sensitized to these qualities of Shakespeare's words. They brought to bear an intellectually cultivated apprehension of the plays. Also, Leavis's view of Othello was operative in Laurence Olivier's performance of the role in the National Theatre in 1964.

We may wonder whether the 'political Shakespeare' first made his appearance in the European Shakespeare theatre (politically sensitive because of the circumstances then of several countries like Poland) in the first half of the twentieth century, many decades before the advent of cultural political and cultural materialist criticism. The productions of plays like *Julius Caesar* by Leopold Jessner in Germany and Leon Schiller in Poland and the famously problematic Paris *Coriolanus* of 1934 are examples, as also the Orson Welles *Julius Caesar* of 1937. Similarly an awareness of race and gender factors marked productions such as Orson Welles' New York *Macbeth* (1936) played by black actors in a Haiti island setting or a black actor playing Othello or sometimes Iago with a white as Othello, and Bogdanov's iconoclastic *The Taming of the Shrew* (1978) with a feminist slant.

Such are the synchronies and the kinds of crossfertilisation, as well as divergences, between criticism and performances in history. We cannot, however, reckon without the critics' and scholars' basic quarrel with actor-managers' or directors' proneness to cut and revise or rewrite passages and scenes, to make interpolations, to thrust forward their own interpretations and also to introduce spectacle or other fads for their own sake. It is almost a tendency on the part of directors to assume that they should remake and customize Shakespeare for their audiences and their times. But the question is whether some kind of refashioning in retrospect is not inevitable or unavoidable in performance and in criticism and if so, whether there are not limits to be set on such exercises of

reinfection and whether the lines of legitimacy are not to be drawn at some points. Given the age-long processes of recurrent and close negotiation between developments in stage and study, possibly, we may postulate a variant new historicist understanding of their interrelations. In any case, producers and actors on the one side and critics and scholars on the other, have served as catalyst or precipitating agent or as propagators of each other. In the long-range view, it does look as though the critics, scholars, producers, designers and actors, have all been partners in the collaborative enterprise of doing Shakespeare.

NOTES

¹Among accounts of Shakespeare on the stage are G.C.D Odell, *Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving*, 2 vols. (New York, 1920); A.C. Sprague, *Shakespeare and the Actors: The Stage Business in Shakespeare's Plays* (Oxford, 1948) and *Shakespearian Players and Performance* (London, 1954); Robert Speaight, *Shakespeare on the Stage* (Boston, 1974); J.R. Brown, *Shakespeare's Plays in Performance* (London, 1966) and *Free Shakespeare* (London, 1974); Richard David, *Shakespeare in the Theatre* (Cambridge, 1978); Richard Foulkes, ed. *Shakespeare and the Victorian Stage* (Cambridge, 1986); J.L. Styan, *The Shakespeare Revolution* (Cambridge, 1977); Dennis Kennedy, *Looking at Shakespeare: A Visual History of Twentieth Century Performance* (Cambridge, 1995) and the recently published *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on the Stage*, ed. Stanley Wells and Sarch Stanton.

Examples of performance histories of individual plays are the four massive volumes on the four 'great tragedies' by Marvin Rosenberg, Dennis Bartholomeusz's volumes on *Macbeth* and *A Winter's Tale*, John Ripley's on *Julius Caesar*, Toby Lelyveld's book, *Shylock on the Stage* (1960) and the volumes on the individual plays by various hands in the Macmillan 'Shakespeare in Performance' series, the University of Manchester Press 'Text and Performance' series and the Bristol 'Plays in Performance' series.

There are several books on, and interviews with, directors and actors, besides books by these.

On Shakespeare criticism of various periods, after the earlier studies by Augustus Ralli, C. Narayana Menon and F.E. Halliday, in the last four decades there have been books by Arthur Eastman, by Aron Stavisky on Victorian criticism and by M.M. Badawi on Coleridge's and by S. Viswanathan, by Hugh Grady and by Michael Taylor on twentieth-century Shakespeare criticism, not to mention several studies on Shakespeare criticism of recent years.

Among the few studies which in their course advert to the interrelation

between performance and criticism are the books by Dennis Kennedy and J.L. Styan already mentioned and particularly the third section of Joseph V. Donohue, *Dramatic Character in the Romantic Age* (Princeton, 1970). Also, G. Winchester Stone, 'David Garrick's Significance in the History of the Shakespearian Criticism', *PMLA*, 65 (1950), 185-197.

²Hazlitt noted how Edmund Kean's Shylock (with which part he burst upon the stage in 1814 as a new star actor, as 'a radical performer') was 'more than half a Christian ... he is honest in his vices; the others are hypocrites in their virtues.' Shylock became a star role. With Kean's playing of the role, the critical attitude of regarding Shylock with imaginative sympathy and understanding received some currency.

³On the relationship between the internalized playing of characters by Kemble and Kean, and the criticism of the Romantic critics, see the book by Joseph V. Donohue, already mentioned.

⁴Sylvan Barnet, 'Charles Lamb and the Tragic Malvolio', *PQ*, 33 (1954), 178-188, held that Lamb was projecting his view of the character on to Bensley's acting of Malvolio which, according to Barnet, was more 'farcical' than 'tragic'. But J.R. Brown, *Shakespeare's Plays in Performance*, p.242, shows that it is reasonable to suppose that Lamb did not misunderstand or misrepresent Bensley's execution of the role.

⁵See Robert Speaight, *William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival* (London, 1954), pp.122-123, p.147 and pp.181-182.

⁶G.F. Reynolds, *On Shakespeare's Stage*, ed. Richard E. Knaub (Boulder, 1967).

⁷Hereward T. Price, *Construction in Shakespeare* (Detroit, 1951) and Eugene M. Waith, 'The Metamorphosis of Violence in *Titus Andronicus*', *Shakespeare Survey*, 19 (1957), 39-49.

⁸Christopher J. McCullough, 'The Cambridge Connection: Towards a Materialist Theatre Practice', *The Shakespeare Myth*, ed. Graham Holdemnen (Manchester, 1988), pp.116-117, and Dennis Kennedy, p.182.

DECONSTRUCTIVE COMPLEXITIES: POSSIBILITIES OF INTERPRETATION

Th. Ratankumar Singh

The study of literature at present is confronted by a bewildering variety of interpretations and theories of literature. The interpretation of a text simply appears to have been gone beyond the paradigms of commonsense and the attempt is made by the interpreter to bring out in various ways its implications. This concern for implication has resulted into a crisis-like situation where interpretations are to be interpreted again. Such difficulties arise mainly from the advent of structuralism and the deconstructive analysis of literature. And such difficulties constitute the so-called culture of post-modernism, which is in fact 'the tail end of high modernism, but now pushed into a cultural situation in which the Utopian project of modern literature has been perversely realised.'¹ As a consequence of this changed and constantly changing phenomenon of the culture of literary criticism theories, the literary experimentalists of the early 1970s and 1980s seem to have been caught up with a kind of queer philosophy of 'post-structuralism' where the interpretative method is against any too rigid convention of technique or language. This is deconstruction.

The aim of this paper is to make an attempt to examine the interpretative activities of deconstruction to suggest a pragmatic theory of interpretation and not to define the anarchy of competing discourses of deconstruction, which has become one of the distinguishing characteristics of post-modernism. Of deconstruction, Christopher Norris wrote:

The present 'deconstruction' as if it were a method, a system or a settled body of ideas would be to falsify its nature and lay oneself open to charges of reductive misunderstanding.²

Exercises and experiments in critical theories are now carried out by the academicians and the practice has become a fashionable academic business in the Universities. The critics have become creators of new terms, which can meet new challenges and possibilities of interpretation. As for instance, *New Criticism* has come up. It is an unfortunate level. *Stylistics* is also another aspect of New Criticism. The academic exercises have pushed the theory of criti-

cism into the far-fetched realms of philosophy and linguistics. Consequently, structuralism appeared. The phenomenon of deconstruction was carved out of structuralism. Instead of giving an extended report of how these movements have followed one another and at the same time interacting and juxtaposing each other, that would lead to post-structuralism, it may be worthwhile to sum up the fundamental underlying principles of these various aspects, which gave rise to deconstruction. The roots of these principles lie in structuralism.

The argument in structuralism is based mainly on its approach towards the interpretative methods based on commonsense and at the same time on its principled rejection of more rigid kinds of theories, which would question any such method. Johanthan Culler in his celebrated book *Structuralist Poetics* (1975) tried to reconcile the structuralist theory with a naturalised or intuitive approach to the texts. According to him the implications of a text are controlled by the contextual knowledge supplied by the reader, and literary works are more or less interpreted according to the reader's frame of mind. It is called 'the reader's use of basic schemata, which enable him to frame hypothesis and to discern the implicative relationships between sentences. These frames are basic to our understanding. It is difficult to fix an exact terminology in this area. It may include the set of propositions characterising our conventional knowledge / activity / course of events/ state.³ It may also include the mental network of elements we bring to the text (we may call it frame) and our ability to use these elements in an orderly way (We may call it schemata) in comprehending the texts. In a sense, it is the background knowledge (frame) and the ordered use of it (schemata). The exact mode for interpretation of these frames is a very complex phenomenon and of considerable interest and debate. Christopher Butler says that "All texts are in a reciprocal relationship with such frames and schemata, which are the higher order mental counterparts of our 'social semiotics' or meaning systems within the culture."⁴ The conceptual structure of our semantic memory is encoded and reflected as a part of our knowledge of the world and they form the organising principles for understanding and relating concepts which by convention and experience are felt to form the basics of

interpretation. The twentieth century process of thinking which has been influenced greatly by Darwin, Marx, Freud, and Einstein ultimately reached a point of fundamental assault on our understanding of the world as knowable and classifiable in absolute terms. Things really exist as we perceive them. The act of perception is governed by innumerable factors which cannot be explained easily; it also makes objectively impossible. There is surely truth in the statement that we create what we perceive. Thus, it follows that all we can really know is the relationship between the observer and the thing observed. A literary work implies recognition of such a typical relationship, though this relationship may always be challenged. Our sense of conceptual unity may ultimately depend upon the way we believe things are in the world. It further follows that no experience is inherently significant, but only so when it is comprehended in the set of relationships, or contents that happen to be a part of the total structure. However, if the notions of frame and schema are accepted, we can see that the interpretation of sentences would no longer be relative only to the sequence of previous sentences of a discourse, but also relative to the set of propositions of a particular frame. This set of propositions is our understanding of the world with which we start reading the text and which we may again discard for the purpose of the text. In reading, our contextual conception of the world and the text's own projection inevitably confront one another. This is the outlook of the structuralists. Jonathan Culler brings out parallels between Kantian thought and the structuralist outlook. Both have their origins in a skeptical divorce between mind and the 'reality' it seeks to understand.⁵ Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) was of the opinion that knowledge was a product of the human mind, the operations of which could only interpret the world and not deliver it up in all its pristine reality. Henceforth philosophy must concern itself not with delusory quest for 'the real' but with precisely those deep regularities that constitute human understanding. Otherwise thought would have been condemned to a prison house of reason, endlessly rehearsing its own suppositions but unable to connect with the world at large.

The escape-route from this condition of deadlocked skeptical reason was shown in structuralist terms by the linguist Ferdinand

de Saussure. He argued that our knowledge of the world is inextricably shaped and conditioned by the language that serves to represent it. According to Saussure, meanings are bound up in a system of relationship and difference that in turn determines our habits of thought and perception. Language brings along with it a whole intricate network of established *significations* (That is making *signs* which imply meaning). This process of signification is much more deeply rooted than is commonly supposed. Our knowledge of things is insensibly structured by the systems of code and convention which alone enable us to classify and organise the chaotic flow of experience. Much of the structuralist thinking and technique is based on the methodical approach to uncover the underlying rules of extricating meaning out of the sign-making process of language. Both written and spoken form of languages are but only sign systems and literature is only one way of using language.

However, it is always very difficult to carve out a reality from the various ways of the manifold patterns of the complex working of the brain itself. We can understand things by the process of discerning relationships or structuring. And it is possible to build a sense of structure from contrasting relationships. We can observe this in the operation of language itself. The anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss also went into this line of structuralist thinking and tried to establish a universal 'grammar' along with a typology of literary genres based on their predominating figures of language. Roland Barthes in his *Elements of Semiology* (1967) tried to investigate scientifically the dimensions of 'connotative' meaning of the natural language by providing a metalinguistic description that can explore a 'second-order' level of understanding. Semiology being such a metalanguage, Barthes writes:

... as a second-order system it takes over a first language (or language-object) which is the system under scrutiny; and this system object is signified through the metalanguage of Semiology.⁶

But Christopher Norris in his *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice* (1982) called this structuralist method, which enables us to master and explain all the varieties of language and culture a 'tortuous explanation.' The question often raised about Semiology is that if it sets up as a second-order discourse unrevealing the connotative

systems of natural language why should it not be possible for further operations at a yet higher level of analysis?

This issue had been raised from the basic distinction of *langue* [approximately language] and *parole* [approximately speech] made by Saussure which has become the basis of modern linguistics. The *langue* is a system, an institution, a set of interpersonal rules and norms while the *parole* comprises the actual manifestations of the system in speech and writing. In literature, this principle may be applied in discerning a *langue* of literature, to which individual texts stand as examples of *parole*. This has been the main activity of the structuralist critics, and is also an attempt to find a 'poetics' of literature through linguistics. It is purely from this point of view only that Jonathan Culler suggested that structuralism and semiology [sign system] are identical.⁷ But within linguistics itself there are disagreements about what precisely belong to *langue* and what to *parole*. However, such controversies need not disturb the structuralist so long as the indication can define a structure at various levels of abstraction and the structure can embody the distinction between rule and behaviour, and between the functional and non functional, within a larger structure. The distinction between rule and behaviour is crucial to any study concerned with the production and communication of meaning. In social and cultural systems behaviour may deviate frequently and considerably from the norm without impugning the existence of the norm. In linguistics the distinction between rule and behaviour is most conveniently expressed by Chomsky terms, *competence* and *performance*, which are related respectively. Performance may deviate from competence and competence is reflected in the judgement passed on the utterance or in the fact that the rule violated is partly responsible for the effect achieved. A speaker may not be aware of the rules. But the linguist must try formally to construct a system that would account for the knowledge that the speaker has. The competence that the linguist investigates is not behaviour itself so much as knowledge which bears upon that behaviour.⁸

Another important aspect of the study of the linguistic implication is the functional property of the language. A language may undergo a series of changes when it is used by different people in

different ages in different countries. But the variations will remain non-functional so long as the significance of the sentence is not changed. It has a great social and cultural relevance also, and calls for an ethnological study. Culler gives an example of garments, i.e. length of skirts might be an important differential feature in the fashion world of a culture while the materials from which they are made are not very important, even though the wearer may be conscious of the quality of the cloth to some extent. The ethnologist tries to isolate the features having social significance from those that do not have much relevance to the angle from which it is observed. They are the signs and using this very sign system which embodies a number of systems of features and norms, that had been assimilated by the members of the society, the structuralists try to reconstruct a sign system of language. While trying to formulate rules of the system one has to identify the units on which the rules operate and thus must reconstruct a whole structure identifying the underlying relations which are functional in the system as it operates in a given time. Deconstruction simply rejects this line of argument by way of refusing a historical identity to one's grammar as it falsifies the relational identity and the value of words in the language. The interrelated items in the system of language are to be identified by their place in the system itself and not by their history.

Here the question arises: if language is a system of relations, what are those relations? It can be studied at different levels like the difference in phonological structure or in relation to other words and those which contrast with it which can have different combinations in a sequence in a given context. They may become either *distributional* if the relations are studied between elements of same level or *integrative* in the case of elements of different levels. But such analysis may result into *paradigmatic* relations (functional contrasts) and *syntagmatic* relations (possibilities of combination). Thus, the analysis of a linguistic system is a very complicated process as everything is inextricably related to everything else. It is the view of Saussure also. Again when structuralists like Levi-Strauss started to work out a methodical analysis of this principle into a system of 'elements such that modification of any one entails modification of all the others', they were bound to go beyond linguistics.

tics itself. And the identification of the system itself appears to be a chimera of the enthusiastic analysis because of the fact that a proper evaluation should account for our judgements about meaning and ambiguity. So we can say that linguistics does not provide a procedure which will give correct results. It does not explore the complicated sequence of possibilities of interpretation and it only tries to determine the nature of the system underlying the event. Simply, Linguistics is not hermeneutic (or interpretive).

Thus the relationship between theory and literature (text) itself cannot be governed by principles of linguistics or anthropology or even philosophy. This is what Jacques Derrida, the French philosopher and critic has pointed out. There can never be any movement of thought from perception to principle without a chain of some endlessly fascinating conflicts and contradictions. All the foundations upon which we may wish to base it will let us down. There can never be a single over-all theory of anything, and hermeneutics, in looking critically at the language in which any arguments are framed, does not help us.

This is deconstruction in one of its modes. Nearly all the problems that deconstruction poses for criticism can be seen in the work of Derrida. He conceived deconstruction when he read a series of texts in the history of western philosophy, from Plato to Descartes, Rousseau and Hegel to Husserl and Heidegger, and of a series of more recent texts in the history of structuralism and post-structuralism from Saussure to Levi-Strauss, Lacan and Foucault. The developing trend of deconstructive analysis is in fact alien to his own method, which is always 'slippery'. Our justification can only be to be how Derrida's line of argument can be used in the common practice of literary interpretation. And certainly we cannot avoid misrepresentation of his principles in the light of his own principles. This inevitable self-contradiction is the most interesting and vital part of deconstruction. When Derrida applied his critique mainly to the philosophical texts he could see philosophy as an infinitely extendible line of texts all of which point to contradictions within their predecessors while they themselves are prone to internal contradictions. It is because of the fact that meaning is neither fixed nor contained in a relational structure but is to be understood by a signifying process.

But as the premises for significance change from time to time meaning may become a constantly changing phenomenon.

The argument of the structuralists including Saussure and Roland Barthes that the written language (*logocentrism*) is a derivative of spoken language (Parole) and is always dependent on the primary reality of speech and has always the sense of a speaker's 'presence' behind his words, is not wholly acceptable to Derrida as he finds a 'dislocating tension'. It is a puzzling but unavoidable paradox. Derrida sees a process of metaphysics at work in the dialectics of speech and writing. In speaking one is able to understand the intimate link between sound and sense, an inward and immediate realization of meaning, which is transparent. Writing, on the other hand, destroys this personal context; it shows a depersonalized medium and is 'a deceiving shadow which falls between intent and meaning'. He stretches the concept of writing beyond its normal (i.e. graphic or inscriptional) sense and considers it as a 'free play' of an element of undecidability within every system of communication. It escapes the self-consciousness of speech. Writing, in this sense, is an endless displacement of meaning which both governs language and also keeps it forever beyond the reach of self-authenticating knowledge. It may even be extended to the peculiar and extraordinary assumption that writing is in fact a precondition of language and must be conceived as prior to speech. Derrida, here, discusses hieroglyphics, algebraic notations and formalized languages of different kinds. This notion challenges the whole traditional edifice of western attitudes to thought and language. And this phonocentric (speech) bias goes beyond western metaphysics that for so long treated writing as a more or less faithful transcription of the elements of speech that can safely be contained within a massive tradition of epistemology (theory of knowledge) or structure. Derrida says:

The system of language associated with phonetic-alphabetic writing is that within which logocentric metaphysics, determining the sense of being as presence, has been produced. This logocentrism, this *epoch* of the full speech has always been placed in parenthesis, *suspended*, and suppressed for essential reasons, all free reflection on the origin and status of writing.*

Christopher Norris in his *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice* sums up what Derrida sets out to demonstrate in the following terms.

1. That writing is systematically degraded in Saussurian Linguistics;
2. That this strategy runs up against suppressed but visible contradictions, and,
3. That by following those contradictions through one is led *beyond* linguistics to a 'grammatology' or science of writing and textuality in general.

If Derrida and those who think like him are right, there can never be any single coherent system of philosophy or of interpretation because the philosophical defence of any single system of interpretation will itself be metaphysically misconceived and prone to contradiction. Thus whatever we attempt in epistemology of interpretation that all assumptions will lead to some external reality (to assert an origin, a presence, or a 'situation' for the next) in relation to meaning, are in fact perpetually undoing themselves in their evolution towards an unattainable goal. And as far as interpretation is concerned, Derrida seems to assert that if all meaning is part of a system, the pursuit of one meaning would then lead to following the whole system. ['we can compare it with the fantasy of looking up a word in dictionary and travelling the whole way through it']. Thus the meaning of any word, phrase or text will never simply stop for there will always be a further 'difference' by which neologism Derrida means both discrimination and destruction of contrasted differences and the consequent 'deferring' of any possibility of arriving at the full meaning of the signifier's signified.¹⁰

These assertions concerning the (deferred) nature of meaning would lead to some important questions like: would we not be able to arrive at a certain interpretation if there is no stopping place? And what are the 'rules' for the play of meaning thus discerned? Do they simply depend upon whim and ingenuity of the interpreter? For Derrida's position is, as he himself acknowledges, subject to its own basic *aporia* or contradiction. Derrida writes:

We cannot state any destructive proposition which has not already had to slip into the form, the logic, and the hidden assumptions, of that very proposition which it wishes to dispute.¹¹

Although it looks like skepticism, Derrida's main argument seems to be an attempt to explore the dialectical interdependence of the two modes of expression (writing and speaking). If the oppo-

sition speech / writing is not subjected to a full critique, Derrida says that 'it remains a blind prejudice, one which is no doubt common to the accused and the prosecutor'. Speech is the 'natural' condition of language and the argument for an 'origin' of language in speech, which is merely supplemented by writing' is also a myth. Indeed speech is always part of the system of text, since it always implies that system of language (of 'difference') which the text typically encodes.

Deconstruction is therefore to be applied in reading and interpretation only. And this activity is to be confined within the text it analyzes. At the same time, as Christopher Norris says, 'it should never be taken as an independently self-enclosed system of operative concepts.' To call it a 'concept' is to fall straight away into a trap of imagining some worked out scheme. Then, if we follow Derrida, we are implicated within the systems we attack. We may therefore agree with Christopher Butler when he says that deconstruction is 'an opportunistic method, one of strategic dislocation, a criticism from within.'¹² As Derrida writes,

Our discourse belongs irreducibly to the system of metaphysical oppositions. One cannot announce the rupture of this belonging except by a certain organisation, a certain strategic ordering, which, inside the field of its own powers, turning against itself its own stratagems, produces a force of dislocation which spreads right across the system, fissuring it in all directions and delimiting it through and through.¹³

If this is the case, then, we have to consider those points at which deconstruction is pragmatically most effective. The relevant issues that have been touched upon in this brief discussion will have to be discussed again in the light of new developments of deconstructive analysis as made by later critics, such as Paul de Man, who pursued deconstruction to its ultimate unsettling conclusions. And the trend is still continuing and it will be difficult to give a final judgement on a still continuing trend. However, the theory of deconstruction will present us with at least some problems. First, it is an attempt to abolish anything in the world external to the text or anything privileged within it, that will help us to determine its meaning. It is an anti-mimetic, free-play thesis. Secondly, it is the attack or apparent attack on the text condemned as being incomplete, and to self-contradiction because of its unforeseen implica-

tions. This is because reading and interpretation must always aim at a certain relationship, unperceived by the writer, between what he commands and what he does not command of the patterns of language he uses. Thirdly, deconstruction deals with the problem of establishing under these circumstances criteria for interpretation of the text which do not simply reflect the ingenuity of the critic as he plays about in inter-textual space, and so can meet the charge of irrelevant subjectivism. Finally, if Derridean deconstruction is to be accepted, all literary interpretations which respect the nature of language are condemned to indeterminacy.

Is it a kind of a culpable retreat from the problems of modern society, as observed by Gerald Graff? (a kind of textual fiddling while Rome burns) or is it a form of sophisticated escapism denying literature any power to engage with 'real' experience or a kind of institutional skepticism which acknowledges only the infinite play of textual inscription? These are the questions that may ultimately lead to another question, as asked by Susan Sontag: Is interpretation a revenge of intellect upon art?

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POLITICS, IDEOLOGY AND LITERATURE: THE LEGACY OF ALTHUSSER RECONSIDERED

Sunil Sharma

Literature is an ideology. As ideology is class-specific, it is political in nature. Literature, as a result, is a product of ideology and politics. Terry Eagleton, in his path breaking and convincing *Literary Theory* (1996), undertakes the job of establishing this fact. The function of English studies in the 19th century England onwards, he says, is to control and incorporate working class through a subtle process of offering unproblematic cultural space where all the class distinctions and antagonisms can be dissolved, a kind of social 'cement' that, in the absence of a religion no longer vibrant and active as a pacifying influence, can bind the working class with the philistine middle classes and middle classes with the aristocracy.

Eagleton quotes Matthew Arnold, the unabashed apologist of this project, who warns that this cultural enterprise, if not properly directed by the middle classes, would lead to anarchy.¹ Jonathan Culler, writing from a non-Marxist position, echoes Eagleton in his *Literary theory* (1997) by saying that in 1980s and 1990s, the literary theorists have come to view literature "as a historical and ideological category, on the social and political functions that something called 'literature' has been thought to perform.... In the nineteenth-century England, literature emerged as an extremely important idea, a special kind of writing charged with several functions."² As a 'subject of instruction, it was charged with a historic civilizing enterprise. At home, it brought together the three classes together by offering them alternative values, giving workers a stake in the culture that relegated them to a subordinate position and thus it promoted fellow- feeling among classes by functioning as a replacement for religion which no longer could hold society together.

The convergence of these two opposite approaches, Marxist and non- Marxist, amply demonstrates that politics and ideology are no longer the primary concerns of a Marxist theory of culture but, by a case of strange inter-textuality, come to inform non-Marxist considerations of them in the construction of culture theory. Litera-

ture, as Raymond Williams and Terry Eagleton show in England, and Culler also subscribes to their views, is a historical category. All three, again in a convergence of opinions, agree that Literature, as understood in the 18th century England, underwent a historical transformation in the 19th century. For twenty-five centuries, says Culler, people have written works that we call literature today but the modern sense of literature as imaginative writing is hardly two centuries old.³ Earlier, literature meant reading ability and reading experience and this included philosophy, history and essays as well as poems, maintains Williams — a concept that denoted 'polite' and 'humane' learning.⁴ The shift to its 20th century specialized meaning, according to Williams, as a creative and imaginative work and of national traditions of literature took place during 18th and 19th centuries, coming to us finally as received assumptions. As a historical category, Williams suggests, literature is a practice, which reflects a historical development of social language itself.

At this stage, three crucial distinctions emerge: Literature, Politics and Ideology. Although very distinct, they are interlinked as three different superstructural practices of a given historical moment, their overall affects shaping up the social consciousness of that given historical moment. That politics, ideology and literature are historical has been demonstrated by Williams, Eagleton and Culler. As superstructural forms, these three practices correspond to definite material conditions — the base of a historical social formation. The dialectics of base/ superstructure, vital to classical Marxism, has been accorded a centrality of position in culture theory, by the structuralist Marxism of Althusser. Althusser's revisionist interpretation of the Marxist theory has gained a new currency in the post-May 1968 West and occupied the culture theory in the 1980s and 1990s. Louis Althusser, the French theorist who has continued to fascinate the bourgeois aesthetics, in his version of Marxism, as evidenced in *For Marx* (1969) and *Reading Capital* (1970) which he wrote with E. Balibar, attempts to locate "a theoretical break" between Hegelian Marx and mature Marx and posits that scientific later Marx could provide an epistemology which, stripped of its Hegelian content, is the real materialistic science of history.

Talking of praxis, Althusser says that Marx's double achievement, scientific and philosophical, lies in a "historico-dialectical materialism of praxis: that is, ... a theory of the different specific *levels of human practice* (economic practice, political practice, ideological practice, scientific practice).⁵ By practice, Althusser states, "I shall mean any process of *transformation* of a determinate given raw material into a determinate *product*, a transformation effected by a determinate human labour, using determinate means (of 'production'). In any practice thus conceived, the *determinate* moment (or element) is ... the labour of transformation on itself, which sets to work, in a specific structure, men, means and a technical method of utilizing the means."⁶ Althusser, it can be seen, gives priority to practice in his conception of materialistic philosophy of Marx and materialistic theory of society. Society, as a complex instance of different practices, thus, becomes the *sites* of distinct practices: economic base and superstructure, both deploying the structure of a production. Althusser specifies that there are not only a mode of *material* production but also mode of *theoretical* production or '*mode of production of knowledges*', in the latter instance, mode of production of ideology. Ideology, thus, becomes a concrete material category. In his essay 'Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatuses' (ISAs) (1969), Althusser outlines his theory of ideology that has influenced much of contemporary thinking on culture. Pauline Johnson says that this essay deals with the question: How is the reproduction of the relations of production secured?⁷ The answer is by the operations of legal-political and ideological superstructure. Althusser gives an account of ideology as a material force in society by talking of the repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs) and ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs), by which a complex of ideas, beliefs and values — that is ideology — gains a materiality and force and achieves its ideological effect of maintaining the rule of the dominant class. Whereas RSAs work through police and army in a repressive manner, ISAs, through church rituals, for example, produce an appropriate subject position and subject consciousness appropriate to economic mode of production. Ideology, thus, interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects who live out their real relations to

real conditions in the imaginary relationships represented in the ideological instance. Commenting upon the unconscious character of ideology, Althusser posits that a child is born into an established set of ideological practices that ensures the formation of an 'always – already' subjectivity that, as Paula Johnson suggests, leads to the 'cognitive closure of ideology' precluding the production of a resistant consciousness. This inadequacy of Althusser to recognise ideology as practical site of revolutionary struggles between two antagonistic classes in a given historic instance makes this version idealistic. Marx, in his 'Preface' to *A Contribution to the Critique Of Political Economy*, recognizes the transformative role of ideological struggles between two contending classes, in the sphere of ideology, by which process the consciousness of the dominated class gets radicalized, thus facilitating the transition of this class from false ideology to the scientific ideology. In his later essays, Althusser offers the argument that art does not give a knowledge of the real world as science does, and that art makes people "see", "feel", "perceive" and this way engenders an awareness about the real concealing character of art. Althusser's account of ideology and ideological effects has influenced Williams and Eagleton in England, and P. Macherey and E. Balibar in France. Macherey, for example, argues in 'A Theory of Literary Production' (1966) that literature is a "*practical, material process of transformation* which means that in particular historical periods, literature exists in different forms.... Literature with a capital 'L' does not exist...."⁸ He believes that literature can distance itself from its ideology ('illusion') by its fictional form and the task of the scientific reader/ critic is to locate and explain the 'silences' or 'gaps' of the text and thus reveal the true nature of the work of art. The 'materiality' of literature and art can be seen in the way a work of art is made to perform the task of the production of an appropriate subjectivity in the educational ISA. In a later essay, co-authored with E. Balibar, 'On Literature as an Ideological Form' (1976), both of them demonstrate the political and ideological functions a work of art is asked to do at purely linguistic levels: the difference between 'basic' French and creative 'higher' French perpetuates the class differences at the level of

language. Thus, Balibar shows in her researches into language that the text is deployed within educational ISA for different *political* and *ideological* purposes in the nineteenth-century France, to create and maintain the dominant bourgeois ideology at primary and secondary levels of education. According to Macherey and Balibar, the literary text is made to perform different political and ideological roles in different historical contexts. Literature, according to this view, becomes a writing practice, and literary texts are produced for consumptional purposes, thus proving the materiality of literature.

This brief account of the various prominent theories of literature and culture clearly demonstrates that literature is a historical material writing practice with its own ideological and political functions played out in the materiality of educational and technological production/consumptional contexts. Literature, in this way, emerges a historical and social practice. All theories, says Eagleton, are political and ideological, a subtle sophisticated expression of the social realities of a West that has, by late 1980s, become post-radical.⁹

An authentic and genuine Marxist critique of the Althusserian Marxism, as outlined in the overview above, requires a more radicalized theoretical position. Althusserian Marxism needs to be interrogated more critically and its idealistic character to be questioned. The retreat from practical political action, the general philosophical pessimism, the lack of faith in future and denial of enlightening and emancipatory role of authentic art, the possibilities of resistances to the dominant ideologies through new artistic forms evolving in subaltern sectors of society—all these features make Western Marxism, Althusser included, totally unsatisfactory for the construction of an adequate culture theory. The need of the hour is a more radicalized, more challenging art. The need of a Pablo Neruda, a Sergei Einstein, a Bertolt Brecht, a Picasso or a Thomas Mann has become more urgent and relevant to the politically passive consumer culture of the mass society. A re-examination and re-thinking of the role of these artists and their rich contribution to the *humanist* art and culture is urgently required.

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PHILOSOPHICAL STRANDS IN T.S. ELIOT'S WRITINGS

A.N. Dwivedi

The year 1910 may be taken as a turning-point in the academic life of T.S. Eliot (1888-1965). Earlier he was preoccupied with John Donne and the Metaphysicals, the Jacobean like Chapman, Webster, Marston and Tourneur and Middleton, and the French Symbolists like Mallarme, Laforgue, Gautier, Rimbaud, Verlaine, Corbierre and Baudelaire, but now he turned his attention to a study of Philosophy as a serious graduate student at the Harvard University. Here he applied himself to Sanskrit and Pali texts for two years under the inspiring guidance of Charles R. Lanman and James H. Woods, who were then busy reading and anthologizing books related to Hinduism.¹ Thereafter, he visited Europe and studied Greek philosophy at Oxford for a year. Back to the Harvard University in 1913, he started his doctoral dissertation on "Experience and the Objects of Knowledge in the Philosophy of F.H. Bradley", basing it on his *Ethical Studies* (1876), *The Principles of Logic* (1883), and *Appearance and Reality* (1893). During his Harvard days, Eliot was more or less influenced by good many philosophers — anti-romantic Irving Babbitt (also an expert in early Buddhism), stern George Santayana, and post-Kantian idealist Josiah Royce, but Bradley affected him most.

Eliot's interest in Bradley was largely generated by Josiah Royce. Bradley himself was greatly inspired by Hegel and Lotze, the well-known German philosophers, but he was against the Utilitarian philosophy of Bentham and Mill. Bradley propounded the theory of new idealism. In his work, *Appearance and Reality*, he tried to prove that all our experimental knowledge is mere illusion, mere appearance. He then proceeded to argue that even illusion or appearance exists in a sense, and must therefore form part of Reality. Appearance becomes fully real when it is completed in a transcendent pattern. Even pain and evil have their place in such a pattern. The distinguished critic, Grover Smith, believes, and rightly so, that Eliot's "derived certain assumptions about the nature of experience and carried their mark permanently."² Eliot owes to Bradley also the concept of personality as a mere cluster of 'imperfections and delusions.'

The doctoral dissertation of Eliot on F.H. Bradley is a purely philosophical work. Though it mainly deals with Bradley's concept of idealism, its interests are clearly literary and artistic. As Bradley himself was indebted to Hegel and other German idealists, it also shows ideas common to them both. Scholars like Anne C. Bolgan and Richard Wollheim in their respective critical studies³ have acknowledged this truth. As a practising poet and critic, Eliot here focuses his interest precisely on "the genesis of the artistic experience and the metaphysical approximations to truth in his literary criticism...."⁴ Besides exploring the nature of poetic *vision* and critical *truth*, Eliot goes well beyond Bradley, while striving for a sort of poetic and critical consistency (or synthesis). In this respect, the concept of 'soul-making' — of 'the man who suffers' — advocated by Eliot's assumes added meaning and significance. All the protagonists in Eliot's poetry and prose are painful sufferers in the drama of life — Prufrock, Gerontion, Tiresias, Thomas á Becket, Harry, Celia, Eggerson and Claverton. In fact, the hesitancy on the part of Prufrock is clearly born of his idealism, and as a defeated idealist he helplessly cries out:

Do I dare
Disturb the universe?

Bradley's position is strongly Hegelian - a powerful historical sense, the notion of evolving consciousness, the absolute independence of art, even the levels of ironic energies reflecting the various aspects of self-awareness. Eliot in following the master also follows the grandmaster. Hegel's literary-critical assessments in *The Philosophy of Fine Art* apparently played a vital part in Eliot's literary-critical career. According to Anne Paolucci —

Bradley introduced him [Eliot] to the dynamism of thought through idealism and prepared Eliot for its elaboration and application in areas outside of philosophy; but in the final effort to continue religious-social-philosophical artistic insights, Eliot comes very close to Hegel's systematic and multifaceted discussions in which metaphysics, religion, history, social forces, psychology, knowledge, and art, all have their place in an integrated vision of life.⁵

As Eliot inherited such a vision of life, he is called "an integral poet."⁶

If Eliot is indebted to Bradley for his 'idealism', he also learnt much from Bergsonism. During his visit to Paris in 1910-11, he got

an opportunity to listen to the lectures of Bergson and was deeply impressed by them. He used to come to the lecture-hall some one hour and a quarter before the lecture began. According to Bergson, there are two levels of consciousness in man — intuition and intellect (or, perception and memory). Eliot maintains that it is only the intuition or perception that gives him experience of reality. While the human intellect concerns itself with the experience of the world or space, the intuitive consciousness "experiences everything as absolute quality and gathers every moment of such experience into an organic pattern, that of *duree*."⁷ This *duree* is the living present that 'accumulates all the past and holds preparedness for the future.' It is a term coined by Bergson, who compares it to listening to a piece of music, where each note is distinct, yet inseparable for the total effect.

Eliot, like Bergson, thinks of human life in its totality, not in fragments. His conception of time is very much like Bergson's in taking our entire being — past, present and future — into consideration. Both Eliot and Bergson are unanimous in their views regarding the historical sense and the personal memory. According to both, the knowledge of the past enlivens the present and modifies the future. Eliot's most philosophical speculations about time come out vividly in his *Four Quartets* (1943). In "Burnt Norton", he writes:

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past.
If all time is eternally present
All time is unredeemable.

The entire utterance is an elaboration of Bergson's concept of *duree* (or, 'duration'). Bergson thinks that time has no extension, in fact no similarity to spatial things, and that the only reality is the present, which contains both the past and the future. The self-same idea is repeated in "The Dry Salvages" where Lord Krishna advises Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra:

You shall not think 'the past is finished'
Or 'the future is before us.'

Like Bergson, Eliot believes that 'all time is eternally present', and pleads for 'the dissection of timelessness with time.'

Another distinguished thinker who deeply influenced Eliot in

his Harvard days was Irving Babbitt.⁸ Eliot knew him in 1909 when Babbitt was an instructor in French. The disciple attended his lectures on French Literary Criticism, but these lectures were so wide-ranging that they dealt with Aristotle, Longinus and Dionysius of Halicarnassus and touched frequently upon Buddhism, Confucius, Rousseau, and contemporary political and religious movements. Eliot was struck by "the frankness with which he discussed the things that he disliked, and which his pupils came to dislike too."⁹ Eliot had 'the highest respect and admiration' for Babbitt and considered him to be one of the modern 'heretics'. Later on, a schism developed between them on the subject of 'humanism'. Babbitt believed that humanism was an idealistic belief in the goodness of human nature towards creating a sound society by rational discipline, but Eliot upheld that no humanism was possible without religion (say, without Christianity). The difference of opinion ended up there, for we know that both were equally attracted towards Buddhism. In his *Selected Essays* (1932), Eliot makes the following catchy remarks: "...Confucianism endured by fitting in with popular religion and ... Buddhism endured by becoming as distinctly a religion as Christianity...",¹⁰ and again: "he [Babbitt] knows too many religions and philosophies, has assimilated their spirit too thoroughly (there is probably no one in England or America who understands early Buddhism better than he) to be able to give himself to any."¹¹

As a true humanist, Eliot speaks of the workers and their working conditions in Chorus I of *The Rock*. In the timekept city of London, men do not need the Church at their working place; in the suburbs, they toil for six days and on the seventh they motor to Hindhead or Maidenhead; and in the industrial districts they are told of 'economic laws.' At this juncture, the Rock, led by a Boy, appears on the scene and announces —

The lot of man is ceaseless labour,
Or ceaseless idleness, which is still harder,
Or irregular labour, which is not pleasant. (Chorus I)

So, 'ceaseless labour' is essential for ameliorating the conditions of workers. This sort of labour ensures continual production of materials and continual inflow of money. Even the workmen recognise this truth, and ask themselves:

If men do not build
How shall they live?
When the field is tilled
They shall not die in a shortened bed
And a narrow sheet.

At the close of Chours I, Eliot hints at an ideal state of experience:

A Church for all
And a job for each
Each man to his work.

This ideal state of existence combines the job opportunity with religious faith, as Eliot envisions it.

There is an unmistakable touch of 'existentialism' in Eliot's writings. Eliot keeps asking questions: What constitutes the identity of a human being or a civilization? Has life any purpose or meaning? How can the problems of life be solved? Etc., etc. And these are all existential questions. The noted critic, Kristian Smidt, rightly suggests that Eliot's main purpose in his creative works is "to find a solution to the problem of living."¹² And for raising 'the problem of living' and for trying to find a solution to it, it is not necessary to have gone to the existential philosophers like Sartre, Camus, Kafka, and Kirkegaard. One can be an existentialist by being keenly sensitive to the immediate surroundings and by realising, through observation and intuition, the predicament of modern man. The bulk of Eliot's poetry and drama brings out the sufferings and malaises of modern man. Most of the protagonists are victims of their surroundings and suffer inescapably for external as well as internal reasons, — the bald-headed Prufrock, the middle-aged Lady, the aged Gerontion, the blind Tiresias, the martyrdom-hunting Becket, the Fury-ridden Harry, the guilt-ridden Celia, the manipulating Eggerson, and the lonely and ailing Lord Claverton are all in the terrible grip of existential problems. What is heartening is that Eliot does not leave most of them in the lurch and is ever ready to suggest a way out of the existential dilemma; his later poetry and plays bear out the statement. One can come out of the malicious spider-web of alienation and frustration, despair and fragmentation, purposelessness and meaninglessness, of life, if one practises the triple virtues of Love, Sympathy and Control (as suggested in *The Waste*

Land, 1922). Towards the close of *Four Quartets* (1943), Eliot again delivers an identical message:

And all shall be well and
 All manner of things shall be well
 When the tongues of flame are in-folded
 Into the crowned knot of fire
 And the fire and the rose are one.

When the 'fire' of divine love and the 'rose' of human love work in perfect unison, the existential tensions and dilemmas will automatically cease.

Eliot took the literary world by storm by declaring in 1927 that he was "classicist in literature, Anglo-Catholic in religion, royalist in politics."¹³ The declaration offered an opportunity to Eliot's antagonists to label him 'a reactionary', but it also unequivocally clarified his stand in respective spheres of human existence. While it tends to point out Eliot's unmistakable religious position — that he was an 'Anglo-Catholic' — it is submitted that some more religious trends than mere Christianity are traceable in his poetry. Of these trends mention may be made of Hinduism or Brahmanism, Buddhism, and even Hebraism. The operation of these religions in the poetical works of Eliot will be examined here along with Christianity. As mysticism running through his poetry constitutes an integral ingredient of Christianity or Hinduism, it will not be separately considered here. Also, myths and rituals forming the fibre of his poetry will not be examined in it.

Eliot's religious bent of mind was shaped at an early age. The popular dictum that 'Charity begins at home' aptly applies to this writer, whose religious inclinations received a boost in the puritan atmosphere of his parental family. His father, though a businessman, was deeply moral, and his mother was a lady of refined taste and culture. Eliot in his *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* acknowledges the fact that "the primary channel of transmission of culture"¹⁴ is the family. He traces his mother's spiritual descent from Schleiermacher by way of Channing, Emerson, and Herbert Spencer. Born in St. Louis, Missouri (1888), and belonging to a distinguished Boston family which had produced the founder of the Washington University, Eliot inherited the Unitarian background of New England. But Unitarianism is an austere religious sect, and so Eliot considered

it as having "lacked the picaresque elements of Christian creeds."¹⁵

The early poetry of Eliot, though not so religious and philosophical as his later poetry, forcefully voices its concern at the growing forces of skepticism and agnosticism. The enveloping air of suffering and pessimism to be largely witnessed in "Prufrock" (1915), *The Waste Land* (1922), and "The Hollow Men" (1925) is actually indicative of the irreligious and non-spiritual atmosphere in modern human world; it also delivers an implicit message to humanity to give up its vain pursuits and indulge in the fruitful ones. In this context, the message of the Thunder in *The Waste Land* — "Give, Sympathise, and Control" — is very meaningful. The theme of quest and failure in it is emphasized throughout because of the quester having taken to a wrong course.

But with "Ash Wednesday" (1930) Eliot's tone changes and a kind of religious conviction returns to him. By this time, he had got converted to Christianity, which provided him with an anchor in life and beyond it. He was no longer propelled by a 'a jumble of irrelevancies' but by 'a complete system'. Anglo-Catholicism now offered 'a unifying principle to his vision.' The well-known critic, Kristian Smidt, rightly suggests that in it "The poet found a pattern when the man found a faith."¹⁶ His poetry written hereafter reflects a sort of spiritual awakening and growth of independence in him. *The Rock* (1934), *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935) and *Four Quartets* (1943) contain a good deal of the convert's missionary zeal. Even the prose literature produced by Eliot during this period — *For Lancelot Andrewes* (1928) and *After Strange Gods* (1934), for example — tends to confirm this view.

As a loyal Christian, Eliot propounded his theory of culture and society, in which the role of Tradition and Orthodoxy was emphatically underlined. He maintained that no society or culture could stand without a solid Christian base. One may go to *The Idea of a Christian Society* (1939) and *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* (1948) for having a very clear image of Eliot's social thoughts. For germs of these thoughts one may also look up Eliot's seminal essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919) contained in *The Sacred Wood* (1920).

Some of the Christian ideas to be had in Eliot's poetry are: the Catholic philosophy of Disillusionment (best exemplified in *Dante's*

Vita Nuova and in Eliot's *Four Quartets*, which led him to realize the ultimate truth of life in its relation to the Absolute), the doctrine of Sin (to be seen particularly in "The Hollow Men", "Ash Wednesday", "Marina" and *The Rock*), the salvation through suffering (to be marked in his poetic plays — and in the sayings of several Christian mystics like Meister Eckhart), the concepts of renunciation and askesis (e.g., in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", "Whispers of Immortality", "Ash Wednesday", and *Four Quartets*), the divine revelation as an act of Grace (it is the Incarnation of Christ — see especially "Ash Wednesday" and "The Dry Salvages" for it).

In his poetry Eliot evoked the images of the Divine Persons in a calm, cool mood, such as the hooded figure in "What the Thunder Said." Such images enable him to visualize the Father and the Holy Spirit as the eye and the dove, which are certainly very ancient symbols. The eye is entirely human in "The Love Song" and becomes semi-divine in "The Hollow Men" and then completely divine in "Burnt Norton" and *The Family Reunion* and onwards, Christ appears as 'the tiger' in "Gerontion" and as 'the wounded surgeon' in "East Coker". And the Virgin, to whom prayers are due, is the 'rose' of many poems (e.g., "The Hollow Men", IV, "Ash Wednesday", II, and *Four Quartets*). She is also the mysterious Lady in "Ash Wednesday" and the Lady in "The Dry Salvages."

The Biblical concept of Heaven is that of a feast, in other words, a beatitude shared by all. Eliot also sought in the Church and its doctrine of immortal bliss a sense of communion, which is frequently alluded to in such poems as "Gerontion" and "East Coker". In the ninth Chorus of *The Rock*, he says: "Let us mourn in a private chamber, learning the way of penitence / And then let us learn the joyful communion of saints." Eliot thought that the solution of the problem of isolation, intensified in modern industrial civilization, is the Church. Here tradition is living a thing, which can make us commune with God. Like Dame Julian of Norwich, he perhaps believed in the completeness and perfection of Love.

Out of Catholic and Protestant individualism, Eliot preferred the first one, since it not only emphasises religious cloistering needed for the contemplation of the Reality but also the perfection of the

soul in a muddy, mundane world. Protestantism actually rejects it in favour of direct communion with God. It is certainly difficult, in several instances, to determine where Eliot is Catholic and where Protestant, but largely he remains Catholic in his outlook upon life and in his practice of religion.

Another explicitly religious-cum-philosophical impact on Eliot's mind and art is that of Hinduism. It is an established fact that Eliot had studied Sanskrit and Pali at Harvard for two years under the able guidance of Charles R. Lanman, and that he had learnt Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* under the supervision of James H. Woods. In his *After Strange Gods*, Eliot remarks: "Two years spent in the study of Sanskrit under Charles Lanman, and a year in the mazes of Patanjali's metaphysics under the guidance of James Woods, left me in a state of enlightened mystification."¹⁷ There are explicit references to the Hindu scriptures in Eliot's poetry, — in *The Waste Land*, *Four Quartets*, and "To the Indians Who Died in Africa." The use of 'Shantih Shantih Shantih' in *The Waste Land* is both Vedic in its origin and Upanishadic in its content. In the same poem, Eliot has drawn upon the *Bhihadaranyaka Upanishad* (5.1-3) in the threefold message of the Thunder - 'Da Da Da', which stands for *Datta* (Give), *Dayadhvam* (Sympathise), and *Damyata* (Control) respectively. The message is symbolic in the context, and sums up the cryptic mode of Prajapati's teachings to the three kinds of his disciples — gods, men and demons — as to how they should behave. The virtues exhorted by Prajapati are essential to break through the prevailing rainlessness and the resultant sterility in the devastated land of the King Fisher.

Four Quartets, a sequence of four poems named after four different places, also takes recourse to Hinduism at times. In the second movement of "The Dry Salvages" (1941), we find 'Time the destroyer is time the preserver', which verily recounts the Hindu concept of time in relation to Timelessness. It clearly alludes to Shiva and Vishnu of the Hindu Trinity. In the third movement of this poem, we are taken to the exhortations of Lord Krishna to Prince Arjuna now in the grip of meum and sense of attachment on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. The Lord says here:

You shall not think 'the past is finished'

Or 'the future is before us'
And again:

...consider the future

And the past with an equal mind.

According to Hinduism, all fragmentations of time (*kalam*) are subsumed in Timelessness (*Ananta*).

"To the Indians Who Died in Africa" (1943), a small poem of barely 22 lines, pointedly refers to the Hindu concept of *Karma* (Action) as propounded in the *Bhagvad-Gita*, which was dear to the poet that he called it "the next greatest philosophical poem to the *Divine Comedy* within my experience."¹⁸ The poem under review appeared in the commemorative volume entitled *Queen Mary's Book for India* (1943), which is addressed to the Indians who laid down their lives while fighting far away from their motherland during the Second World War. In these Indians Eliot discovered an excellent 'objective correlative' of 'selfless action' performed in a spirit of dispassion and detachment. The context of this poem is quite identical to that of the *Gita*, and in both the burden is on doing one's duty without any desire for 'the fruit of action.'

In many other poems too, the *Gita* has been drawn upon. Thus, in "The Dry Salvages", it is to be found in the lines:

Not farewell

But fare forward, voyagers.

And in Chorus I of *The Rock* (1934), the same idea is echoed when the poet writes:

I say to you: Make perfect your will.

I say: take no thought of the harvest,

But only of proper sowing.

Choruses II and VIII also reinforce the self-same idea. These illustrations lead us to believe that Eliot attached greater significance to *Karma Yoga* rather than to any other variant of *Yoga*.

The great Hindu mystic, Patanjali, also finds berth in Eliot's poetry. His *Yoga-Sutras* had truly left the poet in a state of enlightened mystification, as Eliot admits. Patanjali's emphasis on the practice of austerity and self-mortification virtually solved some of the poet's problems; it offered him, as Prof. Smidt suggests, "the answer to a religious need" as well as "the matter for a poetry of

contemplation which should be both intense and dramatic."¹⁹ In the repetitive rhythmical muttering of the Vedic hymns Eliot might have discovered the thought for creating some of his own hypnotic effects. The following poetic passage bears out his unflagging interest in Patanjali's metaphysics:

The inner freedom from the practical desire,
The release from action and suffering, release from the inner
And the outer compulsion....

This passage to be had in "Burnt Norton" of *Four Quartets* is highly suggestive in that it indicates the path of Salvation to an individual, — the true end of all *Yoga*.

A third religious-cum-philosophical system operating in Eliot's poetry is Buddhism. Stephen Spender vouches that he once heard Eliot saying to the Chilean poet, Gabriela Mistral, that "at the time when he was writing *The Waste Land*, he seriously considered becoming a Buddhist."²⁰ The echoes of Buddhism are clearly heard in *The Waste Land* and the poetic plays, especially in *The Cocktail Party* (1950). Eliot had studied Henry Clarke Warren's *Buddhism in Translations* and Pali texts. He likened the Buddha's Fire Sermon to the Sermon on the Mountain.²¹ In the Passage "To Carthage then I came" Eliot collocates Lord Buddha with St. Augustine. Obviously, the plays *The Rock* and *Murder in the Cathedral* were written to meet the requirements of the Church, but from *The Family Reunion* onwards, he ceased to employ the characteristically Christian phraseology *in toto* and began to be concerned more with the universal necessity of spiritual regeneration. But even in *Murder in the Cathedral*, Becket in his Christian guise lives through the Buddhist gospel of renunciation. *The Cocktail Party* also depicts the saint's (Celia's) renunciation of the world of senses.

Hebraism also leaves its mark on Eliot's poetry. There is a particular poetic passage in my mind when I make this remark, and that is the concluding portion of Section III of *The Waste Land*, which runs as under:

To Carthage then I came
Burning burning burning burning
O Lord Thou pluckest me out
O Lord Thou pluckest

burning

(11.307-311)

The two great ascetics of the East and the West — Lord Buddha and St. Augustine — saw humanity as burning in the unholy fire of lust and concupiscence, from which it could salvage itself by taking to self-annihilation and untiring spiritual practice. In the quoted passage, one can easily mark the fusion of Christianity and Buddhism, but there is one more religious trend perceptible in it and this third one usually goes unnoticed — it is the Hebrew tradition. This third tradition is to be found, as E.L. Mayo thinks, in the line 'O Lord Thou pluckest me,' which reminds us of a proverbial expression derived from the Hebrew prophets like Amos and Zachariah who invariably employed it in connection with Jehovah's interventions on behalf of sinful Israel in the past. The impression of the whole passage on the reader is that of "three great religions speaking as with one voice."²² There is one more explicit reference to the Jew in the forth Section of *The Waste Land*, and the passage in which it occurs is given below:

Gentle or Jew

O you who turn the wheel and look to windward,

Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall as you.

(11.319-321).

The poet seems to be suggesting here that suffering is universal and engulfs all, irrespective of caste, creed, or country.

To sum up: Eliot being a serious scholar of Philosophy used various philosophical strands and religious systems in his writings. Bradleyan idealism, Bergsonian concept of *duree*, Babbitt's humanism, all-enveloping existentialism, Eliot's anglo-catholicism, Oriental religions-cum- philosophies like Hinduism and Buddhism, and Hebraism: all these as well as some more thinkers (like Dante, Schleiermacher, Channing, Emerson and Herbert Spencer) have been absorbed in the body of his poetry and plays. They clearly demonstrate Eliot's religious and philosophical bent of mind and his wide-ranging reading and scholarship. Both the East and the West meet in his writings in a marvellous confluence of philosophical and ethical waters, and leave his readers awestruck at his stupendous knowledge and varied artistic experience.

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AUDEN'S USE OF HISTORY IN "SPAIN 1937"

Sanjoy Saksena

History to the defeated

May say alas but cannot help or pardon.

When Auden wrote the concluding lines of "Spain 1937" he was not aware that they would prove to be prophetic for defeating the Republicans, on whose side he was, and, as it happens, "History" had no option but to "say Alas" to them for their rout was complete. After the vanquishing of the Republican "rag-tag army", as Louis MacNeice was later to describe it in his "Autumn Journal", there was no question of any "help" coming from any quarter and their fate was sealed by the outbreak of the Second World War a few months later. The challenge that the Republicans had posed to General Franco was not merely a military and political one but more importantly also ideological. Conservative governments or, shall we say, reactionary power centres all over Europe had wished what the outcome of the aborted revolution was. As for "pardon", the people were least likely to grant it because all those who had taken sides with the Republicans hated each other more than they did their enemies and had thereby reduced the exercise in which hundreds perished, including some very distinguished writers, to a farce. Robin Skelton says:

The Communists appeared more intent upon destruction of the Anarchists and Trotskyites than on that of the Fascists, and it was clear that, far from being a struggle for democratic liberties, the civil war had become a military training ground for the Axis powers, and a pageant of propaganda for the Communists.²

In the light of this pathetic imbroglio Auden's poem appears to be ironical. However, this sad irony that "History" had to inflict cannot underwrite the idealism, the hopes and aspirations with which many people like him went to participate in the Spanish civil war. In England the Spanish civil war appeared to many left-wing intellectuals "the apocalyptic battle" they had been longing for — the proverbial struggle between light and darkness as C. Day-Lewis saw it. Prior to his leaving for Spain Auden wrote to E.R. Dodds about his plans and purpose of visiting Spain:

I am not one of those who believe that poetry need or even should be directly political, but in a critical period such as ours, I do believe that the poet must have direct knowledge of the major political events.... I shall probably be a bloody bad soldier but how can I speak for them without becoming one?³

It was with the intention of fighting and writing poetry to exhort fellowmen that Auden entered Spain in January 1937 via Paris at Port Bou and proceeded to Barcelona which appeared to Orwell and Spender at that time to be a model of socialist society, for private ownership of factories had been wiped out, public services were collectivised and above all servile forms of speech had been done away with. In short, it appeared that history was being made.

Even as conditions had started worsening due to food shortages and mutual bickering and factionalism had become common, Auden came up with "Spain 1937" in April that has been described by Boly as "a notable unsuccess"⁴, though Buell considers it to be "the most satisfactory poem anyone wrote about the Spanish Civil War."⁵ Auden plays the expected role — that of a "poet propagandist", and the poem itself becomes his "last ditch effort to make a Marxist of himself."⁶ He focuses on the various shades of human existence and daily activities that are ordinary but could be transcended by those who have been caught up in them by joining hands with the revolutionaries — a possibility for making lives extraordinary and becoming part of a glorious history that seemed to be unfolding itself before the world. Auden not only captures the profusion of life in all its hues and detail but emphasises its relative insignificance in the larger scheme of things in contrast to the promise that Spain held for those who were committed to democracy and freedom for challenges like that were rare in history. "The poem's first seven stanzas all begin with 'Yesterday' in order to conclude with 'But to-day the struggle' "⁷ — a refrain that Hoggart finds "rather theatrical."⁸

The sheer force of the rhetoric and the quick succession in which the images flow one after another drives the point home — that historical moment for action had arrived. It is through rhetoric that Auden seeks to counter power because "rhetoric is the very

device with which authority secures power."⁹ And to participate wholeheartedly in the making of history lest it should condemn those who were sunk in trivialities, Auden recommends burial of trifling history emphatically and repeatedly: "Yesterday all the past". And the inconsequential history includes among other things which preoccupy men are "assessment of insurance by cards", "taming of horses" and "the carving of angels and of frightening gargoyles". The urgency of Auden's cause is such for him that he even considers the process of development, that is synonymous with silent revolutionising in which the proletariat play a major role as heroes, of marginal value and it needs to be abandoned by those involved with it in favour of fighting for the creation of the Republic: "Yesterday the installation of dynamos and turbines; / The construction of railways in the colonial desert...." He is self-conscious about the essence of the quotation becoming operative on his ilk — a possibility that he would never like to see occur in practice, least of all where Spain was concerned — "the poet's private fears" and "intellectual drama."

"Spain 1937" may be, for convenience, divided into three "temporal sequences" — "Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow". Mendelson finds in this a "cataclysmic account of human time, organised according to Auden's characteristic pattern of two integrated periods separated from each other by a third, divided one"¹⁰ and Spender thought that it was "built on a frame-work suggested by Marxist dialectic of history."¹¹ "Yesterday" has to be bypassed for the sake of a more meaningful "Today" and "Tomorrow". Therefore, Auden speaks less about the nature of Spanish politics and concentrates more on "matters of general human nature" within whose context "freedom-necessity-choice"¹² is placed. What is highlighted is that in a difficult situation when some folks do look forward to a change, they tend look around everywhere but rarely within themselves for a solution: " 'O my vision, O send me the luck of the sailor.' " Similarly, the scientist looks at "the inhuman provinces," self-importantly investigating minutiae where no solution to the larger political problems of the day could be found: "I inquire, I inquire." Despite his larger Marxian sympathies with the poor, Auden does not spare them

because they keep on groping here and there — "Our day is a loss"— and want to be told the course of action that they need to adopt even when time is running out in critical circumstances.

This chaffing is the result of the ignorant poor expecting to be explained as to how history works on the destiny of men and how they ought to organise their lives to make their lot more meaningful: "O show us / History the operator, the / Organiser". The other part of the question put in the mouth of the poor by Auden relates to "Time" and as to how they could rejuvenate themselves for their position held little promise of a betterment in the given system. The rhetorical answer is that "Time" would change for the better for them only if they joined hands in bringing about the democratic revolution in Spain, for later with the passing of time, progressivism could bring about a revolution in their own localised societies by destroying the class system and building a classless brotherhood instead. Through the "idiotically enraptured" poet, the lost scientist and the poor man, Auden has tried to make "frontal attacks on the reader" — make him more "conscious of his involvement with existing personal and social problems" as well as help him, with the aid of the parabolic method, in making a "conscious choice in support of Spain."¹³

From the trivial private Auden moves on to the public — contain as both do a structural argument that points towards larger ideological ideas. Nations "combine each cry" — and in these cries of pain is camouflaged "nocturnal terror" begotten by the malfunctioning of capitalistic political and economic machinery. Exploitation of the people all over is made a common cause — one that should motivate people to support Spain's struggle: "Intervene". The question arises as to what kind of intervention can be expected out of those that contribute to the exploitation of the downtrodden wherever and whenever opportunity comes: "the vast military empires of the shark / And the tiger." The denizens of such states have been timidified to such an extent that they expect redemption to come from "some vague source that would come down from above in the shape of "a dove or / A furious papa or a wild engineer." This regression into prayer or wishful thinking amounts to indulging in escap-

ism that never works. Life does not reply, it is one's heart that speaks. The heart being symbolic of the masses — the common man on the street — people who are "easily-duped", who do the same kind of things that most folks do, who "vow to be / Good", who repeat "humorous" stories, who do business, who value their marriages and who listen to others — and who for all their ordinariness are capable of rising up to the occasion. It is after identifying himself with such ordinary souls that Auden through a voice makes the "proposal" for building "the Just City" and presumes that they would "agree" because the other alternative is a "suicide pact / the romantic / Death." The poet being optimistic "presumes that the paradise envisioned by Marx is now possible, that at least man has removed himself from the pressure of necessity and can, if he wants, control his fate."¹⁴

At this stage of the poem it becomes obvious that men after all do recognize that they have to forge their own destiny, make choices, take action, win freedom and make history. For such persons the clear "choice" and "decision" was "Spain" — the place where history beckoned. This decision of ordinary mortals to stand for Spain was not a secret one and it drew support from places as far off as Africa. Auden tries to canvass support for the Republicans by reminding his readers that among others there were people who dwelled "in the corrupt heart of the city" and yet had their minds and hearts in the right place — that they had "migrated like gulls or the seeds of a flower" to Spain to fight against fascism.¹⁵ Auden's rhetoric assumes the power of a whirlwind, cutting across a wide- cross-section of places and enumerating the difficulties that were faced by those who wanted to join the historic struggle: "They floated over the ocean; / They walked the passes: they came to present their lives." It is an assertion as much for rallying support as a warning to the enemies about the degree of aggression and firmness of intent that the zealous revolutionaries possessed.

After talking about "Today" Auden moves on to the next section of the poem, "Tomorrow", but continues to mount pressure on the people, and wishes to impress upon them that many indulgences that meant so much to individuals could be postponed in favour of the great cause. To convince the people of Spain's just cause and

its value for making existence more meaningful Auden pokes fun at those divergences in which some people were entangled to such an extent that they sometimes were unable to canalise their energies in the area where it was required most.

After providing a witty stimulus Auden gets serious by attempting to ignite latent heroism — play on the tendency and urge towards action in men. This he does by talking about the adventurous risks to life involved — that touches one's manhood and tendency to display bravery: "the inevitable increase in the chances of death." If he makes fun of writers earlier in the poem — the "startled" poet in whose poems "loose waterfalls, sing compact" —, he beseeches them to expend their energies on writing "ephemeral" pamphlets in support of Spain and while he does this he also amusingly hints at the necessity of Marxist style: "boring" meetings that disseminate ideologically loaded propaganda, something "Marxists were disturbed by."¹⁶ The struggle for Spain was not meant to be an individual effort but a collective one in which one was part of a loving and sharing brotherhood of freedom fighters symbolised in the poem by: "the shared cigarette", "cards in the barn", "the scraping concert", "masculine jokes" and the "Fumbled and unsatisfactory embrace before" inflicting blows on the dictatorship supporters. Here, individuals or "all I's" meet and grow in the community formed by social action."¹⁷ After boosting the morale of the soldiers of democracy, he ends with a note of caution and warning about the grimness of war — "the stars are dead" — and that the authoritarian, insensitive conservatives would not "look" or rather think before striking them in the dark. Worse than the likelihood of being killed in the war was the possibility of defeat because the defeated are objects of pity and while they are reduced to a pitiable state they are hounded, persecuted, killed and vilified along with all that they stand for, forever, which is history as described by the quotation — "lines Auden regretted in 1965 as 'wicked doctrine.'"¹⁸

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UTOPIAN INCLINATION IN WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS

Ashok Kumar Tyagi

William Dean Howells is regarded as one of the greatest realists in American fiction. It was he who opposed the cult of sentimentality, which restricted the growth of the American novel. He was a great realist in that he explored those aspects of the nineteenth-century American life which were seldom touched earlier. This is why his novels have engrossed the readers for all these years. No wonder Carl Van Doyen's observation that "Howells produced in his four score books the most considerable transcript of American life"¹ is not far from truth.

Without differing from the above proposition, it may be suggested that Howells is a realist with a difference, "a mildly realistic novelist."² O.W. Farkins remarks that his comprehensive idea of realism is well reflected in his forty novels :

Adultery is never pictured; seduction never; divorce once and sparingly; marriage discordant to the point of cleavage, only once and in the same novel with the divorce; crime only once with any fullness; politics never; religion passingly and superficially; science only in crepuscular psychology; mechanics, athletics, bodily exploits or collisions very rarely.³

The above statement manifests that some of the realistic themes, which intrigue us in life, are missing in his novels. Hence his realism suffers from some limitations. It does not project with intensity those realistics of life which the naturalists and the realists of Howells' age were attempting to place before the reader. His realism is a mellowed one. He once said that "his novels were a response to the needs of his generation."⁴ His remark reveals this consciousness of the period, particularly of the American history, which he was attempting to portray. Then America was altering with rapidity, its population grew double, and the shift in the scene was from the rural to the urban. Vast industrial enterprises rose in number, resulting in the slums of the proletariat in big cities. Even the farmer was discontented as he became a prey to human evils. There was new zone for new settlements because even the western territory was occupied by the immigrants. Howells had to write for this historical

scenario. Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* presents a graphic picture of the new social setting of this historical epoch of the United States.

As a true American novelist, Howells believed in America's novel virtues. His realism was concerned with the common place nature of its society. He wrote about people who could be seen every day: "The divine American average, who were not murderers, seducers, burglars, prostitutes, nor princes in disguise, nor unwilling heirs to fortunes and estates."⁵ He portrayed people who fell in love and married without any idea of unalloyed happiness. Besides, his Americans were worried about their jobs and positions and were conscious of class distinctions. They were ever confronted with moral decisions. Thus, it is obvious that his interest was in moral bias of the Americans. He chose a problem and sought its solution. He had no taste for the realism which the French novelists like Zola adhered to. Despite his friendship with Mark Twain and Henry James, he did not approve of their realism.

Since the scenario in the American history was changing with the rise of industrialism and capitalism, Howells became a socialist with Tolstoy as his guide. Hence he described the moral decay of the competitive society. As a result, his earlier realism grew mild and inclined towards utopianism. It may be discerned in his concern for social reforms. He became a social visionary in the sense that he wanted to save the American society from the ills which were creeping into it owing to the industrial expansion of America. In those days, America followed the best democratic norms, yet it was relapsing into hierarchical order owing to the industrial advance in the same way as was witnessed in the European communities. Howells showed a strong dislike for this change. As the editor of the *Atlantic* and later of the *Cosmopolitan*, he accepted for publication only those articles which suggested social reforms based on ethical principles. In his own essays and articles, he showed the seriousness and sincerity of the highest order and passed comments to vitalize social and mental health. His articles entitled "Equality as the Basis of Good Society", "The Nature of Liberty" and "Who are our Brethren?", published between 1890 and 1905, exemplify his social conscience.

The utopian and the real emerged on the surface in some of his best novels. It is perceived when the disparity between them is marked by the reader. In some of his novels, he attempted to bring about social harmony. As Van Wyck Brooks remarks, his novels are "full of households."⁶ His concern for society often involved the theme of good family relations with its unity. But these families were threatened by feuds and strikes, resulting in their dissolution. They developed no generous understanding. His novel, *A Modern Instance*, brings out a case of family dissolution due to the moral turpitude of the husband, Bartley Hubbard, and the uncontrolled self-indulgence of his wife, Maria Gaylord. Contrarily, Howells' *Their Wedding Journey* and *The Rise of Silas Lapham* illustrate how the families of the Marches and the Laphams rise above dissensions to live their happy lives. In some other novels, Howells dealt with those economic problems which ruined national harmony. For example, competition in a capitalist society is ever inimical to the growth of a nation and its citizens. In *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, the rise is never economic but moral. Competitive capitalism has roused the sensitive soul of its protagonist, Silas Lapham, who presents a case of business failure for his determination "not to sell his virtually worthless Western property to a groups of British dreamers" merely for money's sake, and who "symbolically affirms the relevance of utopian ideal, and he thus, in the bankruptcy which results from his decision, achieves his success."⁷ Similarly, Brice Maxwell in *The Quality of Mercy*, Reverend Peck in *Anie Kilburn*, and Lindau in *A Hazard of New Fortunes* are some other Howells' characters, who symbolise moral life instead of the competitive one of the American capitalism. Above all, David Hughes in *The World of Chance* attempts to establish his own utopian community, based on the ideals of equality and justice, although he meets with failure because of the gulf between dream and reality. The novels referred to above are realistic but with echoes of utopian ideals in respect of their themes and characterisation.

What distinguishes Howells as a truly utopian novelist is *A Traveller from Altruria* (1854), which is "a utopian romance that brings together Howells' ideas in the defence of liberty, equality and frater-

nity in that altruistic other land."⁸ Aristedes Homos, who is the traveller from the utopian commonwealth of Altruria, stands for the ideals which already existed in the American tradition of the pre-industrial period. He is the incarnation of the social dreamer or he himself is Howells the social critic. In an American hotel where all the specimens of the American pomp and prejudice assemble, Homos exposes how selfish competition has eaten into the American community and resulted in the degradation of morality into business exigency and a new and worse wage-enslavement of labour. This proves how "America is Egoria."⁹ Twelvemough, who is present in the hotel gathering, feels astonished at the presence of Homos the Altrurian and his words, "Was he merely a sort of spiritual solvent, sent for the moment to precipitate whatever sincerity there was in us, and show us what the truth was concerning our relations to each other?"¹⁰ Eleventh Strange, who is so fascinated towards Homos, reports to him her alienation in life and lays bare her heart, saying "I loathe my luxury from the bottom of my soul and long to be rid of it, if I only could, without harm to others and with safety to myself."¹¹ She has planned her marriage with Homos, which at the last moment remains inconclusive. Another utopian romance of Howells, *Through the Eye of the Needle* (1907), a sequel to *A Traveller from Altruria*, continues the same theme in the midst of progressive pastures of the land. In this novel, Eveleth pursues Homos on his homeward journey and marries him to become a second Eve in the Eden of Altruria, where there is the kingdom of heaven upon the earth. Thus this utopian novel recounts the stages of regeneration of an American girl, who is unlike those who make money to build up possessions only to recognise one day their utter alienation and doom.

W.D. Howells is a queer sort of novelist because he is not so much concerned with life as portrayed by Zola, Ibsen, Dostoevsky and Hawthorne, but with that life as delineated by Tolstoy, William Morris, Bellamy and the Fabians. He has been widely read in the utopian literature. He has gone through such works as Swedenborg's *New Jerusalem* and Hale's *Sybaris* and *Ten Times Ten is one*. Once he wrote to Hale: "Conditions cannot be bettered except through the

unselfishness you enjoin, the immediate altruism with what now is. The best that is in men cannot come out till they all have a fair chance".¹² Owing to his utopian inclination, Howells became a member of Bellamy's Nationalist Party, and many Social Gospel Ministers were his friends. He warmly praised Bliss's Christian socialists. He had a strong belief in millennium which he regarded as the reign of Christliness on the earth. He also believed in the prospects of socialism in America and hoped that "we may find our nation heading on the road to the ideal commonwealth."¹³ Hence, utopia is an ever present possibility to him, but it lies in human will and effort. He felt like David Hughes, who says in *The World of Chance* that "the way to have the golden age is to elect it."¹⁴

But Howells' sense of reality is never so weak as to be totally swayed by his utopian inclination. He wants to imagine such a utopia as may be within human reach, practicable and realisable. His dream for utopia is not guided by pleasure but by reality and possibility. It is because he stands for the smiling aspects of life. The sense of reality has never loosened its hold of him. He knows very well what the power of environment and the force of history are. As Putney says of Northwich in *The Quality of Mercy*, Howells too cannot retreat from this belief. Howells also has the intimate knowledge of evil and also of man's heroism to fight against it. He has learnt from his counterparts the assertion of individual will and its conflict with social forces, generally resulting in strike, tragedy and doom. All this is not discernible in an ideal commonwealth of utopia which offers only a regulated society. Howells is inspired by the idea of progress associated with dynamic efforts, heroic acts and human virtues such as sacrifice and suffering, self-assertion and bravery. With all this in his mind, Howells cannot be expected to write novels that project ideal but impracticable utopian world. No wonder he has written novels grounded in hard realities of human existence, though definitely with leanings towards utopian aspirations.

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A NEW LIFE: ANIMA AS THE CURVE TO WHOLENESS

Vijay Tyagi

This paper is an attempt to study the different stages and nuances of anima, to collage and categorize the images, symbols, dreams and fantasies found in the novel, and to show the archetypal ictus and activation of the anima which becomes vibrant in the psyche of Levin. Anima is the feminine principle, *tatva*, in man's psyche. She becomes available to him through his preference for certain women and recoils from others. Anima also manifests herself in dreams, fantasies, and in-depth meditation. First, I will deal with the erotic phase of Levin's quest for his anima. The quest is implicitly present from the beginning, but it comes to the foreground only after his transference with Pauline. Thereafter I will focus on the mother anima transference of Levin on her because she primarily manifests herself in the image of mother nature. Nature in its elemental form represents the all-giving mother; through this aspect of transference he realizes the feminine component of his psyche. And finally, I will deal with the Transformative aspect of anima because Pauline leads him to undergo a deep change; his commitment to anima becomes profound and deep. Their relationship is Transformative because it changes their attitudinal perceptions and value system without inhibiting their personal and collective growth, and also provides them with security and growth.

Before beginning the praxis of the anima and its various stages, a brief story of the novel is given to facilitate the analysis. *A New Life*, published in 1961 is Bernard Malamud's most convincing novel. As the title suggests, the novel is about wasted past and the resolve to begin a new life. The story is mainly focused on the relationship between Levin and Pauline against the background of the English Department of the college, its staff and their families. Levin is a Jew from New York with a murky past. His father was a thief and died in prison, while his mother was a neurotic and committed suicide. He becomes a drunkard for about two years and lives in filthy cellars, but a sudden insight awakens him and he develops

faith in literature, which enlarges his consciousness. He does his M.A at the age of thirty, leaves his wayward life, becomes a man of principles, joins a college in North Western State and starts teaching English. At the college he is drawn into an illicit relationship with his boss's wife Pauline, and their affair becomes intense and culminates in their consummation at Cascadia forests. However, she holds herself guilty of having neglected her husband and their adopted children, but after some resistance she decides to divorce her husband in order to live with Levin. After initial hesitancy he decides to marry her and also becomes ready to take on the responsibility of her two kids. He is dismissed from the college, but he leaves for a new life with Pauline who is pregnant by him.

As mentioned earlier, the first stage consists of the erotic movement of Levin towards the anima. On coming to Cascadia he discovers that the ethos of the college and town makes him lonely; he desires friendship and love but gets none in the town. In his quest for love he gets involved in unusual situations. He and a Syrian student Sadek visit a beer tavern in Eastchester "on the prowl for a woman"¹ Sadek makes overtures towards Laverene, the waitress of the tavern. The waitress takes him instead of Sadek to the barn in the countryside, but in the barn he gets sexually inhibited and does not make love to her despite her offering herself and even pleading "let's finish what we are doing"(p.76). In the meantime, before he could come out with his suggestion of a better place for love making, Sadek comes and runs away with their clothes and Laverene too leaves in a agitated mood, shouting at him, "...you bastard, don't ever let me see you again in your whole god dam life. Don't think those whickers on your face hide that you ain't a man"(p.78).

Levin keeps having scores of unsuccessful encounters on the instinctual undifferentiated anima level. He again fails to consummate with Avis Felis in his chamber just because he notices some hard spot under her breast that hurts her while he fondles them. On another occasion, much against his wishes, he succumbs to the charm of his student Nadalee; he "could not keep from desiring her — to consume her and be consumed"(p.122). He fights a losing battle with his primal passion. One day in his office "Nadalee, im-

perceptibly leaning forward, nuzzled her hard breast against Levin's lonely elbow (p.121) and the mere touch of her breast activates his long suppressed libido. Even this affair turns sour because he once again puts on the persona of idealism. His guilt is revealed in his fantasy in which he enacts the role of Oedipus to Nadalee:

He was her old man and had watched her grow from a thing in dirty diapers. At twelve she was menstruating; on her eighteenth birthday Levin married her off to a successful lawyer, to whom she bore seven children in six years, all boys. Her father, ever a man to be tempted by every damned temptation life had plugged him full of sockets and it took only a slight breeze to make a connection- was safe and sound in her invasive presence, until by a dirty stroke of fate (try as he would Levin-pere. could not reverse it) the lawyer expired of a heart attack from overwork. But Nadalee was financially provided for, so Levin went off to Europe to live, traveling country to country this side the iron curtain. It couldn't be said he didn't enjoy his life, though where exactly was home? Several years later, in Sevilla- he was then fifty six- half drunk on val de Penas one festival night before the corrida, he met this masked beauty at costume ball. One tango led to another, the dance to a sense of fundamental intimacy- what after all, is dance? So, whispering together -Levin confessing most of his sins, including advancing age, the senorita saying nothing of importance- they left for his suite at the Hilton.... Then they made love. The masked beauty refused- despite the inconvenience, which she argued was tit for tat for his grizzled beard- to remove her disguise until it was unalterably too late. When he looked at her face at dawn, he groaned at the misery he had committed. Levin there upon put out both eyes threw himself off a high cliff into the shark-infested sea (pp.123-124).

Levin's symbolic incest has to be understood in terms of his moral uprightness and value-orientated vision. Considering the strength of the desire for incest, the taboo generates expansion and transformation. His sexual encounters with three different women — Laverne, Avis and Nadalee — make him lonely and empty. Every time he tries making love he fails because of his over idealization of time, place, romantic flavors and aesthetic nuances. It will be pertinent to point out that his ambivalence to love is the result of his "unlived life"(p.123) and by denying love to himself he becomes morbid and sinks into further depths of despair, "into sadness, and old kind"(p.145). He remains in the state of depression on his bed with no company, gives up all hopes of a 'new life' and regresses

to his unhappy memories.

Levin's traumatized childhood, wayward adulthood, recent dissatisfying encounters with women, and health make him feel utterly hopeless. At this difficult juncture of his life when he is battling all alone and lying ill in his room, to his surprise Pauline comes to his rescue like a friend and mother, and brings to him "Nose drops, antihistamine, vitamin C"(p.146). She sits near him, nurses him with tenderly affection and her presence makes him feel better. Anima's very presence heals him and this psychic healing is not only evident in him but also in his surroundings. Levin begins to feel that she is the one who can fill up his unfulfilled needs and he can trust her in difficult times.

The second stage concentrates on mother- anima transference of Levin on Pauline and their entire relationship in all its range and scope. They meet for the first time at Cascadia railway station and in just a few minutes of their meeting she makes him sit in the front of her husband's car, "She sat between them" (p.69) he is driven to their home and there by chance he drops "a hot gob of tuna fish and potato into his lap"(p.13) Pauline makes Levin change into Gerald's trousers. Her suggestive gestures and her insistence in persuading him to change into her husband's clothes take on a rich symbolic meaning later on. He is fascinated by her grace and energy, and they begin to trust each other. In one dinner party she asks him, "... doesn't it look like a ship from here, and here we are, you and I, on an island in the middle of the sea?"(p.162) This epiphany of Pauline is archetypal and meaningful: the island signifies their alienation from the world and the ship forefigures their union, which eventually takes place in the wood and their journey out of Cascadia.

Levin is overwhelmed by the mystery of nature that awakens his dormant anima. Mythically speaking, Pauline becomes a nymph watching him (Pan) in anticipation. This chance encounter with her in the jungle stirs his long repressed, idealized instincts:

Their eyes met, although he obsessively expected a veil, there was none, and Levin beheld an expression of such towards each other, their bodies hitting as they embraced.

' Dear God ', Pauline murmured. Her kiss buckled his knees. Pauline

undresses in the forest she removed a black undergarment, the mask unmasked. Lying on the coats, Pauline raised her hips and drew back skirt, to Levin the most intimate and beautiful gesture ever made for him.(p. 174)

For the first time in her Levin experiences a woman so deeply; to adopt a Lawrence phrase, he feels her in the body of his body. He experiences rapturous purity in his meeting and mating Pauline, and no guilt: "If he expected uneasiness after the fact, he felt none. When he searched her eyes for guilt he was distracted by their light and warmth. He held the umbrella over their heads, his arm around her waist" (p.174).

Seen in the perspective of Levin's erotic, dissatisfying and abortive sexual episodes with different women, this encounter in the woods vindicates his deep involvement with Pauline. He had always sought comfort and succor in nature because he experienced his mother negatively in his childhood. Therefore, in his adult life nature becomes his surrogate mother. This is one of the reason that he establishes contact with his Yin, the feminine component of his psyche, in the idyllic setting surrounded by flowers, trees, leaves, and scattered sunlight. He "felt himself lifted high and plummeted over violet hills towards an unmapped abyss. Through fields of stars he fell in love. Love? Levin eventually sighed" (p.188). This reverie of Levin is almost surrealistic in symbology for it marks the overcoming of his ideals, hesitation and ego. He surrenders to nature, to his anima in this vision and immediately after this he enters into a rich and tender relationship with Pauline, who has become nature personified and the Eros aspect of anima for him.

After their consummation, he tells her about his traumatic childhood and the humiliation of his past. Like most of Malamud's protagonists, Levin too has a 'deficit personality' to use Abraham Maslow's term. He has lived a traumatized life because of the void created in his psyche by the early death of his parents and this has turned him into an alcoholic leading a meaningless life. For all practical purposes he is an orphan and this results in his regressive search for the missing key, which he finally seeks and finds in Pauline with whom he relates on the anima level and she too gives Levin the love, warmth and protection of the mother that he has never

experienced. Like every male, he too carries within his psyche an archetypal image of woman.

Gradually their relationship becomes transformative, grows deeper and profound. In fact, they reach this stage only after anchoring themselves in the reality and vicissitudes of the external collective. Levin's relationship with Pauline graduates into more realistic and functional coagulation. He sees a vision and travels in the world of healers, saints and reformers. He becomes the king and hermit and "had visions of service to other, the truest of freedom, a secret he had unlocked. He lived everywhere. Every country he came to be his own, a matter of understanding history. In Africa he grafted hands on the poor. In India he touched the untouchables. In America he opened the granaries and freed the slaves" (p.236). This vision is altruistic in symbology; he visualizes himself as the new Gandhi improving the living conditions and status of the untouchables of India. Levin moves forward after experiencing his anima into the realm of cosmic love and leaves behind his erotic cravings. He begins to respond with generosity to people around him. He also starts treating his students as adults. He overcomes all his negative feelings for Pauline; he realizes that they were based on deprivation, loneliness and alienation of his childhood. He now completely trusts her, "I have no cause now not to love her" (p.29). She guides him, heals his early traumas and inspires him to become an activist, fighter and her savior. He becomes confident and his past no more bothers him. The relationship between him and her dissolves their personal and collective blocks through reciprocal participation in the life of each other. Their Transformative relationship is both sustained and nurtured by fostering genuine dialogue and authentic communication with each other, the absence of which makes growth totally defunct. Psychodynamically speaking, the actual change in their relationship comes after they reclaim their projection, dissolve their imago and achieve integration. Individuals seeking Transformative relationship keep exchanging between themselves the twin roles of analyst and analysand. In this state commitment becomes a joy and psychic engagement a palpable reality. The individuals concerned develop an alchemical bonding.

Finally, when Gerald dissuades Levin from marrying her by exposing her emotional instability, her frequent ailments and melancholic nature, he tells him: "An older woman than yourself and not dependable plus two adopted kids, no choice of yours, no promise of one, and other assorted headaches"(p.310). But he does not deter and replies: "... because I can, you son of a Bitch"(p.310). This brief but powerful rebuff shows that Levin has changed and is prepared to take on the responsibilities of a husband, father, lover and provider, and under the influence of his anima Pauline he experiences an awareness of the reality of the other person. Thus he is able to cross the boundaries of carnal love and commits to family life, marries Pauline and adopts her children.

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¹Bernard Malamud, *A New Life* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1987), p.69.

All references to this novel are from this edition and are incorporated hereafter in the text in parentheses.

THE IMAGE OF A BLACK IN THE POETRY OF LANGSTON HUGHES

Ajay Kumar Shukla

Langston Hughes is one of the prominent Afro-American writers of the present times. He is a versatile genius and his writing comprises poetry, fiction, short story, autobiography and criticism. He began his literary career during Harlem Renaissance, and has established himself as a significant poet writing for the rights of his race. As a public poet, he normally uses the personal pronoun to weld himself tightly to his people, making his voice their voice. In his poetry he chiefly concentrates on the story of the Blackman in America: his joys, sorrows and hopes. Poetry to him is a form of social action. It is the human soul entirely squeezed like a lemon or lime drop by drop into atomic words. A poet, he observes, is a human being and each human being must live within his time with and for his people and within the boundaries of his country. He is a poet of blues and jazz, and one of the trademarks of the blues as adapted by Hughes is the ability to see humour in life's serious moments. The pathetic plight of the Black is described but with a sense of optimism for the better world that will come some day.

In the *ante-bellum* America a Black was lynched, degraded, condemned and looked down upon leading to the bruising of his ego and the distortion of his self image. There was not a marked improvements in the life of a Black in the post-Civil War America. In America he always faces racial discrimination in every walk of life. Here he is deracinated, exiled, alienated, "invisible", "worthless". America to him is a cage, a zoo, a circus, a gory monster cannibal and a syphilitic whore. It is a cold, joyless wilderness. Here he is tormented by restlessness, pennilessness, joblessness, weariness and loneliness. Negroes are termed by Kingsley Davis in his *Human Society* (1949) as "American untouchables". Since the poet himself has been a victim of racial discrimination, his description of a Negro is always very realistic and authentic. The poem "Restrictive covenants" shows a Negro as American untouchable: "When I Move / into a neighborhood / Folks fly."¹ The poem "Porter" draws a very pathetic picture of a Negro:

I must say
 Yes, sir,
 To you all the time.
 Yes, sir!
 All my days
 Climbing up a great big mountain
 Of Yes, Sir!²

Sharecroppers, cotton pickers and other rural laborers, regardless of how hard they work, will remain in drastic poverty. The poem "The Town of Scottsboro" records it graphically. Most of the Negroes identify themselves with vagabonds consumed by starvation and misery. A Negro is like an old black mule who has a grin on his face and has forgotten "about his race."³ He is "Shrunken like a balloon without air."⁴ In the poem "Blind" he imagines as if he were blind for whom both Black and White are the same. A Black is living in an uncongenial atmosphere. The poem "One" describes his profound sense of loneliness: "...lonely / as a bottle of lick / on a table / all by itself."⁵ Life to him seems very burdensome and monotonous:

Today like yesterday
 Tomorrow like today
 The drip drip of monotony
 Is wearing my life away.⁶

A Black is not fit to live in this world because this world is meant only for "the rich" or "will be rich" or for "always been rich."⁷ He is attracted towards death. In the poem "Exits", he is tempted towards the deep sea, the sharp knife and the poisonous acid for "they all bring peace / For which the tired / Soul yearns".⁸ In "Prayer for a Winter Night", a request is made to "Great God of cold and winter"⁹ to freeze all those poor who have not enough cover to keep them warm nor food enough to keep them strong.

A Black is generally lynched for minor infractions. The usual excuse for lynching a Black man is that he has raped a white woman; "No I did not touch her / white flesh ain't for me."¹⁰ A Black is also lynched because he speaks of freedom:

Last week they lynched a colored boy,
 They hung him to a tree
 That colored boy ain't said a thing

But we all should be free.¹¹

Whatever the excuse, ultimately Blacks are lynched because they are powerless and have none but God to protect them. This is found in "Song for a Dark Girl":

Way down South in Dixie
I asked the white Lord Jesus
What was the use of prayer.¹²

Lynching is the ultimate weapon of the Southern terror. The South with its lynchings is, in the poet's view, the measure of America. The ugliness, cruelty and malice of the South is brought out in the poem "The South":

Beautiful like a woman
Seductive as a dark-eyed whore,
Passionate, cruel,
Honey lipped, syphilitic —
That is the South.
And I, who am Black would love her
But She spits in my face.¹³

A Black moves to the North from the South and thus the 'Great Migration' takes place. He goes to the North because he thinks that the North is a "Kinder mistress"¹⁴ and here his children may escape the spell of the South. But the picture of the North is much more disappointing. Hughes says in "Migration": "At first they are nice to him / But finally they taunt him / And call him "nigger".¹⁵

In his poetry we have a picture of a Black who wails over his future because of his divided inheritance. Since he is a mulatto, he is accepted neither by his white father nor by his black race. In the chapter "Poetry" in his autobiography, *The Big Sea*, Hughes writes that his interest in such problems began in Lawrence where he played with a blond boy whose mother was coloured and whose father was white. He has produced many works on this theme and his mullato group consists of two poems, "Cross" and "Mulatto", a full-length drama called *Mulatto*, two short stores "Father and Son" and "African Morning", and an opera named *The Barrier*. The last four lines of the poem "Cross" can be cited here:

My old man died in a fine big house
My ma died in a shack.
I wonder when I'm gonna die,
Being neither White nor Black?¹⁶

For a Black the Whites are always synonymous with apathy, callousness and ruthlessness. Since they stand for affluence, there is always a latent longing in every Black to be White. Even though a Black is meek and docile, he is oppressed. In "The White Ones" he says: "I do not hate you, ...Why do you torture me?"¹⁷ Again, in "White Man" he says:

Sure I know You!
You are a white man.
I'm a Negro
You take all the best jobs
And leave us the garbage cans to empty.¹⁸

Despite all these torments, a Black is taught by Hughes the message of endurance. No matter how hard the life is, a Black should lead it 'not without laughter.' There should always be 'laughing to keep from crying'. In the poem "The minstrel Man", the speaker has a deep agony in his soul but outwardly he looks happy. The feeling of emancipation is deeply rooted in the heart of a Black and it can never be crushed by the White power. In the poem "Freedom" the speaker says that by burning books freedom can not be burnt; by imprisoning Nehru freedom cannot be imprisoned; and by lynching a Negro freedom cannot be lynched. He then asserts:

But freedom
Stands up and laughs
In their faces
And says
You will never kill me!¹⁹

The poet says that the time is not far when Negroes will break their long and suppressed heroic silence and explode with violence. His poem "Warning" is specially notable in this context. Again, in "Pride" the overtones of violence are explicit:

For honest work
You prefer me poor pay,
For honest dreams
Your spit is in my face.
And so my fist is clenched
Today
To strike your face.²⁰

Being a distinguished poet of New Negro Renaissance, Hughes inaugurated the distinct movement of "negritude". Africa in his po-

etry is not shown as a primitive land, a source of shame and hatred but as a symbol of pride and reverence. A Black is taught not to be "afraid of light" because he is a "child of night". Hughes followed Garvey's Negro racist philosophy and rejected the philosophy of George S. Schuyler. Garveyism outrightly rejected Jim Crowism and gave the slogan "Africa for the Africans". Just as Rousseau during the Romantic movement gave the slogan of "Back to Nature", similarly Marcus Garvey, a native of West Indies gave the slogan of "Back to Africa" during the Harlem Renaissance.

Hughes romanticizes and idealizes his race less for the sake of love and more for changing the image of a Negro in the eyes of the Whites. In his essay, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain", he condemns those Blacks who wanted to become poets but not the Black poets. Hughes presents a deep feeling of racial pride in "My people":

The night is beautiful
So the faces of my people
The stars are beautiful
So the eyes of my people
Beautiful also is the sun
Beautiful are the souls of my people.²¹

The same is reflected in the poem "Negro". Then, we have the celebration of black beauty in the poem "To the Black Beloved":

Ah,
My black one,
Thou art not beautiful
Yet thou hast
A loveliness
Surpassing beauty.²²

In the poem "Color" he celebrates black color, infuses pride and confidence in the Blacks. Far from self pity and self-rejection, he wears the color of his skin not like "a shroud but a banner for the proud like a song soaring high."²³ The poem "Me and My Song" is a tribute to Africa. Africa is glorified and he pays his humble regards for Africa because there lies his ancestry. It is because of Africa that he is inspired to compose this song.

A true representative and a follower of Black nationalism, Hughes inspires the Blacks to "Reach up your hand, dark boy, Take a star."²⁴ He continues this idea in the poem, "To Be Somebody". A

time, he believes, will come when

Nobody will dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the Kithchen"
then.
Besides 'll see
How beautiful I am
and be ashamed
I too am America.²⁵

He teaches his race the optimistic philosophy, and says in the poem "Dusk": "... walls have been known / to fall / Dusk turn to dawn / And chains be gone."²⁶

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¹*The collected Poems of Langston Hughes*, ed. Arnold Rampersad and David Rossej Asso (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1994), p.361.

²*ibid.*, p.116.

³*ibid.*, p.239.

⁴*ibid.*, p.31.

⁵*ibid.*, p.234.

⁶*ibid.*, p.31.

⁷*ibid.*, p.48.

⁸*ibid.*, p.38.

⁹*ibid.*

¹⁰*ibid.*, p.127.

¹¹*ibid.*, p.227.

¹²*ibid.*, p.104.

¹³*ibid.*, p.26.

¹⁴*ibid.*

¹⁵*ibid.*, p.36.

¹⁶*ibid.*, p.58.

¹⁷*ibid.*, p.37

¹⁸*ibid.*, p.194.

¹⁹*ibid.*, p.289.

²⁰*ibid.*, p.310.

²¹*ibid.*, p.36.

²²*ibid.*, p.21

²³*ibid.*, p.290.

²⁴*ibid.*, p.8.

²⁵*ibid.*, p.46

²⁶*ibid.*, p.193.

THE DISCOURSE OF RESISTANCE IN WOMEN'S POETRY OF INDIA AND CANADA

Nirmaljeet Oberoi

The discursive resistance embodied in women's expressivity has acquired a global recognition. The paper analyses the poetry of Indian and Canadian women poets — the poets of the third world and first world respectively — eschewing the surface level differences and distance between the subalterns of the two worlds. The belief that internalized modes of gender division and subordination constitute the socio-cultural matrix of both the worlds, is the substratum of the paper. Under the labyrinth of gender issues lurk the consciousness of oppression of women and their resistance against it — the two issues transgressing temporal and spatial boundaries, and forming the secret sisterhood of women's literary sub-culture in which they share similar poetic sensibility. Geographical, historical and socio-cultural differences may create different and distinct attitudes and reactions but at the core of women's poetry the dominant and unifying note is of resistance. The ambivalence of difference and similarity is aptly expressed by Dorothy Livesay in her poem 'The Three Emilys':

These women crying in my head

walk alone, uncomforted

The Emilys, these three

cry to be set free —

And others whom I will not name

Each different, each the same. (*Poetry by Canadian Women*, p.52)

The paper considers the position of women as that of the colonized and the patriarchal culture as the colonizer. Women, in many societies, have been relegated to the position of "other", marginalized and colonized. Women, like post-colonial people, have had to construct a language of their own when their only available tools are those of the colonizer. Both the groups are ex-centric and powerless in the male dominated society. The oppressor in the colonial framework is Europe and in women's (literary) discourse — the patriarchal culture, against which they resist.

Resistance is a much used term in post/colonial discourse. It has usually connoted armed rebellion, inflammatory tracts, pug-

nacious oratory, racial, cultural and political animosity:

...resistance is a word which adapts itself to a great variety of circumstances, and a few words show a greater tendency towards cliché and empty rhetoric, as it has become increasingly used as a catch all word to describe any kind of political struggle. But if we think of resistance as any form of defence by which an invader is 'kept out', the subtle and sometimes even unspoken forms of social and cultural resistance have been much more common.

(Ashcroft 2001:20)

The paper concerns itself with the discursive networks of cultural dominance — the dominance of patriarchal culture over women who form the powerless and colonized group. The ideology of resistance, underlying the marginal position of women, is articulated in various modes. The exploitative nature of patriarchal culture, the overweening assumption of socio-cultural, economic and moral authority for male dominance over women is/was a constant motive for resistance. Postcolonialism, postmodernism and feminism have all been actively engaged in dialogue for theoretical formulations of identity — ethnic, communal and cultural identities of the ex-centric/the subaltern/the other. Corroborating to the same assumption Cudjoe (1980) and Harlow (1987) consider resistance as an act, or a set of acts, that is designed to rid a people of its oppressors, and it so totally infuses the experience of being under pressure of oppression that it becomes an almost autonomous aesthetic principle.

In these circumstances, resistance in literature can be considered to be a form of 'contractual understanding' between text and reader, one which is rooted in an experiential dimension and buttressed by the prevalent socio-cultural and political institutions. Considering the nature of oppression and the ensuing resistance, it is assumed that the geographical location of text is only at the surface level, it is the experiential dimension at the deep level which generates a variety of texts, whose structures and whose referential codes are widely appreciated and understood. According to Stephen Slemon (1990) Cudjoe's and Harlow's theory assumes resistance in literature to be 'purely intended' and 'purely expressed'. Slemon supports post-Lacanian and post-Althusserian theories of constructedness of subjectivity and contests this assumption of Cudjoe and Harlow. However, Slemon does not seem to be decrying

the presence of resistance, it is the simplistic view of its varying intentionality and presence which he contests.

Jenny Sharpe in "Figures of Colonial Resistance" (1989) draws out two significant points:

... first, you can never easily locate the sites of anti-colonial resistance since resistance itself is always in some measure an effect of the contrary representation of colonial authority and secondly, that resistance itself is never purely resistance, never simply there in the text — but is always necessarily complicit in the apparatus it seeks to transgress.

(In Ashcroft et. al. 2001:145)

Considering the issue of 'site' of anti-colonial resistance as drawn above, I wish to point out that the gendered 'other' is most directly constructed by presenting the female body as an indelible sign of 'natural' inferiority of its possessor. The body has become a site on which oppression and resistance have struggled — the power struggles of the dominator and dominated, for possession of control and identity. The same is noted by Fanon (1952) in the context of the Negroes that their blackness of the body is a 'fact' which forces on them a heightened level of bodily self-consciousness, and it is the body which is the inescapable, visible sign of their oppression and denigration. In women's literature too, body has become a site of oppression, standing metonymically for all the visible signs of difference and their varied forms of cultural and social inscription.

The self-consciousness of body, as Fanon perceives, adopts a form of resistance. "Either I ask others to pay no attention to my skin or else I want them to be aware of it." (Fanon 1952 in Ashcroft et. al. 2001:325). "I resolved since it was impossible for me to get away from an *inborn complex*, to assert myself as a BLACK MAN" (Ibid., p.324).

The awareness and assertion of the female body as a site of oppression has been articulated by the poets of India and Canada both, giving it a universal dimension. It is within a socio-cultural environment that a woman is made to conform to the roles prescribed by the patriarchal authority. Sasmita Mohanty's poem 'wife' metaphorically presents the sexually subordinated and exploited

status of women's body:

In the courtyard
A small well
Full with sweet cold water
Whenever you need it
There to quench your thirst (In *Their Own Voice*, p.146)

Margaret Atwood's poem — 'A Women's Issue' is a chilling and authentic account of assault on woman's sexuality and body:

Exhibit C is the young girl
dragged into the bush by the midwives
and made to sing while they scrape the flesh
from between her legs, then tie her thighs
till she scabs over and is called healed.
Now each childbirth they'll cut her
open, then sew her up.
Men like tight women.
The ones that die are carefully buried.

(*Celebrating Canadian Women*, p.226)

Motherhood is assumed to be the crowning glory of womanhood; but it is 'controlled' by the strong and insensitive patriarchy. Woman's powerlessness over her body is reflected in Sandy Shreve's poem 'Abortion - For H.V.' which denudes motherhood of its glory:

My womb
one more piece
in the hospital's
monotonous
assembly line
soon scraped clean
of the thrill
to feel I can do it!
of the fears —
how could I
raise a child
alone and poorly paid.
Scraped with the same
bored precision
as are fish
when gutted
for freezing.

(*Celebrating Canadian Women*, p.38)

In a complementary poem, Behroz, E. Shroff depicts the en-

slavement of woman's body and mind both — the ultimate in human indignity:

Like a bucket of water
scraped out of a low-lying well,
a son was obtained from you. (In *Their Own Voice*, p.223)

Conscious of the body and oppressive assaults on it are questioned by Mallika Amar Shaikh in 'Megapolis I':

wife, mistress, whore
what's the difference
unless its a question of statistics
you know there's more to them than their bodies
And yet you deliberately deny it. (In *Their Own Voice*, p.5)

Cruelty of traditions further aggravates the female misery and indignity. Gita Chattopadhyay's poem 'The Ritual of Sati' articulates the dehumanization of woman by throwing her as a log of wood on a burning pyre:

a hard fist holds you down in case you/want to come back
you are going to burn here, now mount the funeral pyre.
(In *Their Own Voice*, p.32)

Poetry of both the subgroups rests on a socio-cultural matrix. In Said's orientalist manner, the patriarchal society casts woman in a mould which is most suitable to its selfish interest. According to Nemiroff (1989), "Because of near invisibility of women writers and artists in the curricula of our schools and universities most females are still exposed to a predominantly male vision of themselves and of the world at large, a vision rendered in the language of male culture." (*Celebrating Canadian Women*: XIV). Eva Fidges corroborates to this view as, "woman presented with an image in a mirror has danced to that image, in a hypnotic trance and because she thought the image was herself, it became just that." (1970:13). The urgency and intensity with which the poets feel the repression and its violence is presented through an image of a female face carved to a 'mute symbol' in Atwood's poem 'Torture':

Just this; I think of the woman
They did not kill,
Instead they sewed her face
shut, closed her mouth
to a hole the size of a straw,

and put her back on the streets,
 a mute symbol
 It does not matter where
 this was done or why or whether
 by one side or the other. (Poetry in English, p.1129)

The 'they' of Atwood's poem above and the 'we' of the ancient Indian folklore below are bound in intertextual ties as both symbolize oppression:

If you are the first to take your bath, the last
 to eat, we shall be able to say you are
 truly the daughter of a deserving father.
 A stranger takes the girl child from her mother.
 If you serve milk and rice to everyone
 and content yourself with plain rice alone
 we shall be able to say you are the proper
 daughter of a wise father.
 A stranger takes the girl child from her mother.

(Collected by B. Majumdar, tr. L. Ray in Tharu & Lalita 1991:136-37)

Oppression and resistance, bound in an inseparable discursive bond, result in covert as well as overt forms of resistance. The veiled resistance is best extended in the discourse by avoiding the 'rhetorics' of resistance. The subtle resistance and the subdued tone offer 'resistance without violence' which is an effective means of resistance. Resistance which ossifies into violent opposition is often entrapped in the very binary which colonial discourse uses to keep the colonized in subjection. As Coetzee's protagonist, Dawn, puts it in *Dusklands*:

The answer to a myth of force is not necessarily counterforce, for if the myth predicts counterforce, counterforce re-inforces the myth. The science of mythography teaches us that a subtler counter is to subvert and revise the myth. (1974:24-5)

Manipulation with the poetic form, namely parody, is another effective and subtle means to counteract female subservience. Ashwini Dhongde's 'Small Ads' speaks in an iconoclastic voice:

Matrimonials
 Wanted a Bride — Height 5 ft. 3½
 Age — 21½
 very fair, delicate
 Good-looking, slim

Highly educated graduate, working woman
 (handling over all money to the husband)
 Gentle and submissive
 (able to live under her mother-in-law's thumb)
 Highborn, from a well-to-do family,
 (able to provide an excellent dowry and suitable gifts)
 Hard-working and modest
 Able to adjust to a joint family, no foolish ideas
 (the wind of 'women's lib' not having gone to her head)
 Advertising only for a better choice.

Wanted a Groom — No conditions.

(must be male)

Adult, either

Marrying for the first time or

A widower with children, anyone will do. (*In Their Own Voice*, p.62)

The female expressivity, in manipulated forms and strikingly novel and challenging discourse, gushes forward with all vehemence and urgency to unfetter the fettered. 'A Breakfast for Barbarians' by Gwendolyn Mac Ewen gives an intellectual dimension to an emotional discourse of resistance:

Let us make an anthology for recipes

Let us edit for breakfast

our most unspeakable appetites —

Let us pool spoons, knives

and all cutlery in a cosmic cuisine

Let us answer hunger

With boiled chimera

and apocalyptic tea

an arcane salad of spiced bibles

tossed dictionaries —

(*Poetry by Canadian Women*, p.162)

In the process of resistance, women adopt strategies of self-empowerment. They appropriate colonial technology/space of the empowered without being absorbed by it. Lenore Keeshing Tobias in 'Resistance' makes a categorical statement:

Well, she's not gonna

go after you

this time crying

she's gonna take a

deep breath, wash

her hair, bundle up
the kids
to go to university
for a degree in engineering.

(*Celebrating Canadian Women*, p.227)

The realization of the androgynous self and transgression into the male space without being subjected to it blends resolution with resistance — resistance which is imperative:

— Let me live, very different
from you, Mother.
Let go, make way.

(*In Their Own Voice*, p.239.)

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ANITA DESAI'S *CLEAR LIGHT OF DAY* : FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION AS A MEANS OF EMANCIPATION

**Sumitra Kukreti &
Anupam Sanny**

The last words of nailed and crucified Jesus for his betrayers and the Jews, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do,"¹ are the epitome of the greatest quality of a human being, i.e. 'forgiveness'. He forgave the people who crucified Him and that forgiveness raised his status much beyond the status of other mortal beings. Forgiveness and reconciliation are the means which provide calm and contentment to the aggrieved. This is an inherent belief of Christianity. A close study of *Clear Light of Day* evinces Anita Desai's faith in this ideology. The study of growth and development of Bim's character stands as a testimony to it. Neglected by her family and deceived by her own ambitions in them, she nurtures anger against her siblings who left her alone despite the fact that she had reared them like her own children. Her anger and bitterness against them strangles her for a long time, but her decision to forgive them brings to her peace and happiness that become the means of her emancipation at last.

It is difficult to understand one's real self but once a person analyses himself, he comes at terms with it that facilitates his journey towards divinity. Apropos of this Swami Vivekanand affirms:

Every being is divine and every soul is Sun covered over with clouds of ignorance, the difference between soul and soul is owing to the difference in density of these layers of clouds.³

Bim's soul is also suppressed for a shortwhile under the clouds of ignorance but the process of self-examination removes it and she attains freedom from her inner conflict. She realizes that no one is perfect in this world and to remain ignorant about one's own drawbacks is the bigger fault than to possess it. Thus, she follows the gospel of Hindu philosophy which propagates 'Atmamanthan' that suggests a man to meditate and try to recognize his true self rising above fragmentation. The spiritual light of 'self-examination' assists Bim to evaluate her own self and impels her to see the whole matter in right perspective. This is the first step to form positive view about others

which gradually paves the way for reconciliation and forgiveness.

Bim's nature is not ingrained with negative traits but her frustration and desperation begin when she realizes that despite spending her entire life for the welfare of her siblings, she does not get due recognition. She is compelled to live all alone with her mentally and physically retarded brother, Baba, in the old rented house of Delhi. She resents Raja's strong and new image of landlord that has debunked the loving relationship of brother and sister. Her anger towards him is not baseless. She suppresses all her rage, but the visit of her younger sister, Tara, once again evokes all the memories of childhood and reminds her of the selfish attitude of her brother, Raja. Tara arrives at her paternal home after twenty years of her marriage, but the unchanged state of the house fills her mind with all the childhood reveries and she wants to share them with her elder sister, Bim. But the latter's aggressive reactions reflect her indignant attitude towards past and leaves Tara stunned. Bim remarks: "I am glad, too, it [youth] is over — I never wish it back. Terrible, what it does to one—what it did to us — and one is too young to know how to cope, how to deal with that first terrible flood of life.... I never wish it back. I would never be young for anything."³ Her statement is replete with words that reflect the unpleasant picture of her childhood devoid of all happiness and parental affection.

Bim's parents did not form any substantial role in the upbringing of their children. They existed for name sake and their lives were confined only to Roshanara club. She describes her father as "the man who appeared to deal with both family and business by following a policy of neglect."⁴ Her mother, being diabetic, used to remain in bed or sit at the card table "with a suffering face tilted upwards in warning so that...[the children] did not dare to approach."⁵ Due to her mother's illness, the responsibility of rearing children was handed over to Aunt Mira, a distant relative of her mother. Her stay in the house provided a sense of security and assurance to children and by providing much needed sense of security and love she became their foster mother. Due to the presence of Aunt Mira, the children did not feel much difference in their lives after the death of their parents. They were so accustomed to their "absence that it was but

a small transition from the temporary to the permanent."⁶ Such indifferent and stagnant atmosphere of the house forced the children to seek relief and avenues of escape out of their home. Tara sought contentment in the arms of Bakul and her marriage became her means of escape. Raja was also affected with the sickening impact of the house and so he always looked for the opportunity to leave the house and get settled elsewhere. Due to all this, ultimately he turned into a selfish, self-centered being and avoided all of his responsibilities which he should fulfill after the death of parents. It is only Bim who undertakes all the responsibilities willingly and fulfills them sincerely. She admits: "... that's only for me to worry about... and the rent to be paid on the house, and five, six, seven people to be fed everyday, and Tara to be married off, and Baba to be taken care of for the rest of his life."⁷

Bim's desire for self-dependence leads her to become a lecturer in a college of Delhi. Apparently, she seems satisfied with her life but the sense of discontentment always prevails in the inner core of her heart due to the selfish and callous attitude of her siblings. She is especially perturbed by her younger brother, Raja, who had been dear and ideal to her in childhood. In adolescence, Raja's frequent visits to the house of Hyder Ali, the landlord, began to create a rift between sister and brother. Hyder Ali became Raja's ideal and to gain his admiration he started to take keen interest in Urdu literature. Naturally, Bim was not astonished by Raja's decision of going to Hyderabad. Instinctively, she knew that he would never come back. Thus, her words spoken to Baba in self-consolation reveal her frustration and desperation: "Everyone's gone, except you and I. They won't come back. We'll be alone now. But we don't have to worry about anyone now — Tara or Raja or Mira- Masi. We needn't worry now that they're all gone. We're just by ourselves and there's nothing to worry about."⁸ After his departure from Delhi, Raja gets married with Benazir, the only daughter of Hyder Ali, and assists him in running the business. He never tries to enquire about the well being of his elder sister, Bim, who has educated and reared him up and provided him everything possible after the death of their parents. But as a landlord, he writes her a letter that hurts her deeply:

You must remember that when I left you, I promised I would always look after you, Bim. When Hyder Ali Sahib was ill and making out his will, Benazir herself spoke to him about the house and asked him to allow you to keep it at the same rent we used to pay him when father and mother were alive. He agreed — you know he never cared for money, only for friendship — and I want to assure you that now that he is dead and has left all his property to us, you may continue to have it at the same rent. I shall never think of raising it or of selling the house as long as you and Baba need it.⁹

She feels insulted and cheated. It presents Raja as a meticulous and materialistic person who is not afraid of hurting his sister's emotions. The only way he expresses his gratitude to his elder sister is by assuring her 'not to increase the rent'. But the hidden message conveyed through the letter is that after the death of Hyder Ali he has acquired the status of new landlord. This letter gives such a deep shock to her that her whole life is instilled with bitterness and she lapses into the gloomy and somber world of grief.

Bim has suppressed her anger in her heart for a long time, but the questioning attitude of Tara makes her reveal the reason of her anger against Raja's attitude. When Tara insists her to attend his daughter's marriage ceremony in Hyderabad, she asks bitterly, "You say I should come to Hyderabad with you for his daughter's wedding. How can I? How can I enter his house — my landlord's house? I, such a poor tenant? Because of me, he can't raise the rent or sell the house and make a profit — imagine that. The sacrifice!"¹⁰ Tara tries to resolve the matter sympathizing with Raja. She says: "... he simply didn't know quite what he was writing. I suppose he was in a state — his father-in-law having just died, and you know how he always felt about him — and then having to take over Benazir's family business and all that. He just didn't know what he was writing."¹¹ This attitude of Tara does not resolve the matter but aggravates the fury of Bim because she has expected Tara to take her side.

Inevitably, Bim feels herself as the victim of Tara and Raja, standing in their court. They appear to her as mosquitoes that sucked her blood and "when they were full, they rose in swarms, humming away, turning their backs on her."¹² Tara's attitude towards Raja baffles her and the anger that has been simmering in her heart for a long

time erupts like a volcano. She pours all her resentment on Baba regarding the selfish and callous behaviour of her other siblings, Raja and Tara. She asks him threateningly, "Are you willing to go and live with Raja in Hyderabad?"¹³ But the indifferent and innocent gesture of Baba wins her heart and makes her realize the mistake. She gets restless and tries to search for the cause of her misbehaviour with Baba. Such introspective attitude of Bim is her first attempt to interact with her own self. The pent up memories and suppressed anger against Raja become cancerous for her. She can not wipe these impressions from her conscious mind, but rather shifts them from her conscious mind to the unconscious. Psychologists have established the fact that the moment a problem is discussed, it becomes the first step toward the solution. Bim expresses herself before Tara and she communicates her anger, frustration and disappointment to her. All this sincere communication and revelation of her feelings provide solace to her, as it acts as a natural outlet for her suppressed emotions. This is just the beginning of her purging away of emotions and purification of her soul.

In the divine light of self-examination she reassesses herself. After deep thought, she feels oneness with her siblings and admits that she has been hurt due to erroneous picture formed in her mind about others. The introspection into her own family history makes her realize their inseparable existence. She feels that Tara and Raja are her own extension and the reason of her unhappiness is her imperfect love for them:

... she saw how she loved him, loved Raja and Tara and all of them who had lived in this house with her. There could be no love more deep and full and wide than this one, she knew. No other love had started so far back in time and had had so much time in which to grow and spread. They were really all parts of her, inseparable, so many aspects of her as she was of them, so that the anger or the disappointment she felt in them was only the anger and disappointment she felt at herself. Whatever hurt they felt, she felt. Whatever diminished them, diminished her. What attacked them, attacked her. Nor was there anyone else on earth whom she was willing to forgive more readily or completely, or defend more instinctively and instantly. She could hardly believe, at that moment, that she would live on after they did or they would continue after she had ended. ¹⁴

True, pure or perfect love has no expectations. Had Bim not expected Raja and Tara to behave according to her wishes, she would have been happy. Had her ego not been hurt after receiving Raja's letter, perhaps she would have been at peace with herself. Her words are clear indication of her new awareness:

She felt only love and yearning for them all and if there were hurts, these gashes and wounds in her side that bled, then it was only because her love was imperfect and did not encompass them thoroughly enough, and because it had flaws and inadequacies and did not extend to all equally. She did not feel enough for her dead parents, her understanding of them was incomplete and she would have to work and labour to acquire it. Her love for Raja had had too much of a battering, she had felt herself so humiliated by his going away and leaving her, by his reversal of role from brother to landlord, that it had never recovered and become the tall, shining thing it had been once. Her love for Baba was too inarticulate, too unthinking: she had not given him enough thought, her concern had not been keen, acute enough.¹⁵

Thus, she decides to forgive Raja and it evokes the memories of the childhood bond of brother- sister in her heart, and it is the clear indication of her sisterly love for her brother. It proves the ideology of Napoleon that "forgiveness is creative and it springs from love. It is the ability to embrace the pain of injury to oneself, while extending one's hands in love."¹⁶ She wipes out the earlier images of Raja from her psyche and begins to take him as an average person who has adopted an easy way to make his dreams come true.

The words in the autobiography of Aurangzeb, which she has read during this period, assists her to take the right decision and come out of her inner conflict. Some lines of this book strike to her mind repeatedly: "... *strange that I came with nothing into the world and now go away with this stupendous caravan of sin!... Many were around me when I was born but now I am going alone.*"¹⁷ These lines make a deep impact on Bim's mind and she decides to forgive Raja for that unforgiving letter that she had preserved for a long time. She realizes that to lead a life of contentment, it is necessary to remove all the malice from the heart. Her first endeavor in this direction is tearing Raja's letter and finally sending a message to him to visit Delhi with his family. With this message of Bim, Tara arrives

for Moyana's wedding in Hyderabad. After Tara's departure and expressing her views to her, Bim feels contented and relaxed. She thinks: "... everything had been said at last, cleared out of the way finally. There was nothing left in the way of a barrier or a shadow, only the clear light pouring down from the sun."¹⁶

It clearly denotes that now her perception towards life has changed and she is able to visualize the world in a clear light of day. The moment of forgiveness is a divine moment for her and paves the way to emancipation. All human relations involve expectations which if remain unfulfilled ultimately lead to despair, but when love is beyond expectations then it takes the form of divine love. Bim realizes that whatever she did for her family was her duty and that to expect something in return is selfishness. Her forgiveness for Raja is the end of her expectations and selfishness. Thus, forgiveness and reconciliation are Bim's means of emancipation that turns her selfish human love into the divine one.

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KALEIDOSCOPIC CULTURAL MULTIPLICITY AND IDENTITY CRISIS IN JHUMPA LAHIRI'S *THE NAMESAKE*

Rashmi Gaur

The Namesake is the story of Gogol, a kid, whose father, after an improbable rescue in a train wreck in India, had decided to move to Boston in his early youth. It is a story in which characters have to reinvent themselves constantly in order to come to terms with a new country and its cultural concepts. When Lahiri began writing it, she wanted to focus on the experiences of a Bengali American Kid.¹ The unsettling ambivalence she herself has felt as an American-Indian, the feeling of somehow being "illegitimate in both cultures" has seeped into her novel also.² In his review S. Prasannarajan has called this novel "an enlarged variation of the same existential trauma of the culturally displaced that animates her debut, *Interpreter of Maladies*."³ Based in a country where multiculturalism normally denotes ethnicity as well as race, the novel increasingly evolves issues related with diasporic hybridity. Williams had argued that the nationally and internationally mobile intellectuals "were often so in thrall to 'market and exchange relations' as to prefer legal solutions to problems of relationship, which would be best resolved only from the lived experience of the 'rooted settlements' in which most people derive their 'communal identities.'"⁴ The characters in *The Namesake* constantly struggle with their hyphenated identity to eek out or to stick to their cultural definitions.

The protagonist of the novel lives in a deceptive world in which the sense of security is only a delicate veneer and the emotional and cultural dimensions of his acute painful sensation of exile reinforce each other. The post-modernist fragmentation of his psyche goads him to seek a desperate and illusive peace in various relationships. Lahiri is fascinated by people who have to mingle their identities with the practices of different lands in order to lead their life. The novel reminds the readers of her debut story collection not only by recapturing the motifs of some stories, but also by its rhapsodic linguistic perfection.

Lahiri begins her novel with the description of Ashima Ganguli,

a Bengali newly wed girl, who has accompanied her husband to a Boston suburb after an arranged marriage and is now expecting her first child. Lahiri is careful to stamp a precise date on some of the events of her novel. Ashima is expecting her first child in 1968. The child would be the namesake of the Russian author Nikolai Gogol as a result of some bizarre incidents, would hate his name and struggle against this identity, changing it officially to that of 'Nikhil' and living through the identity crisis of an ABCD — *American born confused deshi* — till the year 2000, when the novel ends.⁵ The novel traces the struggle of its major characters, who want to settle down in a new country but continuously face the dilemma of being foreigners. Their plight is represented by Ashima's outbursts and fears when she discovers her pregnancy. She insists on continuing with her food habits and calculates the Indian time on her hands (4). Nothing looks normal to her:

"It's not so much the pain, which she knows, somehow, she will survive. It's the consequence, motherhood in a foreign land ... she is terrified to raise a child in a country where she is related to no one, where she knows so little, where life seems so tentative and spare." (6)

Whereas her husband has accepted "all that was inevitable about the world" (14), she resents it. Through Ashima, Lahiri has narrated how the concept of nationhood is intrinsically linked with the lives and beliefs of its people, and issues of culture. Cultural issues in the novel are not present merely as subtext; they construct the major possibilities of thematic interpretation.

In *The Namesake* Lahiri has been able to recognize and present the complexities of women's lived experiences vividly. Her portrayal of characters in *The Namesake* displays what can be called, to borrow a term from Gerda Lerner, a "gender integrated" approach.⁶ She empathetically examines the details of Ashima's routine and other domestic experiences, and juxtaposes them with the trauma of cultural confusion, faced by the second generation of Indian immigrants. Ashima realizes that being a foreigner is

... a sort of life long pregnancy — a perpetual wait, a constant burden, a continuous feeling out of sorts. It is an ongoing responsibility, a parenthesis in what had once been ordinary life, only to discover that that previous life has vanished, replaced by something more complicated and demanding.

Like pregnancy, being a foreigner Ashima believes, is something that elicits the same curiosity from strangers, the same combination of pity and respect. (49-50)

Though unable to accept America as her own country, Ashima gradually adapts herself to it. After her second child she overcomes her confusion and apprehensions, and settles down to a life of child rearing. The traditional Indian concept of devoted motherhood which brands anger, dissatisfaction and indifference as unfeminine, does not allow any space to her to worry or analyze her own reactions anymore. Motherhood provides her with a defence mechanism to cope with her socio-cultural anxieties and also gives her an opportunity to enlarge her social circle. In the first three chapters of the novel Lahiri has given us a thorough information about Ashima's life. In these chapters young Gogol is treated only as "an extension of his parent's lives"⁷ and the reader prepares himself for a more detailed unfolding of Ashima's character. But from the fourth chapter onwards when Gogol turns fourteen and becomes the focal point of the novel, the cultural clashes between the two generations begin.

Ashima and Ashoke have also also felt the pangs of cultural alienation, as for them "home" remains to be a "mythic place of desire."⁸ This desire is reflected in their association with other Bengali immigrants, in singing songs by Nazrul and Tagore, in arguments over the merits of films of Ritwik Ghatak versus those of Satyajit Ray (38). Sociological studies of immigrants' behaviour also reinforce this phenomenon. Williams sees cultural performances and instruction in ethnic dance, music, and arts as "variations of the rituals that preserve in powerful forms elements of the religious traditions."⁹ Gangulis also make a point of driving into Cambridge with their children "when the Apu Trilogy plays at the Orson Wells, or when there is a Kathakali dance performance or a sitar recital at Memorial Hall" (65). They also send Gogol to Bengali language and culture lessons every other Saturday, held in the home of one of their friends.

Susan Sontag has commented that the interpretation of the text must be evaluated with a historical view of human consciousness. "In some cultural contexts", she says, "interpretation is a

liberating act. It is a means of revising, of transvaluing, of escaping the dead past. In other cultural contexts, it is reactionary, impertinent, cowardly, stifling."¹⁰ In its juxtaposition of the experiences of two generations, *The Namesake* provides both the examples to its readers. Gangulis' dual system of values becomes their weapon to fight the encroachment of foreign culture in their personal lives. The first generation of Gangulis display the truth of Arthur Mayhew's observation that the external culture does not intrude into an Indian's personal and domestic life."¹¹ But their children do not want to possess this weapon. Strangely, their assimilation into a different culture is never complete, resulting in a subtle isolation, which is more acute and pronounced than ever faced by their parents. The younger Gangulis showcase the argument that the focus on ethnic identity formation within the diaspora cannot flagrantly disregard "disjunctures as well as conjectures that occur because of but also in spite of identifications based on class, gender, sexuality, kinship, generation, profession and ideology."¹² Remnants of Gogol's early maladjustments and dissatisfactions constantly interfere with the possibilities of possessing any well defined mature outlook towards the problems of his later life. Despite his frantic efforts to outgrow his family and background, he is unable to do so completely. Indirectly, Lahiri may be suggesting that assimilation's hyphen is not so easily straddled. Unlike word choices — oranges or clementines? —, "choices between the old country and the new world don't always stay made."¹³ Gogol duplicates Lahiri's own background, a second generation Indian-American. Lahiri admits that this closeness makes it harder to write about him.¹⁴ In her interview with Anil Padmanabhan she remarks that for her Gogol is the central character who, like his family, is trying to come to grips with his life.¹⁵ The discordant note between his cultural inheritance and the societal environment of America generates a feeling of displacement in his psyche — along with his unusual name, it becomes the armature of the story. The narration of the novel is loosely strung together with the thread of these two motifs.

Gogol was given his name owing to some postal fault. His parents were waiting for an official "good name" to be chosen for

their son by an older relative. Her letter gets bogged down somewhere and never reaches them. Baffled by the insistence of the hospital staff, Ashoke Ganguli blurts out the name Gogol, which had captured his psyche compulsively as a result of a bizarre train accident. This accident had changed his life forever, propelling him to a distant land of dreams. The stories of Nikolai Gogol did not simply enchant him, but became an article of faith to live by. In his formative years Gogol is unaware of the vulnerability his father had faced in his own youth. His resentment towards his name gradually becomes a loathed burden for him. From the first conscious memory, he has hated his name, he hates. He feels angry when his teacher Mr. Lawson discusses Gogol and calls him an eccentric genius. When invited to a dorm party by Colin's older brother, he introduces himself to Kim as Nikhil, tentatively at first, and then inhaling the sensation of liberation it evoked in him. Thrilled by it, and inspired further by a *Reader's Digest* article on "Second Baptism", he legally adopts the new name.

Gogol feels at home at Yale, even though Ashima is outraged at it. He likes its dormer windows, its Gothic architecture and its squat columns of pale pink stone. Despite experiencing a sense of ease, his assimilation of the American culture has not been as spontaneous and effortless as that of his sister Sonia. He neither could merge with the American psyche with abandonment, nor feels at home with the Indian traditions. His own emotional constraints create an inner claustrophobia. His release is still awaited. When he goes to join his father for the Thanksgiving, his train is suddenly halted because of a suicide attempt on the tracks. His father chooses this moment to tell him the story of his christening, and Gogol is overwhelmed suddenly.

Gogol's relationships, first with Ruth, and then with Maxine, are a part of his growing up process. But these associations fail to impart him any sense of inner fulfilment. Rather, the cultural clash he has always felt within comes to the foreground in strange ways. He is conscious of the fact that "his immersion in Maxine's family is a betrayal to his own" (141). He cannot imagine his parents participating in the Ratliffs' universe (141). While he is with them, he

feels "free of expectation, of responsibility" (142). The cultural differences work both ways. He is not alone in his cultural alienation. When Gogol and Maxine drop at his parents' place on their way to Cleveland, Maxine looks at it as a single afternoon's challenge, "an anomaly never to be repeated" (146). Gogol also does not feel excited and "wants simply to be done with it" (Ibid). The autobiographical parallels to Lahiri's own childhood visits to India are quite obvious. She recalls how her parents could truly relax only during the weekend parties when they were with their Bengali friends. She had realized that she was not really Indian the way her cousins in Kolkata were, and she also found it hard to think of herself as fully American: "I thought it would be very much a betrayal of my parents. I inherited a sense of exile from them."¹⁶ The offshoots of trouble as a result of cultural alienation are visible in Graham also, who finds his Kolkata experiences repressive and "taxing" (117). His compromises are taken as pretensions and a sudden chasm opens up between him and Moushumi (217), annihilating all possibilities of a shared life.

Gogol's marriage with Moushumi, which has all the covetous trappings of the Indian diaspora, does not work out well. Moushumi has always felt desperately lonely (213). Her relationship with Graham had whimpered out, leaving her vulnerable. Gogol is suggested to her as an anti-dote, a remedy, as she had been to him. She does not share her darkest moods with him, and he feels "more apologetic than excited" (231). Their incompatibility is evident when Moushumi finds that her affair with Dmitri does not upset her, rather it "causes her to feel strangely at peace, the complication of it calming her, structuring her day" (266). Gogol and Moushumi go through the motions of married life, but both are keenly aware of their inner distance, distraction and veiled dissatisfaction with each other (271). Their separation comes naturally.

Lahiri has provided us intimate glimpses of the immigrants' life in America, and through these details "draws the distinction between the generations vividly: this is not your parent's Indian-tinted America."¹⁷ Employing a banal, third person, present tense narrator she presents before us the pulls and tussles of the two cultures Gogol has to simultaneously inhabit. Characters themselves are

rather silent, but often defined by their cultural contexts. Individually felt experiences are subordinated to the cultural pressures, and Gogol himself at times looks like a stereotypical representation of the ABCD, who is unable to define or capture or be associated with his own roots. Even in her widowhood, his mother has been able to introduce her cultural traditions to the new generation (286).

Lahiri presents before us an account of how a man, without clear cultural moorings, suffocates in a standardised world. The soulless comforts of Gogol's life fail to provide any inner fulfillment to him. The issues and problems Lahiri has raised in *The Namesake* are not exactly particulars of certain questions concerning circumstances within which men live, suffer or seek happiness; while the issues she has raised possess a topicality, they also touch upon some of the eternal dilemmas man has always faced. She probes into the problems of existence, suffering, love and loneliness, exposing the horrors of self-delusion. She shows us the impulses in man's nature, the sources his thoughts and emotions spring from. Simultaneously she also shows us how chaotic the individual feelings can be, how much there is in a man which is contradictory and beyond understanding. Episodes which are rather loosely strung together, and can be read as isolated stories also, are stretched over what can be termed as a translucent cultural palimpsest – taken in isolation these episodes sensitively touch upon the emotional debris of individual lives but together they converge into a complex, well knit plot of cross-cultural transaction involving complex negotiation and exchange, sometimes leading to churlish situations and sometimes exhibiting the superficiality of passively accepted unavoidable changes. Above all, it shows the inscrutability of human life.

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ANN DAVIS: "I AM WORTH A SMILE"

R.K. Singh

We have been used to reading the male poets' personal experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and views of life and society. But reading the female poets' discourse of themselves as the opposite sex, or their experiences, norms, expectations and beliefs could be refreshing, especially if the poet involved is an Australian and the reader is an Indian. Ann Davis, a mature and sensitive female voice from Australia, writes with a strong personal awareness and feminine perspective to view relationships.

Included in the Penguin anthology entitled *Turning Points*, Ann Davis speaks from her Christian cultural background, articulating womanhood, female sexuality and other aspects through metaphors and images that have their own language, colour, and emotional and intellectual fragrance. An active member of Poets Union Inc., Somerset Poets, and the New South Wales Writer's Centre, she came to international attention while serving as Deputy Chairperson of the XXI World Congress of Poets, Sydney, 2001. She has also convened a workshopping group, the Women Writers' Network, since October 1993. Ann Davis frequently appears in various journals and e-zines with her comments, reviews, short stories, and poems. A mother of five daughters, she has published, besides two volumes of poetry, a novel *The Strong Be Damned*. With her visions, issues, and struggles, she plays with words and contributes to women's writing in general and Australian literature in particular.

Devoid of sentimental reflection, moral comment, didactic expression and unnecessary intellectualizing, romanticizing or pedantry, she sounds in her poems serious, self-disciplined, understanding and honest to herself with control over her form and manner. The medium of poetry seems emotionally and intellectually satisfying to her in not only knowing herself but also exploring the why/how of life. Her experiences, external and internal, as also personal and lyrical, enrich and celebrate the female consciousness redeeming woman's physical and spiritual existence. Her musings in *Moths & Camels* (2000) and *Eve's Legacy* (2003) are a bold reminder that women too have existence and essence.

Ann's image of herself is different from the male poet's image of women. Her response to the male 'look' (or outlook) to woman is a powerful 'inlook': she explores her everyday experiences boldly, integrating the flesh into her beliefs and representations; she remains committed to her home, family, children, motherhood, social life, solitude, god, nature and myths; she voices her own vision and understanding which cut across cultures and regions. When she comments on the male-structured norms or sexual politics, she also tells us as a woman that she is in control of herself and confident of creation. In fact, she tries to transcend her body or femininity by acknowledging and respecting the woman in herself.

Through her poems, Ann Davis tries to look through her mind and memory, turning inside out and revealing what is personal yet universal. She is free and yet restrained by her past experiences, her legacy as a woman. She cautions other women about willingly suffering as a member of the family, or as a mother, wife, daughter, and feeling the agony of the spirit when trying to find an answer to the question, "who am I?" Because she questions herself, she shows care for womankind. She remembers her childhood and adult life to create a better awareness among women, be it love affairs, sexual hang-ups, mother-fixation, role-playing, domestic responsibility, life's riches, or death fear.

Ann Davis echoes a feminist discourse when in her *Eve's Legacy*, she asserts: "I'm a victim of choice" (p.64) and "differentiate between choice/and a feeble echo/of other people's choices" (p.72). Aware of her beginning as a simple village girl, she doesn't talk about issues of rights, freedom and equality but shares as a woman the memories of her life as lived or experienced at different points of time. To quote Patricia Gaut from the back cover of *Moths & Camels*: "Ann Davis tells story of her life in fragments of poetry written with a consistent and exceptional honesty ... emotive beauty and universality."

Assimilating 'Eve's legacy' in her mental make-up, she explores her identity and discovers: "I am eve / helen of troy and plain jane / in a drip-dry outfit/for convenience" (*Moths & Camels*, p.56). She is aware of the difference between herself and others: "Why is

it that I cannot pinpoint / the exact moment our main feature / became a b-grade imitation of art" (ibid, p.32), and realizes: "I am not the prophet/but I feel the prophet's pain" (ibid., p.57).

She tries to define love *vis-a-vis* the triangle of the forbidden fruit, the serpent, and Adam according to her own observation as a daughter, wife and mother. Under the cover of innocence she seems to tell truths about the hypocrisy of traditional values:

"Around me
beds are freshly turned
waiting to be seeded." (Trespass')

As a poet with taste and sensibility and "growing old gracefully", she "soulsearches for a feel of things." She journeys through the memories of her early years, "emulating freedom, emulating life ('Inner Sanctum'), even as

"Passing on I walk past the park
Were spring is just a memory
as autumn tones cry russet tears
to mix with blood and salt water sorrow
eating soul food.
It's not as important as fallen fruit
laying decaying
in spotty skin
but then an approaching spotted dog
becomes an old newspaper joke
against the fire hydrant.
Why do I lose myself in reverie
this soft velour night?
Memory?
I walk at dusk along a dusty street
seeing images I'd much rather not." ('I Walk Yesterday's Dreams')

Her strong critical sense makes her question the logic which puts blame of sin on Eve. She puts forward a 'different' vision of gender and society when she says: "Your corruption of me/was so much quicker" ('Rewind'); "it's just possible / that circumstantial evidence / won the day" ('Questionable Verdict'); and "forbidden fruit / is still the sweetest kind" ('From Her Lunch box'). She has a very convincing 'Body of Evidence' just as she knows 'a' stands for 'apple' and 'alligator' as "it's also for avarice, / addiction, abortion, / apathy,

anti-anything, / atrophy / and Aids" ('A is for Apple').

With the complexity for her own psyche, Ann Davis presents a view of the female as female in male-dominated social setup. She appears critical of the stereotyped sex-role and confinement of women within the domestic space. With her immaculate sense of irony, as noticed in poems 'Questionable Verdict', 'From Her Lunch box', and 'Phantasm', she voices her protest about the legacy she is made to suffer as a woman.

Ann Davis has a strong family bond, a sense of togetherness: "She recognizes what it means when there is family support in time of crisis, when parents and children stay in touch, despite distances (thanks to the "ingenuity of Bell"). As a mother she feels proud and and confident when she says: "Flesh of my blood / each one of you / is part of me," but she is helpless too: "What will I do when you die?" ('What will I Do?'). It's the 'mother' image which dominates her poetic reflections: "...my mother, for she is present / in every word I speak, every deed / I do..." ('Before and Afters').

With her sense of family's unity, she can feel the loss of her daughter, husband and parents very intensely – "Death is no stranger to us". Her fear of death is genuine: "What will I do when you die?" ('What Will I Do?'). Death, too, has a haunting presence in her memory: "When I think of you now / I see you framed / in an open doorway" ('The Wasted Years'). She mentions death *a la* Abb-El-Kadir, as "a black camel" and reminds us of the absurdities of humanity:

"Striving always for a heaven
while hiding from the knowledge
that the camel waits patiently." ('Moths and Camels')

She is aware of the irony of one's longing for heaven knowing well, "that the camel waits patiently." Though I doubt Ann Davis makes any major revelation as a woman poet, she does empower herself by writing and seems satisfied by saying what she says in her numerous poems. She exposes an alert mental faculty, making sense of an ordinary life through awareness of something missing within and trying to balance the personal and the social through a memory of lived experiences.

'Memory' is at the core of her very imaginatively arranged poems both in *Moth & Camels* and *Eve's Legacy*. It is the thread that runs through and binds all her poems together; it is her creative source, synthesizing the past experiences as awareness in the present: "It stirs nostalgia into my reality," as she says in the poem 'Before and Afters'. Ann Davis uses the metaphor of memory as a creative process, as vision-device, to recollect in a timeless frame what is past and yet continuous, what is life itself with accumulation of relationships that make her realize truth: "stretching memory / from an adult view point / remembering these sacrifices / realization comes" ('My Memories of Free Love'); "and I / face the truth / face the pain / face the facts / face the face / in the mirror / at last" ('Face the Face'); and "and I resent the loss of memories / more than I resent the loss of youth" ('Face in the Crowd'). For Ann Davis the poet, memory is imagination itself.

Thus, Ann Davis represents an instance of continuous search, loss, change, criticism and revelation. Her poetic quest for her own identity and for a meaning to events that have shaped her years is laudable. Her skilled ingenuity in verse-making testifies to the way a woman views things around her and copes with changes, besides revealing the fabric of the culture and society she belongs to through her personal lived reality.

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TIME PERSPECTIVE IN DRAMA: A NOTE

O.P. Govil

According to Aristotle, the plot of a play should be of a length which can be embraced by the memory just as a beautiful object is of a size which is easily embraced in one view. This analogy is very suggestive. Just as in painting the objects both in the foreground and the background are seen in a perspective — in their proper relationship — and give the impression of a harmonious whole, so in drama, all events which constitute the plot are presented in a proper perspective so as to create the unity of impression. Now whereas in painting the perspective is related to space, in drama it refers to time. In painting the landscape in space is viewed by the eye at a glance, but in drama the inward eye or the memory is enabled to go over a whole sequence of events covering a fairly wide span of time; in other words, action in drama is brought within the range or focus of human memory.

Realism
Time conditions action both in real life and in drama, but it has a different meaning and impact in drama. In real life, it is sharply divided between the past and the present, and the present is continually receding into the shadowy past, causing a sharp fading away of the impressions received. Moreover, since the happenings in the objective world are too near, too multitudinous and too fast moving one after the other, the mind of an average individual witnessing them is seldom able to cope with and assess them with equanimity and detachment. In drama, on the other hand, since the facts or events are ordered according to the law of necessity, and the focus of time converges to make the past continuous — almost co-existent — with the present, we have a view of action well within the range of our memory and quite comprehensible by our mind. This representation of facts or events, whether the action is based on history or not, makes us realize not so much the pastness of the past, as of its presence and by the strong illusion which it thus creates of reality it induces in us both a willing suspension of disbelief and a degree of detachment which are so necessary to comprehend life's meaning.

Time thus being a continuum in drama, we are enabled to view both action and character as presented there in the proper perspective rather than in real life. The death of the protagonist at the end of a tragedy indeed has a profounder impact than the death of a person known to us in real life. While we view the tragic end of the hero as a natural sequel to the preceding course of events of which we have a vivid impression, the death of a person however close to us in real life seldom evokes such a sympathetic and yet balanced response, simply because whatever impressions of his past life we have had, even if we have been very close to him, have faded and may not help us in correctly estimating his character. A murderer in real life is condemned by us with a sense of justice when he is sentenced to death or shot dead in an encounter with the police for we may not know or appreciate the adverse circumstances, even if there be any, which probably forced him to launch upon such a bloody career, but the kaleidoscopic presentation of action in drama enables the dramatist to lay bare the inmost recesses of such a man's mind to remedy the current misapprehensions about him and to judge his character in a more judicious manner. (Even if the dramatist invents a fictitious character, instead of dealing with a historical figure, he makes us apprehend the inner springs of human behaviour through generalisation).

Shakespeare's treatment of the protagonist in *Macbeth* is a case in point. Malcolm, Macduff and his other contemporaries in the play look upon him as a tyrant, for they all suffer so much at his hands, but we know better because Shakespeare devotes much space in the earlier scenes to bring to light the hidden springs of poetry and human feeling in the villain's heart and to indicate how his innate infirmity lets these be smothered by the promptings of his domineering wife. Indeed by his deft presentation of the inner conflict in Macbeth's mind and by his shrewd pointing to various external forces which tend to deuse his guilt as a criminal, Shakespeare evokes our sympathy for an apparently cold-blooded murderer whose case by worldly standards is very extreme. It is this tragedy that Shakespeare comes very close to using the technique of special pleading which is practised by Browning in his later monologues.

Does not
like him
fall?

We fail to judge men in real life mainly because they are our contemporaries. If they are very closely related to or associated with us as in the case of mother and son, we may overlook their frailties out of our excessive affection for them or we may otherwise misjudge them owing to some bias or prejudice towards them. Even biographers are prone to such pitfalls; they may view their heroes, on this side idolatry. A full-pledged novel may offer a more realistic and judicious portrayal of character though it has a blurred time perspective due to an expansive plot-structure and proliferation of detail. Drama, undoubtedly, scores over it, mainly on account of its focussed time-frame of action and instant audio-visual impact. It is because of its unique time perspective that drama more than other forms of literature not only duplicates the experience of living but also evaluates it in a way that nothing else can.

NAYANTARA SAHGAL'S *LESSER BREEDS*: SOME OBSERVATIONS

Sharad Srivastava

After a close reading of Nayantara Sahgal's tenth fictive venture, *Lesser Breeds*, one can't help recalling certain assertions made by Mahatma Gandhi in his *Hind Swaraj*. A few are relevant for the text in study and therefore need to be quoted verbatim. Among other things, Gandhiji says, "The force of love is the same as the force of the soul or truth. We have evidence of its working at every step. The universe would disappear without the existence of that force."¹ Elaborating the concept of "soul force" vis-a-vis "brute force", Gandhiji further says, "...to use brute force, to use gun powder, is contrary to passive resistance, for it means that we want our opponent to do by force that which we desire but he does not. ...passive resistance, that is, soul force, is matchless. It is superior to the force of arms."²

One of India's leading novelists and political journalists, Nayantara Sahgal has written nine books on subjects like sex, race and gender, all equally provocative. And now after years, comes a tenth, *Lesser Breeds*, a work on non-violence and politics, on the discrimination that separates the ruled from the rulers, women from men and Hindus from Muslims. *Lesser Breeds*, she says, "is a quotation, from a Kipling poem, 'in the days of empire which had a right to rule the lesser breeds, the empire which consisted of the rulers on the one side and the ruled on the other' so we were among the lesser breeds."³ In a recent interview, she talks along the same lines, "When I was growing up most of humanity was considered a lesser breed. Anything outside of the master race of Europeans was considered low. Even though empires may have followed up, we are still under their control. This nuclear question is dictated by those who own big guns."⁴ Eventually, of course, the natives learned to fight back; the story of the last century was decolonisation. And that is the story of *Lesser Breeds*.

Published by Harper Collins, the 375-page tome is an endeavour that hoists questions about non-violence, peace and oppression as pertinent today as in the past decades.⁵ "Though people say non-violence is dead in the country which gave it back its independence

but I would say, a gradual opinion is growing among people for it. Also, look at the way people of various countries are opposing the United States' war against Iraq. That is very encouraging," Nayantara opines, expressing regret that "today diplomacy has no more remained a weapon of peace but of war."⁶ In the same vein she adds, "Now with anti-war protests sweeping Europe and America, we should realise the truth of *ahimsa*.... Non-violence is not an answer but the answer to install sanity in today's society."⁷

Weaving the story around a young English teacher Nurullah in the imaginary city of Akbarabad in 1932, *Lesser Breeds* looks at non-violence during the freedom struggle till 1968, raising loaded questions like: Is non-violence a lunatic's fantasy? Has it got any place in the world as it still is? Does it ever work in India? Shall we know about it?

In Akbarabad, Nurullah, an impoverished but immensely promising young man, is 'adopted' by a family engaged in the freedom struggle. Their ancient domed Mansoon has become a 'national monument', a place that had witnessed the worst-ever confrontation between the "brute force" and the "soul force":

The place had been every patriot's Mecca for the last eleven years, ever since the family and a couple of hundred other Akbarabadis had stood their ground when they were cavalry-charged outside the gates for demonstrating against the Prince of Wales' visit in 1921. A trampled mess the horses' hooves had made of them as they went down unresisting in obedience to the new creed: if blood must be shed in this battle, let it be yours.⁸

The story of British rule in Akbarabad is told smoothy, with swift punches of unexpected violence. Running parallel to it is the story of Nurullah's birth and the tragic history of his child mother.

During the ten years that Nurullah stays with the family, Akbarabad educates him in many ways, leaving him opposed and resistant to non-violence. However, there are moments when he is able to comprehend clearly how 'soul force' had completely possessed the country and voluntarily forced thousands of people to court arrest and go to jail:

The old peasants among them (*those who had come to the domed monument like pilgrims*) had skins as cracked and wrinkled as bark, their bark shoes made walking trees of them on the gravel and when they came

in droves they beat upon the path like rain. Eknath didn't go up the spiral stair to the roof terrace and lie on his back under the stars to puzzle out why 'soul force' had possessed the country and sent a hundred thousand people to jail up there, close to the spinning planets, the voice from the hut saying 'Non-violence is not submission, it is the soul's unvanquished strength and power' or 'I want India to recognize she has a soul that cannot perish and that can rise triumphant above any physical weakness' or 'strength comes from an indomitable will' rang in Nurullah's ears with absolute reality. (44)

The 'epiphany' on the strength and power of non-violence does not remain a passing phase with Nurullah. In such a frame of mind, convinced of its truth, he even marks a poem on the subject of non-violence in a text book for his class the next day:

And if then the tyrants dare
Let them ride among you there,
Slash, and stab, and maim and hew ...
What they like, that let them do.
With folded arms and steady eyes,
And little fear and less surprise,
Look upon them as they slay
Till their rage has died away. (45)

At the centre of the movement in the novel is Nurullah's host, the charismatic Nikhil, or Bhai as his friends and supporters call him. Nikhil is a man "who would by his honey tongued gentleness manage to guide an elephant with a hair" but who spends the major part of his adult life in prison because of his involvement in the non-violent movement. Sahgal explores the possibility that non-violence was the fantasy of one-man which may or may not have worked. "Nor did *ahimsa* put an end to violence... it even spurred it on, aroused savage instincts bred from time immemorial to expect resistance, savager when deprived of the familiar fighting adversary or fleeing quarry. Good old-fashioned war was raged against *ahimsa* and *ahimsa* did not escape war's legacies and tragedies, or war's prisoners and its wounded and its killed... no lethal weapon-wielder stood back and said this man before me is unarmed so I will not strike"(58).

Nurullah also propounds the view that non-violence made little difference to the fortunes of the nation: "You must understand the kind of world it was, made up of Europe and the lesser breeds whom Europe

had a right to rule. Armed or unarmed revolt made no difference to that right. Only war and its fortunes drove Europe out."⁹ The question whether *ahimsa* was going to change anything and what use it was, is answered by Nikhil, "What else have unarmed people got?"

Halfway through the novel leaves India for America and the lives of Edgar and Leda, an American diplomat and his sister who are engaged with issues of non-violence and how those issues apply to their own lives in America. They are linked by India, where Edgar was posted and by Shan, Nurullah's student, who goes to America to study and finds herself exploring another world where the colour of her skin implies that she is either to be exploited or lauded. In fact, as the action shifts to America, Sahgal makes us aware of the fact that Gandhi's ideology of non-violence and non-cooperation affected the lives of individuals and communities the world over in ways that could not have been envisaged. The novel ends in 1968 with Nurullah looking back at his life and coming to terms with it. This soul searching is triggered off by the visit of an American scholar who comes to India looking for answers to the question whether non-violence is still relevant.

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⁶Nistula Hebbar, p. 2.

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All subsequent references to this novel are from this edition and are incorporated hereafter in the text in parentheses.

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YANK MARTEL'S *LIFE OF PI*: A NOTE

Madhoo Kamra &
Sumiparna Maiti

Life of Pi is a tale with difference, though to some it echoes the adventures of *Robinson Crusoe*. With first person narration the novel brings the reader in close contact with the speaker. A functional analysis of the novel shows an introspective bent revealing the magic with which a shattered self is reconstructed. Pi is painted as a character going smooth with his life. But the biological necessity to preserve oneself proves the merit of the novel with geometrical details. The novel has everything as its ingredients to project the wholeness of a life: e.g., the declaration, "I was named after a swimming pool," conveys some humorous but touching instances of good reading. Further, the description of his Mamaji is equally humorous and intensely vivid:

My brother Ravi once told me that when Mamaji was born he didn't want to give up on breathing water and so the doctor, to save his life, had to take him by the feet and swing him above his head round and round. "It did the trick!" said Ravi, wildly spinning his hand above his head. "He coughed out water and started breathing air, but it forced all his flesh and blood to his upper body. That's why his chest is so thick and his legs are so skinny." (8)

The novel has sporadic references to religion and philosophy, and thus the glory of 'the Infinite' is emphasized. One can find mystical outpouring of pure and intrinsic worth in expression such as these: (a) "... life leaps over oblivion lightly, losing only a thing or two of no importance, and gloom is but the passing shadow of a cloud" (62); (b) "The presence of God is the finest of rewards" (63) (c) "If you take two steps towards God, God runs to you" (64); (d) "It is a beautiful religion of brotherhood and devotion" (61); (e) "To me, religion is about our dignity, not our depravity" (71); (f) "The main battlefield for good is not the open ground of the public arena but the small clearing of each heart" (71); and (g) "No greatness without goodness" (87). This binds us to the chorus-spirituality and reveals an interpreter by implications. The facility of the utterances reminds one of Sarojini Naidu's well-known lyric, "To a Buddha Seated on a Lotus":

The end, elusive and afar,
Still lures us with its beckoning flight,

And all our mortal moments are
 A session of the Infinite.
 How shall we reach the great, unknown
 Nirvana of thy Lotus-throne?²

The novel is soaked with human sensibility and it shows deep affiliation with the immense panorama of earthly existence. The novel has a number of critical situations where Pi's heart rends with pain; yet with his constant wisdom, he maintains the richness of human soul. The novel has spontaneous, rich and haunting beauty with a well-shed design, suggesting continuous parallels and links between the primitive past and the desolate present. Here one gets the most absorbing image of human condition. The novel presents a natural dynamic relation between crisis and total meaning. The course of action oscillates between the extreme rejection of life and the desperate effort to emerge from threatening situations. Pi is, therefore, a machine-like character who represents unbounded love for animal kingdom and who has an eye of concern and religiosity for human attributes. Therefore, his active conscience forms the dramatic centre of the novel:

Some of us live up on life with only a resigned sigh. Others fight a little, then lose hope. Still others — and I am one of those — never give up. We fight and fight and fight. We fight no matter the cost of battle, the losses we take, the improbability of success. We fight to the very end. It's not a question of courage. It's something constitutional, an inability to let go. It may be nothing more than life — hungry stupidity.

Richard Parker started glowing the very instant, as if he had been waiting for me to become a worthy opponent. My chest became tight with fear. (141)

The story has the fluidity of water because of which the interest is maintained right from the start to the close. It catches not only the surface commotion, 'a life on cross', but also the hidden rhythm of universality, the spiritual communication between man and animal. This makes the text strikingly individual, for it not only portray the process of man's emotional and intellectual life but also concentrates on collective happiness. Therefore the novel has the potential of an effective stir.

The narrative is quite impressive in its language, for the drama of the life within is as effectively portrayed as the externalities. Mulk

Raj Anand has rightly said that language is not a separate element in the art of the novelist but is the art itself, and that it alone explores the novelist's feeling for reality.

While Kenneth Burke considers language as symbolic action, Eliot calls it "auditory imagination" and intolerable wrestle with words and meaning which constitutes feeling for reality. It is true that Martel's language is direct and spontaneous. His use of words shows his expertise at syntax and naturalness of communication. Therefore, his transmission of thought is virtually convincing. His choice of words has intimacy and intensity that enables him to achieve a genuine communication of feeling. The moment of heightened intensity and pressure of feeling at times take a sublime splendour. A few extracts from the book can be cited to illustrate it: (a) "Of hunger and thirst, thirst is the greater importance" (38); (b) "How true it is that necessity is the mother of invention, how very true" (139); and (c) "Reason comes to do battle for you. You are reassured. Reason is fully equipped with the latest weapons and technology" (161).

Repetition is densely filled in for emphasis. This is done not only for the accumulation of ideas but also to the readers of the text. For example: (a) "If that fruit had a seed, it was the seed of my departure" (280); (b) "The dozens of stems were dozens of leaf stems" (280); (c) "The fruit was not a fruit" (280). Questions are also put in consecutive succession whereby a reader is startled by the narrative flow:

How much time had he — or was it she? — spent here? Weeks? Months? Years? How many forlorn hours in the arboreal city with only meerkats for company? How many dreams of a happy life dashed? How much hope come to nothing? How much stored-up conversation that died unsaid? How much loneliness endured? How much hopelessness taken on? And after all that, what of it? What to show for it? (282)

And again,

Was it illness? Injury? Depression? How long does it take for a broken spirit to kill a body that has food, water and shelter? (263)

The intrinsic value of the narration reflects the easy flow and extreme transparency of the hero's thought in crisis. Therefore, the crescendo of feeling mounts with dissolving metaphors and heightened formal effect. The following extracts from the book bear wit-

ness to it:

- (a) The calm sea opened around me like a great book. (119)
- (b) I fell asleep, my mind lit up by the chameleon like flickering of the dying dorado. (186)
- (c) The sea thundered like avalanches. The sea hissed like sandpaper working on wood. The sea sounded like someone vomiting. The sea was dead silent. (215)

Thus, the power of communication is centrally related to Martel's concern with language. Here the concern is human nature and harmoniously the novel carries a rich intrinsic appeal. The agonies of Pi remind us of a complex earthly existence and it echoes Gandhian philosophy of Non-violence. Further, the vision of blessed contemplation of the human condition makes Martel one of the most significant novelists of the present times.

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MULK RAJ ANAND: A PERSONAL TRIBUTE

O.P. Mathur

The news was stunning, almost unbelievable, as if the sun had ceased to exist. For long long decades we had been taking his presence for granted. In this vacuum now suddenly created, we felt bewildered, like the child who, on learning of the death of the great Victorian poet Lord Tennyson, innocently asked his father whether Father Christmas also would die some day. Somehow the comparison seems so apt, for Anand too was a father-like figure, not only as the progenitor of the major Indian fiction in English, but also as a human being with natural warm-heartedness, all-encompassing humanism, and, above all, something intangible that would suffuse you even if you talked to him only for a few minutes. Luckily, I had such occasions not just for minutes but for hours during which I was completely soaked in the 'Anand' of his propinquity.

Earlier I had met him but briefly and had written to him letters equally brief. But his long and detailed replies overwhelmed me with both delight and regret, the latter at his giving so much of his valuable time to me. And so I practically ceased to bother him with my letters. But it seems he still retained a soft corner for me, and when, as Head of the Department of English, I invited him to deliver two or three lectures he immediately accepted and we fixed his programme on phone. His exciting lectures eloquently revealed a deeply cogitative mind and a heart full of the milk of sympathy for the miserable.

The human side of his personally touched me when he promptly accepted my hesitating invitation to him to grant me an interview and also to dine at my humble residence, but on the condition that he would bring his own dinner with him, which I later discovered to be one or two type of drinks — hard or soft or both. But with regard to his interview he was more magnanimous — agreeing to speak slowly, and even repeating some sentences unforgettable, like swimming with the current of the Ganges deep yet slow-moving. Extracts from that interview were published in one of my books.

There was another occasion when I came close to him. It was

at Jodhpur where he specially came, declining to chair the session of an all-India academic body, so that, as he declared, he could draw the attention of the people of Rajasthan to the cruelty of the 'Sati' episode which had taken place only a short time ago. His eloquent condemnation of the episode, like the mighty roar of an eighty-year old lion, is still deeply etched on my consciousness. Later when he wanted to go on some sight-seeing. I was the only lucky one he chose to accompany him. Again we were together for a few hours, but having already been favoured with a long interview, I broached a variety of other topics, in addition to those concerning the places we visited. The expanse of his personality, wide and deep as the ocean, and the all-embracing generosity like that of the sun shining on all alike were overwhelming. All these hours passed with him at Varanasi and at Jodhpur are some of my priceless treasures. At another time, even on my telephonic request he got some information on the ban imposed on his novel *Two Leaves and a Bud*, and sent it to me well in time for my paper. Always helpful, he threw open his rich library of books and journals including *Marg* edited by him, for my research scholar and replied to her extensive questionnaire in detail.

And now that gracious vitality, that soft radiance, has departed from us. As a human being he will live in the hearts of those who came in contact with him, but as a writer he belongs to the ages.

BOOK REVIEWS

EMKEN, *ANCIENT WORLD CLERIHIEWS*

(Calcutta: Writers Workshop, 2002), pp. 35, Rs. 100.00

H.C. Gupta

Ancient World Clerihews begins with 'Achilles / shouted, 'I'll kill his / Whole clan', when they said / 'Hector with Patroclus had painted the town red,' " and ends with — "Shiva drank poison and to cool his system / Placed a quarter-moon on his head / That's why woman has no head on her shoulders / But the Full Moon instead." These two clerihews fairly give an idea of the matter and manner of the work as a whole. The matter of Emken's verses is historical facts, mythological and legendary anecdotes. But the first clerihew must be taken as an exception in the sense that it has not Emken's typical ironical and sarcastic verve. Seen in this perspective, the last clerihew has science, mythology, wit, sarcasm and originality of approach.

The book is divided into three sections: The Glory that was Greece, The Grandeur that was Rome, and The Wonder that was India comprising 50, 25 and 25 clerihews successively. It has three relevant sketches by Asit Mondal one each at the beginning of the sections. He is drawn towards ancient Greek for its 'glory', ancient Rome for its 'grandeur' and ancient India for its 'wonder'. The length of the clerihews varies from 9 words to 33 words.

Whatever be the reason — either I have lessened my curious interest in reading Prof Naik's comic verse or he has exhausted his vibrant energy and bubbling passion of the good old days, the Ancient World clerihews, speaking comparatively, do not read so well as the verses in his two unorthodox histories, which I reviewed earlier. However, the clerihews under review, excepting those of the third section have all the ease, brevity with erudition, and excellence of age, experience and practice.

Here is Apollo with his balls 'soft and live': "Apollo / Never played Polo: / Balls solid and inert were for the naive / He preferred his 'soft and live.' " Note Aristotle's belief and the Professor's inquisitive query: "Aristotle believed that women / Had fewer teeth than men / Did Greeks of the Day / Have no knowledge of fore-

play?" And Emken's account of Euripides' likes and dislikes: "Euripides / adored girls in midis / But hated kiddies / And diddies." The overall drift of most of the clerihevs is towards sex and women.

The beauties of the ancient womankind in the booklet include: *Lady Venus*, *Andromeda*, *Atlanta*, *Eve*, *Clytemnestra*, *Danae*, *Daphne*, *Helen*, *Hero Jocasta*, *Medusa*, *Niobe*, *Eurydice*, *Penelope*, *Persephone*, *Sappho*, *Europa*, *Achises*, *Dido*, *Lesbia*, *Cleopatra*, *Dejanira*, *Laura*, *Amba*, *Rhumba*, *Ms Draupadi*, *Kunti*, *Matsyagandha*. A watchful reader can see the Professor nudging and winking as he adds *Lady* with *Venus* and *Ms* with *Draupadi*. Resisting my temptation for explanation, I give a few humorous clerihevs: "Plato was so called / Not because his shoulders were broad / In his Academy cellar / He'd hidden a broad." (Plato is homonymous with 'plateau', 'broad', a slang for 'woman').

The one bane of the Indian publishing houses has become glaring because of the "Corrections" slip given inside. The proof-reading nods are numerous. The notes under "Postscript", in my opinion, are not enough. I fail to understand, why does the mature author forget that a work of literary art, comic or sober, has no geographical barriers? There should have been explanatory notes on Indian clerihevs as well. Obversely, the notes added to Greek and Roman references are no less well-known to the readers of English literature. Emken's word-smithery is as marvellous as his fancy: "Since he knew he was better/ Than any other poet at home, / The author of the *Iliad* / Called himself Homer, not Mr. Home." And he has never failed to jocularly introduce modern ethos as in: "Why couldn't Abhimanyu / Find his way out of Drona's maze ? / Because in the by-lanes of Poona / He hadn't spent his early days."

To sum up, the writer of the clerihevs is a fancy past master. Emken is witty, ironical, sarcastic, at times bitter, jocular, and playful. The clerihevs are informative and entertaining; — and here is the difference one finds in facts, figures and their literary treatment. Even dross is readily transmuted into gold by an artist's alchemy. I leave it to the reader himself to find out Emken's seat of fancy, querying in Shakespeare's famous lines "Tell me where is fancy bred / Or in the heart of in the head? (*The Merchant of Venice*).

HEMANT GAHLOT, *EVIL IN THE SHORT FICTION OF WILLIAM FAULKNER*

(New Delhi: Radha Publications, 2004) p.106, Rs.250.00

A.G. Khan

William Faulkner's fame rests mostly on his novels, especially *The Sound and the Fury* for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1949. His novels, to a great extent, were the expansion of his short stories. Gahlot tries to see "Evil" as the recurrent theme of his short fiction. He tries to silence the critics who accuse Faulkner of obscenity and violence. He does this task in quite a convincing manner and deserves our applause for this.

In the chapter 'Evil Defined' he states the notion of evil as described in scriptures of different religions. He quotes Eliot to assert that religion cannot be dismissed as non-literary criticism. He states the Hindu view of evil as enshrined in the in the *Bhagvad Gita*. Buddhism reiterates the concept of evil, whereas Parsees attribute evil to the existence of an evil deity. The Christian notion as explained through the Fall of Man in the *Bible* and the views expressed by St. Augustine are also brought into the discussion. Voltaire in France and David Hume in England did not subscribe to the Biblical belief. It is this fear of evil that haunts Faulkner and compels him to write against it with the optimistic belief that all will be well with the world.

In chapter II Gahlot attempts a brief survey of short story as a genre beginning from 4000 BC to 2000 AD. *Arabian Nights*, *Decameron*, *Canterbury Tales* have been cited as parts of a continuous tradition. He examines Poe, Melville and Hawthorne's contribution to this form. In contrast to these masters he quotes Frank O' Connor's stand denying contraction as essential requisite of a short story. For him "an intense awareness of human loneliness" (p.13) is the decisive criterion. Poe's treatment, according to Gahlot, renders stories in four distinct types. He also discusses O. Henry's deft handling of this form.

In "Faulkner: The Artist in the Making" Gahlot traces the environment in which the artist developed. "The American Scene" was

too nasty and every sensitive writer was supposed to react. Chapter IV seeks to understand the pattern – "a panoramic and vivid picture of passions and hopes of the human heart (p.32). This is necessary in order to appreciate the larger design of particular texts. We are also reminded that Faulkner's narrative skill is particularly beset with details of sight, hearing, smell and likewise bodily senses (p.37). He also discusses the controversy about the structure and style of the two volumes *The Unvanquished* and *Go Down, Moses* (p.43).

Faulkner's concern for 'irrational destruction of wilderness' can be appreciated today when ecological disorders have started claiming heavy toll. 'The Bear' (1942) is a symbolic figure representing the wilderness. (p.45). The most important relationship that Faulkner deals with is black-white relationship and the inhuman treatment meted out to the blacks before and after the Civil War is recorded with all the brutalities.

Chapter V tells us that South constitute Faulkner's entire universe. Here he finds "memory of race, of a country whose secret diseases is the amnesic lack of roots and traditions." His works reveal not "the murky depths of an individuals self, but a collective sub-conscious which is flushed to the surface" (p.54). We have to remember that he concentrate on "black characterization with an intensity and seriousness unknown in earlier white American fiction." (p.63)

In Chapter VI entitled *Evil as Endemic to Human Existence* Gahlot reminds us "the kind of country Faulkner adores and also lived in is mainly rural society" (p.81). It is because of sheer force of habit he refused to go to Stockholm to receive the Nobel Prize (p.81). Like Steinbeck he also has "utter contempt for machines" (p.94).

Gahlot gives a very impressive bibliography at the end of the book. Undoubtedly, he evinces a highly systematic and convincing approach towards his work. It is only an exception that one finds a teacher with such dedication towards research in a government colleges. Beautifully printed, the book has a few typographical errors which must be corrected in the next edition. Needless to say, the book is really useful for both the students and the scholars.

**JAIWANTI DIMRI, *THE DRUPKA MYSTIQUE:
BHUTAN IN 21ST CENTURY***

(New Delhi: Authorpress, 2004), pp.188, Rs.450.00

Usha Bande

In the ever-growing corpus of women's literature in English, travel writing by women as a genre holds but a small segment as it is relatively a new-comer in the field. Probably, it is due to woman's restricted mobility so far, or may be because she rarely could travel alone and enjoy the ambience of a place on her own terms. Things have changed since and women traveling alone on job-assignments in particular are recording their impressions that give travel writing a new dynamism. It is exactly at this point that Jaiwanti Dimri's *The Drupka Mystique* enters the scene and leaves the reader captivated by her compelling style. A Professor in the Department of English, Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla, Jaiwant Dimri has had the unique opportunity to visit Bhutan on a teaching assignment and the book under review owes its origin to the rich experience she garnered during her sojourn there. Strictly speaking, *The Drupka Mystique* is not a travel book, nor is it a historical or literary document. The author chooses to call it "vignettes" born out of her observations of and interactions with the people of Bhutan, but I would like to change it to "loving vignettes" precisely because the pictures throb with life as the author pours her affection for the land into it. She has made commendable efforts to understand Bhutan in all her beauty, mystery and mystique and yet to keep her authorial distance to notice her weaknesses not as a nation but as a developing society.

Befittingly, Jaiwant Dimri introduces the land and the people in Part I of her book – its geographical situation, the rugged mountainous terrain, the proximity to nature, the spiritual wealth and the political history of Bhutan. Dimri's book provides a vast panorama of the way of life of the people, which is influenced by Buddhist philosophy and proximity to nature. By the time we flip through the pages to go to Part II, we are quite familiar with the country: its history, culture, religion, geography, flora and fauna, folklore and

dances, in fact, all that one would like to know. Part II is both informative and interactive. It paints a rich picture of the sociocultural life of the people, their literature, their folkways and the impact of the modern culture on these people who are basically attached to their religion and culture, and love to be unassuming and simple. The concept of *chorten* is connected with Lord Buddha; it is a sacred relic.

A lively and interesting chapter, "Drupka Dances and Songs" deals with the folk practices of the Drupkas. There are three types of songs — *Szhungdra*, *Boedra* and *Rigsair* — sung during the mask dances. Thematically these songs are natural expressions of love and hate, joys and sorrows of existence and they point towards harmonious co-existence of man and nature. The tone of the author becomes jovial when she comes to the linguistic nuances and good-humoredly narrates the stories of people fumbling with Hindi and English and creating funny situations. Being a litterateur, it is natural that Jaiwanti should shift her attention to Bhutanese literature.

The last chapter entitled "The Drupka Mystique" expounds the mystery of the land of the peaceful Dragon. It is "a semantic construct which encapsulates the mood and the spirit, the air and the atmosphere of Druk Yuel in general and the Drupkas in particular." These six pages are revelatory in which she catches the mysteriousness and the aura of the land. The book ends with "Kardingche la" means "Thank You". With a Glossary, End Notes and a Select Bibliography, the work becomes a pleasant amalgam of scholarly exercise and a socio-cultural document exuding the joyous abandon of travel writing.

The book is well brought out, has an attractive cover and good quality printing. Inside, it has got some useful and eye-catching sketches. But I wish Dimri could have also provided a small pronunciation key to some typical Bhutanese words, for example, one does not know how the Bhutanese would pronounce Chorten or in Dzongkha whether 'D' is silent or 'Z'. One typographical error pertaining to the spellings of circumambulation / circumambulating is too glaring to be ignored. The language is effective, poetic at times, befitting the theme.

RESHMA AQUIL, *THE UNBLENDING*

(Calcutta: Writers Workshop, 2003), pp.46, Rs.120.00

Kajali Sharma

A blossoming contemporary Indian English poet with four books of poetry to her credit, Reshma Aquil's latest volume entitled *The Unblending* is a collection of thirty-five thought-provoking poems dealing with diverse issues. As the title of the collection suggests, it has subjects which do not blend with one another except in that it deals with woman belonging to Muslim community in India that is in the 'margin' in so many ways — viz. a woman in patriarchal society, a muslim — a community considered minority in India —, and a writer belonging to Indian English literature which is erroneously put even now on the margin in the context of major literatures written in English.

The volume looks like an attempt at experimenting with forms, language, and approach towards an issue in a radical manner. The title of the collection not only signifies the basic themes explored in it, but also the diversity of form, usage of language, her attitude towards a situation. The poet seems to break away from the traditional, known boundaries even though it means having the possibility of not blending with the basic structure of society, and in the process she is pushed in the margin. She uses the nature imagery freely but quite evocatively and sometimes unconventionally. For instance, in the very first poem "Hawk" the male bird is used as a symbol to present the limit of a woman "Aloof, suspicious of men / Like a hawk, armed with his vision / I have entered his kingdom" (p.9)

Most of the titles of the poems are used to signify either a perplexing conflict prevailing in society in terms of racism, religion or politics — as in poems like "Short-Circuit", "Border Crossing", "Little Prophet", "Curfew", "Icon", and "School" —, or a possible solution to the problem of being marginalized — as in poems like "Orchids", "How Do I?", "Full Swing", etc. Reshma Aquil highlights the marginalization of Muslims in Indian society in the poem "Banyan" thus:

But we are seeds

Scattered far

Homeless, jobless, undefined

(p.24)

There are some very hard hitting titles like "Marked Out", "Cruci-

fied", "Bankrupt" and "Foolish Waters" meant to portray the position of a woman in the world which is not only dominated by men but also by traditions. The following lines from the poem "Foolish Waters" are worth citing in this context:

Instantly a man's figure rose to intercept
me he was a Beadle; I was a woman.
This was the turf; there was the path. Only
Fellows and Scholars are allowed here;
the gravel is the place for me

—Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

Madam, this is no place for women.... (p.38)

In the poem titled "Otherwise" she writes:

Hammered into accepting
Marriage as the only solution (p.42)

In another poem she voices forth the agony of the marginalized women in these words:

With kohl in my eyes
Foundation on skin
I've stopped seeing, feeling. (p.40)

Almost a similar type of female social-masking is unveiled in the poem called "Coquette". Another kind of social marginalization of women by men as well as women is painted in the poem "Parting-11":

The changed attitude of his friends
Her colleagues, sensing marital discord (p.34)

Interestingly, the last poem of the collection "The Organism Swings Back" ends on an optimistic, positive note as it leads us to believe in healthy co-existence on several levels whether in terms of communities, religious beliefs and rituals, gender issues, tradition and modernity.

Several of the poems in the volume do not make much sense because of the use of uncommon words like 'Revielle' 'recussance' (p.20), etc. Even the title poem "The Unblending" is quite obscure. But these remarks do not detract from the beauty of the collection. Even the appearance of the book is very pleasing with its aesthetic cover.

All in all, the collection touches on the various facets of marginalization, characterizing our modern world. I feel that by discarding the traditional poetic themes, forms, imagery and diction, she seems to throw the main into the margin and the margin into the main.

**MATTHEW J.T. STEPANEK, *JOURNEY
THROUGH HEARTSONGS***

(New York: Hyperion VSP Books, 2001), pp.62, US \$ 14.95

Asha Viswas

This is Mattie's (He is best known by this name) first collection of poems. These poems were written between 1993 (when the poet was only three years old) and 2001. The poems are not arranged chronologically, but thematically. What makes this book so special is that inspite of his disease Muscular Dystrophy) he writes poems that celebrate life. The foreword of this collection of 62 poems is written by Jimmy Carter, the former president of the U.S.A. These poems are grouped under five different headings — "Beginning the Journey" (Poems 1-14), "Considering the Journey" (16-28), "Coping with the Journey" (30-40), "Celebrating the Journey" (41-50) and "Growing Beyond the Journey" (52-62). Each group begins with a water colour painting of a child, alone or with other children, trying either running towards a heart that has a musical instrument in its centre, or holding a heart.

The collection begins with a "Thank You" to God for giving him the "gift of heartsongs". Then comes the introduction "About the Author."

My body has light skin,
Red blood, blue eyes, and blond hair.
Since I have mitochondrial myopathy

What impresses the reader is the robust optimism, a 'Yea' for life:

...whatever happens,
I will always love my body and mind
...I will always be me.

In a number of poems there is sense of deep loss. His brother Stevie and sister Katie died before he was born, but Jamie, the third child, was his playmate — the two "were brothers together for a long time." This "left over child" never forgets Jamie. In "Unanswered Questions" (This poem is dated Dec. 1993 when Mattie was a three year old child) he tries to find an answer to the 'why' of Jamie's death:

My brother, Jamie died.
His muscles and bones
Did not work at all any more
...I know why he died.

"Anniversary Reflections" (Nov. 95) is reminiscent of Seamus Heaney's "Mid-Term Break". The five year old Mattie (Nov.95) remembers the day Jamie died. Death, for him is not oblivion. There is no rupture of relationship between the dead and the living.

In "Special Things" (Aug. 94) he is fully assured of Jamie's love. It is Jamie who sends him "A rainbow to look at / or a butterfly to run with". Whenever he (Mattie) is sad, Jamie sends him all these things because "He just wants me to be even happier". This care and love is mutual. In "On Being a Good Brother" (Oct.1995) it is the living one who wants to give happiness to his dead brother.

This young poet never loses hope that someday a cure for his disease would be discovered and then he would be able to do all those things that he desires to do. In "I could ... if they would" all such small desires are expressed. For Mattie life is a constant growing up — acquiring more and more of knowledge and then passing it to the new generation. His pain never shakes his faith in God. In "Meditation: The Wind in My Heart" he presents a communion between the two.

The beauty of the objects of nature affirms his faith in the Creator. The most important feature of this collection is its assertion to celebrate life. The everlasting "yea" amidst pain, both physical and mental, makes Mattie a teacher who shows us a vision of a new world sans evil, sans disease. The last poem of the collection is entitled "Eternal Echoes". It appears incredible that a ten year old boy (Spring 2000) has written it. The wisdom and insight expressed in it are astounding:

Our life is an echo
of our spirit today,
of our essence....
It is the resounding
Reality of who we are
As a result of
Where we have been and where we will be
for eternity.

It is a book for all those who have experienced enormous pain, have lost faith in God, and have questioned the 'why' of life.

**SUSHMA TANDON, *BHARATI MUKHERJEE'S
FICTION: A PERSPECTIVE***

(Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2004), pp.189, Rs.400.00

Kuhu Chanana

Bharati Mukherjee's Fiction: A Perspective is a remarkable academic endeavour by Sushma Tandon. Variegated aspects of Mukherjee's creative faculty have been well explored in it. The first chapter has three parts. The first section "America: The Land of Immigrants" traces the history of Immigrants. The critic evinces the eclectic nature of the theory of 'melting pot' and its rejection by scholars like Horace J. Bridge. She makes astute remarks in this regard: "It is important that one gets rid of mechanical uniformity and by encouraging differentiation through mental and psychic cross fertilization reach a higher level of humanity. Foreign societies are the best means to Americanization" (9). The second segment entitled "Memories of Old Traditions and Explorations of New Frontiers" exhibits the wrench of separation felt by the expatriates, and the distorted images of thousands of immigrants emanating from the prism of nostalgia. The third part of the chapter "Bharati Mukherjee as an Immigrant in Canada" highlights the inexorable pain suffered by Bharati Mukherjee in Canada and the different attitudes of the Americans and the Canadians towards the expatriates. To quote the critic's words: "Unlike the United States Canada did not agree to the melting pot theory, but believed that each distant group could maintain its identity and hence it would be a 'mosaic' with each contributing to the fabric of the country. This became one of the reasons for extreme racialism embedded in the society" (19).

The second chapter "*The Tiger's Daughter*" lays bare the multiple layers of immigrant experience imbued with the autobiographical strain. It contains some very significant statements made by Bharati Mukherjee in this context. Though the critic eulogizes the fictionist for her dexterous portrayal of unbridgeable gulf due to cross-culture identities, yet she aptly criticises the novelist for 'uneven pace' and 'texture'. The third chapter revolves round the controversial novel, *Wife*. The eclectic nature of the issues — such as 'women and madness', 'conditioned motherhood', and 'women and violence' — have been

touched only superficially and lack incisive penetration. Though the maverick nature of the text has been assiduously analysed, Sushma Tandon shies away from taking a clear-cut stand regarding the place of the text in the canon of feminist writings.

Adroit analysis of Mukherjee's narratology, her creative process, theory of speech acts and aesthetics are what makes chapters, "The Darkness" and "The Middleman and Other Stories", remarkable specimen of impassionate criticism. Various aspects of multiculturalism have been unearthed skilfully through the threadbare analysis of such stories as "Danny's Girl", "Nostalgia", "Fathering", "The Tenant", "Tamburlaine", etc. However, the unimaginative summing-up of the stories, "Courtly Vision" and "The Imaginary Assassin", in just two paragraphs dents the reputation of the author a bit.

In the fifth chapter on *Jasmine*, the writer tries to unravel the overlapping of postcolonial and feminist strains. It traces the evolution of the character of the eponymous heroine Jasmine from a marginalized 'exotic other' to a 'Female Brahama': "As the female Brahama, she is her own creator, pregnant with new life, as a care giver, she matches Vishnu, the Preserver, as Shiva's counterpart Kali, she has killed the demon, half faced, her rapist" (160). The author's remarks regarding Mukherjee's comparison with Whitman, Jane Austen and B. Malamud can stimulate a research-scholar for a full-length study.

To conclude, the book is remarkable for unmasking the undercurrent themes in Mukherjee's fiction — viz. failed quests, thwarted dreams, dislocation and isolation leading to marital stress, demand of a new and hostile cultural environment, loss of supportive community, and loss of the relatively coherent identity. Also, the book is free from typographical errors. But it has certain conspicuous lapses: for instance, it does not even make a mention of the significant studies published after 1996. Further, there is no reference to seminal articles like "Melting Pot before and after Zangwill" (*Beyond Ethnicity Consent and Decent in American Culture* by Werner Sollorrrs, Oxford University Press, 1986). Then, the screening of Malmud's *The Naturalist* took place in 1984 but the writer calls it a 'recent filming' in the year 2004. However, these weaknesses do not deter the intrinsic value of the book as a fine specimen of dispassionate criticism.

LAKSHMI RAJ SHARMA, *MARRIAGES ARE MADE IN INDIA*

(Calcutta: Writers Workshop, 2001), pp.124, Rs.180.00

Vivek Kumar Dwivedi

If the primary purpose of short stories is to tell stories and that by providing aesthetic pleasure and delight, then Lakshmi Raj Sharma's *Marriages Are Made in India* fulfils this basic need. Six out of eight stories have a clear story line and a definite "sense of an ending". The two stories that do not have clear endings achieve other ends, though I would have liked "Chhotie Ammie", a story that begins powerfully, to have a matching powerful ending.

If one attempts to point out the main features of the stories in this collection, then they can be reduced like this. First, they are dramatically presented; their immediacy and visual presentation are the result of the author's love for drama. The author does not merely teach British drama at the University of Allahabad, he has also written several plays in English. Secondly, they have the power to grip and so they can be read in single sittings. A friend of mine read through the book (to the end) even during a storm with little light, in the absence of electricity. Thirdly, they have psychological insight: characters and situations are realistic and one is not required to have recourse to a willing suspension of disbelief. Though in all fairness it must be said that he tends to present women better than men. Then, the author has an original style; it is difficult to point out even one clear influence on him. Further, most of the stories are written in different styles, ranging from the farcical to the more seriously comic on the one hand, and from the contemplative to the ironical on the other. Lastly, the twist in the tale that Sharma manages is unique and adds much to the art of narration in general.

Having said that, the weaknesses of the author also need to be pointed out. He sometimes refrains from saying enough. Scenes that could have been more sensual are left to the reader's imagination. The stories that have sex as subject are interesting but could be made even spicier by one who writes more openly. He sometimes forgets that stories are more neatly chiselled than life. The author does not make too much effort to trim his stories, as Jane

Austen or Daphne du Maurier would have done. For him sticking to life and its psychological moments is an obsession. However, "Mind Thy Neighbour's Curry" is an exception. Here the story does wind in and out like a Jane Austen story, and "Speech is Silver" is another that is almost a complete story. Sometimes little details that the reader would have liked are missing. One wonders whether the details are deliberately left out or whether they point to some unawareness in the author.

The stories that I like best, though they may not be every reader's favourites, are "The Rape of Ranbaxy" and "Get Thee to a Nunnery". Both these stories revolve round the lives of Christians and it seems that the author enjoys capturing these lives more than he does anything else. If I had to pinpoint the best character created in this collection, I would definitely think of Rohit Ranbaxy. The plight of this young fellow is fascinating when he is caught between the appetites of two odd people; one the truly hungry Ida Evans and the other the gay, Mr Olney. Zubeda in "Chhotie Ammie" and Martha in "Get Thee to a Nunnery" are two significant women characters that stand out. Their psychological moments are unsurpassable. The variety and range of the characters in this collection are wide; indeed, the stories seem to be the result of a long life of silent observation and a fascination for holding the mirror up to nature.

"A Passage to Sri Lanka" is wonderful because it targets the young reader. The tale of two university students going to Sri Lanka for pure fun is amusing. Their adventures with Alice and her wonderland are a refreshing change from the general stuff that is being written today. The author is able to make you laugh better than he can make you cry. Behind the laughter that he knits into the stories, however, there seems to be a serious person for whom nothing is bad enough to be left unobserved. "Marriages Are Made in India" is a story that takes up the issue of inter-racial feelings and the trauma of the white race in having to share life with the black. "Come to the Window" is the story of a young Indian girl having to live a few days alone in a place where people have all the time to pry into the life of the single, yet unmarried eligible. To end, this book would certainly make an excellent gift for someone with taste.

**I.K. SHARMA (ED.), *NEW INDIAN ENGLISH POETRY
AN ALTERNATIVE VOICE : R.K. SINGH***

(Jaipur: Book Enclave, 2004), pp.370 + xiv, Rs.850.00

K.K. Sharma

I.K. Sharma, a poet-critic of repute, has edited the book under review on R.K. Singh the poet with a view to pleading the cause of promising Indian English poets who have been unfortunately marginalized due to their not belonging to the metropolis and lack of publicity. Perhaps with a heavy heart he, at the very beginning of the volume, quotes Voltaire to accentuate that a consistent creative writer should not be subjected to exclusion, and cites T.S. Eliot to impress upon us that we can comprehend the great works of an age better by knowing about the little known writings. It is undeniable that the Indian English poetry of the past two decades or so is, indeed, baffling because of its proliferation and unprecedented flowering. I.K. Sharma rightly holds that the so-called chaos caused by the marginalized Indian English poets who outnumber the dominant small number of poets is a blatant misconception of the scene of contemporary Indian English poetry. To prove this assertion, he has brought out the present book on R.K. Singh's poetry. To quote his words: "I have pulled out a poet only to show what he has accomplished in a span of twenty-five years.... He is a strong poet with considerable output to his credit. His ten volumes of verse should, without prejudice, earn him a place among the noteworthies of our developing literature" (p.6).

Though most of the forty-two articles forming the body of the volume are by fellow poet-critics, Indian and foreign, and are naturally laudatory, yet it cannot be gainsaid that many of the observations of these critics, barring a few, are perceptive and insightful. In "Introduction" I.K. Sharma highlights some of the outstanding traits of R.K. Singh's poetry — i.e., manipulation of language to a specific effect, eroticism centred upon sexual love, concern for the painful realities of contemporary religious, political, economic and social life, etc.

The opening article by R.S. Tiwary is flattering as the very first sentence of it evinces: "Of the Indian poets in English, R.K. Singh

has appealed to me most" (p.16). On the contrary, D.S. Maini's brilliant piece convincingly points to the varied influences on R.K. Singh's poetic genius, particularly of poets like Lowell, Roethke, Sylvia Plath and Kamala Das. He rightly considers him a poet with a rare sexual imagination. The next article by G.D. Barche mainly deals with the erotic poetry of R.K. Singh and has nothing strikingly new. But Satish Kumar offers us a new approach to his poetry by affirming that his poetry, like all significant Indian English poetry, reveals the "harmony in duality". Also, he admires the poet for his cross-cultural awareness, thematic variety and stylistic excellence. Moving a step further, Chhote Lal Khatri attempts to show the poet's journey from sex to super-consciousness. Different from the studies, mentioned so far, P.C.K. Prem discusses R.K. Singh as a poet of nature, beauty and woman. Almost in the same vein, D.C. Chambial examines R.K. Singh's *Above the Earth's Green*. Mitali De Sarkar focuses on Indianness in the subject matter, imagery and language of Singh's poetry. An English man of letters, Michael Paul Hogan endeavours to draw our attention to "an equally important theme running through the author's work: viz., his references to dust, ashes, burning and fire that inform his work with a beautifully bleak undertone, and which provide a satisfying contrast to the primary pleasures of love and sex" (p.119). Some of R.K. Singh's notable poems, composed during the two decades commencing with the year 1974 and published under the title *Silence and Other Selected Poems*, have been intelligently analysed by I.H. Rizvi. While S.L. Peeran's essay entitled "Esoteric, Aesthetic and Metaphysical Poetry of R.K. Singh" is thematically the repetition of some of the earlier studies included in the book under review, G.D. Barche brilliantly evaluates R.K. Singh's outstanding poem, "The Works and Days' Weariness," from the angle of stylistics. The next article by R.A. Singh is simply a brief, general assessment of R.K. Singh's poetry, whereas Stephen Gill's paper on Singh as a mystic poet of beauty is just a variation on the the earlier criticism on him.

An eminent living poet-critic of New Zealand, Patricia Prime has painstakingly brought out R.K. Singh's unmistakable contribution to the popular present-day poetic forms of haiku and tanka. To

quote her words: "He values both genres and writes in both, but makes a clear difference between the two" (p.198). Urmila Kaul traces the history of Indian haiku and assigns a prominent place to R.K. Singh's *Peddling* in it. Six interviews with R.K. Singh by six mature and intelligent persons including Atma Ram and Patricia Prime make the volume interesting and useful. Besides, the poet's major collections of poems have been evaluated by some well-known poet-critics like Asha Viswas, R.S. Tiwary and Patricia Prime. In addition, the book contains some brilliant pieces in the form of reviews of, comments on, and "Foreword" and "Afterword" to, R.K. Singh's poetry.

The foregoing observations on the contents of this book are meant to demonstrate the value of the volume, and I endorse the editor's hope, expressed in the "Preface", that "this volume of available criticism on Singh's poetry will benefit researchers and interested students of contemporary Indian English poetry, here and elsewhere. Also, it may help correct some visions that do not feel drawn to it" (p.x). But I shall fail in my duty as reviewer if I do not criticise the exorbitant price of the tome, and this one thing, I am sure, will throw it into the margin of the list of invaluable works on Indian English literature and thus will thwart the basic aim of the editor — viz., to bring in the limelight the intrinsic worth of R.K. Singh the poet who has not yet got the kind of recognition he deserves. However, I genuinely believe that the perusal of this book will impel many *sahridaya* readers to read, enjoy and admire R.K. Singh's poetry in particular and new Indian English poetry in general.

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