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All editorial and business correspondence should be addressed to

The Editor

Points of View

KH/127, New Kavi Nagar

Ghaziabad — 201 002 (U.P.), INDIA

Telephone : (0120) 2700365

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A SHAKESPEARE 'GEST': BEARING THE BODY IN THE PLAYS

S. Viswanathan

I

In Shakespeare, a dramatic character appearing on the stage with the body of another in his arms is a fairly recurrent stage moment or stage image of action that rouses immediate attention and interest; it is one of the striking Shakespearean 'gests'. A 'gest' may be described as a particular disposition on the stage of the visual items which together set up an interaction among themselves and with the words spoken.¹

Across the canon, the action occurs of a character, or more than one, lifting or holding the body of another; in and through the action there is a display, deliberate or in effect, of the body. This, apart from the several funeral processions in the plays, and the dead marches at the end of tragedies. One of the very rare contemporary eyewitnesses of what was seen on stage, a brief reference by a university resident to a performance of *Othello* at Oxford in 1610, tells us that the University spectators were moved to tears especially by the sight of Desdemona lying dead on bed for all the latter part of the last scene. Basically, the dynamics of drama is strongly dependent on the body, the body of the actors as characters. It was all the more so on Shakespeare's stage in view of both the kind of theatre he wrote for, and what we call the mindset of the age. To readapt Ezra Pound's words, the drama of the time was particularly that of persons moving about on the stage, and speaking words, and, to add, doing action and interacting with the others or another and, in a way, with the minimal stage properties if not indirectly with the viewers also. The early modern age may be said to have tended to pay particular attention to the body and to bring to bear a two-fold attitude on it. It was an attitude which held the new-found enthusiastic celebration of the dignity and beauty of the human body with the inherited medieval religious devaluation of the body, the contempt of the flesh which constituted the infernal triad

with the world and the devil. The power and beauty of the human body was celebrated in the drama and literature of the period, if to a less extent than in the masterpiece of Renaissance art, painting and sculpture although this factor in drama and literature does not seem to have received enough attention.

Patently, the use which Shakespeare and his fellow dramatists make of the possibilities of the human body is, and had to be if as a virtue of necessity, very different from the exploitation, exposure and alternate concealment of the body, so common on the present day screen, big and small, and also in the modern theatre, for that matter, in Shakespeare productions today. Shakespeare's exploitation of the stage presence of the human body is more towards other dramatic ends. The once influential, epoch-making critic, G. Wilson Knight, the leading exponent of the approach to the Shakespeare play as poem, was also an enthusiastic experimental producer and actor of certain plays, though the productions, about which he wrote extensively, were very much off the mainstream. In his productions and in his elaborations of the principles of his production, he laid particular stress on the role of the body of the actor as character and the almost tactile and visceral impact it has on the spectator, so much so that, in his characteristic extreme fashion, in his performance of *Timon of Athens* in the lead role, as Timon in the cave in his last days, he took off his clothes onstage and appeared stark naked without inhibition. Reviewers note that in the RSC Lear, Ian McKellen as Lear in the crucial scene with Edgar as mad Tom pulls down his trousers as 'unaccommodated man'. We may also recall that in the past there obtained, besides the tendencies of bowdlerizing of Shakespeare in several ways, a sort of assumption that Shakespeare's was a serious and strict 'British-and-no-sex' stage. This in spite of the fact that there is considerable bawdy underlying Shakespeare's language in certain appropriate stretches. In more recent times, there has been an attempt in criticism and production to exploit the sexual in the plays, especially in relation to gender questions and to the possibilities of proximity and close physical contact among characters in the play process. Yet, in general, Shakespeare would seem to use the body for other

and perhaps larger dramatic concerns and purposes. For example, another Shakespeare 'gest' is that of the body in the posture of lying supine or, more rarely, prostrate, often asleep. After all on the stage, sleep and death coalesce, the sleeping and the dead being pronouncedly alike, true to the widely current topological similitude between sleep and death, in their indistinguishability. The 'gest' of bearing the body, of which we will examine some of the many instances,² is another example of the many kinds of dramatic uses to which Shakespeare puts the human body.

II

What strikes one at the outset is the proliferation of these instances in the early history plays of the first tetralogy. The piling up of murders and killing in the large number of battles and other encounters in these plays necessitated the stage action of bearing the body away. But the young Shakespeare's liberal use of this practice shows his predilection. It is also perhaps to be accounted for by a certain equation between tragedy and death, the idea that the genre is one that portrays death, which seems to have been assumed in that early phase of Elizabethan drama, and the early quarto titles are an indication of an attempt to incorporate tragedy in these histories. Also, in the three *Henry VI* plays and *Richard III* and in *King John*, one of the emphases is on grief over the dead, and hence the occurrence of a considerable number of scenes of wailing and railing and raging women in addition to those where men shed tears for the dead. In this connection, we may note that there was a theory at that period of the early phase of Shakespearean drama that tragedy was meant to provoke tears if only because it was thought that human beings had to shed tears and expend them from time to time for psycho-physiological health, and tragedy enabled them to do so.³

In an obvious way, the carrying of dead or disabled bodies by characters on stage is to be put down to a stage exigency necessitated by the physical conditions of the stage at the time. Generally, but for certain cases of 'simultaneous settings', the stage

had to be cleared of the characters to mark the end of a scene and start of another. Stage hands were used for purposes of bringing or removing of properties as vestigial stage directions in texts show. But the playwright might think that the dead must be shown to be carried, with a certain display of the body, by another character or characters rather than by stage hands. Exceptions to this rule are there, apparently, the bodies of Oswald and Edmund are removed by stage hands or servants in *King Lear*, appropriately perhaps for what the dead were like in life.

As if in accord with the tendency to excess which marks the *Henry VI* plays, as evidenced in the large number of characters, actions, battles, intrigues and quarrels, and an excess of rhetoric as though by way of *copia*, young Shakespeare in exuberant enthusiasm lays it on also in the use of the practice of bodies being carried by other characters. It is worth noting that the preponderance of the 'gest' in the early histories yields place to a far less commonplace, and more selective and plurisignificant use in the middle and later plays in general, true to the line of development in Shakespeare. All the same, some instances in these early histories stand out as key dramatic moments, another proof that the early plays cannot be styled apprentice work. Among such in the *Henry VI* triad are the bodies of the Talbots, father and son, being borne (1 *Henry VI*, 4.7. 16,29 and 32), the diptych of a son carrying the body of his father and a father that of his son, casualties in battle (3 *Henry VI*, 2.5. 55 and 78), the body of Clifford brought in lying dying (3 *Henry VI*, 2.6. 59 onwards). The first two of these examples merit consideration. The scene (1 *Henry VI*, 4.7) in which the bodies of the redoubtable English warriors, the Talbots, the elder and the son John figure, was evidently a moving and well remembered scene in Shakespeare's day during his early period. Talbot's role, the first of the warriors in the canon, as the defender of the English territorial possessions, trophies of Henry V's victory, is dominant in 1 *Henry VI*. In the aftermath of the Armada the ideal of English heroism in war was much canvassed. Talbot's exploits fit that mood. Shakespeare, however, might also imply with a parallel and contrast between the ultimate unavailingness of the heroic exploits of Talbot

and the success of his historical predecessor warrior Henry V. The factional gangings up among the English lords and the treachery and betrayal of which Talbot was ultimately a victim are factors which also came into relief in the play. However, the tragic and impressive figure of Talbot as he appears in the play would seem to have become a popular theatre memory, as witness the remarks of Thomas Nashe in his *Pierce Penniless* (1592). Nashe speaks of 'brave Tablot, the terror of the French, who had lain two hundred years in his grave rising to triumph once again on our stage and his long inter'd bones embalmed with the tears of ten thousand spectators (at several times) as they see his wounds fresh bleeding in the tragedian who represents Talbot.' The wording of Nashe's testimony should count as evidence that he has in mind the scene (4.7) where the 'gest' in question figures prominently. The wounded, bleeding and dying Tablot appears and is anxious to see his son who had insisted on his going and carrying the fighting into the enemy lines. The father more than half expects that the son too might have got mortally wounded as he himself had in the same sort of exploit. As the body of the son John is borne in, the father laments

Poor boy! he smiles, methinks, as who should say
Had Death been French then death had died today.⁴

Come, come, lay him in his father's arms:

My spirit can no longer bear these harms.

Soldiers, adieu! I have what I would have

And my old bones are young Talbot's grave (1 Henry VI, 4.7. 28-39)

When the French lords sight John Talbot's body cradled in the arms of his dead father, the elder Talbot, and gloat over the spectacle, the English lord Sir William Luce who comes searching for the Talbots, sees the two bodies one in the other's arms, and, finally, takes up the two in his arms.

I'll bear them hence,

But from their ashes shall be rear'd

A phoenix that shall make all France afear'd. (II. 92-96)

Luce thus responds to the French proposal to have the bodies removed by servants and that for the only reason that otherwise the air will be putrefied. The contrastive attitude of the English lord which the playwright highlights is an indication of his implicit concern with

the dignity due to the dead, a general rule as we noted, in his scheme of things and especially to the warrior dead. As we shall see later, besides some meaningful exceptions, the case of Hamlet's way with Polonius' body poses something of a problem.

In *3 Henry VI* (2.5), King Henry VI, after withdrawing from one of the crucial battles of the War of the Roses, watches it from atop an elevation, and waxes lyrical in a long set piece of soliloquy with pastoral nostalgia on the happiness of the 'silly' shepherd's life. He meets with a diptych-like sight of a son arriving with the dead body of his father in his arms, a casualty at his hands in the battle, and a father with the body of his son in a similar situation, one after the other. Rather rigidly emblematic as it is, the scene does well communicate the woes of civil war as it impinges on the common citizen, with the king, on whom the whole war revolves, making his own response to what he sees and hears in this scene within the scene. The juxtaposition in which these are set makes for direct, dramatic effectiveness, the whole situation coming to serve as an object-lesson, if a little too obvious as the real, hard, consequences of civil war, as the spectators see, and hear it, partly also through the eyes and ears of the watching king, as they watch them all. The king's reaction reinforces the view that the weak monarch is prone to fall between the two stools of king and saint, which factor turns out to be his and his realm's tragedy.

III

In *King John* (4.3), a scene in almost the whole course of which the boy Arthur's body is a stage presence after he had hurled himself to his death from atop the castle, the Bastard Richard Faulconbridge directs Hubert who vehemently pleads innocence of any involvement in Arthur's death to pick up the body

Go, bear him in thine arms,

I am amaz'd, methinks, and lose my way

Among the thorns and dangers of this world.

How easy does thou take all England up! (King John, 4.3. 139-143)

An operative factor in the synergy between word and stage image

and action in the 'gest' here is an idea that had a certain currency in Elizabethan times, the idea of the 'King's Two Bodies'. The concept was that the crowned monarch possessed two bodies, the Body Natural or Physical like every man else, and the Body Political or Mystical, an insubstantial spiritual entity. It was a medieval semi-theological and legal fiction which had legal sanction and was accepted as an axiom, and cited in court and similar proceedings. The idea was closely allied to the idea of the body-politic and the similitude between the nation and the human body and its members, a microcosm-macrocosm correspondence between man and the universe in what used to be called the world picture of the times. Faulconbridge suggests in the lines quoted that, now that Arthur the rightful heir to the throne is dead in his boyhood with his end the realm's well-being is also gone, and he goes on to lament the bitter internal strife that will savage and maul the country, as he laments this immediate prospect, conjuring it up in stark, violent animal images. At the time of the King's death in the body physical the Body Mystical was supposed to transport itself into the body of the rightful heir and solemnized at the coronation. Hence the familiar slogan, 'The king is dead; long live the king!' Faulconbridge implies that in the absence of a rightful inheritor of the throne (King John's credentials being in doubt) the true royalty has fled to heaven with Arthur, leaving the country a prey to internecine violence. Shakespeare would seem to suggestively bring in the 'King's Two Bodies' concept in *Hamlet* and *King Lear*.⁵

The assumption of the 'King's Two Bodies' figures, although in oblique fashion as it is often the case with Shakespeare, in the playwright's development of the action and words relating to Hamlet's considerable by-play with the body of Polonius killed by him as an accident. At the end of the scene in his mother's chamber, Hamlet undertakes as he says to 'lug' Polonius' body.

I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room. (3.4. 212)

Indeed, Hamlet's contemptuous treatment of the dead body is one of the few exceptions to the general rule of dead bodies not being subjected in Shakespeare to such insult unless it be that of an obvious wrongdoer. It is not as glaring an exception as that of

Aufiduiers stepping on the dead body of Coriolanus surprised and killed by him moments earlier, towards the play's close, Shakespeare lets his noble prince do disrespect to the old man's body as though partly in Hamlet's distraction and mostly as an expression of his detestation of Claudius's henchman. The treatment may also be one of the stratificatory vestiges of what happens in the play's sources, this time that of the scandalously gross ill-treatment meted out to Polonius' body by Hamlet after killing him in a fit, so gleefully portrayed in Saxo Grammaticus and the French Belleforest's accounts. The loose English adaptation of Belleforest's story entitled the *History of Hamblet* (1608), mentions the detail of Hamlet's dragging the body 'by the heels', a detail not in Belleforest; probably it recalls what spectators saw on the stage in Shakespeare's day. This apart, in three successive scenes, and during a good part of the subsequent action, the invoking of the death or the body of Polonius occurs. The concern in two scenes (4.1 & 2) is with Polonius' body. Hamlet's game of quibbling evasion and teasing with the prying duo, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (4.2), as regards the whereabouts of the body ('safely stow'd' in a chamber) contains good bits of the human body's sorry fate after death, in the *ars moriendi* vein. This part of the play and what follows provide reinforcement of the idea that *Hamlet* is a death-dominated play. A point of interest in the scene (4.2) is Hamlet's conundrum.

The body is with the king, but the king is not with the body.

The frame of reference implied here is the concept we have been discussing. Hamlet talks also of the body of Claudius for whom he had mistaken the hidden Polonius, pretending to answer his interlocutors. He means to suggest that since King Claudius is an usurper and not the rightful heir he possesses only the Body Natural and not the Body Mystical.

A minor if somewhat recondite and double irony lurking in the fate of Polonius' body is that the player of Polonius at the Globe, who as the character receives an unceremonious treatment for his dead body in *Hamlet* had received a certain glorification, of his dead body in his role as Julius Caesar in the predecessor tragedy performed at the Globe. The probability is suggested of the actor of

Polonius having played Julius Caesar in the earlier play in the conversation in *Hamlet* (3.2. 109 onwards) between Hamlet and Polonius.

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

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

(4.2. 109 onwards)

The further irony is that in all likelihood Burbage who played Hamlet also enacted Brutus, and Hamlet kills Polonius in *Hamlet*. In *Julius Caesar* the master-tactic of Antony lies in his manipulative use not only of words and speech but of the body of Caesar, stab wounds and all, which Antony puts centre-stage, displays it, and thus turns the Roman citizens all in favour of Caesar and himself and against Brutus and company in no time, before carrying away the body with a servant's (*Julius Caesar*, 3.1. 290-297).

IV

Four more major instances of the 'gest' in discussion, which may be looked at briefly, are Falstaff with the dead body of Hotspur, Orlando with old Adam on his back, most important, Lear with the body of Cordelia in his last moments, and Cleopatra hauling up the dying Antony at the end of Act 4 of her play.

In a typical braggadachio-like fashion, a zestful jest comes to be played and enjoyed by Falstaff and also enjoyed by Prince Hal and his brother John. Falstaff plays possum feigning falling dead to escape the tender mercies of the fierce Douglas in his encounter with him in tandem with that of Prince Hal and Hotspur. He rises after Hal leaves the spot, after pronouncing a premature obituary by way of farewell to Falstaff in wry anticipation of the different good-bye he bids Falstaff at the corresponding end of the part two of *Henry IV*. Falstaff picks up and carries the body of Hotspur killed by the prince to Hal and his brother, invents the story of his long fight with the risen Hotspur and claims credit and reward for killing

the heroic Hotspur. Prince Hal sportingly consents to countenance the claim but quickly puts in a chastisement of Falstaff's discourteous carriage of Hotspur's body.

Come, bring your luggage nobly on your back. (5.1. 360)

In an irony of his dramatic fortunes, Falstaff's living body comes to endure the unenviable experience of being carried in a buck-basket and dumped into the waters of the Thames as a result of his aborted escapade with Mistress Ford, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (3.3. 156-163), a play with 'Falstaff in it' in the words attributed to Queen Elizabeth who reportedly commanded such a play to be written and performed after watching *Henry IV*.

Playing Orlando at the original Globe must have called for some athletic exercise on the actor's part, what with the wrestling he had to do and the carrying on his back of old Adam (played by Shakespeare according to a tradition reported by Nicholas Rowe in the early eighteenth century) in two successive scenes (2.6) and (2.7). The point of interest in 2.6 is that when the famished Adam in Arden disabled by hunger falls flat and lies on the ground and Orlando tries to cheer him up with a sure promise of procuring food from somewhere, in another corner of the stage, food, a well-covered banquet, would have stood already set for the exiled Duke and party (2.7). The direction given by Amiens to the Duke's companions in the previous 2.5 is evidence for this:

Amiens: Well, I'll end the song.

Sirs, cover the while, the duke will drink under this tree.

(2.5. 32-33)

In this instance of 'simultaneous settings,' a stage convention which obtained then, the table, viands and all, if no venison, but fruit, would have been left onstage stand during the next scene 2.6 for its use in 2.7. The piquancy is in the food which stands so ready, and so near and yet so far for now, for Adam and Orlando. Orlando under the pretext of not leaving his weak, old companion in the 'bleak air' carries him to better shelter, only to re-enter soon in the next scene to interrupt the Duke and his party at their banquet, and later carrying Adam. When Orlando makes his memorable second entry in the banquet scene (2.7), it is timed to be Orlando's re-entry

to be 'covered' by the last lines spoken by Jacques in his seven ages of man set-piece as Orlando with Adam on his shoulders enters the stage through one of the doors and walks some length of the stage to the banquet spot 'under this tree' (2.5. 233), a property tree.

... Last scene of all,
That ends this strange, eventful history,
Is second childishness, and mere oblivion
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything. (2.7. 163-166)

The icon of the young carrying the old man on his shoulders has been likened to Aeneas carrying his aged parents on his shoulders after the fall of Troy in Virgil's epic, an emblem of filial piety. True that Orlando's genuine concern and affection for old Adam serves to give the lie direct to Jacques's cynical account of old age. Yet the state of helplessness and dependency all too obvious in the visual stage picture and the steep contrast between youthful Orlando and old, decrepit Adam on his shoulders, also make an immediate visual communication almost to confirm the element of hard truth in Jacques's words.

A familiar anecdote relating to the late Sir John Gielgud has it that, when Alec Guinness came seeking his guidance, as was customary with contemporary actors, on the role of King Lear he was to perform, Sir John capped his advice with the remark, 'For God's sake, Alec, do get a small Cordelia. You have to lug her around for hours, and you don't want to end up with a hernia.' A wise practical tip on the mechanics of the actor's role. But it goes without saying that there is much more to Lear entering with Cordelia in his hands and the tragically charged discourses he holds with her body. Burbage as the original Lear would have had a 'small (enough) Cordelia' in the boy-actress who took the role. This apart, the entry of Lear with Cordelia's body in his arms is a chilling stage moment. Yet again, in this last part of the play, hope is raised only to be shattered, now the hope that Cordelia's hanging might be prevented after the message sent by Albany with that command. It also belies the expectation that the audience might have had that the play would have a happy (if not really happy) ending after the manner of the old Lear play. The spectacle of the frail old Lear's body with that of

Cordelia crystallizes the tragedy. Not a small part of the tragic tension and force of the play arises from the central situation in the play that Lear is at once old man and king, although the stage history almost shows that directors have concentrated on the one often at the expense of the other. In the terms of the concept of the 'King's Two Bodies' which has its applicability here, Lear undergoes great suffering, agony of body and mind, a virtual torture 'on the rack' in the Body Natural or Physical and his royalty now eclipsed is slighted or ignored, except by the good characters, so much so that the Body Mystical or Political is in hibernation. At the very last, Albany who now comes into full charge, declares a restoration of authority to 'our old majesty', 'absolute power' to Lear who is to die almost the next moment.

More importantly, the stage image of Lear bearing Cordelia's body has been seen by critics as recalling in a manner the *Pieta*, Mother Mary carrying the crucified body of Christ, especially given some Biblical verbal associations in the play which could suggest that Cordelia is a kind of Christ figure.

A different kind of instance of the 'gest' under consideration occurs towards the end of Act 4 of *Antony and Cleopatra*. Also there it occurs 'with a difference' when Cleopatra with the help of her maids hauls up Antony, dying of the stab wound inflicted on himself by him 'the Roman way'. Shakespeare's delineation here is marked by a deliberate theatricality and a concomitant distancing, the self-conscious dramatizing which marks many of the late plays. Cleopatra and her maids ('boy-actresses') heave up the heavy-built Antony, a man built on the grand scale for his dying kiss of Cleopatra to the top of the monument where Cleopatra had taken haven, that is, to the upper acting area from the main stage below.

Cleopatra: Come, come, Antony
Help me, my women. (4.13. 28-29)

Cleopatra: Here's sport indeed!
How heavy weighs my lord!
My strength is all gone in the heaviness
That makes the weight.
... .. yet come a little

...
 O come, come, come. (4.13. 31-38)

The drawing up and kissing processes take quite a long and painful while implying so much physical pain and stretching on Antony's part and for Cleopatra and her maids, though a kind of stage pulley mechanism could have been pressed into service from behind. The scene with a considerable amount of artifice in its conception and rendering seems to have become a current stage and theatre memory soon after its original performance, John Fletcher who succeeded Shakespeare as the chief playwright of the King's Men, recalls it and implants a parodying reminiscence in his comedy *The Wild Goose Chase* (published in 1616 and probably enacted earlier). A character in this comedy, an anticipation of Restoration comedy in several respects, is mocked at by an all too earthly servant in the course of an action which takes place with reference to two acting areas, at the upper and lower stages. The servant's words recall the prolonged and difficult process of Antony in *Antony and Cleopatra* being lifted up to the 'above', all for a kiss.

... ... It will be long enough
 Before you cry, 'Come, Anthony, and kiss me.'

(*The Wild-Goose Chase*, 5.4. 39-40)

(quoted from the text in *Drama of the English Renaissance, II: The Stuarts*, ed. Russell A. Fraser and Norman Rabkin [New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1976]). The line names Antony and recalls Cleopatra's iteration of 'come', the word repeated by her possibly as a 'yo-he-ho' expression as she pulls with effort. It may be instructive to compare the sexual associations of the conversation in Fletcher's play in its characteristic, loose moral tone and the implied sexual suggestions that may be found in the language of Shakespeare in the scene in *Antony and Cleopatra*, and look at the contrast.

A similar and theatricalising ordered with sophistication seems to characterize the scene with the body of Imogen brought in by Arviragus in *Cymbeline* (4.3. 194). She is in a state of anaesthesia wrought by the sleeping draught but taken to be dead by the brothers. The same characteristic makes Imogen's response on awakening in her 'grave' to the presence by her side of the headless body of Cloten in Posthumus' clothes whom she mistakes for her hus-

band Posthumus and by very slow degrees comes to discover the headlessness.

The instances which we have considered of this 'gest' go to show that these often serve multiple purposes in the play of their occurrence in their theatrical historico-social, cultural, thematic and ideological life and dimensions.

NOTES

¹'Gest' is the English equivalent of the term used by Brecht. 'gestus'; it telescopes the senses of 'gesture' and 'gist'. See John Willett, *The Theatre of Bertolt Brecht* (New York: New Directions, 1968), p.173 and Michael Hattway, *Elizabethan Popular Theatre* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), p.57. Shakespeare uses the word in its archaic sense of a knightly exploit, or sometimes to denote bodily movement, action and gesture. *Antony and Cleopatra* (4.8. 2) and *A Winter's Tale* (1.2. 41). In early Renaissance time, the word also denoted a tale or story. In a sense, a 'gest' is a stage moment whereby hangs a tale.

Citations in this paper from Shakespeare are from the handy old Oxford Shakespeare, ed. W.J. Craig (1965). I have dealt with some Shakespeare 'gests' else in my *Shakespeare's Dramaturgy* (New Delhi: Spantech/ Manohar, 1993), pp.62-91.

²Instances are *1 Henry VI*, 2.2. 6, 2.5. 121, 4.1. 142, 4.7. 16 and 29-32, 5.1. 92; *3 Henry VI*, 1.1. 16, 2.5. 55 and 78, 5.4. 131; *2 Henry IV*, 4.4. 132; *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 3.3. 156-163, 5.5. 108; *As You Like It*, 2.6. 2.7. 165-166; *Julius Caesar*, 3.1. 253; *Hamlet*, 3.4 end, 4.2. 29; *King Lear*, 5.3. 241 and 256; *Antony and Cleopatra*, 4.13. 9 and 29-40, 4.13 9 and 29-40; *Cymbeline*, 4.3. 134, 4.3. 282.

³The curious theory that shedding tears from time to time was a healthful practice was expressed by a then well enough known Italian humanist of the Renaissance, John Della Casa in his 'courtesy book', a book of etiquette entitled *Gallatea: 'of Manners and Behaviours*, translated into English by Robert Peterson (1576). See also Marvin Herrick, *The Poetics of Aristotle in England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), p.19.

⁴Probably the famous last line of Donne's 'Holy Sonnet, No.10' on death
"And then death shall be no more; death thou shalt die"
is an echo of Shakespeare's line. Donne in his youth was reportedly among other things, 'a great frequenter of the theatres.'

⁵Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957) and Marie Axton, *The Queen's Two Bodies* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977), the latter especially on the currency of the idea in Elizabethan times.

A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON SHAKESPEAREAN SONNETS

Iffat Ara

The crown dominated the new literature of Elizabeth's reign and therefore Shakespeare's age is characterized by scholarship and learning. Professional writers like Shakespeare enhanced this spirit in an effective way. His enormous knowledge of the world and experience of life found expression through his creative writing. His use of language is masterly. He is possessed of varied talents and could absorb everything in himself as if by instinct. This singular personality is held in high esteem, for through his intellectual powers he manages to seek self-fulfilment. It is Shakespeare's special feature that he presents conventional and historical figures with an imposing assertiveness. These characters achieve permanence and throb with life. The new and startling truth about his characters, revealed by Harold Bloom, is that they provide a glimpse of the author himself.

Shakespeare has certain motives in creating a work of art and through the use of imagery and symbolism he achieves his ends. And certainly he is the best stylist of his age. His main objective in writing poetry is to convey a vision of life. To magnify this truth, characters are drawn who communicate their views about the complexities of life through images and symbols. These are assets that lead to an endless exploration of the complexities of his art. It is inwardness in characters that Shakespeare emphasizes, and it is through wit that he mesmerizes all. Shakespeare's closeness and warmth of feeling for the young Earl of Southampton, who probably was his patron, urged the poet to compose sonnets. His sonnets won applause among intimate friends who called them 'sugared sonnets'.

The readers of sonnets like Edward Thomas are rather critical about brevity a sonneteer is expected to maintain in composing a sonnet. Shakespeare also has this fear while writing a sonnet. He in his plays and sonnets lays emphasis on real experiences rather than abstract thoughts and ideas. Also, the words used in his poetry

denote Wit and Wisdom that lend it grace and freshness. The youth who has the exclusive privilege to be the hero of the sonnets is prominent in public and also has historical relevance. Shakespeare's description of this friend presents him as a respectable gentleman of good breeding who possesses inborn dignity and is well-assured of his authenticity. In Renaissance Italy male-friendship between two progressively broad-minded persons reflected intellectual toughness and is a concentrated theme of Renaissance literature. This friendship ensured literary pursuit. Friendship is therefore a well-known theme embodied in the sonnet-sequence. Courtship also acquires equal relevance in a sonnet.

The sonnets differ in quality, for they are not alike. Some are fine pieces of art, others are not upto the mark and the rest reflect Shakespeare's genuine feelings. W.B. Yeats considers poetic composition a laborious task in which the poet quarrels with himself. And as Iago says in Shakespeare's play *Othello* that the poet-goddess labours and thus poetry is delivered. Shakespeare was inspired by the conventional mode of writing sonnets but his own experience conveyed through characters and imagery transformed the tempo of his composition. One fails to perceive whether the young man and the dark lady existed in real life or were figments of the poet's imagination. Whatever may be true about them they are imposing personages. Time is an antagonist bent upon utter destruction. The use of word-play is effective in presenting a paradoxical view of reality.

The sonnet is a mere framework, but when the imagery is laden with thoughts it gives proper form to the sonnet. Shakespeare's sonnets not merely express his intense feelings but also reflect his knowledge of the world around him. He is very innovative in his thoughts and ideas. Even in a state of weariness his thought process offers new perspectives on the reality of love. Shakespeare uses unforeseen analogies, and the study of science through sense perceptions and a glimpse of reality constitute an integral part of his poetic achievement. He seeks both love and desire and also intellectual greatness. And he manages to challenge Time in order to end all kinds of opposition. His sonnets exhibit dramatic qualities

and they resemble the plays in terms of themes and images. The poet and the mistress are central characters and the friend also acquires a special place in a sonnet. The sonnet may also be compared to a monologue and a soliloquy. There may be no action in a sonnet, but the inner development is revealed through the proper use of imagery:

For never-resting time leads summer on
To hideous winter, and confounds him there;
Sap check'd with frost and lusty leaves quite gone,
Beauty o'ersnow'd, and bareness everywhere. (Sonnet 5, 5-8)

In this well-known sonnet the fading beauty is the victim of summer which itself is subject to change. It is followed by the cold winter that overcomes all. Shakespeare uses nature imagery to show the fate of the sonnet hero. But he also emphasizes immortalization. Time and death are controlled by the creative art of the poet.

Shakespeare wrote sonnets devoted to the mistress and those related to the friend. Those where mistress is mentioned are satiric in tone and therefore cynicism and humour give a renewed flavour to his art. He admires the natural black complexion of the Dark Lady who does not adorn herself with cosmetics. Perdita in *The Winter's Tale* also favours naturalness and rejects borrowed attire and does not grow grafted flowers in her garden. The poet in the sonnets is struck by the Dark Lady's natural appeal, though others may disapprove of her. She may not evoke sensual pleasure but the friend seems to bring them together. Hence desire is a 'wasting fever' that affects both the mind and the body. But reason functions like a saviour that emphasizes the concept of nature both as a creative and benevolent entity. The love for the mistress is merely sensual because the poet is more attached to the friend who possesses superior qualities and is therefore more attractive. The patron-friend assumes greater power than the conventional romance heroines. He is associated with all the best values and the worthy things in the universe. He is 'the paragon of the two sexes.' The poet is no less fascinating because if the friend is possessed of all virtues the creative artist preserves what is otherwise subject to extinction. Friendship outshines everything and marriage is the explicit theme

of the first nineteen sonnets.

The real purpose of marriage is merely procreation. It is because the extension of family like the broad concept of the expansion of the world is associated in turn with the concept of order and degree. Nature has the power to produce new life. The concept of procreation and natural fertility, expounded by humanists and by Marlowe, is emphasized by Shakespeare in his plays and sonnets. Time is also defeated by progeny preserving the beauty of the friend:

Thou dost beguile the world, unless some mother,
For where is she so fair, whose unrear'd womb
Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry? (Sonnet 3, 4-6)

Besides Time and winter metaphors, the image of the sun is used to describe the splendour and mutability of the friend. And again, it is marriage and procreation that overcome death:

So thou, thyself outgoing in the noon,
Unlook'd on diest, unless thou get a son. (Sonnet 7, 13-14)

The eyes of the friend contain truth that in turn is reflected in the higher intelligence of the spheres. The eyes express deep love and have an abiding effect. The friend should exhibit his own power and worth.

The sonnets of Shakespeare are both conventional and original in theme and presentation, but they lack a planned sequence. The sonnet is like a mirror that reflects the creative mind of the poet and his own objective view of reality. He alone is capable of looking into this mirror and show his reaction accordingly. His critical assessment of the Dark Lady and the love relationship with her is surely negative. It is found in sonnets 137 and 141. He is more favourable in his attitude towards the lover. Sonnet 144 emphasizes the triangular relationship of the Dark Lady, the young friend and the poet who finally meet at a given point. The fact is that the poet represents the two lovers and also the qualities of love that he absorbs in himself. Though there is conflict both between the lovers and the forms of love, yet it is all contained in the mind of the poet. The male is idealized, while the female is degraded. Also, he is both attracted by the Dark Lady and repulsed by her. These mixed reactions also give depth to the sonnets. It is noteworthy that the sonnets reveal different facets of 'love' and do not arouse sexual

desire. Besides, the poet chastizes his unchaste love. The sonnets are concerned with beauty and human relationship in all its complexity and uniqueness.

Despite lack of sequence, the sonnets are divided into three sections. The first, starting from 1-17, follows the conventional style of writing. The second section opens from 18 to 126 and reflects on Shakespeare's poetic art involving both the rival poet and Shakespeare himself. The last section, relating to sonnets 127-154, presents the Dark Lady's figure in cynical terms. He seems to be possessed of mixed emotions. The three persons involved in the triangular love-relationship are equally prominent. The sonnets therefore contain a wide range of experience and touch upon themes found in his plays.

The adverse effects of Time involving beauty and love are interwoven in the fabric of sonnets. This theme is used more effectively in the plays like *As You Like It*, *Macbeth*, *The Winter's Tale* and *Henry IV, Part II*. What Shakespeare the poet fears is the uncertainty regarding the experience of love. It is like the damage done to delicate flowers by strong winds. Shakespeare is sensitive to Time's destruction, its indifference to human sentiments and the lesser chances of permanence. He does not conceive of Time as a philosophical concept, but presents its activities on an experiential basis. His thinking is also revealed through images and symbols drawn from real life. For instance, the impact of Time on the cycle of seasons is reflected through sonnets.

Time, which haunts Shakespeare's restless mind, is also paradoxical in its implications. In sonnet 116, Time's eternity and transience are equally estimated; the eternity of love, which hurls back Time and beauty, falls a victim to Time. The defiance of Time is defeated by the solidity of love. Thus, the conflict in the poet's mind is resolved and all tensions end. Love is the essence of existence and expresses the identity of the soul. Love at the highest level is untouched by the opposing agents. It is strong enough to protect itself without fear. In fact, Shakespeare loses his selfhood in his creations, and his sonnets are undoubtedly the best illustration of it.

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JOYCE CARY'S CRITICAL RESPONSE TO LEO TOLSTOY'S ART AND IDEAS

K.K. Sharma

This paper is intended to examine thoroughly Joyce Cary's response/ reaction to Tolstoy's fictional art and ideas, for the celebrated twentieth-century British novelist himself admits that the great Russians — Tolstoy and Dostoevsky — are his masters along with Hardy, James and Conrad (Cary, Prefatory Essay to *Aissa Saved* 10) and he also refers to Tolstoy and *Anna Karenina* in two different contexts during the conversation with *Paris Review* interviewers ("An Interview with Joyce Cary," *Writers at Work: The Paris Review Interviews* 52). Cary made his debut as a fictionist in 1930s with the publication of *Aissa Saved* in 1932 and gained recognition as an outstanding fictional writer in 1940s when his novel *The Horse's Mouth* was published in England as well as in America and was filmed in America. In 1950s he emerged into eminence not only as a fictionist but also as an art-theorist when in 1952 he was requested to deliver three lectures at Oxford in Hilary Term on "The Novel as Truth" and in 1956 to give the six Clark lectures which appeared in 1958 under the title *Art and Reality*. Small wonder Andrew Wright proclaimed him a giant among the twentieth-century novelists (Wright, *Joyce Cary: A Preface to His Novels* 13), and Walter Allen eulogized him by accentuating his Protean quality, his Shakespearian objectivity (Allen, *Joyce Cary* 9). What I stress is that though as a fictionist he may not be as great as Henry James, Joseph Conrad, E.M. Forster, Virginia Woolf, D.H. Lawrence and several others belonging to the twentieth century, he is unmistakably unique among the novelists in the English language in that he not only made perceptive and incisive critical statements about Tolstoy the writer but also reacted sharply to his idea of love and marriage with special reference to women as presented in *The Kreutzer Sonata* by writing the remarkable novel *The Moonlight* (Cary, Prefatory Essay to *The Moonlight* 9). Before and after Cary, many renowned British novelists — Henry James, Joseph Conrad, E.M. Forster, Somerset Maugham, Virginia Woolf, and D.H. Lawrence — , who were contem-

poraries and successors of the illustrious Russian fictionist, expressed their cogitations on his fiction, but none of them could produce a creative work in response or reaction to his creative writing. However, the present essay is devoted exclusively to Cary's critical appraisal of Tolstoy's art and ideas, and will not treat, for want of space, his novel *The Moonlight* written in reaction to Tolstoy's concept of man-woman relationship and the conditioning of woman by the society in this regard as embodied artistically in *The Kreutzer Sonata*.

Joyce Cary makes numerous observations on Tolstoy's art and ideas in his prefatory essays prefixed to the Carfax Edition of his novels, in his conversations and interviews, in some of his essays contributed to variegated magazines, and, above all, in the Clark lectures published in book form entitled *Art and Reality*. As a matter of fact, he, time and again, illustrates his ideas about art and the novel from Tolstoy. I shall here collect, cohere and critically examine them in order to arrive at his assessment of Tolstoy as artist and thinker.

In his close perusal of Tolstoy's writings, Cary discerns that the Russian, like every great artist, begins with his intuitional discovery of something new about the world. Intuition, a sudden "sub-conscious recognition of the real" (Cary, *Art and Reality* 14), imparts to the artist the direct knowledge/ feeling of the world as it is, and this is a kind of joyful discovery to him. But he does not comprehend this fully and so he approaches his intuitional discovery and reflects on it in order to grasp it, and here he experiences great difficulty because of the gap between intuition and expression. Apropos of this problem confronted by Tolstoy, like any genuine artist, Cary writes:

Tolstoy tells us in his diary how he sat for a long time trying to express his feeling; but he could not find the right words. What is interesting to us is that Tolstoy's feeling — the intuition — remained to be examined, to be compared with the various expressions which were rejected in turn because they failed to be accurate. (26)

Indeed, every writer, like Tolstoy, is invariably siezed with a directly intuited impression of feeling or idea, some record of the subcon-

scious, and bafflingly marks the problematic passage from intuition to reflection, from the knowledge of the real to the expression of it in a suitable form; he has to translate artistically one state of existence into another, the purely sensuous impression into a truly critical and reflective form. Cary affirms that every writer, like Tolstoy, has to look for words to express his intuitive feeling and his reaction to it, and succeeds in it only after a lot of continuous efforts. Thus "Tolstoy tells us that he found the task so exasperating that he wanted to get up and walk away. There is no short cut across this gap" (27). To a sincere artist like Tolstoy, his intuition comes to him from a world of permanent, objective forms, and it moves him in a certain way because he is endowed with a special sensibility and what Tolstoy, as his diary hints at, "was looking for was not his own idea of things, but the exact impression they had made on him" (30). And we clearly mark that Tolstoy was "impatiently trying to find out exactly what his feeling, his intuition, was" (85). A great artist as he was, he was worried not only about the gap between intuition and concept, but also between concept — the initial raw statement — and its working out in a narrative with a suitable form.

Cary, by implication, points to the greatness of Tolstoy as an artist when he explains, illustrating from his books like *Anna Karenina* and *The Kreutzer Sonata*, that the Russian master, like Henry James, has always an intuition (which Henry James calls 'germ'), a definite theme to explore and communicate artistically in his novel. Cary, thus, asserts that Tolstoy got the intuition for Anna's tragedy (her committing suicide on the railway track) upon which the novel is centred, not from the suicide committed by his friend's mistress on the railway line which profoundly afflicted him, as most of the people believe, but from the Turkish embroidery on his dressing-gown which he was wearing on one fine morning. While noticing the delicacy and precision of the embroidery on the gown by some unknown woman, he suddenly realised that the mind or world of woman is vastly different from that of man and this formed the real basis of *Anna Karenina*. It dawned upon Tolstoy that Providence had assigned different natures and responsibilities to women and men. And as such "Woman's function was social, to be sister, wife, mother, nurse,

the centre of family life, the builder and keeper of its sacred values" (107). In Tolstoy's view, Providence has endowed man with the power of love and response to love which is the only essential clue to good life, and hence a society, which is not based on love, is unnatural and evil. In fact, as Cary states, "Tolstoy's religious training enforced his intense intuition of family love; it explained the value of love in the world, it gave his religious idea very deep roots in a personal experience of the real, finally it gave him his theme, that is to say, the theme had its tap-root in a first profound experience" (105). Little wonder he considers the artificial life of society, which is poles opposite of the country/ village life, as basically corrupt. Anna suffers terribly and meets her doom or tragic end because she goes against Nature's law for womanhood by leaving her husband and child for a lover, and this naturally is bound to destroy not only the happiness of her family — her husband and child — but also of her lover and ultimately her own once for all. Cary is correct when he affirms that Tolstoy is completely different from Hardy in that while for the latter blind Fate was the ruling master of human tragedy, "for Tolstoy it was the nature of things, the laws of being. Anna represented womanhood. She broke God's law for womanhood, and was therefore not only the source of evil to others but was herself terribly punished" (108).

Cary discusses Tolstoy's *The Kreutzer Sonata* to demonstrate further how the Russian writer is usually haunted by his theme so much so that it becomes an overt message verging on pure propaganda, and yet the deft artist in him exposes it in an artistic form which makes it forceful and arresting. In this novel he emphasizes that women are brought up and trained for marriage by teaching them from childhood "to exploit their sex that marriage itself is merely a sexual conspiracy or a sexual battle and that from these causes arise all the evils of society" (109). Cary opines that though the entire novel is simply a propaganda and is unconvincing, yet he makes it effective and moving by putting it into the mouth of the central figure, the wife-murderer in the narrative, and makes us realise that the narrator's act of murdering his wife becomes an obsession with him and is certainly true to his nature and life. We feel that all

this is nonsense and is only an excuse of a highly stupid, jealous person for killing his wife, and yet this is true as it is in accordance with the nature of the protagonist and the situation in which the characters are placed. No wonder Cary passes his final judgment as follows:

The book gives us a fine picture of that everlasting type, the neurotic, frustrated or merely selfish and stupid person, who puts upon society the reproach of his own failure. So at the very time we are saying 'What nonsense', we are also saying, 'How true to the man — how true to the situation'.

The Kreutzer Sonata is completely successful as a work of art because, although it preaches, the message it is meant to give has been entirely assimilated into its form. The whole thing is an experience with the feeling appropriate to that form. (109-10)

True, a writer must neither make his theme light nor subordinate it to any other issue even if his theme has nothing to do with a general or great truth of life; his theme is his personal truth and if he relegates it to a subordinate position, he falsifies "the truth of his feeling" (115) and is sure to lose the power of expressing it. Thus in a novel with a significant meaning and form, the theme is dominant and the novelist invents his whole story to develop, underline and convey it. But as the novels of Tolstoy demonstrate, Cary says, "the more comprehensive a novel in scope, in width of scene, the more it loses in power and significance" (115) because its focus on the meaning, the theme, is diversified and distorted. This is the reason why, according to Cary, "*Anna Karenina* has much more power than *War and Peace*, and *The Kreutzer Sonata* has more than *Anna Karenina*" (115). The fact is that the truth embodied in a novel is in consonance with the power of its communication; the truth, the meaning, presented in the novel, is a felt one soaked in values, a personal one as the whole truth cannot be known and hence cannot be communicated.

Cary points out that Tolstoy, like all true philosophers and artists, attempts to explain the meaning and nature of art to suit his picture of things and in doing so, as he himself tells us, took fifteen years before he could write his well thought out treatise, *What Is Art? And Essays on Art*. A "means of intercourse between man and man"

(Tolstoy, *What Is Art? And Essays on Art* 12) and thus bringing them closer, art, according to Tolstoy, must have a moral purpose otherwise it is bad art. Obviously, his concept of art rejects completely the aesthetic theory of art for art's sake which is primarily/exclusively concerned with aesthetic pleasure, without having a definite meaning. Bracketing Tolstoy with Ruskin and supporting him wholeheartedly in this regard, Cary asserts:

... Tolstoy and Ruskin declared that art is bad unless it has a moral purpose. And this has force too, because it disparages the theory of art for art's sake. It gives us the truth that it is only the most trivial arts that even pretend to serve a purely aesthetic end. Even hats are meant to attract attention. All great art has a meaning beyond itself. (*Art and Reality* 18)

Inevitably, Cary opines that every real artist, like Tolstoy, Dickens, Hardy, James or Conrad, deals with morals. By "morals" he means conduct of man leading to happiness or misery, that is, what people do and the reason and result of their action. Little wonder he makes the sweeping, forceful statement: "The greatest writers of the world are just those who take the greatest interest in morals: it is because of that they are so exciting to read. Think of Dickens, Tolstoy, Hardy, and Conrad" (Cary, "A Novelist and His Public" 36). Emphasizing the point further, Cary states that arts may differ in their moral effects, but none of them can exclude morality, and of all arts, the written arts, except the purely factual, take a moral problem as their meaning. The written arts deal with human action, and hence what men think and do are as important for a writer as what they are. The writer is concerned with action and events, and he mainly creates a world of action. Consequently, he has to deal with motive, with morality. He invents his plots and characters to give us knowledge of a world in which men are deeply concerned with morals. He offers his meaning to the reader for his final judgment. Every author, whether Tolstoy, Aeschylus or Dickens, does this.

True, the writer creates for us a whole meaning which is essentially moral. His meaning, though particular to himself, expresses a moral truth of wide appeal. In order to accentuate the validity of this truth, Cary refers to Jane Austen, Leo Tolstoy and Marcel Proust. He holds that much of Jane Austen's greatness is due to her com-

mand of a clear moral idea (*Art and Reality* 53), and that a great novelist like Tolstoy not only presents morality in the novel, *The Kreutzer Sonata*, but also uses the book as the vehicle of message or propaganda, which he makes highly moving by devising a suitable form for it (109-10). Tolstoy's writings lead Cary to infer that all artists invariably preach:

We are told that novelists must not preach. This is nonsense. All serious artists preach — they are perfectly convinced of the truth as they see it, and they write to communicate that truth. (109)

Indeed, Cary's emphasis on the importance of morality in fiction is the result of his discernment of great writers' (as different as Tolstoy, D.H. Lawrence, Dante or the author of *Everyman*) obsession with their themes embedded in morals — the sense of right and wrong — and message (158).

No doubt morality is indispensable for a good artistic creation, but the artist should not preach openly. That is why, Cary avers that since Tolstoy in *The Resurrection* fails to conceal his intention of instructing the reader, the book engenders strong dislike. However, it does not mean that the artist should not convey a message and that he should only tell a story leaving the message to preachers; as a matter of fact, art has a message and "can and must be used for any kind of communication, including instruction" (Cary, "The Way a Novel Gets Written" 6). Cary, thus, endeavours to demonstrate that Tolstoy's novel fails not because of its message, but because it is a bad art — viz. it fails to give a message couched in experience. Good art should contain an implied statement of belief. That is, it should certainly preach, but should do so implicitly as it "is not the place for propaganda; it must state a case, but it must not give verdict" (Cary, "My First Novel" 638). The reader of a novel does not relish sermons or judgments, and does not read it for information or instruction. Therefore, the artist, unlike Tolstoy, should accomplish the task of conveying moral ideas by cajoling and bribing the pleasure-seeking reader and by giving the moral ideas the form of felt-experience.

Cary refers to Tolstoy's *War and Peace* and *Resurrection* and Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karmazov* in order to explain the novelist's

problem of stating the case comprehensively or presenting an argument in detail, for in doing so he only makes an intellectual appeal and breaks the emotional continuity of the narrative/ the reader — viz. the unhampered emotional experience of the reader — which is disastrous for his art as it is very annoying to the reader. This is applicable even to great characters like Tolstoy's Peter in *War and Peace*, and Cary lucidly puts his viewpoint as follows:

This is even if one invents 'raisonneurs,' characters like Peter in *War and Peace*, to discuss philosophy; for a character able to discuss fine points (which is what you need to get any value out of him) however real in himself, and firmly placed in the action of the book, if he states the case, will at once come out of it and appear like a lecturer on the platform. For the reader perceives at once that that is what he is for, and is rightly offended. And the more carefully one hides such a purpose, the more offensive it is. Ingenuity, in fact, is always disastrous, if it is meant to deceive. (Cary, Prefatory Essay to *Castle Corner* 5-6)

However, Cary admits that great writers like Tolstoy and Dostoevsky put forward social philosophy through their creations and do so effectively. In this regard, he considers Tolstoy's *Resurrection* and Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov* commendable in that they present a case, and not the case, and argue and portray everything from one particular point of view. Apropos of this Cary affirms:

But these great books do not state the case, they weave a spell, they leave out all those qualifications, those relativities which, in the real world, affect conduct and opinion. They state not the case, but a case; they see everything from one angle; they are 'true' only for their own characters in that situation, carefully chosen and limited to drive home one moral slogan, and excluding all these complex issues which in real life would make it possible to say 'but Aloysha's solution is wish-fulfilment.' (6)

Cary considers the delineation of social philosophy in the manner of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky very difficult and artistically hazardous for an artist, and therefore he abandons his original plan of showing the revolutions of history and philosophy during the period 1880-1935 in a vast work in three or four volumes, and writes only one novel *Castle Corner* in which he creates characters and leaves them to act without indulging in social philosophy.

Cary perceives the distinction between moral and aesthetic judgments in Tolstoy, particularly in his much debated novel, *The*

Kruetzer Sonata. He finds it aesthetically brilliant, but morally all wrong. As a matter of fact, it is almost impossible to split the personality of a man into moral and aesthetic segments, for the moral judgment in a man is a secondary intuition which becomes part of the 'intuitive character'. The whole man reacts to his physical surroundings as well as to the world of coherent value created by art. According to Cary, the aesthetic and the moral sensibilities are inalienable; the moral judgment is an invariable ingredient of every aesthetic judgment of art. While discussing Tolstoy's novel, *The Kruetzer Sonata*, he points out that the material has been handled with dignity and distinction. In spite of so much violence, it has moral attributes and a moral taste inasmuch as it has no exaggerations and no falsities. When one compares this novel with another tale of violence, *No Orchids for Miss Brandish*, one clearly sees the difference that is not purely aesthetic but also moral. This makes Cary to state:

One cannot, in fact, split up the personality of a man — the sensible character of his being — into the aesthetic and the moral.

It is the whole man, the total sensibility that intuits the world. That world is a world of ordered meaning, of coherent value as given by art. (*Art and Reality* 136)

Cary feels that it is by creating a world of action that the writer presents his moral meaning to us, and Tolstoy does not do so. The reason is that we "do not discover the meaning of this world as a concept, but as a form of moral experience" (152). Hence the vital quality of a writer's art lies in giving the experience, not the concept, and Tolstoy fails in this respect in *The Kreutzer Sonata*.

Cary extols Tolstoy for imparting formal excellence to his novels by exploring and communicating his theme. Importantly, he is obsessed with his theme, which is naturally assertive in his book and everything else is subservient to it. Cary repeatedly maintains, and rightly does so, that Tolstoy could succeed in writing a masterpiece of formal perfection like *Anna Karenina* because he was haunted by his theme. Undoubtedly it is a great novel since every detail belongs to the formal unity of the author's meaning. In about ten chapters, he has organized a race meeting to bring all the charac-

ters into play. But all these chapters, though tedious in details, move the story forward to illustrate the theme.

As stated in the preceding paragraph, *Anna Karenina* possesses a highly commendable form because even the ten successive chapters, devoted to the delineation of a race meeting, contribute to the development of theme and reveal the essential changes in the characters — the new dimensions between Alexei and Anna, between Anna and Vronsky, and Anna's telling her husband that she hates him in a fit of agitation due to Vronsky's fall during the race, etc. Tolstoy's diary discloses his fear that the race, delineated in ten chapters, would be an anti-climax lest it should provide some dramatic climax to shed new light upon the central theme. Hence in Cary's view, Tolstoy, like a master artist, "builds up the dramatic climax of the race as an allegory of Vronsky's relations with Anna and a premonition of her fate when she too is physically unable to serve his will" (161). What is notable in this context is that he does not make the allegorical presentation too obvious and for this he gives us with marvellous skill the details of the dramatic situation realistically — the entire racing background, the mare, the trainer, etc. — in order to persuade us cajolingly to accept the intrusion of a conceptual idea without seeing its untruthfulness, which can be realised by us only subconsciously, as a result of our sympathy for the poor mare, in the form of "a vague but strong sense of the tragic relations between the wilful impatient egotism of the man and the patient feminine devotion of his victim (162). And then unfortunately our critical mind makes us uneasy and we see clearly with discomfort that the Russian celebrity, no doubt, succeeds in achieving the desired emotional effect, but certainly it is "an effect not congruent with the situation of the moment, involving characters we have accepted as actual in an actual world. We are checked by a false note" (162). Cary further points out that even before it the scene disturbs us because we learn a lot about the mare's beauty, high breeding and Vronsky's love for her, and Tolstoy portrays her as such a sensitive creature that we wonder why she does not speak. The same mare is seen lying at his feet and looking to him with speaking eyes. This part

of the scene assumes allegorical implication and this, in Cary's opinion with which I agree, destroys the truthfulness of the scene. As a result, the characters become mere concepts created to illustrate a theme, and the theme is reduced to a mere precept out of a copybook because

Allegory is an immense temptation to the writer, especially the great, the obsessed writer.... Allegory gives a clear, a definite meaning; not to the soul, but to the conceptual judgment, and in a form of dry precepts whose falsity is at once detected by the soul.... Allegory is false because it lays down categorical imperatives for conduct in a world of particular and unique events. It treats the world as a mechanism whereas it is a world of free souls. (162-63)

Cary rightly holds that although allegory is a definite mode of giving a clear and exact meaning or message and hence a great temptation to the writers, it, when too explicit, also mars a good work of art and so a great artist should make the best use of the narrow space between allegory and the dramatic scene. Cary explains how Tolstoy in the above scene of *Anna Karenina* fails as an artist because of too explicit allegorical implication, while D.H. Lawrence, certainly not as great as the celebrated Russian, is wonderful in the creation of a similar type of dramatic scene in *St Mawr*. In this fictional work, St Mawr the stallion, who stands for uncorrupted male energy and is instinctive and above conceptual whims, is true to life. The scene in which it throws and almost kills Rico Carrington is quite close to allegory, since Rico stands for the cultural intellectualism which Lawrence despises as a decadence, as something conceptual, and hence antagonistic to 'the intuitive real'. Apparently, he conveys his point artistically and is very impressive in spite of his narrow theme. The reader accepts the vital truth, communicated through the scene, despite the fact that St Mawr and Rico Carrington are intended to represent generalities as wide as presented in *Everyman*. Indeed, the Lawrentian scene does not disturb us by any suspicion of allegory, for St Mawr and Rico Carrington, notwithstanding their representative characters, remain what they really are. What, according to Cary, is remarkable about Lawrence, in contrast to Tolstoy, is that the great British novelist "has got his effect with almost the precision of allegory, but without

falling into that trap" (159). In *Anna Karenina*, the mare collapses in the race due to Vronsky's awkward movement, and it breaks her neck. Unable to get up, her master kicks her in anger and she struggles to comply with his command. At this the reader feels perturbed by Tolstoy's overt manipulation of explicit allegorical meaning, and questions, as Cary rightly points out, "Is this Vronsky and the mare or an allegory of Vronsky and Anna, of Tolstoy's society male and his unhappy female? Is it a puppet show, with Tolstoy pulling the strings?" (159-60)? And Cary wishes, as we too, that the Russian master should not have resorted to an artistically dangerous technique in this scene and should have been on a safer ground like D.H. Lawrence. It is true that Vronsky is a typical soldier, but he is much more individual and less typical than Lawrence's Carrington. What makes the Russian soldier quite a free individual character is the fact that Tolstoy deftly puts him among about half-a-dozen other typical soldiers who have been sharply differentiated from one another by the great artist in Tolstoy. Vronsky's English mare is very much like Lawrence's St Mawr — a simple, thorough bred without any typicality about it. And yet Tolstoy, universally acknowledged as a greater fictional genius than Lawrence, fails in the artistic creation of the dramatic scene and causes in the reader immense uneasiness, while Lawrence achieves a rare success in the creation of similar scene even though it is saturated with symbolic significance. Cary explains the reason why the scene in *Anna Karenina* has a ruinous effect on the actual experience of the reader and why it becomes apparently allegorical, while the scene in Lawrence's *St Mawr* escapes free from such artistic and emotional failure. To quote Cary's own words: "For one thing, we see at once a parallel between the mare's relation with Vronsky, and Anna's, both at his mercy. And there is no such parallel suggested in *St Mawr*" (160). And allegory is not a great artistic device as it gives an explicit, definite meaning to the conceptual judgment, and not to the soul, "in a form of dry precept whose falsity is at once detected by the soul" (163). Allegory is not true to life, for it imposes categorical imperatives on human conduct in a world marked by uniqueness and particularity beyond generalizations; it treats human world as a

mechanism, while in reality it is lived by free souls.

Thus Cary demonstrates how Tolstoy's failure in creating his key scene convincingly mars *Anna Karenina*, whereas Lawrence's *St Mawr*, though very close to allegory, is an artistic triumph. Vronsky becomes unconvincing in his rage which startles us because in that great scene he is untrue to his otherwise generally disciplined character, while the mare is true to her character as a good disciplined horse. But what is specially wrong with Tolstoy's portrayal of the mare is that "she is suddenly made to represent the feminine principle as Tolstoy conceived it" (167). Tolstoy deserves all praise for creating a real mare, absolutely true to life, but we are shocked when all of a sudden she is shown as the representative of the feminine character in general and we, as sensitive and sensible reader, refuse to accept her in such a new unconvincing role as a part of the artificial high society which corrupts Anna in Tolstoy's view. Cary feels that the Russian novelist's lending an unexpectedly different meaning to the mare and the whole scene is unmistakably a false note and he uses the expression 'false note' knowingly because "the effect is analogous to that of the false note in music which interrupts suddenly the recreation of the structure of our subconscious and causes our critical judgment to start up and say 'What's happened — what's wrong'" (167)? The falseness of the new meaning, suddenly given to the mare, becomes all the more conspicuous when we clearly see that Anna, who stands for womanhood and who as a brilliant writer's character in the narrative is part of the meaning, is a real woman in the fictionist's sense and we readily accept her as such. We know full well that women can do a lot of unusual things in the world and yet can be essentially women — i.e., good mothers, good wives, etc. While delineating Anna, Tolstoy does not evince any interest in larger issues; he simply presents to us "a woman who is woman to us as well as to him, at once a living individual and a typical woman" (167). So what is wrong about Tolstoy's portrayal of the mare representing the feminine principle in relation to Anna is that a meaning has been imposed on an alien context and thus everything becomes overtly manipulated and puppet-like, whereas Lawrence's handling of *St Mawr* and his

theme creates just the opposite artistic effect — a truly functional one. To quote Cary's words:

And what's wrong in this case is simply that the meaning of a note, or phrase, the mare, has been forced into a context that doesn't belong to it. So she loses even her own character as a mare — she becomes like a performing animal, a puppet, manipulated by Tolstoy. St Mawr is not a puppet because his meaning in the tale is not only one with his nature, but with his function in the tale.

For we must remember always a tale is not life, it is art and subject to the limitations of art, in this case, to the logic of the subconscious, allotting by association a meaning to each character, to each development, in a construction that is fundamentally As If. (167-68)

In conclusion, I feel inclined to state, on the basis of above discussion, that in his critique of Tolstoy the artist Joyce Cary is concerned with only germ or intuition, theme, form, morality and allegory. Clearly, his evaluation of the great Russian's creative genius, though doubtless invaluable, lacks comprehensiveness and air of finality.

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A LATE BATTLE WITH THE SAVAGES: TENNESSEE WILLIAMS' *SMALL CRAFT WARNINGS*

Leonard R.N. Ashley

This essay chooses a leading American playwright and one of his minor plays to make the point that anyone in America or India and in connection with any significant writer the personal reminiscences of any persons who were in contact with the living writer, no matter how briefly, should record their experience. Small details can flesh out the profile of the writer, no matter how much the professional literary critics, biographers, editors of her or his letters or others have published, for even in passing acquaintance something useful may be learned about the individual. The friends of Shakespeare editing the First Folio of his collected works advised the reader to "look not upon his picture, but his book," but moderns wish that any and all those who came into contact with Shakespeare the man had taken the trouble to write about him, even though the works outlive the man and, as W. H. Auden said of Yeats, "the death of the poet was kept from the poems." We moderns may have recovered from Freudianism but we still like to see if understanding the writer's psychological makeup can throw light on the reading of the writer's work. Reception theory or plain common sense tells us that all literature is interpreted by the individual who experiences and reshapes it. Here is a personal experience involving Tennessee Williams, so this will be rather loosely organized in order to try to capture the mode of memory. Although the moment recalled is factual, and extra information and background are provided for context, it is best to make this memoir appear more like a chat than a lecture.

Williams' fame is now worldwide, grown vastly since, he claimed, he was "snatched out of virtual oblivion and thrust into sudden prominence" (1978: 15) when *The Glass Menagerie* became a hit. That success was so great that even today tiny bits of information about him are still of interest globally among lovers of literature. With *The Glass Menagerie* he was at long last an overnight success. He made it out of a film script called *The Gentleman Caller*

(1945), itself drawn from his short story "Portrait of a Girl in Glass". This was indicative of his lifelong method of drawing on his personal history, for the girl was his sister Rose, and his persistence in reworking autobiographical facts and feelings material as he climbed the ladder of fame.

Mary McCarthy in the elite *Partisan Review* had savaged Williams as "a streetcar named success" and called him a "carrot firmly rooted in pay dirt" but he was never a hack bowing to the taste of the crowd and in fact his commercial success was held back somewhat by critics (Gore Vidal alleged Jewish critics) who hated homosexuals, and Williams was, to use a word known now but then unfamiliar, "out" as far as his personal life was concerned. Vidal wrote (1985: 8) of the pop pundits of *Time* (who had also given him trouble for his sex life).

Deviant and maybe decadent, Williams at the very least was powerful as he worked in the tradition of Heine who wrote, "Out of my great sorrows I make my little songs." American literature has always had more than its share of life presented as literature, fact modified as fiction, if not from the start the homosexual overtones that some critics have found in *Moby-Dick*, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *Billy Budd* and other masterpieces. In Williams' early work the scent of green carnations, the Victorian symbol of male homosexuality, and Parma violets, then associated with lesbianism, was apparent, even if some people did not recognize what the perfume was. In fact some gay writers disguised their proclivities and those of their characters. Once the public caught on, Williams early on and Edward Albee later on were accused of presenting characters who were homosexuals in disguise.

In his novel *Moise and the World of Reason* and his better known and very frank *Memoirs*, Williams was "out" *avant la lettre*. As he grew older his homosexuality and his literary reputation both were tempered although no opposition to homosexuality can be identified as the cause of either his initial success or his subsequent loss of popularity. What was once perversion came to be considered alternate lifestyle. He did not succeed because he had any gay cult following. He rose by general merit in the highly com-

petitive Broadway theater and Hollywood, as the Jews did. By the nineteen sixties his passionate human melodies had garnered Williams Pulitzer Prizes and Drama Critics' Circle Awards, his sex life aside.

Williams continued to mine his own experience in an attempt to retain public acceptance but the audiences were seeking new secrets. *Suddenly Last Summer* was probably more soul-baring than the *Memoirs* which somehow on occasion sound more fantastic than the violent death of Sebastian or the machinations of Sebastian's horrible mother. It was not decadent subject matter that caused his decline. The decline was perhaps inevitable. Through it all Williams was still capable of optimism on occasion and so he was upbeat when he came to *Small Craft Warnings* (1977). That is a work we concentrate here, partly because it is too much neglected. *Small Craft Warnings* was staged far of Broadway in a tiny venue on Fourth Street in the Lower East Side (or East Village). The critics greeted it as something slight. They regarded it as a dotage of a has-been.

Williams by then was one with the trouper in *Follies* who defiantly sings "I'm still here." But he felt rejected and dejected. In his self-dramatizing *Sunset Boulevard* kind of way, he hoped that this play would constitute a kind of comeback. He felt ready for another closeup. Also, he intended the play to be a payback to the fickle public which he now felt ready to address and challenge rather than seduce. Williams was himself, basically inimitable. There was, as Foster Hirsch (1979: 16) pointed out, "no school of Williams." Only Williams could have arrived where *Small Craft Warnings* found itself. We can revisit it to cast light on Williams' late career and in the process say something of the fate of Broadway's darlings and the world of American theater in general, as well as to add a bit of personal reminiscence.

Small Craft Warnings also reflects the tendency in American criticism to regard the artist's personality as of more popular interest than the work. Truly in a lot of modern art there is "nobody home," but things get by, get bought, maybe more for investment on the greater-fool theory, so long as a few alleged experts hype it, and people judge Warhol or the like in terms of prices, not price-

lessness. The drama is another thing altogether. What critics damn can run for years. The drama demands that a considerable number of people get together to finance and stage a play and a considerable number of people keep it running by paying money for tickets to see it. It is not an elite but a pretty popular art, or it closes on Saturday night.

The drama has to be about something more than a name artist. *Playwright* has *wright*= "craftsman, maker" in it. The modern art object, a big bunny that someone made at a "sculptor's" direction, a painting that the one who signed it never painted, a skull of platinum studded with diamonds famous for its price and nothing else, a crucifix in urine as an outrage — these things are about the artist, not about art, rather in the way that today nobody reads Byron but people are still fascinated by his sex life, club foot, dashing good looks, other personal details. Life outshines works. Some celebrities have few or no works; they are famous for being famous, that's all. If Sylvia Plath had not seen suicide as a good career move, and been connected to a much more important poet, Ted Hughes, her few scraps of inferior poetry and *The Bell Jar* diary-as-novel would hardly have got much critical acclaim. Zora Neale Hurston is highly prized by some, but her main claim to fame is African-American Woman. Williams may have acquired a homosexual following but millions of heterosexuals hailed his work — despite his life, in many cases.

To win a following Williams' plays had to go on. A master playwright cannot go unproduced or be read later on if she or he has not had hits. A poet who is a classic, which someone has defined as a work that one has to pretend to have read, or wins prizes but does not sell many books can be admired, and can hope for future generations to read the works. A playwright unstaged in life is doubly dead in death. Actually, if only a few of a playwright's best plays survive the reputation can be enhanced. *The Glass Menagerie* was revived on Broadway in 2005. An all-black cast revived *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* in 2008. Williams will be revived over and over. Critics can easily comment upon the weaker work following the better or be triumphant over the master tottering with, say, *Slapstick Tragedy*

(1966) or overusing old tricks from symbolism to projections. Americans like success; success gives promise to everyone of some kind of attainable fame and fortune. They also like to see the mighty fallen. That consoles those who themselves failed to gain publicity and pelf. Still there is the American idea of progress, better days coming. In the long run, Williams will be regarded as the greatest American dramatist of the twentieth century, a century that had Clyde Fitch and Eugene O'Neill early on and Mamet and more at the end. Maybe no one will care about *Two Character Play* or *Small Craft Warnings* any more than they care about Shakespeare's collaboration on the dreary pageant of *Henry VIII*.

Let us admit that by *Small Craft Warnings* Williams' glory days were over. The critics were vociferous in announcing the fact that Williams was deep into what we may call his period of maladjustment. Jealousy or disappointment, mean spirit or unfair expectation overshadowed critical judgment of *Small Craft Warnings* and made the opening a Night of the Long Knives. Critics can be a sadistic lot. You cannot really blame them for anger when their profession makes them sit night after night in theaters where, as in most art, the work is not good. Anatole France had another explanation: he said that critics were savage because they were eunuchs, people who saw the deed done nightly and could not do it themselves. In any case, critics came after *Small Craft Warnings* with daggers drawn. No wonder the woman who wrote the marvelous comedy of *Harvey* quit while she was winning, like the woman who wrote *Gone with the Wind* or the woman who wrote the wonderful musical *Once upon a Mattress*. I'll bet you know their works and not their names. That holds true for lesser hits as well. What did Matt Crowley do after *The Boys in the Band* or Bret Easton Ellis after *Less than Zero*? Why didn't Hemingway kill himself while he was ahead? F. Scott Fitzgerald famously said that there are no second acts in American lives and lots of people believe that. (Actually there is a second act but the drunks go out for drinks at intermission and do not return).

A poet of the theater such as Williams is a public person and new drama is always not only a continuation or departure from tra-

ditions but likely to be widely compared to older plays. It is difficult if not impossible, however, for the public playwright's career to have a constantly upward trajectory, if only because the public seeks novelty, improvement. Even writers called *The Master*, such as Sir Noël Coward and before him Henry James, had their ups and downs. In fact, one critic described the stages in the career of Henry James, drawing on British royal history, as having three periods: James I, James II, and *The Old Pretender*.

Not every writer lives or works long enough to descend into mediocrity after the heights or degenerates into cookie-cutter repetition or self-imitation or self-parody. American dramatists especially seem as a group to appear as sudden blazes in the sky and then burn out like comets. It is also instructive to list (say) the 100 top US novels or plays and then see how few, if any, are the late productions of their creators. In the particularly chancy business of the commercial theater, controlled (noted Williams as early as 1944) by "businessmen and gamblers," it is always a bumpy ride. It is rare indeed to find those who have gone regularly from success to success, each succeeding work greeted with more acclaim than the last, ever more famous until death, even capping all with a monumental posthumously published work. At some point one play loses money — about one production in 18 on Broadway gets its investment back — or the audience loses interest. Then the backers do not like to take a risk. In the commercial theater you are only as good as your latest success. In the end you are as good as the best by which you are remembered, a matter of what you have done that will last, not what you did last.

Hollywood repeats with a smile the story of the man who asked a friend for a loan, reminding the friend how he got him a job at the studio, made a lot of money for him in a series the friend who became an executive produced over the years, and a while back pulled him out of the swimming pool and saved him from drowning. The Hollywood executive responded by demanding, "What have you done for me lately?"

Robert Brustein complained of Williams "repeating himself year after year." The occasion, however, was actually a departure by

Williams, the "serious comedy" of *A Period of Adjustment*, which Brustein said was a nadir from which Williams could only rise. Today *A Period of Adjustment* looks better as the domestic difficulties it deals with have become mainstream American, half of all marriages end in divorce, and the landscape is littered with rejected husbands who, like the play's dumb but well-meaning hero, have no companionship at Christmas but a cocker spaniel. Such comedy was somewhat unusual for Williams but Brustein was right that Williams did deal in despondency and sentimentality year after year. Williams looked at the reception of this play on stage and screen and decided to revert to the kind of work that preceded it, not because of any Lope de Vega urge to write the same damn play hundreds of times over but because he realized what worked for him and his audiences. If Williams was going to make any changes it might be simply to eliminate some *coups du theater*, eliminate some too-familiar damaged and outrageous characters (though more credible today), and make language a little less filigreed, to avoid what Salieri complained of in Mozart's work: "too many notes." If he was going to retain any weakness it might be one that Camus found in all modern art, the fact that artists today find it "easier to shock than to convince." At this time Williams had also to cope with midlife crisis and temporary physical and artistic collapse. Richard Gilman obnoxiously declared, "Mistuh Williams, he dead."

But Williams, who had been dismissed as a mere "stage magician" with nothing up his sleeve, no prestidigitation left, the audience on to him, surprised everyone including himself, emerged from his "heart of darkness" alive. *Time*, which had hailed him at the beginning of the decade as "the greatest living playwright," if one did not count Sean O'Casey (and who now counts Sean O'Casey at all?), had announced he was "on the sickbed of his talent," washed up, defeated by the very flaws in his personality that had fueled his earlier creativity. In the nineteen sixties Williams was an Orpheus descending from the heights of *Night of the Iguana* to the depths of *In the Bar of a Tokyo Hotel*, written, he admitted, on drugs in that era when both high and low culture were high and drug addiction was considered bohemian. Some later defended Williams as just an-

other important writer such as Coleridge or DeQuincy on drugs, sympathetically explaining that Williams was just in the vogue (if "out of it." Williams told Vidal he did not recall anything of the nineteen sixties' experience and Vidal retorted, "You didn't miss anything." In fact, Williams was in the era of druggies very depressed and unwell and he needed chemicals to bring him up to snuff, to get him started at the typewriter, after which the joy or labor of writing provided his drive. When others were learning Transcendental Meditation as well as taking drugs, like The Beatles, or "getting high on life," Williams was using drugs not to gain Burroughs-like fantasies or Ken Kesey or Kerouac abandon but to calm his nerves, "get his act together" as people said then, and get the creative juices flowing. Williams reminds me of a drama teacher I had at McGill University many years ago who claimed he was "born two drinks behind other people." A couple of stiff ones and he appeared perfectly normal. It was said that no one suspected that he drank until one day he arrived at the university unaccountably sober. Williams needed to be able to be sedated to write. It was his life. He said he spent half of all his effort into writing and the other half parceled out to other activities, including a small amount dedicated to lovers and friends. He is alleged to have quit a psychiatrist who diagnosed neurosis as the cause of authorship, declared his writing an addiction, and "threatened" to cure him of writing altogether.

Why did he write at all? What was the cause of his addiction, if addiction it was? Dr. Samuel Johnson said nobody but a fool ever wrote except for money, but money was not Williams' goal, although he did get wealthy and enjoyed that token of respect. Nor was he able to accept Dr. Johnson's dictum that one must write simply and directly and appeal to the general, not "singularity". Singular speech, theater poetry Williams found in an enhanced Southern speech the way that John Millington Synge found a poetic prose in the speech of the Aran Islanders, was Williams' forte, perhaps his most singular and significant contribution to the modern stage and its audiences trained to expect a sort of realism from the cinema (and later television). Williams' emotionally charged poetic prose, more truly poetic than his verse in fact, we may understand in the light of stage

makeup. Under the lights of the stage in order not to look abnormally pale one has to wear what is called straight makeup. Then one looks normal, as if not wearing makeup at all, and one's facial expressions can carry to the back of the auditorium. In Williams' plays, the dialogue is written in a seemingly realistic prose; it sounds as if the characters might actually speak that way. But it is verisimilitude, not real but realistic, made up to be capable of great flights. It can reach superb heights. It is not the way Southerners really speak. It is theatrical, not ordinary. It fits the romantic and poetic and sometimes passionate and perverse characters whose fictional lives help the rest of us to find beauty and meaning in our own lives outside the theater, to live better, more fully, and in the mundane world to dream and do.

It was only to be expected that Williams' style would be fresh, then fashionable, then old-hat — and that the dreamer and dramatist, despite personal setbacks and career disappointments, would persevere, overcome obstacles or at least try. Always impelled and somewhat handicapped by early success, forever seeking and hampered by his celebrity, Williams had problems. When John Mason Brown reviewed the Broadway opening of *The Glass Menagerie* he complained that he had not been able to see it without the advance warning in the praise of the Chicago tryouts. Every new play was asked why it was or was not superior to all that had gone before. Fortunately, Williams had the help of Eliza Kazan as director and stars such as Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton and others, but their performances would likewise be measured against high expectations and show-biz envy. Pres. John Adams long before had noticed the rudeness of New Yorkers ("they talk very loud and fast and all together and break in on you speaking") and the commercial theater milieu made things worse. It has always been much like the satirized and yet cherished or acceptable characters of *The Producers*. The drama began as poetry and ecstatic and only later became prosy and prosaic. Williams reached the peak of a dramatic poetry that could function in the modern representational rather than presentation theater and after him so powerful a style offstage diction was not to be found until perhaps the flat and forceful style of David

Mamet came along, an improved, stage combination of the tough-guy style that was found in fiction and the conversational style, however oblique, found in the poetry of John Ashbery.

The critics talked loud and fast, and tough, about Williams. They distrusted the "fine excess" that Keats said must be found in poetry. They felt superior to the stage tricks that moneymen said must be seen in productions. Some called Williams a peddler of "solid gold watches," a confidence man, but Williams responded that the drama was after all "the charlatan of the arts" but, he added, at the same time, in the commercial theater the charlatan is "most easily detected." That may not be so, because the mob is not as smart as the most perceptive professional critics. The paying public visiting the Bright Lights of Broadway, most of them provincial, can be fooled by the "stage magician." They actually applaud the triumph of the not too talented. They want to be entertained, not overwhelmed. People who are themselves losers may wish to see others lucky enough to get away with as much as the traffic will bear, from spectacle instead of profundity, from ticket prices to stolen bows.

On the whole, things sort themselves out. Williams earned the wins he scored and may be most of the losses he suffered. The business waxed and waned, helped by "money names" on the marquees. John Gassner in 1961 surveyed with his usual industry if not insight what Williams' name meant by then. So did Stang in 1965 and others. But by the late nineteen seventies Free was reporting that critics were "almost unanimously" contemptuous of Williams. (See Finkelstein 1960, "the critics have problems" and writers have rivals: Truman Capote presented Williams as a chunky, drunken Mr. Wallace, among "unspoiled monsters"). Literary bankruptcy comes, as a Hemingway character says, gradually and then suddenly. The critics gang up on the weak. In the same year as Free (1977), Williams received many taunts flung from the critical bandwagon. "Hey, Mister! Throw me sumthin'!" Among the most cutting were these words from the severe John Simon (1977: 21), worth quoting at some length:

Poor Tennessee Williams! He is, or was, our greatest living

playwright, second only to Eugene O'Neill at his best, and it is infinitely sad to see him deteriorate before our eyes. It is even worse than watching a woman we love grow old, because that happens gradually and symmetrically with our own aging. But here we are, still alert as ever, and Williams, for a long time now, has been giving us stones for bread — really merely watered — down reworkings of his old situations, characters, ideas, and dialogue, exactly as in all the recent plays bearing his signature, itself most likely merely stenciled on. A man who would steal and re-steal from himself is the saddest of failures. Reprehensible as it may be to steal from others, it is at least enterprising: a sign that the world outside exists.

Being as perceptive a critic as Simon (now retired) must have been "infinitely sad" almost without respite. How much garbage can a sensitive critic sit through? The Fabulous Invalid's standard fare ranges from regrettable to intolerable, good and great are few and far between, and from time to time Simon was called upon to review the face of Liza Minelli or a bad Hamlet or a vanity production. Even the general public seems to know how awful a production really is and realizes that being deaf at *Phantom of the Opera* (what great scenery!) would be a boon and that the reason to pay big money to attend *The Producers* is to impress a business customer (otherwise, wait for the movie, preferably on cable). With so much absolutely insufferable modern painting and sculpture and rap and pop noise, a pretty bad play even when reworking old material — Giacometti did the same skinny sculptures, frankly always acceptable, over and over; he said he kept trying to discover "why I fail" — ought not to be a hanging offense. If Williams borrowed from his own experience so did Arthur Miller (Mr. Marilyn Monroe) and Neil Simon many others (not to mention the delightful Woody Allen) and Williams metamorphosed fact into art much more memorably than those. His errors came when he strayed into expressionism, experimental theater, Brechtian alienation, absurdist tricks, political comment, and other fads and fancies. But Simon attacked him on his singular gift, magic realism of the theater, especially when Williams donned "new clothes" for a summer play or uttered an "outcry" over remembered wrongs. Simon again:

And when he tries to write about his later experiences — as in *Small Craft Warnings* and in the *Bar of a Tokyo Hotel* — it comes out lifeless and third-hand, as if seen through the double screen of his former writings and

a mind grown soft from self-indulgence.

There is plenty more of this from lesser critics than Simon, both the first-night journalists (maybe moved from crime reporting to the drama desk) and the publish-or-perish academics, balanced by encomiums such as those collected by John S. McCann (1983) at the time of Williams' death, when some gathered to praise as well as bury him. The postmortems continue and the drama remains the art that tells us most about an era, reflecting the conventions, the mindset, of times past, as well as, sometimes, presenting deathless values. The dogs bark but the caravan moves on. The critics write but the best plays live in revivals.

I have seen no revival of *Small Craft Warnings*. I wish I could. At the end of his career, Williams may not have been ready to hide his diminished light under a bushel but, predictably, it seems to me he threw a colored scarf over it to make it a bit prettier though no less illuminating. *Small Craft Warnings* was one of those denounced reworkings. In 1970 it appeared in a different form as *Confessional*. It has Leona, one of the standard Williams flawed but staunch heroines, struggling in a hostile world, a woman that the soulful Alma in another play would describe as "the faded and frightened and difficult and odd and lonely," what Williams elsewhere called "the fugitive kind." Rich symbolism and lyrical aria are hallmarks of the play, the mixture as before, but new is the fact of Williams launching himself as a small craft on "strange seas of thought alone" (a Wordsworth phrase). It may not be a masterwork but it is a revealing and daring venture. Had it been presented as the initial offering as an unknown this play might have been hailed as a promising first effort by a writer, some critic was sure to have said, who took up the Williams material and beat Williams at his own game! As it was, by Williams and with Williams in it, it was largely dismissed like the flimsy one-acter *A Year of Dry Mornings*, which Kenneth Tynan (1968: 56) had swept away as "unearthed from some forgotten bottom drawer." Really this play is dedicated to attempting to avoid destruction, a characteristic Williams move. It reminds one of another Williams, William Carlos Williams, who wrote (in a quaint scattering of words to make prose look like poetry)

But love and the imagination
 are of a piece
 swift as the light
 to avoid destruction....

Earlier, Williams had deliberately chosen to stage his *Garden District* way uptown in Manhattan (at the York on First Avenue), Off-Of Broadway, but by the time of *Small Craft Warnings* he had to settle for way downtown (and way down market), around the corner from Second Avenue. That was once the Broadway of the early-twentieth century Yiddish theater but by then was quite unfashionable for almost everyone, what Tom Wolfe the Younger would call "low-rent".

Some critics were too grand to go there. A Russian poet (now obscure, then "hot"), Yevtushenko, seemed mild by comparison when he told Williams, who had given him a free ticket to the show, "You have put only about thirty percent of your talent into it, and that's not just my pinion but that of a people seated around me." Williams' ante-bellum gentility, if the memoirs (reprinted 1976: 11) can be trusted, rose to the occasion:

I was distressed but kept my composure. "I'm very happy to know," I said, with the cool of a Southern lady, "that I still have so much of my talent left!"

This was at odds with the critics. In Britain, Russell Davis (1985: 23) wrote: "In the last years, we saw quite a lot of very fuddled Williams." Maybe. As the title of a very minor work has it, *Old Men Go Mad at Night*, particularly if they possess such mental mechanisms as delicately complex as Williams'. He was at his best still a somewhat unstable mixture of Blanche Dubois' snail-horn sensitivity and Stanley Kowalski's complicated machismo (Mary McCarthy said Brando, who was such a success in the part, was a "male impersonator") and Williams had a touch of the old maid tourist from a Baptist Female College whom we see in *Night of the Iguana* and also the old poet Nono of that play, perhaps even the manly Xavier (Savior) of *Orpheus Descending*. He was a divided personality, leaning a little toward the hippies ("let it all hang out") and a little toward the Rev. Mr. Shannon ("button up your shirt"). He was queer and (some said) homophobic, shy and always eager for recognition. Williams was both the aspiring adolescent and the old man full of

years. He made his poetry sing, even as a dying swan. Until the end he was feisty, like the old whore in *Cider Hill* who dies trying to make a comeback and Williams usually had far more drive than the self-indulgent alcoholic gay of *Two on a Party*. He had doubts but consistently clung to what he called "a religion of endurance." Even in "a time of desolation" he could write *Camino Real*, and rewrite it. And write *The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Any More*, and revise. He was never at any time the young fellow in *One Arm* covering at death and yet he knew "fear is a monster" and took death as one of his major themes. All this came into play for the play *Small Craft Warnings*. I do not dare call it a summing up but it was perhaps an inevitable outcome.

Now to conclude at long last with the personal reminiscence, creeping in these days of the New Journalism even into the stiffest of academic treatises. Back in the 'seventies I saw Williams himself as Doc, a minor character in that play, presented only a couple of blocks from where I had fairly recently lived in Manhattan. He played somewhat unobtrusively but convincingly, even with the mumbles and misses, acceptingly of the seedy California bar and its ragtag denizens. It was tremendously moving. He helped to hold a ramshackle play together. The play called on pathos and pity but somehow dispelled any hint of futility. I believe that onstage he did much to pull the whole thing together without, one might say, drawing too much attention to himself. Many in the audience did not know who he was but appreciated the way the character of Doc rather embodied the play's dented indestructibility and romantic lyricism.

Free (1977) missed the play's theater poetry but his sharp eye for form did not miss the lack of "an adequate dramatic expression for the matrix within which his characters exist," which I suppose means that there was no *pièce bien fait*, tight structure. Williams was always more Strindbergian than Ibsenite, to refer to the two grandfathers of modern theater. Like Strindberg's, Williams' plays are rather musical in form, but I believe that saves his often melodramatic characters and situations from looking too carpentered.

Speaking with Williams backstage after a late-night perform-

ance of the play, I dared to ask him if he actually drank at the bar on the set. (I knew he used to carry a glass of wine when he met audiences after the final curtain to read something, to chat, to ingratiate himself and push the play, as indeed he was doing by consenting to appear in the cast. He said he did not really drink on stage. He said:

In my little dab at acting I don't drink but I pretend to. In my real life I may get drunk but I pretend to be sober. My real life is full of pretending, always has been.

He was touchingly grateful that a young professor in The City University, an institution less dedicated to education than preparation of students for careers, knew his superb work and he was delighted that I had seen him on television "pushing the show," which needed, he added, "attention for the production." He made no bitter complaint that a great dramatist was required to do more than write the drama. He said he was no actor, not, at least, any more than a homosexual then had to be in society. It was not until years later that I realized how true Williams' performance had been. It took the passing of a defrocked doctor I happened to know, a man who drank himself to death down in New Orleans, to make me grasp how penetrating a characterization Williams' Doc was. Life imitates art.

Williams was right not to rest on laurels. He was right to keep on keeping on, to struggle to get *Small Craft Warnings* put on, to do whatever he could to give it a decent run. (It closed far too soon.) When the collected plays were published and people read *Small Craft Warnings* many wished they had caught that show. That is just one person's small moment remembered regarding the play and its author, a play which is a part of an uneven but unique and eminent career, a bit of "the immortal bird" who, as Mallon (1985: 46) says in connection with Williams' biography,

As "the South's other great writer" [William Faulkner] might put it: He endures. So that Williams might endure more fully understood, I hope and trust that others will supplement all the professional criticism and commentary with their personal scraps of anecdote, beloved since John Aubrey's seventeenth-century gossip, about the great writers whose paths they may have crossed, however fleetingly. That, in

the case of Williams too, however much people who knew him well, from directors and actors and agents such as Audrey Wood and Mitch Douglas to all the others who knew the living, social person. In addition to the dramatic and fictional works of Williams and all the biographies, edited letters, the following, cited in the text, are to be noted.

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DEATH AND RESURRECTION AS STRUCTURE: TONI MORRISON'S *BELOVED*, *SONG OF SOLOMON* AND *JAZZ*

Rambhau M. Badode

We die. That may be the meaning of life. But we *do* language. That may be the measure of our lives.¹

The female body which emerges from the water in *Beloved* [...] is one which is formed by death, violence and mourning [...] Her name a metaphor for the gathering at the grave, her death a necessity of love, her resurgence reconstitutes the past as incarnation and female experience as an embodiment of histories within the present.²

Pilate is larger than life and never really dies in that sense. She was not born, anyway - she gave birth to herself. So the question of her birth and death is irrelevant.³

Death is a continuous metaphor in Toni Morrison's novels; a catalyst for reinventing a cultural and individual identity. Never defined as something separate from life, death provides the present with an umbilical link with the past. Morrison also 'strips back' and unfolds, in the sense of opening up, revealing and developing in order to be able to move forward. Looking specifically at three novels, *Song of Solomon*, *Beloved* and *Jazz*, this paper is concerned with the method of returning to source in order to reinvent and rebuild, looking specifically at Morrison's use of death and resurrection as structure. It examines the various means by which death is used as a source for reclaiming a cultural and individual identity. *Song of Solomon* makes specific reference to the brutal killing of Emmett Till, a 14 year old who was murdered for allegedly whistling at a white woman, and the event which triggers Guitar's search for money is the bombing of a church in Alabama where four young black girls were killed. Violent death is an integral part of the machinery of each of the novels but it is the engine which drives *Beloved* and *Jazz*. The reclamation of individual and cultural identity is a central theme of all three novels. Some kind of transformation or reawakening is central to this theme and often this takes the form of a rebirth or resurrection.

Beloved

The texture of *Beloved* tightly interweaves life and death, making death lose its permanence. When Beloved insists 'I am not dead I am not [...] I am where she told me [...] her smiling face is the place for me'⁴ she demands her own space with the living. The only formal punctuation in this passage, in which Beloved openly reclaims her identity, is one full stop after the first sentence, establishing that claim to her identity as a definite, non-negotiable statement. Her presence established the visually fractured nature of the remainder of the passage, the indistinguishable nature of time and the repetition of many of the phrases create a sense of Beloved's struggle to re-establish that presence.

The literal spaces between groups of words which punctuate the passage signal the timelessness of her presence and the un-lived spaces of her life. The lack of punctuation adds a fluidity to the suggested seamless nature of time and thus reinforces a sense of the inextricability of past and present, of ancestors and their descendants. Beloved's insistence that 'All of it is now it. is always now' (p. 210) is illustrated when the voices of Sethe, Denver and Beloved blend to suggest that the past, present and future are all one and the same (pp. 215-17). Not only are their voices blended but Sethe and Beloved are visually blended and bound together by the insistently repeated image of Beloved claiming Sethe's face as her own. Reflected in Sethe's face Beloved not only continues to live but her resurrection is made visible: 'I see her face which is mine ... She smiles at me and it is my own face smiling' (p. 213 and p. 214).

The character of Beloved embodies the novel's epigraph, a metaphor for the 'Sixty Million and more' black African's killed by slavery, and as such her resurrection forces the characters, and the readers, to confront the past. Memory is an active, constitutive force; it keeps the dead alive. Beloved acts as a conduit to and a manifestation of memory. Ironically, in his determination to deny memory and not to allow the past into the present, Paul D plays his part in that manifestation by his violent exorcism of Beloved's ghost from the house at 124 Bluestone Road, which is the trigger for her physical return. His reluctance to confront the past by metaphorically

locking it away in 'the tobacco tin lodged in his chest' (p. 113) is ultimately broken by that manifestation. The essence of *Beloved's* seduction of Paul D is not only sexual. Just as he literally touches her 'on the inside part' (p. 116) so she too touches him inside, seducing his feelings, unlocking and exposing those repressed memories:

She moved closer with a footfall he didn't hear and he didn't hear the whisper that the flakes of rust made either as they fell away from the seams of his tobacco tin. So when the lid gave he didn't know it. What he knew was that when he reached the inside part he was saying, "Red heart. Red heart," over and over again.' (p. 117)

The structure of *Beloved* creates a form that keeps alive the struggle to remember, the need to forget and the inability to forget. It is built on the basic concept of memory and rememory. The concept of rememory is that memories have a physical existence beyond the minds of individuals and that it is possible to inhabit and experience another person's memory. This is voiced in the novel by and through Sethe:

'Some things you forget. Other things you never do [...] Places, places are still there. If a house burns down, it's gone, but the place - the picture of it - stays, and not just in my rememory, but out there, in the world. What I remember is a picture floating around out there outside my head. I mean, even if I don't think it, even if I die, the picture of what I did, or knew, or saw is still out there. Right in the place where it happened.'

'Can other people see it?' asked Denver.

'Oh, yes. Oh, yes, yes, yes. Someday you be walking down the road and you hear something or see something going on. So clear. And you think it's you thinking it up. A thought picture. But no. It's when you bump into a rememory that belongs to somebody else. Where I was before I came here, that place is real. It's never going away. Even if the whole farm - every tree and grass blade of it dies. The picture is still there and what's more, if you go there - you who never was there - if you go there and stand in the place where it was, it will happen again; it will be there for you, waiting for you. So, Denver, you can't never go there. Never. Because even though it's all over - over and done with - it's going to always be there waiting for you. [...]'

'If it's still there, waiting, that must mean that nothing ever dies.'

Sethe looked right in Denver's face. 'Nothing ever does,' she said. (p. 36)

This belief that nothing ever dies creates a tension between remembering and forgetting. She represses memory because 'To Sethe, the future was a matter of keeping the past at bay' (p. 42) but this

is constantly subverted by her unquestioning acceptance of the baby ghost's presence. It is this tension which gives life to and therefore creates the manifestation of Beloved. Sethe's (re)memories are then literally experienced by others through Beloved.

Rememory therefore not only keeps history alive but also crosses time and experience. Denver loves to hear the story of her birth but when she tells the story to Beloved she begins to experience Sethe's flight from Sweet Home to 124 Bluestone Road. All the senses come into play to evoke the images as she 'began to see what she was saying and not just to hear it [...] Feeling how it must have felt to her mother. Seeing how it must have looked' (pp. 77-8). Seeing the colours, feeling the textures and the terrors and smelling the scents of the past as she listened to her story are enabled by Beloved's hunger to know their history. It is that hunger for and reaction to Denver's story that possesses and enlightens her storytelling and drives her imagination to encompass a sense of their recent history. But it remains a story. It is, and can only be, Sethe's personal experience. But a past experience, the memory of which storytelling plays an essential part in keeping alive and accessible and Beloved is the conduit through which the story is relived.

Because of its link with ancestral history, memory is also an essential tool for reclaiming and recreating both personal and cultural identity. Beloved is both Sethe's personal past and the past of slavery which Sethe has to reclaim. The climax of the reclamation comes in the second part of the novel in four consecutive Sections in which the three women re-establish their identities (p. 200-17). Sethe reclaims Beloved as her daughter; Denver reclaims Beloved as her sister; Beloved reclaims Sethe as her mother and by doing so she also reclaims herself and her own identity, 'I am Beloved and she is mine' (p. 214). Like Baby Suggs, who denies her slave-given name of Jenny Whitlow and re-establishes her identity before she dies, Beloved is now a named ancestor. They have reclaimed their presence and place in history, both personal history and the history of slavery. The essence of Beloved's presence is Sethe's remembrance of her. The concept of rememory and the notion of a repossessed ancestry are inextricably woven together.

Ancestral history is an important source for Morrison - 'When you kill the ancestor you kill yourself.'⁵ The sense of timelessness offered by the presence of an ancestor is integral to Morrison's method of returning to source:

... ancestors are not just parents, they are sort of timeless people whose relationships to the characters are benevolent, instructive, and protective, and they provide a certain kind of wisdom.⁶

Song of Solomon

If you come from Africa your name is gone. It's especially difficult since it is not just your name but also that of your family or tribe. I never knew the real names of my father's friends. They used other names, nicknames. But when you die, how do you link with your ancestors if you have lost your name?⁷

All of the stories in *Song of Solomon* are about naming, misnaming, renaming and about birth and death. The renaming of African-Americans with a 'given' name is a white imposition which serves to sever links with, and ultimately knowledge of, their ancestral heritage. Names are an essential part of the ancestral legacy and Milkman's quest is to find the source of his name and his true identity. Names, in particular those in the song, guide Milkman through his journey. Towards the end of that journey, as his enlightenment develops, all names become meaningful. He reads road signs with a questioning eye wondering what lay beneath the official names, names of people disconnected from their ancestors by an imposed identity 'recorded for all time in some dusty file, hid from view the real names of people, places, and things. Names that had meaning', and had died forever.⁸ Engaging in a process of 'knowing their names' is defined by the novel's epigram and Milkman allows his mind to wander through a list of names of family, ancestors, friends and acquaintances and to expand into a wider internationally known black community:

Their names. Names they got from yearnings, gestures, flaws, events, mistakes, weaknesses. Names that bore witness. Macon Dead, Sing Byrd, Crowell Byrd, Pilate, Reba, Hagar, Magdalene, First Corinthians, Milkman, Guitar, Railroad Tommy, Hospital Tommy, Empire State (he just stood around and swayed), Small Boy, Sweet, Circe, Moon, Nero, Humpty-Dumpty, Blue Boy, Scandinavia, QuackQuack, Jericho, Spoonbread, Ice Man, Dough Belly, Rocky River, Gray Eye, Cocka-Doodle-Do, Cool Breeze, Muddy

Waters, Pinetop, Jelly Roll, Fats, Leadbelly, Bo Diddley, Cat-Iron, Peg-Leg, Son, Shortstuff, Smoky Babe, Funny Papa, Bukka, Pink, Bull Moose, B.B., T-Bone, Black Ace, Lemon, Washboard, Gatemouth, Cleanhead, Tampa Red, Juke Boy, Shine, Staggerlee, Jim the Devil, Fuck-Up, and *Dat Nigger* (p. 330).

From the particular to the universal, fictional and real names are mingled and blurred. But all have been imposed, and reconciling the intimacy of the too-close literality of those names with the arbitrary, uncaring distance of unnamings and renaming that denies ancestry and renders the characters and their culture 'dead' is part of the novel's quest.

Used as the central metaphor for this quest and to illustrate the consequences of severing African-Americans from their roots, the Dead family, named by a 'drunken Yankee in the Union Army' (p. 18), embraces white American materialist values of possession and ownership. This is epitomized by the 'wide green Packard' that Macon Dead, Jr drives every Sunday to parade his success and his family, because they too are among his possessions. But, while some envy the luxury, its cold and rigid formality as it drives through the streets avoiding all contact with the community amuses them into calling it 'Macon Dead's hearse' because it had 'no real lived life at all' (p. 33). Milkman is tainted by Macon Dead's lust for wealth and power, believing it allows you to 'own yourself and other people too' (p. 55). But it serves only to divide the family amongst itself and from other black Americans, to oppose the concept of community and to deny any association with or knowledge of their cultural and spiritual essence. The use of the name Dead serves to emphasise symbolically how much the fixation with white-defined respectability can cost in personal, social and spiritual terms. It is Guitar who makes explicit the connection between the imposed name of Dead, the appropriation of white values and the pervasiveness of white control:

They want your life, man [...] I don't mean they want your dead life; they want your living life [...] White men want us dead or quiet - which is the same thing as dead [...] They want us, you know, 'universal', human, no 'race consciousness.' (p. 222)

During his journey Milkman gradually sheds the white American values of possession and ownership and frees himself of the

consequential controls. The symbolic closing of the door at the 'big dark house of twelve rooms' (p. 9) at the end of Part I marks his departure from those values. Part II begins his journey to find the gold and the first two Sections see him gradually and systematically undergo a process of being physically and literally 'stripped back' as he is divested of clothes, possessions, wealth and reputation. His luggage mysteriously disappears, he throws away his lighter in a fit of temper and his gold Longines watch is 'acquired' by Grace Long. Piece by piece his clothing is stained by water, ripped and torn by rocks and finally removed by hunters. "Damn," he murmured aloud. "I'm losing everything" (p. 294). The hunt is the pivotal episode of Milkman's journey, representing the moment of rebirth. Shortly afterward he begins to 'feel connected, as though there was some cord or pulse or information [he] shared' (p. 293) with the people in Shalimar and Danville. This is closely followed by the discovery of his identity when he finally solves the riddle of the children's song. At the moment of Milkman's epiphany, on realising that the gold he is chasing is not a symbol of wealth and power but of the knowledge and identity of his ancestors, he finally reclaims his own identity and his image is reformed:

He ran back to Solomon's store and caught a glimpse of himself in the plate-glass window. He was grinning. His eyes were shining. He was as eager and happy as he had ever been in his life. (p. 304)

But for Guitar the gold still exists and remains a symbol of power and revenge. Milkman's life before and during the quest is lived within an atmosphere of death and potential violence. His birth coincides with the suicide of Robert Smith, he is reared and nurtured in a house of suppressed violence, his best friend takes part in a programme of indiscriminate retaliatory murders of whites in revenge for the murder of blacks, and his lover 'Hagar. Killing, ice-pick wielding Hagar [...] found herself each month searching the barrels and cupboards and basement shelves for some comfortably portable weapon with which to murder her true love' (p. 126). The quest itself is driven by a legacy of violent death. Both Jake and the old man in the cave, who Macon kills in panic, die violently. The confusion between Jake's bones and the gold the old man is guard-

ing fuels the energy of the quest. Milkman's revelation that the gold is in fact his ancestor draws him toward the community with a positive, loving response and away from violence.

The value of community is an important and insistent theme in Toni Morrison's work and Guitar's refusal to deny violence in his desire for vengeance, forces him to abandon that very value for which he believes he is fighting. In order to carry out his revenge Guitar deliberately and willingly destroys all close connections with his community:

'You can't marry.'

'No.'

'Have children.'

'No.'

'What kind of life is that?'

'Very satisfying.'

'There no love in it.'

'No love? No love? Didn't you hear me? What I'm doing ain't about hating people. It's about loving us. About loving you. My whole life is love.'

'Man, you're confused.' (p.159)

The hunters hunt for food but the thrill of the hunt and the dispassionate killing of the bobcat is shadowed by Guitar hunting Milkman and the juxtaposition questions Guitar's desire to kill. The ritualistic skinning and dismemberment of the bobcat after the hunt is carried out in counterpoint with the echo of Guitar's justification of the equally precise and ritualistic killings by the Seven Days. His insistence that the killings are carried out in the name of love for his people is questioned by the equally insistent 'What else?'. On hearing of the existence of the Seven Days Milkman warns Guitar 'it's a habit. If you do it enough, you can do it to anybody [...] You can off anybody you don't like. You can off me' (p. 161). Guitar deliberately severs himself from love within his community for the pursuit of violence. More importantly by not giving 'a damn about names' (p. 160) he severs his link with his ancestors and in doing so he denies the novel's central quest, to reclaim identity. Morrison regards the absence of an ancestor as 'frightening', 'threatening' and destructive.⁹ Killing and the desire for gold as a means to power and revenge become Guitar's love. It is this obsession that refuses to

allow him to believe that the gold does not exist and which releases in him the destructive impulse to kill within his own community without seeing the distinction.

Jazz

Joe Trace loves and kills within the black community but his violence is absorbed by and contained within that community. Dorcas's refusal to identify the man who shot her and Alice's refusal to name the woman who tried to slash the dead girl's face confine the violence to the black community. This is crucial to the basic premise of the novel, that black Americans needed their own insulated space to explore and develop their own identity in order to be able to move forward. *Jazz* is set in Harlem in 1926 during 'The Jazz Age'. White histories tend to see the creative and social changes of the period as part of the aftermath of World War I. But history takes on a special significance during this period for African-Americans as their music begins to take on its own identity, developing an identifiably black American culture. It is this period that Toni Morrison tries to recover as being specifically part of black American history. The city is presented not only as providing the necessary space but also as absorbing and protecting all types of people. You can do 'what you please in the City, it is there to back and frame you no matter what you do.'¹⁰ The wind sweeps away any trace of Violet's footprints in the snow and Lenox Avenue is silent as the City conspires to protect her.

Highly syncopated, *jazz* nonetheless has an ordered underlying melodic structure giving cohesion and support to the reciprocation of the counter improvised, displaced rhythm of competing instruments, which grow, fall back, explore, play with ideas and possibilities. Represented as a living organism, the personified 'City' also has a pulse, a regular rhythmic beat that keeps breathing life into it. The Monday to Friday working week is part of that rhythm, which organises human life. But the human body has its own contra rhythms and to break or disrupt 'the artificial rhythm of the week' has 'satisfaction pure and deep' (p. 50). The City with its contra rhythms offers a space where the rhythms of jazz can be developed and can itself build a space which shapes and is shaped by both

black and white people. The image of the 'cold black faces' of the marching men in July 1917 following the ordered, regular beat of the military drums and 'moving slowing into the space the drums were building for them' (p. 53) symbolises the black American community who are using an existing structure and occupying a space which jazz is constructing for them, a space in which life styles, morality and familial patterns are being renegotiated. Alice identifies the role of African-American music in shaping the social space into which people are being drawn:

It was the music. The dirty, get-on-down music the women sang and the men played and both danced to, close and shameless or apart and wild [...] It made you do unwise disorderly things. Just hearing it was like violating the law' (p. 58).

Lawlessness and violence are an integral part of this rhythm but, like the other voices of the improvised structure, they are absorbed by the protective City. Within that protection the black community is allowed to evolve. Violence, healing and regeneration all take place in and are confined within the black community. In turn the central story, the murder of Dorcas by the lover she has just left, itself focusses, controls and contains the stories of all the characters. It is the point of reference and all the characters exist in relation to it. But Joe's is not the only act of violence to be contained. Black women who have been wronged are also seen to have the potential for violence and are categorized according to various levels of that Potential. They are 'armed' and 'dangerous' because many carry 'folded blades, packets of lye, shards of glass taped to their hands'. Those who do not arm themselves are 'attached to armed men'. Still others 'become pistols' organising

'leagues, clubs, societies, sisterhoods designed to [...] [b]ail out, dress the dead, pay the rent, find new rooms, start a school, storm an office, take up collections, rout the block and keep their eyes on all the children' (p. 78).

A single composite pattern of resolute women who are united in struggle, no matter what form it may take. Alice is a pistol, Violet is one of the armed and all are linked to their ancestors through generations of struggling black women.

Violet's assertion that she tried to slash the dead girl's face because Dorcas is her enemy even in death, triggers Alice's memory

of repressed images of violence thirty years earlier when she had craved the death and torment of her husband's lover. Alice had not acted but had contented herself with murderous dreams. Because of her own restraint, she is at first fearful of women like Violet who are not restrained. But Violet simply needs somewhere 'to sit down' and says 'I thought I could do it here. That you would let me and you did' (p. 82). Drinking tea together, talking, drawing out fears and secrets, and mending and ironing clothes is part of the healing process for both women. Healing also takes place in the feminine, domestic sphere for Joe through Felice. A physical reminder, with her 'four marcelled waves and all' (p. 197), she fills the space where Dorcas's photograph had been. But unlike the girl with straw behind her face, an effigy of an image acceptable to a social group she wanted to belong to, Felice has a solid image and self-identity. The result of a conscious, caring decision when she 'heard he was still at it, crying and so on' (p. 205), she brings Joe and Violet completion to the story of Dorcas's death and in doing so relieves her own grief and plays her part in the healing of all three characters:

He turned to me, touching my elbow as I walked to the door. 'Felice. They named you right. Remember that' (p. 215).

Happiness and laughter 'More complicated, more serious than tears' (p. 113) are regenerative, reuniting Joe and Violet and bringing both parts of Violet together:

She buttoned her coat and left the drugstore and noticed, at the same moment as *that* Violet did that it was spring. In the City (p. 114).

The City plays its part in their regeneration. The music that floats in through their window making them dance together draws them back into its rhythm with a sensuality that makes Felice feel like an intruder. Renewed and able to move forward they join the City's Monday to Friday rhythm, moving around its streets, enjoying being part of the community. But they also find their own private rhythm 'telling each other those little personal stories they like to hear again and again' (p. 223) and their private 'undercover whispers' counter the public 'sound of snapping fingers under the sycamores lining the streets' (p. 226) of which they have become part. Now able to move forward, rejoin and become part of the community, they are essential to the wider process of reclaiming and developing a cultural

identity:

jazz music was not originally for anyone but its players. It was always clear what its painful sources were. And yet it does what art is supposed to do - it makes another thing possible. This is how I want my work to be - a private thing for public consumption."¹

Every act of interpretation is a domination, according to post modernist theory. The history told by Toni Morrison in *Song of Solomon*, *Beloved* and *Jazz* is also a will to power, a strategy to allow a people to be the subject of its own history, not as marginalised 'others' or addenda. A deliberate movement can be traced from death, to resurrection, to discovery, to progress. The images of self and identity are perceived as perpetually in process and in *Jazz* the characters are seen to develop independently of the narrator. But just as the contra sounds of jazz are seen to exist independently while complementing each other, reinterpreting the same work over and over again, creating energy and driving forward, so the narrator invites the reader/audience to take part, to 'make me, remake me' (p. 229) by constantly reinterpreting her work.

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INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH: CANONIZING THE HUMAN FACTOR

Niranjan Mohanty

Let me begin my paper by what Robert Scholes in his interesting study of English in the universities of the U.S. mentioned evoking a different context. Scholes wrote: "The victors write history. The vanquished, if they are lucky, read it" (150). Today, after one hundred and seventy two years of introduction of Macauley's *Minutes* (1835), I feel tempted to believe, because of the status of Indian Writing in English, that we are not only 'victors' (without of course, fighting a political battle) but also 'lucky' without being vanquished. There has been a great paradigm shift between the period when writing in English in India was treated an impossibility and now, when it is a realized reality, without being fashionable or cliché either. The power embodied in the shift obviously generates a kind of enthusiasm and verve which would, in future years, bear fruits. The shift has neither resulted in our willing acceptance of the concept of a fortunate fall, *felix culpa* of Medieval Christian thought, in which the sin of Adam and Eve was seen as fortunate, because it led to the Redeemer, nor in our adherence to Joycean *foenix culprit* (of *Finnegans Wake* 23), in which a guilty figure rising like a phoenix from the ashes of its funeral pyre without the possibility of any redemption, like Finnegans's own waking up. The shift, on the other hand, has resulted in creating a new discipline in the academic world.

I have a strong conviction that, after more than 170 years of its origin, Indian Writing in English has achieved its historicity to assume its canonical status today, not simply because it has been incorporated into the syllabi of Indian, European and Western universities, but also because of the critical acclaim and attention it has drawn to its fold. I am, therefore, convinced, like many others in India, that the Indian writer in English is neither Adam nor Finnegans, but is almost like the lover of Donne's "Canonization" who so startlingly declares:

Alas, alas, who's injured by my love?
What merchant's ships have my sighs drowned?
Who says my tears have overflowed his ground?

While making an attempt to unearth one of the riddles involving Indian Writing in English, I'm all at once reminded of a comic situation in *Coriolanus* (Act V, Sc II) where we encounter a play with names. Menenius visited the Volscian camp outside Rome with a view to persuading Coriolanus to abandon the siege and save Rome. The sentries did not allow him entry, in spite of telling his name. The sentries replied, "the virtues of your name/ Is not here passable." He still insisted on getting in and meeting Coriolanus. But of no avail. Coriolanus himself then appeared but rejected his friend. The sentries teased Menenius as he was departing: "Now, sir, is your name Menenius? 'Tis a spell you see, of much power."

My purpose in citing this comical situation from *Coriolanus* is to unearth an interesting riddle. Indian Writing in English began to gather strength and momentum, both in the Indian universities and the Western, and more so with the Western academic circles, only when it has been put under the colonizing and homogenizing umbrella of postcolonial literature, suggesting inevitably, thereby, its semblance to literatures in English in other countries which had a colonial past and a colonial history, without taking cognizance of the richness, the diversity, the sophistication, the growth embodied in Indian Writing in English; or for that matter, without taking note of other factors or forces which shaped, moulded and nurtured the growth, flowering and fruition of this body of writing, which, despite its challenges and problems, has earned its name and made stay. What I propose to suggest or argue here is that should a rich body of literature, growing or developing on its own, and having had its authentic historicity and tradition, and having had identified its own creative expression and idiom, be identified with literatures in English in other countries which had experienced colonial past. Now it is indeed quite relevant to ask one question to ourselves: Do our writers (who write in English) write with the burden of a colonial and hegemonic past? Or do they write with a motif of vengeance or with a malice of perpetuating resistance? Or do they write with the belief that the colonial past always impinges upon their writing even today? I, honestly and engagingly, believe that the period of resistance was over with our country's freedom. Indian Writing in English,

therefore, is dialectically postcolonial, not fashionably so. It is merely itself. Despite its identity or nomenclature as it is — whether Indian Writing in English or a fraction of Postcolonial literatures of the world in the Western world, it has remained a minority course and has become a specialized course catering to the needs of specializing students. The case in Indian curricula is not, however, different. Robert Scholes makes a very pragmatic observation:

Every English department in the United States now in some phase of a struggle over how "minority" literatures in English — Ethnic American, postcolonial, gay/ lesbian are to be represented in the curriculum and who, if any one, is to teach them. One result of this struggle has been the development of courses in specialized literatures taught by specialized faculty to specialized students. (152)

This then is the paradoxical nature of the fate of Indian Writing in English, whether it is here or elsewhere. The situation is not likely to change, as long as English or American literature is thought to constitute the mainstream literature in our curricula. In spite of its specialized identity as 'minority literature', it can hope to survive, provided the students who undertake such specialized courses get ample opportunities for employment. In order to have currency, once legitimacy is achieved, any literature or writing has to bear upon its relevance in the present. Now other forces or factors — the forces of market or consumerism, the forces of demand in the diverse professional world come into operation to give an usable identity to Indian Writing in English. But from this angle, if we look at Indian Writing in English — more particularly Indian fiction in English —, it has a demand and a craze in the West. Such a trend has been set in since 1980, say, with the publication of *Midnight's Children*, with Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai winning the Booker, with Jhumpa Lahiri winning the Pulitzer, or even for that matter, V.S. Naipaul winning the Nobel (even if Naipaul stated that "India and Trinidad are the two sources of my pain"). An euphoric attraction towards this rich body of writing has been instrumental to intensifying the critical capital, side by side, ameliorating and consolidating its popularity through media and established publishing houses. But if we juxtapose this popularity with the total indifference to what preceded this new body of writing, particularly before 1980, we are likely to un-

earth another riddle that leads us to accept the view that, as if, whatever was written prior to 1980, could or should be thrown to oblivion. Such a stance or attitude can and does immense harm to the historical relevance of this body of writing. What I propose to adhere to or assert is that because of the plethora of prizes in the present, the past achievements can not be disowned or marginalized. We can not obviously appreciate and applaud the present glory, without taking account of what has been achieved by the past. Writers like R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand, who were instrumental to the formation of an indigeneous tradition of Indian Writing in English, can not be said to have done or achieved nothing. Their greatness as writers can not, however, be marginalized or disowned. Such tendencies in the recent critical judgment is likely to jeopardize the status of the present-day writers in future. I'm much concerned and worried about this kind of a critical outlook. What happened to the first generation of writers in English in India, whether the trio I have already mentioned, or poets like Derozio, Toru Dutt, Man Mohan Ghosh, Kashi Prasad Ghosh, reminds me of the New Criticism or New Critics. Every new body of criticism/ theory that emerged after New Criticism tried to adumbrate the methods of interpreting literary texts pioneered by the New Critics, without realizing the fact that all theories stood upon the shoulders of New Criticism, and for our information, these shoulders were strong enough to bear the burden of all other theories till date. But being pragmatic, I can say that the keys given by the New Critics to open literary texts are still valid today in the classroom situations, more particularly in India. Without understanding the utility of such keys, all other theories, rather the interdisciplinary theories, remain incomprehensible. What I intend to suggest is that day by day, as civilization advances, and as our access to information pool becomes incredibly easy, the methodology of interpreting literary texts experiences transformation resulting in our increasing apathy towards the literariness of literary texts. We are forced to unearth everything else except what is literary in a literary text. We are exposed to class, class-struggle, base, superstructure, religions, religious values, social and moral values, binaries of all kinds, gender and

sexuality, history as a grand narrative and a chunk of history from a less significant and comical moment (and not heroic), masters and slaves, signifiers and signifieds, difference, colonial situation and postcolonial context. We are loaded with so much of information, so much of fashionable jargons, that we fail to relate such information and such jargons to the literary texts. As a result, the literary text either disappears or becomes complacent with finding out an escape route through the window of the class room. T.S. Eliot, in his "Choruses from the Rock" prophetically but judiciously warned us:

Endless invention, endless experiment,
Brings knowledge of motion, but not of stillness;
Knowledge of speech, but not of silence;
Knowledge of words, and ignorance of the Word;
Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?
The cycles of Heaven in twenty centuries
Bring us farther from GOD and nearer to the DUST. (99)

Regardless of technological inventions and expansion of the critical tools, it has to be borne in the mind by the creative writer and the critic that the creative power, the esemplastic power of the human mind is eminently superior to what the machine-driven or information-crazy mind generates or creates. In a seminal essay "Literature in a Technological Age," Cleanth Brooks observed:

A world reduced to hard facts would thereby become a dehumanized world, a world in which few of us would want to live. We are intensely interested in how our fellow human beings behave — in their actions, to be sure, but also in the feelings, motives, purposes that lead them to such actions. The proof is to be found in situation comedies of T.V. shows or the gossip columns in the magazines and newspapers. We want to know the facts, but we crave for the whole story too — its human interest and what we call its meaning. We want meaning and we want wisdom, but those elusive commodities are always in short supply. In the Book of Proverbs we learn that "Wisdom crieth ... In the streets," but it goes on to imply that "no man regardeth." If this was the situation several millennia ago, it remains so today. Secretly we may hunger for wisdom, but our overt craving nowadays is, of course, for information. Data banks are much in vogue and they are highly useful, but they are not equipped to pay off in the currency of wisdom. (Brooks 3)

My purpose in quoting Brooks is simply to highlight the importance of the human element or factor for the creative writer and that of 'meaning' embedded in the literary text for the critic in India today. Once such factors get side-tracked, both creative writing and criticism or theory of any brand is likely to jeopardize itself, is likely to become a series of nothingness, resulting in the frofligacy of preposterous documentation of our lives and facts in our literary and critical texts. If Indian Writing in English has to leave an indelible impression, if it has to retain an everlasting quality, or if it has to reach the condition of fire, it has to embody the human factor, the human element with honesty, sincerity and a religious temper. This is how our writers can retain their identity without failing to achieve universality. By referring to Brooks's statement, I should not be misunderstood to have meant that the Indian Writers in English is blind to the human element or concerns. It is for the sake of sharpening, refining and intensifying this concern that the writer can achieve immensity, can acquire greater critical attention. A creative writer's vision should ordain self-sufficiency not only in discovering the relationship of diverse facets of our existence but also in enabling the readers to discover meaning in apparent meaninglessness and form in formlessness through the representational quality of his words, of his written word. He should exploit the diverse representational potential of the written word. In an age of information, the word retains its potential, its immensity. John Updike has something very significant to assert in a short piece, "The Written Word":

A sense of vast and potent space adheres to the written word. Into an endlessly fecund sub-universe the writer descends and asks the reader to descend after him not merely to gain instruction but to experience delight, the delight of mind freed from matter and exultant in the strength it has stolen from matter. In combative richness, the written word rivals, almost blasphemously, creation itself, and like that creation holds within itself the seeds of infinite renewal. (Updike 35)

Our creative writers must take measures to see that there is always an infinite renewal in the use of words. This word only matters for it embodies the world. The potency of the word lies in its representation quality that bestows power and strength to it, that enkindles it, generating the passion of flux and spirit of stillness in it. The

Indian Writer in English has to write the most persuasive word, charged with a passion to perpetuate life in its totality. The importance of the written word lies in its orientation through culture, tradition and social values. Vasant A. Shahane, while examining Khushwant Singh's works, observes:

Language must become the primary instrument of national expression. English in India must become sufficiently Indian in order to be an adequate instrument of national consciousness and expression. It may deviate, in this process, from the established norms of King's English but these deviations should be welcomed by all because they will bestow on Indian English the vitality, vigor, and directness which are the admirable qualities of a living language. (Shahane 155)

I believe what Shahane had suggested three decades ago remains valid even today. Whether one writes from within India or from any other country outside India, Indian English — the creative medium has been able to become an instrument of nurturing and fulfilling the demands of our national and cultural experiences and consciousness. Salman Rushdie in an interview describes his emotional relationship with India:

There is only one place for every human being and always only one place that gives you the feeling of being at home. I was born in Bombay and even now going to Bombay is the only time when I have the feeling of coming home. (101)

When *The Moor's Last Sigh* was treated as a novel ridiculing India, Rushdie clarified his stance:

And I gather that there is some attempt to have the book banned in the rest of India because there is a dog called Jawaharlal in the novel. I find it a rather ridiculous issue. There is not a novel that sets out to ridicule the India that Nehru brought into being, but actually to lament the damage done to that vision of India in the succeeding years. Most of the leading characters in the novel are passionately in favour of the Independence movement except for one who is pro-British — an Indian character who is pro-British — and it is this figure, in order to annoy his family who are nationalists, who names his dog Jawaharlal. It has to be seen in this context. It is the one anti-national character who does this to annoy and all the major characters in the novel are annoyed by this. Given this background, it would be tragically ironic if people who claim to be protecting the flame of Nehru's memory should see this novel as being hostile to it. (100)

Rushdie rightly feels defensive about the issue; for him, it is the

context that decides upon the issue; for common men who are yet to fathom the sophistry of the context would read things literally and are likely to remain affected sentimentally or emotionally. There can be no solution to this kind of extremes — one, governed by the alignments of a textual context, the other by the fluidity of a sentiment. I strongly believe that any creative writer, whether writing in the regional language or in English, has an unwritten, unconscious responsibility to the society, culture, country, tradition, linguistic heritage he belongs to or shares with. One can not disapprove of or dismantle this hiatus, this inviolable, insurmountable relationship, the relationship that ultimately goes into the making of a literature which acquires the condition of music, or of fire or silence or of timelessness. Indian Writing in English today is fast moving in this direction.

It is an admitted fact that Indian fiction in English has taken the front seat, both for its own sake and for the kind of critical responses it has evoked over the years. Next to fiction is poetry, and the last comes drama. It has been maintained by scholars and critics that there is no dearth of poetry but quality-poetry is rare. Such a scene is debilitating, dampening. This is not the case of India only, it is a global phenomenon. But that is not to concede to the fact that fiction represents the country or its culture more than what either poetry or drama does. Literature is always self-validating. The validity of any literary genre stems from its quality — both the quality of perception and of representation. Literature, whatever its genre, must provide us with new angles to read, understand, know and interpret reality. It must evoke fresh perspectives to overcome the condition of stagnation and decadence. It must remain human and humane to the core if it has to assume a timeless or an universal condition. I am at once reminded of what Professor K.R. Srinivas Iyengar observed in 'Meet the Author' Programme of Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi:

Writing, then, is an act of faith, a faith that stumbles, yet revives and endures....

And we all know that careering technology and sophisticated electronic media are fast reducing books and reading to anachronisms. As for the English-knowing potential audience or an Indian readership that cultivates

Indian writing in English, it is no more than minimal if not national. It is but elementary wisdom under these circumstances to realize with cold certitude that books like mine are not exactly going to set even the Coum — even the Buckingham Canal — on fire. A writer like me, then needs more than anything else, a bottomless humility, humility both about the worth of his work and of its possible impact on the world today or in times to come. (91)

Indian Writing in English has to remain "an act of faith"; has to retain at its core the quintessential rhythm and mark of human sympathy and human dignity, if it has to retain its own identity, the kind of identity that A.K. Ramanujan tries to uphold in a poem entitled "Death and the Good Citizen," where he compares the Indian way of cremation with the American way and accepts the Indian way:

But
 you know my tribe, incarnate
 unbelievers in bodies,
 they'll speak proverbs, contest
 my will, against such degradation.
 Hidebound, even worms cannot
 have me: they'll cremate
 me in Sanskrit and sandalwood,
 have me sterilized
 to a scatter of ash.

(*The Collected Poems* 136)

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FLORA AND FAUNA AS SOURCES OF IMAGERY IN GIRISH KARNAD'S PLAYS

Ravi Dwivedi

Broadly speaking, images are the sensory content of a work, whether literal or figurative. Peter Huggins, a well known contemporary poet of the United Kingdom, in his poem "Another Train" wrote about the function of an image in a poem in particular and in all creative works in general: 'A poem work of art is a train of thought / the carriages are images/ between imperfect couplings.' To a creative mind, the entire universe from dust particles to stars is a source of imagery. Moreover, he can create some images with his imagination without resorting to outside objects. External and natural phenomena are a rich and inexhaustible source of images. A great writer invariably makes use of the two fecund resources for images – one object-based images and the other fancy-created. Among the numerous sources of images, quite commonly exploited are the sky, mythology and legends, and flora and fauna. In this article I intend to make a study of only the flora and fauna Images. Quite a rich source of images in Girish Karnad's plays is the kingdom of fauna and flora which evidences his vast knowledge and keen scientific observation of animals, beasts, reptiles, insects and saplings, plants, trees, grasses, creepers, leaves, buds, flowers and fruits.

The images taken from flora objects can be studied under subdivisions as follows: The Trees, The Leaves, The Flowers, The Fruits, The Garden and The Jungle. The tree images are: Heavenly *Kalpa Vriksha* (HV² 40) and 'Big Banyan Tree' (TFAR 5); 'Banyan tree-enormous-hundreds of years old' (BTS 81); 'Fortunate Lady' (HV 5) and 'Mango' (TD 6); 'Champak tree' (TFAR 18), 'The *Neem* tree' (TFAR 34), 'Banyan tree' (TD 41) and 'Under the banyan tree' (NM 53).

Among the big and mythological trees, those most frequently used for his imagery by Karnad are Banyan, *Kalpa Vriksha* and Fortunate Lady. Karnad has beautifully drawn an image of *Kalpa Vriksha* – a special tree which stands for boons in ancient literature. This *Kalpa Vriksha* is not merely a species of flora but a mythological tree. In Hayavadana, Bhagwata reports the words of a *Rishi*: "As

the heavenly *Kalpa Vriksha* is supreme among the trees (HV 40). There is another tree named Fortunate Lady – mythologically speaking this tree has all the marks of a marriage a woman puts on (HV26). In the cart driving scene Padmini's exultation and effusive praise of Kapila resonate with sexual connotations. At the very beginning of *The Fire and the Rain*, Girish Karnad takes his reader to a meeting of the elders being held under a banyan tree (5). In *Bali: The Sacrifice*, Mahout tells the queen that there is a God under banyan tree (81). In *Naga-Mandala*, there is an enormous ant-hill under the banyan tree where a king cobra lives (53). In *Tale-Danda*, Lalita speaks of Haralayya's mother who is supposed to be the incarnation of Goddess Dyamavva who speaks under the banyan tree (41).

The other trees that have appeared in Karnad's plays to serve imagery are the neem tree, the jack-fruit tree, the tamarind tree, the mango tree. In *Tale-Danda*, Basavanna says, "I am an ekke a swallow-wort among mangoes" (23). Aravasu accompanying Nittilai goes in search of Vishakha behind the *champak tree* (TFAR 18). Paravasu after killing his father calls Aravasu near the *neem tree* (TFAR 34). The leaves images are: 'dry leaves' (HV 58), 'Shakes like a leaf' (TD 62), 'See every leaf' (BTS 76), 'Skin like young mango leaves' (NM 32), and 'Betel leaves' (TDTS 49).

In Karnad's vegetable world we come across the images of different kinds of leaves, such as faded leaf, dry leaf, coloured leaf, green leaf and fallen leaf. Dry leaves, faded leaves and fallen leaves suggest the perturbed state of human beings or sometimes uselessness of persons. On the contrary, fresh leaves bring to our mind the budding youth or vitality of human beings. In *Naga-Mandala*, Kurudavva – the mother of Kappanna – depicts the beauty of Rani by comparing her skin to young mango leaves (32). In *The Dreams of Tipu-Sultan*, Kirmani tells Tipu that the English have been given betel leaves (49). In *Bali: The Sacrifice*, for Mahout night is so clear that one can see every leaf in the tree (76). In *Hayavadana*, female chorus sings of a top of dry leaves (58). In *Tale-Danda*, Sovideva shakes like a leaf (62).

Then Karnad uses flowers for his images: 'Fortunate Lady flowers' (HV 126), 'Rose Yeppee' (45), 'White Jasmine' (47), 'Rose'

(*TDTS* 49), 'Nightqueen' (*NM* 49), 'Pegu Rose' (*TDTS* 64) and 'Lotus' (*HV* 13). His flower imagery mostly constitutes of the rose, jasmine, nightqueen, lotus, hibiscus, lily, yippee (sick) and fortunate lady. The lotus, which is a spiritual symbol in his plays, is an archetypal symbol of purity, fidelity, rejuvenation and austerity in Indian literature. In *Naga-Mandala*, Rani is susceptible to the sweet smell of the blossoming nightqueen (49). In *Hayavadana*, Devadatta describes his son as a rose (45). Even dolls speak of flowers. Doll II, for example, says, 'Round his neck a garland of virgin white jasmines' (*HV* 47). In *The Dream of Tipu Sultan*, the Sultan calls all his companions to see the progressive age as the Pegu roses bloom (67).

Besides trees and flowers Karnad has taken images from fruits. His fruit world comprises apples, grapes, Jack-fruit, mango, vomit nut, etc. These fruits are sweet, bitter, warm, red, green, rippled, rotten and of round shape. In *The Fire and the Rain*, Vishakha says to Yavakari, '...you are still lost in the fragrance of the Jack-fruit' (16). Gangambika speaks to Haralayya of the underestimated condition of women in male-dominated society 'as a woman for man is just a ripe mango on a roadside tree' (42). The apple in *The Dream of Tipu Sultan* is exquisite and its colouring is so delicate that it is a supreme pleasure to look at it (21). And 'vomit nut causes dizziness whosoever eats it' (*TD* 56).

Garden images are abundant: 'The Garden of Versailles' and 'Lal Bagh' (*TDTS* 25), 'Garden stands in the tree of emeralds' (*NM* 28), 'Field or garden' (36), 'Magic garden' (p.28), 'New Rose Garden' (*Tughlaq* 63), and 'The garden only for girls' (*BTS* 89). Similarly, some of the jungle image are: 'The dark jungle' (*TFAR* 10), 'Jungle as a sheer hell' (13), 'Jungle is like a home' (49), 'The whole forest like a fragrance' (*HV* 63), 'The forest with river and tree' (62), 'The whole night in the jungle' and 'Thick wood' (29). Karnad's Gardens are usually presented as loaded with flowers and fruits. Forests are dark, thick, and illuminated by the sun, the moon and the stars. Tipu Sultan is very fond of gardens. In *Naga-Mandala*, Rani speaks of a magic garden (28). In *Tughlaq*, Muhammad refers to a rose garden where the coins of copper currency will be heaped (63). In *Bali: The*

Sacrifice, we have a garden that is only for girls (9).

Karnad's animal imagery mainly comprises tiger, lion, bison, porcupine, mongoose, panther, horse, camel, wolf, goat, donkey, cow, buffalo, deer, elephant, rabbit, sheep, stallion, and bull. The animals used for the purpose are wild or domestic according to the nature of the character, or according to the comic or tragic. Quite striking of a few wild animal images are: 'fight like lion' (HV 61), 'Howl of wild wolves and the answering bay of street dogs' (*Tughlaq* 54), 'The big, the whale' (NM 45) and 'tiger bellows for his mate' (45). These wild animals are meant to portray the rough, dehumanized and contemptuous nature of human beings. In *The Fire and the Rain*, Andhaka, the door-keeper of Raibhya, hears a terrible sound of a wild horse, a boar or a bison (10). when at Devadatta's insistence Kapila searches the house of Padmini, the former finds: 'This is a lion. A tiger — a horse — a rhinoceros — another lion' (HV 16). In *Tughlaq*, Muhammad tells about the ominous sounds, 'I have heard only the howl of wild wolves and answering bay of street dogs' (51).

Besides these images from wild beasts, we also find numerous images from domestic animals, some of which are: 'like a buffalo that has been rolling in mud' (TFAR 19), 'The era of camel' (TDTS 36), 'Goats have to be sacrificed and buffaloes slaughtered' (NM 45), 'Die like a sick dog' (TD 50), 'Skinning dead buffalo' (40), 'To run like a rabbit' (11), 'Like a dog pissing' (13), 'Millions of cows' (14), 'Divine bull Nandi' (6), 'Privilege on this ass' (49), 'Buffalo fat-ted' (77) and 'Like a bull-elephant' (86). 'Buffalo' has been used in Karnad's plays to symbolize ignorance, stupidity and simplicity. In *The Fire and the Rain*, Raibhya says to Vishakha, 'Why are you so filthy? You look like a buffalo that has been rolling in mud' (TFAR 9). In *Naga-Mandala*, Rani says to Naga: 'It is a hard nut to crack to make you speak in morning even goats have to be sacrificed and buffaloes slaughtered to get a word out of you in the mornings' (NM 45). In *Tale-Danda*, Lalita speaks of skinning dead buffaloes (40). 'Bull' has been used to show stupidity and violence. In *Tale-Danda*, Jagadeva calls Basavanna as 'The divine bull, Nandi' (6), and king Bijjala is 'like a bull elephant' (86). The dog is usually used to portray a bombastic speaking man. Red with anger, Bijjala rebukes his son

Sovideva by remarking, 'Why are you stuck there, leg out, like a dog pissing' (13). Pigs, donkeys and asses are other animals, the names of which have been used for abuses. To Bijjala Sovideva is no more than an 'ass' (19). Kallappa tells the qualification of a king, 'You need to have been a donkey in your last' (12). Devadatta pushes Kapila and shouts, 'Get away, you pig' (HV 37). Rani compares herself with 'The pig, the whale, the eagle' (NM45). When Basavanna comes to the scene, Sovideva attempts to run 'like a rabbit' (11).

Like Karnad's animal imagery, his bird imagery, too, is of special interest to the reader. The birds that are frequently referred to are vultures, sparrows, pigeons, parrots, owls, cocks, eagles, falcons and swans. There are birds of prey or pet birds in keeping with the purpose to be served by them. The images from birds of prey are: 'Why are the vultures — reeling —' (TFAR56), 'Fly like a falcon' (57), 'Hard to breathe in this eagle nest' (Tughlaq 51), 'Brahmin is like the Jackal' (TD 56), 'If the owl blinded' (56); 'Eagle answers' (NM 20), and 'eagle-none of them asks' (45). In *The Fire and the Rain*, on the occasion of sacrificial fire Vritra presents vultures along with other birds. Vritra challenges Indra, 'You can elude me, Indra but you can't escape me even if you fly like a falcon across ninety nine rivers' (57). In *Tughlaq*, the old man remarks, 'I am a man of plains son I find it hard to breathe in this eagle nest' (51). In *Tale-Danda*, Basavanna shows his hatred for a Brahmin, 'Brahmin is like a jackal who eats vomit-nut and gets dizzy' (56). The owl has been usually considered a bird of ill omen and ill luck, and hence Basavanna speaks of it, '— If the owl blinded by day thinks its nightfall —' (56).

The images from pet birds are: 'little parrot' (NM 33), 'like a parrot' (BTS 83), 'your pigeon is sitting' (HV 15), 'sparrow chirping' (BTS 80), 'swans are frozen' and 'royal swan' (102), 'not a — sparrow' (NM 51), 'like a pigeon' (TD 29), 'a thunder bolt at sparrow' (34), and 'like cocks' (HV 61). Parrot is a pet bird which is very intimate to man. In *Naga-Madala*, Kurudavva speaks of her son Kappanna, 'So let's call this little parrot of my eyes —' (33). Similarly, in *Bali: The Sacrifice*, Mahout asks the Queen, 'Stop repeating yourself like a parrot' (83). In *Naga Mandala*, Rani says, 'I am not a parrot' (51), meaning thereby she does not want to be taken for a mute

sufferer and repeater of words like a parrot. In Karnad's plays sparrow stands for innocence. In *Naga-Mandala*, Rani says, 'I am not — a sparrow' (51). In *Tale-Danda*, Gundanna laughs, 'That will be hurling a thunderbolt at a sparrow' (34). In *Bali: The Sacrifice*, Mahout tells the Queen about the condition of his mother when he was born, '...she heard the sparrow chirping' (80). In *Tale Danda*, Jagadeva speaks of Ramayya, 'the solitary saint whose head flew around like a pigeon' (29). Swan is symbol of purity. In *Bali: The Sacrifice*, the king saw in a dream a 'royal swan caught in mud' (103). Karnad plays cock is used as a sacrificed bird, substitute for a real bird. In *Bali: The Sacrifice*, there is a cock with its head raised and beak open as though 'it was crowing' (110). In *Hayavadana*, Bhagvata sings 'Like cocks in a pit' (61).

Girish Karnad uses a variety of images related to common birds not having specific names. The images from common birds are: 'Bird has flown' (TDTS 10), 'Bird's nest' (NM 49), 'Knock a bird down' (BTS 91), 'bird ambushed' (NM 54), 'Birds to be penalized' (TD 48), 'the bird stares' (NM 14) and 'Cacophony of birds' (50). In *Hayavadana*, the reader comes upon a double headed bird. Devadatta tells Kapila about the door frame of Padmini's house as it has 'an engraving of two headed bird' (16) and Kapila, at last, locates Padmini's house door as there is a 'a double headed bird' (16). In *Naga-Mandala*, Appanna keeps his wife Rani locked like 'a caged bird' (30), and Rani's heart is trembling 'like a bird ambushed in a net' (54). In *Bali: The Sacrifice*, the king tells the queen that he can 'knock a bird down' (91). In *Tale-Danda*, Basavanna says, "Are the birds to be penalized" (48)?

In a word, Girish Karnad makes a highly commendable use of flora and fauna imagery. In fact, he has ransacked the whole universe for his imagery.

REFERENCES

¹Metaverse Muse, Vol. VIII No. 2 & Vol. IX No. 1, p.33.

²HV is my abbreviated form for *Hayavadana*. Other abbreviations used are: BTS for *Bali: The Sacrifice*, NM for *Naga-Mandala*, TD for *Tale-Danda*, TDTS for *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan* and TFAR for *The Fire and the Rain*.

**STEPPING ACROSS LINES IN TIME AND SPACE:
SALMAN RUSHDIE'S
*GROUND BENEATH HER FEET AND FURY***

Nilufer E. Bharucha

Salman Rushdie's texts began to appear at a time when the first postcolonial generation had come of age in the erstwhile colonies of the British Empire. In Britain, too, this was a time when the first post-war/ post-imperial generation, never to have experienced the Empire first hand, had come to maturity. The 1980s in the U.K. witnessed a tremendous 'Nostalgia for the Raj' phenomenon, fuelled as much by Mrs. Margaret Thatcher's 'Put the Great Back into Britain' rhetoric as by the post-imperial generation's desire to connect with their past. Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, which became highly visible after receiving the Booker Prize in 1981, provided a vehicle for such time-travel. In India, too, the first postcolonial generation not to have personally experienced the bonds of empire, became time-travellers into the past. Fed so far on official histories of India's independence struggle against the Raj, this generation revelled in the alternative narratives and magic realism of Rushdie's texts. *Midnight's Children* was followed by *Shame*, which did for Pakistan what the earlier book had done for India – recaptured and repossessed its immediate history. Then came *The Satanic Verses* (1988) that became a theological/ideological battleground and changed Rushdie's life from a globe-trotting celebrity to one of the Twentieth Century's most celebrated literary prisoners.

Incarcerated though he became to avoid the logical end of the *fatwa* issued against him by the Islamic leader of Iran and enthusiastically adopted by most of the Islamic world, Rushdie's metaphorical stepping across lines continued as before and the next big book was *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995), which powerfully asserted his right to his Indian past. The books which Rushdie wrote in the last years of the Twentieth Century and the first years of the Twenty First Century – *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (1999) and *Fury* (2001) – are books that mark a widening of the ambit of the writer and the crossing of more lines. *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* moves into

different spheres of Time and Space than did the earlier books. Here the New World, the spaces across the Atlantic Ocean become integral to the text and the time is more the present than the past – the world of showbiz and rock/pop groups. In *Fury*, the metropolitan spaces of the old world – London, Bombay and Karachi – are replaced by New York. The colonial histories of India and Pakistan now give way to personal identitarian politics, intertwined with issues of youth and glamour. Stepping across these lines Rushdie's texts have become more reflective and philosophical while still retaining their irony, humour and black comedy.

The Ground Beneath Her Feet a very self-conscious novel and in the opening line itself, Rushdie has written himself into the narrative - 'On St. Valentine's Day, 1989, the last day of her life, the legendary pop singer Vina Apsara woke up from a dream of human sacrifice in which she had been the intended victim' (3). The last day of Vina's life was the first day of Rushdie's own unenviable experience of living under the death sentence pronounced on him by the Iranian cleric-President Ayotallah Khomeini on 14 February 1989. The Ayotallah himself puts in a guest appearance in the text as the Christopher Plummer look-alike who grips the dreaming Vina's wrists and ankles and prepares her for torture and ritualistic death.

The Ground Beneath Her Feet thus opens with a flashback in which the personal is interwoven with the fictional and the factional. Vina's premonition of her own death, ties in with Rushdie's *fatwa* and her character is a composite construct in which a little known pop-star of Indian origins, Asha Puthli, who had some success in the New York of the 1970s, is a major ingredient. As for Ormus Cama, her only true love, he is a thinly veiled Freddy Mercury, the lead singer of the pop group Queen. Rushdie has admitted that 'Freddy Mercury was quite helpful to me' (Jaggi, 1999), but has denied a one-to-one resemblance between his Ormus and the late Mercury. After all even though both Cama and Mercury were Bombay Parsis, Cama was a Heterosexual and Mercury was a homosexual. But the important commonality between them was that both, although they did not deny their origins, did nothing to make them known. As a result very few of the Queen fans knew that

Freddy Mercury was born Farrokh Balsara and had spent his youth in Bombay. As Rushdie has said in his interview with Jaggi, 'I've no idea why Mercury made those decisions, but I suspect its because he didn't want to be put in an ethnic ghetto. He wanted to be a mainstream star...That led me to the idea of transcending your skin, going past the frontier of the skin....'

There is much else in this text, apart from Cama/Mercury, that goes past several frontiers of time, space, history and 'reality'. Rushdie has presented an alternative reality and history of the 1960s, 70s and 80s here - Britain is involved in the Vietnam war, John F Kennedy survives the assassination attempt in Dallas. Further, alternative histories are juxtaposed with myth and sexuality. So the Ormus-Vina love story is intertwined with the myth of Orpheus and Euridyce. All these histories, stories and myths are the backdrop against which the passions, carnality and tenderness of the Ormus-Vina saga are played out.

Very early on in the text, Rushdie has also brought in his usual theme - or rather the common theme that links most diasporic Indian discourse - 'Disorientation: loss of the East' (5), in which the loss of Ormus/Orpheus is linked to the loss of the sun. The first few pages of the novel also see an underlining of the language issue, when Rai, the narrator of the story, tells us that Vina and he 'spoke in English' but 'Not only in English'(7), they used 'Bombay's garbage argot, *Mumbai ki kachrapati baat-cheet*, in which a sentence could begin in one language, swoop through a second and even a third and then swing back round to the first. Our acronymic name for it was *Hug-me*. Hindi Urdu Gujarati Marathi English' (7). Fortunately for the readers, Rai desists from making them too privy to this *Hug-me* discourse and they get away with a few examples. But the readers do have to suffer through Rushdie's other foibles - whether it is his passionate embrace of Postmodernity's *mantra* of the erasing of the barriers between High and Popular Culture; or a harking back to the project of Orientalism and its link, however tenuous, with European Classical scholarship; or the harping on alternative planes of consciousness, more full-blown than any earlier magical realism; or the dabbling in cosmology and metaphysics; or the usual

moralising on the Postcolonial Indian condition - they are all there for the edification of the reader.

Yet in spite of all the above, if *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* does not tempt the reader to transfer the text itself to another realm of being and/or alternative reality, it could be because the intense power of the writing still surfaces often enough through the storm and mist of Vina /Mira's torn bustier and juts through Ormus' antics in his on-stage shell. Ultimately, however, it is the pathos and vulnerability of his larger-than-life protagonists and the abiding talent of the writer himself, palimpsestically laid under/over the grandiose style, that ensures that *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* does not indeed pull the carpet out from under the author's own feet.

What also prevents this from happening is the introduction of the character of Rai, the self-effacing narrator of the temptuous love story of Ormus-Vina. Rai's is the mask that Rushdie has donned in this text; in *Shame* it was as Omar Khayyam that he had written the marginal man into the grand narrative of history. As Rai, Rushdie is both narrator and participant in the text. He is on the periphery, the margins of the discourse but aspires to become the only love of Vina Apsara and usurp the position of Ormus/Orpheus. It is Rai who tells us the story of how Ormus-Vina met in Bombay's Rhythm House, a music store, and how in that instant the ground had metaphorically moved beneath their feet, forever sealing their fates and ultimate destruction. It is also Rai who tells us how the landscape of the Bombay of his childhood was changed by rapacious builders like his mother - thereby providing gender with agency. Rai also narrates the single consummation of the grand passion of Ormus-Vina and the years of forced and voluntary celibacy that had then followed. It is again Rai who tells us of Ormus' struggle to establish himself as a singer in London of the 60s and of the move to New York and the super success that his band the VTO finds there, with Vina as their lead singer. It is often through Vina that Rai learns of these stories as, all through her years of major love for Ormus, Vina indulges her alternate physical passions and lesser loves - Rai being one of the lesser loves. When the catastrophic moving of the earth takes place, Rai is witness to Vina being claimed/re-claimed

by the Earth, in the tradition of the Orpheus myth or to put it in another dimension - the Indian one - like Sita was in the Indian epic *Ramayana*. After the death of Vina, the rivalry of Ormus and Rai - unknown/unacknowledged by Ormus - continues as Rai now romances Mira, the Vina look-alike. At the end of the many narratives, Rai is in possession of the alternative Vina and Ormus is dead but the Ormus-Vina love story lives on as does the grand reputation of the VTO.

The Ground Beneath Her Feet leaves us with many questions that impinge not just on the ultimate meaning of that text, but also on all other books written by Rushdie and finally on the future of Rushdie's writing itself.

Is the death of Vina at the beginning of the text, in the larger sense, a harbinger of the death of the artist? Could the palimpsestic layering of the disappearance of Vina into the earth - European classical/Indian mythical - be a pointer to Rushdie's own hybridity? If so, with Rushdie, the writer, being laid over, the musical protagonist Vina, can the writer himself be seen as male and female, a hermaphrodite - one who transcends gender? In a similar vein, can *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* then be seen as a metaphor for culture and civilisation at the end of not just a century, but a millennium - a very complicated metaphor in which worlds collide and ultimately coalesce in the hybrid, multi-layered, multi-gendered self of the writer? Does this make *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* a metaphor for an imaginative leap into the new millennium? A new Millennium in which the moving of the earth has made nonsense of the old boundaries and borders of geo-political, socio-cultural nation spaces of the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries?

What impact would such shifting of the tectonic plates of culture and civilisation have on older national notions of identity? How would these new transnational spaces change the lives of private individuals and nations on the threshold of the third Christian millennium? Would hybrid, diasporic identities displace older ways of looking at one's self?

As a diasporic writer, Rushdie sees the multiple identities which he and other diasporic Indians sport as wonderfully liberating. These

plural identities are liberating not only for individuals but also for the linked nations of India and Britain. According to Rushdie, India has to come to terms with the fact that 'there are different ways of being Indian, which do not necessarily have to do with being rooted in India' (Sharma, 1995). Britain too needs to deal with the reality of its multiple selves. An English writer is no more a White, Protestant person - preferably male. S/he can also be a Rushdie, who upon his own confession is 'handcuffed to history' - a Colonial history that continues to impinge as much upon the erstwhile colonised as it does upon the former colonisers - a history that has engendered multiple identities and rich, multi-layered texts.

In the essay 'Step Across This Line', in his new collection of non-fiction writing of the same title, Rushdie has expanded at length on the theme of frontiers, borders, locations and re-locations. This text can thus become a lead-in for *Fury*. Here he has linked the notion of modern frontiers to old tales and quest myths, ranging from Islamic tales to the legend of the sorcerer Merlin. The point being made here is 'The Journey creates us. We become the frontiers we cross...To cross a frontier is to be transformed' (410-11). And yet frontiers are usually invisible and are sometimes used to keep people in rather than out as in the case of the iron curtain. Also, frontiers become the 'physical proof of the human race's divided self...as at the frontier our liberty is stripped away...Even the freest of free societies is unfree at the edge...' (412). Frontiers in Western countries are today lines drawn to keep out the poor from richer national spaces.

This is of utmost concern to Rushdie as a migrant to whom the benefits of 'cultural co-mingling' make for immense benefits to the host society - benefits not to be gained through insular guarding of economic privileges. 'Step Across This Line' was a lecture delivered at the University of Yale and this coupled with Rushdie's own stepping across the Atlantic Ocean gives a certain edge to his comments on America's own history of shifting frontiers and its unease with its current role of the sole global 'imperial' power. In a globalising world Rushdie wonders whether it is time to propose a thesis of post-frontier in a world of mass migrations and new power

equations. Yet even in a post-frontier world and in spite of permeable borders for some – the European Union for its own citizens, for instance – for the majority of others borders remain very important as in a 'dance of history...slow, slow, quick, quick, slow, back and forth and from side to side, we step across these fixed and shifting lines' (425).

The 'dance of history' is of vital concern to Malik Solanka in *Fury* as he steps back and forth across lines not just in time and space but in the inner dimensions of emotions. *Fury* is a rather autobiographical novel dedicated to Padma, the new emotional anchor in Rushdie's own life, the glamorous young model who also writes cookery books. Malik Solanka is a middle-aged academic and maker of the high-profile doll – Little Brain – whose migratory trajectory has brought him out of the Indian sub-continent, to the UK, where he has a wife and child, and from there across the Atlantic Ocean to New York, where he becomes entangled with the nymphet Mila and the glamorous Neela Mahendra. In an ironic twist the real and the fictional become entangled when one remembers that Padma was the name of Rushdie's fictional muse in *Midnight's Children* and Solanka is derived from the place name Solan, a town in the Himalayas where the Rushdie's family had an estate which he has after a long legal battle managed to wrest back from the Indian Government. In the novel is also an estranged wife and young son, whom Solanka has run away from, almost like his creator, who is separated from his third wife and young son. Solanka has not so much abandoned them as put distance between himself and them as he fears that otherwise in his fury he would do them physical harm. So the move across the Atlantic Ocean to the USA is not the usual migrant act of seeking a better life but an act of self-destruction. Solanka saw America as the great devourer and had gone there to be devoured. Using imagery from popular culture and computer programming Rushdie writes that Solanka had "flown to the land of self-creation, the home of Mark Skywalker the Jedi copywriter ..." (79) and was going to deliberately erase the old programme that was his mind and 'cleanse the whole machine'(79).

Fury is also a very American novel and not just by virtue of

being the first Rushdie text to be set entirely in the USA. However, the author is a transplanted, translated Briton of Indian origins and hence the gaze he brings to bear upon the current only global superpower, is a very sharp, ironic and often mocking one. He sees America, not as was once seen by migrant writers – the home of the free and the brave – but as a rather dark space, powerful but greedy, omnivorous and more often than not exhibiting bad taste. A space that its new migrants do not worship and idealise, but hate – a space that would offer annihilation and ultimate end to existence rather than new hope.

Fury it must be remembered is a pre 9/11 text. A text that was published before the New York skyline was drastically altered by fury, by vengeance, for acts of political omission and commission and cultural/religious violation, as perceived by the perpetrators of the bombing of the twin towers of the World Trade Centre in New York. Yet that fury to come is palpable in the text in the ravings of the taxi driver Ali. Rushdie himself has described *Fury* as an 'ultra-contemporary novel, smack up against the daily headlines' (Habich, 2001). These headlines range from the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East, to the unpopularity of Tony Blair (called Tony Ozymandias) in Britain, to the foot and mouth disease also known as the mad cow disease that had originated in Britain and was threatening the rest of Europe.

Intertextuality also forms an important strand in *Fury*. It is very eclectic this intertextuality and ranges from Shakespeare and Spinoza, to P.G. Wodehouse and Cruella, the female villain in the film *101 Dalmatians*. This postmodern technique was of course evident even in his first novel *Midnight's Children*. Here however there is an almost celebratory quality in the invoking of pop and film icons from television and cinema. In this text, characters from erudite texts rub shoulders with characters from *Star Wars* and popular fiction, such as *The Valley of the Dolls*.

Dolls are at the very centre of this narrative – especially the doll called Little Brain. The dolls are a very complex symbol in this novel of the almost incestuous relationship between the creator and his creation, a creation which is like a child is to its father. Malik

Solanka while an academic in Britain had crafted dolls, the most interesting of which was the Little Brain. A female doll but one with a brain – but like most progeny and creations, it soon outgrew its progenitor/creator. Little Brain became a national rage, with books, television programmes, costumes and a huge fan following. Solanka ultimately became redundant to the 'life' Little Brain had assumed. Here of course one can read into the text the ancient/modern myths of Galatea/Pygmalion and Frankenstein/Mary Shelly. Finally in a raging fury Solanka gets his wife to destroy all the dolls and when even that is not enough to assuage his fury against a world that had usurped control over his dolls – his intellectual property, he flees to America. Here however he meets Mila Milo, a Lolita-like nymphet who re-plays what Solanka first thinks is sexual abuse at the hands of her father, with him. However, the realisation dawns later that it was Mila who had seduced her father and it was from her that he had fled back to death and destruction, into strife-torn Serbia, his former homeland. Mila too appropriates Solanka's dolls, by first gaining his trust as a great fan of Little Brain. This appropriation takes the Little Brain into cyberspace and makes the dolls even more contemporary by transplanting them into the world of computers and computer software. Solanka however, is associated with this software and gains profit from it, as he had done earlier from the television manifestations of his dolls. The world of Little Brain is now a complicated Computer programme that draws upon Greek mythology and the legend of Kronos and the rebellion of the sons against their father. This rebellion though is set not just in cyberspace but also on another planet.

Science fiction and ancient mythology meet and meld in the cyber world as do the Occident and the Orient. The name of Professor Akazs (the sky in Urdu) Kronos' assistant is Zameen (the Urdu word for Earth). Kronos the doll-maker is an obvious alter-ego of not just Malik Solanka, but of Solanka's own creator, i.e. Rushdie himself. When there is a threat to culture on the planet Rijk and the end of civilisation threatened, Kronos flees to the twin island of Baburia, with a ruler called Mogul. Like Kronos, Solanka loses control of his creation when Mila rises up in fury and screeches at

him: 'Little Brain? Let her fly, Malik, let her be what she is...Let her go...(178).

At that moment Mila is finally revealed to Malik Solanka as 'Fury, the world-swallower, the self transformative energy' (178). The titular fury is linked in this text to the the ancient Greek myth of the Furies. Fury is central to not just the text but to the times – 'Everywhere you looked, thought Professor Malik Solanka, the fury was in the air. Everywhere you listened you hear the beating of the dark goddesses' wings' (p.123). This dark world view makes *Fury* the most pessimistic of Rushdie's novels. Here there is hardly any hope, just a desire for self-destruction. Even the entry of the beautiful Neela does not lighten the text.

Neela is as noted earlier inspired by Padma Lakshmi, with whom Rushdie was supposed to have been smitten during the production of this novel, and with whom according to the glamour press he is now in an on-and-off relationship. Padma Lakshmi the real-life model is of Indian origins, born in India, went to college in the USA and then became a model based in New York. After her high-profile relationship with Rushdie had brought her to notice in India, Padma Lakshmi has walked the ramp in India too and even acted in Bollywood films. Neela Mahendra though is a more serious person and produces television programmes. She is also a diasporic Indian but once removed – from a place that vaguely resembles Fiji, where her ancestors had been taken as indentured labour from India, during the colonial period. Like most diasporic Indians, Neela is in a time-warp and her apartment in New York is filled with Bollywood film memorabilia and she plays Hindi film music for Solanka. Neela above all is stunningly beautiful and shifts her affections from her lover, a dear friend of Solanka's, to Malik himself. This relationship is short-lived as love for her land draws Neela into a conspiracy against the indigenous rulers of her island, who hated the imported Indians. She flies off with one of the Indian activists to her homeland and when Solanka goes there in search of her he finds that in a rather eerie fashion, reality has become one with fiction and the commander of the Indian group calls himself Akazs after Solanka's Professor Kronos and Neela is in a 'Zameen of Rijk' mask. In the

battle that follows Neela is killed but she is able to save Solanka. On the British plane he reads the note that Neela had written for him: 'The earth moves. The earth goes round the sun' (255). So Zameen is obliterated in the cataclysm on her island, but Akazs, the sky has been saved.

The question that asks itself is what has he been saved for? He no longer has either Mila or Neela. The rhyming of the two names is quintessentially Rushdie – hidden layers of ironic meaning, peeling off one by one, becoming available to those readers who understand Hindi/Urdu where 'Mila' means that which has been met and 'Neela' is the word for the colour blue – a colour not possible for Zameen, the earth, which is forever subordinate to the sky, Akazs. The final chapter of the novel finds Solanka back in Britain. His abandoned wife who had for long hoped to have him back and even refused to be angry with Solanka over the desertion, is finally in another relationship. He has also been so long estranged from his son that he can meet up with him only in a public place – a fair ground. His son also called Asmaan (sky) still has the golden hair of childhood but Solanka cannot reach out to him as he rides his bicycle on the heath outside his home. When tired, the shoulders the boy rides on are those of his wife's new lover, Solanka's best friend and when 'Asmaan leaned his head against Morgen's sports coat, something broke in Malik Solanka's heart' (258). His wife sees him then but signals to him to go away.

The text ends with Solanka climbing on to the bouncy castle in the fairground and desperately trying to draw his child's attention by jumping high into the sky, where his son finally sees him 'taking flight like a bird, to live in the great blue vault of the only heaven in which he had ever been able to believe' (259). Solanka's final shriek echoes long after Asmaan hears it: 'Look at me! Look at me, Asmaan! I'm bouncing very well! I'm bouncing higher and higher!' (259).

Fury is an even darker book than *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*. Here there is pain, guilt, desertion and even contemplated murder. All the human frailties wrapped up in the gossamer veils of beauty and intellect. Veils that are rend one by one and Solanka, his creator Rushdie and their collaborators in their confrontation with

the elemental Furies, the readers, are left with the ruins of a world, a civilisation and a family. This is a very disturbing text in which the stepping across lines of time and space have brought the protagonist to the very edge of his known world, where he has lost his creation, twice, lost his wife and son, as well as the woman he loved and who loved him in the New World. He attempts to step back across the line into his old world, but it is lost to him and the bouncing higher and higher on the children's bouncy castle is a probably the physical destruction of Solanka and his metaphorical union with the sky – the Asmaan and the Akazs.

Does the probable death of Solanka/Akazs and his desertion of Zameen/Neela indicate what the end of *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* seemed to foretell – the death of the author? Is this the end of creativity, culture, civilisation, as well as personal love, all torn to shreds by Fury? In an interview Rushdie has said that *Fury* was a book that demanded to be written and almost wrote itself (Habich, 2001). Has the writing of this book then purged the darkness, appeased the furies within the author himself? Only subsequent stepping across lines would reveal whether Rushdie is still, as he had said in *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, in the land of *Gup* (talk) or retreated into *Chup* (silence).

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THE USE OF NARRATIVE AND LANGUAGE IN ARUNDHATI ROY'S *THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS*

O.P. Dwivedi

There are infinite languages operating in this world and each of them has certain boundary, but English does not know any boundary. It was born to colonize the minds of the world. Thanks to Macaulay who inseminated the Indians with English education, though his purpose was only to produce a class of babus who could operate as interpreters between the Whites and the Indians. But India "is now one of the world's largest markets for the production and dissemination of English-language books, and boasts of several very famous novelists in the language."¹ The English language has witnessed many experiments from time to time in its form and style by fiction writers, and Arundhati Roy has also made a new linguistic experiment in her Booker Award winner *The God of Small Things* (1997). The present article is intended to discuss the narrative style along with the use of language in Roy's *The God of Small Things*.

Placed in the Southern Indian state of Kerala and divided chronologically between the late 1980s and the early 1990s, *The God of Small Things* is a Bildungsroman novel — a kind of novel which traces the growth of central character from childhood to maturity. The novel revolves around a forbidden relationship between a Syrian-Christian divorcee Ammu and a low caste carpenter Velutha. The story is about Ammu's dizygotic twins named Estha and Rahel, about the inter-caste affairs, about the subsequent beating and killing of Velutha in the police station of Ayemenem, a village in Kerala, and about the death by drowning of the twin's cousin- Sophie Mol. The entire human drama in the novel operates in the context of India, divided by caste and class, polluting this world.

The God of Small Things (cited hereafter as TGST) contains a highly complex narrative structure which makes the novel all the more absorbing. The narrative pattern of the novel is such that it takes the readers not only to the past but also to the present and future, thus making memory an important source to correlate and understand the various interlinked incidents in the novel. Emiliene Baneth Nouailhetas' statement is pertinent in this context:

Remembering is also an effort that is forced upon the readers through the system of repetition and echoes that characterize the text, both on semantic and a digestic level, as characters return to certain places that are inhabited by memories, or as they are involved in situations that cause them to recall circumstances of their past.²

The mnemonic style is triggered by the return of Rahel to her native town of Ayemenem after a gap of twenty years. Memory is the source for the narrative in the novel, which operates on account of Rahel's thoughts and impressions. She recedes and eadvances and then recedes again till the novel ends. For Rahel, memory lies in

Coat hangers, tomatoes. In the tar on the roads. In certain colours. In the plates of a restaurant. In the absence of words. And the emptiness in eyes.³

Rahel's memory is a blend of happy and nostalgic events, affecting her life. Her happy memory constitutes that of her mother's image: "She had a delicate, chiseled face, black eyebrows, straight nose and luminous nut brown skin.... Sometimes she was the most beautiful woman that Estha and Rahel had ever seen" (45). She also bears horrendous memories of the shameful incident with Estha in the "Abhilash Talkies" which resulted in Estha's headache and vomiting. Besides, Rahel recalls the demonic treatment of Velutha by the police, which resulted in his death.

Pappachi is another character in the novel for whom the past matters a lot. Even after his retirement from job, he continues to dress up in a three-piece suit and always keeps his golden pocket watch. He is a man who still lives in the present. He always keeps with him a picture of his youth which was shot in a studio in Vienna. His discovery of a rare species caused his doom since the authorities concerned didn't find any trace of rarity in it, rather they identified it as a different variety of an already known species. Twelve years later the authorities rectified their blunder as they found that Pappachi's moth was a rare species. But they gave the credit to his junior whom Pappachi hated the most. This memory of unjust treatment meted out to him always haunts him.

Baby Kochamma's past life is also quite significant to her since it contains the sweet memories of her suppressed love for Father Mulligan whom she could never embrace but "in her memory of him he embraced her" (298). Memory thus plays a vital part in

Kochamma's life. Evidently, we can see that repetitions and echoes, memories and recollections play a critical part in the narrative-structure of the novel. "Therefore memory", says Emiliene Baneth Nouailhetas, "is a relationship to the past, imitated in the novel's structure which reproduces the piecemeal, tentative process of rememoration, by relying on mnemonic triggers, objects, places ('small' things); but it is also fragile and easily interrupted"⁴

Arundhati Roy has discussed her narrative style in one of her interviews thus:

The fitness of a story-teller is to be able to say things and see things the way it has not been done.... The main thread of the story [in *The God of Small Things*] takes place within the twenty-four hours, but there are several other united threads that go over years that make the structure steel.⁵

Obviously, she has chosen a fresh narrative style to do things *the way it has not been done*. She has treated memory artistically.

Now let us have a look at the use of language in Roy's *The God of Small Things*. Ever since its release, the novel has been a source of debate for the critics and the linguistic innovation in it is certainly one of them. On the one hand, we have a critic like C.D. Narasimhaiah who freezes off this innovation by calling it a "pulp", whereas on the other hand, we have Emiliene Baneth-Novailhetas, who finds it alluring: "The playful scanning of language, far from being gratuitous or superficial, is linked to a critical perception of the world, and sometimes to an ominous pejorative function in the narrative."⁶ But the fact cannot be negated that Roy has been successful in this innovation. This innovation can also be esteemed as a marketing strategy, which can act as a catalyst to sell her novel. By performing such a magniloquent linguistic innovation Roy has been successful in fetching for herself a separate identity. This linguistic innovation is an author's license which permits him/her to violate all the traditional linguistic rules.

Roy does not dwell on the vernacular style, but instead opts for a fresh one as far as the English language is concerned. Such an innovation allures Bill Bufford to state: "There are qualities in this language that you won't find elsewhere: sometimes its use is more exacting — more precise, more clearly articulated — than the lan-

guage might be in the hands of a British or American author, almost as if the language were slightly anachronistic, of a different and disciplined world."⁷

All the linguistic innovations done in *The God of Small Things* bears a close resemblance to the Indianized English usage. Probably by doing that, Roy wants to uncover the reality about the use of English by the Indians in their lives. Today we find the use of so many *hinglish* words by people in their daily lives. Roy's characters speak English in "a kind of stylized staged-cum-spoken."⁸ It is not what she writes, but the manner in which she thinks and writes makes her characters look like the one in real-life, as English is not the mother tongue of Indians in the way it is in England and several other parts of the world. Even in the metropolitans where English is spoken on a wider range, people speak it along with one or more other regional languages.

An interview of Roy throws light on her writing in English. She says, "It is the skin on my thought" and then quickly adds that "Because I am an Indian, I will write as an Indian,"⁹ and in doing so, she has substantiated Raja Rao's statement: "We cannot write like the English. We should not. We can write only as Indians."¹⁰ She violates all the linguistic rules by using one-word sentences, capitalization, faulty spelling, deviation from correct grammatical syntax, use of italics for the sake of emphasis, like "*She is living her life backwards*" (22), coining of words ("afternoon-gnap", "green-for-the day", "dinner-plate-eyed", etc.), incorrect spelling such as *Amayrica*, *Die-vorced*, etc. Sometimes we get a glimpse of Roy's past childhood which comes out vividly in her novel. She is able to capture the idiosyncrasies of a child's language which is to be found in her reversing the order of the word at a time when Rahel and Estha read the police board:

'ssenetiloP,' he said 'ssenetiloP, ecneidebO,'

'ytlayoL, ecnegilletnL,' Rahel said.'ysetruoC.'ycneiciffE.' (313)

And again we witness another instance of this reversal pattern through the eyes of Estha :

TO STOP TRAIN PULL CHAIN, it said in green.

OT POTS NIART LLUP NIAHC, Estha thought in green. (324)

Roy thus uses unprecedented linguistic style and also creates some new idioms and phrases like 'dia-able-age', 'touchables', 'biological father', 'Clean-children like a packet of peppermints', 'as lonely as a wolf', 'vinegar-hearted', 'Her eyes spread like butter', etc.

Sometimes Roy unnecessarily employs alliteration as in the passage given below:

Nothing mattered much. Nothing much mattered. And the less it mattered. And the less it mattered, the less it mattered. It was never important enough. Because worse things had happened. (19)

Roy's *The God of Small Things* is often being criticized for its eroticism. She has slipped in a few irrelevant erotic passages which can be easily marked in the first chapter of the novel as well as in some other chapters. In Chapter one, we find Inspector Mathew of Ayemenem police station gently dabbing Ammu's breasts with his baton – *Tap, tap* (8). Then again we have some off-colour descriptions in the chapter 'Abhilash Talkies' in which Estha encounters an 'Orangedrink Lemondrink Man' who forces Estha to satisfy his lust in the following manner:

Then the gristly-bristly face [face of the Man] contorted and Estha's hand was wet and hot and sticky. It had egg-white on it. White egg white. Quarter boiled. (104)

Roy displays a remarkable dexterity in coining words, especially through the process of compounding; for example, 'Thiswayandthat' (101) and 'Stoppited' (141). She employs punctuation marks as and when she wishes – "She used her windows for specific purposes. For a Breath of Fresh Air. To Pay for the Milk. To Let out a Trapped Wasp..." (28) and "Taking the boat with Things in it (so that they could (b) Prepare to prepare to be prepared (204). Sometimes she makes the words dance:

Scurrying hurrying buying selling luggage trundling porter paying children shitting people spitting coming going begging bargaining reservation-checking. (300)

Such a rhetorical use of language moves the reader by an uninvited smile.

Roy's *The God of Small Things* is none other than Velutha, who leaves "no ripple on the water, / no foot prints on the shore" (289-290) who fails in her love-affair with Ammu because of the male

chauvinist society. The family members of Ayemenem conspire in order to teach him a lesson, by getting him immured in the police lock-up, where he is beaten and meets a tragic death. Roy displays her emotion couched in artistic language on Velutha's death by calling it "Not death. Just the end of living"(320).

To conclude, we find that the narration of *The God of Small Things* makes memory an important factor and requires the reader to be assiduous. The narrative pattern of it colours the memory of its readers. The novel has been a success in tracing the history of Ayemenem with its grandiloquent English usage. Alex Tickell says that "Roy's use of English marks an awareness of how language shapes identity and reveals the lingering residue of colonialism in contemporary Indian English"¹¹ Roy uses this linguistic innovation in a radically new way, mixing colloquial and formal language and blending the British English with the vernacular Pidgin English in order to reach out to the entire English-speaking world. This feature makes the novel a major work of Indian English literature highlighting some specific cultural and political concerns.

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**HISTORY VERSUS POLITICS OR
POLITICS VERSUS HISTORY:
A STUDY OF GITHA HARIHARAN'S
IN TIMES OF SIEGE**

Monika Gupta

Githa Hariharan's *In Times of Siege* glamorises an ordinary man like Shiv and tells us that the truth ultimately surfaces and hence a normal human being can yet be a 'hero', if he is true to himself. Though Shiv Murthy is a fifty-two year old Professor of History, he no longer teaches students but does what the Head of the Department instructs him. He coordinates resources for his educational clients. He settles down to write a module on the Vijaynagar Empire. He is suddenly confronted with forces beyond his control. His personal as well as political life is responsible for the earthquake in his life. His wife Rekha is in U.S.A. visiting her daughter. He gets a phone call from his ward Meena's friend, who is studying in Kamla Nehru University, to inform him that Meena is lying in the hostel with a broken leg. He has been asked to pick up Meena from hostel so that she can recuperate. He imagines himself as a "saviour of one legged girls"(Hariharan, *In Times of Siege* 6).

Shiv simultaneously has to face allegations by a group of religious bigots regarding the article he has written on Basava, the medieval philosopher. The extremists from 'Ithias Suraksha Manch' voice their brash opinions about Shiv's 'academic rape' of a religious subject. He is totally dominated by his wife Rekha but she is far away and he finds himself discussing things with Meena, a chit of a girl, who is by circumstances staying at his premises because of her broken leg. He somehow picks up courage and makes some tough decisions. He is caught in a maze and wonders whether he should stick to his guns as far as his decisions are concerned or he should get himself caught up in the rigmarole of religious intolerance and apologise for what he has written. This is the crux of the issue in the novel that portrays religious fundamentalism in India and other places. Of course, this is a satire on liberalism in the West. Meena and her coterie of friends are very much on the side

of Shiv. They advocate his cause and hold rallies distributing pamphlets. Shiv finds himself drawn towards his ward Meena and cannot divorce desire for Meena from politics.

Shiv becomes a victim of circumstances and has to make some extremely difficult decisions. His lesson on "Basavanna's moment for social reform has been leaked somehow to the press"(53). He learns the bitter lesson that though he has honestly written a lesson, he, instead of being appreciated, has been informed that "...the lesson has hurt the sentiments of a Hindu watchdog group"(53). He has been accused of distorting history and historical figures. It sounds stupid to him when the Head tells him:

It seems you have implied Basavanna's city, Kalyana, was not a model Hindu kingdom. It seems you have exaggerated the problem of caste and written in a very biased way about the Brahmins and temple priests. And also you have not made it clear enough that Basavanna was much more than an ordinary human being. There are people who consider him divine you know. (53-54)

Shiv cannot believe his ears when he is told that he has to go on leave because of the controversy. He is pained when the Head tells him that he will have to tender an apology and let the Head decide to reprint the lesson. He is in a quandary whether he should stand up for his writings or succumb to religious tolerance and tender an apology much against his wishes. We learn about "fundoo"(57) from Meena's conversation with Shiv. And these fundamentalists are "Fascist. Obscuranist. Terrorists. And the made-in-India brand, the communalist — a deceptively innocuous sounding name for professional other-community haters" (57). Shiv vacillates between the memory of his dead father and Basava and derives inspiration from them. He feels akin to them in the sense that like him they also faced so many accusations in their times. Basavanna, a saint of the medieval age, was a revolutionary who overhauled the caste system and overthrew it during the reign of Kalyana. Shiv's own father was a revolutionary and part and parcel of the Indian freedom movement. There is an eternal battle between religious bigotry and tolerance in him. Hariharan has given a historical insight to his predicament. History becomes alive once again and she portrays the same old problems that were prevalent ages ago:

Basava and many of his followers took on the caste system, the iron net that held society so firmly in place; that reduce the common man and woman to hopeless captives. Thousands of these 'ordinary' men and women took part in Basava's egalitarian dream.... The king, Bijjala, an old friend of Basava's, was under tremendous pressure from the pillars of society. Not surprisingly, the relationship between the king and his finance minister soured.(61)

Basava called for non-violence, but "His charisma was no longer enough to keep the moderates and the extremists among his followers together" (62). These questions remain relevant more than eight hundred years later. Shiv finds it difficult to explain his ideas, his times to "...some bunch of hate crazy goons" (63). He is an academic, a Professor, after all, and not a two inch newspaper column hero. He becomes defiant and tries to become what he is not. Murthy tries to give a new light to his works and Meena decides to take up Murthy's cause and she asks her friends to help Shiv.

In Times of Siege is a bit vague at times, but it does not give one a feeling of impending doom as the title suggests, nor is it ominous. The novel proceeds from one event to the other. Shiv's office is ransacked and torn into shreds. A guard is posted outside his house for protection. One cannot come to any kind of conclusion inspite of true to life situations and one cannot discern how to record historical evidences. The novel lacks specific information inspite of being so gripping. The University pushes aside Shiv's observation on paper and is worried about the "implications" (67). Shiv has "... a flash of surprised recognition. This must be how a man feels when he has leapt out of an open window. The last image he sees before his picture making machine hits the pavement and breaks is a message flashed in telegraphic language" (73). He is blamed for distortion of history. One of the organisaiton leaders signs a statement. Mr. Anant Tripathi, who signsit, says:

We will not allow our history to be polluted like this. Fifty years after independence, we cannot have Indian historians brainwashed by foreign theories and methods depriving us of our pride in Hindu temples and priests. How are these historians different from the Muslims who invaded our land?(76)

Shiv is alleged to have vested interests. The Manch also quotes several historians like retired professor Shri A.A. Atre to support the

claim that Basava was not against Brahmins as such.

The Vice-Chancellor wants to get away from any kind of controversy and urges Shiv to take back his words and retract. He wants him to apologize to the 'Ithihas Suraksha Manch' and avoid the media. He sees his lesson sent to the corner in disgrace and imagines it to be placed in quarantine like chemicals in a highly inflammable vehicle: "Caution Highly Inflammable Medieval history. Only known antidotes: 500mg of blissful ignorance or 250mg of unadulterated lies. Shiv's booklets have been banished along with the real and troublesome Basava. Only a sanitised Basava is allowed to remain, a 'saint singer', a singer with a saintly face." (86)

For the detractors, "Basava was nothing more than bigoted revolutionary" (87). Hariharan's angst is over the betrayal of the secularist vision that gave shape to India, and the limited scope for debate in the nation and happy co-existence of all cultures. She makes an avid discovery and puts forward her views. It is a juxtaposition of three ages from the past with the present rise of the 'fundooos' (fundamentalists). In Kalian in the 12th century the Veerashaiva movement tried to bring about social change and tried to do away with the narrow rigid caste prejudices and gender bias. In the 16th century Vijayanagar was sacked. Shiv tries to gauge the heritage lessons to come to some kind of conclusion. He feels "... the heterogeneous truth that demands the coupling of conflicting narratives requires the participation of more than one body" (87). He is no longer in a quandary about facing the public or the media. He is himself amazed at his capacity to take up the cause against repression. He tells the media the fact:

"The important thing to remember," he says, "is that history, like the human mind, is a complex body with many strands. Ours is a rich, plural history. Of course all these threads must be repeatedly re-examined." (97)

Hariharan tries to portray the link between fascism and the ugly faces of Hindutava unveiling themselves all around, and it is "the regimentation of thought and the brutal repression of culture" (107). She makes us sit and think, "Each of us carries within ourselves a history, an encyclopaedia of images, a landscape with its distinct patterns of mutilation" (104). Hariharan, through Shiv, por-

trays that

Truth, that large map of abstraction so many men fight over, die for, is the size of a pinpoint — just a glimmer in a drop of water, part of the flowing stream. And what is the truth Basava sees in the river? That cross-current can co-exist, that rapids and the most placid of waters are fellow travelers? Or that it is possible to move, to break free of gold encrusted temples, customs and prejudices made of petrified stone, aspiring to stand like monuments for all time? (107)

In Time of Siege flows as gently as the river where Basava stands in contemplation. It begins in a lucid manner and strong visualisation. The characterisation is vivid and the narrative is quite realistic. Real life examples are a reminder of racial prejudices and horrific sense of bigotry among the religious zealots. Hariharan is not really interested in people who are full of certainties. She has used male and female voices. Shiv's voice is not the typical male voice. It crosses all boundaries of gender bias. His ward Meena, a student activist with sectarian ideas, is visualised as a normal human being with normal desires at the end. Shiv has high flown ideas about liberalism but they remain theoretical. Hariharan feels that ideas can get tested only in times of siege. The Emergency, India after Babri Masjid, the Gujrat carnage or the Iraq war — people have to figure out themselves whether their ideas hold good at a given point of time.

History for Hariharan becomes a tool to understand ourselves and our times. History is a contested area and is used for gaining present political ends all over the world. A history textbook controversy moves on to a historian peeping into different interpretations of the past. What difference does it make whether a mosque exists under a temple or *vice-versa* for centuries. One fine day someone can be heard vociferously demanding censorship rights. The power hungry take up issues and distort history. Hariharan states in an interview, "That's why I used Basava to get the caste system in." At the same time she remarks, "It's also important to remember that the same people who are willing to cede economic space, to give it away to MNC's to make India a window display of products, also claim they are cultural nationalists"(Desraju). It is ironic that patriotism is so inherent in some people who view the homogenous Hindu

past as an eternal fixture of the nation. She urges people to know Basava whose ideas are not antithetical like his adherents. When Shiv talks to Meena, he tells her about Basava's rosy myths and the so-called divine powers. The story goes that Basava was Siva's bull that was sent on earth. Peculiar examples of Basava's miracles by a bigwig were that "Basava was praying when he saw an ant hurrying along with a seed in its mouth. Basava took this seed for some reason and gave it to his sister Nagamma, and the result was an immaculate conception" (116-117). Hariharan's characters in *In Times of Siege* are quite satirical. Meena laughs uproariously and tells Shiv "... how close some of these mythical explanations are to the small print on the sarkari documents? I mean, you can really see the government walla in these convoluted myths, bending over backwards to do some damage control" (117). Arya, one of Shiv's colleagues, makes an avid comment, "...if it is someone like that of someone who wants to make hundred percent blue film about widows in Benares, the secular fundamentalists are all on the streets shouting, 'No ban, no censorship.' But our historians and thinkers and activists get different treatment. They won't even let us speak" (127). This is the stark reality that Hariharan tries to portray and there is a game that goes on pertaining to history versus politics and politics versus history. It is difficult to discern who will win. Shiv begins to sound like a quotable politician when he talks to the media. But Shiv realises, "The world, that vast map of furrowed wisdom his father spread out for Shiv's delight, shrinks all the time in the wrong climate" (150). Shiv concludes that history "is only a lone, orphaned atom left behind, a sullen, impoverished particle of knowledge" (150).

'Hampi,' according to Hariharan, stands for the monumental past that has been very oppressive. The nationalism at that time was quite different from the one during the freedom movement. Hariharan has been asked quite often why she chooses to be so direct and staccato in her works without any magical realism in this book. She has been able to incorporate day-to-day living and has portrayed human emotions very vividly as an observer. Shiv is by his father's questions "what kind of country poisons the minds of children, of its youth? And did we fight for freedom so we could

divide this teeming hungry house forever" (159-160)? Shiv's sexual fantasies are like a home movie and he is obsessed by it. He associates the mind with a 'snake'. The snake represents his sexual longings. There is a psychological turn when he thinks, "The mind is the snake; the body is the basket. They live together, the snake and the basket. You don't know, though, when it may kill you; you don't know when it will bite you" (171)!

Hariharan tries to portray that it is impossible for a simple, honest person to live on the same plane with prejudiced and biased religious bigots. She lays bare the naked realities of self-destruction within different groups in Indian society. They can terribly be divisive and brutal. As of today people are in the vortex of volcanic violence. A message is important for the world that censorship is fatal when facts are hidden. Religious fundamentalists all over the globe have been responsible for the horrific destruction of the world. Though Hariharan has written about Hindu fundamentalists, it applies to every kind of fanatic and fundamental following of any religion. Anyone can identify with the characters in the novel and relate with them. Though the novel is small, there is a lot in it that makes one contemplate. It is a work full of parallels and Meena is Shiv's catalyst.

Ultimately Shiv's father is no longer his ideal and he "leaves with the storm" (191). His father's legacy to Shiv is "the gift of remembrance" (193). Shiv is now ready to "leap off the precipice" (194). Hariharan's voice can be heard as Shiv reaffirms "... the value of the only heirloom he needs from the past, the right to know a thing in all the ways possible" (194). Githa Hariharan's subtle dissections of the eternal struggle between religious fundamentalist ideas and liberal dissent in modern day India begins and ends with history.

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CONSTRUCTING THE CHANGING NATION: LOCATING FICTIONS WITHIN FRONTIERS

Sridhar Rajeswaran

This paper seeks to locate advancements made in theory, their conflicts and the radical potential they offer. The paper also unearths at this moment the revolutionary potential of gender. The potential offered by the knowledge effects are in the very first place being read due to the fact of colonial exaction and rule that created an impossible the interdependence of Centres, Peripheries and Margins. These effects are studied with the particular purpose of trying to locate the imprisoned nation and its hegemonised narration, as having been impacted by the then prevailing imperial order. It seeks then to splice open the concomitant issues raised in trying to do so, and this is done through recourse to larger history. It locks horns with those personages who were in the process of making that history and writing those texts which bear witness to the same. The choice is of such persons and those texts which in-togetherness began the construction of the nation. Such testimony which provides the terrain to rub knuckles against the grain, is further read in the context of texts and theories that are sensitive to the 2/3rd barbaric other. Such an act for its turn facilitates the movement forward from a colonial world order to a world order postcolonial. If the act allows for such a movement from the colonial to the postcolonial and beyond, it in the process also aids shift emphasis, from the logic of the chronos of history to the topos of geography. It also enables the shift from modernity and its collapse to Postmodernity and its seamlessness. After all the peoples of the imprisoned nation that needs to be restored to itself, are by definition implicated in an alien culture and its institutions of Language and Literature – that ground certain hegemonic constitutive conditions.

Beginning in media res

There are moments in cultural history when entire aspects of culture, especially its institutions such as Art and Literature, need to be re-examined and re-defined. These moments crystallise in particular trends, in particular 'ideologies', all of which become parameters to construct a method that helps appraise the times and

explore age old issues in the field of cultural studies. The Twentieth Century had seen a thorough re-interpretation of cultural issues. In the field of English studies, issues of literary theory had been open to European influences. Structuralism, Post-Structuralism, Semiotics, Feminism and Marxist mode of analyses had all sought to establish precise, relevant and more meaningful relationships between the artist, her/his work, and the world at large.

Theory as a Radically Subversive Force

This science of literature through its indissolubility of form and content (as in Russian Formalism), offered new insights, marked certain new directions, extended old boundaries, and gained an exalted position for itself, and rightly so. This notwithstanding, these advancements in the process had too many issues with the very methods and methodologies of the earlier interpretation of literary texts, and in some instances to the extent of completely negating the ideas, constructs and ideologies that governed the earlier forays. Such negation did not stay however as merely impacting the methods and methodologies used, but marginalised the very literatures of consequence, which function in accordance with the rules that govern that symbiotic relationship between art and theory for a meaningful "aisthesis" (a term used to mean an act of sensuous apprehension, of a thinking that memorialises and responds, to grow out of being and reach into Truth). The texts on which were premised the knowledge effects of these forays and which were already part of cultural centres, mediating, negotiating, interacting with Private, Public, and larger National spaces were suddenly rent apart.

What suffered the most was the literary canon as a first order ideological representation and in the area of method and methodologies all second order ideological re-presentations³ that sought merit and worth as being representative of the times. Consequently, all attempts that had – and henceforth will – gained knowledge through an inter-lock at the contexts of production, in the revised scenario, had no place whatsoever, had no claims to being valid currency. If this was the general order there was also an extension of the logic of application to ridiculous illogical extents to prove the futility of such groundless readings that were brought to the front by the

sensibilities of the newer theories. Stanley Fish's iconic reading of Blake's Tiger in his masterpiece, 'Is There a Text in This Class?' is a point in study.

These newer theories while particularising the contexts of reception, due to the positional limitations of the interrogating voice and texts, in a pluralized and bi-polar world, were all operating as it were under the dictum that the music piped earlier had false notes and truth lay silent, hidden under its debris – products through 'appropriations' or which subsumed multiplicity in violent hierarchies. A project of 'naturalisation' to clear the debris underscored their subversive interventions but unfortunately the carefully 'constructed categories of the world' were a new burden and the load stilled certain heard melodies that were sweet. The indeterminacy of meaning for instance and the hiatus of aporia that eventually disclosed itself in the practice of reading *écriture*, the difference and deference of *différance* of Derrida, implicated the very logos as Centricist.

A Hundred Flowers Blossom

If one was mourning the stilling of certain melodies one could not come to terms with the fact of the contrapuntal harmony it had suppressed which the silences of the stilling suddenly made possible to be hear – notes sung by 'mad women from the attics.' Thus, a new world of meanings was all enunciated with the annunciation of *écriture féminine*² and the phallus of patriarchy, thanks for once to its persistent gendering, revealed itself and all knowledge became now phallogocentric.³

Textual Subversions as Concrete Forms of Struggle in the World

From Marcel Mauss⁴ to Levi-Strauss,⁵ from the symbolic structures of kinship, language and exchange of goods to their becoming key to the understanding social life, from new findings of foundations of social life to their ternary nature giving dynamism to total social facts, from the understanding of the phenomena of *mana* as having an intrinsic, an almost sacred content to its ability to catalyse the synchronic and diachronic elements, from the *mana*, as an empty algebraic symbol to it serving as signifier of signification, from an infinitive number of *manas* present to their intervention as a third element between the signifier and signified, from being a

floating signifier to becoming that element in the synchronic which introduces the asymmetrical generative aspect — the aspect of contingency and time, in the Saussurean sense at the level of *Parole*, and from that to myth the third dimension of language itself has been the textual subversions' contributory claims to concrete forms of life in the world. A radical struggle that meant, it is now building dwelling thinking⁶ no more in a world of similarities but in a world of imposed categories structured on differential equations. A knowledge which Derrida actually uses to structurate his "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" in his *Writing and Difference*, which as a complimentary spin-off succeeded veritably in shifting the onus of bearing the responsibilities of literature, on to the written text. A correction effected on the 'event' of the structuralists which Saussure failed to capitalise upon. A world of revolutionary possibilities that stayed unharnessed by virtue of his having stayed within the paradigms of the spoken word.

Transferring Psychoanalytic Propositions on the Constitution of the Subject to the Composition of the Text

If this be the case with the Poststructuralist Deconstructionists, theories of signification like that of Julia Kristeva and Umberto Eco are concerned with the need to "analyse the unanalysable: the inexpressible, heterogeneous, radical otherness of individual and cultural life."⁷ Kristeva attempts to produce the subject in process,⁸ while Eco⁹ seeks to define, isolate and elaborate a theory of codes within which the subject of semiotic activity functions. In Kristeva, for example, we have the symbolic order functioning as a formal guarantor of meaning and social significations. This she achieves by situating the text within the arena of history by positing change and stability as aspects of a continual process. She thereby produces history as a process through which the chora moves in its always already differentiated unity. We have the initial motility of the semiotic 'chora' or energy drives and stases that make up consciousness, pre-genital and pre-oedipal, that serves as a guarantee for a later eruption of subjectivity, in spite of its inscription in the symbolic order. With the introduction of history and the location of the text within the arena of history, two major issues come to the

forefront. The first, what is history and how it is to be read and secondly the issue of the historicity of text and the textuality of history,¹⁰ both of which are problematic.

Redefining Nation Spaces: Liberating Marginalised or Suppressed or Forgotten Histories

The history of the world over the last hundred odd years has left large questions and areas, unanswered and open, in so far as the basic intelligence of the intelligent species is by itself concerned. The three great revolutions of the Industrial, French and the American declaration of Independence while they stood for the voice of humanity that could have written a great new future ended so shortly that it needed three more revolutions and a couple of World Wars, and that too, fell short in adding wisdom to its grey cells. It is these three latter revolutions which are significant to English studies as they constitute the terrain for those processes that sought to re-define cultural history and its institutions of art and literature. The revolutions in question being the great Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, which premised on Marx's theories of Surplus value, dialectics as proof of material existence, and his Hegelian inversion of a radical idea – to arrive at "the rational kernel within the mystical shell," underscored the establishing of a nation in which exploitation of one by the other of the species will stop and a new consciousness would emerge. The aftermath of action however left a lot to be desired and this was the time that saw the works of the great Mikhail Bakhtin, and the theories of Roman Jakobson and the Russian school. The second revolution singled out being the failed German revolution which high-lit the ability of nationalist fervour to consider its own space as more equal than others and not merely that but in the process birthing a world war. The third revolution which is linked causally to the world war was the Irish revolution of 1916, the great attempt by the 'Unmanageable Revolutionaries' of the colonised to break their chains and free itself from British hegemony. Curiously enough, in all three revolutions there was a stultifying of the alternative sensibility of gender. The sacrifice of a Alexandra Kollontai in Russia, a Maud Gonne in Ireland and a Rosa Luxemburg in Germany along with so many crossovers that marked the struggle

for their righteous position in the world. The significant contribution of gender was the fact of the forged links, the establishment of the fact that cross cultural ties produce transcendent spaces, and humanity need not be limited by narrow domestic walls and national boundaries. A Cama from India, a Viceroy's sister in Ireland, an Irish woman of English Ascendancy class in Russia, all impelled by the same need to see the world and humanity a free space, sitting as a community breaking-bread in togetherness, to spell alternatives. As far as literature goes this was the period of Modernity and Modernism that culminated with the Second World War. The world of the great moderns, each of whom tried to reinstate literature back in its rightful centre. But they all had to battle their own disembodied consciousness and did not succeed, perhaps their aesthetics failed them or they failed the aesthetic. All three new revolutions had just failed too.

Renaissance: The Restoration of the Imprisoned 'Nation' to Itself

The Second World War also began the processes of the dismantling of the European Empires, and it was time for the sun to set in the lands where it had never set before. It was also the beginning of sunrises in lands that were soon to be free, free to make or mar their own futures. New nations and new texts that were to spell freedom were to be writ. India was one such land which awoke at the midnight of the 14th of August 1947 and Algeria on the 19th march 1962, both significant for the purposes of this project. These two nations saw the birth of people like Gandhi and Fanon, whose life and works spell significant possibilities for the construction of the nation. Their work, read together in their particular locations, may act as an aid in asking those significant questions about the construction of the nation in texts which are specific to the times and may thereby help in re-formulating issues in aesthetics. Fanon's sensibilities as regards the nation and its culture would be verified yet again through the works of Edward Said, the rationale being the fact of the latter's grounding himself in the former and thus we have two locations, two different knowledge bases. If Fanon was of the moment of history, Said voyages into the core of the Metropolis by interlocking with its cultural constructs. This provides also those

postcolonial perspectives to aid colonial re-possession. Fanon is certainly iconic but Said important, in as much as he plotted the trajectory of Otherness — that difference may not be “absolutised as an otherness.”¹¹ Unless the value of such thought is recovered, no work can really be tested against the touchstone of insurgent literature, valorised by Fanon. Gandhian texts being pan Indian if read in the context of a text from a site of subalternity, fill in the blanks better.

Nationalist Resistance: The Intellectual and Cultural Arguments of Gandhi and Periyar

In a nutshell Periyar's work aids focus on the locationary politics of the Other Hindu (the significant issue of caste in the nation space), while that of Gandhi's for its turn, enables us to realise the Other of the Hindu (the significant issue of the Muslim in the nation space, in the back-drop of the traumas of partition and Babri Masjid), thus one needing the other for completion, more relevant in today's independent India that reverberates to echoes and resonances from the same partisan issues. The point is when these two diverse lives and the texts they wrote and stood for are not constructed in their alterity, we are in the presence of a knowledge that is holistic. A site of subalternity that interlocks with the knowledge/cultural history of the dominant create veritable new structures of feeling to forge in the smithy of the traditional a new organic intellectual.

The question therefore is did the policy of non-violence with its entire edifice of *ahimsa* and *satyagraha*, both connoting a selflessness, eschew the basic tenets of history, which insists on the destruction of the old order before the new one could be built and consequently the violence? While it is true the non-violent (militant non-violence) struggle served the purposes of ejecting the white imperialist, despite its deliberate possession of cultural memory, the freedom it ushered in was it but a regaining and not a redefining of the principle? In other words, the expulsion of the white man left intact his control over our memory which were appropriated and then naturalised by the imperialist - created brown sahibs, evidence of which may be found in the persistence of imperialist structures of rule and governance, which India's new rulers made their own?

The point is, did the keywords ahimsa and Satyagraha, which precluded a war within one's own and one's past served to rationalise and legitimise the rule of the few over the many?

Perhaps the answer to the question rests with Periyar who too sought to write meaning, write amidst historical turmoil, write in History, write History, in short being History through his Self-Respecting Movement and Socialism, popularly known as Dravida Khazagam, with Dravida standing for the oppressed hegemonised and the Khazagam the Movement towards equality. His core areas of critical concerns were to compel the hegemonised, the Other to cultivate self-respect and build a socialist order. Generally this other is premised to be the Other of the Hindu, but for our purposes what is important is the Other Hindu, the identity which denies its own to emerge as a different sort of citizen. For this let us turn to the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu. In the Tamil country the struggle against the British was overwritten by the struggle of the majority, the so-called non-Brahmins against the power of the Brahmin and the stranglehold of the institution of caste, whose existence was everyday confirmed by the Brahmin's assertion of his difference and on that account his superiority to the rest of the people. In effect this was a struggle of the masses against the few, but in practice, the masses constituted themselves as a minority. Periyar had understood this well and worked to translate this dormant violence into projects that would demand an assertion of self-respect. The class structure of the ancient Tamil-speaking race had always subordinated itself to the dialectics of different cultural concepts and the enabling of its presence in alternative cultural spaces made them in this instance to conceive their identity in those gendered terms. Culture in the Tamil country being inexorably gendered, in that it is underwritten by semantics of honour, encapsulated the social in sexual terms for the one and for the other utilised the sexual to further the political, as propaganda and practice. The modality through which this was achieved was cinema.

From Chronos to Topos: The Double Constituency of Fanon and the Re-Inscription of Said

After Frantz Fanon, it seems as if the nation and its culture are

to be forged in the context of struggle and resistance and this has proved to be a paradigmatic text for studies of culture under colonialism - the arguments, all referential, since debates only pitch themselves on stages. The context of colonialism is structured by alienated space, deferred liberty and a forced erasure of memory. Fanon explicates at length on this with reference to Algeria. The economics of colonialism require this former, as necessary ideological conditions for its exploitative plunder to continue. But paradoxically, these in turn become the sites of native struggle and resistance to the coloniser. Expropriation of land causes the peasant to rebel and forces the poet (the term poet here is used as a symbol and it stands for the institutions of Cultural History) to re-map his country's contours. The absence of liberty brings the masses onto the streets and the poet's voice joins the general chorus of rage and protest. Fanon's compelling voice, speaking to the colonised rather than at them or about them, has proved evocative and resonant in the decades following his death in 1961. His work has attained the status of an iconic text for those living in and wanting to write of politics and culture in a post-colonial universe, while his seminal arguments continue to frame and inform debates on the relationships which undergrid culture, imperialism and nationalism.

Fanon's key themes may be found in all of his works - from the early *Black Skins, White Masks* to that classic, *The Wretched of the Earth*. *Studies in a Dying Colonialism* and *Towards an African Revolution* constitute the other important works. *Black Skins, White Masks* attempted to understand and critique the problem of self-perception and self-constitution under colonialism and employed the language of psychology to define its concerns. *Studies in a Dying Colonialism* comprised profound sociological theses on the transformations of familial and social relationships under colonialism. *Towards an African Revolution* and *The Wretched of the Earth* gestured towards the future, pronounced themselves to be combatant texts, addressed to comrades in the struggle and exemplified a mode of critique that constantly looked to engage itself as well as its object of study in a dialogue with the world of which both are a part and which transforms either, even as it submits itself to be

transformed by them.

If Frantz Fanon bore witness to and pronounced against a colonialism in combat and, by the same token, testified to the importance of a national liberation struggle (as differentiated) from a merely nationalist struggle, Edward Said may be said to continue this tradition of testimony. In *Orientalism*, he delineated aspects of that complex of epistemological, political and material interests which produced the 'Orient' of a colonising Europe. In some respects, this essentially Foucauldian project repeated the errors of the master himself, in that the Orient, constructed as an entity that possessed a discursive life of its own, seemed to acquire, rather re-acquire, that reified status Said wished to destabilise in the first place. However, in the deeply questioning and marvellously rich *Culture and Imperialism*, Said worked to redress his extensive and provocative critique of Oriental scholarship - of both its tacit premises and its substantive content. Foucault was once more pressed into service but, as if sensitive to the dangers of a theory of power that is premised on discursive effects and productive practices, which reinforce and create rather than authorise and mandate power, Frantz Fanon is brought in as a counter to Foucault.

Fanon represents the interests of a double constituency, native and western, moving from confinement to liberation; ignoring the imperial context of his own theories, Foucault seems actually to represent an irresistible colonising movement that paradoxically fortifies the prestige of both the lonely individual scholar and the system that contains him. Both Fanon and Foucault have Hegel, Marx, Freud, Nietzsche, Canguilhem and Sartre in their heritage, yet only Fanon presses that formidable arsenal into anti-authoritarian service.¹²

Bhabha's Two-Faced God and the 'Grim Prose of Power' in a Common and Forked Tongue

Imperialist enterprise did not end with the ceding of territories as the colonialist agenda for the one and the conditioned colonised mind for the other insisted on the continuation of the impossible dependence of centres and peripheries. While the post colonial had a 'state of progress' civilizational compunctions of links for the one,

in the area of culture we had the white man's language officiating. The inherited polity if having determined the language issue rather hastily as argued in certain quarters, a change into one of the many others meant splintering the nation. The great anti-Hindi agitation in the Dravidian land in the 60's a leaf in the pages of Indian history, the annals of which are writ with instances of a double quickness to disseminate the nation citing difference.

There exists then a justifiable felt need "to explore the Janus - faced ambivalence of language itself in the construction of the Janus- faced discourse of the nation."¹³ A project that "turns the familiar two faced god into a figure of prodigious doubling, which investigates the nation space in the process of the articulation of elements. Where meanings may be partial because they are in *medias res*; and history may be half made because it is in the process of being made; and the image of cultural authority may be ambivalent because it is caught, uncertainly, in the act of 'composing' its powerful image."¹⁴ This incidentally justifies the very beginning of this paper and project *in media res*. Further, the texts of authority work an ambivalence to create a nation space that generates its own identity and history, which have then catapults that space into an "eternity produced by self generation."¹⁵

To continue, the project of keeping a nascent nation thus together meant looking at it as being greater than the sum total of all its parts and in this sense the colonialist language spelt a unifying cord. It is not to deny the elitist and the urban homologues of the language, it is not to deny the persistence of colonial hegemony through language, and this is not to deny the resistance to the language by virtue of it having been engendered in contexts other than its own, but to state that they were for the modern nation state a mere minor contradiction. Further, in the context of this forced interdependence between centres and peripheries the officiating language must be one which may help build bridges for resistance with the fraternity of other erstwhile colonized voices from other spaces. The point is English has become in today's world order a palpable channel of communication across lines and borders that its centrality makes it a convenient medium for communication. Further, it

is particular englishes that are spoken and writ within a large generic English banner.

Like Soda without Flizz and Toddy that is Fermented: New WT's

The first part of this sub-title is self explanatory in so far as the attributes that qualify the drinks are concerned. This because we all know that soda needs to be fizzy while toddy should not be fermented. The 'and' in the title is to inform its doubling sign-value as both a gap and a bridge. In its dual meaning it may be said to yoke heterogeneity; the violent hinging standing for disjunction, as also to intimate a veritable concord of disparate experience – 'differance'. The second part of the title New WT's seems to, in a postmodern situation and in a neo-colonial order, able of contextualising constitutive conditions that seem to so prevaricate the world order today, by ideally capturing the sense of hyperreality in which new 'New Worlds' are engendered and new 'New texts' sought to be annunciated/enunciated for the one, and for the other, aptly aids the re-possession of immediate memory through a 'event' with WT standing for the catastrophe of the World Trade Centre and the concomitant trauma of a 9/11.

Further the Twentieth century also as pointed out earlier created its own complications with the emergence of a neo-colonial power that has collapsed the three world orders of the first, second and third into merely two worlds those that are less equal and one alone, itself which is more equal than all others. Time then perhaps for the hegemonised to re-define Gramsci, add in the value of interstitial spaces and talk about the sum total of the world per se as being larger than the sum total of all its parts. This because what we have is a single large privileged nation that has the power and the knowledge vested in it to hegemonise and its desire to do so has already come to the fore with discordant voices emerging in many what was once the third world. At the level of history it totes the end of history and at the level of Culture it synonymises the state of mind with the state of progress to vitiate its own pathological war-mongering tendencies in the hysterical discourse of a clash of Civilizations. It recognises a salad bowl only within the spaces of its own interiority while for others it offers the same melting pot

containing difference within the sameness of the self. This position enables it to help fight wars for oil and hide income to itself, which it needs to do for sustaining its leadership that is underscored by a military economy. The other of its Janus-facedness confuses religion as culture and in the heat of that double speak and real-politik uses a generic umbrella to subsume the inconsistencies of a few as being the malady of the entire race to spew hatred as the founding principal of very human existence.

In Search of a Future, rather Urgently

There is an obligation then to re-pose questions regarding the meaning of aesthetic representation and its relationship to history. It is in this context that an impulse arises to question the advancements made by the science of literature which came into being in the Twentieth Century. An impulse to query the worth of deconstructive strategies, of those which argue the impossibility of grounding meaning, except as a series of semantic, philological and philosophical differences, in short, of binary opposites, but which, and often by the same token, refuse both to answer for and to account for those conditions of materiality which allow the play of difference however strictly monitored by cultural and political conditions.

Of deconstructive theorists, Terry Eagleton notes that they "have no particularly pressing reason to locate their own social existence within a broader political framework."¹⁶ In contrast, he recalls those "languishing under various forms of oppression came to acquire, often at great personal cost, the sort of technical knowledge necessary for them to understand their own condition more deeply and so to acquire some of the theoretical armoury essential to change it."¹⁷ Eagleton makes it clear that all knowledge is implicated in politics and history and argues that these conditions of materiality account even for the specific forms of knowledge, which obtain at any given time at any given place.

Writing of Derrida's binary opposites, Jonathan Dollimore observes that the philosopher was clear as to the 'violent hierarchy' where one of the terms governs the other. He further notes: "A crucial stage in their (the binary opposites) deconstruction involves an overturning, an inversion...both the reversal of the authentic-

inauthentic opposition ... and the subversion of authenticity itself are different aspects of overturning in Derrida's sense...."¹⁸

If this be the case with Derrida, theories of the subject, in relation to linguistic processes, have singularly failed to demonstrate the dynamics of the productivity of subjectivity beyond the post-oedipal stage. In Kristeva, for example, we have the initial motility of the semiotic 'chora' or energy drives and stases that make up consciousness, pre-genital and pre-oedipal, that serves as a guarantee for a later eruption of subjectivity, in spite of its inscription in the symbolic order. But this does not, in any way, explain the production of subjectivity within the terms of the symbolic order. The symbolic order functions in Kristeva's discourse as a formal guarantor of meaning and social significations. Its tactics and strategies are taken for granted in their censorship over the semiotic but do not help clarify the production of the social order of significations. The positionality of the subject, who is present only as absent in the symbolic order, is invoked merely to privilege the return of negativity and the broaching of the symbolic in the realm of the modern aesthetic text, more specifically, the symbolist text.

Through significant moments in history, certain events that have hitherto been overwritten, '(in)-differently' written, in the texts that have been chosen for study, will be re-possessed and accorded their rightful positions through a contextual reading that aims at naturalisation. Such a reading is premised on a certain recognition: of the pertinence of gender, which is treated here, less as an ideological expression and more as a continual "structure of feeling." The structure of feeling can be made contiguous with the findings of interest in structuralist and post structuralists theories. The purpose lies in the reclaiming of public and private spaces for a redefinition of nation spaces and that is translatable into a problem of negotiation and inter-action

Between an emergent ('private') moment and a dominant ('public') one.

Between a cultural national moment - homologous to the 'private' and a modern national one - the moment of the 'public'.

The point is the emergent as well as the cultural-national gets inscribed into/onto sexual and social relationships while the dominant

and the modern-national are crystallised into political and economic institutions.

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- ²Reference here is to the depersonalisation by French structuralist critics of a literary product by conceiving it not as a "work" but a "text", one species of the social institution called *écriture* (writing). Feminine here in the context is the naturalization of the term by feminist critics.
- ³A Derridean coinage. In the instance of Derrida the term is an amalgam of phallogocentrism and logocentrism. For more details, refer to Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics* (London: Methuen, 1985).
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BOOK REVIEWS

ARCHANA D. TYAGI, *A STUDY OF SHELLEY'S POETRY IN THE LIGHT OF ÂCÂRYA KṢEMENDRA'S 'AUCITYA-SIDDHÂNTA'*

(Delhi: Shalabh Publishing House, 2008), pp.318, Rs.1150.00

Satendra Kumar

The book under review aims at analyzing the use of language in Shelley's poetry from the point of view of *Aucitya-Siddhânta* (Doctrine of Propriety) of Sanskrit Poetics. It focuses directly on the poetic expression at five levels: *bhâsâ* (language), *guna-alakkâra-rasa* (excellence, poetic figure and sentiment), *vyâkarana* (grammar), *sanskriti* (culture) and *kâvyapratibhâ* (creative genius) as a whole. The book is divided into eight chapters, and the first one "Aucitya in Indian Poetics," which carries five sections, deals with the *Aucitya Siddhânta* as propounded by Âcârya Ksemendra. Dealing with the term, *aucitya* etymologically, it also evaluates the development of this doctrine in Sanskrit Poetics from Acârya Bharata to Prakâœa-varsa.

The second chapter "Aucitya and Western Poetics" attempts to explore a significant area of intersection between the Sanskrit and Western Poetics, viz. their views on a poetic expression as an appropriate speech, with a view to revealing affinities and parallelism between the two. The third chapter "*Bhâsâ-aucitya* (propriety of language)" operates at the expressiveness of the phrase, sentence and meaning in narrative. It is because of *bhâsâ-aucitya* that Shelley's poetry bears striking graceful qualities, captivating charm of phrase, sentence and meaning in narrative, elegant but sparse ornament, tasteful sentiments, tender-heartedness and elegance of expression.

The fourth chapter "*Guna-alankâra-rasa-aucitya* (propriety of excellence, poetic figure and sentiment)" underlies the uniqueness of Shelley's poetry, caused by the appropriate use of excellence, poetic figure and sentiment. Here *aucitya* is exhibited as the soul of *guna-alankâra* and *rasa*. Chapter Five "*Vyâkarana-aucitya* (propriety of grammar)" places the tremendous reliance of Shelley upon

the grammatical devices. It includes all appropriate turns of expression caused by verb, case-ending, gender, number, adjective, prefix, particle and tense. Though Shelley uses all the sub-varieties of grammatical propriety in his poetry, he prefers propriety of verb and propriety of adjective. He, by his use of propriety of verb, coins new expression in different ways. In his poetic language, the subject, being cohered with verb, communicates appropriately and the secondary subject attains excellence in relation to the same verb; the adverbials go to qualify it; the metaphorical superimposition heightens the beauty of the verb forms; and lastly, the direct object, though concealed, gets charmingly communicated.

The next chapter "*Sanskriti-aucitya* (propriety of culture)" exhibits that all the sub-varieties of the *sanskriti-aucitya* are present in Shelley's poetry. The spontaneous description of country creates poetic delight and surprise and causes loftiness in his *desa-aucitya* (propriety of country). Shelley treats *kula-aucitya* (propriety of family) too in such an apt way as his poetry attains a rare excellence. As far as *vrata-aucitya* (propriety of custom) is concerned, it finds its way in Shelley's poetry through figurative language. This is followed by a chapter on "*Kâvyapratibhâ-aucitya* (propriety of creative genius)," which includes *tattva* (truth), *sattva* (disposition), *abhiprâya* (motive), *svabhâva* (nature), *sârasangraha* (essence), *pratibhâ* (genius), *avasthâ* (state), *vicâra* (thought), *nâma* (title) and *âsinvâda* (benediction). Like a great poet, Shelley creates overwhelming emotions or emotional states in his poetic composition through his *pratibhâ* (genius) and creates *pratibhâ-aucitya* in his poetry. Thus Shelley's poetry has a unique universal appeal generated by the various proprieties of *kâvyapratibhâ-aucitya*.

The study concludes that Shelley's poetry emerges out great when put to the test of the *Aucitya-Siddhânta* of Sanskrit Poetics. It aims not merely to instruct but to delight and transport too. What is discernible throughout the book is the writer's successful attempt at unraveling and demystifying Sanskrit Poetics, and assessing the poetry of an alien country in an alien language. The author makes the reader feel that criticism is no Herculean task but is a thoroughly invigorating, delectable and elevating experience.

**NIKHAT TAJ, *E.M. FORSTER'S NOVELS:*
THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF
*THEMES AND SYMBOLS***

(Aligarh: A.M.U, 2006), pp.v+187, Rs.250.00

Sanjeev Sharma

E.M. Forster is one of the most researched of the twentieth century English fiction writers. The present book is yet another attempt at exploring the literary worth of this major novelist. The basic claim of the study that a symbolic analysis of Forster's novels cannot be done by disassociating them from the thematic strand is valid. In fact, in the modern novel, texture and structure are closely interwoven. In the present study the author has successfully analysed Forster's novels on this basis. The novel has been seen as a work of art, an entity in itself wherein every theme and symbol contribute to its richness and variety, making it "aesthetically compact and beautiful" (iii).

Separate studies have been made on themes and symbols in Forster's novels in the past, but the distinguishing feature of this study is the way in which two distinct approaches to literature have been combined – one focusing on symbols and the other on basic themes. The writer demonstrates with great ease and conviction how symbols bring out themes and how thematic motifs take a symbolic significance. Symbols, images, metaphors, and myths have been closely identified and their integral relationship with themes has been closely analysed. The learned scholar has offered us an extensive and comprehensive analysis of these novels. The symbolic patterning, underlying the behaviour of characters, the central thematic conflict internalized in the novels, nature symbolism, the interweaving of myths into the novels — all these have been perceptively and critically analysed by the critic in a clear and lucid manner.

The book opens with the essential background study of the literary and cultural milieu of Forster's times. Furthermore, it offers a review of critical studies on Forster. This provides a proper context for the close and proper understanding of the six novels in the

subsequent chapters. In the chapters devoted to individual novels, aspects like place/locale and characters have been studied in depth. In *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, *Howards End*, and *A Passage to India*, place becomes the nerve centre onto which the thematic movement converges. *The Longest Journey*, *A Room with a View* and *Maurice* demonstrate a shifting of focus from place to character – the thematic movement begins from the epicentre outwards and is thus essential for the true comprehension of these remarkable fictional works of the preceding century.

The analysis of the symbolic framework and properties of the novels have been done in relation to Forster's major thematic concerns. It has been shown that while in the Italian novels, the major thematic concern centres round the struggle between the public self and the private self, the later novels have a "poetic-philosophic dimension." The central line of argument, underlined in this research work, is that Forster's novels operate on a schismatic principle in general. The distinction of these novels lies in the use of integrative symbolism. Forster's subtle art of correlating the outer and the inner drama of life has been cogently discussed. In exploring the two aspects of themes and symbols in their infinite variety, the author has worked out the interdependence of the thematic and symbolic components to establish the novelist's vision of life in the largest possible perspective which is necessary to apprehend correctly the mind and art of Forster.

The book is a significant contribution to studies on Forster. The writer has examined in depth the kaleidoscopic world of Forster's fictive writings and brings out the contradictions, heterogeneity as well as the moral vision embodied therein. The absence of 'absolutes' in Forster's fiction has been dealt with insight. The credit of the present study lies in providing a critical and perceptive analysis, neat organization, command of language, and methodical approach. The well-prepared bibliography further enhances its usefulness for both the scholars and the teachers. The study can act as a model for researchers in the area of fictional writings in general and E.M. Forster in particular.

S. VISWANATHAN, *ESSAYS IN INTERPRETATION*

(Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2007), pp.236, Rs.550.00

H.C. Gupta

This book is a collection of S. Viswanathan's critical essays — all earlier "published in various journals and collections over the last several decades" (xv). The "Introduction", which begins the work, is in itself an essay *par excellence*; it leaves nothing to add for a reviewer by way of introducing the art and contents of the essays. By his interpretation — or better, different interpretation — the author with his consummate critical critiquing skill and ability has brought about the fact that plagiarism is part and parcel of human D.N.A., great world-famous writers inclusive. Even the 'originary' (to use Viswanathan's term) writers have nothing original so far as the facts about human nature and world are concerned. What makes a writer's originality lies in his art of representation.

What strikes a serious *sahrad* reader is the family likeness of the essays. These are 'essays' in the etymological sense (that is assays) and 'essays' in the accepted true sense of the term — cohesive and coherent wholes. They are marked with the writer's charm of personality. Each sentence and each paragraph is tightly and architectonically linked with the other to make one whole. In the style of a great teacher, the author begins with the key-sentence preambles and broad outlines of his subject matter in the first paragraph and the details and discusses it elaborately and painstakingly in the succeeding paragraphs, the last of which makes a syllogistic summing up of the whole. The first and the last sentence of the concluding paragraph of Essay 24 bear witness to it.

Viswanathan's volume of essays is certainly not every reader's cup of tea. Style, which is the man in his case, is difficult. Viswanathan reminds one Emerson's words "No society is as large as an individual." Highly individualistic, the scholar has a predilection for difficult words, and convoluted long, parenthetical sentences. His is a style marked with foreign terms, nuances, coinages and compound words. Some of them are: "bookly knowledge" (32); "originary poet" (33); "the critiquing critic's conclusions" (172);

"paracurricular" (175); and "exemplum ad horrendum" (211). The compounds, in particular, catch the eye: "hard-to-please playwright" (61); "aesthetico-dramatic" (133); "The Orpheus-Lycidas-Milton-Christ identification" (12); "Chinese-box-like structure" (42); "barely-begun-to-be told" (127); "I-and-Thou meeting" (235); and so on. But on the whole, the book is commendable for the prose saturated with erudition, suggestiveness, terseness and conciseness.

Each essay in the volume gives the scholarly writer as well as the *sahard* reader a relish of Keatsian rapture: "Then felt I like some watcher of the skies/ When a new planet swims into his ken." However, the book can serve as the best specimen of how lamentably a good and great work can be marred by printing/ proof-reading errors, some of which are howlers — *exempli ad horrendum*. Mistakes of both omission and commission in the use of the marks of punctuation, viz., to give just two of these: (i) intrusion of comma — "underlying, attitudes," and "the, two epics" (34); and (ii) omission of fullstop at the end of the para (188) and at end of the essay (47). The author should not have too much depended on his proof-reader.

In sum, the collection showcases the range and enthusiasm of the bibliophile long-adored by his students, colleagues and *sahrad* readers. It is an epitome of the Professor's intellectual, emotional and spiritual personality. It would be unfair not to record indebtedness to the knowledgeable author because the reader's labour of love is amply rewarded in his heightened perception and enrichment of knowledge, despite the unsavoury hangover left long by proof-reading lapses. Each and every essay is a neatly packed casket of information-sweets and interpretation-riches — a veritable cocktail of knowledge, aesthetic perception and critical and analytical acumen, capable of satisfying the knowledge-hungry reader. The collection is indubitably laudable for spell-binding riches. In my considered opinion, it is a must for teachers, researchers, students and common readers alike. Its jacket-design and binding deserve praise, but it is priced exorbitantly and hence beyond the pocket of most of the students and teachers. I wish that such an invaluable book must appear in paperback edition with reasonable price as early as possible

**O.P. BUDHOLIA (ED.), *GENERIC MANIFOLDS:
INDIAN ENGLISH LITERATURE SINCE 1950***

(New Delhi: Adhyayan Publishers, 2008), pp.XI+265, Rs.725.00

Savita Shrivastava

This book by O.P. Budholia unveils an avenue of the generic manifolds of Indian English Literature; it consists of useful resources for pattern, design and new trends that sprouted in linguistic and structural properties developed in Indian English Literature written after 1950. It also works out the reactionary potentials and the obsessive mode of expressiveness. The volume comprises of twenty-two papers on generic variety which critique scholarly the emerging new trends in language, theory and structure.

The first paper, "Indian Writing in English: Challenges and Future Directions," is by Niranjan Mohanty. He has analyzed scholarly some new challenges that create the exigent responsibilities before Indian English writers for linguistic innovations and cultural paradigms. Krishna Singh critiques through textual properties the various aspects of colonial neurotic sensibility in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*. She also works out the social and psychological issues such as globalized cultural conflict, and racial and national concerns. Nutan Kulshrestha in her paper on the short stories of Jhumpa Lahiri makes a successful effort to exhibit the pictorial representation of the protagonists. With a cultural travail between rootedness and rootlessness, she also traces the self-explanatory process of female characters. Charu Sheel Singh in his paper, "Literature as History's Other: Imaginative Gold into Fictional Manifolds," analyzes some specific and theoretic differences in the narrativisation of history and literature. The association between the episodic and semantic memories divulges seriously the theoretic principles of literature. The phenomenological and empirical modes of knowledge bring forth the higher theoretic concept of "Bindu".

Karunesh Jha analyzes the linguistic inventiveness and the familist relationship in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*. A. K. Chaturvedi, while interpreting the text of *The Inheritance of Loss*, traces the predicament of man. A.N. Dwivedi critiques the historical and social perspectives in the thematic contents of Manohar ••

Malgonkar's novels. Seema Raizada's article on *Fire on the Mountain* examines the phallocentric world of Anita Desai. R.P. Singh traces the motives of piety and profanity and discloses the double standards of human relationships in the novels of Jhabvala. O.P. Budholia explores the subtle theoretic features of Indian culture and makes their application to Anita Desai's *Journey to Ithaca* and Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine*. Sanjeev Khanna brings out some important distinctions between the human and the non-human world in R.K. Narayan's *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*. Alka Rani Purwar focuses on the Freudian concept of the repressed desires and the social question of unwed motherhood in Markandaya's *Two Virgins*.

Renu Joshan and B. Janaki in co-authorship stress repeatedly the text as the context for its structural growth in Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine* and Bapsi Sidhwa's *An American Brat*. Ashok Sachdeva discloses some inner and essential points of the feministic trends in contemporary Indian English fiction. Lata Mishra deals with the magical strategies related to the poststructural viewpoints in *Midnight's Children* and *The Mistress of Spices*. Qamar Alam concentrates on some apparent contradictions that exist in the three novels of Shashi Deshpande. He studies the psychogenic traits of human personality in the three fictional texts of Deshpande. Sheila Vijay dwells on a few novels of Jhabvala for interpreting the social, moral and cultural paradigms of India. Charu Chitra discusses the two novels: one from Hindi (*Adha Gaon*) and the other from English (*Sunlight on a Broken Column*). She points to the inner pangs of Muslims against the partition of India. M.C. Saxena in his paper on Khushwant Singh distinguishes between the facts of history and the principles of literature. His reading of the novel *Delhi* brings into light the psychological facts and the range of memories. Jyotsna Prabhakar spotlights the realistic aspects in Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence*.

Apart from these essays, there is an interview with the contemporary poet Charu Sheel Singh by O.P. Budholia. Evidently, this book is a valuable contribution to the generic criticism and will certainly be helpful to both the students and the scholars alike.

CONTRIBUTORS

S. Viswanathan is former Professor of English, University of Hyderabad.

Iffat Ara is Professor of English, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh.

K.K. Sharma is former Professor of English, University of Allahabad.

Leonard R.N. Ashley is Professor *Emeritus* at Brooklyn College, New York.

Rambhau M. Badode is Professor and Head, Department of English, University of Mumbai.

Niranjan Mohanty is Professor of English, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan.

Ravi Dwivedi is Assistant Professor of English, Madhav Mahavidyalaya, Jiwaji University, Gwalior.

Nilufer E. Bharucha is Professor of English, University of Mumbai.

O.P. Dwivedi is associated with the Department of English, University of Allahabad.

Monika Gupta is Reader in English, H.N.B. Garhwal University, Srinagar, Uttarakhand.

Sridhar Rajeswaran is Adjunct Faculty in the Department of English, University of Mumbai.

Satendra Kumar is Head, Department of English, Government P.G. College, Lansdowne, Pauri Garhwal, Uttarakhand.

Sanjeev Sharma is Reader and Head, Department of English, S.D. Postgraduate College, Ghaziabad.

H.C. Gupta is former Professor of English, Jiwaji University, Gwalior.

Savita Shrivastava is Professor of English, Government K.R.G. College, Jiwaji University, Gwalior.

POINTS OF VIEW

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