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EDITOR

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# POINTS OF VIEW

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## THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRANSMIGRATION OF SOULS IN ENGLISH POETRY

S. Viswanathan

It was Pythagoras the pioneering Greek philosopher who not only came upon the doctrine of metempsychosis, the transmigration of souls, a key belief of the Hindu religion but came to adopt it as an important part of his philosophy. Perhaps Pythagoras adopted the idea from India. It was through him Plato inherited the concept and made it an essential doctrine of Platonic philosophy. The Italian Neoplatonists did not see any conflict between Christianity and the idea, and so incorporated it in their philosophical thought. When the idea however travelled England, it provoked a strong reaction. The idea that the soul has gone through many different kinds of births and bodies before it embodies itself in its present form and that it enters a succession of bodies, human, animal and bird in subsequent rebirth after death and that memories or reminiscences of previous births linger on during infancy and childhood even as these disappear as we attain adulthood, are ideas alien to the Christian mind. It is not surprising, then, that the idea occasionally becomes a popular joke in some plays of Shakespeare and Jonson.

The earlier example of a deployment of the theme is to be found in one of Donne's early poems, 'The Progress of the Soul' (1601). Donne's use of the idea is ironical, half-jocular and half-serious and the poem has a flippancy tone. Donne adopts for the nonce the Pythagorean idea, and dallies with it. The soul which takes its birth, curiously enough, in Eve's apple, passes through a series of lives, and the impression is that of the gambols of the soul in birth after different birth. It undergoes changes, almost suggesting an evolution, and finally finds its culmination in Queen Elizabeth, the reigning monarch, a 'deathless soul'. This is in the narrative mode Donne uses a stanza from similar to the Spenserian but a ten line stanza with the last as an alexandrine.

The idea appears in another form and for quite another purpose in Donne's second of the *Anniversaries* also entitled 'The Progress of the Soul', young Elizabeth Drury's soul after her death has as-

cended to heaven and gets purified into ideal perfection and absolute purity in its deathless, sinless state. It is in a way appropriate that Donne in this panegyric elegy, in which he idealises and universalizes the theme of death and rebirth. Donne brings in the idea of a higher, upward evolution. The idea serves as a counterpoise to the idea of progressive decay and degeneration, which reduces the world and human life to cinders.

These two or three general inferences which relate the metempsychosis hypo-thesis as it figures in poetry to be drawn from this. The assumption that we were in earlier states of existence in a state of heavenly perfection and purity leads to a nostalgic longing to go back to that state. It was believed that there had been a falling off from the state of harmony in which the whole universe and its inhabitants, the heavens the earth and its creatures, the elements existed in a system of linkages through correspondences making for an oneness of man with the universe. A backward-looking tendency thus ensues. This nostalgic instinct is a factor. Secondly, implicit in such beliefs is the assumption of a certain pattern of evolution, either haphazard or downward, or for that matter a higher upward evolution such as is in evidence in the second *Anniversary*. It is this idea of a higher evolution which was repropounded by Sri Aurobindo and also may be said to have been the basis for Browning's aspiration towards a state of perfection at least in the hereafter, 'in the heavens the perfect round'.

The next poet to bring in the idea is Henry Vaughan. Introducing of the latter half of the seventeenth century a poet and visionary like Henry Vaughan employs the concept centrally and seriously as a key idea in several of his poems. The idea well accords with Vaughan's world-view that emerges in many of his poems. He believed in an absolute oneness with the spirit of nature and the universal spirit. In one poem, he wrote that one should feel the movement of the waves of the ocean, and the shining of the moon and such dynamic natural phenomena as taking place in one's head and mind. It is basically a belief in a scheme of mythic and mystic correspondences linking man, the whole creation of God, God and heaven in a complex relationship, a doctrine essentially medieval.

In his poem 'The Retreat' Vaughan makes reference to the doctrine of previous births and rebirth. He speaks of 'my angel infancy', the period of infancy and early childhood when memories and 'reminiscences' of the previous state of existence of our soul would stay on in a fashion, a 'celestial thought' with a glimpse of His bright face, as he calls them 'a glorious train'. Vaughan has a compelling, nostalgic longing to move backwards in time in order to dwell in that blissful state of reminiscences of the Heavenly City we come from. In 'Regeration' Vaughan describes the difficult journey backward to that state, and how the difficulties are overcome for him by which time he could have some vague experience of the state of the Biblical Jacob, his constant association with God's angels and his ladder of ascent into heaven and attainment of the status of a mystical visionary. This is a poem which is tinged with such alchemical ideas and images, a realm with which also Vaughan was familiar. In this and other poems of Vaughan's the imagery of light connoting the state of reminiscences of pre-existence abound. It is interesting that in Wordsworth's Immortality Ode it is this imagery of light that plays a chief part. The poems are no doubt marked by strong tendencies of nostalgia and regress, but the backward movement has its own dynamics and thus it conveys the sense of a great deal of brisk activity and positive energy. It works to avoid any impression of lethargy or escapism Vaughan's extensive and intensive use of the light imagery probably derives from the neo-Platonist emphasis on it as a symbol of the heavenly. It all ultimately goes back to Plato and very early times in the two branches of the Hebrew religion, the Jewish and the Christian, light was a symbol characterizing symbol of the divine and the heavenly.

English poetry had to wait till the arrival of Wordsworth and his memorable Immortality Ode and Coleridge with his 'Ode to Dejection' for an incorporation of the idea of preexistence and rebirth. The Immortality Ode is a turning point in the poetic development of Wordsworth. He was at the time facing a crisis of mind and faith in his poetic abilities and his close relationship with nature, as his poetic power was an outcome or outgrowth of his faith in nature's power over his mind. It is happy spring-time. Nature is in bloom, the

lab is frisking about in the meadow and the flowers send an inviting fragrance. But Wordsworth feels he cannot respond and reciprocate this happy spring spirit. A person who possessed a spontaneous empathy with natural phenomena now feels the gift slipping away from his hand. The link now does not work. As he analyses his plight, he realizes that the gift was an inheritance in the form of intimation or 'reminiscence' of his earlier state of existence of an indissoluble bondedness with nature. That is why he feels that the light has gone from the world which includes nature, and his life. Further reflection gradually brings an awareness and hope that instead of helplessly bemoaning the loss, he should develop a sense of growing up towards maturity, and avoid looking at it as a consequence of growing old, growing from childhood to adulthood. He should be thankful for what is left rather than regretting what is gone.

Thus a positive feeling emerges in the evolution of thought and feeling in the poem. The poet gathers up his recovered faith in himself and in nature. But the emergence has to be a hard earned change of outlook. Instead of spurning growth into full adulthood as regressive and bringing on a loss, he comes to terms with it. Such an attitude, he believes, will enable him to reassure himself that his oncoming age and his childhood could find and forge links so that his 'days are linked each to each by natural piety'. It is the process of the maturing of the mind.

When Coleridge finds himself in a state of depression and dejection over a similar situation, try and theorise however hard he may, and try to reestablish the links with nature and childhood, it is not a fully successful attempt for him. The differences between the attitudes and cast of personality between the friends and collaborators are noteworthy and instructive Coleridge thinks of a favourite metaphor of his, the Aeolian harp. The loss of inspiration is characterized by Coleridge as the inability of the harp on the window-sill to sympathetically vibrate and respond to the wind blowing in. The wind fails to blow the music out of the instrument whereas Wordsworth predominantly employs the analogy of light. The difference between the two elements invoked is striking.

Coleridge has the greater powers of deep and close analysis

of his plight, and of its philosophical and theoretical implications for psychological well-being and wholeness and the name and nature of imaginative inspiration. What Coleridge comes to realize in his grappling with his crisis of the mind is that the exercise of the poetic imagination entails a strong exercise of the will, beginning at the starting point. Moreover, he carefully contemplates how poetic response occurs in the presence of an external object, natural, human or animal. The subject (self)—object relationship is the issue at scrutiny, 'we receive but what we give'. Coleridge also comes to suspect that the subject can develop a full response to the object only if there were to be some suggestion of the merger of self and the world and self thus implying an empathy. Also, sometimes the feeling of fear arises whether it is a projection of an entirely subjective impression and response into the object in view. The question is whether the object is being rendered into a construct of the thought of the poet-observer. This question was to remain one of the preoccupations for a long time of Coleridge's thought on poetry and the imagination. No doubt, he controlled the power of imagination, but also feared if its power could simply engulf the object in its power. Wordsworth in a fashion solved this problem himself by physical contact and embracing of the object to reassure himself about its otherness, concreteness and reality. Coleridge meets the problem faced by activating his thought process. He tried to explore the legitimacy of a merger of subject and object. For all the difficulties and seeming intractability of the problem, if he could exert and exercise his will with his total personality, that is the involvement of his cognitive faculties and critical judgment, the essential difficulty can be overcome and he would find that the imagination has started functioning and is relating itself directly with the phenomena observed. This is perhaps the reason why Coleridge became convinced that an author like Shakespeare brings to bear on the act of composition his total personality, his cognitive faculty and keen critical judgment together with his creative imagination. The idea seems to be the main thrust of his epoch making Shakespeare criticism. The factor in question, one of an exertion of will on the part of the poet as essential, is behind the general feeling about

Coleridge in his own day that he lacked the necessary will, 'a smack of Hamlet in myself'. Coleridge critics and scholars have tried to dispel such notions about him, though. They offer a lot of explanation. That Coleridge was quite capable of achieving a strong exercise of will power is clear from the body of poetry, and the journals he ran and his crucially important books and collections, as the recent Princeton editions of his prose works would amply demonstrate. What is suggested as we consider the processes of Wordsworth's and Coleridge's thought when confronted with their problem of mid-youth crisis of the mind and their feeling of a loss of the faculty of poetic imagination is that the imaginative response to nature which is instinctive and spontaneous in childhood even as the child is unaware that is how it takes place, the response. The spontaneity gets lost through growth, but a good deal still remains with the will power of the growing or grown up poet. That is the maturing process. The spontaneity of response in childhood is a spill-over from pre-existence, a vestige which fades away with the years of growth.

On the other hand, Wordsworth tried to tackle the problem caused by the fading away of the 'intimations' of a pre-existent life by depending upon memories of childhood and youth. The experiences of this period of life, the 'fair seedtime' of his soul that had become imprinted in his mind served as sources of power and solace from hiding places deep in lieu of 'reminiscences' of previous life. These memories of childhood and early life are what he relied on these recollections but was not without doubts and fears. He wondered how long or longer these recollections from deep hiding places in early life would last. The fear was that as age came on the process of recollection may fail. Also, as his accounts of incidents recollected and recorded in the closing book of *The Prelude* show, Wordsworth was in some suspicion that it was his imagination and desire and wish-fulfillment that got projected into his recollections, and the influence of these incidents and objects comes from the poet's own self rather than the outside world. It is the emanation from the subject that is, of the subject engulfing the object of the original experience. It is ultimately the crucial question, faced by

other Romantics like Shelley what parts the object encountered and the subject feeling into it, each perform in the transaction, especially in recollection. A complex inter subjectivity results which it is not easy to unravel.

Such are the long-term consequences in the life development of the poetic personalities of Wordsworth and Coleridge, consequences of 'reminiscences' of previous life and its bliss in early periods of this life. The poetry is the record of what the poets do in their attempts to confront the problem and find ways around it. It is a hard struggle bravely undergone. The soul-searching of observation and analysis, and theorizing (Coleridge) do, at least serve a therapeutic end for themselves. It is relevant to remember that Wordsworth's experience of the whole process, loss and recovery, at least partial, became a model that had an impact to the good on seminal intellects of the nineteenth century such as John Stuart Mill who had to face the severe challenge of a crisis of mind in youth. To persons like Mill and later intellectuals in the stages of their development like Matthew Arnold the heading power of Wordsworth's poetry and the model he set served as an uplifting force in their mid-youth crisis of deep depression, almost on the verge of an abyss of dreariness.

Other diagnoses of Wordsworth's mid-youth problem have also been offered. Some held that it was his guilt complex over having left Annette Vallon high and dry in France, after begetting a daughter by her. Another psucho-analysis reading of his problem has been that he was smitten by an insidious, incestuous love for his sister Dorothy with whom he lived.

### NOTE

In what may be called an allotropic modification, the idea of metempsychosis makes its appearance, as a special case, in the mystical royal theology and legal fiction, of the medieval and Renaissance times. According to the concept, the king possesses two bodies the Body natural and the Body politic, mystical hypostasis. On the death of the king the Body politic of the dead king immediately transfers itself into the body of the person who is crowned as the successor and the coronation ceremony confirming its accession into the body of the new king ('The King is dead; long live the king'). Shakespeare's contemporary Francis Meres wrote that the soul of Ovid had embodied itself in the poet.

## ENGLISH POETRY AROUND THE NIGHTINGALE: MYTH, REALITY AND IMAGINATION

O.P. Mathur

In the present-day world in which the birds in general appear to be a decreasing tribe, some of them also vanishing, it is a charm, almost nostalgic for the urbanites, at least to read about them. One of the birds most celebrated in English poetry from Chaucer to the moderns is the nightingale. One of the reasons for the popularity of this theme may be the origin of its tale in Greek mythology about two sisters, Procne and Philomela. The latter, enchantingly beautiful, was ravished by Procne's husband Tereus, who was escorting her from her father's house to her sister Procne but performed a pretended marriage with her after giving her the false news of Procne's death. But on her threat of revealing the fact to her sister, Tereus cut off her tongue. However, she did manage to reveal the facts to her sister Procne by weaving a pattern giving all the graphic details of her suffering, which made Procne perform an unimaginably cruel act of vengeance by killing her own small son Itys or Itylus and serving his meat to her husband and revealing the fact only after he had finished the meal. But before the horrified Tereus could have done any act of terrible violence to the sisters, who were fleeing, the gods intervened and transformed the three of them into birds – Procne into a nightingale, Philomela into a swallow and the sinful Tereus into an ugly and cruel bird, probably a hawk. The later Roman writers somewhat confusedly began to portray the tongueless Philomela as a singing nightingale and the sorrowful Procne as a swallow'. The English poets too following the Roman tradition have devoted their attention mostly to the tongueless nightingale, and far less to the poor swallow or the hapless Itys or Itylus. A little more attention has been paid to the hawk, and that too in the modern age. Quite a few poets have ignored the myth and written on the nightingale of reality, largely ignoring the other characters.

A.C. Swinburne's poem 'Itylus' emotionally, almost sentimentally, embodies the same confusion. In it Philomela (the nightingale) sadly addresses her sister Procne (the swallow), revealing not only

her own sorrow at her ravishment but also her sister's sorrow at killing her own son. It is this double sorrow which makes her song so deeply heart-rending.

Directly addressed to the swallow there is perhaps only one important poem by Tennyson, 'O Swallow, Swallow (Palgrave, pp. 364-65) which appears to be a love poem in which a lover is asking a swallow flying to the South to approach his beloved. It seems to have no relation to the myth.

In fact, as far as English poetry is concerned we have to accept the confusion between the two sister-birds representing Philomela as the nightingale. The earliest English poets, generally more concerned with religion or humanity, seem to have looked at natural objects for comparison or contrast with human states. Just an illustration or two should suffice. Geoffrey Chaucer describing the young Squire in his 'Prologue' to *The Canterbury Tales* says

So hote he loved that by nyghtertale

He sleep no more than doth a nightingale (lines 97-98).

Similarly, Shakespeare also, much more concerned in his play with human character, the intricacies of human relations, has a look at himself in his sonnet no. CII in which, addressing his beloved, he compares himself to a nightingale who sings in the summer but stops singing in the autumn:

As Philomel in summer's front doth sing,

And stops her pipe in growth of riper days....

Therefore, like her, I sometime hold my tongue,

Because I would not dull you with my song.

Among the earliest poets to write an independent poem upon the nightingale was perhaps Sir Philip Sidney who in his *The Nightingale*<sup>3</sup> contrasts his own state with that of Philomela who had too much experience of 'love', though forced upon her, while the poet himself, apparently pining for it, has had none. It is surprising that a poet like Sidney gives more importance to the physical side, though forced, of 'love' than to the deeper emotional attachment between lovers – "wanting is more than two much having", as he puts it.

Nearly, a contemporary of Sidney, Richard Barnfield in his *The Nightingale* (Palgrave, pp. 21-22) bewails the lot of the melancholy bird who sings her 'doleful ditty' while the whole of nature, including

plants and animals, is brimming with joy. But he does not receive pity for his birds which, unlike Sidney, he does not specify.

Even a poet like Milton in 'Il Penseroso' (Palgrave, pp. 98-103) refers to Philomel:

In her sweetest saddest plight',  
Smoothing the rugged brow of Night, ...  
Most musical, most melancholy! (lines 57-62)

He wishes to hear its 'even-song' missing which he walks to see 'the wandering Moon'. Milton also wrote a sonnet 'O Nightingale that on yon bloomy Spray' in which, as different from the melancholy Philomela, the bird sings in the evening before the 'shallow cuckoo' or the owl. The poet associating the nightingale with the Muse or with love, states, "Both them I serve, and of their train am I."

All the major Romantic poets touched upon the theme of the nightingale, Wordsworth in his poem 'O Nightingale! Thou Surely Art' regards the bird as "A creature of a 'fiery heart'" with notes of 'Tumultuous harmony and fierce", over which the poet, true to his poetic temperament, prefers the 'homely tale' of quiet love and allied feelings sung by the Stock-dove:

Slow to begin, and never ending;  
of serious faith, and inward glee;  
That was the song – the song for me.

The nightingale has been displaced by him from its high pedestal.

S.T. Coleridge wrote two short poems on the nightingale, both unrhymed and written in a light, almost recreational, mood. In the first poem entitled 'To the Nightingale' he calls it 'Minstrel of the Moon! Most musical, most melancholy Bird," comparing it half humorously with the night-watchmen, the "hoarse, unfeathered Nightingales of Time". To the poet the nightingale's song is far sweeter than the music of a lady's harp, but not as sweet as his wife's voice thrilling him "with the husband's promis'd name." Coleridge's other poem on the nightingale entitled 'The Nightingale A Conversation Poem April 1798', reversing the tradition, followed by himself in his earlier poem, expresses his belief that "In Nature there is nothing melancholy." He then passes on to describe a wide grove in which in the day-time a number of nightingales

answer and provoke each other's song,

with skirmish and capricious passings  
 And murmurs musical and swift jug jug ....

At the end he bids farewell to the 'Sweet Nightingale' and also to his friends. The poem is remarkable for presenting a realistic picture of the nightingales unmarred by any myth and unaffected by the listener's mood.

Shelley too wrote a poem entitled 'The Woodman and the Nightingale' in which the nightingale has been treated as just a 'happy nightingale', a symbol of happiness resulting from a sort of utopian love and companionship among the birds who have built their nests on the same tree.

Whilst that sweet bird, whose music was a storm  
 Of sound shook forth the dull oblivion  
 Out of their dreams; harmony became love  
 In every soul but one.

It was the Woodman who one night felled the tree and destroyed the happy world, thus becoming a symbol of evil destroying a paradisaical world. Shelley's nightingale has nothing to do with the Greek myth, but is just a bird, one of those who spread the sunshine of happiness and love and is destroyed by a Woodman – an eternal conflict between Good and Evil which Shelley often feels as pervading the world.

Being one of John Keats's best and most widely read poems, his 'Ode to a Nightingale' has been so universally appreciated that it is useless to repeat what has been said about it so many times. Perhaps it may also be fruitfully considered as a hide-and-seek between reason and unreason, reality and imagination. The very opening lines of the poem deserve a somewhat unconventional examination. The first stanza begins with a traditionally figurative expression of longing – a heart aching for reaching the world of the bird singing so sweetly. But immediately the poet sinks into the world of unreason – with 'drowsy numbness' overpowering and paining his heart. But realistically, a heart-ache (a possible symptom of Angina) is not accompanied by drowsiness and numbness, which again appear to be very unusual, for the pain of the senses would hardly be felt in that condition, especially when one has drunk hemlock or some other 'dull opiate'. These paradoxical statements embodying a tension between reality and dreaminess, are perhaps

justified in the poet's being 'too happy' in the 'happiness' of the nightingale. In fact, the poet himself seems to have realized the paradoxical nature of his initial statements, and so decides to fly to the nightingale not with the help of any sedatives or intoxicants, but "on the viewless wings of Poesy", i.e., Imagination, for "the dull brain perplexes and retards".

But Imagination too seems to land him in a zone which contradicts Reality, for there

haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,  
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;  
But here there is no light,  
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown  
Through venderous glooms and winding mossy ways.

In the lines that follow he cannot see the flowers at his feet, but he can visualize the bright moon surrounded by stars, which in the world of reality, are practically invisible around the shining moon.

In his next stanzas his wish for easeful death while listening to the bird's song is understandable, and he passes on after this to call the bird, i.e. its song, "immortal". With this his flight of imagination being over, he returns to his 'sole self', realizing that the world of 'fancy' or imagination is ephemeral and the nightingale's song which he had imagined as arising from its "happiness" in the opening stanza, is really a "plaintive anthem", maybe arising from the lot of the mythical Philomela. Now, John Keats is left wondering:

Was it a vision or a waking dream?  
Fled is that music:- do I wake or sleep?

These closing lines provide a key to the unique and immortal beauty of the poem—a wonderful portrayal of the underlying tension between tearful Reality and ecstatic Imagination generated by the magical effect of the nightingale's song.

Matthew Arnold's *Philomela* (Palgrave, pp. 425-26) is a powerful lyrical outburst addressed to Procne, the true Philomela of Greek mythology who killed her own son for vengeance. The poet is heart-rendered by her "wild, unquench'd, deep-sunken, old-world pain" and asks her

Doust thou again peruse  
With hot checks and scar'd eyes

The too clear web, and thy dumb sister's shame?  
 the poet further asks her whether she still relives in her memory  
 the past, her flight and transformation into a bird. Perhaps she still  
 does, for

How thick the bursts come crowding through the leaves!

Again – thou hearest?

Eternal passion!

Eternal pain! (Palgrave, p. 426)

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, more appreciated as a poet in her  
 age than her husband Robert Browning, wrote a poem entitled 'Bianca  
 among the Nightingales' which has nothing to do with the Greek  
 myth or the melody of the song of the nightingales, who go on singing  
 in the same tune regardless of her own love story narrated by her.  
 Their song does not express any reaction to her story, making her  
 irritated, creating in her reaction a chronological change. For instance,  
 when she and her lover Guilio kiss, the birds seem to her driving  
 "straight and full their long clear call." And when the lovers are  
 sundered, she scolds them for continuing to sing, almost driving her  
 mad. And when Bianca is finally deserted by her lover who seems  
 to have married an English lady, she begins to abuse the nightingales:

Oh, owl-like birds! They sing for spite,

They sing for hate, they sing for doom!

They'll sing through death who sing through night

They'll sing and stun me in the tomb "

The nightingales, the nightingales!

The nightingales are presented as neutral, unconcerned but ever  
 singing in the same tone. Unlike the birds of many other poets like  
 Keats or Arnold, Elizabeth Barrett Browning's nightingales are portrayed  
 as going on singing unconcerned with man who may interpret their  
 notes as he likes.

In the twentieth century new socio-economic and psycholog-  
 ical concerns largely moved the nightingale of the myth, reality or  
 emotional sympathy into a range of new perspectives. Poets like  
 Wordsworth, Coleridge and Mrs. Browning had already viewed the  
 bird from non-mythical viewpoints. Even Keats's famous Ode does  
 not have any direct reference to the myth.

Coming nearer to us in time, we find that Walter de la Mare in

his poem 'All That's Past' suggests the nightingales as originators of racial memory passed on to us in dreams:

Very old are we men;  
 Our dreams are tales  
 Told in dim Eden  
 By Eve's nightingales.<sup>4</sup>

Another well-known poet Robert Bridges starts by questioning the Keatsian imaginative approach in his 'Nightingales' (Palgrave 482):

Where are those starry woods? O might I wander there,  
 Among the flowers, which in that heavenly air  
 Bloom the year long!

He goes beyond imagination to the 'dark nocturnal secret', possibly from the Freudian psychology of biological urges:

Our song is the voice of desire that haunts our dreams,  
 A throe of the heart,  
 Whose pinning visions dim, forbidden hopes profound,  
 No dying cadence nor long sigh can sound,  
 For all our art.

Bridges' nightingales are different from other birds "the innumerable choir of day", who welcome the dawn while the nightingales are almost poets themselves, who dream of dark secrets, or they may just be common birds with normal biological urges, as observed above. But, in any case, they are meant by the poet to be quite different from Keats's nightingale as Bridges has clearly implied in the lines quoted above.

T.S. Eliot's well-known poem 'Sweeney among the Nightingales' is a peep into his veiled discontent and indignation and the moral degeneration of modern society and its contrast with the right type of life which is embodied in the mention of the nightingales in the title. Sweeney is a lecherous middle-aged man apparently involved in love-affairs with two women thought to be in league against Sweeney who naturally declines to play with them a gambit, starting with a game of chess. Chess involves much 'killing', which along with references to Rachel tearing at the grapes with "murderous paws" and "gloomy orient and the Dog" and the hushed "sunken seas" are ominous signals of evil and murder. All such omens culminate in the actual murder of Sweeney, indicated by the conclud-

ing reference to the cry of the dying Agamemnon murdered by his wife Clytemnestra. The nightingales are a witness of this murder and the word 'singing' may be suggestive of the singing 'Philomela'. The reference to the 'Convent of the Sacred Heart', possibly just a name of a nearby convent, may ironically refer to a 'Convent' (i.e. a conspiracy) of 'sacred Hearts' (ironically evil-minded persons). It is only the nightingales, who are a witness, may represent the present-day reader's response to the contrast between tragic events of the myth and the fate, perhaps well-deserved, meted out to a lecher by two prostitutes. The nightingales take this murder so light-heartedly that they intentionally desecrate the shroud of the murdered man with their liquid droppings, possibly embodying the poet's own contempt for the seamy side of modern civilization suggested by the hissing and hard consonant sounds of the last two lines of the poem:

And let their liquid siftings fall  
To stain the stiff dishonoured shroud.

In connection with the third important character rather the initiator of the Philomela myth, Tereus, transformed into a hawk, we find that he has received some attention only in the twentieth century in which there is an abundance of animal poetry, serious, sympathetic and ironical. In W.B. Yeats's fanciful poem 'The Hawk' (Palgrave, p. 506) in which the 'hawk of the mind', a creation of the poet's imagination as the mythical hawk was that of the gods' imaginative creation, acquires independence and pride almost like the hawk into whom Tereus was transformed, and refuses to be "clapped in a hood", though its "pretence of wit" was a gift of the poet, its godlike creator.

Charles Thomlinson's 'How Still the Hawk'<sup>5</sup> is like Tereus, the 'doom'. It drops on its peaceful prey, the nightingale (Philomela) "who does not share. The nearness and the need," but with her attractive beauty she becomes

The shriveled circle  
Of magnetic fear.

Similarly, in Thom Gunoi's 'Tamer and Hawk'<sup>6</sup> the hawk has, like Tereus the escort to Tereus the ravisher of Philomela, acquired an independent and superior status and says to the tamer before killing

him:

For you I fear to lose,  
I lose to keep, and choose  
Tamer as prey.

Ted Hughes, who has written a number of poems on a variety of animals, shows in his famous poem 'Hawk Roosting'<sup>7</sup> a powerful hawk having the thoughts and ambitions of a conscienceless ruler like Tereus or a dictator like Hitler with "the earth's face for [his] inspection," so that he, the supreme manifestation of Creative Power, asserts his elemental right:

I kill where I please because it is all mine.  
There is no sophistry in my body...

For the path of my flight is direct  
Through the bones of the living.  
No arguments assert my right:

Tereus might have at least thought, if not said, something like this, for Ted Hughes' hawk is made of the same stuff, though it goes many steps beyond him to unveil the very roots of Power and its negative use.

Finally, to return to the nightingale made 'immortal' by its song and given more attention and sympathy in English poetry than any other bird, we might like to notice another type of immortality given to it by no less a poet than W.B. Yeats – the immortality of a work of art. He would prefer a bird not of flesh and blood, a dying animal', but a 'Philomela' of myth, a product of somebody's 'aging intellect'. Yeats would like to return to that nightingale and transfer it from myth to sculpture, a work of art "Of hammered gold and gold enamelling"

Yet upon a golden bough to sing  
To lords and ladies of Byzantium. ("Sailing to Byzantium")

This would perhaps be the best consummation of the mortal bird that generations of poets have sung about.

Miracle, bird or golden handiwork,  
More miracle than bird or handiwork,  
Planted on the star-lit golden bough,  
Can like the cocks of Hades crow,  
Or, by the moon embittered, scorn aloud

In glory of changeless metal  
 Common bird or petal  
 And all complexities of mire or blood. ('Byzantium')

Yeats's mention of the moon reminds us of Keats's ode in which too he calls the bird "immortal", independent of biological life ("No hungry generations tread thee down"), or the Biblical stories like that of Ruth, or even of the magical "fairy lands forlorn". Two great poets seem to shake hands across a century portraying the bird as immortal, though in different ways. Still we hope that the nightingale will be immortal in quite another way, by being the darling subject of poets for centuries to come, though, as before, in the company of other birds and animals.

### NOTE

Most of the references, especially of lesser known poets, are being given. Those not given pertain to well-known poets, and their complete works may be consulted. Many of them can be found in good anthologies of English poetry including F.T. Palgrave's *The Golden Treasury* (London: O.U.P., 1974). The references to this well-known anthology have been absorbed in the text of the paper by giving the relevant page numbers after the word 'Palgrave'. If necessary, the Internet may be searched, especially on Websites like 'http: mail google.com or http: quotesandpoem.com.

### REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup>Etith Hamilton, *Mythology* (A Mentor Book: New York Public Library, New York, 1953), pp.270-71.
- <sup>2</sup>Palgrave, *The Golden Treasury*, pp.464-66. Further references to this book will be found in the text of the paper. See Note given above.
- <sup>3</sup>David Green (ed.), *The Wingless Words* (Madras: Macmillan, 1974), p.8.
- <sup>4</sup>A. Methuen (ed.), *An Anthology of Modern Verse* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1941), pp.63-4.
- <sup>5</sup>Jim Hunter (ed.), *Modern Poets Four* (London: Faber and Faber, 1979), p.37.
- <sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p.61.
- <sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p.91.

## HOW TO MAKE LITERATURE AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE

Leonard R.N. Ashley

The responsibility of a writer is to excavate the experience of the people who produced him. —James Baldwin, *A Dialogue*.

This is directed to writers who want to bring a deeper understanding of India to the peoples of India and describe the Indian experience to the English speaking peoples of the whole world. It concerns literary production. All literary productions are in a sense collaborations between the literary tradition and reality and the writer's imagination as well, of course, between the writer and the readers, which is what the German reception theory, now so popular among US critics, is all about. This article brings up the question of the relationship between the writer and the inherent limits and editorial forces. It undertakes to mention how some of these work to shape writing anywhere and how writers in English in India can be aware of these factors and deal with them to their advantage, whatever they happen to write.

In some cases we know why writers write: egotism or service to humanity, ambition or obsession, and loneliness rank high in the list. Mostly writers are one with Martin Luther: "God help me, I can do no other." We have no way of knowing now precisely what most authors wrote. Poetry may be largely exempt from interference, one person speaking to another, but who can say what a reader will bring to short or long fiction? Plays are by their very nature not only subject to the interpretations individual directors and actors impose upon them but also the changing audience reactions over time. Some playwrights such as Truman Capote did not like the theater because of what he called "team sport". Capote resented that his lapidary work would be modified without his consent in pragmatic production. Other playwrights such as Tennessee Williams submitted gladly to the commercial theatre know-how of directors such as Elia Kazan. Some screenwriters (with unmade or maybe impossible movies in their heads) tried to keep a tight grip on their work when it was adapted to the screen but almost all realized that screenwriters, as it were, are lowly. Their scripts are less texts than pretexts for making

a film.

Norman Mailer said writing was for men the closest thing to giving birth and we know that writers for film more than most authors give birth to a creature but then put it up for adoption. A whole team from studio heads to producers and rewrite men and directors and actors "put in their two cents worth," for better or for worse. Whether in the Bollywood or the Hollywood cinema, no script goes unchanged from today's computer copy to the director's shooting script. Practically no director can invariably win over the "input" of producers or even over certain leading actors and in any case every director has to worry about a so-called final script that may have been "in rewrite" for years and on the spur of the moment may have to be altered because of production budget, location difficulties, cast crises or other factors. George S. Kaufman, sitting in the cinema to see the film of one of his plays, at one point legend says jumped up and cried, "They used a line of my dialogue!"

Whether composing for the old printed word or the new moving image, writers are very much like architects. They envision something and construct it in their minds. They basically draw blueprints, taking into account the site, the client's desires and available budget, the current fads, the zoning laws, even the regulations of the unions and the methods, technologies, and materials the contractors use. Few edifices turn out exactly the way any architect envisioned. If the final building closely resembles the pretty little model it probably looks a little kooky, maybe as silly as a museum by Lloyd Wright screwed into the ground or (say) one by Gehry that reminds you of a newspaper that was cast as litter in the street and went to pieces and blew up against some nearby walls.

If you want to find an outlet, every line you write must be written with others in mind. Excuse the personal, but all writers have a bad habit of talking about themselves. When as a young man I wrote a lot of poetry, as many young persons do I took great care to send it out to "little magazines that died to make verse free" that I had meticulously analyzed to be sure that they specialized in exactly the sort of poem I was producing. That way I was much published. I had a theory that anything at all that said it was poetry could get

into print somewhere if you kept sending it out of the house, and I was proved right. But if I had wanted a lot of readers I would have written pornography, not poetry.

If I had not found more than 60 such magazines over a comparatively short time — and one had to keep researching because the lives of many periodicals were brief — I should either have had to start my own poetry magazine to publish my own stuff and that of similar thinking friends or be content to put scraps in a drawer and go unpublished, like Emily Dickinson. If you think the avant-garde has to be boldly original, you are wrong. No magazine wants to publish anything that is “not our sort of thing”. There are at any time rules and regulations governing even the avant-garde. Writing simple clear prose without “taint of personality” (the phrase is Tennyson’s) is truly fresh and outstanding today, but now we are in an age not of communicating but celebrity. Ours is an era not of expression but self-expression. Also we now equate originality with chance, so we cut up manuscripts like William Burroughs or flip a coin to determine movements. I won’t call the result ballet because it has no narrative or message and I won’t call it dance because it is not movement to beat or exactly to music. I call it an event, an old-fashioned Happening, actually not much different than a drag queen voguing, like Merce Cunningham. Moreover, both Burroughs and Cunningham are dead, and were old before they left, so it is high time for something fresher, new genres for the new technology.

Today you can bypass editors and self-edit, self-publish. This writer in 2009 published several books. *Last Days: The Messiah, The Apocalypse, The Rapture, The Last Judgment* was originally designed to be the twelfth book in his series on the occult but Barricade Books, the publishers of the successful series, went into Chapter 11 bankruptcy and so the manuscript was offered to half a dozen religious publishers. Five out of six offered to publish it but each insisted on taking out all opinions that did not gibe with their particular sectarian beliefs, different for each one. I undertook to self-publish with Xlibris, a branch of Random House, and express my own ideas, good or bad, and stick with that. I likewise self-published my *Language in Action*. Who else would publish an 800-page book on

onomastics and geolinguistics, literature and politics, etc., in paperback for less than US\$ 25.00? I had to edit these books myself and I came to appreciate how much work publishing houses usually do in editing and design.

Most authors submit to publishers editing, sometimes lightly, sometimes not. Maxwell Perkins made a readable novel out of Tom Wolfe's *Of Time and the River*. He excavated it from the huge boxes of manuscript that Wolfe wrote on the top of his refrigerator. Ben Jonson carefully edited his plays when Shakespeare did not, and Jonson was scathingly criticized for publishing mere plays as *Workes of Ben Jonson*. Shakespeare as what George Bernard Shaw called a writer in the "commercial romantic style" wrote for production, not publication. Published plays could be acted by rival companies and Shakespeare was a co-owner of the King's Men's repertory. What we have of Shakespeare has passed through the altering hands of his acting company for London use and cut for provincial tours and in the case of *Macbeth* cut and added to by Thomas Middleton, then to be emended by scholars such as Theobald. Theobald did not understand "as sharp as a pen on a table of green fields" and undertook to say of Falstaff that "a [he] babbled of green fields". You may think this is a charming improvement, but the table of green fields was a lawyer's table covered with green felt—and a lawyer's pen Shakespeare considered to be extremely sharp.

Many an author has much benefited from line-by-line changes and cuts. Poet T. S. Eliot's *The Wasteland* was vastly improved by Ezra Pound's blue pencil, and Eliot hailed Pound as "the greater artisan/maker". Some writers may have been much harmed. Innumerable novels in typescript have been made successfully publishable by editing just as editors of collected works have substantially improved a writer's reputation by tasteful selection of the best or the most popular. Seldom does a writer cut out a very popular work which he feels inferior the way W. H. Auden rejected the famous *September, 1939* about a "low, dishonest decade". Few creators are the very best judges of their best and worst work.

Editors are usually, to use Dr. Johnson's phrase about lexicographers, harmless drudges. They bring, for example, Emily

Dickinson's squirreled-away poems to light, even leaving her idiosyncratic punctuation. Editors often have been invaluable, part-author, sensitive, marvelous improvers. There are certain rules editors impose and one good rule is that "two heads are better than one". Another is that an author can be "too close to his work" and an objective assessment is required. Ideally, we should get what the author wrote and so we can place praise or blame. In practice, modern publications are badly edited, inadequately indexed, and full of typographical errors.

The less cliquy magazines seldom deal in old-fangled poetry. I won't say verse because anything but prose broken up and scattered around a page is what is now wanted, the quatrain and the sestina being effectively dead. Every periodical has strict requirements to impose on writers certain stylistic requirements and perhaps themes thought suitable by the owners for the periodical's usual readership. In addition there are space limitations. Those force concision. There used to be an old tradition of publishing in parts which call for a certain number of pages for each installment. This made the likes of Dickens verbose — he was paid by the word and had pages to fill — and likewise demanded cliff-hanging conclusions to each episode very much like those in the serials run in the early cinemas. Thus Dickens got the reputation for being melodramatic. Of course Dickens was the product of an age in which melodrama ruled the legitimate stage. Dickens even wrote a melodrama with the creator of the nineteenth-century novel of melodramatic mystery, Wilkie Collins. The unusual names Dickens gave characters made them memorable but also increased the distance from reality that his fantastic mind had already imposed. When the parts of works first printed in installments are collected to make a novel seldom or never are changes made to eliminate these repeated minor climaxes. Dickens badly needs cutting, but now Dickens is so famous nobody could get away with improving him by excision any more than the overly long novels of Stephen King and some other currently popular writers can be cut.

What will happen to prolix books in the age of 140-character texting? Will the short story, America's more successful literary

genre than the novel, make a comeback? Some writers try to sell collections of short stories by suggesting there is a theme. By the slimming of any work down to size for film, we get a taste for the quick and brief. Film is ruled by the amount of time a spectator can be expected to sit continuously in a seat but novels can be picked up and put down at will, providing of course other communications in our world have not ruined our attention spans. Even ambitious "major works of fiction" cannot truly be the three-decker monsters of the centuries when people had more time and patience to read than they do today. Our answer to the three-volume novel is to come out over time with something like the Harry Potter series or to make several films out of *Lord of the Rings* or a seemingly unending stream out of *Star Trek* or *Halloween* or other hits. *Friday the Thirteenth* and *Star Wars* prove repeats are profitable.

There is an old joke among academics who say that in Shakespeare's time after Christopher Marlowe's roommate Thomas Kyd had a big hit with *The Spanish Tragedy* some theater owner must have said to him, "Look, Kid, give us the same thing again only this time just make the son revenge the father rather than the father revenge the son, but keep the ghost, keep the blood and thunder and the over-the-top Senecan arias and for God's sake don't forget the really good madness stuff!" Kyd actually wrote "the sequel". His *Hamlet* is lost, all but a single line from *The Ghost*: "Hamlet, revenge!" We have to be content with a rewrite of Kyd's drama. Shakespeare penned that. We can expect another sequel (maybe *Horatio's Story* or *Fortinbras I*) or maybe even what Hollywood calls a prequel (*Young Hamlet*, perhaps by Mel Brooks). There already is a *Gertrude*.

To have the best chance of making a profit producers like to adapt previously accepted material. They take the tried-and-true from movies, from comic books, from novels, from short stories, from anywhere the public will recognize and applaud. The new and original is always risky. The commercially oriented artists avoid it, to put it in terms of a worn-out phrase that vampiristically just will not die, "like the plague". The present writer wrote a whole "complete" history of the vampire in legend and art. That was some years

back. Now much more vampire material is to be seen in cheap comics and fiction, expensive films, and all over television for tweeners, teenagers, and alleged grownups or what the circus used to call "children of all ages". Vampires are sure money makers.

Where once I joking advised a friend who wanted to write something very profitable to attempt "a lesbian western," today I would probably make that "a lesbian/ bisexual/ gay/ transsexual vampire story," preferably with pretty teenagers. You have to address the popular demand. Only a few artsy-fartsy poets are currently talking to themselves, and we say people who talk to themselves are crazy. Sane and practical writers believe Dr. Johnson was right when he asserted with characteristic confidence that "nobody but a fool ever writ except for money". Our modern, globalized commercial bent seems to indicate that if you are not content with Milton's "fit audience but few" and you want epic sales and not epic poetry you produce for a felt need and design to please a wide market by closely following the rules for detective fiction, action heroes, or what have you. To market art you must know the art market. Only a very few, by luck or pluck, can create a market for themselves.

Publishers may once have been gentlemen dismissive of financial gain but today they all have to be market driven. They may dictate a number of features of the works they will publish. For example, the Harlequin romance novels are written to strict instructions regarding plot and the nature and placing and characters, even the names given to characters. Some publishers of sexually oriented fiction look for sex action every half a dozen pages. Henry Miller seems to have come up with this rule for himself when writing the Tropic series and his awkward style still allowed him to make page-turners because his readers were happy with sex not style.

Even stricter are the demands of television comedy. That has to fit into the broadcast time slot and also to allow for various breaks in the action for the insertion of commercials. Television to a greater extent than most popular culture media has to have "eyeballs," live potential customers for the goods and services the sponsors are pushing, programs directed at the appropriate age and spending

cohorts. The more people who watch a program the more the broadcasters can charge for commercial time.

Today one-quarter of all US television broadcasting is Reality TV. This is a genre which does not have to pay high prices for writers because it is largely unscripted and can use talent who work for no compensation except for prizes awarded to the winners. The reality show *American Idol* is essentially the old amateur hour of Major Bowles on radio but it draws so many viewers it can charge a million dollars for a 30-second commercial "spot". It is a great money-making machine. A win can jump start a career. The losers of all such shows and the survivor shows have been joined by those on shows where some business magnate fires would-be executives. Donald Trump in the US has been followed by a similar unpleasant character in the UK. These knock-downs entertain the cruel public by showing the travails of the insulted being thrown off the runway in a fashion contest, exiled from the kitchen in a nasty chef show, thrown off the island in a demanding survival test. These shows somewhat share the appeal of soap opera (promoted to "daytime drama").

Failure is indeed a reality for many people today. Contestants participate without any per-appearance fee just as did the radio quiz show hopefuls who looked to winning a prize. The struggling contestants today on long-running television game shows such as *Family Feud*, *The Price Is Right*, *Jeopardy*, and so on "resonate" with us. The proliferation of such entertainments pushes much comedy and drama off the air. The amateurs in their awkwardness and striving provide all the laughs and the happy endings of success and all the tragedy of defeat that the public seems to need.

The modern public seems to crave destruction. The age is apocalyptic. This does not require cop-show or spy-story actors or the huge expense of car crashes and hi-tech explosions that we find all over the big and small screens. . Writers have had to call for more and more gory deaths and spectacular destruction and ever more stupendous special effects on the screen in order to trump the misery of reality contestants' personal annihilation. Week by week the contestants get more famous and more imperiled than any would-

bes in old-fashioned beauty pageants. It is a feast of sadism and *Schadenfreude* that challenges the most explicit of horror films. It has infected all US and UK fiction. You will be familiar with some of these shows no matter where you live. Surely India has them. Japanese shows are incredibly nastier to the contestants. It's a cultural thing.

Despite all the problems and pitfalls of authorship this brief article has touched upon it still strongly wishes to inspire writers to write, which is the only way that writers can ever feel fulfilled and the only way their ideas and emotional reactions can ever be adequately conveyed to the rest of us. In a journal in English directed at an Indian audience let me say that many of the challenges facing writers in English India are very much the same as those facing all writers in English worldwide right now. You have the immense advantage of a language that promises the best of you a global readership, a larger readership than has ever existed in the history of the world. Seize the opportunity if you have anything to say.

To be extremely successful you must have your finger on the pulse of the general public. You must know how and where your work will be received, whether it is literature or criticism of literature, inspiration or information. You will be well advised to deal in both your own epiphanies and in the time-tested techniques and themes. So use such basics as the quest, good versus evil, a stranger arrives on the scene, boy meets girl, etc. You can extrapolate from personal experience and stick to the kinds of characters, situations, and settings you know or can research, while all the time providing the expected with never too much of the unusual, even in science fiction, new directions in the crime novel, or new "takes" on social dynamics from love stories to political intrigues.

You may find it useful to notice that the modern puts an emphasis on the visual and so write cinematically if you want the big money, selling to the movies, whether nationally or internationally. You may want to tackle matters never discussed before but do not fail to bolster your imaginative material with plenty of the stuff of common life, because modern readers like to be informed as well as diverted. To that mixture fold into the something new the some-

thing old, in your case perhaps searching Indian myth and legend for "new" ideas. Maybe you should even add to your "creative writing," as if all writing were not "creative," some translations of the ancient treasures of the Indian literary heritage.

If you want to join the majority writing of the present, rather than (say) the building on the nineteenth-century Indian railroads or writing the epic of the Indian Mutiny or the modern nation's founding why not present the life of India on a broader scale than fixing on the lives of one current caste or class? Tell us about the desperate lives of the poor and despised and downtrodden if you like but do not neglect to write as well of, for example, the growing Indian business class especially in science and technology, the exciting lives of Indian students who studied abroad and have returned to make a new India at home, even what happened to the maharajahs of the *raj* and how old aristocrats and tribal leaders and religious figures and others with ties to the past are faring right now.

I would be fascinated to read an Indian writer who can explain to those of us in the west some true values of Indian philosophy that we in the west have picked up far too sketchily and far too often distorted. I would love to read a novel centered on the daily life of a village family moved to a teeming Indian metropolis or a Bollywood production company in action or a modern painter or sculptor or archeologist starting out or at the height of a brilliant career or a young Indian working with computers or engaged in or combating terrorism or a modern mogul who has risen to the top of Indian business, finance, or elective or tribal politics. Why not give us a book of retold folk tales, one from each of India's many colorful cultures? Why not a novel called *Fashchas* which traces the first-year experiences of a mixed group of students at a large Indian university? Why not a big dynastic novel of an Indian family whose newest members have moved to Britain or America? Why not a love story complicated by caste, age difference or cultural conflicts? Maybe you can use some of the native \ narrative techniques of Hindi, Sanskrit, Rajastani, and Urdu that Christi A. Merrill in *Riddles of Belonging: India on Translation and Other Tales of Possession*, (Fordham University Press, 2009) has made known recently to read-

ers of English. Every nation has something of its own narratology.

Express ideas and emotions. Explain without too much intrusion. You do not want to be Henry James these days. We can understand anything if you explain well. You can do your part to help Indians to understand themselves and the rest of the English-speaking world to understand India, a nation that, with China, is set to alter dramatically the century in which we live and indeed change the world forever. If you can capture where that all came from, what things were like as the big change began, what the title of a Victorian novel called *The Way We Live Now*, you may have a classic.

New Yorkers used to say, "There are eight million stories in the big city". Just think how many stories there must be in the subcontinent! Write one. Try to get into it as Mallarmé said all the perfumes, colors and sounds of some part of India but give a little (his words) of "the satisfaction of guessing, bit by bit; to suggest it, to evoke it—that is what enchants the imagination". Try to capture the essence of some aspect of your country, remembering that Henry James said the only excuse for the novel is that "it does attempt to represent life". Listen to all criticism but maintain your own standards and change only what you can accept as absolutely needing correction. When you are ready, send your child out into the world. If it returns, send it out over and over until someone says, "I love it" and will bring it to public attention. If it is any consolation to hear this note that some great works of literature were rejected out of hand dozens upon dozens of times by all sorts of so-called experts but were eventually understood and acclaimed by everybody. Once you get into print, people attacking you can be regarded as publicity. Look what a *fatwa* did for *Satanic Verses*.

Write until an idea occurs to you, in your head (like Gibbon) before you set words down or weed your garden later. Spend time re-reading the work of previous effort trying to change at least one word for the better each time through. Ideally, don't talk about your work. If you associate with writers, talk about anything but your work, anything, even their work. Maybe you should not only refrain from asking other writers to read your Work in Progress but also refuse to read their Work in Progress. If you think their work is bad

it will be awkward to tell them. If you think it is good you may become jealous or insecure. Maintaining your confidence is important. If you read, read successful authors. Do not fear you will lose your personal voice because you are not going to write like Swift or Proust. You are going to write like you. But you can pick up a few tricks from how Chekhov got out of a narrative corner you find yourself in, how this or that author handled a symbol or named a character.

There are useful technical dodges as simple as repeating certain words, or varying sentence length, or using or not using linear narrative, or shifting point of view, or starting with a very simple, short, arresting sentence. Molière said he never had any trouble at all with the opening line. The trouble came later. You can learn how to move along, to build to a climax or how to start a chapter or end one. Don't try the O. Henry "sting in the tail" too much, if ever, though John Cheever in *The Chaser* shows a success in that line with just two words that can bring you right out your seat. There are devices but no magic formulae. With dialogue, you should read it aloud; you don't want what looks good on the page (as in Hemingway) to be unspeakable. You do not have to copy Dickens in assuming the voices and gestures of characters and acting out before a mirror as you speak your dialogue but do try to make your individual characters distinct in their expression. Don't let them sound all alike as in certain British novelists such as Ivy Compton-Burnett. Dialect needs to be age and class as well as region specific and remember that odd phonetic spelling is no longer popularly accepted.

Pope wrote that "True ease in writing comes from Art, not Chance," so keep working dutifully at your trade and practice will make perfect. An ancient Roman said "no day without a line". Every day write something. You do not have to set yourself Trollope's minimum number of words or Scott's certain number of pages. Just be sure to write or improve something. Each day stop with a sentence incomplete; that way you will get off to an easy start the next day. Destroy a lot of what you write unless. Most writers prefer to go with the flow and later look at the result with a cold eye. For them writing is rewriting. Not endlessly. Stendhal said one never finishes a novel, one abandons it. Learn when to let go.

## EXTREMES OF LITERARY CRITICISM — “OLD LIAR”; ONE OF “THE GREATEST WRITERS OF ALL TIME”: D.H. LAWRENCE’S DENUNCIATION OF, AND ADULATION FOR, LEO TOLSTOY

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D.H. Lawrence, though strikingly original in his views on the variegated facets of life and art, is an extremist to some extent. For instance, he rejects intellectuality or cerebral consciousness for phallic consciousness, discards outright the conventional concepts of morality, character-creation and form for spontaneous, creative fullness of being and “religion of blood”, etc. No wonder, then, if he is, to a certain degree, unbalanced in his approaches to creative artists as well as art and its varied forms. This is well evident in his numerous observations on Tolstoy’s mind and art, interspersed in many of his letters and non-fictional works written by him from time to time all through his brilliant but controversial literary career. What is specially notable in this connection is that though, unlike several of his illustrious contemporaries — viz. Henry James, E.M. Forster, Somerset Maugham and Virginia Woolf —, he did not write any essay exclusively on Tolstoy, yet the inimitable Russian fictionist was one of the few authors who seized his mind and on whom he made many significant statements here and there and everywhere. Therefore, in order to understand his response to Tolstoy, we have to piece together his various, scattered cogitations on the Russian fictional genius contained in his letters, *Study of Thomas Hardy*, “The Novel”, *Fantasy of the Unconscious and Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, “Preface” to his translation of Verga’s *Cavalleria Rusticana*, a couple of his poems, etc.

Lawrence’s letters evince his deep interest in Tolstoy. As early as 23 December 1907 Lawrence, before he could publish anything worthwhile, told Louie Burrows in a letter that she would surely find Tolstoy “interesting” and hence should “accept” him (*The Letters of D.H. Lawrence*, Vol. I, ed. James T. Boulton 42). The next year in a letter written on 2 December 1908 he advised May Holbrook to read seriously Tolstoy, along with Balzac and Ibsen, as “they were

great men all" (96). Again, on 28 February 1909 he informed Louie Burrows that of late he read a lot of modern literature including that of Tolstoy (118). During this period of his life, he was so much obsessed with Tolstoy's heroine Anna Karenina that in the confession of his passion for Frieda to his former beloved Jessie Chambers in June 1912 he referred to the Russian's immortal fictional character thus: "I only know I love Frieda... I can think of nothing but of Anna Karenina" (412). In October 1912, about a year before the publication of his first important novel entitled *Sons and Lovers*, young Lawrence, along with his wife Frieda, carefully read *Anna Karenina* and observed in a light vein in his letter to Edward Garnett: "She (Frieda) finds Anna very much like herself, only inferior — Vronsky is not much like me — too much my superior" (463). Then, on 10 June 1913 he wrote to Edward Garnett to know about the progress of the latter's book on Leo Tolstoy that actually appeared in 1914 (*The Letters of D.H. Lawrence*, Vol. II, ed. George J. Zytaruck and James T. Boulton 21). Again, he made a mention of Tolstoy's novels in October and November 1913 and referred to the several English translations of *The Kreutzer Sonata* which he wanted to read (*The Letters of D.H. Lawrence*, Vol. II 96, 101 and 114). However, in a letter written to Catherine Carswell on 27 November 1916, he averred that Tolstoy and his great countrymen like Turgenev and Dostoevsky, along with Maupassant and Flaubert, were coarse and affected as compared to English artists and Fennimore Cooper; indeed, they were "so very *obvious* and coarse, beside the lovely nature and sensitive art of Fennimore Cooper or Hardy. It seems to me that our English art, at its best, is by far the subtlest and loveliest and most perfect in the world. But it is characteristic of a highly-developed nation to bow down to that which is more gross and raw and affected" (*The Letters of D.H. Lawrence*, Vol. III, ed. James T. Boulton and Andrew Robertson 41). Nevertheless, he was fully conscious of the greatness of Tolstoy, Turgenev and Dostoevsky, and therefore admitted in his letter to Catherine Carswell dated 2 December 1916 that the illustrious Russians had meant and mattered immensely to him, but at the same time he believed that they were somewhat crude, uncivilized and insensitive in comparison with the

celebrated British novelists whom he found finer, purer and 'ultimate'. To quote his own words:

Oh, don't think I would belittle the Russians. They have meant an enormous amount to me; Turgenev, Tolstoi, Dostoievsky — mattered almost more than anything, and I thought them the greatest writers of all time. And now, with something of a shock, I realise a certain crudity and thick, uncivilized, insensitive stupidity about them, I realise how much finer and purer and more ultimate our own stuff is." (44)

Interestingly, only after twenty-one days of making the previous assertion, Lawrence, while commenting on Middleton Murry's novel in a letter sent to Gordon Campbell, described Tolstoy and Dostoevsky as "the best and greatest of men" (63). In fact, he had an irresistible fascination for Tolstoy's writing all through his literary career. This is the reason why he, as he wrote to Cecily Lambert on 8 November 1919, "went to a Tolstoy play" which seemed to him "awful rubbish" (411), felt extremely thankful to S.S. Koteliansky for sending him *Tolstoy's Love Letters* (*The Letters of D.H. Lawrence*, Vol. IV, ed. Warren Roberts, James T. Boulton and Elizabeth Mansfield 462), and requested S.S Koteliansky on 21 December 1928 — even when he was dying of tuberculosis — to send him "a cheap copy of *What Is Art?*" (*The Letters of D.H. Lawrence*, Vol. VII, ed. Keith Sagar and James T. Boulton 82).

The above-cited comments of Lawrence on Tolstoy and others invite serious critical attention. As pointed out above, idiosyncratic extreme is evident in that they were earlier enormously important to him, mattered most to him and were "the greatest writers of all time", but only after a very short period they shocked him by their "crudity" and "stupidity"; these contradictory views confound the reader and amply display his confused, erratic critical faculty. Surely, it is an instance of imbalanced and careless criticism because if Tolstoy's realistic, comprehensive delineation of the contemporary Russian society with all its sordidness is shocking to Lawrence, what should he say about the eminent Dickens's depiction of the seamy side of the Victorian world in his works? or about Fielding's picture of the vulgarity of life in his first two masterpieces? or about Hardy's indulgence in the uncivilized rustic life? or, for that matter, about his own portrayal of the rough and uncivilized colliery world in *Sons and*

*Lovers* and the naked description of sexuality and primitivity in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and *The Rainbow* which were banned for a considerable period and which disgusted T.S. Elliot so much so that he called him "uncouth" lacking in "intellectual and social training" and "disinherited of all the humaner achievements of civilized living" (*After Strange Gods* 62-4)?

Besides, this view of Lawrence about Tolstoy and others is in sharp contrast to that of his illustrious contemporary fictionist-critic, Virginia Woolf. While he finds the Russians crude, uncivilized and stupid in comparison with British novelists, Virginia Woolf declares Tolstoy and his compatriots, as well as James Joyce, to be saints and spiritualists and the contemporary established English fiction writers like Arnold Bennett, John Galsworthy and H.G. Wells as materialists ("Modern Fiction," *The Common Reader*, First Series 185 and 193). She sees the works of Tolstoy and others embedded in the very essence of life, the soul or spirit of human existence, the inner being which Lawrence speaks of time and again in his expository writings. Moreover, when he asserts that "our own stuff" — i.e. British fiction — is "much finer and purer and more ultimate", he does not at all mention any English fictional work or fictionist to illustrate his comment, and thus makes only a sweeping remark without meaning anything substantial and that too with reference to Tolstoy and his fellow countrymen who, in the considered opinion of most of the scholars and critics, are among the greatest writers of all time.

In a letter written to Henry Savage on 15 November 1913, Lawrence lashes out at Tolstoy and declares him a nihilist. At the beginning of it he states that he wanted to read *The Kreutzer Sonata* but could not do so till then because of its exorbitant price (*The Letters of D.H. Lawrence*, Vol. II 96). Then in the last but one paragraph of the letter he expresses his staunch belief that sex is the very spring of life, something that emanates from the eternal, and so the distancing from it means nothing but nihilism, the death of the being — the true essence of life. Inevitably, he condemns Tolstoy and Middleton Murry by calling them nihilists who plead for feeding mind and soul at the expense of body, thus making the spirit "to live

with a half corpse of a body." He writes:

Sex is the fountain head, where life bubbles up into the person from the unknown; you conduct life further and further from sex — it becomes movement — expression — logic. The nihilists — *Tolstoy was one, or nearly one — never tried to love* — Middleton didn't, really — he was profoundly a nihilist — he should have uttered nihilism, but he was English, and hadn't the courage, so he kept one flag — Beauty. (102, italics added)

Indeed, Lawrence as literary critic, though certainly not a professional and devoted one like Coleridge, Arnold, F.R. Leavis or T.S. Eliot, is often, to some extent, paradoxical and confusing, and his critical approach to Tolstoy is not an exception to it. His remarks about the *The Kreutzer Sonata* bear a testimony to it. After several abortive attempts to procure and read this sensational novel, he at last perused it and found it quite fascinating. In the letter written to Edward Garnett on 2 December 1913, he pointed out that it interested him because it, like *Fumeurs d' Opium* by Jules Boissiere, was "the raw material of Art." It fascinated him because it embodied the novelist's felt experience truthfully, but he opined that it was not a genuine work of art. He wrote: "That's why I liked *Kreutzer Sonata* — it is exactly what Tolstoi *thought* he experienced — and jolly truthful too — but not art. But it interests me" (114). Lawrence's comment on Tolstoy's novel is not convincing; it is erratic and self-contradictory. He does not explain as what he means by "the raw material of art" and the finished material of art, and what is the difference between the two? Besides, he likes *The Kreutzer Sonata* as a fictional work, but does not recognize it as a piece of art. Thus, his critical opinion on the book is somewhat ridiculous and baffling to a serious scholar of fiction.

In his criticism of Tolstoy and his fellow Russian fictionists — Turgenev and Dostoevsky —, Lawrence, as he himself admitted in a very significant letter written to Edward Garnett on 5 June 1914, was influenced by the great Italian artist, Marinetti, a very important passage of whose "Manifesto tecnico" (*I Poeti Futuristi*) he translated as "the profound intuitions of life added one to the other, word by word, according to their illogical conception, will give us the general lines of an intuitive physiology of matter" (182). Pinning full faith in what he translates from the Italian, he does not bother about physi-

ology of matter, but "that which is physic — non-human, in humanity, is more interesting to me than the old-fashioned human element — which causes one to conceive a character in a certain moral scheme and make him consistent" (182). Unconventional in most of the matters, Lawrence, getting support from Marinetti, completely rejects the traditional belief in a certain moral scheme, which becomes the basis of his concept of art and morality. And this also is the basis of his adverse criticism of Tolstoy and the company, for these Russians, despite their extraordinary talents and capabilities, conceive a certain moral scheme in which all the characters, including the very exceptional ones, are to fit, and this makes the characters of Russian novelists dull, old-fashioned and lifeless. To cite Lawrence's words:

The certain moral scheme is what I object to. In Turguenev, and in Tolstoi, and in Dostoievski, the moral scheme into which all the characters fit — and it is nearly the same scheme — is, whatever the extraordinariness of the characters themselves, dull, old, dead. (182-83)

Lawrence further explains his point by affirming that he cares only about what a person is, physiologically, materially and inhumanly. That is, what he is as a phenomenon, representing "some greater, inhuman will", rather than what he thinks or feels in consonance with "the human conception". In other words, he is concerned with the true essence of life, the "radically — unchanged element" in each human being. He further explains his stand by asserting that "diamond and coal are the same pure single element of carbon", and so he is concerned with carbon — the very essence of the thing, the whatness of life. Unfortunately, a novel usually focuses on "the history of the diamond", and not on the basic essence, carbon (183). And according to Lawrence, Tolstoy, like most of the novelists, concentrates on the diamond or the coal, and not on carbon, that is, on the very essence — the whatness of a man or a woman. This comment on Tolstoy and other celebrated Russian fictionists stands in stark contrast to those of several British fictionists-critics like Virginia Woolf, E.M. Forster and others who hold the Russians in high esteem simply because they primarily focus on the inner reality of life, the very soul of it. Thus, it is, indeed, very difficult to agree fully with

Lawrence, though he is not only persuasive but also often convincing and perceptive in his approach.

Lawrence, who loved Middleton Murry and admired his literary taste, was exceedingly annoyed by the latter's book on Fyodor Dostoevsky in which the author paid a glowing tribute to Russian literature, especially Tolstoy and Dostoevsky whom he described as the giants with whom ended an epoch of human mind. Lawrence was rudely shocked by his friend's concluding remark in the book, *Fyodor Dostoevsky: A Critical Study*:

In Russian literature alone can be heard the trumpet-note of a new world: other writers of other nations do no more than play about the feet of the giants who are Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, for even though the world knows it not, an epoch of the human mind came to an end in them. In them humanity stood on the brink of the revelation of a great secret. (263)

Middleton Murry's conclusion, which certainly smells of adoration, elicits Lawrence's indignant, cynical observation on Tolstoy and other Russian fictional celebrities. In his letter written to his friend, Murry, on 28 August 1916 he wonders how Murry and others can bear the old, traditional life, and then furiously lashes out at Tolstoy and others by asserting satirically that with them an age of the human mind may have ended,

... but humanity is capable of going on a very long way further yet, in a state of mindlessness — curse it. And you've got the cart before the horse. It isn't the being that must follow the mind, but the mind must follow the being. And if only the cursed cowardly world had the courage to follow its own being with its mind, if it only had the courage to know what its own unknown *is*, its own desires and its own activities, it might get beyond to the new secret. But the trick is, when you draw somewhere near the 'brink of the revelation', to dig your head in the sand like the disgusting ostrich, and see the revelation there. Meanwhile, with their head in the sand of pleasing visions and secrets and revelations, they kick and squirm with their behinds, most disgustingly. I don't blame humanity for having no mind, I blame it for putting its mind in a box and using it as a nice little self-gratifying instrument. You've got to know, and know everything, before you 'transcend' into the 'unknown'. (*The Letters of D.H. Lawrence*, Vol. II 646)

Though Lawrence is blatantly bitter in his reaction to Murry's perception of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky as the zenith of fiction writing, there is surely more than a grain of truth in his affirmation that the

mind should transcend the being, and not the vice versa, and that one has to know everything before one endeavours to reach the "unknown".

In the large corpus of Lawrence's expository writing, some pieces are invaluable for our present study, namely, "The Novel" and a few chapters of *Study of Thomas Hardy*, especially the first one. Though Lawrence has written four articles in all on the novel, the other three being — "Morality and the Novel", "Why the Novel Matters" and "Surgery for the Novel — a Bomb" which contain his original, unconventional cogitations on the various aspects of the novel in general —, yet "The Novel", which first appeared in his book entitled *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine* in 1925, is indispensable for understanding his attitude towards Tolstoy because almost one third of it discusses Tolstoy and his works. After proclaiming vigorously that the novel "is the highest form of human expression so far attained" (*D.H. Lawrence: A Selection from Phoenix* 161), Lawrence holds that it essentially is and must be

1. Quick.
2. Interrelated in all its parts, vitally, organically.
3. Honourable. (169)

Importantly, while explaining these three great qualities of the novel, he refers to Tolstoy time and again.

Lawrence emphasizes "quickness" as embodied in characters, and he admires Tolstoy, along with Hardy and Verga, for his skill in creating characters saturated with quickness. By "quick" he means simply the assertive life-flame or God-flame, which is in everything, and is not merely an abstraction because it exists only in phenomenon, human beings and settings; it stands for their hidden mystery and inner dynamism. A novel, according to Lawrence, cannot exist without being "quick"; if it is not quick, it is bound to come to nothing, even though it may be a best-seller. And this is the reason why it does not have any didactic absolute. Lawrence points out that the act of Vronsky's taking Anna Karenina in Tolstoy's famous novel is godly because it is quick. A character, Lawrence opines, ought to be "quick", and this implies that he ought to be closely related to all the things around him — "snow, bed-bugs, sunshine, the phallus,

trains, silk-hats, cats, sorrow, people, food, diphtheria, fuchsias, stars, ideas, God, tooth-paste, lightning, and toilet-paper. He must be in quick relation to all these things. What he says and does must be relative to them all" (166). Lawrence illustrates his view from Tolstoy's work. He affirms that in *War and Peace*, Pierre is less quick and more dull than Prince Andre. The former has close relations with tooth-paste, people, foods, ideas, God, stars, sorrow, silk-hats, trams, etc. But he is not quickly related to snow and sunshine, toilet-paper, cats, lightning, fuchsias, the phallus, etc. Tolstoy makes Pierre 'so human' and hence 'so limited'. He is put in the masses to limit his individual potentialities (167). Here we notice that in Lawrence's discussion of the three merits of the novel, the second actually overlaps the first. He maintains that everything in the novel must be in true relation with all other things in it. He stresses the significance of the interrelation of all things in the novel, but he holds that this should be as natural as the flow of a stream. For then alone the novel can have its unique beauty, displaying that everything in it "is true in its own relationship, and no further" (168). When all the parts of the novel are genuinely interrelated, there emerges a work of art, vital and organic whole.

A novel, in Lawrence's opinion, is honourable only when the novelist is true to everything in it — characters, didactic purpose, inspiration, his own character, and other parts which constitute it. Judging Tolstoy from this standpoint, he finds *War and Peace* thoroughly dishonourable because it has fat, diluted Pierre as a hero and presents him as a desirable and important man, though the fact is that he is not attractive and desirable even to the author himself. The novelist fails to see, what the novel clearly shows us, that Pierre is not wholly alive (169). Consequently, he fails to create an honourable novel; he shows more sympathy for his characters than the reader is willing to grant.

Lawrence explains the element of honour further and illustrates his point from Tolstoy the man and his novels. He holds that Tolstoy is "a great creative artist" (169) and hence true to his characters; but as he is a person with a definite philosophy of his own, he is not honest to his character. Lawrence uses the word 'character' in a

typical sense, meaning by it "the flame of a man, which burns brighter or dimmer, bluer or yellower or redder, rising or sinking or flaring according to the draughts of circumstance and the changing air of life, changing itself continually, yea remaining one single, separate flame, flickering in a strange world: unless it be blown out at last by too much adversity" (169-70). Explaining, thus, what he implies by the word 'character', he affirms that had Tolstoy been honest to the flame in him, i.e. his own character, he would have easily perceived his dislike for the "fat, fuzzy Pierre". But unfortunately the Russian novelist, who is more than a character, a personality — i.e. "a self-conscious *I am*: being all that is left in us of a once-almighty Personal God" (170) —, intentionally proceeds to 'lionize' Pierre who is "a domestic sort of house-dog" (170). This Lawrence regards as dishonourable on the part of Tolstoy because he deliberately refuses to be true to himself on account of his self-conscious personality which impels him to improve upon himself, to cite Lawrence's satirical, rather cynical expression, "by creeping inside the skin of a lamb; the doddering old lion that he was! Leo! Leon" (170)!

Lawrence is angry with Tolstoy, though not justly, because he has his own fixed notions and the Russian does not fit in them. He finds the Russian worshipping the human male, "man as a column of rapacious and living blood" (170). He himself was very lustful, but would hurl thunderbolts of morality at others indulging in lust. His duplicity makes him dishonourable. Lawrence further points out that it is also apparent in his attitude towards socialism and Bolshevism. In his life as well as art he believed in the Absolute and this is not possible. Thus, Lawrence asserts: "Count Tolstoy had the last weakness of a great man: he wanted the absolute" (171). But no man, or even no God that we can think of, can be absolute, can be absolutely right, good or lovable or loving; even Jesus Christ was good or right only relatively, and this is also true even of Rama of Indian mythology. Inevitably, Tolstoy, because of this kind of attitude, is self-contradictory and presents dichotomy in his works which, in Lawrence's view, make him and his novels dishonourable, rendering them as flawed pieces of art. The novelist-critic observes:

But what a dishonourable thing for that claw-biting little Leo to do! And in

his novels you see him at it. So that the papery lips of *Resurrection* whisper: 'Alas! I would have been a novel. But Leo spoiled me.' (171)

Thus, Lawrence believes that Tolstoy, though a great genius (he repeatedly uses this expression for him in his non-fictional works), often fails as an artist. He is of the view that the novelist is a unique being and a class by himself. Naturally, everyone cannot be a novelist. A Christian or a theosophist or a Holy Roller cannot easily write a true novel; but on the other hand, a novelist can easily have in him a theosophist or a Christian or any kind of person. Surely, he is a distinguished individual, though he may not put up a fence and may allow any type of person to live in him (172). The problem with Tolstoy, according to Lawrence, is that he cultivates a reformative zeal and rigid notions, and imposes all this on his characters without bothering about the feasibility of it, and thus at the cost of sacrificing the flame-life pervading the universe. In a word, he lacks in honour — this word, used by Lawrence in a specific sense, has already been explained in detail —, and this disgustingly mars a novel like *Resurrection*. Apropos of this, Lawrence states:

And the honour, which the novel demands of you, is only that you shall be true to the flame that leaps in you. When that Prince in *Resurrection* so cruelly betrayed and abandoned the girl, at the beginning of her life, he betrayed and wetted on the flame of his own manhood. When, later, he bullied her with his repentant benevolence, he again betrayed and slobbered upon the flame of his waning manhood, till in the end his manhood is extinct, and he's just a lump of half-alive elderly meat. (173)

According to the oldest Pan-mystery, God is the flame of life permeating the entire universe. Whatever and whenever this flame may be, it is to be honoured and the novelist should be true to it. Since sex is flame which burns man's absolute and his ego but "is only relative" (173), the novelist must be true to it also. Unfortunately, Tolstoy, in Lawrence's opinion, is not honourable in this respect and is not able to rise above his ego and his belief in the absolute. Hence his spontaneous denunciation of Tolstoy: "But see old Leo Tolstoy wetting on the flame. As if even his wet were Absolute" (173)!

Lawrence opines that the third quality of the novel, i.e. it must be honourable, is of supreme importance inasmuch as it enables

the reader to see the difference between what the artist has done with his material and what he might have done with it. Life is inseparable from art. If the artist is true to life, his work will surely reveal the quick and purge away all that is dull and dead in life. Thus, what is of vital significance is how far the artist has been true to it, and this can be measured by "honour", the third requisite of the novel. Notwithstanding his transcendent genius, Tolstoy, according to Lawrence, glaringly lacks in this quality, and therefore his fictional masterpieces like *War and Peace*, *Resurrection*, etc. are far from satisfactory as works of fictional art; they are not 'honourable' and doubtless damage "quick" or "life-flame".

The hiatus between what meaning the novel conveys to the reader and what meaning the novelist attempts to impose on the narrative, which he illustrates from Tolstoy's novels, leads Lawrence to infer that the novel and the novelist are quite often distinct from each other, and that the novel should be believed and not the novelist. Two of his remarks are very pertinent in this connection: "Let me hear what the novel says. As for the novelist, he is usually a dribbling liar" (174) and "Never trust the artist. Trust the tale" ("The Spirit of Place," *Studies in Classic American Literature* 8). Apparently, Lawrence discriminates between the novel and the novelist to separate the patent meaning from the latent, and to distinguish between two kinds of the latent meaning, one less explicit than the other. "The dribbling liar" does not imply bad artistry or faultily executed intention; it simply means that the artist's intentions may be governed by various ideological and other pressures as in the case of Tolstoy who was obsessed with his Christian-socialism and the "foulness of flesh", but a genuine work of art rises above them and Tolstoy's novels, in Lawrence's view, fail in this respect. Moreover, a work of art embodies the artist's unconscious meaning which, according to Lawrence, is more real, urgent and potent than the conscious, intentional meaning which the artist knows and likes. The novel as a work of art does not have didactic absolutes, even if the artist intends to express a didactic purpose. In a novel everything is true in its own relationship and there lies its real beauty and truthfulness, and as has been pointed out above, Lawrence

feels convinced that Tolstoy's novels are wanting in it because he frequently indulges in absolute and presents sex as something "cheap and nasty", and thus fails miserably to present life-flame as honourable. Obviously, the remark that the novelist is "usually a dribbling liar" is about a novelist like Tolstoy and he is the writer discussed and demolished just before making this derogatory observation.

Lawrence downright debunks Tolstoy because the latter's works fail to exemplify the former's concept of morality. According to Lawrence, art is not purely aesthetic and entertaining, but inescapably moral. He holds that art should strive to change men and women and should give them moral sense. He avers:

The essential function of art is moral. Not aesthetic, not decorative, not pastime and recreation. But moral. The essential function of art is moral.

But a passionate, implicit morality, not didactic. A morality which changes the blood, rather than the mind. Changes the blood first. The mind follows later, in the wake. ("Whitman," *Studies in Classic American Literature* 180)

Patently, Lawrence draws a line of demarcation between implicit, passional morality and didactic, explicit morality. In his opinion, a piece of art is not immoral, if it has any dominant idea or purpose; but it is so if the artist puts his thumb in the scale to make it support or uphold his didactic purpose which is usually antagonistic to his passional inspiration. Lawrence brings out the difference between the "grosser or lesser" morality and the "finer or greater" morality. By "grosser morality" he means the conventional, institutionalized system of society, grasped and formulated by human consciousness. On the contrary, "finer morality" implies the mysterious and unknowable moral forces of life and nature, or of the universe itself, which are eternal, unalterable and invincible. The great artist, in Lawrence's view, is primarily concerned with "finer morality", and not with "grosser morality"; he does not replace immorality by morality, but replaces "grosser morality" by "finer morality" (*"Art and Morality," Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D.H. Lawrence* 526).

Judging from the standpoint of his concept of morality, briefly enumerated above, Lawrence finds Tolstoy highly dissatisfying and appalling. He holds that most of the great novelists have didactic purpose: Tolstoy has his "Christian-socialism", Hardy his pessimism

and Flaubert his intellectual despair. However, the didactic purpose is not a healthy thing in a novel, though even at its worst, as in Tolstoy and Flaubert, it "cannot put to death the novel" ("The Novel" 162). Lawrence does not see any distinction between a writer's philosophy and his purpose because a philosophy is only a purpose on a higher level (162). But what really matters in a novel is that the purpose should be large enough, and should not contradict and kill the emotional inspiration of the novelist. Strangely, even in a great novelist like Tolstoy, according to Lawrence, we find philosophy and inspiration at cross-purposes, and this undoubtedly make his and other such fictionists' books unwholesome. Tolstoy's fault is to let his purpose become explicit in his novels, despite his efforts on the contrary. Little wonder Lawrence assails the Russian's masterpieces like *Anna Karenina* and *Resurrection* on this ground in the following severe manner:

Vronsky sinned, did he? But also the sinning was a consummation devoutly to be wished. The novel makes that obvious: in spite of old Leo Tolstoy. And the would-be-pious Prince in *Resurrection* is a muff, with his piety that nobody wants or believes in. (162)

This leads Lawrence to assert that the greatness of the novel lies in the fact that it does not let even a great novelist like Tolstoy "tell didactic lies and put them over" (162); as a matter of fact, a great novel necessarily avoids didactic lies. He analyses incisively Vronsky's relationship with Anna Karenina and their tragic end. He holds that everyone is bound to feel very happy when Vronsky gets Anna Karenina. And when it is so, the so-called social sin in their relationship is immaterial and redundant — it should not bother or disturb anybody. Apparently, on seeing the situation impartially, one discerns the cause of their tragedy in their fear of society; the devil causing their ruin is society, and not phallic urge and fulfilment. Their sin lies in their cowardice — their fear of society —, and not in their sincere, genuine passion of love. Since the novel, *Anna Karenina*, lays it bare and the novelist fails to conceal, or present artistically, the imposition of his moral intention on the protagonists, the book exposes the didactic falsehood or lie. Inevitably, it engenders irrepressible indignation in Lawrence and impels him to assail

**Tolstoy and his false, perverse didacticism with a stream of invective:**

The novel makes it obvious, and knocks all old Leo's teeth out. 'As an officer I am still useful. But as a man, I am a ruin,' says Vronsky — or words to that effect. Well what a shrunk, collapsing as a man and a male, and remaining merely as a social instrument; an 'officer', God love us! — merely because people at the opera turn backs on him! As if people's backs weren't preferable to their faces, anyhow!

And old Leo tries to make out it was all because of the phallic sin. Old liar! Because where would any of Leo's books be, without the phallic splendour? And then to blame the column of blood, which really gave him all his life riches! The Judas! Cringe to a mangy, bloodless Society, and try to dress up that dirty old Mother Grundy in a new bonnet and face-powder of Christian-socialism. Brothers indeed! Sons of a castrated Father!

The novel itself gives Vronsky a kick in the behind, and knocks old Leo's teeth out, and leaves us to learn. (162-63)

True, in *Anna Karenina*, the didactic purpose or moral intention and the passionate inspiration are alienated from each other; Tolstoy's didactic purpose is not big enough and it quarrels with his passionate inspiration which seems to succumb to the stale, old social purpose or morality. Discarding completely the conventional, communal morality of the type Tolstoy presents in this novel — "pernicious skin-and-grief form of morality" —, Lawrence rightly affirms: "The old, communal morality is like a leprosy, a white sickness: the old, anti-social, individualist morality is alone on the side of life and death" ("From *Study of Thomas Hardy*" 210).

Lawrence denigrates Tolstoy on the ground that the latter does not offer us a frank criticism of the morality he delineates in his works, particularly *Anna Karenina*; on the contrary, he rather over-emphasizes the moral purpose in it. Lawrence adumbrates that a good work of art should not merely adhere to a certain morality, but should also present its candid criticism because morality is not of permanent value, while art is of eternal value:

... all morality is of temporary value, useful to its times. But Art must give a deeper satisfaction ....

Yet every work of art adheres to some system of morality. But if it be really a work of art, it must contain the essential criticism on the morality to which it adheres. (214)

Lawrence severely criticizes Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* and *The Resurrection*, for he finds in them an overemphasis on morality which

may appear to be actuality but is not "living life" in the true sense. He opines that Tolstoy and Hardy are concerned more with the lesser human morality than with the greater morality. They submit their works to the grosser morality, and their characters, unlike Shakespeare's great tragic heroes and Sophocles' Oedipus who are depicted battling dauntlessly against the puissant, fathomless 'moral forces of nature', are shown fighting fiercely the man-made moral laws and succumbing to them. Apropos of these two celebrated novelists' unsatisfactory treatment of morality, Lawrence states:

... in Hardy and Tolstoy the lesser, human morality, the mechanical system is actively transgressed, and holds, and punishes the protagonist, whilst the greater morality is only passively, negatively transgressed, it is represented merely as being present in background, in scenery, not taking any active part, having no direct connexion with the protagonist. Oedipus, Hamlet, Macbeth set themselves up against, or find themselves set up against, the unfathomed moral forces of nature, and out of this unfathomed force comes their death. Whereas Anna Karenina, Eustacia, Tess, Sue, and Jude find themselves up against the established system of human government and morality, they cannot detach themselves, and are brought down. Their real tragedy is that they are unfaithful to the greater unwritten morality, which would have bidden Anna Karenina be patient and wait until she, by virtue of greater right, could take what she needed from society; would have bidden Vronsky detach himself from the system, become an individual, creating a new colony of morality with Anna.... (205-6)

Further, Lawrence denounces Tolstoy as the latter employs his metaphysic for self-justification and self-denial. In fact, a novelist should not indulge in evolving a metaphysic of self-justification or self-denial, and should not judge the world by his metaphysic. Instead of applying the world to his metaphysic, he should apply his metaphysic to the world. Lawrence sees Tolstoy as the glaring instance of this faulty application of his metaphysic. Of course, an artist, while viewing the universe, must view it in the light of a theory, and hence "every novel must have the background or the structural skeleton of some theory of being, some metaphysic" (217). But the metaphysic should not be dominant in a work; rather, it must always be subservient to the artistic purpose lest it should make the novel a treatise. Lawrence points out that Tolstoy is a patent example of the writer's wrong application of his metaphysic. In his youth, the

great Russian was disgusted with his flesh because of his profligacy. Naturally, he discards himself, his own being in favour of his metaphysic and denies the Father — i.e. flesh — so as to avoid the admission of his own failure. And this, according to Lawrence, makes

... all the later part of his life a crying falsity and shame. Reading the reminiscences of Tolstoy, one can only feel shame at the way Tolstoy denied all that was great in him, with vehement cowardice. He degraded himself infinitely, he perjured himself far more than did Peter when he denied Christ. Peter repented. But Tolstoy denied the Father, and propagated a great system of his recusancy, elaborating his own weakness, blaspheming his own strength. 'What difficulty is there in writing about how an officer fell in love with a married woman?' he used to say of his *Anna Karenina*; 'there's no difficulty in it, and, above all, no good in it.'

Because he was mouthpiece to the Father in uttering the law of passion, he said there was no difficulty in it, because it came naturally to him. Christ might just as easily have said, there was no difficulty in the Parable of the Sower, and no good in it, either, because it flowed out of him without effort. (217-18)

Like Tolstoy, Hardy also tries to fit the events and experiences of life into the theory of being, and he makes a very clumsy effort to do it. He rises to great heights and becomes true to himself only when he puts aside his metaphysic which always obstructs when he thinks of people. However, Lawrence points to one thing very remarkable about Tolstoy and Hardy: with their natural instincts and gifts as great creative artists, they are able to comprehend the great truth: "The theory of knowledge, the metaphysic of the man, is much smaller than the man himself" (219).

Lawrence, again, refers to Tolstoy to explain clearly his idea of morality in the novel. In the brilliant essay titled "Translator's Preface to *Cavalleria Rusticana* by Giovanni Verga", he states that Tolstoy is appalling in that he perversely hates the spontaneous passion and instinctive pride in man. This is the reason why he takes a perverse pleasure in making the later Vronsky pitiable and abject because the robust passionate male in young Vronsky is detestable to the author. Small wonder Lawrence derisively observes in this regard: "Tolstoy cut off his own nose to spite his face. He envied the reckless passionate male with a carking envy, because he must have felt himself in some way wanting in comparison" (261).

However, Lawrence is perceptive and correct in his assessment of Tolstoy the moralist and Tolstoy the artist; he draws a clear-cut, insightful demarcation between the two different selves of the Russian fictionist. While he condemns him outright as a moralist and an individual by calling him perverse, he does not fail to perceive in him a healthy artist worshipping the very essence of life — the spontaneous, passionate pure life — like the great, inimitable Sicilian artist Giovanni Verga whose book entitled *Cavalleria Rusticana* he eulogized enthusiastically and dispassionately. Lawrence explains all this effectively in his perceptive comments on Tolstoy and his characters, Vronsky and Anna:

It was only as a moralist and a personal being that Tolstoy was perverse. As a true artist, he worshipped, as Verga did, every manifestation of pure, spontaneous, passionate life, life kindled to vividness. As a perverse moralist with a sense of some subtle deficiency in himself, Tolstoy tries to insult and to damp out the vividness of life. Imagine any great artist making the vulgar social condemnation of Anna and Vronsky figure as divine punishment! Where now is the society that turned its back on Vronsky and Anna? Where is it? And what is its condemnation worth, today? (262)

In fact, Lawrence considers Tolstoy's books, especially *Anna Karenina*, very relevant and vital as they often show how natural passion and sexuality become destructive because of the modern unbalanced culture. But he accentuates the fact that 'Tolstoi-ism', his ideal of Christian brotherhood, is unhealthy and unvital, and hence discardable. In the book titled *Fantasia of the Unconscious and Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, he makes it clear in these words:

Better Anna Karenina and Vronsky a thousand times than Natasha and that porpoise of a Pierre.... Better Vronsky's final statement: "As a soldier I am still some good. As a man I am a ruin" — Better that than Tolstoi and Tolstoi-ism and that beastly peasant blouse the old man wore. Better passion and death than any more of these "isms" .... But still — we *might* live — mightn't we? (220-21)

Certainly a minor piece of criticism, Lawrence's review of Tolstoy's novel, *Resurrection*, is significant and deserves some consideration because it embodies his conviction in the resurrection of the body, of the flesh as opposed to Tolstoy's belief in this regard. Also, this review shows his patent technique of explaining his own

metaphysic by placing it in juxtaposition of that of some other great writer who was Hardy in his early career and Tolstoy in his later days. Since Lawrence has unflinching faith in the resurrection of body, he attacks Tolstoy the author of *Resurrection* for worshipping a dead Christ. He asserts that the Russian presents Christ as a God of death, and not of life and flesh, and hence the British novelist-critic feels as if "the stone was rolled upon him" (*Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D.H. Lawrence* 737).

Lawrence speaks of Tolstoy in a couple of his poems, of which the one entitled "Now It's Happened" deserves a special mention here. This poem is highly critical of Tolstoy. Lawrence condemns Lenin and Stalin for their type of radical socialism, commonly known as Bolshevism. He believes that Tolstoy, who could create memorable rebels like Anna Karenina and Vronsky, might have saved Russia from Lenin's and Stalin's undesirable, unpalatable Bolshevism. No wonder he calls him "a traitor", and blames him and Dostoevsky squarely for the ruin of Russia under Lenin's Bolshevism. His scathing attack on Tolstoy in exquisite poetic mode is worth citing as it cannot be rendered adequately in prose:

One cannot now help thinking  
 how much better it would have been  
 if Vronsky and Anna Karenina  
 had stood up for themselves, and seen  
 Russia across her crisis,  
 instead of leaving it to Lenin.

The big, flamboyant Russia  
 might have been saved, if a pair  
 of rebels like Anna and Vronsky  
 had blasted the sickly air  
 of Dostoevsky and Tchekov,  
 and spy-government everywhere.

But Tolstoi was a traitor  
 to the Russia that needed him most,  
 the clumsy, bewildered Russia  
 so worried by the Holy Ghost.  
 He shifted his job on to the peasants  
 and landed them all on toast.

.....

So our goody-good men betray us  
and our sainty-saints let us down,  
and a sickly people will slay us  
if we touch the sob-stuff crown  
of such martyrs; while Marxian tenets  
naturally take hold of the town.

Too much of the humble Willy wet-leg  
and the holy can't-help-it touch,  
till you've ruined a nation's fibre  
and they loathe all feeling as such,  
and want to be cold and devilish hard  
like machines — and you can't wonder much. —

( D.H. Lawrence, *The Complete Poems*, Vol II 271-72)

Lawrence articulates the same belief in the article "The Novel" in equally effective prose. He laments that a great man like Leo Tolstoy could let "old-Adam manhood" be improved upon by the so-called reformers, i.e. Bolshevists, "who all feel themselves short of something, and therefore live by spite, that at last there's nothing left but a lot of shells of men, improving themselves steadily emptier and emptier, till they rattle with words and formulae, as if they'd swallowed the whole encyclopedia of socialism" ("The Novel," *D.H. Lawrence: A Selection from Phoenix* 170). Lawrence is shocked to see that Tolstoy, who was a devotee of "the human male, man as a column of rapacious and living blood" (170), could bear the Russians being ludicrously changed into Bolshevists. The creator of great rebels like Anna Karenina, Vronsky and others, could timidly and willingly accept Bolshevism — the violent overthrow of Capitalism by the Russian Communism/Marxism headed by Lenin and Stalin. Comparing Tolstoy to a lion and the Bolshevists' Russia to a lamb, Lawrence lambasts the old, experienced Tolstoy thus:

When the lion swallows the lamb, fluff and all, he usually gets a pain, and there's a rumpus. But when the lion tries to force himself down the throat of the huge and popular lamb — a nasty old sheep, really — then it's a phenomenon. Old Leo did it: wedged himself bit by bit down the throat of woolly Russia. And now out of the mouth of the Bolshevik lambkin still waves an angry, mistaken tufted leonine tail, like an agitated exclamation

mark. (170)

Though unfairly harsh to Tolstoy and at times abusive too, it may be said in Lawrence's defence that he believes that only a great writer or a great work entails criticism and no good critic can or should think of attacking an ordinary author or an ordinary work. This he makes explicit in his remark about a minor novel by Hardy: "The spirit being small, the complaint is narrow" (*Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D.H. Lawrence* 435). And we know it very well through Lawrence's numerous remarks, discussed above, that he considers Tolstoy a very great genius, an outstanding creative artist, and proclaims *Anna Karenina* to be his favourite novel. As Jessie Chambers records, in his youth he regarded *Anna Karenina* as "the greatest novel in the world" (*A Personal Record* 114), and held that Tolstoy's women were greater than Shakespeare's as he once told Frieda's son (*Composite Biography*, Vol. III 113). What I feel, after having a careful and comprehensive perusal of Lawrence's variegated statements about Tolstoy and his works, is that he oscillates between admiration and condemnation, wholehearted acceptance and downright rejection of Tolstoy the writer. As a matter of fact, he has a love-hate literary relationship with the illustrious Russian. And that is why, on the one hand he holds him in high esteem and cannot but refer to him and his writings in his discussion of art or artist, the novel or the novelist, and an individual fictional work or an individual fictionist; but on the other hand he bitterly criticizes him time and again, goes to the extreme extent of using such disparaging expressions as "dishonourable", "old liar", "claw-biting little Leo", "The novel... knocks old Leo's teeth out", etc., and passes strictures on him like a "hanging judge".

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## ANTIFEMINISM IN BERNARD SHAW'S *CANDIDA*

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Bernard Shaw's *Candida* has been studied variously by critics like G. E. Brown, Morell and Marchbanks, Martin Meisel, Maurice Colbourne, J. L. Styan, William J. Doan, Bernard F. Dukore, Charles A. Berst, Walter N. King, Louis Crompton, Margery M. Morgan, and Arthur H. Nethercot. But by and large *Candida* has not been studied as an antifeminist play. Hence, this paper seeks to make a close reading of the play to demonstrate how the antifeminist ideas find a projection in *Candida*.

For the presentation of negative images of women in literature two terms have been used — misogyny and antifeminism. Therefore, it shall be in the fitness of things to deliberate on them first. *A Feminist Dictionary* describes misogyny as “[w]oman-hating [that] ‘[i]ncludes the belief that women are stupid, pretty, manipulative, dishonest, silly, gossipy, irrational, incompetent, undependable, narcissistic, castrating, dirty, over-emotional, unable to make altruistic or moral judgements, over-sexed, under-sexed. . . . Such beliefs culminate in attitudes that demean [their] bodies, [their] abilities, [their] characters, and [their] efforts, and imply that [they] must be controlled, dominated, subdued, abused and used not only for male benefit but for [their] own” (275). Katherine M. Rogers uses the term more widely: “I include among the manifestations of misogyny in literature not only direct expressions of hatred, fear, or contempt of womanhood, but such indirect expressions as misogynistic speeches by dramatic characters who are definitely speaking for the author and condemnations of one woman or type of woman which spread, implicitly or explicitly, to the whole sex” (Preface xii-xiii).

The prefix ‘anti’ in the term antifeminism makes it evident that the word ‘antifeminism’ came into parlance only after the term ‘feminism’ gained currency. Since the feminists were initially concerned with the issues of rights, the word ‘antifeminism’ too has been defined in the same vein: it is “[t]he conviction that women are not entitled to the same moral and legal rights as men, or to the same social status and opportunities. ‘All anti-feminist thinkers hold in common

the thesis that there are innate and unalterable psychological differences between women and men, differences which make it in the interests of both sexes for women to play a subordinate, private role, destined for wife and motherhood. [It] . . . '[i]nvolves the idea that women ought to sacrifice the development of their own personalities for the sake of men and children" (*A Feminist Dictionary* 54). The different types of antifeminist practices described in the definition have been ubiquitous throughout literature in the form of misogyny because ". . . [a]nti-feminism is its ideological defense; in the sex-based insult passion and ideology are united in an act of denigration and intimidation" (*A Feminist Dictionary* 275). According to *The Oxford English Dictionary* an antifeminist is a person who "[is] opposed to women or to feminism; a person (usu. a man) who is hostile to sexual equality or to the advocacy of women's rights" (524). Thus, antifeminism may be regarded as the ideological representation of the different tenets of misogyny.

Shaw's misogynistic attitude is manifest in the presentation of *Candida*. In the beginning of the play he shows that *Candida* comes home with a stranger, Eugene Marchbanks, because Shaw projects her as gossipy. She needs a man with whom she can talk endlessly. She knows that her husband, Morell, being busy with public preaching, does not have time to spend with her. Another misogynistic trait finds reflection in the presentation of *Candida*'s physical beauty. Shaw depicts her physical charm as a means of man's entertainment. Lexy admires *Candida* because "[he] think[s] her extremely beautiful . . . extremely beautiful. How fine her eyes are!" (3: 205). Her husband also considers her to be a means of entertainment. He says to Eugene Marchbanks, "*Candida* will come to entertain you presently" (3: 234). Further, Shaw shows that women compete with each other in vying for men's attention and use their beautiful looks as their means. Proserpine's attitude towards *Candida* envisions the playwright's misogynistic expression in the form of this rivalry. Proserpine says to Lexy, "*Candida* here, and *Candida* there, and *Candida* everywhere! . . . merely because she's got good hair and a tolerable figure" (3: 205). Thus Shaw considers a woman to be a charming creature whose sole existence lies in entertaining men.

In Preface to *Getting Married* Shaw has written: "It is no doubt necessary . . . for a woman without property to be sexually attractive, because she must get married to secure a livelihood; and the illusions of sexual attraction will cause the imagination of young men to endow her with every accomplishment and virtue that can make a wife a treasure" (4: 353-54). No wonder he presents Candida as a woman who uses her physical charm to attract men. His admiration of her personality, her charming youth, serene eyebrow, courageous eyes, and well set mouth and chin is one of the ways of making her an object of the male desire. In the stage direction Shaw points out: "[Candida] can always manage people by engaging their affection . . . and most of her sexual attractions for trivially selfish ends" (3: 213). Thus, Shaw believes that women earn their livelihood and get their work done in day-to-day life not because of their competence but because of their physical charm. This idea is a misogynistic in nature.

Some of the critics of Bernard Shaw like Leon Hugo, Charles A. Berst, Tracy C. Davis, Kerry Powell and Swapan Kumar Banerjee call Candida a New Woman and thus try to prove that Shaw was a feminist. It shall not be out of place here to discuss the concept of New Woman before entering into debate on the issue. According to *A Feminist Dictionary*, a New Woman is "The woman who avails herself of these advantages [freedom to work, to educate herself, to be healthy, to remain single without stigma if she chooses] . . ." (300). To some other feminist critics, the concept of New Woman is not synonymous with that of feminism. Bridget Elliott Angelika Köhler (2004) and Kerry Powell have criticised this concept. For them it is just like new wine in an old bottle because in this concept as well, a woman is burdened with the traditional responsibilities of a mother-sister-housewife all in one. Thus, they believe that there is nothing new in the basic idea of New Woman itself as is also held by Jeune when she writes: ". . . the New Woman was in fact as old as Eve" (87). Henerik Ibsen's Nora was called a New Woman because she challenged the male authority and decided to walk out of marriage (Allen 219).

As a matter of fact, Shaw's Candida readily takes up the re-

sponsibilities of wifely duties, tending of children, keeping the house in order and remains economically dependent. Thus she does not exercise any choice that a New Woman was craving for in the sphere of home within and without. The duties which Candida decides to carry out are against the duties and opportunities of New Woman of 1890s. The New Woman was conscious of her unequal social status and therefore was demanding equal rights and opportunities to enter into the public sphere, educate herself, and get freedom of choice to marry. Candida is not provided with any such opportunity. Unlike Nora, she chooses the traditional role. Indeed, she has a limited choice – to nurse either Morell or Marchbanks. The choice is not about nursing and not nursing but about choosing either this male or that. Even in exercising her choice she displays the characteristics of a traditional woman. There is not even a slight change in her social status unlike the demand of the New Woman. She is not able to break up the chains of her slavery and become an independent being. The dramatist positions her within the four-walls of the house without providing her any choice and therefore Shaw's attitude towards woman is antifeminist in nature. She undertakes to discharge the duties of taking care of her husband, bringing up children, cooking food, washing utensils and looking after the household. Like a typical housewife, she is engaged in slicing onions and filling up the lamps (3: 234). Shaw therefore, assigns her the role not of a New Woman but that of a woman of the nineteenth century.

Mothering has been one of the key issues with feminists. Some of the feminists like Simone de Beauvoir (501-42), Katherine M. Rogers (3-55), Jane M. Ussher (258-59), Kate Millett (172-76), Sheila Rowbotham (84-93) and Janet Sayers (147-171) find mothering as a burden on women. In their opinion, the burden of mothering reduces women to the household and restricts their participation in the activities of the outer world. Contrarily, Bernard Shaw in several of his plays shows that mothering is an important duty of a woman, and *Candida* is no exception to it. The play begins with Candida's 'maternal indulgence' (3: 213). Even the conflict presented before her in the play is in terms of mothering, if she has to nurture Morell or Marchbanks. For Candida, Morell is a boy whom she has to

nurture. She says to Marchbanks, "My boy is not looking well. Has he been overworking?" (3: 239). She says to Eugene Marchbanks, "Now I want to look at this other boy here: my boy! Spoiled from his cradle . . . James as a baby! the most wonderful of all babies.... Ask me what it costs to be James's mother and three sisters and wife and mother to his children all in one (3: 266). Also, she is worried about Marchbanks. She says to him, "Oh come! You great baby you! You are worse than usual this morning" (3: 217). She plays the role of a nurse to Marchbanks. She says to him, "My boy shall not be worried: I will protect him" (3: 256). Thus, the maternal instinct of *Candida* is profoundly reflected in her attitude towards Morell and Marchbanks. She is an example of a typical Victorian mother-sister-wife-nurse unlike a New Woman of her choice and freedom.

In *Candida* the purpose of the playwright is to defend the conventional roles of a wife and a mother in the society. In his interview on *Candida* with *Realm* on 5 April 1895, Shaw accepted that "the convention is the subject of the play" (131). When he was asked what convention he has propagated in the play, he answered: "I beg your pardon—the wife—and—mother convention. The strongest and best position a woman can occupy, you know, is that of a wife and a mother" (131). Further in his letter to Golding Bright in 1896 Shaw writes: ". . . 'Candida' is the poetry of the Wife and Mother—the Virgin Mother in the true sense; and so on and so forth" (632). *A Feminist Dictionary* describes Virgin Mother as: "Absolutely obedient to the male God, she derives all her status from her son" (258). Thus, the views of the feminists show that Virgin Mary does not have an independent existence but a secondary one as she has to nurture the child. Similarly, Shaw relegates *Candida* to the secondary position by making her existence only for rearing up "the children", i. e. Marchbanks and Morell and comparing her role to that of Virgin Mother.

Describing the traits of a traditional good woman, Simone de Beauvoir writes:

. . . the 'good woman' is man's most precious treasure she belongs to him so profoundly that she partakes of the same essence as he; she has his name, his goods and he is responsible for her. He calls her his 'better half'.

He takes pride in his wife as he does in his house, his lands, his flocks, his wealth through her he displays his power before the world: she is his measure and his earthly portion. (207)

In the play both the male characters, viz. Morell and Marchbanks consider Candida as their property. For example, Morell reckons her as the "greatest treasure on earth" (3: 261). His monopoly over her body discloses sexual exploitation of woman. He calls her a "good woman" (3: 204) because she is virtuous, devoted and faithful. He takes pride in the different roles of Candida. He says to her, "You are my wife, my mother, my sister: you are the sum of all loving care to me" (3: 267). Thus, by making Candida a good woman, Shaw propagates the traditional idea of a woman and not that of a New Woman.

Shaw believes that women should live under the control of men. His presentation of Candida's submissiveness is similar to the biblical presentation of women where they are ordained: "Wives submit to your husband" (Eph. 5: 22). At the end of Act II in *Candida*, Morell is afraid of Eugene Marchbanks when he leaves Candida in his custody and goes for the sermons. He suspects Marchbanks of having a secret relationship with his wife in his absence. He says to Marchbanks, "Out with the truth, man: my wife is my wife: I want no more of your poetic fripperies" (3: 255). The moment Candida says to Morell that she is waiting for his bid, Morell says to her, "I have nothing to offer you but my strength for your defence, my honesty for your surety, my ability and industry for your livelihood, and my authority and position for your dignity. That is all it becomes a man to offer to a woman" (3: 265). Candida accepts what Morell offers her. She says to her lover, "Didn't you hear James say he wished you to stay? James is master here. Don't you know that?" (3: 262). Thus, by giving herself to such a male-chauvinist like Morell, Candida remains subservient throughout the play. Her husband controls her.

The feminist critics like Simone de Beauvoir (445-501), Katherine M. Rogers (56-99), Jane M. Ussher (260-65), Kate Millett (79), Marlene Dixon (189), and Gayle Rubin (37-38) reject the ideology of marriage. In the opinion of these feminists, marriage as an

institution is a construct of the male dominated society to oppress women. In *Candida*, Bernard Shaw describes marriage as an institution which brings comfort to men. In the play, Morell thinks that a man can establish "the Kingdom of Heaven on earth"<sup>4</sup> (3: 204) through marriage. Michael Holroyd uncovers Shaw's antifeminist ideology when he argues, "... *Candida* and Ann Whitefield are fair examples that may appear positively anti-feminist" (167).

Beauvoir describes the display of man's weakness particularly in the presence of woman as a ploy used by him to hoodwink a woman (207). Shaw's antifeminist outlook also gets reflected in his depiction of Reverend James Morell as a weaker person than his wife. A casual reader is led to believe that Morell is merely a doll in the play and that *Candida* is being empowered by him. But neither is he a doll nor is *Candida* being empowered by him. On the contrary, he strengthens his position by showing himself weaker than *Candida*. He reminds *Candida* that he is what she has made him. He says to *Candida*, "What I am you have made me with the labor of your hands and the love of your heart. You are my wife, my mother, my sister: you are the sum of all loving care to me" (3: 267).

The playwright's enforced "goodness and purity" (3: 242) of *Candida* towards her husband leads her to the sexual slavery of her husband. She is expected to display sexual purity and marital faithfulness towards Morell. By giving herself out-and-out to a man, she loses her freedom over her own body. Thus, in *Candida* Shaw describes the sexual slavery of women. He nowhere talks about Morell's goodness and purity towards *Candida*. This presentation of sexual inequality highlights Shaw's antifeminism.

Henrik Ibsen's *Nora* slams the door at the end of the play. She thinks that she is not made for merely bringing up children, keeping the house in order and obeying her husband. She dislikes her economic dependence on her husband. She, therefore, revolts against her husband. Some critics of Bernard Shaw like Nicholas Grene (32), Leon Hugo (95) and Eric Bentley (307) consider *Candida* to be a counterblast of Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. But the fact is that *Candida* accepts the domestic life rather than the public life. She is economically dependent on her husband. The play ends with

Candida's submissiveness to her husband. She herself accepts her economic dependence on her husband when she says, "[w]hen there is money to give, he gives it: when there is money to refuse, I refuse it. I build a castle of comfort and indulgence and love for him" (3: 266-67). Further, she accepts "his strength for [her] defence! his industry for [her] livelihood! his dignity for [her] position!" (3: 267). Her slavery lies in her acceptance of money and male supremacy. Further, she affirmatively stamps on her domestic roles when she says to her husband, "James: youve not been looking after the house properly" (3: 236). Thus Shaw's *Candida* deliberately accepts her duties towards her family and her husband.

Economic exploitation of women at the hands of men is one of the major issues of the feminist discourse. The feminists like Simone de Beauvoir (146-47), Kate Millett (39-42), Jane M. Ussher (254-56), Gayle Rubin (32), Sheila Rowbatham (98-102) and Marlene Dixon (191-94) criticise low wages of women in the labour market on the basis of discrimination of gender. These feminists argue that women have equal rights of wages and their participation in the labour market. In *Candida* Shaw depicts Burgess as a typical middle-class man whose sole purpose is to earn money and oust women from the labour market with machinery. He does not like to give a chance to women in the labour market. He exploits women workers by paying them the lowest wages.

The above discussion evidences that Shaw has used several misogynistic traits in the play like presenting Candida as gossipy, romantic, vying for man's attention, pretty and over-emotional. Through *Candida*, he propagates his antifeminist notions like their subordination to men, their intellectual incapacitation, their adherence to the male notion of marriage, their domestic nature and their economic dependence on men. He does not view women beyond secondary sex. It is obvious that he is not interested in the emancipation of women, but is rather interested in maintaining the status quo. In this respect, like a true Christian, he is guided by the *Bible*. Thus it is clear that Shaw is not advocating and presenting a 'New Woman' as is generally thought, but is eulogizing the limited role of 'Old Woman' in different walks of life.

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## POLYPHONY IN GIRISH KARNAD'S *BALI: THE SACRIFICE*

Nirmaljeet Oberoi

The paper upholds the assumption that polyphony is inherent in human life at varied levels. These levels are interdependent and mutually supportive. Individuals placed within a multifaceted experiential context realize within and without themselves "... the co-presence of independent and interconnected voices."<sup>1</sup> It is attempted here to present that the first level at which polyphony can be discerned playing a vital role is the 'mind' and 'manner' of an individual. Human mind, working according to a dialectical process, entertains different and differing ideological and linguistic stances. Human beings receive from and contribute to a socio-cultural nature of existence; hence, they store and respond to various voices which are co-existent, interactive and unmerged. In the seventies and eighties, taking the inspiration from Bakhtin, the western critics used the term 'Dialogics' which indicated 'sociological poetics' in which the concept of polyphony is integral. Polyphony means more than one voice/a number of voices which are expressed through many utterances. An utterance is embedded in a cultural context and thence derives its meaning. It is the speech of 'someone else' that expresses the intentions of the protagonist. One utterance related to another creates a dialogical network of voices marked with stark individuation.

Various distinctive impressions form an ideological heteroglossia on human mind. According to David Murray,

For we experience and represent the world to ourselves and others not in a single shared language, but in a multiplicity of overlapping and often conflicting versions of that language (official, vernacular, technical, literary, the jargons of different age groups, etc). The multiplicity of interacting languages (heteroglossia) is always implicitly present when any one of them is used, and any utterance takes its meaning from its relation to the various other languages with which it is inevitably in dialogue.<sup>2</sup>

In Bakhtin's view, polyphony arises out of the use of different styles and lexicon of language to mark the individuation of voices and thereby create heteroglossia. I have attempted in this paper to replace multiplicity of linguistic expressions by ideational variations and varieties which create an ideological heteroglossia. Further, I

have substituted non-verbal expressions and behavioural language for linguistic expressions as *Ball: The Sacrifice*, being a play, includes both verbal and non-verbal means of communications. Earlier the critics used dialogical poetics to analyse a novel but I have used it to discuss and analyse a play, a genre in which dialogues as utterances are mutually dependent as well as contextually dependent. To be precise, the context of culture not only gives a basis and significance to each of the utterances but also links them in a mosaic of heterological expressions. An individual placed in the labyrinth of criss-crossing cultural values often experiences and expresses co-existent, interactive and unmerged voices and consciousness. I would label it as polyphony at the intra-personal level.

The next level of polyphony, which the paper attempts to present can be experienced at a wider level which I would term as polyphony at an interpersonal level, dependent yet again on the inevitable socio-cultural context. Each individual is a component of the world-structure as no individual is complete, consequent and significant as an entity. One becomes significant only when one is related/contrasted with the other. Each one with their distinctive voice interacts with the other, rendering polyphony at a wider socio-cultural level. Once again ideational-heteroglossia is formed by the plurality of independent and unmerged voices, but at a wider level. When an individual, thus, distinctively interacts with another individual, a dialogical discourse is interwoven with plurality of voices. The cultural fabric of life is thus woven with distinct, unmerged ideational motifs which create a general pattern just as diversity of social language creates a dialogical heteroglossia to arrive at a meaning.

In a polyphonic text, the characters are free to articulate voices and points of view which challenge the validity of the authorial view. The linguistic and semiotic characteristics of the various voices have to be interpreted vis-a-vis the author's ideology. The plurality of voices does not in itself mean a non-authoritarian narrative. In Karnad's play the non-verbal component of the text gains an expressive value for as a communicative mode it reflects social values, attitudes and world view of the characters. Each different stance contributes to the dialogical web and resists cancellation. This was

the fundamental belief of Bakhtin.<sup>3</sup>

## II

Karnad's play *Bali: The Sacrifice* is a socio cultural construct reflecting the pluralistic and multi-cultural Indian society with diversified class-consciousness and diverse social paradigms. The play is inherently polyphonous. It has a significantly expository preface in which Karnad gives an expression of Tennysonian assimilative quality when he claims to have drawn upon the thirteenth century Kannada epic *Yashodhara Charite* by Janna which in turn relates to an eleventh century Sanskrit epic by Vadiraja, which again in turn is related to the ninth-century Sanskrit epic *Yashastilaka* by Somdeva Suri. Some of the components of the narration have their roots in the first century stories and legends which play a significant role in Indian culture. To quote the playwright's words:

Great epics, apart from being the source of everything else, constitute an important component of what we may term as moral philosophical thinking of the Indian tradition. ...Professional philosophers of India over the last two thousand years... have very seldom discussed what we call moral philosophy today.... The tradition itself was very self-conscious about moral values, moral conflicts and dilemmas, as well as difficulties of what we call practical reason or practical wisdom. This consciousness found its expression in the epic stories and narrative literature.<sup>4</sup>

The play presents polyphony of life through the issue of acceptance and rejection of violence, particularly (animal) sacrifice in religion. Anthropologists hold that almost all the ancient religions of the world had tribal moorings from which the ritual of sacrifice might have emerged. In the beginning man feared nature and worshipped its powers as thunder, Sun, Moon, rain, oceans even trees and ferocious beasts. Hence, to please these forces and the deities, man sacrificed animals, birds and even human beings. There are four characters in the play. The mahout, the queen, the king and the queen mother. Each articulates a different ideology, defying its conciliation, thereby making the text a heterologically ideological construct. The different voices are expressed through dialogues – not so much by actions. The dialogue, the inherent property of a play, takes on the form of the utterance for establishing an interdependent network of utterances in the given socio-cultural situation.

Keeping the myth of 'Cock of Dough' at the centre and presenting it visually in the play, Karnad weaves the web of utterances. The queen mother represents the Vedic cult of ritualistic 'bali' performed by the Brahmins. The king, who earlier practised the Vedic religion, is converted to the religious faith of his queen — the 'Jain Dharma'. Towards the end of the play, the king oscillates between Vedic and Jain beliefs. The Mahout represents the third dimension of the religio-ethical construct by believing in omnipresent, benign God considered almost in the framework of Unitarianism.

The Vedic rituals of Hinduism are replete with animal sacrifices. Important 'yagyas' such as 'Ashwamedh yagya' marked sacrifice of a horse, the 'Rajsooya yagya' involved the sacrifice of animals performed by the king, the 'Sarpa yagya' involved the sacrifice of serpents, etc. The sacrifice of goats, rams, bulls, cows, poultry is mentioned in *The Rig Veda* and *The Yajur Veda*, in which sacrifices are associated with full moon rites. The rituals of sacrifice implied a collective communal living.

Sometime in the third millennium BC, two schools of thought emerged on the socio-cultural-ethical site of India — one upholding animal sacrifice and the other opposing it vehemently. The orthodox Brahmins maintained that sacrifice of animals was the sole means of propitiating the gods, while the opposite group argued that the bloody ritual was a perversion of the Vedic command and was merely a practice adopted from the uncivilized native inhabitants. The adherents of 'Ahimsa' believed that the Vedas were originally based on the principle of 'Non-violence' but the people purposefully disregarded those religious works which dealt with non-violent rituals. Addressing the dichotomy between violence and non-violence, the Jains disapproved of the Vedic sacrificial practices as hostile to righteous and moral living. Jainism entertains two aspects of non-violence (Ahimsa), internal and external. Internal aspect is associated with 'Chitta' which entertains the thought that all creatures are alike and man should exercise self-restraint in attitude towards one and all. This, in Jain philosophy, is termed as 'Aatmopamya' which is the basis of righteous behaviour and living. Compassion is the essential source of 'Ahimsa'. In the fifth century BC, Buddha in-

cluded non-violence in his preaching and considered it as an incomparable human virtue.

### III

The queen in the play represents the Jain point of view of non-violence and as said above, the king oscillates between the non-violent and violent instincts. With this socio-cultural background, the play opens in an old dilapidated temple, and the whole of it is enacted here. The mahout sings in an enticing voice luring the queen to leave her palace at night and both have an exhilarating physical proximity. Having discovered the adulterous escapade of the queen, the king, under the influence of the queen-mother, agrees to a pseudo-sacrifice of the cock made of dough to redeem the sins of his queen. The inevitable conflict arises to a crescendo, when Amritmani, the queen who had agreed to sacrifice the cock of dough hallucinates it to be alive. The text says — "The queen looks up at the king in sudden hatred, picks up the sword and lunges at him to stab him. She freezes. — Alternatively, the queen could stab the king or repelled by her own violence, press the point of the blade on her womb and impale herself on the sword. The actors may consider themselves free to explore any of these endings." (124)

In the very beginning of the play, the queen acquaints us with the binary oppositions existent in human life, the natural outcome of which is an intra-personal mental heteroglossia/dilemma.

Queen: As the world is divided into two orbs:  
 one lit up by the sun  
 the other hid in the shade.  
 So also the human soul,  
 the habitation of gods,  
 is split into two realms-  
 one of the spirits that adore  
 the blood and gore  
 of the bright, shining blade  
 slicing smoothly  
 through the lamb  
 and the other  
 ruled by the spirits that bid  
 you pause  
 before you use

the knife on a sapling  
 or clap in the air-  
 lest you harm a life. (73)

The king has changed his religious stance from Vedic to Jainism and then, towards the end of the play, tilts towards Vedic ritual of sacrifice, thus proving the fact that no voice is suppressed forever. Differences co-exist. This results in the presence of oppositional voices in human mind. The king is presented as a hunter at a point of narration. The queen reminds him that — “They say when you were born every inch of the earth was soaked in blood.” (97). Proving his later stance, the king assures the queen by referring to the queen mother that “She has accepted the fact that we will not be a party to her violent rites. And she carried them out in her own separate shrine. In her shell leave it at that.” (97). Towards the end of the play the king tries to plunge his sword into the cock when the cock begins to crow. The singer creates the atmosphere of the sacrifice and sings thus. The two instincts of violence and non-violence pull the king into two different orbs as life is made of irreconcilable polarity. The same dialectical opposition plays in the mind of the queen when she sings the same song in the beginning of the play.

The queen as a child does not understand the implications of violence but has the violent instinct subtly ingrained in her as in any human being. She wants to see a bird aimed down —

King: All right then, I'll knock a bird down from  
 the branch in the evening. Just for you  
 Don't tell anyone—.” (91)

But when the bird falls dead, she is agitated and recoils in horror at the sight of the bird and reprimands the king.

Queen: But why did you kill it?

King: (not accusing) you wanted to see it killed down. (92)

The queen mother, representing the Vedic cult of sacrifice, remains steadfast in her belief as she has become the icon of Vedic violence which is challenged by the queen.

Queen: The animals are graded according to the  
 occasion. Poultry is offered at daily rites.  
 Sheep, goats for the more important rituals.  
 Then buffalo.

King: You know that's been the family tradition.

Queen: Weren't human beings also offered in sacrifice to the goddess once?

King: Yes, But that was generations ago.

Queen: So you see, tradition can be given up —

King: Mother will not agree to give up her practice. (96)

The conflict moves from intra-personal to inter-personal level when the conversation states a conflict between violence and non-violence:

Queen: I don't want to hurt her. She can live by, her beliefs. But we are Jains, our son will be a Jain. He will have to uphold the principle of compassion for all living beings, of non-violence." (97)

The readers might expect the conflict to resolve towards the end of the play when the queen mother instigates the king and queen for the violent act of sacrifice but Karnad keeps up the spirit of irreconciliation — there is only a conjecture of violent action but no actual action is performed. The play does not reduce the polyphonies of life in a single voice, but puts forward the inescapable dialogical quality of human life at its most varied.

The world-view rendered by each of the characters enfolds the binary opposition of life which at no point in the play are re-conciled.

Violence

Non-violence

Vedic sacrificial rituals

Benign, friendly God of the mahout

The collective communal life      independent life of the mahout

The queen and the mahout, the king and the queen, the king and the queen mother, the queen and the queen mother, the king and the mahout — all confront each other with a belief in a value system which is oppositional and antithetical to the other. Each one views the world from one's own belief-system. It is this marked individual distinction which renders life polyphonous.

At this point the question arises — if the human mind is reigned by conflicting attitudes what is the authoritative element in the play which renders the characters rational and sane? At the interpersonal/social level, various differences defy cancellation and submersion, then what prevents polyphony from turning into cacophony?

If polyphony does not entertain a non-authoritarian stance then where is the author in the play? A plausible answer seems to be the arche-human consciousness which acknowledges the presence of irrepressible polyphony of life. Both are mutually dependent. The author perhaps links himself with that consciousness and does not link himself only with one character. Karnad has exercised exotopy through identifying himself not with only one character but with the abstract value system — on which the actions and reactions of all the characters depend. This exotopy is in a way identification of the author with the ideology of polyphony which subsists in all the characters.

As said above Bakhtin considered variations in the language used as an important source of polyphony. In the play the three characters — the king, the queen and the queen mother belong to the same socio-cultural set-up, only the mahout is from the lower section of the society. There is, therefore, criss-crossing of socio-cultural value based systems. The play opens with the defensive attitude of the queen and the assertiveness of the mahout which is reflected in the imperativeness of his speech.

Mahout: Who are you.

Tell me. (74)

—

Go. (75)

Don't panic. Do as I say — Just laugh. Be merry. Come on. (85)

Queen: Please— its getting late. I'm getting worried.

Let me go. (75)

The difference in attitude is further asserted by the difference in the body language of the two characters. When the queen wishes to leave the temple Karnad describes the action vividly:

"The queen makes a sudden move to the door and tries to open it, but he is faster than her and stops her. There is a scuffle. He drags her back and literally throws her into a corner. She moans in pain." (76)

Neither in words nor in action is expressed any compatibility among characters. When we take the next situation where the king and the mahout confront each other, the tables are turned as the mahout is on the defensive and the king is assertive.

King: Shut up!

Mahout: If I shut up, your Majesty, how will you know?

I mean — I didn't do anything.

King: I said shut up!

(He draws his sword and is about to slash at the mahout when—)(88)

The king's agitation against the queen's escapade and his disapproval of the situation is stated by the queen mother thus—

But you are sweating. And your eyes are bloodshot.

Are you all right?

(Long pause)

Son — (103)

Throughout the play a conflict in ideology persists. Mahout's speech further polarizes the word into high/low; the haves/the have-nots; rich/poor.

People mock at mahouts. Call us low-born' But where  
would all your princes and kings be without us.

I want to know. What would happen to their elephants?

No elephants. No army. No pomp and splendour.

No processions. No king?! Ha! (80)

In the play no two characters appear to be in harmony with each other as each belongs to a different socio-ethical-cultural framework. There may not be a stark variation in the speech styles but, each character presents a different ideology. When a text is embedded in a multicultural context, polyphony is inherent.

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- <sup>4</sup> Girish Karnad, *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan & Bali: The Sacrifice – Two Plays* by Girish Karnad (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004). All textual quotations of *Bali: The Sacrifice* are from this source, and the page nos. are given in parentheses in the text of the paper.

## VIJAY TENDULKAR ON THE SOCIAL PRACTICE OF LOVE MARRIAGE

Brahma Dutta Sharma

In Vijay Tendulkar's play *Silence! The Court Is In Session*, the English version of his Marathi play *Shantanul Court Chalu Ahe* translated by Priya Adarkar there come to light the risks involved in having in a society the practice of love marriage as opposed to that of arranged marriage and in the light of those risks we can make an attempt to grasp the dramatist's views on the issue.

Love marriages occur in William Shakespeare's plays like *Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It*, and *The Merchant of Venice* and there love brings together those who deserve each other and can live together happily. For instance, Viola in *Twelfth Night* falls in love with Duke Orsino, who at that moment is trying to win the hand of Olivia, but since Viola's love for the Duke is earnest and constant, the events take such a course that ultimately the Duke seeks Viola's hand and marries her. In Shakespeare's plays a true lover's destiny is always bright and his/her mistakes turn out to be more correct than correct judgments. For example, Olivia's falling in love with Cesario, who is actually Viola who has disguised herself as a boy, is a mistake because Olivia believes Cesario to be a boy, but this occurrence turns out to be a correct occurrence, rather than a mistake, because it is this occurrence that makes it possible for Olivia to marry Sebastian the moment he arrives in Illyria, and paves the way for Viola's marriage with the Duke. Thus, in Shakespeare's plays love is one's safest guide to the temple of Hymen. Even in his sonnet 'True Love' Shakespeare asserts: "Let me not to the marriage to true minds/[a]dmit impediments"<sup>1</sup>. All this indicates that according to Shakespeare what matters in the field of matrimony is nothing but "true minds" and that considerations like religion, race, parentage, relationship, and age are irrelevant and deserve to be ignored.

But this is not so in Vijay Tendulkar's play *Silence! The Court is in Session* as here Leela Benare, the protagonist of the play, has to face the wrath of the society on the issue of marriage too and finds herself too weak to make the society accept her stand on the

issue when the Chairman of the Education Society orders her dismissal, he issues the instruction: "It is a sin to be pregnant before marriage. It would be still more immoral to let such a woman teach, in such a condition! There is no alternative – This woman must be dismissed... Send the order for my signature"<sup>2</sup> (p. 69) though nothing in her performing her duties as a teacher has ever earned disapproval, as she tells Samant: "In school, when the first bell rings my foot's already on the threshold. I haven't heard a single reproach for not being on time these past eight years. Nor about my teaching. I'm never behind hand with my lessons! Exercises corrected on time too! Not a bit of room for disapproval – I don't give an inch of it to anyone!" (pp. 3-4) – and is regarded as a good teacher as she says, "My children will do anything for me. For I'd give the last drop of my blood to teach them" (p. 4). Let us see why and how it so happens.

When the play opens, Leela Benare is still an unmarried woman, though she has made attempts to get married. In the first attempt she made to get married she tried to marry her maternal uncle with whom she was in love and who was in love with her, as she confesses: "I was in love with my mother's brother... He gave me love... I insisted on marriage. So I could live my beautiful lovely dream openly, Like everyone else!" (p. 74). This love did not lead to marriage in spite of the fact that both the boy and the girl were in love with each other because there stood between them a rule of their society which declared the marriage of a girl with her maternal uncle a sin, as she reports: "How was I to know that if you felt like breaking yourself into bits and melting into one with someone – if you felt that just being with him gave a whole meaning to life – and if he was your uncle, it was sin! Why, I was hardly fourteen!" (p. 74). In this case, Leela was absolutely earnest in her love, yet she failed to get married because a custom/tradition of her society deemed the marriage of a girl and her maternal uncle to be an act of sin and it became an impediment to the marriage of true minds. In this case the girl was flouting the social norm but the boy who must have tried to give his beloved the impression that he was a brave person, was not that bold, as she reports: "I insisted on marriage... And my brave man

turned tail and ran" (p. 74). But the girl did not come out of the episode unharmed, as she reports: "I did commit a sin" (p. 74). With the result that now she is helpless and can only gnash her teeth at the man and say: "I felt like smashing his face in public and spitting on it" (p. 74). However, she has lost her innocence forever and cannot claim any more that she is a virgin... If the practice of getting married through a love affair had not been prevalent in her society, she would still have been innocent. In other words, it is the practice of love marriages that has caused an irreparable damage to Leela.

The play also brings to light the fact that a love marriage is a culmination of intimacy between the boy and the girl as Leela and her uncle became intimate with each other before they came to the question of getting married. In other words, in love marriages intimacy precedes the marriage. This implies that the intimacy that develops between two persons may lead to their marriage or may end in itself. It means that the practice of love marriages permits intimacy between unmarried persons but does not ensure every intimacy to lead to a marriage. Leela's not being able to get her first lover as her husband signifies that it is quite possible for a boy to get undue advantage of his intimacy with a girl and to refuse to marry her. In such a case the girl may find herself to have lost her innocence and still to have remained unmarried. The institution of marriage is based on the understanding that the husband and wife intimately know none else than each other and are virgins at the time of marriage, as is implied in the following observation of the Hindu law-giver Manu: "A boy or a girl should marry after he/she has systematically studied all the four *Vedas*, or two *Vedas*, or at least one *Veda*, when he/she is still a celibate."<sup>3</sup> If a girl has lost her virginity before her marriage she, if she gets married somehow, may find herself in the situation that Tess in Hardy's novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*<sup>4</sup> faces after she has married Angel Clare and has revealed to him her past and Angel leaves for Brazil or the situation in which Madhu in Shashi Deshpande's novel *Small Remedies*<sup>5</sup> finds herself when she has revealed to her husband Som that she had lost her virginity on the day her father died long before her marriage and her husband loses all his happiness with the result that Madhu

resolves to leave her husband's house to live a lonely life elsewhere.

Leela's efforts to get married through a love affair make her behave like the animals having the herd instinct, as opposed to those having the coupling instinct, as first she falls in love with her maternal uncle [see *supra*], then she falls in love with professor Damle as she confesses: "I fell in love. As a grown woman. I threw all my heart into it; I thought, this will [*sic*] be different. This love is intelligent. It is love for an unusual intellect... But it was the same mistake. I offered my body on the alter of my worship. And my intellectual god took the offering – and went his way" (pp. 75-76) and consequently becomes pregnant as is evident from her telling Professor Damle when the latter refuses to marry her: "I shall have no choice but to take my life. Bear it in mind that you will not escape the guilt of murdering two ... living beings" (p. 45). She is reported to have once tried to entice Rokde as he states: "After the performance all of us left the hall... She held my – my hand... I freed my hand. She moved away. She said, Don't tell anyone what had happened" (pp. 56-57). And then she tries to become intimate with Samant as once she says to him, "Let's leave everyone behind, I thought, and go somewhere far, far away with you! ... yes I like you very much... You are a very pure and good person" (p. 2), a little later, as the narrator reports, "[s] he goes very close to [Samant], and yet again, as the narrator reports, [s] he makes it an excuse to get even closer to him" (p. 3). The repeated reports of this vulgar behaviour of hers signify that according to the narrator she is trying to entice Samant. If the practice of love marriages had not been there in Leela Benare's society, she would not have behaved in such a vulgar way.

No doubt, much can be said in support of love marriages: they make it possible for one to get a wife or a husband of one's choice; if you marry a person with whom you are in love and who is in love with you your married life will be genuinely happy and harmonious. Likewise, much can be said against the practice of permitting only arranged marriages: if one has to spend one's life with a person one is not in love with, one's life will become hellish as it will be full of

squabbles, quarrels, abuses and misuses. Yet one thing is certain: if a society does not permit love marriages, no girl will find herself in the situation in which Leela finds herself when her lover and maternal uncle refuses to marry her after he has physically exploited her. In the light of this fact it is safe to infer that Vijay Tendulkar is rejecting the practice of love marriages in the play *Silence! The Court is in Session*.

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- <sup>1</sup>Shakespeare, William, "True Love" (Sonnet no. 116), *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, ed. Peter Alexander (London: English Language Book Society, and Collins, 1964), p.1328.
- <sup>2</sup>Tendulkar, Vijay. *Silence! The Court is in Session*, trans. Priya Adarkar (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), p.69. All the subsequent quotations that follow in the article are from this text.
- <sup>3</sup>Manu, *Manusmriti* III, 2. Manu's Sanskrit couplet reads as follows:  
Vedaandheetya vedau naa vedanvaapi yathakramammi  
Avilupt brahamchrayo grahstha-thramavishet!!
- <sup>4</sup>Hardy, Thomas. *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979).
- <sup>5</sup>Deshpande, Shashi. *Small Remedies* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2001).
- <sup>6</sup>Guy de Maupassant, "Simon's Papa," *Modern Short Stories*, First Series, ed. S.K. Kumar (Madras: Macmillan, 1967), pp.89-102. In this story a boy cheats his beloved under the promise of marriage and deserts her with the result that when she gives birth to his son and later sends her to school the boy is ridiculed by his fellow students that he has no papa while everybody else in his school has one.

## SUJATA BHATT: A FEMINIST STUDY OF HER POETRY

Mithilesh K. Pandey

With exposure of the west and its ways of life, recent Indian women poets writing in English like Imtiaz Dharker, Eunice de Souza and Sujata Bhatt exhibit signs of reprisal against the long existing patriarchal set up. She has brought out five volumes of poetry — *Brunizem* (1988), *Monkey Shadows* (1991), *The Stinking Rose* (1995), *Point No. Point: Selected Poems* (1997) and *My Mother's Way of Wearing a Sari* (2000) — which attracted the attention of readers from various points of view in India and abroad.

Feminism resists all hierarchal positions and institutions primarily because they subordinate women. Therefore Bhatt as a poet attacks the conventional role of woman in the patriarchal setup with subtle sense of irony and satire. Being aware of the Indian situation Bhatt dwells upon Hindu rituals and symbols which have cultural significance. For instance; bangles are not merely ornaments but symbolize 'the auspiciousness of wifehood'. But the way Bhatt recalls mother's attachment to her bangles, evinces a strong sense of irony as her life has no meaning:

They are green glints and unbreakable I think  
Because she can wear them all day  
Whether she scrubs glass out clothes,  
Or dishes, the bangles stay on. ( 22)

As an experienced woman, Bhatt exposes the ill treatment of woman in a male dominated society where a woman has hardly to say anything. In one of the poems titled "Udaylee" she reveals the traumatic experience of an upper caste Hindu woman during her menstruation period. A menstruating woman is treated like an untouchable. She is kept isolated, though perhaps allowed to read and write letters. But the poet wonders at the ironic advantages that such confinement brings in a women's life by chance:

Here we're permitted to write  
letters, to read, and it gives a chance  
for our kitchen-scarred fingers to heal. (15)

Another poem "Buffaloes" expresses the plight of an Indian

mother who has become widow in young age. The poet narrates the fate of a young widow who wants to die on her husband's funeral pyre but is stopped by her mother-in-law, for she has to bring up her three-week old son. Now, she has a dual responsibility of that of a father and a mother. Moreover, she has to guard herself from the eyes of lustful men. Her youth responds to the change in season but she has to suppress her feelings. As per Indian tradition, she can not think of remarriage and has to remain a widow throughout her life.

Apart from marriage and family, poverty is also responsible to compel women or girls to stoop down to any extent for their survival. In the volume titled *My Mother's Way of Wearing a Sari*, Bhatt sarcastically overtures of the anomaly prevalent in our Indian families where girls are treated as unwanted objects and hence parents kill them in the mother's womb. The poetess deliberately narrates the pathetic condition of unwanted girls in the moving poem "Voice of the Unwanted Girl" where they have to die in the mother's womb:

Mother, I am the one  
 You sent away  
 when the doctor told you  
 I would be  
 a girl- In the end they had to  
 give me an injection to kill me. (38)

Like post-feminist poets, Sujata Bhatt has also used myth to negate the power of patriarchy. In one of her famous poems, "Parvati", she accuses Parvati for giving all her energy, all her Shakti-power to Shiva, thus accepting male protection and subjection. She criticizes women for their surrendering to fulfill the needs and urges of the male God and of being: "Heathen /pagan Hindu" (*Brunizem* 43-44). On the other hand, like de Souza, Bhatt refashions the myth of wild Goddess in her famous poem "Well well well" as a strategy to grab the male space. The poetess, like girls, is in search of the wild goddess who holds the key to the powers of understanding of knowledge. The word 'witch' has come to be understood as a pejorative, but long ago it was an appellation given to both young and old women healers. The word 'witch' has derived from the word 'wit' meaning wise. Sujata Bhatt realized that if a woman has to progress

she must "wrest from men what they do not want to give: control, power and privilege"(Terri 27) and hence aspires:

I need words like witch, power  
may be even, gypsy. (Brunizem: 106).

Sujata has also used Medusean myth from the feminist perspective and believes that Medusa represents a complexity of contradictory attributes as well as a disturbing rebellious and turbulent persona. She can be made to signify the unity of life and death in some sort of eternal immanence but she herself is mortal. Hence to look upon women is dangerous. Medusa's gaze is deadly. The poet suggests that the hypocrisies of civilized rationality are powerless to gnaw what is destructive in the world and in us, and that the horror may well be the most devastating product of our demands for innocence and virtue:

When I say witch I can't have you thinking of  
Medusa  
or Macbeth or Salem.

I can't have you thinking at all. (107)

Though these figures and images are power-oriented ones and are ultimately destroyed in the patriarchal structure, the poet here refers to the power charged "words", and scribbles about the position of a woman's 'fall from grace' into patriarchy. As a consequence, we find miscellaneous persuasive images of dead, of muteness, blindness, and the very condition of being manipulated. The young girl tastes love for the first time and feels ecstasy. After being an outcast, she is finally reintegrated into patriarchal society by aligning herself with a man. Magic, thus, is defined in terms of man-woman love, patriarchy, and not what she was before, an individual saturated with freedom:

This favorite leather jacket, gentle grey,  
that he gave her, has power. (107)

The material used for harnessing and intercepting is leather due to its resistant and enduring quality. One can mark the colors, not the bright red of dancing shoes, not the orange of freedom, but the grey of death. The lover in the poem is babbled when he meets the women who 'could control the blood in her brain' He was urgently in need of such power to get fascinated at the moment:

When the magic spoke to him, when she touched his hands  
 he got some magic,  
 he got what he was looking for. (108)

He has now all the magic he has needed. Finally reintegrated into patriarchy, the witch has to lose her power now; she finds her magic gone and becomes a static boundary with inactivity: "She wears silk to cool her magic, her logic" (110).

What Foucault aptly remarks about power is true that it is "an institution and not structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with, it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategic situation in a particular society" (Foucault 93). That is the reason why Bhatt tells us, "I took the word witch". The girl /witch then is made for sexual exploitation, for she had made herself vulnerable as never before:

Then she let him  
 have all the magic he needed. (108)

Surrounded by the principles of patriarchy, she loses touch with her wild woman self and has to listen to a different voice that takes her away from herself. There is always a vague remembrance of things done before, words said before, the awareness of a different past but the inability to act upon that awareness. Similarly, Bhatt's feminist vision becomes apparent in the poem "A different way to dance" in which she points out the past life of Ganesh, the elephant-headed son of Shiva and Parvati:

Sometimes the elephant head of Ganesh  
 Dreams of the life among elephants it knew  
 before Shiva interfered. (Monkey Shadows 35).

The woman always carries the scars of a consciousness, forced within patriarchal bonds, analogous to which in order to establish the parallel between a divine life of high standards and a human life of low standards, and focus on identity to create new waves and new forms. The lines, cited below, convey a sense of self-awareness about the contradiction of the ideal and the real situation of the female world:

The elephant trunk swings  
 From side to side  
 hiding away the memory of Shiva's raised hand,  
 hiding away the knife-slashed soul,

that throbbing wound it carries  
since leaving its first life. (36)

Moreover, the poet, illustrating the mythic set-up, configures the pain the woman elephant is forced to undergo. The poet also emphasizes the all-pervasive freedom struggle that informs or colours every aspect of the period under consideration. In a way, the issues of feminism are related with/to the problems of the emotional experience, the struggle for independence continuing with the same strain of thought. The poet in another poem "What happened to the Elephant" muses on the fate of a dead elephant whose head now is the divine Lord Ganesh. But as a feminist, the poet in the guise of a child

refuses  
to accept Shiva's Carelessness  
and reaches of a solution  
without death. (37)

The poet expresses her anguish over the fate and existence of all female creatures. Even in the group or family, they feel alienated and have to remain content within themselves. What Germaine Greer remarks in this context is true that "many a housewife staring at the back of her husband's newspaper or listening to his breathing in bed is lonelier than any spinster in a rented room" (Greer 244).

Recent Indian women poets have realized that religion is the main cause of their subordination and subjugation in the male dominated society apart from stern traditional concepts. While knowing the role of religion in the life of a woman, Bhatt becomes personal and exposes the hypocrisy of Hindu community who believe that a gold necklace in the form of a swastika is symbol of beauty "untouched by history." In another poem "Debibhen Pathak", the poet wonders if she can ever rescue the swastika from history.

So many old religions fatten  
on arguments, or fresh murders  
or do they call that offerings?  
Someone's blood, someone's money  
someone's wife, someone's son  
should not have been touched. (38)

The poetic voyage is constructed on the self itself, a journey into inner time, which is a creation of subjective order in the male-

dictated order. Looking back into her own child life, she longs for the freedom and autonomy in the poem "The difference between Being and Becoming". What Virginia Woolf suggests that "women should have liberty of experience, that they should differ from men without fear and express those differences openly" ( Woolf 32-33) is obviously expressed in the following lines:

So where does the body house the soul?  
 Locked in the attic;  
 No  
 These doors and windows are always open,  
 As children we lived outside. (50)

Bhatt, like Mamta Kalia, in the poem entitled "White Asparagus" subverts the phallogocentric language and asserts the discourse of desire from the woman's point of view, the subordinate role of woman in the patriarchal society is reversed, and the woman is given voice to articulate her desires, her will to have her sensual orgasm at her own behest. While articulating woman's desire, Bhatt demolishes the position of the subordination of woman and places her in the active role, giving her the word to voice her inner urges:

Who speaks of the strong currents  
 Streaming through the legs, the breasts  
 Of a pregnant woman  
 In her fourth month?

She 's young, this is her first time,  
 She 's slim and the nausea has gone. ("The Laugh of Medusa" )

Although, like Kalia, Bhatt creates a new feminine text in poetry and her text illustrates Cixous's idea about the spirit and strength of woman's writing as spelt out in the preceding extract from "The Laugh of Medusa", "a feminine text can not fail to be more than submissive. It is volcanic, as it is written it brings about an upheaval of the old properly crust, carrier of masculine investments, there is no other way" (Cixous 875).

Unlike feminist poets, Sujata Bhatt is subjective in adopting language for her poetic journey. She brings in a mythic consciousness into play and questions the ability of people to adapt to language however oppressive and leave their stamp of uniqueness on it. In the poem "A different history", she challenges the patriarchal

language used by male persons generally to dominate or irritate someone:

Which language  
has not been the oppression's tongue?

Which language  
truly meant to murder someone? (Brunizem 33)

Sujata Bhatt shows the malice of Hindu religion and its preplanned laws against women on the gender basis. Hence her crusade against patriarchy and its 'Absolute' character manifests itself deconstructing the forms of knowledge which, according to Derrida, 'structured around a centre'.

The foregoing analysis of Bhatt's poems demonstrates the fact that the basic subject matter of the poet is her own experience as Kamala Das says in *My Story*, "a poet's raw material is not stone or clay, it is her personality" (157). As an experienced lady, her maturity is seen in the feminist vision and even becomes more significant in her mythic consciousness either in the form of Kali or Agni which can break the wall of patriarchy prevalent in our society. Whatever is the output of her poetry, as a feminist poet she has been able to outface the male dominated world by transcending the intricacy of patriarchal structure to recover both power and position of women at the global level.

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**ECOLOGY AND GENDER:  
AN ECO-FEMINIST APPRAISAL OF  
AMITAV GHOSH'S *THE HUNGRY TIDE***

**Rashmi Gaur**

I

The long history of sexism is deeply rooted in contemporary cultures. Logocentric discourse entailed hierarchies of binary differences, associating woman with a subjugated difference within these — man/woman, culture/nature etc. The post-structuralist understanding of woman/feminism negates the choice of any positive construct as feminism deconstructs everything related with patriarchy but does not construct anything. Such positioning is reinforced when Julia Kristeva says, “A woman cannot be; it is something which does not even belong in the order of being. It follows that a feminist practice can only be negative, at odds with what already exists so that we may say ‘that’s not it’ and ‘that’s still not it’” (Kristeva 137).

By rejecting the need of large historical narratives and macrostructures, post-modernist criticism can focus on specific cultures and smaller historicities. In this context the representation/location of identity within feminist discourse possesses pluralistic promises. “Woman” is not a determinable identity anymore. Post-structuralist criticism concedes that woman is not a determinable identity. It is pertinent to quote Derrida in this context, “Perhaps woman is not some thing which announces itself from a distance, at a distance from some other thing ....Perhaps woman — a non-identity, non-figure, a simulacrum — is distance’s very chasm, the out-distancing of distance, the interval’s cadence, distance itself” (Derrida 49).

The non-universalistic approach of post-modernist feminism would replace unitary notions. Nancy Fraser and Linda J. Nicholson comment:

...postmodern-feminist theory ....would replace unitary notions of woman and feminine gender identity with plural and complexly constructed conceptions of social identity, treating gender as one relevant strand among others, attending also to class, race, ethnicity, age, and sexual orientation” (Fraser and Nicholson 270)

Such multi-layered approach towards feminism/s focusing on otherness and difference, offers fresh insights into the overlapping, at moments conflicting, definitions and interpretations of feminism. Eco-feminism is also a relatively fresh approach to develop a holistic perspective towards the relationship between gender and ecology, also viewing the role of gender in the context of environmental concerns and economic development.

## II

The ideological fundamentals and practicalities of feminist thought incorporate the needs of sociopolitical changes. Conventional theories of development have excluded women, ignoring to translate their contribution to productive and reproductive tasks in terms of GDP. Ester Boserup's book *Women's role in Economic Development* which came out in the 1970's, has had profound effects upon feminist theory in relationship to development models and the development of subsequent theories (Manion, net). It was further expanded in the 80's to incorporate the needs of the environment within existing approaches. Theories about the bonds which subsist between gender and environment resulted in Eco-feminism which scrutinizes the correlation between gender oppression and environmental squalor caused by the long-established male dominance.

As an academic discourse, eco-feminism is not a homogeneous approach. Its "diversity is illustrated by its geographical spread, having a significant academic and activist presence in the US, Canada, North West, Europe, India and Australia" (Twine net). Ecofeminist critics regard that in the western thought women and nature are linked together and the processes of inferiorisation have mutually reinforced each other. Twine elucidates how the western scientific discourse is informed by imagery that portrays nature as female:

Given women's status this both aided and eroticized the domination of nature for 'men of science'. Interwoven with this discourse has been the inferiorisation of women via the discourse of 'women as closer to nature' and thus 'further away' from a dualistically opposed and politically deployed concept of 'reason' (Twine net).

Various strains of Ecofeminist criticism focus on the role of gender

in political economy, gender's relation to the environment as a reflection of beliefs of identity and difference, and emphasize the necessity of sustainability. Despite its concerns about the environment, Ecofeminism upholds the primacy of gender, and considers that for the protection and well-being of environment, as also for sustainable development, gender is a significant factor in determining access and control of natural resources. The present paper attempts to trace these strains in *The Hungry Tide*, the fifth novel and sixth substantial book by Amitav Ghosh, a major signature in contemporary English fiction.

### III

*The Hungry Tide* is both a "prophetic and poetic novel" foregrounding issues which escape straight answers (Taras.net). The novel develops through the perspectives — sometimes juxtaposed, sometimes parallel, and sometimes overlapping — of two main characters — Piyali Roy and Konal Dutt. Piyali Roy, a young Indian American marine biologist, is searching for a rare, endangered river dolphin, *Orcaella brevirostris*; and has come to Sundarbans in this connection. Konal Dutt is a Delhi based businessman who is proud of his capability to understand the nuances of different languages. Another character who plays a significant role in the novel is Fokir, an illiterate fisherman, who shares an uncanny instinct for ways of the sea with Piya. Amitav Ghosh authentically delves deep into the hidden fabric of human psyche. He portrays the inner life, the moral failures, weaknesses and perversities of human nature; as well as its magnificent grandeur with an ingenious creativity. As the plot unfolds, we are drawn into the lives of several women characters — Piya herself; Nilima, the NGO activist; Kusum, who died in the 1979 massacre of Morichjhapi; and Moyna, the ambitious backwoods wife of Fokir. In the lives and travails of these women characters, we find an internalization of the precepts of Ecofeminism. The story of the novel happens in the tide country — *the Sundarbans*. This immense archipelago of islands possesses no borders to divide river from the sea, or land from water. Here was founded a Utopian settlement by Sir Daniel Hamilton, a visionary Scotsman with the hope to establish a society

where people could overcome the divisions of race, class and religion. The utopia disintegrates, giving way to a human jungle, which struggles against nature for survival, dominates and exploits it; in turn it also encourages a thinning hold of social morality which can abet the abuse of women with impunity. The issues raised in *The Hungry Tide* bind interestingly with the canons of Ecofeminism.

#### IV

*The Hungry Tide* projects a deep awe of nature. The *Sundarbans*, recorded as *bhatirdesh* in the records of the Mughal emperors, possess a destructive hold over humanity, "At no moment can human beings have any doubt of the terrain's utter hostility to their presence, of its cunning and resourcefulness, of its determination to destroy or expel them (8). When Nilima and Nirmal reach Lusibari, they find that hunger and catastrophe were a way of life. Life was hazardous and people died in their youth. Nilima notes that it was customary for the women of the island to dress as windows when their menfolk go for finishing (8). Such harshness however does not stop men from exploiting natural resources, "... thousands risked death in order to collect meager quantities of honey, wax, firewood and the sour fruit of the *Kewra* tree (79). Nature is exploited callously and insensitively; sustainability is ignored by the abusive proprietary ethics, which values land and animals only as economic resources. In his letter to Kanai, Nirmal has noted this fact:

"...when I first came to Lusibari, the sky would be darkened by birds at sunset. Many years had passed since I'd seen such flights of birds. When I first noticed their absence, I thought they would soon come back but they had not." (215)

Mentioning this fact to Piya, Kanai asks, "Do you think there are fewer dolphins than there used to be?" (226). Piya grimly connects this fact with drastic and disastrous changes in the ecological system and comments, "When marine mammals begin to disappear from an established habitat it means something's gone very, very wrong" (266-67). Technological development resulting in advanced fishing gear has also had a destructive influence on nature. Fokir's wife Moyna is concerned about her son's education as he will not be able to depend on the traditional skills of fishing or catching crabs. She

tells Kanai, "Mashima say that in fifteen years the fish will all be gone. ....These new nylon nets are so fine that they catch the eggs of all the other fish as well. Mashima wanted to get the nets banned, but it was impossible" (134).

There are other hints of similar meaningless exploitation of nature and consequential stasis of human life in the text – the vast waterway of Malta river is reduced to "a narrow ditch (24). This dilapidated state of the river has practically closed the Canning port and people prefer to go to Lusibari through Basonti (25). Retaining the contemporary perspective *The Hungry Tide* shows that even the less bountiful natural surroundings are thoughtlessly exploited by man, wreaking havoc on the already precarious ecological balance. Similar exploitative practices are senselessly worked out in the context of women too – on their psyche, as well as on their body. In the patriarchal hierarchy men are the powerful, women the powerless (Hooks 118). Such atmosphere often generates ambivalence among women about their responses to male supremacy and ideology of domination.

Patriarchal society is based on structuring unequal relations between man and woman, overlooking that subjugation necessarily causes fear and unease. Hegemonic masculine norms have defined relations of power in which women are not given any agentic role, - rather they are always primarily considered as sex objects. When Kanai sees Piya off on the platform, his initial desire is to seduce her somehow. He invites her to Lusibari and watches her with interest (16). What is clandestine and clothed in civilized movements in the case of Kanai, becomes crudely apparent in the actions of the guard and Mejdā, Piya's guide and launch owner. Their irreverent cockiness generates uncertainty in Piya and she feels safer with Fokir, an illiterate fisherman.

Kusum is another woman character whose life is destroyed by the malicious greed of men. After her father's death, her mother is pushed into prostitution. Traffickers also want to trap Kusum, a young teenager at the time, but she is sent to Lusibari by a well-wisher Horen. She is soon associated with Nilima's work, but the hoodlums don't spare her. On the night of the stage performance of the glory

of Bon Bibi, Horen helps her to flee. Later Kusum marries a station vendor and has a son. After her husband's death, she comes to settle down in *Morichjhapi* alongwith other refuges, putting her faith in the basic goodness of the people who symbolize government, as much as in the legend of Bon Bibi. Betrayal had to come to her as suddenly as it had come to her mother. Kusum's exploitation is paralleled with the exploitation of nature. Ecofeminists also believe that there is a close connection between the exploitation of the two.

Ecofeminism also emphasizes the necessity of sustainability – people have to learn to balance the use of Earth's resources and a respect for the Earth's needs. This attitude opposes the conventional colonizer's claim that human have no moral obligation to the non-human, because humanity has the ability to dominate and control it. The ecofeminist strain is discernible in the characterization of Nilima and Piya. Nilima is popularly known as "*Mashima*". Married to Nirmal Bose "a leftist intellectual and a writer of promise" (76), she is forced to move away from Kolkata in 1950s, when the brief police detention unsettles Nirmal. Settled in Lusibari, Nirmal runs a school and Nilima organizes a women's union which ultimately burgeons as the *Badabon* Trust and is acknowledged nationally. With the passage of time Nilima becomes cautious and wants Nirmal to steer clear of the *Morichjhapi* controversy. She had to come to Lusibari for Nirmal's sake. It was a place which offered no consolation or companionship to her initially. However, she has been able to create something which is useful to people. When Nirmal accuses her of opportunistic compromises she loses temper: "You live in a dream world – a haze of poetry and fuzzy ideas about revolution. To build something is not the same as dreaming of it: building is always a matter of well-chosen compromises'...."(214). The support system for women which she has created over the years is important to her. Draped in hand woven cotton saris and almost circular in shape, at the age of seventy six, she commands respect for her selfless devotion to the cause of women. The *Badeaban* Trust which she manages wants a holistic development of land and people. This is perhaps the reason that Piya comes back to Nilima when she decides to establish a data bank for studying the dolphins. Like

Nilima, Piya also wants that conservation should be a way of life, not a burden (397).

Piya, a cetologist, is an Indian American who wants to spend sometime in the *Sundarbans* to study the river dolphins. The social organization of human lives around gender has suggested that men should control the public sphere and women should be confined to feminine and reproductive roles. Rachel Alsop has quoted from Richard Dawkins's *The Selfish Gene* (1976) wherein he has argued that "men's genetic make-up makes them programmed to philander in order to maximize their reproductive potential" (Alsop 134). By extension, patriarchal culture perceives women primarily as objects of desire. This irreverence is paralleled by the traditional attitude towards nature which talks of taming it, instead of establishing a harmonious relationship with her. Kanai's initial interest in Piya, as well as in Moyna, is governed by this instinct. In the patriarchal nature of language and culture women could enter only as objects. The derogatory attitudes and ugly intimidating kinesics of Mej-da, Piya's guide, and also of her official guard showcase the indignity women have to routinely suffer because of this attitude. They do not allow any helper to remain on the launch which raises suspicions in Piya's mind. Mej-da's crude gestures and the guard's coldness towards it strengthen this perception.(56). Even a revolutionary person like Nirmal possesses no real regard for the dedicated work of his wife. Accusing her of siding with the rulers and ignoring the "real issues" he dismisses his wife Nilima's work with contempt:

"She shut her eyes as she recalled the contempt with which her own husband had dismissed her life's work. She turned her head to brush away the tears dripping from her eyes. 'We were like two ghosts living in the same house. At the end he seemed to want only to hurt me' (120).

Patriarchy encourages a "perverted, misleading and prostitutional relationship of consumption to production (consuming in order to reproduce one's manpower) and of production to consumption (producing by means of one's work in order to spend one's salary)" (d'Eaubonne.net). Gendered mental structured have rested on this foundation since millennia. Patriarchy also encourages a market economy which has to devastate the planet and plunder the earth

in order to survive and move on.

## V

*The Hungry Tide* presents before us the strains of feminism and environmentalism simultaneously. These strains are never juxtaposed in the story. They complement and reinforce each other. The structure of the novel convincingly lays bare the pettiness and the irrelevance of essential biologism. It also sensitizes us about the decrepitude and virtual collapse of the eco-system. The novel underscores the connections between gender and environment and is a message to change our perception about both. Piya's initiative towards the end of the novel should be taken as a message to promote women's active role in environmental protection and conservation programmes. The issues raised by Amitav Ghosh in *The Hungry Tide* are not limited either to feminist or to environmentalist invective; rather they concern humanity, suggesting that the multi-disciplinary perspective of ecofeminism offers a more holistic option of attaining social equality and sustainable development.

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## DISQUIET AND SORROW IN URBAN IMAGINATION: READING RAJ KAMAL JHA'S *IF YOU ARE AFRAID OF HEIGHTS*

Sushila Singh

Raj Kamal Jha's second novel *If You Are Afraid of Heights* is a relentlessly disturbing book. The novelist has astonishing grip over banal urbanity and magically weaves the stories of truth, happenings all around, covered underneath, ever known and imagined but rarely entered and brought to truth-telling. The novel begins with the inscription from Paul Auster's *Mr. Vertigo*:

Deep down, I don't believe it takes any special talent for a person to lift himself off the ground and hover in the air. We all have it in us – every man, woman, and child ... You must learn to stop being yourself. That's where it begins, and everything else follows from that.

The opening lines of the first prologue and the epilogue are the same: "Look at the picture on the cover, there's a child, a girl in a red dress; there's a bird, a crow in a blue white sky. And then there are a few things you cannot see" (p.1 and last page). The beginning and the end remain the same with the unabated grief of the crying girl child and the causes of her crying which everybody knows but doesn't seem to see. Cities are dangerous for the girl child, even her home is not a safe domain. The city in the novel is Kolkata, which Raj Kamal Jha knows best.

Fantasy and reality merge here in this city and melt into each other. The city is the metropolis — Kolkata —; although landmark places are named but the city remains unnamed. The bizarre, absurd nature of reality today, the very truth of urbanity calls in question the realistic tradition of ordinary life. The picture on the cover page of the novel is the novel: there is a child, a girl in a red dress, a crow hovering in a blue white sky. Then there are things – the varied reality of life – that one cannot see or finds blurred. This child is between eleven and twelve years of age. The child is standing on the balcony of a two-room flat which looks like a crying face (1). Because there are only two rooms in the flat, this room serves as the living room for most of the day. This is where the child sleeps on single bed against the wall. This is her shifting space/trap – there

are chairs, a potted plant, a second-hand table in the centre with a cracked glass top on which are kept some of the child's school books, one opened in the middle (1).

The child, a girl-child, is crying. The image represents the controlling symbol in the book — the neglected crying girl-child strikes the cord of existence in the cities. Who is the crying child? Astride narrator on the hovering crow partakes in the sorrow and tries to understand the reality through the picture frames of the family that lives in that weeping flat. The child is crying. Tears in her eyes, she sees the crow but blurred and that is why cannot see the narrator, her friend who is sitting on the crow's back. His legs pressed hard against its sides, his body raised so that the bird does not feel his weight. The narrator on the crow's back has flown in circles across the sky and over the city, throughout the day, afternoon and evening. All this while he is watching the child's father and mother.

The blue white morning of the sky changes to a deep purple evening because the narrator's story begins in the dying light of day. The child, her father and mother live in the weeping flat of the crumbling city. The story is of decay and neglect and unredeemed sorrow of the young and innocent whose dreams are thwarted every moment. The girl's father is a common average person. He works in the City Building Clearance Office. His job is to receive construction plans (maps) from those who ironically wish to build new houses in the old crumbling city.

Like Hemingway's modern epic *Old Man and the Sea*, Jha's story begins, "once upon a time in the city, there lived a woman called Rima and a man named Amir. They are two faces of the common humanity: Rima becomes Amir if read oppositely. They meet in an accident: "she picked out the shards of broken glass from his face, they fell in love and just when it seemed they were settling down to live happily ever after, a strange little thing happened one night: Rima woke up hearing a child crying" (7). Rima could not make out if it was a boy or a girl. It was a wail, rising and falling, loud and soft. It was a black night. The street was black and there was a brown dog. The driver must have reversed without looking and sheared off part of the dog's tail. The city is city of accidents

– such accidents happen every day in the city. The city is city of anonymity, faceless and nameless people are involved and killed in these accidents all the time.

For six full days Rima heard the crying of the child in her head and during night she woke up to hear the crying from the street outside. On the seventh day she tells Amir about the crying. He only says, "Tell me when you hear it, ... wake me up, I'll listen too" (p. 9). That night Rima and Amir wait at the window. Two men walk by – laughing, nudging, one of them was drunk. At that time the crying began. Rima shivered and Amir said,

"Don't worry ... There are a thousand and one reasons in this city for children to cry. Why don't we talk about this in the morning, Why don't we go back to sleep?" .... "Rima said no, I need to find out who this child is, why does it cry, I don't want to wake up every night like this and I don't want this sound in my ear during the day." (10)

Rima, in fact, wanted to find out if the crying stopped when she left Amir. Rima left, never to return to Amir. She left him to be alone. For company she had the sound of the crying child. The story is told only to understand: out of all men, women and children in this city, sixteen million at last hour, how it had to be only Amir and Rima with their names as mirror reflections of each other who met in the accident amid shards of broken glass.

Long before Amir and Rima met, a building named Paradise Park came up in the city. It was a special building. If someone was stopped and asked the way to Paradise Park he too became special. It was the tallest building in the city. The construction was so unique people could not tell how many floors it had and how many people lived there. Several stories went round about the Paradise Park — one favourite one was about the sea and the gulls:

Each floor on Paradise Park had only one apartment, and one side of its living room was a wall made entirely of glass, the kind of glass they use in telescopes. So that on nights when the sky was clear, when the wind had blown away the dust and the smoke, when the moon and the stars were in their right places, exerting just that precise gravitational pull, you could see the Bay of Bengal, which is at least five hundred miles away, right outside the living room. So sharp was this lens-window that you could see the waves, the green foam, the white spray breaking across the shore, crashing against the wall. (15)

Rima lived there, and brought Amir there on the night of the accident. Paradise Park came up right in the centre of the maidan — a sprawl of empty land. Jha comments on the vanishing open spaces in cities — so this maidan was an accident. "This is the only open space there is in a city where people live, five or six to one room, fifty or sixty to a bus stop, more than a thousand to a neighbourhood, these numbers increasing every day and every night" (19). This maidan was called the dying city's last lung until one day real estate agents began to buy. The maidan was a protected area under the City Preservation Act of 1972: "But like all laws across the world, it had loopholes so tiny you didn't even know they were there until you met lawyers with trained eyes and nimble fingers who could squeeze an entire herd of elephants through if only you gave them enough money" (20). Because men had enough money and the officers at the City Building Clearance Office had deep and wide pockets, in less than a month the maidan disappeared in patches. First came up 'Dragon Chilli' — a Chinese restaurant, woman's hair-dresser called 'Madonna Clips', greeting-card store 'Maidan Wishes' and then came up Paradise Park. It appeared the newspapers were also in conspiracy — initial angry adjectives vanished from the protesting newspapers as if the words were written in disappearing ink. The protest transformed into poetry, similes, metaphors and magazines ran photo features on the construction. The lyric of the city might read like "Imagine a morgue, the room in the hospital that's full of corpses. Now think of a little child learning to walk, Place the child on the cold floor of this morgue, stand at the door and watch. Paradise Park is like this baby, taking its first steps in a room full of corpses. Let's celebrate new life in this dying city" (22-23).

About forty-minute bus-ride away from the maidan lives Amir in a two-room flat in a building that from outside looks like a crying face. Ironically, the word 'Amir' means a rich man. However, he is not poor but he is not rich either. He is paid a little over five thousand rupees per month with some dearness allowance and about two hundred rupees as annual increment. There is nothing striking or noticeable about him: "He's medium height, medium age, medium weight, medium nose, medium eyes, everything medium. Even

in colour, he's medium brown, like wood left outside for a couple of days, in the sun and rain" (30).

Characters in this novel mingle and merge into each other to leave a feeling of raging disquiet in the mind. Amir's job in the post-office pertains to writing letters for those who cannot read or write. In the first week of the month there is a long line at his desk — handcart-pushers, rikshaw-pullers, carpenters-on-call, masons, maids — all are sending a part of their monthly wage to their families at home, far away from the city. There is a young man who wants to write everything to his mother: Amir stops him telling what he would write in his next letter. The boy smiles and says — please do as you think is best. He has been writing all morning. He hears the voice of a man:

"If you are afraid of heights, brothers and sisters, I have nothing to show you, please leave, but if you don't care how high you go, if you don't mind people becoming dots moving up and down the road which becomes a ribbon, then listen to me because I will tell you how you can climb onto my crow's back and fly out of this city. Across and over, above and beyond. No pushing in buses, no shoving in trams, no saying sorry, no jumping puddles of pee, piles of shit. In short, my friends, no headache.... Think it's a horse, you're the rider." (41)

From a distance, Amir sees a woman and a child. The woman's hands are dark and fingers wrinkled. Perhaps, she has just finished washing the dishes. The child is a girl of eleven or twelve year old in a shirt and skirt. The girl is returning home from school. She is pointing to a shop where there are dolls. The little girl is fascinated with a doll in "red dress with little flowers in front, white and blue, its sleeves with frills made of lace, white and red" (41). The woman, probably the mother of the child, looks tired as dragged towards the shop by her daughter but looks away.

For Amir, it is journeying through Park Street somehow passing time till he boards a tram — tram services were inaugurated in this city in 1873. Amir is reading the last line of the poster: "we carry about 5.5 lakh passengers every day to their destinations." And then the accident happened. People read about it in the newspaper next morning that two trams collided in a freak accident and that a departmental inquiry was ordered.

Part two of the novel is titled 'You are Afraid' — the second prologue leads to a small town where they found the body of a girl, eleven or twelve years of age, lying in bottom of a canal, twenty five feet deep and as many feet wide." (137). A newspaper reporter Mala, shows up in the town from the city — "To find out who the girl is. And how and why she was found dead in the canal." Mala procures a copy of the post-mortem report after bribing the hospital attendant fifty rupees. The deceased was last seen on the night of 14 July and police got information about dead body on 16 July at 6.15 p.m. The girl child was brutally raped and gagged to death.

Mala wants to ask the girl's mother: "who killed your daughter"? But she cannot ask, it doesn't sound appropriate. Instead she begins by asking about the red dress the girl was found in. The mother tells her it was her favourite dress — bought with the money sent from the city by her son, his first salary. She recounts: "If you know my daughter, she is the type who never shouts or complains, never asks for anything, she is the perfect child, never once does she cry, sulk, make a face, but that evening when I had walked past the shop, she was behind me, and when I stopped to buy a bar of soap, she kept looking at that red dress which, even from a distance, was as bright and beautiful as when you held it in your hands. I looked at her looking at the dress, I could see her eyes and I knew I had to buy it" (174). The dress fit her daughter as if made to her measure. It looked so good that they needed to take a picture. The next day all three — father, mother and daughter — go to the photographer for the picture. They decided to get the picture framed next month; the moment father got his salary. Mala also sees the dead girl's room, her doll there and returns to her hotel room leaving behind the girl's mother crying.

The girl's mother reminded Mala of her own mother: "the same height, the same way of sitting on the floor, with legs drawn up, chin on the knees while listening, both have the same way, nervous and clumsy, of adjusting the sari where it keeps slipping over the shoulders" (181). All mothers, perhaps, look the same. Mala falls asleep in her hotel room and dreams of when she was eleven years old — school going, trying to escape home, to escape the shadow of her

father and her repeated molestation at her father's hands. As a young woman newspaper reporter Mala is embarrassed as she remembers her childhood days which she tries to forget. Mala is articulation of the crying child's despair.

The novel ends with the young girl on her balcony, her despair and fear for her parents dispelled for the time being. Her friend, the crow-rider flies away and gets smaller and smaller in the sky which turns blue white. She feels tears lining up, drop by drop in her eyes. She struggles not to let the tears out. She doesn't want anyone to wake up to the sound of a child crying. As she blinks hard, the tears go away and she can hear her friend, "I shall come to see you whenever and wherever you need me. These words ringing in my ears, his pictures his scraps of paper in my hand. And I look down, I am not afraid of heights" (293).

The novel *If You are Afraid of Heights* unfolds the layers of despair in the trapped humanity. With deep understanding and unsettling insight, Jha captures the changing decaying urban India. Fantasy and reality alternate to tell the truth of the strangely familiar world's untold story. In his search for a suitable form, it seems, Raj Kamal Jha is experimenting with a mix of fabulation, non-fiction and empirical style of narrative. Jha's novel, *If You are Afraid of Heights*, is also an example how sturdily traditional realism has survived assimilating various modes to represent the modern reality.

Yet another point of interest in this novel is the use of crow and crow rider imagery. Symbolically, the bird crow is considered as an ill omen and associated with death. It is also sometimes the harbinger of good news, the messenger. Jha brings in bird imagery to reflect on the character in his novel particularly to focus on the suffering of humanity. Jha's novel *If You are Afraid of Heights* grapples with the problem of disquiet and sorrow in imagining urbanity and therefore, perhaps, he created the crow and the crow-rider as the narrator in the novel.

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## A TYPICAL FANONIAN REBEL: THE PROTAGONIST OF ADIGA'S *THE WHITE TIGER*

L.M. Joshi

Harl Priya Pathak

Now, comrades, now is the time to decide to change sides. We must shake off the great mantle of night which has enveloped us, and reach for the light. The new day which is dawning must find us determined, enlightened and resolute. (Fanon 235)

Munna, alias Balram, alias The White Tiger, alias Ashok, seems to hear these lines of Franz Fanon written with violent anger against all kind of colonialism humanity is tortured with in the year 1961, when he comes out of his timidness to kill his own master brutally to enter light and acquire his name. By any kind of colonialism, we mean any kind of subjection by which a man is taken to be a subaltern. Now, according to Antonio Gramsci, a sub/altern is the under/other—someone who is an underdog, a downtrodden, an inferior or stationed below or belonging to a subordinated group.

Definitely, then, *The White Tiger* by Arvind Adiga, the winner of The Booker (2008), is a story of a subaltern who goes to the extreme limits of brutality to come out of slavery, out of the darkness where he was born and brought up. No matter how he gains his freedom, he yearns for it even when he is a child, even when he is working in the tea shop with other “human spiders that go crawling in between and under the tables with rags in their hands, crushed humans in crushed uniforms, sluggish, unshaven, in their thirties or forties but still ‘boys’” (Adiga 51), and even when he is deputed as a driver to Stork’s son and is out of darkness. It is after coming out of the darkness to light that he is enlightened and takes a radical step to remain in light, emerging as a *new man*, an oppressed taking the name of his master, the oppressor, to begin a new and free life.

*The White Tiger* is the story of a man, now free and confident and writing to the Chinese Premier telling him about India, about himself, about his journey from darkness to light, about how he is a successful entrepreneur in spite of murdering his master Mr. Ashok, and telling him how a sweet, innocent, full of inferiority complex,

under-confident village boy comes out of its inferiority and becomes a *man* to employ several others men and consider them equal, neither inferior nor superior. He has to come out of the suppression; that humiliation which they all have been suffering from since long. He must live like a man, and must come out of even the non-violent thoughts because "even your thoughts are a condition born of an age-old oppression" (Sartre 151).

Balram murders his master. He is now a self-dependent, successful, and bold man, who can think of writing to a foreign Premier in such a tone. The violence he has committed has emboldened him. As Franz Fanon writes: "At the individual level, violence is a cleansing force. It rids the colonized of their inferiority complex, of their passive and despairing attitude. It emboldens them and restores their self-confidence" (51). Balram has to take this extremely drastic step because an animal is going to become a man, a man from a donkey, a man reconstructing himself. He, by this act, is going to achieve what all his ancestors were devoid of — *Freedom* — Freedom from the shackles of the chains he is caged in. Killing is the necessity in the first phase of revolt, says Sartre, "eliminating in one go oppressor and oppressed: leaving one man dead and other man free" (Sartre IV). Moreover by doing so he is cleansed — is cleansed at the cost of his family in darkness, is cleansed of his complex of being a downtrodden, cleansed of the humiliation of being called a *family* when he is treated as nothing more than a servant.

*The White Tiger* by Arvind Adiga is a typical Fanonian rebel who can go to any extent to get liberation. He despises everything that stands for servitude, fidelity and devotion. He does not spare even Hanuman, a religious symbol of utmost devotion towards lord Rama. He is of the belief that such idealizations make it extremely difficult for a simple man like him to come out of slavery and win freedom; such idealizations forbid them even to think of liberation and freedom. He proves himself to be the follower of Fanon by becoming first from the last. His dream is to blow the world of the rich, of the suppressor, and he does so, but again it is a Herculean task; he could do so only because he had a master like Ashok.

Balram is a servant who can be made to feel inferior but can

never be convinced of his inferiority. He is never satisfied with the way God has created the world. He is a rebel, a Satan, a Devil, who, standing at the ramparts of The Black Fort spits at God's creation again and again after he reaches it in khaki uniform, becoming the driver to Mr. Ashok. It is this encounter with the Fort because of which he dares to spit at God when He seems to ask him:

Isn't it all wonderful? Isn't it all grand? Aren't you grateful to be my servant?... He is angry, very angry with God who created the world this particular way, instead of all the other ways it could have been created. (Adiga 88).

Balram is a man who, deep down in his heart, knows no authority. "He patiently waits for the colonist (oppressor) to let down his guard and then jumps on him. The muscles of the colonized are always tensed" (Fanon 16). Balram practises several times to kill his master, sometimes with iron wrench and another time with the strong bottle of Johnnie Walker. It's with the latter that he avenges himself at last when he gets the opportunity.

An oppressed is an oppressed not only physically but also psychologically. Cultural aspect of this dominance is as important as the physical or the economic one. The language of the master, the clothes they wear, all play a vital role in reminding the slave of his slavery. They are mocked and humiliated for the lack of using their master's language or not wearing what they wear. This is where they are differentiated in the society. They make a separate inferior class — those who cannot pronounce *pizza* or *mall* or are without any knowledge of the number of planets, and are not allowed entering a mall because they wear servants' clothes. The clothes are the signifiers — signifiers of the colonizer and the colonized, of the oppressor and the oppressed. Liberty gives them chance to come out of this fixedness. Balram does not dare visit a mall in the servant's uniform. He goes there in a dress like that of his master Mr. Ashok — "that was all white, with a small word in English in the centre" (Adiga 150) and black shoes. He is to be in the servant's clothes, bright ones which distinguish him as a servant. He is able to get rid of them permanently only when he is a free man, only when he dares do something no slave can even think of — it is only

after he kills his master that he is able to put on the clothes of a free man.

Fanon remarks, "...there is not one colonized subject who at least once a day does not dream of taking the place of the colonist" (5). No wonder Balram takes the name of his master, Ashok Sharma. He is fond of chandeliers just as Stork (the landlord in his village) was. He is so much fond of it and to such an extent that he has fixed one in his bathroom too, knowing full well what even Stork has wanted to do but could not. Chandelier for him is the sign of richness, of beauty and of light which only a free person can enjoy.

The oppressed are deprived of a proper dwelling place where ever they are destined to live, whether in darkness or light. They are thin undernourished animals — diseased striving to survive in dingy quarters devoid of any hygiene. They are in groups by the road side, under the bridges, in the slums, or in the open air. They are without names and without any age. Theirs is darkness. Emphasizing the same Fanon writes:

The colonized sector...is a disreputable place inhabited by disreputable people. You are born anywhere, anyhow. You die anywhere, from anything. It's a world with no space, people are piled on top of the other, the shacks squeeze tightly together. The colonized sector is famished sector, hungry for bread, meat, shoes, coal, and light. The colonized sector is a sector that crouches and cowers, a sector on its knees, a sector that is prostrate.

(4)

And the irony is that that this sector is guarding itself, guarding all the people who try to go out of it. It pulls them back. The slavery has seeped deep into their bones, their blood. Balram, a rebel, aspiring to come out of it, finds it very difficult. He compares the condition of the oppressed to the roosters and hens in the rooster coop. He tells this to the Chinese Premier:

Hundreds of pale hens and brightly colored roosters, stuffed tightly into wire-mesh cages, packed as tightly as worms in a belly, pecking each other and shitting on each other, jostling just for breathing space; the whole cage giving off a horrible stench — the stench of terrified feathered flesh. On the wooden desk above the coop sits a grinning young butcher, showing off the flesh and organs of a recently chopped- of chicken, still oleaginous with a coating of dark blood. The roosters in the coop smell the blood from above. They see the organs of their brothers lying around them. They know

they're next. Yet they do not rebel. They do not try to get out of the coop. (Adiga 174)

Balram, who is yearning to come out of the coop, is held back by his friends and relatives. The foremost among them is his granny who does not let him go even to The Black Fort, just because he stares that thing too long. She is the one who does not want any change. He and his brother Kishan must work in the tea shop and earn something instead of going to the school. She is the one who encourages him to be very loyal to his master so as to take the blame of every crime of his master on himself. The other people of the same class too forbid any kind of innovation. Other drivers mock at him when he tries yoga in the car, and not joining others.

The Rooster Coop was doing its work. Servants have to keep other servants from becoming innovators, experimenters, or entrepreneurs.

The coop is guarded from inside. (194)

In spite of all the pulls from behind, Balram or The White Tiger is out of the coop. He *has woken up* while the rest of them are sleeping. He is a colonized, a downtrodden who has liberated himself through violence. "The thing becomes a man through the very process of liberation" (Fanon 2). Liberation, according to Fanon, brings out a new humanity. The liberated man, Ashok Sharma alias The White Tiger, too thinks of a society uncorrupted by religion or morals which make it impossible for a colonized or a servant to come out of the cage in which he is trapped. He elaborates his plans to the Premier in the following words:

After three or four years in real estate, I think I might sell everything, take the money, and start a school — an English language school — for poor children in Bangalore. A school where you won't be allowed to corrupt anyone's head with prayers and stories about God or Gandhi — nothing but the facts of life for these kids. (Adiga 319)

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## EPISTEMOLOGY OF GENDER IN LAURENCE'S *THE STONE ANGEL*

Vallari Gaur

Born in 1926 in the small Canadian town of Neepawa, Margaret Laurence is known primarily for her Manwaka novels. In these novels – *The Stone Angel* (1964), *A Jest of God* (1966), *The Fire – Dwellers* (1964), and *The Diviners* (1974) – she has created unforgettable women characters, who struggle through life to shape up and define their priorities to arrive at selfhood. The longing of these women to define their identity should be read not only as a feminist story of survival and victory, but also as an indication of the astringent effects of a situation in which body has become the map of identity, power and opportunity. Laurence has shown how the gendered subject is produced through a variety of discourses and technologies. The psychic-social conflict associated with it is presented in her novels in the context of sexual politics. She goes beyond the patriarchal binaries of male and female to delineate how the female, as well as the male psyche, is constructed by the social cultures.

David Glover and Cora Kaplan comment in the introduction to their book *Genders* that “gender is a much contested concept, as slippery as it is indispensable, but a site of unease rather than agreement” (Glover and Kaplan ix). Judith Butler also states that it is “a troublesome term, a site of contest, a cause for anxiety” (Butler 3). Teresa de Lauretis investigates how the gendered subject is produced through a variety of discourses and technologies in her article “The Technology of Gender” (de Lauretis 5). Lauretis maintains that the internalization of gendered identities conditions one’s own cognitive and behavioural patterns, while simultaneously creating a comfort zone as far as our reactions to different genders are concerned. The difference between sex and gender is indicative of the difference between bodily and cognitive planes. The cognitive self is constructed by the psycho-analytical and cultural perceptions with which we view our own self and forge relationships. The imperceptible constituent of gender also determines our behaviour towards others, simultaneously nurturing an understanding of the

interpersonal behaviour we find ourselves comfortable with. Cultural internalization of gender begins within family and intensifies at places of learning and work leading to a gendered ladder in power relationships. The impact of gendered behaviour cannot be uncomplicatedly measured as it is a phenomenon which has "bodily, psychological and behavioural features (Alsop et al 14). Gendered interpretation of literary texts enables us to examine man woman relationship as an axis of prevalent social inequality.

Gender studies convince us that the projection of male and female as unquestioned essence is lop-sided. It is discriminatory against women as it can prove that some unpleasant activity is 'natural' for women and 'alien' to men. It is also opinionated and dogmatic as far as men are concerned, as it conditions their beliefs and judgments providing them a sense of superiority. The ideas of masculinity and femininity cannot be treated as permanent or stable, unchangingly essential, even when we refute the idea of biological essence. The binary model of difference as enclosed and captured between the opposite poles of masculinity and femininity blinds us to that which escapes this rigid structuring. Laurence's novels outline the lives of women and men struggling against gendered identities. As a case study the paper reviews *The Stone Angel*.

*The Stone Angel* narrates the story of Hagar Shipley's inner metamorphosis. A ninety year old widow, Hagar possesses a proud determination. Her father Jason Curie had established himself in the society through his hard work and tenacity. The stone angel which he raises in the memory of his wife is more a symbol of his wealth than his love. Hagar's mother was a weak and submissive person who had silently accepted traditional feminine roles – reproduction, caring for the children and home. She dies in child birth. So long she lived, she was accorded lesser significance than Jason's broad mare. Biological essentialism supports different social roles for men and women on the basis of physical differences. Hagar's mother is treated only as a body, not as a soul, and she has feebly accepted it. Family settings showcase the idea of sexist dominance in patriarchy. Jason has set and defined norms about what is apposite and appropriate for a woman. A woman, according to his patriarchal logic,

must have no wishes of her own – she should find satisfaction in defining herself as a wife and a mother only. Betty Friedan terms it as “feminine mystique” (Friedan 43).

Emphasis on the monotonous aspect of feminine chores defines Hagar’s childhood. The Curie household upholds patriarchal values, which Hagar internalizes, and also at an unconscious level rebels against. Early in the novel it is shown that Hagar walks only on well made paths as she is careful not to untidy herself. She has been trained to be elegant in her bearing (4-5). For Jason Currie, Hagar is “the angel in the house” (10). In his ideas, external bodily adornments are more significant for girls than any other vocational training. Feminist critics have always been aware of this aspect of patriarchal mind set. Mary Wollstonecraft has recorded similar sentiments in *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* in 1792, “Taught from infancy that beauty is woman’s scepter, the mind shapes itself to the body, and roaming round its gilt cage, only seeks to adorn its prison”, (quoted by Greer 63). Similarly Hagar is encouraged for a particular type of education only, which aims at making her lady-like in a Victorian manner. It does not prepare her for facing life and its challenges. Hagar reminisces, “I knew embroidery, and French, and menu – planning for a five course meal, and poetry, and how to take a firm hand with servants, and the most becoming way of dressing my hair” (42-43). Hagar’s training prepares her for a decorative dependence on men, instead of being self-governing. Hagar also realizes that the traditional education imparted to her by the Toronto Academy, where Jason had sent her ambitiously, has led to her economic impoverishment. She is unable to take up any meaningful vocation in times of her need. She feels envious of those women who have trained for careers and are better prepared for survival.

Hagar does not exhibit any feminine weakness. Her proud attitude does not allow her to have any emotional bonding with her mother, whom she perceives to be weak and therefore worthless. Her aversion to her mother’s weakness is so deep that she finds herself unable to wrap her mother’s shawl to comfort Dan, her dying brother (25). Jason regrets that Hagar is born as a girl, instead of

a boy, and therefore does not welcome independence in her. His aim is to domesticate her so that she can take care of feminine responsibilities. The andocentric norms have conditioned him to view education not as a liberator but as a means to continue the inferior standing of women. When Hagar returns to Manawaka after having completed her education, Jason views her as a possession. A close study of the novel reveals that Jason is unable to think beyond gendered notions. This positioning ignites a sense of rebellion in Hagar. She wants to take up a teaching assignment, but Jason does not allow it, thinking it to be beneath his dignity. Hagar's rebellion is turned towards Brampton Shipley, fourteen years older than her, with "no get up and go", an antithesis to Jason. If Jason symbolizes conventional middle-class respectability, Bram symbolizes disorder of a tramp. Hagar's attraction towards him represents her attempt to defy her gendered identity.

The rebellion's independence which would have been welcome in a boy becomes a disfigurement for Hagar. Her rebellion against her father comes at a price. She is disinherited by Jason Curie, who donates all his property to the town. Even in his death Jason prefers to rely on the materialist success to perpetuate his memory than on the possibility of any kindhearted patch-up with his daughter – the triumph of the masculine pride has been exalted in this episode.

Hagar's relationship with Bram is also affected by their gendered notions. The impact of her puritan upbringing is illustrated in the novel through her own recollections of her early marriage, reinforcing the idea that the creation of gender is subtle and oblique:

[...] It was not so very long after we wed, when first I felt my blood and vitals rise to meet his. He never knew. I never let him know .... He never expected any such thing, and so he never perceived it. (81)

Hagar confirms to what Luce Irigaray has called "La Mascarade", a false femininity that allows a woman to experience desire only in so far as it is prescribed by the desires of men (Irigaray 20). In Hagar's imagination Bram is a primitive man who would somehow prove to be incredibly gentle towards a lady. She is unable to perceive the coarse plebian life outside her immediate zone of experience. Bram, though, proves to be as patriarchal as Jason. He gives her an el-

egant decanter as a wedding gift and wants sons, not daughters, to create a dynasty. He wants a boy because "it would be somebody to leave the place to" (101). Bram also does not leave hobnobbing with other girls and does not bother to improve his language or manners. The twenty four years of their marriage are despondent and full of frictions. Bram's frenzied ravings or sullen silences do not provide him any positive rewards. He is also a victim of gender conditioning. It would be appropriate to quote Bell Hooks at this juncture:

As long as he (man) is attacking women and not sexism or capitalism, he helps to maintain a system that allows him few, if any, benefits or privileges. He is an oppressor. He is an enemy to women. He is also an enemy to himself. He is also oppressed. His abuse of women is not justifiable .... If feminist movement ignores his predicament, dismisses his hurt, or writes him off as just another male enemy, then we are passively condoning his actions (Hooks 75).

Another reason of friction can be traced to Hagar's gender conditioning, which has trained her to examine things in a particular mode only. Instead of responding to Bram in an open manner, she views her relationship with him through the lenses of cultivated femininity. She has a dreamy and unrealistic notion about love which Bram cannot understand, "He had a banner over me for years. I never thought it love .... Love, I fancied, must consist of words and deeds delicate as lavender sachets, not like the things he did sprawled on the high white bedstead that rattled like a train" (SA 70). Such notions are cultivated in young girls by patriarchy through the commercialization of what Alison Light has termed as "mass entertainment" – genres of popular romances produced specially after the first War in fiction and cinema echoed traditional views about feminine sexuality, and successfully established parallel and distinct male and female audience. (Light 206). Hagar's gender conditioning deprives her of gratifying relationships with other people.

*The Stone Angel* vividly portrays how gendered identities inhibit our capacity to nurture relationships, injecting a void and loneliness in our lives. It is exhibited not only in the lives of Hagar, Jason, and Bram, but also in the lives of Hagar's brothers – Matt and Dan. Constance Rooke has astutely commented that "Jason

Curie's expectations about what a man ought to be and what a woman ought to be have damaged the lives of all his children" (Rooke 30). The study of gender sensitizes us towards the multiple modes of constructing masculinities and femininities. Cultural production of these concepts is carried out within a social context, also within the framework of an ideology. The association of gender with bodies is a social assembly. Socially/culturally gendered identities construct individual cognition and encourage people to follow pre-cut grooves, and interpret their experiences within certain conditions. Patriarchal society propounds the view that men and women are "intrinsically different .... Have sex-specific personality traits and therefore are suited to occupying separate positions within society" (Alsop et al. 134). Patriarchal thinking lacks critical scrutiny of the power relations in which gender is constructed, thus abetting a gender hierarchy.

In *The Stone Angel* we find that Jason Currie establishes inviolable regimen about how his children have to conduct themselves in life. His sons Matt and Dan are discouraged from expressing gentle affectionate emotions or show signs of any considerate approach candidly. They do not possess the wild streak of defiance which Hagar has and are therefore disliked by their own father who feels that they "have failed to achieve an imposed standard of masculinity" (Rooke 30). Jason is easily put off by their docile and submissive attitude and whips them at slightest pretext. Dan is lazy and does not like to work hard. Hagar remarks, "He was always delicate, and he knew very well the advantages of poor health" (21). His pre-mature death does not affect either Jason or Hagar. Matt, who is hard-working, as well as loving and tender-hearted, develops an inferiority complexes a result of parental pressure, which later on results in sexual inadequacy. Jason's pressures to perform according to pre-set norms of masculinity make him a lonely and discontented person, resignedly waiting for his death. Hagar also fails in her life as she cannot reconcile herself to passive femininity. Its only towards the end of the novel that she acknowledges her actual emotions and gains some peace. Sara Maitland comments, "In almost any other imaginable hand Hagar Shipley would be a classic, male-defined model of a domineering woman, but Laurence transforms

her, not into saint but into ME – or you or us” (Maitland 44).

*The Stone Angel* compellingly captures the constricting influences of gender conditioning in individual and social life. It sensitively shows how gendered identities negate the prospect of self-actualization and thwart satisfying relationships. The novel has creatively captured the vicious repercussions of the notion of gender – of the limiting boundaries it constructs and also how one becomes a gendered self. It also suggests that gender cannot be the sole determinant of a woman's fate.

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## **THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS**

**Iffat Ara**

In the comedies of Shakespeare reality is highlighted at various levels. Shakespeare has dramatized the conflict between appearance and reality through the portrayal of characters. Critical analysis reveals them as possessed of 'half-realized ideals' and 'a testing of reality'. If Proteus and Valentine represent contrary attitudes to love, Julia and Silvia highlight the 'test of love's reality' and a sane view of life. All excess is neutralized and human relationships relating to love are explored.

Love and friendship suffer from conflict and there is a deeper conflict between the mere concept of love and its actual experience. The claims of nature and those of romantic love are juxtaposed in order to bring out the complexity of the human personality. Proteus and Valentine cultivate the virtues of constancy and selfless love. Valentine's platonic love for Proteus urges him to express his pent-up feelings. He regrets his departure to Milan but is conscious of the need to travel abroad for educational purposes, for it helps one to acquire knowledge and experience of the world(1.1.2). This, however, is not true in the case of Launce. His 'homely wit and profound humor' surpass that of the fashionable gentlemen of the day.

Valentine goads Proteus to give up his amorous approach to life and go on an educational tour (1,1,6-7). Proteus, moved by Valentine's leave-taking, wishes him good luck and asks him to remember his friend if he comes across any rare object. He further assures him of his own fidelity. Valentine mocks at love and, equating it with folly, rejects love for its own sake:

However, but a folly bought with wit,  
Or else a wit by folly vanquished, (1,1,34-35).

Valentine regards love as a ruinous force, for it paralyses reason. Proteus insists on the fact that love is the source of wisdom. Valentine refuses to acknowledge this truth. To him love is like a canker that eats away the bud and thus lays waste one's wisdom. In solitude Proteus is 'a votary of fond desire' and reveals traditional Protean nature when he describes love as a power that has transformed him

beyond recognition. He has become indifferent to life and its pleasures:

Thou, Julia, thou has metamorphos'd me'  
 Made me neglect my studies, lose my time,  
 War with good counsel, set the world at nought;  
 Made wit with musing weak, heart sick with thought (1,1,66-69).

This reflects the attitude of a young lover and his unnatural mode of behaviour.

After Valentine has left, Speed enters looking for his master whom he fails to meet at the moment. Proteus mocks at the two by equating them with the sheep and the shepherd (1,1,74-75). This brings to light the natural relationship existing between the young men and their servants. In Elizabethan times such intimacy vanished when class consciousness crept in. Speed is asked to deliver Proteus's letter to Julia. His indifference is condemned by her. She did not reward him for his labour and hence he equates Julia's hard-heartedness with steel. Julia refuses to read the contents of the letter and returns them to her maid because she rejects Proteus's superficial love that resides merely in the eyes. But she sincerely loves the man and reveals her true nature when she ruminates thus:

Fie, Fie! How wayward is this foolish love,  
 How angrily, taught my brow to frown,  
 When inward joy enforc'd my heart to smile (1,11, 57-63).

She wishes to read the letter in private to know Proteus's mind.

Proteus's father, Antonio, in consultation with his friend, resolves to send Proteus to the emperor's court so that he may grow in worldly wisdom. As yet he lags behind and is not up to the mark:

I have consider'd well his loss of time;  
 And how he cannot be a perfect man,  
 Not being try'd and tutor'd in the world. (1,111,19-21).

Proteus laments his departure, for it leads to a sort of emotional alienation. His expression of love and its comparison with 'natural changeability' reflects the falsity of his nature:

O, how his spring of love resembleth  
 The uncertain glory of an April day (1,111,84-85).

In future his love will prove to be transient like the April day and will be attended by darkness and despair.

Speed dislikes Valentine's love-sickness as he courts lady Silvia and invokes idealism. Like Proteus, he also resembles a

melancholy figure in despair and falls a victim to this erotic experience:

First, you have learned, like Sir Proteus, to wreath your arms, like a malcontent; to relish a love- song, like a robin redbreast; to walk alone, like one that had the pestilence; To sigh, like a schoolboy that had lost his ABC; to weep, like a young wench that had buried her grandam; to fast, like one that takes diet; to watch, like one that fears robbing; to speak puling, like a beggar at Hallowmas (11,1,17-24).

Speed considers himself a physician who wishes to cure the abnormal patient. Valentine admires Silvia's beauty and charming manners but Speed rejects his Master's distorted vision of irrational love:

You never saw her since she was deformed,  
Because love is blind (11,1,60-66).

He tries to awaken him to reality but Valentine remains absorbed in his dreams. Silvia's 'graceful courtly gesture' of returning Valentine's letter written to her at her request perplexes the lover but Speed aids his master: "To yourself: Why, she woos you by a figure" (11,1,140). He also goads him to respond adequately to her tender feeling of love.

Proteus's parting with Julia is marked by irony: what begins as a harmonious relationship ultimately gives way to Proteus's fickleness:

Here is my hand for my true constancy;  
For truth hath better deeds than words to grace it (11,11,8-18).

Julia sheds tears but remains silent in her grief. Launce critically examines his master and brings in his dog, Crab, in order to describe his own family leave-taking in the context of Proteus's parting from Julia while the family members weep for Launce, the heartless dog 'all this while sheds not a tear'. If Launce is sincere and loves his dog, Proteus is talkative but 'sour-natured' like the dog:

He is stone, a very pebble-  
Stone, and has no more pity in him than a dog (11,1, 9-10).

Language here is an effective means for reflecting human nature through 'sound and imagery'.

When Proteus arrives at the Duke's court Valentine praises his friend generously. He contrasts his own worthlessness with Proteus's perfection:

And though myself have been an idle truant,  
He is complete in feature and in mind (11,1V, 62-71).

But in fact Valentine is more virtuous than Proteus though he cannot judge others. Valentine describes Proteus's love for Julia in terms

of "visual images". He also tells Silvia how this love kept him in Verona all this while. When he meets Proteus he discloses his own love for Silvia. The 'scoffer at love' turns into a lover and finds no joy equal to this pleasure (11,1V, 132-37). He is still a novice and like many other romantic lovers 'pours conceits upon his lady' and elevates her above the mundane level. Like the lords in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Valentine feels the natural urge to love some one.

Proteus's first trial reflects his infidelity. He replaces Julia's image by that of Silvia. Whereas Julia had once laid emphasis on the 'irresistible power' of true love Proteus is content with the outward appearance of things and does not perceive their inner worth. Hence 'newer objects' replace the former ones. The moral change that takes place makes him reason thus:

So the remembrance of my former love  
Is by a newer object quite forgotten.

That makes me reasonless, to reason thus. (11,1V, 192-94).

Though earlier he had reflected on true love which 'hath better deeds than words to grace it' he now falsifies this truth by showing the transitory nature of love. He therefore indulges in 'betrayal' and 'abasement'. Moreover, his egoism urges him either to refrain from treachery or use his wit for his benefit: "I to myself am dearer than a friend" (11,V1, 23). Though he is guilty of offence yet he is ready to break all natural ties in order to satisfy his unlawful desires.

Speed and Launce are engaged in a verbal exchange in which they expose the false nature of their masters. One is aided by the other in making anti-romantic revelations:

When it stands well with him, it  
Stands well with her. (11,V,20-21)

And yet this conventional love-making is meaningless, for the girl is honest but Proteus is a knave. Valentine is brainless as compared to his sensible, witty servant.

Proteus's self-confession reveals his love for Julia and also its denial. It is his mischievous nature that leads him astray. When he makes a moral choice he refers to the dilemma: "Love bade me swear, and Love bids me forswear" (11,VI, 63). The dark, secret love is one which has been tainted by lust. Julia disguises herself as a man and like Helena in *All's Well That Ends Well* makes a

journey to the court in order to stay with Proteus. Before she leaves for Milan she is still sentimental about Proteus's love for her. She refuses to be guided by the natural intelligence of her maid Lucetta who urges her to give up idol-worship. But she gains 'practical sense' and 'healthy sensibility' the moment she arrives in Milan and contacts Silvia.

Proteus's seeming virtue deceives his companion and he informs the Duke about Valentine's plan to take away Silvia. The Duke befools Valentine in the ladder-scene and forces him to leave Milan. Valentine, depressed by his banishment, prefers to die rather than lead a life of torment. Though he lacks commonsense yet he is emotionally sensitive. He prefers substance 'to the shadow of perfection' and a real Silvia to a mere image of her. He is a true lover who cares both for the inward and outward beauty of his beloved:

What joy is joy, if Silvia be not by?

She is my essence. (111,1, 175-177).

The Duke seeks Proteus's help to make Silvia forget her former suit and love Thurio. Proteus mentions three things that women dislike:

The best way is to slander Valentine,

With falsehood, cowardice and poor descent (111,11,31,32).

And these three vices Proteus wishes to attribute to Valentine. He indirectly urges the Duke to let him do the favour although he pretends to hate such a task. But he discards gentlemanly behaviour and deceives Valentine and thus breaks the eternal ties of friendship. He also negates social norms relating to love and marriage. He seems to serve the cause of Thurio but woos Silvia for himself:

Say that upon the altar of her beauty

You sacrifice your tears, your sighs, your heart.

For Orpheus' lute was strung with poet's sinews;

Whose golden touch could soften steel and stones,

Make tigers tame (111,11, 73-80).

This description also betrays a distorted vision of love.

Proteus fails to move Silvia, for she is more virtuous and intelligent than her tempter. When he insists on his honesty she exposes his treachery and when he praises her beauty she reminds him of his duties towards Julia. Silvia possesses a 'sturdy nature'

and is courageous enough to assert herself on most occasions. She is sensitive and kind to Valentine but she disapproves of false romanticism.

The disguised Julia overhears the song in which Silvia is admired for her virtues. The song is written by Proteus for Thurlo in order to seek Silvia's good will. The words describe Silvia and also reflect normal human behaviour:

Who is Silvia?

Holy, fair, and wise is she. (IV,II,38-40).

Her 'commonsense' and 'good faith' distinguish her from other women. The song also reveals the fickle-mindedness of Proteus who invents an excuse to approach Silvia. To the host who brings Julia with him, the song is sweet and melodious but to Julia it has been a sad and depressing experience. Silvia, more perceptive than Julia, discards one whom she hates. When Silvia remains unmoved, Proteus desires the 'shadow' of her picture. He only cares for the outward beauty and remains insensitive to inner feelings:

Vouchsafe me yet your picture for my love,

For, since the substance of your perfect self

Is else devoted, I am but a shadow (IV, II, 117-121).

Silvia gets rid of Proteus by promising to give him her portrait. Then Silvia goes about in search of Valentine.

Lauince's monologue in which he talks about his sacrifice for the dog whom he saves from disgrace and who is 'a very cur on all occasions' is followed by Proteus's entrance. He employs the disguised Julia for carrying messages to Silvia. Julia's loyalty and Proteus's treachery reflect the various shades of human nature. Julia a 'shape changer' is devoted to her master whom she awakens to reality and offers him an insight into love. Proteus ignores this truth and asks Julia to deliver a ring (her own gift to Proteus) to Silvia. He also tells her to bring Silvia's portrait. When Julia examines the painted image and thinks of her master's devotion to it she detects his false nature. When she compares her yellow hair with the whitish hair of Silvia, she prefers her own. Her high forehead, an admirable aspect of female beauty, is also superior to that of Silvia. Hence she rejects Proteus's idolatry. And yet she admires Silvia's good nature. Like Proteus, in a moment of moral

choice, Julia does not claim any self-interest (IV,IV, 100-108).

The Duke goes in search of Silvia and he is followed by Proteus and Thurio. Valentine, staying in the forest, echoes the attitude of the exiled Duke in As you like it:

Hath not, old custom made this life more sweet  
Than that of painted pomp? (11,1, 2-3).

Valentine also prefers the fertility and the 'benefits of the natural life' to the selfishness and deception at the court:

This shadowy desert, unfrequented woods,  
I better brook than flourishing peopled towns (V,IV, 2-3).

Valentine is less sensitive to the burden of his sorrow and is free like the nightingale who sings melodiously. Silvia is rescued by Proteus from the outlaws but she still condemns the man. In the natural surroundings of the forest truth is revealed and 'artifice' and 'error' are exposed as Valentine steps in: "Thou friend of an ill-fashion" (V,IV, 61). It leads to Proteus's self-confession and Valentine's forgiveness who offers Silvia to him.

The final trial scene sheds light on human nature in all its varied aspects and here Valentine's behaviour tends to be like that of a virtuous gentleman. He wishes to retain both friendship and love, for he is dedicated to both. Hence he confesses to this effect:

And, that love may appear plain and free,  
And that was mine, in Silvia, I give thee (V, IV, 82-83).

Dr. Batteson's comment on it seems to be convincing: 'you shall have as much interest in my heart as she'. Julia wholly misconstrues it. It is also alleged that perhaps Valentine wishes to test Proteus. It may also be that harmony is at long last achieved through forgiveness and sacrifice. But Julia's swooning finally restores her to Proteus. The Duke acknowledges Valentine's merit of constancy and agrees to marry Silvia to him. Thus these incidents seem to remove the 'unnatural flaw' and ambiguity of the final scene. Even the outlaws become humanized under Valentine's restraining influence and return with others to the 'Civilized social humanity'<sup>1</sup>

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- <sup>1</sup>*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, ed. William T. Betken (Bardavon Books; New York: Rhineback, 1982), p. XXXVII.

## **BOOK REVIEWS**

### **JOHN SPENCER, *RECOLLECTIONS***

**(Japan: Bayreuth & Okayama, 2006), pp.55**

**I.K. Sharma**

A young man in his early twenties stands before half a dozen stern eyes at the army headquarters of England. He is asked to join the army and serve the nation as 'a cataract of disaster has poured out upon us' (Winston Churchill, in the British Parliament, in 1940). Self-assured, the young man says a candid no and raises 'conscientious objections' to the logic of war. For the frank reply and his anti-war stance he is awarded five years of compulsory farm-work, which he later does in Yorkshire and Lancashire. A new idealist takes birth in him. He becomes a genuine twice-born. The ideal-bound young man is John Spencer, who in due course of time becomes the academic face of England in the countries of Asia, including India. No less interesting is the fact that he is one of the first British Professors of English sent to India in the fifties of the last century to 'show' the way to teachers of English. After about fifty years the professor returns from the green pastures of academics to the happy couch of private reflections and communicates (poetically) the varied impressions and the early memories of his farm-work gathered in Lancashire and Yorkshire. Like Wordsworth, he looks back in tranquility upon his own past, his felt experiences (from 1930 to 1983 and beyond). These intimations of his past he arranges chronologically in his book of poems titled *Recollections* (2006).

It is an unadorned book of poems. 'Plain against luxury' like the university living. His daily encounter with the unsophisticated country people opened a new world for him to know, to feel, and to record life as it came under his ken. The first thirteen poems spread over twenty pages of the book unfold the dumb agony of farm-faces, who, like farm-tools, have been 'wrung and marked by time' and each in old age "furbished for final harvesting" (9). The picture of rural England shall be complete only when the reader meets the

stallion and its grandiloquent master. The black shire stallion performs on a brood mare ("At Service" 24), and the master,

Then, stealing his stallion's prowess,  
 he boasts his legendary phallic role,  
 telling the listening taproom tales  
 of his own dark potency : the miracles  
 on village maids, shy spinsters tamed,  
 wives with husbands absent at the Front.

This sort of rustic no-bars-hold talk is an amusing satire on the vanity-filled Victorian prudery.

Apart from giving us these curious little sketches, the anti-war poet (the disciple of Edmund Blunden) offers in a subtle manner the reactions of the new generation about war:

'Blast all your bloody wars.  
 The last one took my father-  
 all I got's his name,  
 and that memorial down the lane.' (26)

Thereafter, the poet turns to Asia, to the newly-born old India:

Along the Moghul road no marching feet,  
 only the creak of oxcarts, village cries  
 cowdung fires hazing the ochre light,

What is noteworthy is the fact that the book is 'free from the tyranny of the universal'. It is specific, related to the memory of an erudite poet who carries with him the equipment of judging the art. On account of this there is no boiling over, no splits. No fuming, no fretting. Everything condensed, compressed to the minimum. Like the mother hen he guards each word lest it should fall sideways. Therefore each word in a poem helps reveal the meaning intended.

Not unrelated is the fact that long-kept things generally turn bad in shape, warped. But he retrieves them as fresh as ever 'wrapped in neat human syllables' (words of my poem). What I find very striking is: one can recall at will, without much strain but to recapture the emotional reaction of the past is not easy. Then to reflect on it in a mature way makes it quite difficult. Moreover, to document it on a page for the future generation in an artistic way is still more difficult. But Spencer does all the three tasks eminently well and successfully. It makes him professor past perfect and his *Recollections* a happy document of goodbye-to-good-morning in verse.

## **BASAVARAJ NAIKAR, *THE QUEEN OF KITTUR***

**(New Delhi: Authors Press, 2009), pp.310, Rs.300.00**

**R.S. Chulki**

This is a very good historical novel dealing with the biography of Rani Chennamma from her birth to death. After the death of her husband, Raja Mallasarja, she became the powerful ruler of the Kingdom of Kittur and rebelled against the East India Company that wanted to conquer entire India. The first part of the novel describes her bravery and patriotism when she fought against the Collector of Dharwad and killed him. In the second part she fought against Mr. Chaplin, who left Bombay for Belgaum on 17<sup>th</sup> Nov 1824, with a firm decision to annex Kittur Kingdom after defeating Rani Chennamma.

Rani Chennamma had five great and admirable qualities of head and heart. Her nobility is shown when she gave ten thousand rupees to Saidansab to reconstruct a mosque. Her magnanimity is shown when she treated the Christian prisoners of war saying, "These innocent women and children are like our own sisters and children" (146). She showed her political sagacity when she said, "We are free to manage our own kingdom the way we like. Our treaty with Munro says that" (91). Her humanity can be seen when she released two British captives, Mr. Elliot and Mr. Stevenson, whom she never ill-treated as enemies. She showed her equanimity of mind when she was kept as a prisoner in her own palace and also in the Bailhongal jail afterwards.

The greatest quality of Chennamma was that she was a great patriot and heroic in her struggle, which is shown in her speeches to the warriors of Kittur from time to time. Then she is depicted as the greatest war heroine whose name will shine like a star among the great queens of India. Mr. Eden, the Acting Political Agent, after the demise of Thackeray, admired Chennamma's bravery (203). Despite her big army of 3000 horsemen, 2000 camels and about a hundred elephants, 36 cannons and 56 guns, she was defeated in the war. There were three obvious reasons for her defeat and downfall. First of all, she could not get any help and support from the Raja of Kolhapur. Secondly, she was betrayed by her own selfish and

treacherous man, Sivabasappa. Thirdly, the Company army, which surrounded Kittur Fort from three directions, was several times bigger and better equipped with modern weapons of war.

The revengeful and ambitious Chaplin ordered the captains to give capital punishment to the prominent rebels and warriors of Kittur like Sardar Gurusiddhappa and others. He ordered for the demolishing of the main portion of the palace and the fort of Kittur so that the name of Kittur kingdom should be obliterated from the minds of people. The glory and grandeur of the kingdom was crushed down. But it is an undisputed fact that Rani Chennamma sowed the seeds of 'Patriotism and Freedom', which sprouted afterwards.

It is a highly absorbing historical novel in which the author has neither distorted the facts, nor exaggerated them. In every historical novel there must be a proportionate fusion of facts and fiction. The author is not allowed to take liberties with the recorded events. At the most he can reconstruct the past and interpret it by filling the gaps logically and artistically. As there is no scope for the free play of imagination, he can create minor or functional characters to bring out the truth of history. It is a work of art, not rewriting the history. The author's artistic part will be in the blending of the realistic with the fantastic. The exact dates, months and years of hectic political activities, wars and deaths, manners and morals of the kings, queens and common people must make us think, feel and see the past before our mind's eye. The letters written by the British Political Agents and others confirm the authenticity of the novel. Nothing is tedious or monotonous in the novel. As it is not divided into chapters, the novel has swift continuity and flow till it reaches the final disaster. Several Virasaiva technical terms, Kannada and Sanskrit words create the local colour and atmosphere successfully. The language is racy and effective. Somehow, some misprints have crept in, but they could be avoided in the future reprints of the novel. Indians depend heavily and rely on British historians, who were partial in the writing of history, but here Basavaraj Naikar has viewed and re-written from the Indian point of view. As a creative writer Naikar has injected life into the moth-eaten records and has infused blood and life into all the characters.

**W.S. KOTTISWARI, *POSTMODERN  
FEMINIST WRITERS***

**(New Delhi: Sarup and Sons, 2008), pp.136+14, Rs. 400.00**

**Satendra Kumar**

In the present book under review entitled *Postmodern Feminist Writers*, W.S.Kottiswari has made a genuine effort to examine the much debated Postmodernism and Feminism by taking into account certain key texts written by women writers of different cultures. The writers examined are Margaret Atwood (a Canadian novelist), Toni Morrison (an African American novelist), and two Indian novelists, Shashi Deshpande and Githa Hariharan.

The book is divided into five chapters. In the first chapter the writer focuses on "Theoretical Modules: Postmodernism-Feminism Nexus." The feminist literary criticism of today is the direct product of the women's movement of the 1960's, and postmodernity is characterized by smaller and multiple narratives which question metanarratives like Patriarchy, Capitalism, Liberal Humanism and Marxism. While Postmodernism is against classical realism and the fierce asceticism of the nineteenth century works, Feminism is against traditional representation of women.

In the next chapter the writer studies Margaret Atwood as a postmodernist writer. Using such devices as irony, symbolism and self-conscious narrators, she makes brilliant use of postmodern techniques in order to explore the relationship between humanity and nature, the dark side of human behavior and power as it pertains to gender and politics. As a postmodern feminist novel *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) is concerned with the dismantling patriarchal systems that oppress women. Novels like *Cats' Eye* (1990), *The Robber Bride* (1993) and *Alias Grace* (1996) confirm the notion of postmodernity. By using language as a subversive weapon, the women characters in Atwood's novels create a female space for themselves. The novels project her double vision through which she manifests politics at every level. In fact, she scrutinizes social myths of femininity, male and female fantasies about women, women's representations of women's bodies in art, fiction, popular culture and pornography, women's social and economic exploitation

as well as women's relations with one another.

Chapter III points to the remarkable achievements of Toni Morrison by highlighting her postmodernist techniques, which provide new directions to African American women's discourses. The first part describes black women's literary tradition in order to place Toni Morrison in the right perspective, the second part brings out the crucial differences between white feminism and black feminism and the third part concentrates on the theoretical frame work which helps us to understand the split subjectivity of the black female, and this is followed by a detailed examination of the various postmodern strategies employed by Morrison in her novels which try to show the machinery of myth, the ways meaning can modify experience. Her postmodernism is rooted in the African American culture and its values.

Then there is a chapter which deals with Githa Hariharan and Shashi Deshpande as postmodernists. In order to achieve their goals, Indian feminist writers have exerted their energies to deconstruct the past, and reconstruct a more meaningful present. Deshpande's and Hariharan's works dwell on this difference of postmodern feminism. Githa Hariharan's first novel, *The Thousand Faces of Night*, can be described as what Malashri Lal calls "a narrative of split consciousness." In Shashi Deshpande's case there is a meeting of two worlds — the language of reading among the urban readership and the emotional world of everyday experience. Deshpande writes a variety of Indian English that is rooted in the ambience of regional cultures of the states of Maharashtra and Karanataka. The culturally specific words and sentences sit easily and naturally in her body of work. At its core, however, the resistant phenomenon is important primarily because it questions and seeks solution. Deshpande invokes Hindu philosophy and ethics.

Undoubtedly, this critical venture provides a sumptuous mental feast to the serious readers of English Literature. The jacket of the book is impressive and symbolic to indicate the new approaching dawn of feminist writing. It also contains a very useful Bibliography. The book, it is hoped, will be indispensable to the genuine teachers and students of literature.

**K.K. SHARMA, *SHELLEY'S SPENSERIAN  
HERITAGE AND OTHER ESSAYS***

(New Delhi: Sarup and Sons, 2009), pp.148+12, Rs 450.00

Vipin Singh

A collection of nine scholarly articles, this book is absorbing since it focuses on variegated themes, genres and writers. It deals with a great poet of the Elizabethan period Edmund Spenser, an immortal creative genius of the English Romantic Revival P.B. Shelley, a late nineteenth century Russian master fictionist Leo Tolstoy as viewed by his illustrious contemporary British novelists-critics — Henry James, Virginia Woolf, Somerset Maugham and Joyce Cary —, the artistic use of the techniques of 'the flashback' and 'the interior monologue' by Joyce Cary in his novels, the treatment of the partition in Indian English novels, and R.K. Narayan's feminist stance in *The Dark Room* written as early as 1938.

The first essay brings out, perhaps for the first time, the fact that Shelley suffered from the anxiety of Spenser's influence on him. The learned critic refers to Harold Bloom's impressive treatise titled *The Anxiety of Influence* and applies the thesis, propounded in it, to Shelley's poetry. Arguing persuasively, authenticating his statements from the facts, he successfully "establishes the truth that Shelley all through his poetic career wrote under the influence of Spenser, though he did not properly concede it and concealed it deliberately as much as he could..." (11).

The next four articles in the book are devoted to four twentieth century British novelists' response to Tolstoy. Unfortunately, Henry James could not perceive his creative genius clearly, and discarded his fictional masterpieces as "large loose baggy monsters." The reason is that he developed fixed notions about the novel under the impact of great French fictionists with all stress on form, the aesthetic side of art. As opposed to James, Virginia Woolf wholeheartedly eulogized Tolstoy and accentuated, in particular, the Russians' wonderful presentation of the essence of life, thus hailing them as spiritualists in contrast to her contemporary popular British novelists whom she described as materialists concerned with the outer/external reality of life. K.K. Sharma is right when he affirms that she

was the first to "measure and reveal the astonishing depth and breadth" of the inimitable Russian (26). Unlike James, Maugham, who also wrote under the influence of the French masters very much like James, could genuinely extol everything in Tolstoy and hence proclaimed *War and Peace* as world's greatest novel. Joyce Cary is quite perceptive in his critical views on Tolstoy's art and ideas, but he "lacks comprehensiveness and air of finality" (76-7).

The volume contains two critical pieces on Cary which are intended to show his skillful use of two modern technical devices of 'the interior monologue' and 'the flashback' in *The Horse's Mouth*, and *To be a Pilgrim* and *The Moonlight* respectively. The novelist knows that 'the interior monologue' is a kind of 'infection' which affects almost every modern writer, but he thinks that it is a useful technical device to portray the similarity or contrast between thought and action and to explore human motives. K.K. Sharma closely analyses *To be a Pilgrim* and *The Moonlight* to bring out the novelist's functional use of the cinematic technique of flashback. Prof. Sharma correctly points out that in the later novel a better balance is maintained between the backward and the forward movements of the narrative. The reason is that the protagonist of this novel is given an elder sister who keeps her away from that loneliness which is the lot of old Wilcher in *To be a Pilgrim* like many aged persons.

The last two critical pieces concentrate upon Indian English fiction. The first one examines the theme of partition in six outstanding Indian English novels, but K.K. Sharma laments the fact that the big four of the Indian English novel — Anand, Narayan, Raja Rao and Bhabhani Bhattacharya — did not find such a significant theme worth serious treatment. The concluding article is a detailed study of Narayan's *The Dark Room* from the standpoint of woman's marginalization, establishing convincingly that he, despite being a male 'pure artist', is the first to deal with this theme comprehensively in Indian English fiction.

All in all, the volume is an instance of good, standard literary criticism which should be appreciated the world over. Refreshingly free from modern critical jargon and pedantry, it is undoubtedly a significant contribution to literary criticism.

**RAM BHAGWAN SINGH (ED.), CREATIVE  
NEIGHBOURS: SAARC WRITINGS IN ENGLISH  
(Kolkata: Towards Freedom Publication, 2007), pp. 252, Rs.695.00**

**Ram Sharma**

Ram Bhagwan Singh explores the new field of SAARC Writing in English. This seminal work contains nineteen articles of reputed scholars. In the prologue to the anthology, the editor asserts:

SAARC'S political identity is founded on common cultural and historical background. Besides geographical proximity five of these eight countries have a common history of colonial subjugation and struggle for freedom —. Their literatures though in different languages celebrate the same composite Asian spirit and Eastern values. The current forces of globalization have egged them on to forge stronger ties for mutual co-operation and progressive interaction. (vii)

In a nutshell, the editor has presented in it the literary scenario of Bangladesh, Srilanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Maldiv, Afganistan and India.

In the chapter entitled "Kazi Nazrul Islam: A Poet Extra-ordinary" Samiram Kumar Paul discusses Kazi Nazrul Islam's basic themes of courage, bravery, and sacrifices for human dignity, freedom and liberty. The second chapter, "Communalism and Literature: Writings from Bangladesh" presents Ram Bhagwan Singh's analysis of some of Bangladesh writings. The last part of this article assesses Taslima Nasrin's novel *Lajja* thus:

Though a work of fiction, *Lajja* can serve as documentation of contemporary social history in Bangladesh. It is said that in history names and dates are true, everything else is false, whereas in literature everything is true except the names and dates. (32)

The next article "*The Circle of Karma: Journeys of the Vagrant Spirit*" by V.P. Singh focuses on Kunzang Choden's first novel *The Circle of Karma* which belongs to Bhutan. In the fourth piece, "The Balladry of the Bhutanese Lo- Zey: A Critique of the Ballad of Pemi Tshewang Tashi," the author Seema Murugan deals with a specific period in the history of Bhutan. The Ballad of Pemi Tshewang Tashi is a special kind of Ballad. The article that follows it, "Contemporary Indian Fiction In English" by R.S. Pathak, is quite informative about novelists like Ranga Rao, Arundhati Roy, P.V. Narasimha Rao, Salman Rushdie and others. The next one, "Violence, Identity and

Narrative," by S.S. Prasad concentrates on the multidimensional problems arising out of multiethnicity with the colonial heritage as it has propagated and encouraged various identities also on the basis of language and religion. The author has discussed the novels of Gamini Salgado's *The True Paradise*, Carl Muller's *Colombo*, Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice Candy Man*, Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*, and Razia Khan's Bengali novel *Draupadi*.

S.K. Arora's paper, "Decoding the Maldivian Milieu: A Note of the Maldivian Poetry in English," is very informative. He has taken into consideration Abdulla Fahumy Didi, Abdulla Sadiq, Adam Abdurrahman, Al-Usthadh, Noonu Thaa Hass Didi, Hussain Afeefudhdheen, Hussain Salaahudhdheen, Muhammadh Jameel and Saeed Farah Didi. C.N. Srinath elucidates Nepalese poetry in his scholarly paper "Modern Nepali Poetry — A Note," while R.B. Singh is quite innovative in selecting the theme of partition trauma in his paper "The Pakistani Perception of the Partition Trauma." The trauma of the Partition has been a subject matter of scores of novels and hundreds of short stories both in India and Pakistan.

Sunanda Sinha explores Tehmina Durrani's experiences in the novel *Women, The Eternal Colony of Man*. S.S. Agarwalla evaluates Pakistani novelist Shaukat Siddiqui's *God's Own Land* in his paper, while Dipika Sahai deals with the postcolonial attitude and gender bias in Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride*. Prabhat K. Singh presents a scholarly paper on Pakistani Poetry in English, whereas Rajiva Wijesinha has written an informative article, "Images of the Sub-Continent in Sri Lankan Writing In English." C.L. Khatri takes into account Sri Lankan novelist Carl Muller's novel *Yakada Yaka* and B.R. Agarwal raises the issue of assimilation in three SAARC novels in "Cultural Clash, Confusion and Final Assimilation in Three SAARC Novels." This anthology contains a good paper by S.K. Arora entitled "Archetypes of Cultural Homogeneity in SAARC Poetry."

This anthology creates interest in the readers and makes them hungry for knowing more and more about SAARC Literature. But the price of it looks quite exorbitant. In the end, it can be stated that this volume is of great interest for every scholar and lover of English Literature.

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## POINTS OF VIEW

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