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POSTCOLONIALIST PERSPECTIVES ON ENGLISH LITERATURE: THE QUESTION OF PERSPECTIVISM

S. Viswanathan

Postcolonialism or the 'postcolonialist discourse,' as it comes to be termed, is to be regarded as a current, general movement of thought, a 'theory', such as feminism or deconstructionism rather than as a literary-critical phenomenon. One of the main modes of expression of the movement, and in a sense its heuristic medium, has however been literature and criticism. Not that post-colonialism has not made its intellectual presence felt in history, science, political science, sociology and anthropology. Yet one cannot perhaps help noticing the irony that where one would expect postcolonialism to translate itself into action in terms of economic and sociocultural emancipation in the practicalities and material circumstances of daily life the intellectual fervour and the attendant activism have hardly issued in any notable operativeness in the practical sphere. It would make one wonder whether the postcolonial discourse has had a real impact on such forces as may strive for the restitution of sociocultural identity and independence and for cultural survival through resistance and renovation. Moreover, postcolonialism has, in the present context, to assume a double responsibility. It has to be on its guard against the temptation if not tendency towards a derivative adoption or imitation of postcolonialist categories of thought from the metropolitan west. In addition, it has to work against the current of super-power-impelled globalisation. Thus, postcolonialism has to face the risk of at least two kinds of neocolonialism insidiously subsuming it.[1]

The critical venture of decolonising that is particularly active in the postcolonialist discourse, with its by now well articulated rationale and its strong impetus, goes far back in time in its historical beginnings and antecedents. One remembers the old pregnant saying that the conquering Romans were conquered by the conquered Greeks. In the modern epoch, the enfranchisement of the colonies a long process, which started within less than a couple of centuries after the colonial settlement of the New World, extended

over nearly two centuries and brought in its wake a revolt against Eurocentricism, led in America by Emerson and the Transcendentalists. A near-contemporaneous development with the process was European and subsequently American Orientalism. Orientalism's entwinement with the colonial urge and bias, and its inspiration in the colonial's desire and need to project the colonised nation as the inferior 'other' in its ineluctable station of 'alterity' have been well recognized, thanks to Edward Said. By the same argument, there is a notable convergence, despite the difference of kind and of shade and colour among these, of the views of Foucault, Said, Frantz Fanon, Fredric Jameson, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, for example, towards the principle of 'alterity,' operative in the colonial's sense of innate superiority over the colonised 'other,' a principle that could be seen as paradigmatic of the relationship of the domination of the dominant over the dominated. Similarly, the several oppositional stances which take their stand on the basis of differences of gender, race, class and of 'world' (first, second or 'third') have a common base in their apprehension of the paradigm of power relationships. Also, the new historicist and the cultural materialist conceptions of literary or artistic 'representation' and translation as inherently politicised activities enmeshed in the play of power have alerted us to the colonising and colonised element in these activities which according to some of these critics at any rate requires not only to be unravelled but also to be subjected to a decolonising process. The synchrony of postcolonialism and postmodern thought and poststructuralism is partly explicable in the light of the convergences noticed.

No wonder then that the urge towards a decolonisation and dehegemonisation of English studies has come to be keenly felt in countries where the subject has been a heritage of colonial rule. More interestingly, cultural critics of the metropolitan west have themselves at times described their critical endeavour as one of decolonising the texts and canon of English literature and criticism, meaning to say that their enterprise is one of teasing out the hidden agenda of power play goverming the text. There is no gainsaying of the need for a long overdue awareness of the different kinds and degrees of colonial bias in English literary texts and for an active

application of a consciousness of it in reading and responding to the texts. A sensing of the colonial contexts and their possible presence as co-texts and subtexts in the texts, as part of the historicism of the text and of ourselves as readers, makes for a potential enrichment of response. While postcolonialist criticism has in this way contributed to an enhancement of our response, it has not always avoided turning out to be not only a partial critical procedure but often reductionist and lacking in what one might call perspectivism.

We may now consider certain premisses underlying the 'decolonising' theoretical criticism of Shakespeare and related drama in recent times. Certain crypto-or protocolonial impulses have been sought and found, now in Shakespeare, now in some of his critics, which tendency might remind us of a comparison with Virgil who would seem to have built in in his epic a celebration of imperium, the idea of Empire, the Roman empire. Indeed, a strong tack of the postcolonialist criticism of Shakespeare is to make him out to have been deployed as an agent and an instrument of colonising hegemonisation in direct and in oblique fashion and as a subtle proselytising means of westernisation of outlook and values in the then subject nations. At the same time, there have also been critics who trace the 'decolonising' vein in Shakespeare himself in the plays of the 'radical Shakespeare.' Such a critical situation of typical Shakespearian contrarieties, however, cannot be dismissed simply as illustrative of the seek-and-you-shall-find-it pattern or as mere projections of the critics on to Shakespeare. Rather, it could be regarded as an illustration of the phenomenal inclusiveness which is the hall-mark of Shakespeare. Perhaps a realisation of the possibility of this being the case would alert us to the need for being aware of, and sensitive and responsive to, the other side of the question, and thus to give due weight, and yet not much more than due weight exclusively, to one point of view.

If several critics and scholars of one generation regarded Shakespeare as the champion of the Tudor doctrine of monarchy, as an advocate of hierarchy and 'degree' and as an orthodox opponent of the idea of any sort of revolt or protest, the contemporary cultural materialist critics would place him in just the opposite camp.

Similarly, an earlier generation of scholars might have thought that Shakespeare could have anticipated the much later ushering in and subsequent history of the colonial era and of its end in emancipation, by virtue of certain intuitive perceptions and prophetic powers of the poet-playwright. But the new historicists and other cultural critics of today would have us believe that the colonial paradigm must have been suggested to Shakespeare by the then contemporary phenomenon of the Virginian plantations as a colonising venture in the New World, overseas travel and trade and the setting up of the East India Company almost at the turn of the century, and the advent of capitalist enterprise and a host of such material and socioeconomic and sociocultural factors.

A recent article by Margo Hendricks[2] may be cited as an example of how postcolonialist criticism could read what is apparently a 'dream' play like *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as deeply involved with the idea of the colonial enterprise, especially in its 'Indian' references. In such interpretation, there is a blurring of categories with the result that what pertains to the realm of trade, travel and travel literature, to the sheer fascination of exotica and of the romantic is assimilated to the 'possession' of 'dominion', to colonial conquest and rule. For instance, the well-known exchange in *Julius Caesar* (II.i) between Cassius and Brutus can be set in the context of colonial history in more than one way, as it also may be read independently of the colonial context.

Cassius: ... How many ages hence
Shall this our lofty scene be acted over
In state(s) unborn and accents yet unknown!
Brutus: How many times shall Caesar bleed in sport,
That now on Pompey's basis lies along
No worthier than the dust!

Julius Caesar (III. i. 111-116)

The postcolonialist way with the passage would be to see it as Shakespeare's capturing on his part of the ambitions of colonialism and of the mood of colonial expansion and possession of new realms into which the reach of his and England's language would extend, a confidence and vaunt alike about his country, his language and no less his drama. As the former Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere remarked with reference to his translation of *Julius Caesar*

into his tongue Swahili, the prophecy by Shakespeare proved true in another sense, in the sense that the play and the lines got translated into the languages undreamt of in Shakespeare's day and that too in new-born states. That would raise the possibility that Shakespeare's anticipatory vision is not so much by way of envisaging colonial possession of new lands or the spread of English and his drama to the American 'states' then unborn in new accents. It might rather be a case of Shakespeare's prefiguration reaching far ahead and being one of the dismantlement of colonialism, of the dissolution of Empire and of the legacy of colonial rule such as English and Shakespearian drama getting absorbed and assimilated and translated in the larger sense into new states and their languages. Or it may well be that the passage both 'looks before and looks after.' Shakespeare may look backward to the Roman legend and myth that Caesar was, its European dissemination into England and English drama and the historic destiny of the event of Caesar's murder leading subsequently to the Augustan empire formation. Or it may be a stroke of the exploitation of the vein of dramatic self-consciousness by the playwright.

It is the colonial theme in (indeed many would say 'of') *The Tempest* which has received a great deal of exploration at the hands of the anticolonialist critics. Not only the colonisation of America starting with the Virginian plantations but the colonisation of countries and regions in Africa, Asia and remote islands like the West Indies has been seen as typologically or allegorically prognosticated and portrayed in the play's code. The anticolonialist decoding of this has been exciting and illuminating in several ways. However, the intricacies imbedded in the contrastive and correspondent patterns of proto-colonial relationships in the play have not been done justice to. The tendency again has been one of an appropriation or reappropriation of the play and its rich complexities and telling intensities, especially of relationships, to the anticolonialist stance and perception.[3]

The 'decolonising' impulse which propels a good deal of cultural criticism today has led to the defamiliarising and demythicising of Shakespeare and his drama and other Renaissance literature in several ways. The cultural materialist emphasis on the

inherent, deep-laid network linkages between drama and the theatre on the one side and the socioeconomic and sociopolitical factors of the time on the other has resulted in the position of mutually participatory congruences between the two. The formation of joint-stock companies like the East India Company and a company for the Virginian voyages and plantations, later in the same first decade of the seventeenth century, the newly evolved market economy and the spirit of consumerism now come to be regarded as supplying certain informing principles of the professional theatre and drama as an institution, with its inevitable dimensions of commerce and politics and, what is more, of the structure, and sometimes the very texture of writing and enactment, of the plays.[4] The excesses of this trend consist in the premature assumption that once drama came to occupy the commercial theatre it lost its roots in popular culture and in community values, and the connections got severed once and for all. While one may not adopt the Leavisian idea of the near-total persistence of the unity of community culture and community values wholesale, one should not fail to recognise the survival of a certain cultural unity and homogeneity of a kind and of a community of sensibility and shared values in Shakespeare's day. It is worth noting that the theatre then occupied a common ground or meeting place making simultaneous contact with the popular culture of the community, with the political forces of the 'Right' and of the 'Left', of the monarch and the court with their patronage and censorship, and of the voice of protest and dissent; and with the market and materialist factors it had to reckon with. The present-day 'decolonising' critics' exclusive emphasis is on one or the other of the latter of these. The on the whole successful and almost uncanny negotiation of its way with the official censorship as well as patronage on the side and with the demands of commercialism on the other, which the theatre could achieve in the period deserves better appreciation than has been granted it. To put it another way, the 'decolonising' trend in criticism all but alike in its several manifestations, has practised a rather linear vision. As a consequence, factors which it is needful or at any rate desirable to take into account get ignored or get short shrift as their hands. They would seem to project-on to Shakespeare and his contemporaries in proleptic fashion

development and tendencies such as colonialism in its full-fledged status; and the cultural dichotomies between the popular and the commercial, between highbrow and lowbrow, which in point of history belong with periods no earlier than the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In a way, such a prolepsis is akin to the way critics of the modernist era tended to project the nineteenth-century crisis of faith or doubt on to early seventeenth-century writers.

Postcolonialist criticism has, of course, traced the often subtle sometimes overt operations of the imperial instinct and of the sense of superiority of race and race prejudice in later eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century English literature, not to mention the occasional but hardly sustained interest shown by a critic here or a critic there in a late seventeenth-century woman writer, playwright and colonialist of sorts, Aphra Benn, a single swallow that did not quite make a summer. Besides the severe cultural critiques of the 'orientalising' practised by a major pioneer Orientalist like Sir William Jones and others of that ilk, a critiqueing scrutiny has been offered of the 'orientalisings' of the poets such as Blake, Shelley, Southey, Moore and Byron. In all this, the very few critics who give due credit to the positive aspects of such interest in India and the Orient are at best an exception to the general rule of the rule-of-the-thumb dismissiveness or an attitude of prejudice.

For example, there has been a failure to recognise the still, small voice of a figure like William Cowper, and for that matter the ringing oratorical outbursts of Edmund Burke, arch-conservative as he might have been, against the depredatory violations perpetrated against India by Warren Hastings. Cowper in *The Task* in the 'Winter' section asked though in another persona

> Is India free ? and does she wear her plumed
> And jewelled turban with a smile of peace,
> Or do we grind her still ?

The lines raise the demand for India's freedom at a time when the process of the subjugation of the country had just got under way. They also bespeak an acknowledgement of the glory and the wonder, exotic as it might be, that India was. They register a protest, loud and clear, against the oppression of India by the British the process of which had started then.

By the same argument, the possibility, strong as it appears to be, that Blake may be making covert reference to the oppression of India by the British in a poem like 'The Tyger' has not so far been considered. Blake, if anything more than Shelley, set himself against all oppressors of mankind. Quite apart from his possible acquaintance with Indian myth and lore, which has been commented on by Blake scholars, from the circles he moved in he not only imbibed a sympathy with the French revolutionary ideals but would have formed a sympathy for India oppressed by the British gaining control of the country. In the early nineties of the eighteenth century, at the time of writing of 'The Tyger,' Blake could not but have heard of the strong resistance put up by Tipu Sultan against the British, Tipu the Tiger and also perhaps of the then known and dreaded toy tiger used by Tipu as an instrument of punishment of the captured English soldiers. After all, among Blake's 'proverbs of hell' is: 'The tygers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction.' It seems more likely that Blake regarded the phenomenal energy and strength of the tiger positively and as making for an overthrow of evil and oppression. He might have intended an associations in the poem with Tipu the Tiger, if not Tipu's then notorious toy tiger, as an emblem of the strength and energy needed for confronting and defeating the forces of oppression, in a manner sympathetic or favourable to Tipu rather than in a manner condemnatory of him as an emblem of evil which last significance Tipu and his tiger would have carried in jingoistic general opinion of the day. The stars which are awe-stricken at the advent of the tiger and throw down their spears and cry as they submit to it are in Blake's system meant to suggest the fallen angels or evil as oppressive controllers of destiny, and the brute power of the tiger connotes the exercise of destructive force for liberation and regeneration. This perhaps despite the fact that Blake's illustration of the animal facing the poem, with its slightly comic overtones, is set in ironical contrast to the poem. It is a question whether Blake had a chance to look at one or two paintings of the tiger as a tropical animal then available in London.

The good that such writers tried to do in their writings for the cause of India and colonised states tends to get 'interr'd with their

bones.' True, a poet like Southey bore deep-seated racial and religiously intolerant prejudices against Indian and Oriental mythology, religion and culture, and Shelley in spite of his liberated convictions carried the patronising belief that India needed British rule to be redeemed in spite of his fascination for Indian myth and ethos and Indian habits like the matriarchal laws obtaining in Karala then and Indian items like the champak. But Byron had a genuine sympathetic understanding of Oriental life and habits, especially those of the Islamic Middle East.[5] Let alone the numerous ephemeral writings by those in favour of India which have languished in the archives without attention, little attention has been paid to caring references to India in literature as for example Yeats's utterance in a poem in 1937:

John Bull has stood for Parliament
.....
For he knows how to say
That all must hang their trust
Upon the British Empire
Upon the Church to Christ
.....
John Bull has gone to India
And all must pay him heed
For histories are there to prove
That none of another breed
Has had a like inheritance
Or sucked such milk as he,
And there's no luck about a house
If it lack honesty.

True, if there are attitudes and sentiments sensitive to India expressed in English Literature, there are also many instances of brazen imperialistic and racial bias as in Tennyson's 'Akbar's Dream' and his vacuous vaunt in 'Locksley Hall'

Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay

almost reechoing Macaulay's notorious ill-informed canard. The postcolonialists have pertinently and forcefully directed attention towards these. But these exposes and similar ones by them of the metropolitan literary figures' response to the slavery problem (Coleridge's, for example), to the Indian mutiny or the Jamaican massacre in the nineteenth century have not given credit where it is due, as they often tend to paint all writers black with the same

tar. Also, the colonial context to which works like Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* and other novels like some of Dickens's are related, though well worth pointing out, turns out to be an overplayed card. At the same time, the more sophisticated and genuine understanding that has been made available of the colonial transactions of writers like Kipling, Forster, and Edward Thompson in particular deserves attention and appreciation.

In sum, it is worth reminding ourselves that the programme of a decolonising of English studies and of the response to English literary texts, a necessary and desirable and in a way inevitable pursuit, given our postcolonialist situation and postcolonialist consciousness, needs to be carried out in such fashion that we are on our guard against a narrowness and linearity of perspective and its distortions. The caveat that we have implicitly to enter for ourselves in the enterprise is that we should not let the externalistic application of a ready-forged apparatus of a set of anticolonialist criteria detract from the real encounter with and from the savouring of the imaginative experience of the literary text. The recognition and weight we give to the colonial factor, however governing we may regard it to be, should not overbalance the other factors at work.

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[1]A comprehensive if partisan account of the 'postcolonial discourse' lies to hand in Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (London: Routledge, 1998).

[2]Margo Hendricks, '"Obscured by Dreams": Race, Empire and Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*,' *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 47 (1996), 37-60.

[3]I have tried to address this question in '*The Tempest* in the Tropics: The Anticolonialists' Play,' *The Aligarh Critical Miscellany*, 5 (1992).

[4]Besides the works of new historicist criticism by Stephen Greenblatt and others, and the response elicited by such criticism, see Douglas Bruster, *Drama and the Market in the Age of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[5]In addition to Harish Trivedi, 'Byron and the East: from 'orientalism; to 'liberty,' *Colonial Transactions: English Literature and India* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995) orig. pub. 1993, a thorough study is to be found in A.R. Kidwai, *Orientalism in Lord Byron's Turkish Tales* (Lewiston and Lampeter, Mellen University Press, 1995).

NIRVANA AS THE LEITMOTIF IN *KING LEAR*

O.P. Budholia

In his four major tragedies--*Hamlet, Othello, King Lear* and *Macbeth*--Shakespeare presents all the four aspects of human life: social, ethical, political, and spiritual. In *King Lear*, the dramatist unfolds a complicated world of human relations, human nature, varying mental states, filial ingratitude, and the hero's long journey from passions to self-realizations.

Like *Hamlet, King Lear* has a main plot and a sub-plot, and each is permeated with the concept of *nirvana*. The sub-plot of this play consists of three main characters: Gloucester, Edmund and Edgar. The main plot of the story rotates round the old King and his three daughters, Regan, Goneril and Cordelia. The two plots are, thus, patterned for symbolic revelation of varied human relations, passions and self-realisations.

As an old man, Lear wishes to be "unburthen'd" of the authority of his kingdom. He, thus, intends to divide his kingdom into three parts. Being a man in self-love and with egoistic reflections, he longs to have the gratification of self-love through his daughters. He puts a question before them: "Which of you shall we say doth love us most?" The reply of Goneril brings a soothing-effect to his passion-ridden psyche:

> Sir, I love you more than words can wield the matter;
> Dearer than eye-sight, space and liberty;
> .....
> As much as child e'er loved, or father found;
> A love that makes breath poor and speech unable.
> Beyond all manner of so much I love you. (I, I, 54-60)

Regan also agrees with Goneril and confesses "that self-metal" of which the latter is made of. Lear, thus, makes sure of them for their share in the kindgom. His third and the youngest daughter, Cordelia, does not satisfy the sudden stimulated passions of his mind. Her reply becomes an example of the 'unsheathed truth':

> Good my lord,
> You have begot me, bred me, loved me: I
> Return those duties back....
> Why have my sisters husbands, if they say
> They love you all? Happily, when I shall wed,

That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry
Half my love with him, half my care and duty:
Sure I shall never marry like my sisters,
To love my father all. (I, i, 87-95)

Cordelia with her naked truth shakes the unconscious passions that lie dormant in Lear's mind. The expression "the Dragon and his wrath" (I, i, 121) symbolizes the psychic level of his mind. The noun "dragon" is followed by another noun "wrath" with a possessive "his" in the context of the Cordelia-consciousness, symbolizing the demented human emotions. He, in a fit of his passions, is at his wits' end for distinguishing between good and evil. He, thus, deliberately confines himself to the inexorable laws of *karma*. Over-laden with passion and violent anger, he commits distressingly two mistakes: Kent's exile from his kingdom and depriving Cordelia of her share in the estate. As Cordelia symbolizes the truth of life, she does not please him with "glib and oily art" (I, i, 223). Once again, the often-repeated word "wrath" comes to his mouth and he curses Cordelia: "Better thou/Hadst not been born than not have pleased me better" (I, i, 233). King of France, Burgundy, is surprised at Lear for demeaning of human emotions. The reply of Cordelia so influences him that he observes many apparent contradictions of human qualities in her.

Out of Lear's violent anger, there crops up an aversion in him not only towards Cordelia, but also towards the Cordelia-principles of life. Bound with the "wheel of fire" or by the non-convergence values of life, Lear makes his ingrained passions the sole formula for his future actions. He even forgets the courtesy which begins at home for his blood relations. He bids her farewell without "grace," "love" and "benison." Cordelia, the most-loved daughter, knows her father well, and marks the impetuous passions and lower instincts in him. She also suspects the villainy of human nature in her sisters:

... I know you what you are;
And like a sister am most loth to call
Your faults as they are named. (I, i, 261-63)

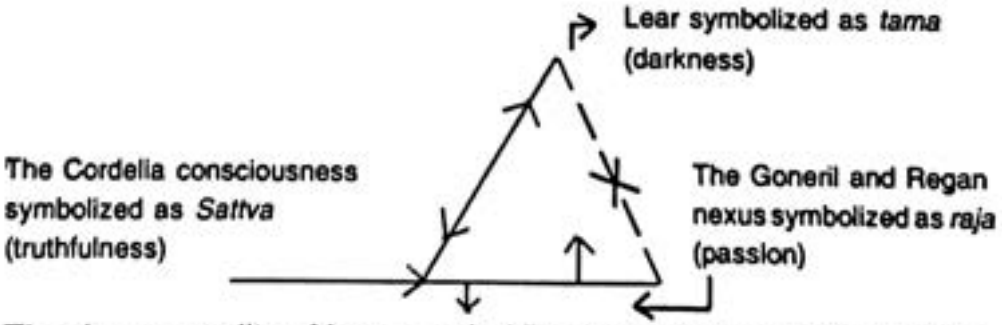
The sub-plot of the play consists of three main characters--Gloucester, Edgar and Edmund. This part of the play deals with the moral dilemma of father and his two sons, Edgar and Edmund. Gloucester's past, full of lasciviousness, creates rashness in his

mind. His bastard son, Edmund, becomes the sole cause of his violent anger and temperamental aberrations. He misguides Gloucester against Edgar by presenting a forged letter. Gloucester, like Lear in a fit of wrath, casts off Edgar. In the main plot, Cordelia, as "a spirit," "a soul in bliss," and "a fair daylight," lays down apparent contradictions with the dark world of Lear's passions. Edgar as the higher self of Gloucester teases him for his past in Edmund. Edgar, thus, stirs him momentarily with a negative rush of human emotions. The entire human relations in this play become symbolic and emblematic. The predominance of human nature (*manav prakriti*) becomes associative with and reconcilable to higher *prakriti* for outlining the cosmic vision of Shakespeare.

According to Indian *dharma*, the human nature assimilates the three *gunas* of the higher prakriti--*sattva, rajas* and *tamas*. As a tragedy of human nature, *King Lear* fits in to the analysis of the three *gunas* of human nature. Thus, the leitmotif of this tragedy lies in the incessant persuasiveness of the hero for the release of a *Karmic* life. An Indian critic of Shakespeare, Syed Mehdi Imam, has beautifully explored the influences of *gunas* on Shakespearean tragedy, especially on *King Lear:*

> From the perusal of Shakespeare's tragedies, three general principles of tragic drama emerge--the principle of play (Lila), of Disillusionment (Maya) and Release (Mukti).... *Lear* is the play of the dualities of gratitude and ingratitude, a disillusionment (Maya) and release (Mukti).[2]

Thus, on the basis of this analysis of the text, there emerges the formation of the triangular which shows the complicated world of human relations with reference to the attributes of gunas:



The deeper reality of human mind lies beneath the surface values of human emotions. Therefore, it seems appropriate to weigh scientifically and psychologically the role of the symbolic expression

in human life. Gerald S. Blum, a noted psychologist, brings out the relations of the symbolic expressions with the deeper reality of human mind:

> The symbol is an indirect representation which stands for something else, thereby contributing to the disguise of unacceptable impulses. The process is facilitated by the fact that thoughts are typically translated into pictorial images in dreams. Various principles of association--such as physical resemblance, similar function, part whole relationship, contrast, and occurrence together in time--lend themselves to the substitutive disguise.[3]

In this way, the triangle, sketched above, symbolizes Lear as *tama* and his three daughters become symbolic of *raja* and *sattva.* The Goneril-Regan nexus represents *raja,* while the Cordelia consciousness stands for *satva.* The individual attributes of each *guna* can be analysed according to Indian way of life thus: the *sattva guna* produces a deeper sense for goodness, beauty, virtue, observance of duty and freedom from desire; the *rajas* (passion) produces desire and action; and the *tamas* produces ignorance, darkness, indifference and dullness. The modern psychologists regard the unconscious as the store of all ideas. Man's each idea is governed either by *ego* or *super-ego. Id,* being a sensual desire, enhances a concrete shape to them by its associative role. The association of *Id* with *ego* creates *rajas* and *tamas* and the dissociation of the two leaves *Id* to be reconciliatory with *super-ego* or guilt-consciousness or super-consciousness creating the eternal values of *sattva guna.*

Modern critics of Shakespeare have explored the problem of psycho-analysis in *King Lear.* In fact, the problem of father-fixation can not be denied fully in this play, but to deal with it in detail means to deviate from the core of our discussion. To apply the concept of *nirvana* to *King Lear,* a few slokas of the *Bhagavadgita* deserve to be quoted, particularly in the context of Lear's journey towards super-consciousness or *nirvana:*

> With the preponderance of *rajas,* Arjuna, greed, inactivity, undertaking of actions with an interested motive, restlessness and thirst for enjoyment make their appearance.

and

> With the growth of *tamas,* Arjuna, obtuseness of the mind and senses, disinclination to perform one's obligatory duties, frivolity and stupor--all these appear.[4]

Lear's association with the Goneril and Regan nexus results in the emergence of *tamas* in his mind. His dissociation with the Cordelia-element means his deviation from the universal validity of moral values. He even observes "the sacred radiance of the sun" (I, i,108) in Cordelia, and yet the preponderance of passion (*rajas*) makes him compel her to mend the truth:

> .... Mend your speech a little,
> Lest you may mar your fortunes. (I, i, 93-4)

Almost in all Shakespearean tragedies, a man in action limits his predicament. The playwright lets Lear free to choose his action from either ways of life, and he chooses the wrong one due to the thrust of human nature or the attributes of *gunas*. *Oedipus Rex* is not an example for Shakespeare to decide the *karma* of the hero only on the basis of destiny. In the world of Lear, there are two extremes: the extreme good and the extreme evil. And Lear chooses in the beginning of the story the extreme evil. Man in Shakespearean tragedies is patterned neither after the Gloucester-formula ("As flies to wanton boys, are we to th' Gods;/They kill us for their sport" iv,i, 36-7), nor after the Edgar-formula ("The Gods are just, and of our pleasant vices/Make an instrument to plague us" v, iii, 169-70); but Shakespeare considers the Edmund-formula seriously and reconciles with it for the theory of *karma* ("The wheel is come full circle; I am here" v,iii, 173).

Lear is the most passive among all Shakespeare's tragic heroes. Each action of Lear begins with and ends in the psychic depth of his mind. The total sum of his actions reveals the psychic reaction. The attraction and repulsion of desires make this tragedy *sui generis* for its tragic elan. As Cordelia is the truth personified in human being, it arouses in Lear the momentary emotional stimulus causing a rush of uncontrollable passions. Thus, his attitude towards the truth of Cordelia is based on "primary process mode of thinking and the operation of the pleasure principle."[6] The association of *tamas* and *rajas* creates the momentary excitement in him. One discerns in him a purblind impetuous embrace of the diabolic intellect of Goneril and the unbridled malice of Regan. Lear's spell of passions is bound to break. Breaking, it brings a moral awakening in his slumbering conscience. This sudden awakening

makes him yield to the Cordelia-element of life or *sattva* which may be renamed as the true self of Lear. Thus, he overcomes his lower impulses by the gradual process of *jnana* (knowledge).

As an archetypal hero, Lear suffers not from the inexorable laws of destiny, but from his own flaws--the demented passions. Both Goneril and Regan observe it. The phrases used to the alchemy of his mind--" poor judgment," "the unruly waywardness," "choleric year"--exhibit the declining vales of the reasoning of his mind. Here is Goneril's opinion about his reasoning power:

> I would you would make use of that good wisdom,
> Where of I know you are fraught; and put away
> I these dispositions that of late transform you
> From what you rightly are. (I, iv, 217-20)

What kind of transformation is it? Certainly, it is of "dispositions" and of human nature. In fact, it is his movement from *sattva* to *rajas* that Goneril observes in him.

Too much attraction to any thing binds one in bonds of *karma* and "seething excitement." The unfulfilled desires of Lear fill him with violent anger. As a man of negative thoughts, he becomes obsessive of the Cordelia-consciousness or tragic elan. This makes him kneel with reverence before Cordelia, and creates in him an abhorrence for the lower impulses of human nature. Like an angry Indian sage, he curses Goneril for her filial ingratitude:

> Into her womb convey sterility!
> Dry up in her the organs of increase;
> And from her derogate body never spring
> A babe to honour her !....
> Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth,
> With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks,
> Turn all her mother's pains and benefits
> To laughter and contempt, that she may feel
> How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
> To have a thankless child ! Away, Away! (I, iv, 276-87)

The impact of Goneril and Regan is so piercing in his mind that he feels the shaking of his "manhood": "I'll pluck ye out,/And cast you, with waters that you loose,/To temper clay" (I, iv, 300-302). Thus, he overcomes the blood-smearing coil of the passions. The killing of passions, giving up selfish motives, attraction, repulsion, jealousy, malice, greed and other psychic aberrations make Lear again a man of total integrity. Sometimes, the suppression of lower

desires does not suit our moral purpose, as it adversely affects the subconscious regions of human psyche, resulting in mental disease. But all natural desires are not detrimental to human personality, as few of them create the sense of guilt. The sense of guilt in psychology is linked with the super-consciousness. The guilt-ridden conscience in man makes him release a kind of liquid which relieves him of all passions and makes him calm and submissive. Prof. Blum analyses beautifully the inner traits of a guilt-ridden man thus:

> Guilt or super ego anxiety has a host of reactions associated with it. Confession, the seeking of atonement, acts of reparation all stem from unconscious forces related to moral standard. Seemingly self-destructive behaviour can serve to gratify a need for punishment and expiation of one's sins. An individual may, without conscious awareness, place himself in a situation where an accident is likely to befall him.[7]

In the absence of Cordelia, the companionship of Fool creates a strong moral sense and a "trembling sensibility"[8] in Lear's mind. As a personification of the Cordelia-consciousness, Fool always follows him in his miseries. As Blum suggests of an accident to a guilt-ridden man, Fool brings one to our notice when he reminds Lear of the fruits of altruism:

> Let go thy hold when a great wheel runs down a hill, lest it break thy neck with following; but the great one that goes upward, let him draw thee after. (II, iv, 69-72)

Obviously, the sense of guilt acts as a purgatory process on the tension-tormented human psyche of Lear. He now follows the path of *nirvanà*. Gautama Buddha teaches his disciples to give up, rather to burn entirely, the dross and dirt accrued from the images of attraction and repulsion of a loved-one object of our lower sensual order for attaining the perfect peace of mind:

> Just as a lamp when it becomes extinguished goes neither hither nor thither, neither to the earth nor to the sky, neither to this direction nor to that, it has been utterly blown out on account of the oil being consumed; similarly a sage obtains *nirvana* when the desires and the passions have been consumed; he goes neither this way nor that, but obtains utter peace.[9]

Lear experiences the truism of life. He does not suppress his inborn desires, but blows them out totally for attaining the higher bliss. He restrains his lower impulses and overcomes them. The blowing out of *tama* creates the climax of tragic conflict in his mind. He now yearns to know his real nature. Here is Lear who becomes the best example of tragic elan in him and of the play as well:

Does any here know me ? This is not Lear:
Does Lear walk thus ? Speak thus? Where are his eyes?
Either his notion weakens or his discernings
Are lethargied--Ha ! waking? 'Tis not so,
Who is that can tell me who I am? (I, iv, 223-227)

As Lear blows out "the wheel of fire," he nears the true essence of life. The dramatist applies his own alchemy to the regeneration of Lear and Gloucester. Both the stories are teamed together for displaying the climax of tragic sufferings and the spiritual attainments. Lear perceives the hollowness of this world just before he goes mad:

... this tempest in my mind
Doth from my senses take all feeling else
Save what beats there--filial ingratitude !
.... But I will punish home:
No, I will weep no more. In such a night
To shut me out? Pour on; I will endure.
In such a night as this ? O, Regan, Goneril ! (III, iv, 12-19)

The repetition of the phrase "In such a night" is linked symbolically with the Goneril and Regan nexus, reminding Lear of his *karma,* but the verb "endure" fills him with a superhuman strength to expiate his sins and to atone for his past *karma.* Thus, the account of suffering goes higher than the sins he has committed in his life. His dissociation from passions and sincere and honest association with the Cordelia element lead him to the way of *nirvana.* As he believes that his sufferings are not commensurate with his actions, he wins our sympathies as a tragic hero: "I am a man/More sinn'd against than sinning" (III, iii, 59-60).

The storm-scene becomes symbolic of the endurance and sufferings of Lear. Gloucester also suffers under two selves: the Edmund-self of the baser instincts and the Edgar-self of moral principles. Gloucester begets his bastard, Edmund, in the dark and vicious place and the same bastard "cost him his eyes." Lear does not understand the greatness of Cordelia in his sanity, but he realizes her greatness in his insanity. Gloucester with the light of his eyes does not see the higher virtues in Edgar, but he realizes them when he is totally blind. Hence his conclusion:

.... Men must endure
Their going hence, even as their coming hither:
Ripeness is all. Come on. (V, ii, 9-11)

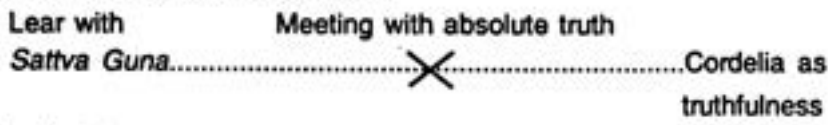
Gloucester is, thus, enlightened by his son Edgar, and realizes the

higher motives of life before his death.

Lear faces two kinds of storms: the internal and the external. He regards the external storm as the mischievous trick of the "servile ministers." The storm that goes inside his mind shatters him so much so that he undergoes a ceaseless compunction in his body and mind. He thinks of his past *karma* and links them with the chain of his present ideas--a psychological process which Shakespeare has masterly shown in Lear:

> Is man no more than this? Consider him well.
> Thou ow'st the worm, no silk, the beast no
> hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume...
> thou art the thing itself.... (III, iv, 100-104)

The moment the external storm subsides, the storm in Lear's mind also subsides. This subsidence combines the higher *prakriti* with human nature. The merger of the human with the divine nature creates a disinterestedness in Lear's mind--a gradual process of *nirvana* itself. He now longs for his redemption--not a Christian redemption, but a universal regeneration which becomes synonymous with the Indian concept of *Moksha.* The following diagram serves to illustrate it:



He is finally associated with the higher principles of Cordelia-consciousness. Now, he is fully relieved of the violent anger (*krodha*) of his mind, and attains the attributes of soul. The doctor attending upon Lear also convinces the reader of the quieting down of his wrath (*tama*): "the great rage,/You see, is kill'd in him" (IV, vii, 78-9). As a soul in bliss, Lear realizes the movement of an eternal wheel of *karma* and pleads to Cordelia thus:

> You do me wrong to take me out o' th' grave;
> Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound
> Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
> Do scald like molten lead. (iv, vii, 45-48)

The death of Goneril, Regan, Gloucester and Edmund bears the stamp of the theory of *karma.* They all meet their retributive justice, as they don't realize the movement of time. As Lear realizes the wheel of time, he kneels down before his daughter, Cordelia, and seeks her forgiveness. He feels immense pleasure in

accompanying Cordelia to prison house for knowing "the mystery of things" as if they were "Gods' spies" (v, iii, 16-7). His meeting with Cordelia symbolizes the moral principles of Fool. He actualizes the Fool-projection of his mind when he addresses Cordelia as a "poor fool." The scene showing the dead Cordelia in Lear's arms defies the range of language. Lear has been shown obsessed with the Cordelia-principle of life:

> Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have a life,
> And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more,
> Never, never, never, never, never
> Pray you, undo this button....
> .... Look on her, look, her lips,
> Look there, look there ! (v, iii, 305-310)

As a regenerated soul, Lear attains his *nirvana* when he dies with the higher principles of life. He lives in doubt, but dies in faith. As a matter of fact, he attains that equanimity of human mind which reflects the deactivation of senses, thoughts and desires. It is a stage which relieves Lear from ignorance (*tama*) and the passions emanating from it: anger (*krodha*), greed (*lobha*), pride (*mana*) and delusion (*maya*). He finally triumphs over these sticky substances of lower fire, and relieves himself of all *karmic* particles. And this confirms the attainment of his *nirvana*.

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MATTHEW ARNOLD'S POETRY AND THE PREDICAMENT OF MODERN MAN

R.S. Pathak

Even his staunch critic T.S. Eliot admits that Arnold is "in some respects the most satisfactory man of letters of his age" and that "we cannot afford to neglect Arnold."[1] Arnold died in 1888 and the same year his literary heir or successor was born in the form of T.S. Eliot.[2] It is not surprising that we find in Arnold's poetry a foretaste of the problems which Eliot was to take up for exhaustive treatment in *The Waste Land* and other works. True, Aronold is a transitional figure linking his Age to our own. M. Bonnerot is of the view that he is "well-adapted to the spiritual needs of our perplexed age." Kenneth Allott, in his Introduction to the Penguin selection of Arnold's poetry, also finds the poet "congenial" and his sensibility "modern." Leon Gottfried calls Arnold "a prophet of the modern age" and highlights an "outstanding quality" of his poetry which gives Arnold a "unique place in the English literature of his period, [and] a place of special relevance to our times." Explicating his viewpoint further, he maintains:

> He [Arnold] possessed a profound intuition of the historical irrevocability of the disruptive, atomizing forces of modern life, and a keen instinct for the problems and perils these forces were bringing and would continue to bring into being.[3]

The present paper aims at revealing the essential nature of Arnold's poetry on the basis of an in-depth textual analysis of his selected poems with special reference to his foretaste of the plight of the modern man and the solutions suggested to obviate his problems.

The poet listens everywhere 'the grating roar,' 'the eternal note of sadness' and 'the turbid ebb and flow/Of human misery.' Consequently, as *Memorial Verses* records, the weather of the heart is left cold and bleak, a 'wintry clime.' And the poet finds himself as a fish out of water,

> Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
> The other powerless to be born,
> With nowhere yet to rest my head.
>
> (*Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse*)

The note of wistfulness is characteristic of even his love poems.

In one of his 'Marguerite' poems the poet writes:

> Yes: in the sea of life enisled,
> With echoing straits between us thrown,
> Dotting the shoreless watery wild,
> We mortal millions live alone.

Poems after poems bear witness to the poet's desolate mood and unhappiness. An analysis of the lexical sets used by the poet very frequently reveals the reiterative use of items like 'solitary,' 'lonely,' 'alone,' 'sad,' 'misery' and their synonyms.

Arnold was touched to the quick by the miseries of common people. Life in the Victorian England embittered his own. With the collapse of a long-established order and the resulting fragmentation of society, the old ties were snapped and men rendered conscious of separation. They felt torn assunder and isolated by dividing barriers--lonely for a lost companionship, both human and divine, and nostalgic for an earlier world of unifying belief and peace. Like other sensitive people and unlike many 'honest doubters,' Arnold was perturbed by contemporary discoveries in science. Lyell's *Principles of Geology* (1830-33), Chamber's *Vestiges of Creation* (1844) and Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859) particularly shook the age-old beliefs in nature, God and the Bible. Although the full impact of these developments were felt after Arnold had written most of his poetry, he must not have been unaware of their simmerings during the earlier decades. The loss of faith ultimately resulted in the loss of moral vision and people were deprived of a reference point to fall back upon in crises.

Constantly at war with himself, Arnold perceives a split in his own soul. His various loyalties pulled him in different directions, and he found it difficult to arrive at a harmony. The fragmented vision could be due to dissociation of sensibility affecting the entire thinking of the Age. Arnold's poetry celebrates a kind of *Maladie du siecle* which was to grip the coming age more fiercely. Many of his good poems are records of his mind and its dilemma. In *Self-Dependence,* for example, he says that he is "Weary of myself, and sick of asking." The life is full of sick hurry, divided alms, over-taxed heads and palsied hearts:

> For what wears out the life of mortal men?

'Tis that from change to change their being rolls;
'Tis that repeated shocks, again, again,
Exhaust the energy of strongest souls
And numb the elastic powers.

While writing about his own times, Arnold intuitively perceives the predicament of modern man. The poet is a visionary (*Kavayah-krantadarsinah*) and are not bound by natural laws (*Niyatikrtaniyamarahita*). What Arnold writes is more fully applicable to our own conditions. In his poems he unfolds the essential loneliness of man. The modern man conspicuously suffers from alienation which manifests itself in various forms including generation gap, compartmentalisation of life, schizophrenia, chopping off of human relationships, cares and concerns, personal crises resulting in stunting of personal development and so on. The present century—specially the post-war period--has been a period of great mental and spiritual unrest and has rightly been designated as 'The Age of Alienation.'[4] The modern man finds himself in a particularly inhospitable world. In our age, as Edmund Fuller observes, "man suffers not only from war, persecution, famine and ruin, but from inner problem... a conviction of isolation, randomness, [and] meaninglessness in his very existence."[5] The modern man's sense of alienation gets aggravated by his lack of faith and corrosive uncertainty. Diagnosing the malaise, Paul Brunton says: "Never before were so many people plunged in so much uncertainty, so much perplexity and unsettlement."[6] The plight of the modern man has been discussed by Melvin Seeman under a set of five interrelated operational conditions, i.e. powerlessness, normlessness, isolation, self-estrangement, and meaninglessness.[7] These are, in fact, different over-lapping manifestations of alienation.

Many of Arnold's poems highlight the plight of a person who is not at home in his setting and cannot relate himself to his world. In his well-known poem *A Summer Night* Arnold shows how hostile conditions have led to human isolation and emotional sterilization:

For most men in a brazen prison live,
Where in the sun's hot eye,
With heads bent over their toil, they languidly
Their lives to some unmeaning taskwork give,
Dreaming of nought beyond their prison-wall

And as, year after year,
Fresh products of their barren labour fall
From their tired hands, and rest
Never yet comes more near,
Gloom settles slowly down over their breast.

Since all human values and human emotions are of social growth, the barrenness of emotions in human hearts implies the barrenness of the society. *The Burried Life* delineates the helplessness even of lovers:

I knew the mass of men conceal'd
Their thoughts, for fear that if reveal'd
They would by other men be met
With blank indifference, or with blame reprov'd;
I knew they liv'd and mov'd
Trick'd in disguises, alien to the rest
Of men, and alien to themselves.

The lines cited above project both the kinds of alienation, i.e. social alienation, and self-alienation.[8] People bury their true self and speak out what is not their thought and thus lead a life of duplicity and deception:

And long we try in vain to speak and act
Our hidden self, and what we say and do
Is eloquent, is well--but 'tis not true.

In *Rugby Chapel* the poet, again, talks about the futility of modern people's life:

Most men eddy about
Here and there--eat and drink,
Chatter and love and hate,
Gather and squander, are raised
Aloft, are hurl'd in the dust,
Striving blindly, achieving
Nothing, and then they die--
Perish.

These lines remind us of lines conveying the same thought in *The Scholar Gipsy* regarding

... the sick fatigue, the languid doubt,
Which much to have tried, in much been baffled, brings.
... Who fluctuate idly without term or scope,
Of whom each strives, nor knows for what he strives,
And each half lives a hundred different lives.

Many more extracts may be reproduced to prove that Arnold was keenly aware of the predicament of alienated persons culminating

in the atrophy of their sensibilities. Very few poets have considered this issue so obsessively as Arnold.

The protagonist of *Empedocles on Etna* (1852), alienated from human beings and nature, is 'A living man no more', 'But a naked, eternally restless mind.' Being cut off from society is an intolerable source of his loneliness:

> With men thou canst not live,
> Their thoughts, their ways, their wishes are not thine,
> And being lonely thou art Miserable,
> For something has impair'd thy spirit's strength,
> And dried its self-sufficing fount of joy.

Empedocles's fate is that of the rootless modern man who thinks life can be lived properly on the basis of intellectuality alone.

Arnold has also suggested solutions to life's problems. He asks forthrightly: 'Is there no life, but these alone/Madman or slave, must man be one?" And:

> And can our souls not strive,
> But with the wind must go,
> And hurry where they drive?
> Is fate indeed so strong, man's strength indeed so poor?

The "deepest passion in his life," says H.F. Lowry, "was for what is permanent in the human mind and the human heart."[9] And the advice that the poet gives is of great relevance today. He says:

> Resolve to be thyself; and know that he
> Who finds himself, loses his misery.
> (*Self-Dependence*)

Empedocles on Etna recommends self-examination:

> The sophist sneers: Fool, take
> The pleasure, right or wrong,
> The pious wail: Forsake
> A world these sophists throng.
> Be neither saint nor sophist-led, but be a man!

This is no mean goal to realise. For this purpose Arnold also went to Indian scholarship. Arnold, like Senancour, was in his youth a romantic at heart but a classicist by training and tradition, which was a constant source of his agitation. Senancour sought to rid himself of his unquiet longings by taking refuge in classical and Eastern scholarship. Similarly, Arnold, as Clough points out, turned to "his rehabilated Hindoo-Greek philosophy" in search of a solution to his dilemma.[10] Arnold had a copy of *Introduction a l'Histoire du*

Buddhisme indien (pub. 1844) by Eugene Burnouf, the great Orientalist who revived interest in Orientalism in the mid-nineteenth century. In a letter of 1858 Arnold referred to Burnouf's book as "my Bouddhisme."[11] He owed even a greater debt to *Srimadbhagavadgita*, which was translated into English by Sir Charles Wilkins in 1785 and was retranslated into French by J.P. Parraud in 1787. According to Lowry, the reading of *Srimadbhagavadgita* had "heavily influenced Arnold's 'Resignation' and other early poems."[12] Arnold regarded the great Indian classic as the most perfect poem. It is conspicuously mentioned in his *Note-books* in the list of books read by him.[13] *Resignation* is a fair epitome of Indian wisdom:

> To die be given us, or attain!
> Fierce work it were, to do again.

The vanities of life will be swallowed up in the eternal cycle:

> The world in which we live and move
> Outlasts aversion, outlasts love,
> Outlasts each effort, interest, hope,
> Remorse, grief, joy;--and were the scope
> Of these affections wider made,
> Man still would see, and see dismay'd,
> Beyond his passion's wildest range,
> Far regions of eternal change.

A later poem *Courage* elaborates this ideal even more fully. This Indian sage-like virtue would go well with Arnold's stoic resignation. Obermann, too, describes one in whom he finds it exemplified. In the first Obermann Poems of 1849 Arnold talks of the souls

> Who weigh
> Life well, and find it wanting, nor deplore;
> But in disdainful silence turn away
> Stand mute, self-centred, stern and dream no more.

These souls never know the 'superfluity of joy' or 'the longings vain.' Arnold's Gipsy Child knows no rebellion and is a 'meek anticipant' of 'sure pain,' for he has 'foreknown' the 'vanity of hope.' In *Srimadbhagavadgita* such a person is called the *sthitiprajna*.[14]

It may be remembered that Arnold recommended 'disinterestedness' as the highest ideal in literary criticism. One who is disinterested in the true sense will be endowed with a rare quality "by steadily refusing to lend itself to any of those ulterior, political,

practical considerations about Ideas." The most essential prerequisite of this ideal is an "inflexible honesty." "It is a very subtle and indirect action" and "by embracing in this manner the Indian virtue of detachment and abandoning the sphere of practical life, it condemns itself to a slow and obscure work." This approach, Arnold implies, would instil culture which ensues from "the love of perfection." But the search of perfection is difficult and rare: "Excellence is not common and abundant; on the contrary, ... excellence dwells among rocks hardly accessible, and a man must almost wear his heart out before he can reach her." Arnold's mission in life was a relentless search for "harmonious perfection." His poems like *The Scholar Gipsy* and *Thyrsis* are outcomes of his own life-long search for unity and wholeness. There can probably be no better ideal for the modern man than pursuit of "total perfection by means of getting to know... the best which has been thought and said in the world." Despite life's manifold problems, Arnold declares, there is a bounty for the person who faces them in right spirit:

> Is it so small a thing/To have enjoy'd the sun,
> To have lived light in the spring,/To have loved, to have thought, to have done;
> To have advanced true friends, and beat down baffling foes?
> I say: Fear not! Life still
> Leaves human effort scope,
> But, since life teems with ill,
> Nurse no extravagant hope;
> Because thou must not dream, thou needst not then despair.

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[8]For a discussion of these two kinds of alienation, see I. Taviss, "Changes in the Form of Alienation," *American Sociological Review*, 34/1 (February 1969), pp.46-7.

[9]Lowry, "Introduction" to *The Letters of Matthew Arnold to Arthur Hugh Clough* (London/New York: OUP, 1932), p.36.

[10]Arthur Hugh Clough, "Review of *Recer' English Poetry*," *North American Review*, 77 (July 1853), p.22.

[11]A. Whitridge, *Unpublished Letters of Matthew Arnold* (New York, 1923), p.43.

[12]Lowry, "Introduction," *op.cit.*, p.71n3.

[13]*The Note-Books of Matthew Arnold*, eds. H.F. Lowry *et al* (London: OUP, 1952), p.586.

[14]*Srimadbhagavadgita*, 2/54-72.

We should, however, not lose sight of the basic difference between the qualities of the *sthitiprajna* and Arnold's stoic qualities which he recommended and adopted after his reading of *Obermann* and others. In the *Gita's Karmayoga* there is hardly any place for "blank indifference" and living "Trick'd in disguise, alien to the rest/ Of men, and alien to themselves." Arnold's final insistence on 'peace' rather than 'joy' is nevertheless due to the influence of the *Gita* on his mind.

YET ANOTHER CONTEMPORARY PARODY OF *THE WASTE LAND:* A NOTE

Sumanyu Satpathy

Skirmishes between little magazines, with parodies often playing an indirect and lively role in them, were not uncommon during the heyday of modernism. One such skirmish took place in 1926-27 in the pages of Eliot's heavyweight *Criterion* (1922-39) and the short-lived *Calendar of Modern Letters* (1925-27). This episode in the history of little magazines is not unknown, though not very well-documented. What is less well-known is an interesting parody of the *Waste Land* which seems to be one of the worthwhile outcomes of the skirmish. In what follows, I present a brief, contextualized account of the skirmish, along side the hitherto unnoticed parody.

As is common knowledge, some young intellectuals, Edgell Rickword among them, felt let down by Eliot's (and *The Criterion's*) gradual but decisive bent towards high-Anglicanism and reactionary politics. Consequently, Rickword, Douglas Garman, and Bertram Higgins launched their own organ to pursue the path originally shown by Eliot--for them criticism's lost leader. *Calendar's* inaugural number carried a brief statement of editorial policy, stressing the need for a literary review which maintained classical standards, and avoided non-literary issues.[1] Obviously, Eliot understood the tone and tenor of that piece as well as the editorial thrust of the new venture, and perceived a possible threat from a rival monthly. As his fears increased within a few months, he wrote an elaborate and veiled rejoinder in certain sections of his short essay, "The Idea of a Literary Review" in *The New Criterion.*[2]

In the meantime, however, Rickword had already published highly perceptive reviews of Eliot's poems, *The Waste Land* in particular, and had shown a willingness to note the poet's relative strength and weakness, more so the former.[3] In response to *The Calendar's* broad policy of supporting unpremeditated art, Eliot outlined his new program, and declared unambiguously, that he would consolidate through his organ the classical tendency of the times. *The Calendar* editors reciprocated by saying that "not even the bulkiest review can be boundlessly eclectic."[4]

But such editorial battles waged in public were often enmeshed

in deeper waters; and in the present case, there seems to be two possible, perhaps interrelated, intertexts. The first one is related to the "Machiavellian practice of power-politics" that Conrad Aiken documents in his fictional autobiography, *Ushant: An Essay;* and the second is a the-then-recent quarrel that Forster had with Eliot.[5] "The farouche John (Gould Fletcher)... disapproved of what he considered to be a deliberate and Machiavellian practice of power-politics, of reputation making and reputation-*un*making."[6] Presumably, as a result of one of these "rituals,"[7] Eliot had asked F.S. Flint to do a scathing review of Rickword's pioneering study of *Rimbaud: The Boy and the Poet.* Forster "ventured to send a line of protest" to Eliot about the review, in which Flint had said, quoting some clumsy sentences from the book, that the author's "English is so inadequate, his style is so clumsy, that he cannot be read without a constant irritation." "This treatment," Forster said in his letter, "is surely foolish, and--when the victim is quite a young writer--worse than foolish."[8] It is another matter that Forster did not know Rickword personally then. But the incident is suggestive of the feelings of Rickword at that time, and a possible cause of animus. After all, he had done no harm to Eliot's reputation in his reviews.

In his aforementioned *TLS* reviews, for example, published anonymously, he identified parody as a new technique in Eliot.[9] He was to say the same thing in a review for his own paper, a review which Leavis was to praise in his introduction to *Towards Standards of Criticism.*[10] But now (1926), because of the circumstances I have already outlined in brief, the scene was set for him to publish the following anonymous parody in *The Calendar of Modern Letters:*

> Some of our readers have complained of the conventionality of the verse which we publish, so we have procured at great expense a specimen of a more emancipated technique. If, as we hope, it pleases all tastes, we shall be happy to give the whole poem, of which the following is a part. The author prefixes a note:
>
> " 'Mocking the God' is the first movement of an anthropological theme. By gibing at the tribal fetish, a certain people is afflicted with a long period of semi-darkness and incessant rain. The crops rot, the land becomes water-logged and complete sterility ensues. This the author considers an adequate symbol of the state of contemporary consciousness. He hopes to conclude with a description of the removal of the curse and the restoration of fertility,

but he has as yet found no adequate symbol, except the Sir Percival of the Grail Legend, which is too romantic for his taste. The literary references are intended to enrich the texture of the verse with imagery, for invention risks being vulgar, and besides the success of several very cultured poems has recently approved the innovation."

Mocking the God

Out of the rusty sunrise the iron-face of Sol, clang
Bang, as scheduled Greenwich time;
The iron face of Sol
Emerging rusty from night-deep ocean,
Sol, the deliverer,
Rhetorical, clanging Sol hoisted Sol himself out of his solitude
Over the eastern hill,
His fingers cloud-white gripping cold peaks
Vermeil-tinctured dawn
Came tripping down the spangled lawn.
'Back, back to your rusty dusty feudal tin-wavel'
Elegant hyacinth light plants sparkled.
'No delivery this morning, you theatrical survival,
Slick on the cue as Lyceum hero.'
O poor old man, poor good old man!
The tungsten tears matted the tawny beard.
Sol reels heavily homeward no more facing faithless
Sharper than serpent's teeth,
Misbegotten whore-son earth defilers kites.
O now is doomsday, now the shut of eve!
And the small rain comes down.

"Except one is beginning or finished and so able to begin at the end, there are so many things which finish at the beginning that the beginning begins to finish by being at the end. The finish of it will be that those and others will finish by beginning to begin again at the beginning which in the end will turn out to be nothing but the finish, which will begin by being the same as the rotation of the earth, when one will have finished by no longer distinguishing the beginning of the end from the end of the beginning: that which is the end of every beginning is equal to the beginning of every end, which is the final beginning of the infinite defined by the indefinite and disposes of the possibility of the existence of a continuation."[11]

Though parodies could be used as a constructive defense of a style, as Margaret Rose has pointed out,[12] the purpose in this particular case seems to be ridicule rather than defense, and for the following reasons: the anonymity of the author, the poem's appearance in the "Notes and Reviews" section of the magazine,

and the context already outlined, suggest that the work was a conscious parody. The sign-posting is no less deliberate: references to the anthropological theme, the curse and the sterility of the land, and the conditions in which the curse could be lifted: all these are obvious allusions to *The Waste Land.* Further confirmation, if confirmation be needed at all, comes from the editorial claim that the text was "procured at great expense." For we now know the details of the tranaction which took place between various editors and Eliot over the poem. Eliot was paid a handsome amount for it by various parties ($150+$2,000+$580.28c).[13] At least some of the details of the financial transaction were talked about in literary circles in the public domain.

We can have some idea about the role that reviews played in the making and breaking of reputations, clique formation, and, more particularly, how *The Calendar* clique worked from some of the letters that were exchanged between various protagonists of the story. In October 1922, Wyndham Lewis wrote to Sydney Schiff "that he backs a Sitwell Review to rival Eliot's *Criterion,* and offer[ing] to be the art editor and contribute stories and essays. Subsequently, he lampooned Schiff as one of the "Apes of God" in the *Criterion.* Schiff himself fell out with Eliot, and joined *The Calendar* team. In 1925, Lewis wrote to Eliot about what Harold Monro told him: "[I]n selling something to a paper called the *Celendar* he (Lewis) was associating himself with a rival venture to Eliot's or Monro's." But Lewis maintained that the *Calendar* "had already Lawrence, Huxley and so on as contributors, with Joyce benevolently the background."[14] Now that, in 1926, Schiff was close to the *Celendar* group, it is quite possible that he let everyone know about the *Waste Land* transactions. The title of the parody, "Mocking the God" may well be an allusion to Lewis's *Apes of God,* excerpts from which *The Criterion* had published. Though I have not been able to identify the author of the anonymous parody, either Rickword (who was to write a scathing parody of "Whispers of Immortality" when Eliot became an Anglican) or Richard Aldington (an expert parodist, with Ezra Pound's poetry as his chief target, and by now a bitter enemy of Eliot) could be considered a likely candidate for the authorship, with suport from the likes of Schiff.[15] It is the last section of the parody which poses some problems for a voluntarist

reading of the parody. This section has no obvious "original" intertext in Eliot, not upto 1926 at any rate. What is interesting is to ask whether Eliot remembered this unkind cut when he wrote the *Quartets*, as was not unusual with the Tse Tse, known for his elephantine memory. Is it possible to surmise that he wanted to tell his parodists that serious, philosophical poetry can be written out of apparent nonsense; and that he shared the larger philosophical view that binaries between sense and nonsense did not exist ? And by "unparodying" the last part of the parody quoted above in such lines in *Four Quartets* as "In my beginning is my end.... In my end is my beginning" ("East Coker") and "What we call the beginning is often the end/and to make an end is to make a beginning" ("Little Gidding") he was joining hands with the later Joyce and Pound in unconsciously inaugurating the postmodernist era in English literature ?[16] In any case, in this entire episode of an elaborate joke, he seems to be the one who had the last laugh.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

[1]The brief editorial at the end of *The Calendar's* first issue says," ...there is virtue not in intentions but in achievement only." Further, the antagonism is implicit in the following statement: "A conviction of the value of spontaneous growth (or growth which seems spontaneous to the watching mind) and of unpoliced expression, is as near as we come to any public challenge or editorial doctrine" ("Comments and Reviews," *The Calendar*, March 1925 (unsigned), p.70).

[2]Eliot, T.S. "The Idea of a Literary Review," *The New Criterion*, Vol. I, No.I, January 1926, 1-6.

[3]"A Fragmentary Poem," Rev of *The Waste Land*. *TLS*, 20 September, 1923, p.616. *The Calendar* itself carried similarly respectful reviews and discussions of Eliot's poetry in its December 1925, and January 1926 numbers. As Barnard Bergonzi points out, Rickword's enthusiasm waned after 1926 (Bernard Bergonzi, "*The Calendor of Modern Letters*"in *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 1986, p.158).

[4]"Comments and Reviews," *The Calendor*, February 1926.

[5]Conrad Aiken. *Ushant: An Essay*. Boston, 1952; and P.N. Furbank. "Forster, Eliot, and the Literary Life," *TCL* vol.31 summer/fall 1985, nos. 2 & 3 (170-175).

[6]Aiken p. 233.

[7]Ibid., p.232.

[8]Furbank p.171.

[9]See the *TLS* review cited above.

[10]Reprinted in *Anna Karenina and Other Essays* (London, 1967).

[11]"Notes and Reviews" section of the April 1926 issue of *The Calendar of Modern Letters* (73-4).

[12]The parodist, Rose says, "may in fact wish to defend the parodied text as having been reduced to parody by its imitation by other writers or poetasters,

or by the misreading of readers or critics." Margaret A. Rose, *Parody/Metafiction* (London, 1979), 23. Also, two other factors may be considered as contributing to the ambiguous status of the "parody." First, the fact that *The Waste Land* (more so, its "Notes"), was considered by many in the mid-twenties as a literary hoax. Second, in 1925, the co-editor of *he Calendar,* Garman commented adversely on Nancy Cunard's *Parallax* on account of its close imitation of the Eliot poem in question. Undeterred by parody and imitation, Eliot went on to publish poets who wrote such imitations as "These are the dog-days/She left in dead winter/mixing the seasons, planting August in December,/leaving everyday Tuesday/like a stale biscuit in a house for sale" (*The Criterion,* December 1928).

[13]See Rainey, Lawrence. "The Price of Modernism: Publishing *The Waste Land.*" Ed. Roland Bush. Cambridge, 1991.

[14]The episode is discussed in some detail in Aga Shahid Ali. *T.S. Eliot as Editor.* Michigan: 1986, p.38.

[15]In the form of "An Old Rhyme Re-Rhymed" in *Behind the Eyes: Selected Poems and Translations* (Manchester, 1976), p.109, as Bergonzi points out (Bergonzi 158).

[16]Apart from the known sources in Heraclitus and the throne of Mary, Queen of Scotts.

LAWRENCE'S METAPHYSIC AND AMERICAN CLASSICS

S.K. Tikoo

Studies in Classic American Literature is a collection of critical essays which were originally conceived as lectures for an American tour of D.H. Lawrence. Published earlier under the title "The Transcendental Element in American Literature (1917-18), " the work was subsequently revised and published under its present title. It presents significant interpretations of what are now acknowledged as American classics. They are significant for yet another reason : they adequately project his own point of view. The discussions are interesting, though his conclusions may not always be acceptable.

Lawrence probes the historical past of the American people and examines the possible impact on present life of their continiuing psychological connections with Europe. To his great surprise, he finds that even during his time the connections are deep enough despite their increased interest in materialistic existence in America. As a result of their fascination for materialistic values, they had lost touch with their innermost self and with the very spirit of their being. This view underlies his observation that the American artist be evaluated separately from his literary work. Being essentially an escape from Europe, he had yet to get over his instinctive attachment to his European past. His life in America thus lacked the fullness of emotions experienced in Europe. Without such an experience the American artist was given to creating in his work only an idealistic, intellectual and mechanical world. Lawrence, therefore, holds the view that in order that the American artists experience a feeling of involvement in social and national life and realise their soul in its wholeness, the American outlook had to be reoriented. But Lawrence's assessment of the American's emotional poverty, however genuine from his point of view, does not seem to be convincing. This is so because he goes to the extreme of doubting the genuineness of every American utterance.

Lawrence also critiques American belief in democracy. He believes that the American tendency toward idealisation and intellectualisation in art emanates from inadequate conviction in the

democratic ideal. His remark that the American democracy has had "a false dawn" is still more unconvincing and untrue to common experience. While highlighting their emphasis on freedom and equality-- two pillars of American democracy--,the Americans, in Lawrence's view, clearly ignored their past and failed to realise that real freedom could come only through obedience to external authority. This contradicts his earlier observation that Americans were psycologically too preoccupied with their European past. To Lawrence the authority means the authority of the inner self, the power within man and not outside. One may recall here that his belief in the authority of the inner self is in direct contrast with T.S. Eliot's belief in the authority of the Christian Church. Eliot attacked Lawrence's advocacy of the doctrine and authority of the inner self which he thought to be shifting and undependable. Lawrence, in a way, stressed that the inner self implied obedience to different gods but more particularly the dark, unknown self which determined the real identity of man. F.R.Leavis's defence of Lawrence against Eliot's attack attracted both critical and popular attention of contemporary readership to Lawrence's point of view.

There seems to be some ambiguity in Lawrence's stand on the tendency among Americans to break off their age-old connection with Europe. He states that Americans had been unable to understand that their real freedom could be achieved not by severing connections with Europe but by submission to their European *gurus*. This view is contradicted by Lawrence because he simultaneously holds that one's real freedom might be achieved by discovering and obeying the authority of the inner self, the authority derived from his belief in the religion of the blood. Having perhaps realised the inadequacy of this doctrine of the blood, Lawrence concedes the imperfectibility of man. He resolves the paradox by making a distinction between the practical prototype of the American and the emotional, and prefers the latter. To him the American scientist, Benjamin Franklin, represents the practical type and Hector St. John Crevecoeur the emotional type. Lawrence repudiates Franklin for subscribing to the notion of the perfectibility of man and upholding the American tendency toward idealisation and intellectualisation. But he appreciates his scientific urge to explore the nature of the savage, isolate, pristine self which has a strange, bewitching power.

Lawrence is passionately devoted to exploring the savage in man. This is, in fact, what fascinated him in the life of those aboriginals who were untouched by the sophistication of modern civilisation. His visit to New Mexico in 1922 was intended to provide him with a first hand experience of the life of Red Indians. The visit furnished him with a rich subject matter which he subsequently used in some of his short stories--*St. Mawr, The Woman Who Rode Away*, and *Morning in Mexico*. The experience was highly enriching and satisfied a deep want in him, as is obvious from this observation:

> I think wild and noble America is the thing I have pined for most ever since I read Fennimore Cooper, as a boy. Now I have got it.

Cooper touched Lawrence deeply and made him glorify the noble savage.

Cooper's novels ranked high with Lawrence for yet another reason. They underlined the hypocrisy of the American ideal of equality. In fact, the superiority of one class to another is inevitable. It was therefore neccessary to infuse a spirit of mutual accommodation and tolerance into the various classes and sections of society so that the high and the low could coexist harmoniously. However, class ditinctions could not be completely rooted out. Their display was not desirable; mere awareness of them was enough. It is in this light that he views the situation of the Effinghams couple in Cooper's *Homeward Bound*. The white, aristocratic American couple while on their return journey from Europe feel a sense of superiority in the presence of Septimus Dodge, a member of the lower class. Lawrence upholds not only the right to liberty of an individual but also his right to privacy. He even cautions against emphasising class distinctions by using such terms as 'superior' and 'inferior' which inevitably exist in an ordered society. The 'superior' are burnt by what Lawrence describes as the "acid of antbites, the formic acid of democratic poisoning" (p.46) just because they have cultivated a wrong notion of the democratic ideal of equality. In consequence of their suppression of inner feelings, Americans live an unreal, superfifcial life. Lawrence notes that "there'll never be any life in America till you pull the pin of the democratic ideal of equality out and admit natural inequality... Never real human beings" (p.49).

Lawrence's view of the reality of human beings in life as well

as in literature is thus backed by his doctrine of the inner self. Human beings are real to the extent that they realise or are governed by a realisation of their inner selves. As a true naturalist, he turns down any discrepancy that may exist between appearance and reality, between what one pretends to be and what one actually is. Obviously, Lawrence tends to suggest the need for recognition of individuality of each man in society as a possible way to get over racial and class conflicts which create tension. The discovery of their individuality would help individual members of a society to promote a new kind of democracy. Hence his observation that Cooper's novel, *The Last of the Mohicans,* has a singular merit of illustrating what Lawrence regards as democratic equality. Natty Bumpo and Chingachgook, the two representatives of the Red and White race respectively, "stand side by side, stark, abstract, beyond emotion, yet eternally together. All the other loves beyond seem frivolous. This is the new great thing, the clue, the inception of a new humanity" (p.65).

Cooper's *Deerslayer* throws further light on the doctrine of the inner self advocated by Lawrence. Deerslayer is himself the object of hunt by a woman but he refuses the temptation in order to preserve the integrity of his soul. Lawrence finds the novel significant because it warns the white American against continuing to be half-European and therefore existing as an unreal human being. If the resurgence of the new consciousness did not come about, the atmosphere of violence and race resistance rampant in the continent would continue and the white American psyche would remain divided between innocence and lust, and between spirituality and sensuality.

Probing the American psyche as relfected in American literature, Lawrence cites the *Tales* of Edgar Allan Poe as apt illustrations of the disintegration of that psyche. Poe's *Tales* originated in Poe's life. However, Lawrence does not deny that an internal division within the author's mind may be instrumental to his progress as an artist toward self-realisation and hence comparable to the dark night of the soul for its purification before entry into heaven. But such a division ought not to prolong. He therefore both applauds and derides Poe's scientific interest in making experiments. He

applauds Poe's desire to record and analyse the breakdown of his own psyche, and experience "the ecstacies of extreme spiritual love" (p.73), for Lawrence too believes that such experiences constitute the highest gratification of a man in life. But he derides Poe for his inability to realise that one ought not to set one's will on violating the limitations imposed on man by nature. As a result his unnatural attempt to experience the extremity of physical ecstasy with his wife ended tragically. The same experience figures in his tale, *Ligeia*. In another tale, *Eleanora,* Poe again dwells upon the theme of indulgence in sensual love to experience "heightened consciousness, visions, spectre-visions, prismatic" (p.81). Analysing the cause of this craving Lawrence finds that it emerges when the isolate self is broken, and the consciousness of the self is absent. His reflections on Poe suggest the emphasis he places on commonly acknowledged need for preserving the integrity of one's soul. Lawrence is impressed by Melville's novels because of his treatment of the idea of perfect marriage as one in which the partners can preserve the integrity of their private selves rather than expose them to each other.

Lawrence maintains that none can ignore one's private self and be content with public self and living in society, even if the society be an ideal one. In a society there is always some kind of tension in the minds of its members as each member tries to dominate another member. Poe's work furnishes him with an insight into the negative role of society. A society that is corrupt or has artificial mores can detroy the very being of man and hence the only remedy available to him is to listen "to the Holy Ghost who is inside and who is many gods" (p.87).

Poe's unnatural and uncontrollable craving for things gives Lawrence a further clue to an understanding of hiw view of man-woman relationship, a controversial subject matter of his novels. He opines that woman could be instrumental in helping man realise the glory of love, but her total surrender to his will can be detrimental to maintaining the integrity of his self. It would bring about his fall and further his domination by her. As such Lawrence offers his own advice that man and woman should both resist one another and maintain their private selves. He finds support for his contention

in the novels of Hawthorne. That, in the event of man's failure to preserve his private self, woman could play a destructive role and disturb the moral order of society was, in his view, demonstrated by the role of Hester Prynne in *The Scarlet Letter.* Lawrence focuses on the destructive role of Hester Prynne whose chief gratification consists in seducing the white, American parson, Arthur Dimmesdale. The parson falls into her trap because he, too, is willing to be seduced. As such the two lovers are given to maintaining false appearances of being pure. Referring to Dimmesdale, Lawrence observes that "His spiritual love was a lie" (p.97). Lawrence attributes the spiritual weakness in Dimmesdale to "the insanity of mental-spiritual consciousness" (p.101). He suggests that this mental-spiritual consciousness could be broken by a firm adherence to real belief instead of the false, hypocritical sensation of belief. Until this break was truly effected man would continue to sin. Hester Prynne's physician-husband Roger Chillingworth is rejected because of his belief "in the old male authority" and the intellectual make-believe reality. But, as Lawrence finds, he too fails to realise that his relationship with his wife could not be sustained merely at the intellectual level which is what seems to have driven her to Dimmesdale. As Lawrence argues, they represent "the two halves of manhood mutually destroying one another" (p.106) which once again points to his oft-repeated theme of the evil of intellectualising and spiritualising the physical reality of flesh and blood. The allegorical presentation of this theme so impressed Lawrence that he describes *The Scarlet Letter* as "one of the greatest allegories in all literature" (p.106). Even in his study of Hawthorne's *The Blithedale Romance* Lawrence makes the same point: that to labour is one thing and to idealise labour quite another, which underlines his tacit preference for the physical struggle or wrestle with life over an idealistic or transcendental preoccupation with it.

Lawrence wanted men to be real flesh and blood creatures, not mental beings. This required adjustment to the elements, "the perfect equipoise between them and us" (p.134). The life joy, he believes, comes from a direct wooing of or wrestling with the great elements--earth, air, fire and water. Reacting to the impact of science on man Lawrence opposes the intervention of machinery

between man and nature which would deny the former the experience of feeling the fullness of being through contact with nature. Man might, therefore, in Lawrence's parlance, worship only such gods as may be a source of life and help develop rapport with the elemental forces of nature. He admires Dana's book, *Two Years Before the Mast*, for promoting knowledge of a great element, the sea.

But, unlike Poe, Melville also cautions Lawrence. He learns that one ought not to go too close to nature either. Melville showed that one might sympathise with the savages. Yet one could not go too near them. Despite their physical attraction there was something repulsive in them. They were centuries behind the white man in the life struggle. They refused life because they found that the world of the whites was not a place they would prefer to live in. This draws Lawrence to conclude that while "Melville was, at the core, a mystic and an idealist," he "at his best invariably wrote from a sort of dream-self, so that events which he relates as actual fact have indeed a far deeper reference to his own soul, his own inner life" (p.142). For this reason perhaps Lawrence considers *Moby Dick* to be "one of the strangest and most wonderful books in the world" (p.168). The hunting of the whale therefore symbolises to him the subjection of the blood-being of the white American by his maniacal will and consciousness. The ghastly hunt may be regarded not as a triumph but as the doom of the white civilisation and hence unwelcome. Clearly, Lawrence does not support destruction of nature, but certainly upholds the need for man's understanding of and adjustment to the elemental forces of nature.

Of the great American writers studied by Lawrence, it was Whitman who had exercised a major influence on him in his formative period as a writer. To him Whitman is a pioneer who lighted up a new path--"The Open Road, the great home of the Soul" (p.181)--for Americans and the world. He was the first writer to smash the old moral conception that the soul of man is something superior and above the flesh. Even Emerson had maintained this tiresome superiority of the soul. Even Melville could not get over it. But "Whitman was the first heroic seer to seize the soul by the scruff of her neck and plant her down among the potsherds" (p.180).

Whitman's greatness consisted in having given a new doctrine of life: "A new great morality. A morality of actual living, not of salvation.... America to this day is deathly sick with saviourism. But Whitman, the greatest and the first and the only American teacher, was no Saviour.... His was a morality of the soul living her life, not saving herself" (p.181). Lawrence's reverence is at its highest in his impassioned but slightly repetitive rendering of Whitman's heroic message on the journey of the soul (p.182).

To conclude, then, the Lawrentian metaphysic postulates that the only love, freedom, or democracy is that in which one soul recognises another going along without compulsions on the journey into the unknown. That should perhaps be a message to the modern world from Whitman as well as Lawrence. But Lawrence would have this message transformed into a doctrine of flesh and blood, the doctrine of the body, so that people may live life fully and not escape from it by idealising and intellectualising it. His doctrine proposes an ideal-practical life which is accommodative of the high and the low without obliterating these distinctions, a love and sex which are controlled and yet instrumental in discovering one's inner self, and an integrity of the self which recognises one's individuality, and, finally, a democracy which is based on a belief in the integrity of an individual rather than the false notion of equality among all individuals. In short, it is possible to concede that the real significance of *Studies in Classic American Literature* consists not so much in Lawrence's literary-critical analyses of the American classics as in the illustrative exposition of his own point of view scattered in these close readings.

REFERENCES

[1]D.H. Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature* (Penguin Books, 1971), pp.28-9.

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

MARK TWAIN'S QUAINT IMAGERY: A NOTE

Chandra Singh Mehta

One of the remarkable things that even a moderate scholar of Twain would not fail to miss is the figurative strain in his writings. Few among the Mark Twain experts have undertaken the task to distinguish the nature of his figures of speech--to determine whether they differ from the figures used by the romantic writers or whether they have only ornamental value without being a special aspect of his prose structures. Of course, critics like T.S. Eliot[1] and Lionel Trilling[2] have touched upon the myth of the Mississippi river, and Henry Nash Smith has shown how the "tough coyote and the pursuing dog"[3] form a paradigm of contrasts between the Eastern tenderfoot and the Western initiate. But it is William M. Gibson who emphatically brings forth the point that metaphor serves as a prime force in Mark Twain's writings. To quote his words: "It may be different in kind from the metaphors of James or of Howells--and is certainly more directly drawn from the 'garden of life'--but it is quite serviceable to Mark Twain's purposes."[4]

An extract from the opening pages of *Old Times on the Mississippi* reveals Mark Twain's special use of metaphor:

> After all these years I can picture that old time to myself now, just as it was then; the white town drowsing in the sunshine of a summer's morning; the streets empty, or pretty nearly so, one or two clerks sitting in front of the Walter Street, stores, with their split-bottomed chairs tilted back against the wall, chins on breasts, hats slouched over their faces, asleep--with shingle shavings enough around to show what broke them down, a sow and a litter of pigs loafing along the side walk, doing a good business in water-melon rinds and seeds, two or three lonely little freight piles scattered about the "levee"; a pile of "skids" on the slope of the stone-paved wharf, and the fragrant town drunkard asleep in the shadow of them; two or three wood flats at the head of the wharf but nobody to listen to the peaceful lapping of the wavelets against them, the great Mississippi, rolling its milewide tide along, shining in the sun, the dense forest away on the other side, the "point" above the town, and the "point" below, bounding the river glimpse and turning it onto a sort of sea and withal a very still and brilliant and lonely one.[5]

Here the central unifying metaphor is that of sleep, of 'drowsing.' The clerks are 'broken down' in health from the exertion of whittling—a figure extravagant but wholly in keeping with the thought and situation. The sow and piglets are doing a good business in a town

almost without business. And the limitations of small town life are vividly painted by the metaphor of the great reach of the river as an 'inland sea.'

Indeed, metaphor and simile were Twain's favourite rhetorical ornaments. He makes use of them in a strikingly vivid manner. The world of nature is the store-house from which he draws his imagery. His figurative use of seasons and storms, moonlight and sea, cloud and wind, lava and ice, water and fire, is in keeping with the primitive quality of his imagination. To look at a random piece of his prose is to see images rising from the words. To him, mountains in the distance show 'rounded velvety backs' that makes one want to stroke them, as one would 'the sleek back of a cat.' The city of Athens, flooded with moonlight, seems 'like some living creature wrapped in peaceful slumber.' His style has an easy flowing rhythm marked now and then by a striking image or an arresting simile. He describes an ocean-view as follows:

> Piles of picturesque rocks... garrisoned by drunken, sprawling sea-lions, and elegant long-legged pelicons.[6]

Again and again we are struck by terms that have an imaginative life of their own off the page: "... the whole of them have the soft rich tint of strawberry icecream."[7] This is Twain's way of describing the picturesque Pink City of Jaipur. These figurative expressions are like streaks of brilliant color in the narrative stream, which not only call for our appreciation but also inspire us to draw our own interpretations. He is fully aware that a reader's attention can be arrested only through selectivity rather than by an overwhelming reproduction of verbal effects.

The vegetable kingdom, winds, storms, and geographical and topographical features form the basis for figures both humorous and serious. The thrill of an intellectual discovery 'swells a man's breast with pride' above that which any other experience can bring. And, indeed, it is like discovering "a great thought--an intellectual nugget, right under the dust of a field that many a brain-plow had gone over before." This last figure is a notable example of Mark Twain's faculty for expressing abstract ideas in concrete terms, always one of the distinguishing features of his style. Verily, Mark Twain is in love with words. In his burlesque, *Account of the*

Extraordinary Meteoric Shower, he washes his glass frequently with Veuve Chequer and records what he sees after each 'wash':

> I applied the sixth wash. A sprinkle of sparkling fragments ensued--fragments of some beautiful world that had been broken up and cast out of the blue firmament and then a radiance of noon-day flared out of the Zenith and Mercury... came sweeping down like a banished sun... you could'nt see the other side of the street for the hurtling tempest of stars.[8]

In such passages, although the means so lavishly expended are far beyond the worth of the end obtained, there is indication of careful attention to word selection and sentence structure, with a strong underlying sense of prose rhythm.

The images of Twain are not merely flights of fancy; they have some definite foundation of their own. Analyzed carefully, the association of his images may divulge a pictorial or semantic connection as well as a visual or oral one. Some of his passages convey a curious sense of movement, as when he describes a journey up the Himalayas as

> receding down, down... was a shaven confusion of hilltops, with ribbony roads and paths squirming and snaking cream-yellow all over them.[9]

Sometimes the imagery effects a suggestion of noise--even where no noise could actually exist--to produce any kind of odd impact. A 'roaring avalanche' of people swept out of Melbourne (as he recounts the gold strike in Australia) and left it

> ... desolate, sunday like, paralyzed... all signs of life departed, all sounds stilled, save the rasping of the cloud-shadows as they scraped across the vacant streets.[10]

The elemental power of nature is also not free from the sharp perception of Clemens. In his travel books, images derived from the elements of fire and water abound. In *Travel with Mr. Brown,* he describes

> gleaming cataract of vines pouring sheer down a hundred and fifty feet... wonderful waterfalls of green leaves as deftly overlapping each other as the scales of fish.[11]

At times, he even pictures trees in terms of water:

> What a soaring, strenuous, gushing fountain, spray of delicate greenery a bunch of bamboo is! ... vegetable, geysers grace the view, their sproutings refined to steam a distance.[12]

Critics attribute his excessive use of water imagery to the fact that his most impressionable time was spent in sight of the great Mississippi. In *Mark Twain's Escape from Time,* Susan K. Harris

examines Twain's imagery in the light of Gaston Bachelard's concept of preferred images--images that give unity to a writer's imaginative escape from despair. She further finds that the images resonate with peace, tranquility and contentment, that neither Twain nor the characters who reflect his sense of alienation seem able to obtain in ordinary life.[13] The significance of Twain's water images, thus, is related to a response to timelessness.

Then, there are images based on fire and light. The beauty of fire seems to have fascinated him and this reflects in the strange comparisons he makes of the plants, trees, mountain and even places, with the radiance of fire. A tree appeared to him as having 'a lovely upright tassel... red and glowing as a firecoal.' In the Australian hills he saw a tree whose "mass sphered itself above the naked straight stem like an explosion of misty smoke." The blue mountains were "a softly luminous blue, a smoldering blue, as if vaguely lit by fires within." The city of Banaras is 'a religious Vesuvius' and in its bowels theological forces have been "rumbling, thundering and quaking, boiling, and flaming and smoking for ages." And through the dim haze of years Mark Twain in imagination could still see the lips of Feringhea, the deadly Thug, uncover his teeth and could still catch 'the incandescent glimmer of his smile.' The diamonds appear to him as 'smooth and limpid, and in sunlight vomit fire.'

Twain loves to give words a new meaning, a strange context and a new significance. He has an intense liking for the red color, and probably the aesthetic beauty which he finds in the fire is a part of that liking. This beautiful description of an 'ice-covered tree' in terms of fire images is certainly a high-water mark of his style:

> ...at last the sun fires a sudden sheaf of rays into the ghostly tree and turns it into a white splendor of glittering diamonds... the sun climbs higher and still higher flooding the tree... turning it into a glory of white fire, then in a moment, without warming, comes the great miracle... a gust of wind sets every branch and twig to swaying and in an instant turns the whole white tree into a spouting and spraying explosion of flashing gems of every conceivable color, and there it stands and sways this way and that, flash ! flash ! flash ! a dancing and glancing world of rubies, emeralds, diamonds, sapphires, the most radiant spectacle, the most blinding spectacle... most intoxicating vision of fire and color.[14]

Only a man of poetic sensibilities is capable of creating such a

picturesque prose. Descriptions have made his style in travel books more wordy and his figures exhibit a conscious artistry. His ability to store up vivid sensory Images has a distinct advantage in the creation of descriptive prose. Generally, the descriptions are merely photographic, most of the times he simply accumulates and presents the facts he observes at an elementary level, without revealing any essential quality. The following lines from *The Innocents Abroad,* describing Fayal in the Azores, give only the statistical account:

> The town has eight thousand to ten thousand inhabitants. Its snow white houses nestle cozily in a sea of fresh green vegetation, and no village could look prettier. It sits in the lap of an amphitheater of hills three hundred to seven hundred feet high and carefully cultivated clear to their summits.... Every farm... is cut up into little square enclosures by stone walls.... These hundreds of green squares, marked by their black lava walls, make the hills look like vast checker-boards.[15]

Although the figurative language is in abundance, still the lines appear to be devoid of any life. The style is not distinct.

Stylistically more successful is the passage from *The Innocents Abroad* in which he describes a night storm at sea. It is a fine example of sensuous perception with emotional accompaniment. Mark these lines:

> There was no thunder, no noise but (that of) the pounding bows of the ship, the been whistling of the gate through the cordage, and the rush of the seething waters. But the vessel climbed aloft... then paused an instant that seemed a century, and plunged headlong down again, as from a precipice. The sheeted sprays drenched the decks like rain... darkness was everywhere. At long intervals a flash of lightning clove it with a quivering line of fire that revealed a heaving world of water where was nothing before, kindled the dusky cordage to glittering silver....[16]

Images of sound here reinforce visual details and one can keenly feel the emotion running through it. The particularity of emotion makes the description true. Twain appears to be preoccupied with death. This preoccupation is revealed in the ghastly luster on the men's faces, the sepulchral cabins, the ship that might not 'live through the night.'

Figures of speech associated with death abound in Twain's writings. He appears to have been preoccupied with death, as early as the *Sandwich Island Letter,* for in it he describes the gala Honolulu on a Saturday afternoon as follows:

> There enters a heathen from the south seas, tattooed till he looks like the customary unfortunate from Reese River who has been blown up in a mine.[17]

Death-imagery can be espied everywhere in *A Tramp Abroad.* Wherever Mark Twain saw a pile of gravel near a German railway station, it was always 'heaped as trimly... as a new grave.' Twain speaks facetiously of the invalids staying at Interlaken as 'departed spirits... preserved from decomposition.' The death parade continues through the pages of *Following the Equator.* A man in the train had "teeth which made his mouth look like a neglected churchyard"; and at Darjeeling he found 'cabs like coffins,' in which you sit. The city of Adelaide had languished in a 'death trance' for two years, then came the resurrection: '...and the corpse got up and walked.' Driving towards a Hindu betrothal ceremony at midnight, he could imagine that he was passing through a city of the dead, the streets were still; native sleepers lay about on the ground, wrapped in blankets; the attitude and their rigidity counterfeited death; on each side were small open booths counterfeiting sepulchers, "with counterfeit corpses motionless in the flicker of the counterfeit death lamps." The whole scene resembles a 'death-watch.'

It is remarkable that with such a strong penchant for the harsher aspects of life, Twain could also enjoy the picturesque aspects of Nature--the lakes, mountains, and rivers under moonlight. But he fails to find any benevolence in them as the romantic writers do. In this sense, the effect of nature on Twain is quite antithetical, and thus it is that he veers sharply away from the lake-poet's 'romanticism.' A true romanticist, it is held, produces a literature of aspiration, of idealization, and of faith in the spirit and essential dignity of man. All this do not matter to Mark Twain, though he does share the dreamier aspect of romantic temperament. What charms him is the pictorial aspect of Nature. The striking feature of a lone palm tree is its resemblance to a picture, the palm seen rearing its graceful crest 'as in an ebony frame,' with its slender stem a clean, black line and its projecting fronds 'all sharply cut against the smooth gray background.' It gives an effect of etching of mountains risen from the sea and slanted up "... like a vast picture, framed in between ocean and clouds. It was marked and lined and tinted like a map."[18]

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THE INDIAN AMBIENCE OF AMITAV GHOSH'S *THE SHADOW LINES*

O.P. Mathur

In a recent conversation Amitav Ghosh mentioned that the inspiration for *The Shadow Lines* was provided by the Indian reality, especially the communal riots. In fact, this pervading ambience is not only the root inspiration of the novel but also the springboard for its radiating suggestivity of the universal verities of life mirrored directly through national politics and indirectly through the portrayal, occasionally a caricature, of the life of a large Hindu Bengali family many of the events of which are inextricably linked with the events happening on the Indian political scene from the middle forties to the middle sixties, from the communal holocausts before and after independence to those staged in the then East Pakistan following the theft committed at the Hajratbal in Kashmir in December 1964. The main thrust of the novel, however, is on varied events in three or four generations of a large family residing initially as a joint family in Dhaka, then partitioned, and finally dispersed over various places.

The institution of the joint family has been a matter of pride for Indian society on account of its healthy sociological implications of constant and multifaceted mutual help and cooperation, the growth of deep emotional attachment and an inbuilt insurance against all contingencies like illness, unemployment and death. The 'nuclear' families, a common feature of Western society, and even our own younger generation are realizing the value of the joint family, the more so when the families are being fragmented due to the growing ego, craving for more freedom and the compulsions of employment. Through *The Shadow Lines* runs the value and sanctity of the joint family, which, though artifically and ridiculously partitioned for the time being, cannot ultimately keep its branches segregated. A reference to some of the relationships may make the dynamics of this family clearer. Initially, the family of the Boses had with every succeeding generation and " 'the odd house...' evolved slowly with every generation of Boses adding layers and extensions until it was like a huge top-sided pyramid, inhabited by so many branches of the family that even the most knowledgeable

amongst them had become a little confused by about their relationships" (p.121). It was a big joint family, "with everyone living and eating together" (p.121). The first two generations are briefly mentioned. To the second generation belong Goshtabehari Bose (also known as Jethamoshai and Ukil Babu in the novel) and his yonger brother. Ukil Babu's family consisted of three sons and two spinster sisters. The younger brother's family consisted of his daughter the Grandmother in the novel, and her sister, Mayadebi. After the death of their grandfather, a strong man, the elder brother (called Jethamoshai by Grandmother) with all his lovable whimsicalities and an unimpressive sternness could not effectively keep the family together and the house had to be divided with a straight wooden partition-wall running through the middle of the house, with funny consequences:

> When the wall was eventually built, they found that it had ploughed right through a couple of door-ways so that no one could get through them any more; it had also gone through a lavatory bisecting an old commode. The brothers even partitioned their father's nameplate. It was divided down the middle by a thin white line, and their names were inscribed on the two halves—of necessity in letters so tiny that nobody could read them." (p.123)

What is the result of this partition ?

> ...instead of the peace they had so much looked forward to, they found that a certain eerie silence had descended on the house. It was never the same again after that; the life went out of it. (p.123)

Grandmother's mother and Jethamoshai's wife, her aunt, however, continued their cooperation in making arrangements for the marriages of the members of their families. The resilience of the bonds of Hindu family are too strong to be completely snapped by a wooden partition. Both the Grandmother and her sister Mayadebi are married off, and the partitioned house is now inhabited by only four elderly persons. But while their wives had in a way got over the bitterness, it remained in the hearts of the brothers. With the partition of the country everybody left Dhaka except the elder brother, Jethamoshai. Grandmother gave birth to a son and became a widow in her early thirties, while Mayadebi's husband, called Shaheb in the novel, rose high in foreign service. Grandmother's son in course of time became the father of the unnamed narrator-boy of the novel, while Mayadebi gave birth to Tridib, the protagonist, who was thus the uncle of the narrator.

A special relationship which is of great significance in the novel is that between two married sisters. Grandmother and Mayadebi whose worth in the 'secrecy' in the narrator's mind transcends mere blood-relationship. That branch of the larger family, which includes the two sisters, married in different families, is central to the novel, for its protagonist Tridib, the son of Mayadebi, and his deep admirer and maternal nephew, the unnamed narrator, are spiritually on the same wavelength. Thus the intricate web of the novel's familial relationships consists of the underlying affection and intimacy pervading the families of Jethamoshai and his brother, on the one hand, and Grandmother and her sister Mayadebi, on the other. This close-knit bond of a family continuing for four generations is the core of the ambience of the novel.

The novelist also casts his glance at the comprehensive social scene. The three major classes have all been depicted with just a few individuals like Tridib's father, Jatin Kaku (an Economist with the United Nations) constituting the elite, and Tridib himself representing the sensitive intellectuals. The poor are also glanced at here and there:

> Shading my eyes, I saw that there were a number of moving figures dotted over those slopes, they were very small at that distance, but I could tell they had sacks hung over their shoulders. They were picking bits of rubble off the slopes and dropping them into their sacks. I could only see them when they moved; when still, they disappeared completely--they were perfectly camouflaged, like chemelions, because everything on them, their clothes their sacks, their skins, was the uniform matt black of the sludge in the pools. (p.133)

The narrator, poised at the centre, rightly represents the middle class surviving only with their brains and always afraid of falling into the pit of poverty, symbolised in the above scene:

> It was that landscape that lent the note of hysteria to my mother's voice when she drilled me for the examinations.... I knew perfectly well that all it would take was a couple of failed examinations to put me where our relative was, in permanent proximity to that blackness: that landscape was the quicksand that seethed beneath the polished floors of our hosue; it was that sludge which gave our genteel decorum its fine edge of frenzy. (p.134)

The bedrock of Indian life, upon which *The Shadow Lines* is founded, is further reinforced by a number of other factors, the most important of which is the depiction of traditional customs. The irrationality of the age-old customs of not eating food prepared or

served by a Muslim and of not allowing one's food to be 'polluted' by the shadow of a non-Hindu is ironically, but tellingly, brought out by Robi, representing the new generation, when on their post-partition visit to Dhaka they learn that their old and senile grandfather, then known as Ukil Babu, eats food prepared by a Muslim, the wife of Khalil, the rickshawala who occupied their house after Partition and, inspite of his very limited income, is looking after him and feeding him. Robi comments:

> .... There was a time when that old man was so orthodox that he wouldn't let a Muslim's shadow pass within ten feet of his food? And look at him now, paying the price of his sons:
>
> Trignometry ! Robi cried in a triumphant aside to May. They must have known trignometry. They probably worked it out like a sum: if the Muslim is standing under a twenty first building how far is his shadow ? You see, we are much cleverer than you: But your grandfather couldn't tell when a German's shadow was passing within ten feet of his food. (p.210)

The same ironies are applicable to the practice of untouchability within Hindu society itself.

Some other aspects of the Indian way of life are also glanced. The Indian custom of the touching of the feet of the elders at the time of arrival or departure as also of women wearing clothes in accordance with their status, married or widowed, are shown when Grandmother goes for the first time to her ancestral house in post-partition Dhaka to visit her only elder relative the old Jethamoshai, her father's brother, she is unable to decide whether her sari should be a bit gaudy as befitting her being a bride visiting him for the first time or be plain white with a darkish border as befits a widow. Finally, after changing and re-changing her sari she decides to put on a white sari with a red border (p.205). Hers is a touching dilemma expressive of the Indian culture ingrained in her.

Some lighter aspects of Indian life are also presented as ironically as the serious ones. Unaffected by the dynamics of material progress and the consequent tyranny of time, and unimpinged by the pressure of 'Today,' the earlier generations had a more leisurely life, giving Indians the notoriety of being "hardened gossip lovers." They believe that things will take care of themselves, and so do no smart planning. Retirement overtakes Grandmother almost unawares, making her an object of riducule and embarrassment for others. Journeys, like hers to Dhaka, are

undertaken at the spur of the moment without any advance planning. And, though a regular listener of A.I.R. news bulletins, she is unprepared to face the reality of the Pakistani Dhaka, always asking "But where is Dhaka ?" till she reaches her old neighbourhood. The Westerner would be amused by such whimsicalities, but they were a reality of the Indian life of a generation or two ago.

The novel is a graphic portrayal of the dynamism of Indian social life spread over a canvas of time covering almost four generations. The narrator is one belonging to the last of them, and he is still a boy slowly growing into manhood. The basic mnemonics of this memory-novel are naturally loaded with ironies, pathos nostalgia and much matter-of-fact description which may not always be comprehensible to an average Western reader of today. However, beyond all these superficialities lies the all-enveloping Indian ambience--the core of its thought, its vision that has resisted the onslaughts of time, its concept of a Divinity which annihilates "the mystery of difference" (p.71), in fact all distances and paradoxes of space and time and creates in us both "the love of the nearby and the faraway" (A.K. Ramanujan, quoted on the jacket of the novel), in which we can include the distances not only of ways of life and culture, but also of the senses and the spirit, the body and the soul. The world of the Indian seers is divided only by shadow lines like the lines drawn by children in the novel on sand (pp.69 ff), or the reality and its image in the mirror. The latter idea is developed in the novel, on the model of Lewis Carrol's *Through the Looking Glass,* to portray reflection of reality, dissimilar only in its ways of life on the other side which a child leaving on one side of the partitioned house is made to imagine so as to frighten her sister to sleep:

> When the house was divided, she said, Maya was very little and she didn't remember the other side at all. So, later, often, to frighten her when she wasn't going to sleep or something like that, I would make up stories about that part of the house. Everything's upside-down over there, I'd tell her; at their meals they start with the sweets and end with the dal, their books go backwards and end at the beginning, they sleep under their beds and eat on the sheets, they cook with jhatas and sweep with their ladles, they write with umbrellas and go walking with pencils. (pp.125-26)

The world is essentially one, for all reality is relative:

> You're lying, I shouted at her. That can't be a staircase because it's flat,

> and staircases go up, they aren't flat. And that can't be upstairs because upstairs has to be above and that isn't above; that's right beside the drawing room. (p.70)

The pattern of houses made on sand stands for the transitory and illusive nature of reality.

In the conversation, referred to at the beginning of this paper, the novelist remarked that the communal riots have been a source of his inspiration, thereby giving an inkling into his repulsion against artificial divisions and violence and his implied affirmation of unity and enrichment of life. His protagonist Tridib, whose very name signifies God or 'Tridev' as the supreme all-pervading reality. Tridib's compass, like the vision of divinity, demolishes all artificial divisions of mankind. The old Jethamoshai is an unconscious embodiment of the same vision in his refusal to leave his ancestral house, for, as he says, where he would go if they decide to draw another line somewhere else (p.215). Similar are the folly and irrationality of domestic partitions and the irony of the sameness of 'coming' and 'going' (pp.152-53) illustrated in the case of Grandmother who while 'going' to Dhaka is really 'coming' to her ancestral house for the first time. Khalil, a common Muslim refugee, also enshrines this ancient wisdom in sheltering and maintaining an old Hindu (Jethamoshai), now called Ukil Babu. Examples can be multiplied to demonstrate that *The Shadow Lines* is one of the most 'Indian' novels produced in recent years. The mnemonic discourse of this novel consisting in its accuration into the long tunnel of life at the end of which we reach its 'ultima thule' in Tridib's sacrifice is well described by May to the narrator:

> .... For years I was arrogant enough to think I owed him his life. But I know now I didn't kill him; I couldn't have, if I'd wanted. He gave himself up; it was a sacrifice. I know I can't understand it. I know I mustn't try, for any real sacrifice is a mystery. (pp.251-52)

It is this "final redemptive mystery" (p.252) that constitutes the spire of the meaning of this novel which embodies the supreme quintessential wisdom of India, the wisdom for all mankind.

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THE CHESSMASTER AND HIS MOVES: A STUDY IN NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE

Kaushal Sharma

The technique of story telling enables a novelist to portray his vision of reality. It is, indeed, a mode of perception for the reader. No wonder it is increasingly being used as critical tool in evaluating works of fiction. A novelist has various modes of narration at his disposal and different stages of his story demand different modes. The choice of narrative method intetprets the difference in mood, and affects the coherence and tempo of a work.

Raja Rao evinces a rare skill in the use of narrative technique, for he adopts the Puranic art of story-telling and the modern experiments made by European novelists. He makes several variations on the estabilished tradition of story telling in his different novels with the focus on achieving authenticity and verisimilitude. *Kanthapura,* his first novel, is written in the traditional Indian Puranic form, from the point of view of "I" as witness. *The Serpent and the Rope* contains story within story, fables and legends, philosophical reflection on Christianity, Buddhism, Vedanta, Tantra, mystical experiences, initiation-tests and interesting observations on religion and politics. It is punctuated with long dialogues and lots of interior monologues. The author uses the narrative method of "I" protoganist. In *Comarade Kirillov,* Raja Rao uses the device of witness-narrator technique. It has two witness-narrators and not one. The first and the main witness-narrator is 'R' who is a true Vedantist and a Gandhian, a relation and a close friend of the principal character, Padmanbha Iyer who, later on, becomes a communist and is called Comrade Kirillov. The second witness-narrator is Irene, the wife of Kirillov. She has recorded her impression of her husband in her diary which falls in the hands of 'R'. *The Cat and Shakespeare* evinces Raja Rao's masterly use of the protagonist-narrator-cum-witness narrator technique. Ram Krishna Pai, who is the narrator of the story, is both the protagonist-narrator and the witness-narrator.

The Chestmaster and His Moves (1988) has a very vast range. The novelist deals very deftly with the serious thoughts on politics, history, religion, love, death and God. On the metaphysical plane,

it depicts the protagonist's quest for Truth. It will not be out of place to quote Raja Rao's words on June, 4, 1988 at the time of the award of Tenth Neustadt International Prize for Literature:

> I would like to be completely nameless and just be that reality which is beyond all of us who hear me--that reality which ivokes in me you, and I in each one listening to me this evening, that there be no one there but light. It is of that reality, the sages have spoken.[2]

These words evince Raj Rao's quest for spirituality and for truth. There are eight main characters in the novel. Sivarama Sastri, a mathematician, is the son of Rao Bahadur Sivasankara Sastri, an assistant Commissioner under the Raj and Lakshmi Sastri. Uma Ramchandra, his sister, is married to Ramchandra Iyer, a lawyer. Jayalakshmi (J) is the daughter of Sunder Ajit Singh, Maharaja of Vilaspur and Rani Sahiba, and is married to Surrendar Singh. Ashok Sinha is the Raja of Dharampur. Suzanne Chantereux (S), an actress, is the daughter of Madame LaFosse. Jean-Pierre is a gynaecologist. Mireille is the daughter of Marie Anne Xenakapoppulos. Ratilal Jhaveri, an Indian jeweller in Paris, is a Jain. Jeanne Abou is friend of Madame Lafosse and Suzanne. They form a group of cross cultural persons who draw their sustenance and identity from India, Israel, Greece and Senegal. The novel has a tinge of cosmopolitanism. The events and the threads of the story present a unified plot with Sivaramsastri at the centre of the narrative. The novel has a dramatic exposition. The narrative gives the growth of the protagonist's mind. Siva, after securing a scholarship from the French Government, joins the International Institute of Pure Mathematics at Paris. With his Vedantic heritage, he is a typical Brahamin who wears a sacred thread, washes several times a day and never eats any thing before his bath. Despite the hum-drum life of Paris, he feels very lonely. It is here that he needs Suzanne and is immediately fascinated by her physical beauty. He falls in love with her. Mireille, the wife of gynaecologist in Paris, later on, enters his life. Uma, Siva's sister, is sterile and also comes to Paris to consult a famous gynaecologist. Jaya Lakshmi, the old beloved of Siva, who is suffering from a brain-tumor, goes to London for a surgical operation. She also comes to Paris for a change. His relationship with her is purely abstract, spiritual, a sort of marriage of Being. His non-fulfilment of love with Jayalakshmi is marked by

frustration. His relationship with all these are marked by his irrepressible urge for spirituality.

The novel is written in first-person narrative technique. In order to highlight the authenticity of the growth of the protagonist's mind, the author employees retrospective flashbacks. The narrator is haunted by the reminiscences of the past. There are protagonist's recollections of his deep relationship with Suzanne, Mireille and Jaya. These are redolent of the stream of consciousness Technique. There are interior monologues which enable us to peep into the innermost recesses of the protagonist's mind. In order to express his authentic spiritual and intellectual growth, Raja Rao uses interior monologues, flashbacks, myths and symbols. The novel opens with an interior monologues of Siva:

> You remember, J, you said to me: Tell me you need me, and I'll come I need you now, you know what I mean. I do not truly need you. Yet I need you. Would you therefore come? Would you return as parrot, betel vine or bodhisattva. Sometimes I dream of you and call you Kadambari.[3]

Thus, for Siva she symbolizes, beauty wisdom and purity.

The title of the novel is very suggestive. Siva is convinced that all our activities of life are controlled by the rules of the game of chess where there are a million pawns. He asserts that Lord Siva from his Himalyan abode runs the affairs of the world. He asserts; "Siva sits in the yogic medidation, and runs the whole world from his mountain retreat. The world dances, then, like a Jugglar's monkeys."[4] We men, Siva believes, are only chess-pieces in the hands of the Creator. In an interior monologue he muses to himself: " 'Holy, Holy universe, Parvati's game and Siva's amusement. So life, I said to myself, why not go and play now. Nothing is everlost, nothing ever gained as Newton well knew.' "[5]

The eternal riddle "who am I" haunts him. In order to know the true meaning of one's existence, the wisdom contained in the Vedas and the Upanishads can alone help us. He goes into the visions of Sri Sankara going to the Himalayas and estabilishing the holy shrine of Badrinath and composing his well-known Hymn to Siva: "Sivoham, Sivoham/Chidanand Rupam Sivoham" He is haunted by the vision of a fatherly figure, a guru, in valley of the river Marne, flowing west to the Seine near Paris. He wishes to be lost into the flash of anonymous countryside which looked like a chess-board.

He addresses the elderly figure thus:

> I felt that afternoon, I had become a chesspiece.
> Father, and send me a cable, will you, if you find the chess-master. O Father, bless me and do not, I beg of you, leave me alone. I am lost, totally lost.[6]

The momentary flash of spiritual experience makes him realize that he is simply a chess-piece in the hands of God:

> ... A chesspiece does not move by itself. He, who is behind me, moves me to the next place. And I also know that, I and this me, are not two me-s, but somewhat one and only one 'I'.[7]

Siva's relationship with Suzanne, Mireille and Jaya take him deep into his spiritual quest for Truth. Suzanne has a wife-like attachement with him and thinks that she was his wife in her past life. She creates a vision of herself as typical Indian wife with a brass pitcher of water on her head, walking shyly on the road, alongwith other half-veiled woman. She wants to be cremated like a Hindu wife. For her, Siva is like a God and she puts her head on his feet. Their relationship is a sort of mutual rediscovery. Sensuality transports them into a spiritual experience. The depth of his attachement with her is rightly reflected in this flashback:

> Here was a woman in her firm womanhood, her things and bust so perfectly made for surrender for union, biological greases pulling you so forcefully to you inner adventure. As I held her firmly in my arms, and adjusted myself to her breath and hold, I felt not a Caliban, not even Ariel but a prince. ....I was reborn, Blessed, blessed, Suzanne[8]

Mireille enters the life of Siva with her natural, pure and spontaneous love for him. She craves for fulfilment in love. She is not only physically attractive, but also very intelligent. Devotedly attached to Siva, she looks after him during his illness. Her company makes Siva feel cheerful. She feels that at long last she has been able to find her ultimate man. Siva considers her a source of enlightenment. For him perfection in love needs complete surrender, i.e., merger of one in the other. Mireille is quite aware of the abstractness of Siva's desires, which means her death and extinction.

Siva's first encounter with Jaya in the childhood in a temple of Chidambarm leaves an indellbe imprint on his mind. He, then eight only, had gone there in the company of his father after losing his mother. The temple provides him momentary flashes of mystical experience. At Ghazipur, on the sugestion of Ramesh, her cousin, Jaya asks him many mataphysical questions regarding the meaning of life and the place of sorrow in life. For her Brahamin-like purity

and spiritual aptitude, Siva feels attracted towards her. When lonely whether in India or London, she always feels the ringing of bells in the temple of Devi Astakam. Both of them have a great reverence for each other. She, like a pupil, looks to Siva for guidance and protection. Their intellectual affinity is praised even by Jaya's mother. At times she wishes to have a son-in-law like Siva. On her part, Jaya also wishes to have Siva as her husband instead of Surrendar who is an utterly materialistic, a tyccon, always after money. The spiritual bond between Siva and Jaya is unbreakable. With a reference to Tristan-Iseult myth, Raja Rao conveys that the physical separation strengthens their love, Jaya, as desired by Siva, comes to Paris for solemnizing her spiritual marriage with Siva. In his severe emotions disturbance, Siva fancies that Lord Siva has swallowed all her poison from her bulbo and now she could live for ever. Siva's deep attachment to Jaya is reflected in a mood of poetic frenzy. In an outburst Siva tries to suggest their deathless love with the force of conviction;

> I am I, because you are there, you is only me, turned the way round, like space turned time. So there will be no death.[17]

In order to explain fully the quality of love between Siva and Jaya, Raja Rao takes the help of the myth of Siva and Kali. Siva lying at the feet of Kali who, with her lance of Lord's chest, is ready to kill Siva, the lord of the universe. He can never be killed and he just plays the game of death. Theirs is a divine deathless love. Raja Rao takes the help of the Hindu myth of Kanyakumari, (Parvati lives in lone wifehood at Kanyakumari). With the Mahayaga of gods, the goddess emerged out of the sacrifical fire. She came to the southern coast of India. The Goddess acquired marriagable age. Muni Narad, perceiving this, thought of a plan to disrupt the marriage so that the services of the Goddess could be used for killing Asuras. He apporached the Goddess and requested her to ask Lord Siva to reach the southern tip of the land from the Himalayas before dawn alongwith eyeless coconut, knotless sugarcane and veinless betel for the performance of the marriage. When Lord Siva was on his way and very near to the place of the Goddess, Narad at Suchindram gave a cock's call, indicating the dawn. Lord took note of this fact and seeing the futility of further journey, stayed at Suchindram as a statue. Hence the Godess remained unmarried and became an

eternal bride-to-be awaiting her Lord for ever. Siva thinks that Jaya, like Parvati, is unmarriagable. Siva and Jaya are eternal lovers. Thus with the help of myths which are universal and timeless, Raja Rao expresses the protagonist's subtle feelings and profound thoughts.

Raja Rao very deftly employees symbols to depict the subtle thoughts of his characters. At times these symbols help to portray his character's complex metaphysical ideas. In *The Chessmaster and His Moves*, the Chessmaster, the perfect player of Chess, symbolizes the creator and the Supreme Being. The entire game of Chess (the affairs of this mundane world *Jagat*) goes according to His will. Though He appears to play for Himself, He is playing for each of us (the chess-pieces on the board) to the perfect end. The entire visible world is his divine game (*leela*). His moves symbolize the unpredictable, mysterious and inscrutable ways of God. Sivarama asserts that all the incidents in man's life are controlled by the rules of the game of chess which has "not four orders of pawn but a million."[9] He himself feels a chess-piece out of millions in the hands of the Creator. In an interior monologue he bursts out: "would I ever be true happy? Tell me, Chessmaster, where are you taking me?"[10] Every activity ranging from one's arrival, departure, victory and defeat, the creation and decline of empires are ordained by the will of the grand Chessmaster.

Thus, we see that the various modes of narrative technique, adopted by the author at different places, lend authenticity to the novel. These modes also help the author to explain metaphysical thoughts.

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A PASSAGE THROUGH BIHARIPUR WITH PRANAV KUMAR VANDYOPADHYAYA

K.K. Kapoor

Pranav Kumar Vandyopadhyaya's maiden English novel, *Passing Time in Biharipur* is a regional work with a Pan-Indian significance. His *Biharipur*, a sprawling locality in Bareilly, has echoes of R.K. Narayan's *Malgudi*, though it essentially is a picture of *mofussil* culture in Western Uttar Pradesh, as it underwent a rapid transition during the 1960's. The storyline is thin but the author has really succeeded in conveying the ethos of a milieu beset with a nerve-wracking culture clash between a moribund tradition and a decadent modernity. The novel shows how the euphoria of Nehru's tryst with destiny days slowly evaporated into cynical despondency fuelled by political opportunism and social lumpenization.

Passing Time in Biharipur is the story of a young idealist, Vinayak, who carries distinct autobiographical echoes. He is an educated boy of the lower middle class who swears by the ideals of social justice, political activism and economic upliftment. Working in a small factory he tries to organize his co-workers in an active trade-union movement; aims at social harmony by forming a welfare association including the various castes and creeds; and contributes his mite for social uplift by running a free homoeopathic dispensary. However all his dreams come to nought as the vested interests sabotage his idealistic plans. The factory he works for declares a lock-out; the welfare association is a non-starter as it is headed by a scheduled caste man; and his dispensary is wrecked by hired goons. Beaten and dejected he leaves *Biharipur* to its well-deserved infernal fate, and joins Allahabad University seeking pastures anew.

The central *motifs* that run through the novel are cultural turmoil, political chicanery, and moral decay. In its own way it is an allegory of Independent India emerging from the dark days of the British Raj with high hopes of progress, justice and social integrity; and slowly sinking into a cess-pool political corruption and moral degradation. This high to low structure is constructed around a number of images that run through the novel as *leitmotifs*. The

cultural transition is conveyed in two significant images-Bhagirath's Hotel and its dilapidated radio set that blares cheap film music round the clock. Bhagirath's tea-stall is a cultural melting pot like India herself, with people of all types and shades thronging to enjoy tea, gossip, scandals and sexy music. This dirty, slimy shop is a metaphor for the ethos of *Biharipur:*

> At the end of the lane is Bhagirath's tea shop, the New Janata Hotel. The Hotel's old sign-board tells the story of the ravages of sun and rain. The once clear names are now obscured by rust.... In Biharipur nobody bothers too much about names.[2]

The rust is symbolic as it has eroded not only the tin-plate of the sign-board but the very heart of Biharipur and its residents. The seedy hotel is a hot center of scandal-mongering and character-assasination. About the conversation of the regulars "there is only one condition: that it be spicy." (p.1) The primary story that dominates the earlier part of the novel is the shocking elopement of a Brahmin teacher's daughter with a local bootlegger, a low-caste thug called Moolchand. Sexual innuendos and escapades are the staple diet of Bhagirath's customers, and several such incidents are reported in the course of the story. There is Sarju driver's wife-Dalevarni-who disappears one fine morning; Murari Doctor's sister, Gauri, who falls in love with a Muslim youngman, Nasiruddin-the sordid affair provoking a communal riot; and, above all, Naina Mem-a true incarnation of the New Morality. She has deserted her husband, and maintains a cozy live-in relationship with an Anglo-Indian railway guard. She is the one woman who stands up to Bhagirath Hotel's scandal-mongers and fights back spiritedly. She can be as foul-mouthed as the worst of them, as Lukka Pehelwan finds to his peril one day. When he calls her a whore, she explodes:

> 'You bastard, you go and tell all this to your sister. I wonder whether you have a real sister at all. Your father was not really a man, was he? You touch me and you will pay for it. I will expose you naked in front of the whole neighbourhood.' (p.144)

These lines echo the gutter-culture of Biharipur, at whose epicentre lies Bhagirath's tea-shop.

Film music is another motif that runs throughout the novel. Bhagirath's Hotel blares Binaca Geet Mala and Vividh Bharti all day:

> ... the radio was on full blast. It was that time of evening when people came

> and listened to songs on the radio or caught up with the latest scandals. (p.6).

Any social gathering is a flop unless the loud-speakers are arranged to play film songs. Murari Doctor's welfare association meeting is a grand success as "people were overwhelmed just listening to the music." (p.103). The response of Biharpurians to this music is summed up in these words of Anees, a disciple of Lukka Pehelwan:

> These songs, you know, are fabulous.
> I wish I could rush back to my wife. (p.56)

The popularity of cheap film music serves as an indicator to the trivialisation of India's mass culture.

The decline in India's cultural values is brought forth through another objective-correlative-Vinayak's ancestral house, Kaushalya Bhawan. With all the political parties talking of 'Ram Rajya', Vandyopahdyaya invests Kaushalya Bhawan with the characterstics of contemporary India-dilapidated, fading and slowly losing its identity. Mark these words:

> Whatever the colour of walls inside may be, gauging from the outside it is difficult to believe that this house was once painted white. It is true that the walls were plastered with cement when the house was built. But now that is history. Now these walls are so covered with election slogans, film posters and advertisements that they serve the function of huge hoardings. (p.291)

Apparently the reference is to the 'white walls' of Indian culture now tainted with sleazy politics, slimy showbiz, and rank commercialisation.

Vandyopadhyaya's novel is primarily a socio-political fable and his vision of the fledgling Indian democratic polity is stark, dark and pessimistic. *Passing time in Biharipur* recaptures the second decade of Indian independence when political chicanery and skullduggery were slowly but surely upstaging idealism and sacrifice as action motivators. This moral decline and the vast shadow that fell between political appearances and reality is objectified through the character of one Baba Bholanand Giri whose self-styled disciples led by Lukka Pehelwan proclaim him as Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, living incognito:

> Clad in his saffron robe Baba Bholanand Giri had first been seen in Biharipur a long time ago. He was a tall man of wheat-coloured complexion. He had long matted hair a beard and a moustache....Soon a rumour spread like wild

> fire. Its source was Lukka. He said: 'This is Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. He is scared of the police and the *gormint*, and is disguising himself as Baba....Even after Independence people in power cannot like him for he defied Gandhi. (p.17)

As the story unfolds it is slowly revealed that the Baba is nothing but a drug addict/peddlar who befools the people with his periodic political harangue. Still his innocent followers keep their faith alive:

> Sometimes the Baba, having smoked for a while, hands over his *chillum* to whoever is sitting next to him for a refill. The person who gets the *chillum* considers himself blessed. (p.22).

Those who think rationally and question the Baba's credentials are mercilessly beaten and silenced into submission. This is what happens to Vinayak when makes a brief reference to smugglers masquerading as Netas, at a function where Baba Bholanand Giri is being felicitated:

> 'I have also come to know that those who have been arrested for smuggling are no saints.' Someone from the audience lobbed a broken brick at Vinayak. He fell down, clutching his head....As Vinayak fell down some people exploited the opportunity to bash him up. (p.68).

One must appreciate the prophetic vision of Vandyopadhyaya in this fable. Today we know that any upright youngman who stands up to question the authority of dubious political operators is silenced by sheer muscle-power. Similar prophetic voices are heard in Vandyopadhyaya's exposition regarding he genesis of communal riots, caste conflicts, and volatile non-issues like building of temples and mosques. His finger is at the pulse of the young Indian democracy, and his diagnosis of the growing malaise is accurate, though despondent.

It is revealing to note the persons whose writ runs in Biharipur, which is India in microcosm. Young idealists like Vinayak are constantly haunted, taunted, and humiliated by the lumpen elements who rule the roost. There are small-time *goondas* like Billu and his gang who make their living through terror and extortion. Then there is Bhaiyan *Badmash:*

> ...the most feared tough of Biharipur... When he walked along the roads, exuding power and force, he intimidated the people. The initiation or control of any riot in Bareilly was never possible without Bhaiyan. (p.157).

Another dominating character is Gangu Guru, a Gorakhpuri *lathait* who has set up a paan shop in Biharipur. Fearless and tough, he

is quick to pick a quarrel and launch into violent and impulsive action at the spur of the moment:

> Gangu Guru had grown old but the residents of Biharipur were still frightened of him. Who knew what he may do suddenly? He was selling paan and tobacco today, but he was quite capable of breaking somebody's head tomorrow. For the others there may be a difference between home and jail. For Gangu it was all the same. (pp.190-91).

These are the conscience-keepers of Biharipur-Moolchand, the bootlegger; Lukka. Pehelwan, the drug-peddlar; Billu goonda, the extortionist; Bhaiyan Badmash, the instigator of riots; and Gangu Guru, the jail-bird. What hope does an idealist like Vinayak have in such a motley crowd of lumpen elements.

It is tempting to compare Biharipur to Brahmpur, the focal town of Vikram Seth's mega-novel, *A Suitable Boy*. The names of the two locales are similar as is their ethos and symbolic significance. Seth's Brahmpur is also a portrayal of Indian backwaters, and a milieu lurching drunkenly from the euphoria of newly-acquired independence to the nitty-gritty of political chicanery. Vikram Seth-flippant, cynical, and irreverent-puts the theme of his novel in the following words:

> The Post-Independence romanticism, and Post-Independence disillusionment formed a volatile mixture.[3]

Like Biharipur, Brahmpur, too, is a witness to the eclipse of idealism, and the humiliation of the good. The honest, secular idealist—Mahesh Kapoor--loses the General Election, falling a victim to political conspiracies and scandal-mongering. And who is the winner? The newly-crowned M.L.A. is Waris Khan, a village yokel who is an illiterate rabble-rouser. Here is Seth's ironic depiction of the newly-emergent leadership of Independent India:

> (Waris) was in his late twenties, tough, robust, handsome...(who) used the word *haramzada*--bastard--very freely. In fact he used foul language in the friendliest way.[4]

A young socialist, Abdur Rasheed, who is studying for a University Degree and, simultaneously, fighting for the cause of landless labourers is disowned by his family, ostracized from his society and, finally, driven to suicide. The victory, in Brahmpur, of Waris plus the failure of Mahesh Kapoor and Abdur Rasheed, runs parallel to the victory, in Biharipur, of Moolchand and the defeat of Vinayak.

Both the novels have an apocalyptic vision of the fledgling Indian democracy that was seemingly headed towards a dark abyss of political skull-duggery and social lumpenization.

Passing Time in Biharipur, like *A Suitable Boy*, is the study of an ethos built around a set of structural motifs. Perhaps it will be proper to say that Biharipur is the real hero of Vandyopadhyaya's novel, as *Malgudi* is of R.K. Narayan's fiction. Yet the comparison ends here. R.K. Narayan's vision is integrating, *Malgudi* absorbs the culture-shocks. The wayward sons of Malgudi come back home after their brief stints of mutiny and disorder. Malgudi lives in a tradition that is virile and deep-rooted in the waters of time. Biharipur, on the contrary, is a seedy world of dirty lanes, cheap music and grubby people where tradition and moral values are terms of mockery. Something is rotten at the heart of Biharipur, and the prevailing stink is nauseating and frightening. No wonder, unlike Narayan's heroes, Vinayak runs away from Biharipur. As the novel ends we see Vinayak throwing in the towel:

> Kaushlya Bhawan and Biharipur were left far behind. Vinayak watched the town of Bareilly recede from the window of his train. After a while it grew dark. *Nothing was visible anymore.* (p.221, Emphasis added)

If Vinayak were inclined to quote the Bard at this juncture, he would have almost certainly gone to Hamlet:

> The time is out of joint; O cursed spite,
> That ever I was born to set it right. (I,v, 188-89).

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LANGUAGE THROUGH LITERATURE AND LITERATURE THROUGH LANGUAGE: A STUDY OF ARUNDHATI ROY'S *THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS*

M. Adhikari

Human language, aural-oral and symbolically meaningful is always structured uniquely. To a native, the process of native language learning is a natural and controlled activity. But to a foreigner, the learning of another language like English, raises many problems. The role of ELT at such junctures become significant. The teaching of English as a second language chiefly aims at facilitating the acquisition of English language for the purpose of communication. Consequently and generally, it has followed the method of 'hearing, speaking, reading and writing.' The insistence of traditional grammar for improving basic linguistic skills have been emphasised but it has failed to encourage a free communication of thought, the centre and focus of literature.[1] In ESL a rigourous method of linguistic analysis initiated by Bloomfieldians has tended to downsize the importance of meaning as an element of language. Excessive drills on disconnected sentences, the so called 'component parts,' away from the realities of situation, thought and communication, have restricted the gain of ESL. Mere emphasis on phonetics, grammatical structure and dictionary meaning of words has damaged the progress of learners. This has lead Newmark to argue for the learning of 'chunks' of language.

ELT was initiated to introduce foreign students to English as a second language, at school level. In India, it has been used in the pre-University colleges (PUC) and at under-graduate level. But the question is should we neglect the approach, method and technique of ELT while we are teaching English Literature at the post-graduate level? Most of the language experts would react strongly to see the subordination of language studies to literary studies because language studies now, considered to be independent subjects, have become self-confident with the growing popularity. One can feel a certain sense of rivalry and hostility emerging

between literary and linguistic studies. This is mainly due to a bias in favour of literary studies continuing in Europe from Renaissance to recent years.[2] Literary studies have enjoyed the supremacy because grammatical rules and systems have been worked out on the basis of literary works but this feeling of animosity can be greatly reduced if it is realised that literature generally thought to be worthy of preservation for aesthetic qualities becomes so, because of its special use of language. 'Linguistic and Literary scholarship do not operate on the whole, on the same field or in the same way; but within the subject matter, it is reasonable to see some common ground and opportunities for profitable linguistic studies.'[3] It is very important to remember that aesthetic evaluation, to a great extent is dependant on a logical interpretation of its phonetic, grammatical and lexical constitution. No literature can be conceived of as being worthless or sentenceless.' Art means expression' where the medium may vary from language to colour or colour to musical notes. A worthy analysis of literature depends on the indispensable and vital linguistic studies plus other semantic, aesthetic and emotive values.

At the post-graduate level, a meaningful study of English Literature should integrate the techniques of linguistic and literary studies. It cannot depend on the basic assumption of CIEFL, Hyderabad:

> It is the analysis of the language used and the mastery of a passage that are more valuable at the PUC level rather than any 'aesthetic consideration' or 'biological or psychological speculation' about the writer.[4]

In fact, I would like to state categorically that at the pre-University, under-graduate and post-graduate level, teaching of English Literature should cooperate with ELT to make the act of analysis, appreciation and comprehension, sensible and complete. A great artist is not necessarily a great linguist. But he communicates through language. He rules and is ruled by the norms and laws of the same. It is always very fruitful and satisfying to pin-point the liberties practised by the writer and also to discuss how these experimentations either vitalize or erode the worthiness of the literary work. Great masters like Ovid and Shakespeare have altered the rules of literary composition and in the process, have remodelled and perfected the technique of expression. The truth

that should be accepted is that literary and linguistic studies should scale down form their self-made high altars to compliment each other, keeping in mind, the joint idea of enriching and enlarging the scope of language/literature. The spirit should be of cooperation rather than confrontation. Language through literature and literature through language should form the equally significant components of serious study.

In this paper, an attempt has been made to discover the beauty and gravity of the novel *The God of Small Things,* by presenting a linguistic analysis of the text. It would be interesting to establish the role of the language in enhancing the aesthetic and literary appeal of the work.

I

The novel, *The God of Small Things,* has had its share of praise for its 'verbal wizardary.'[5] It has been pointed out by Beth Yahp that Roy has reduced the supremacy of the conventional prose by mingling it very often with the non-conventional and unacceptable grammatical expressions. 'Speech level' and 'pre-speech level' expressions in the tradition of stream of consciousness novels have been freely introduced 'Roy's text constantly breaks the conventional rules of grammar and syntax, abandons orthodox punctuation, coins neo-logisms, imports typographical devices, runs sense impressions together with synaesthetic richness.'[6] The rich unorthodox verbal texture, very innovative in nature, captures the ebb and flow of emotions adequately. The reader is constantly reminded of James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. The dominance of the poetic mode takes full shape through the resonance of words. In the following passage, the famous rainy season of Kerala projected with its natural bounty makes us conscious of Roy's choice of words and minute power of observation:

> It was raining when Rahel came back to Ayemenem. Slanting silver ropes slammed into the loose earth, ploughing it up like gunfire.... The walls streaked with moss, had grown soft and bulged a little with dampness that seeped up from the ground.... The wild overgrown garden was full of the whisper and scurry of small lives.... In the under-growth a rat-snake rubbed itself against a glistening stone....[7]

The poetic passage packed with present participle words stresses

the idea of continuity ('raining,' 'slanting,' etc.) and it is skillfully juxtaposed with words that stand in opposition in content ('slammed,' 'gunfire,' etc.). Detailed nature pictures if on the one hand conveys a sense of satisfaction, completeness, on the other, the choice of words loaded with meaning with a rise and fall of notes produces fine rhythm. Metaphors and similies become the integral part of the prose. Roy begins the novel by following the rule of conventional grammar but very soon, she moves into the sphere of arbitrary or so-called un-grammatical sentences: 'Anyway now she thinks of Estha and Rahel as *Them,* because seperately, the two of them are no longer what *They* were or ever thought *They'd* be.
Ever.'[5]

Italicized words in capital letters are plainly suggestive of the speaker's stress on the words for a particular reason. But it surely rebels against the orthodox pattern of correct inscription. The long sentence is followed by a single word 'Ever' and it is abruptly stopped by a full stop. Roy gives body to thoughts by using words as they come. The gap that is left is to be filled up by reader's response.

With Roy, coining of new words, verbs or nouns by joining or dividing or making other combinations, is a passion. It is quite typical of her to write, 'Orangedrink Lemondrink Man'(5). By creating new nouns and names, she is not only projecting the psychology of children but also constructing arbitrary signifiers that present 'situational meanings' for Estha and Rahel. The game of pronunciation though bends the rules of grammar yet it projects reality more closely than ever. Children love to join words. For them the phonetic demarcations are not important.

An analysis of Roy's language indicates her obesession with novel methods of word-usage. The passage 'Edges, Borders, Boundaries, Brinks, Limits have appeared like a team of trolls on their seperate horizons' (5), seems to burst with synonyms. But it has individual, referential meaning. The nouns in capital letters apparently very physical in nature, has a great amount of emotive value for marginalised Estha and Rahel. To the reader it signifies dis-union, estrangement, feud, rupture, compartmentalization and

many other nuances of division and incompatibility. The very next sentence, 'Gentle half-moons have gathered under their eyes and they are as old as Ammu was when she died. Thirty one.
Not old.
Not young.
But a viable die-able age' (5), enriched with a simile and an image overwhelms our receptive mind. Consciously Roy places the words in the format of poetry, forbidden in prose. Sentences 'Not old,' 'Not young' incomplete in the traditional sense of syntax, intelligently juxtaposes two antonyms 'old-young' and the homonyms 'viable-die-able' not only invents a new adjective but by opposition and similarity compresses the speech to make it more effective emotionally. This practice commonly exploited by the poets includes unusual combination of words that foregrounds the mood of the novel, very essential for any work of art.

Definitely percetible in Roy's prose is the quality of hybridization, a mark of post-colonial fiction. Though the practice is old in Indian-English writings yet it has been popularised by Salman Rushdie's confident entry into the literary world. The devices of 'abrogation and appropiation' have been convincingly utilised to control the language of the coloniser. Roy has excelled in creating 'in a language which is not *[her]* own the spirit which is *[her]* own.'[8] The text of *The God* is loaded with indigenous words: 'Mundu' (161), 'churidar,' 'sherwani' (228), 'Kappa and meen navachathu' (134), 'Inquilab Zindabad. Thozilah Ekta Zindabad' (66), 'veshya,' the song of Velutha's crippled brother in Malyalam (196), 'Pappachi Mammachi (10), 'Baba' (5). Hundred instances can be easily picked up from the text. In the introduction of *Orientalism* Edward Said has commented that the inclusion of native words in a foreign language text underlines not only the mastery of the text maker but also the device to indicate the typical nuances of words and emotional reactions of a culture. Said has observed, 'the images, themes, motifs that circulate in the text can be useful indicators of its ideological underpinnings.'[9] Roy while creating images has relied very heavily on Indian experiences like the drowned child's skin being as wrinkled as the 'dhobi's finger' (14) or Estha's feeling of

betrayal of Velutha, 'like a mango hair between the molars' (32). The emotive power of the noun phrase, 'a mango hair between the molars' has a special ethnic flavour that can be concretely appreciated by an Indian and imagined artistically by a foreigner.

Salman Rushdie once stated:

> We can't simply use the language in the way the British did .... It needs remaking of our own purposes.... To conquer English may be to complete the process of making ourselves free.[10]

By making herself free, Roy has conquered the English language, has succeded in manipulating the language without any inhibition or complex. Let us consider the following passage:

> There were so many stains on the road.
> Squashed Mis-Mitten shaped stains in the Universe.
> Squashed frog-shaped stains in the Universe.
> Squashed crows that had tried to eat squashed frog-shaped stains in the Universe
> Squashed dogs that ate the squashed crow shaped stains in in the Universe.
> Feathers. Mangoes. Spit.
> All the way to Cochin. (79)

The syntactic arrangement of the passage is interesting. The look is of a poetic composition. Though each of the lines begins with a capital letter and closes with a full-stop yet except for the first sentence none is a complete one. Beginning from the second line, we have noun phrases and the last is an adverbial phrase. The passage would have become quite grammatic if after the first complete sentence a colon was placed and rest of the lines were joined to the first by adding semi-colons after each sentence. The question is why did Roy take these liberties with grammar and punctuation? First, it is a deliberate attempt to go back to the language of childhood. It has the rhythm of a famous nursery rhyme, 'This is the house that Jack built.' The logical development of ideas are well presented but an Indian child is not expected to go for the rules of grammar. Thoughts more important to him. Pour out in quick succession and the Joycean echo is very obvious. Second, the passage with a special context has a special meaning for the reader. It shocks, baffles and finally the realisation seeps in. The aliteration of 'squashed,' 'shaped,' 'stains,' rhetorically fascinating is also inspiring connotatively. The reader feels the pleasant excitement

of decoding the language to absorb the meaning.

Another passage describing Murlidharan is noteworthy for its repetitive words and yet the result is not monotony but a successful attempt to transcend the barrier of word meaning. This comes about through 'sign-ification' of words:

> He watched the trains come and go. He counted his keys.
> He watched governments rise and fall. He counted his keys.
> He watched cloudy children at car windows with yearning marshmallow noses.
> The homeless, the helpless, the sick, the small and lost, all filed past his windows. Still he counted his keys.(61)

The entire passage gives the feeling of a poem that has a refrain: 'He counted his keys.' The first two lines have the same number of syllables and the last two are longer but are matched by the balancing refrain. Again one is reminded of the closing song of the clown in *Twelfth Night* with the refrain 'For the rain it rainth everyday.' Momentous things of life pass Murlidharan. The fall of government, the picture of homeless, helpless, sick and small but he remains engrossed in his selfish material work and counts his keys (possessions). By repeating the words, presenting the various images of life and projecting the innumerable frames of reference, Roy successfully compels us to negotiate the twists and turns of life.

Arundhat Roy has played with words, flouted the laws of grammar by 'deviations' and has proved that like a trained musician she can skillfully use the *vivadi swara* or the forbidden note of a *Raga,* enhance the beauty of the composition and then, return back to the original set of *swaras.* Roy has a child-like fertile mind. She has invented 'sourmetal smell,' 'orangedrink lemondrink,' 'whatisit,' 'whathappened,' 'thangod,' to give the flavour of the Indian soil and to capture the Malayalee way of speaking English. The device reduces the feeling of strangeness or the foreigness of a language. She has often broken the letters of a word to offer different connotations of the word.

'A Wake
A Live
A Lert (227)'

are some of the fine examples of this practice. The words have been broken into two syllables. The same letter 'A' introduces each line which is not a sentence but a phrase. In each of these lines 'A' can be taken as a prefix as we have in 'amoral' or it can be an indefinite article to qualify 'Wake,' 'Live' or 'Lert.' Sophie Mol's condition may be like a Wake, a Christian ritual observed before the burial of a body. It is a foregrounding of the things to come. She is to die soon. 'A Live' phonetically comes close to 'a lie' or 'a life.' Her life can be interpreted as what a life.' Then finally, the divided words, now with double syllables have the power to conjure up the sound of rapid gunfire to wake a child. Thus the lexical, the syntactical and the phonetical interpretation may create new meanings as per the response of the reader. Roy, by using unconventional linguistic devices has stimulated the reader to fill up the gaps and blanks to construct meaning from the literary text which otherwise, would not come into existence. Her performance is closely related with her competence in the language. Having internalised the very nature of the language, she is ready for new experiments. At times disquieting but at other, epiphanic in its essence.

Deviations, experimentations, innovations, inventions are some of the hallmarks of Arundhati Roy's style. Her language in isolation could have been condemned as unlawful usage. But viewed through a piece of literary work, her linguistic jugglery is worth all applause. Deliberately, she has taken liberty with semantics and syntax but instead of eroding the quality of the language, she has enriched, enlarged and embellished it. The kaleidoscopic impression of a Syrian-Christian family of Kerala has been communicated to us by a linguistic system conventional and often made non-conventional. Inclusion of untranslated words is not an example of pollution but is an element of metonymic of a culture. Roy has sufficiently established that words assume different connotations in different contexts and 'a sentence means one thing while its utterance in context means another.'[11]

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THE SYMBOLISM OF "HEART OF DARKNESS" IN *THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS*

K.K. Gaur

The phrasal expression, "Heart of Darkness," recurs repeatedly in Arundhati Roy's debut novel, *The God of Small Things.* It symbolises the dask forces operating in human life, and most of them are the creation of the social structure identified with various social institutions, such as parenthood, marriage, man-woman relationship, traditions and unjust, inhuman discriminations built upon misconceived prejudices under religious and political diktats. Hypocrisy of human nature lies at the root of many ills. The denizens of Ayemenem--a small remote village in Kerala as the pivotal local for most of the important events taking place in the novel--represent the personages who fall victims to these dehumaning forces consciously or compulsively. The life in this place in inextricably caught up into the octopus-like clutches of social evils like male chauvinism, age-old discriminatory caste considerations of Touchable and Untouchable, police brutality, double standards of morality, chicanery of political idealism practised in the euphemistic name of Communism and taboos that wrongfully suppress natural urges of human origin in the name of sin ordained by religion. Sterling human qualities, viz. tenderness of heart and feeling, relalisation of the dignity of work of all types, fraternal fellowship and collective harmonious living of social togetherness based upon mutual tolerance and exurberant large-heartedness are given a good-bye. Hence, the consequence is a phenomenon afflicted with petty jealousies, mistrust, avoidable unnecessary sufferings, tensions and intricate destructive interplay of acts of omission and commission that disrupt calm, happy and zestful living. The writer at many places makes it amply clear through the direct authorial comments or by using symbolic expressions like "The God of Small Things," "The God of Loss," "The God of Goose Bumps," "Pappachi's Moth," "The History House," etc.

The women characters like Ammu, Hammachi and Baby Kochamma live a life of emptiness, and have to undergo the pangs and stings of the practical art of living in Ayemenem. All of them lack the sense of fulfilment and suffer from bereavements. Rahel ad Estha, two-egg twins called 'Dizygotic' in medical terminology,

right from the unripe tender age of seven years pass through a tragic course of events conspicuously maked by severe sufferings of separation, parental bereavement, and are always dwelling under the threatening doom of uncertainty which at times is given expression to in these two thoughts that recurringly assail their minds:

> Anything may happen to anyone.
> It is best to be prepared.

The two-egg twins think of themyselves in terms of "We" and "Us," and not as he or she as separate entities. A sudden stroke of doom befalls them when both of them get separated after Sophie Mol's accidental death by drowning in Meenachal river and their mother Ammu's unexpected ouster from Ayemenem subsequent to the disclosure of her sexual night escapades with a Paravan named Velutha. The result is a constant consciousness in the duo of some vital link missing in their individualities. Such a state of their mind is seemed up in these words:

> That the emptiness in one twin was only a version of the quietness in the other. That the things fitted together. Like stacked spoons. Like familiar lovers' bodies.[1]

The brother-sister reunion after an interval of twenty three years in Ayemenem leads to an unusual, socially impermissible incident of physical mating at a rainy, wet night. What prompts them to this act is not "happiness but hideous grief."[2]

Amongst women, Ammu strikes as the most tragic character. Her life from girlhood at parents' home to her death in helpless condition, while working in a mediocre hotel in Alleppey, and followed by unwelcome, unceremonious last rites performed by an ill-disposed brother, Chacko, poignantly indicate the pathetic treatment she meets at every stage. Her dead body is denied a normal burial in a church because of the insensitive and inflexible law of the ecclesiastical hierarchy which considers her as a defiled one due to her intimate sexual contact with untouchable Velutha. That is why her corpse is fed into the furnace of an incinevator which brutally devours her by burning away the whole of her body in no time. Rahul and Estha have to wait for a pink receipt which will entitle them to receive her ashes, the grit from her bones and the teeth from her smiles.

Moreover, Ammu is persistently persecuted and tortured by a malevolent attitude of male chauvinism. She is bereft of the benefit

of higher education because of the archaic, conservative outlook of her father, Bennan John Ipe, the Entomologist, who sends his son Chacko to Oxford for higher education and prefers to keep his daughter confined within the four walls of the house in a non-descript place like Ayemenem. Pappachi's insistence "a college education was an unnecessary expense for a girl, so Ammu had no choice but to leave Delhi and move with him"[3] sums up his orthodoxy.

Ammu grows into a young girl of eighteen years at her parents' home but fails to get a match because they cannot afford to give much in dowry. She is, therefore, huddled thoughtlessly into a hasty marriage with a Bengali youngman whom she meets per chance at a wedding party in Calcutta while temporarily staying at a distant aunt's house there. He is working as Assistant Manager at a tea estate in Assam. The marriage is solemnised without the knowledge of Ammu's parents because she does not want to return to the sickening atmosphere of her Ayemenem house. What she thinks a way of rescuing herself unfortunately proves a greater tragedy in her life. It is like falling from the frying pan into the fire. Her husband, she discovers, is a full-blown drunkard. He beats and ill-treats her. The calamitous end occurs when her husband is asked by Mr. Hollicks, the English Manager, to get himself treated at a clinic in the town and leave his wife with him to be 'looked after' otherwise he will face dismissal. Ammu alongwith her two children leaves her husband for ever and comes back to Ayemenem as an unwelcome intruder. Ammu is thrust back into the dark, unredeeming atmosphere of "Heart of Darkness" that is Ayemenem. Fate or circumstances conspire to push her further and further into the heartless chain of events despite her efforts to get away from them. Her sudden sexual temptation towards Velutha--a Paravan who brings small gifts of wooden boats, boxes and windmills for her children--leads her into a tunnel of endless darkness and complete annihilation.

Biologically Ammu's response to Velutha's muscular, well-built body is but spontaneous as her suppressed womanhood gets aroused after several years. But the male-chauvinistic and caste-bound Indian social system permits no allowance for such human considerations. Her night escapades with him in the History House for thirteen days under the threat of incessant heavy downpour due to cyclonic disturbances give her physical self-fulfilment to her fill.

The stolen hours of the night simultaneously satisfy and further sharpen her desire for sexual intimate assuagement. The author in the Chapter titled "Cost of Living" describes this Lawrentian explosive sexual situation in graphic and tantallising details. She has to pay too heavy a cost for it. She is asked to leave Ayemenem by Chacko and gets separated from her loving children to die unwept unhonoured, unsung and unremembered. She is more sinned against than sinning.

Hammachi and Baby Kochama, too, fall prey to whimsical tendencies of their male partness. Bennan John Ipe after his return to Ayemenem on his retirement from service matreats his wife, Hammochi, out of pure jealousy and frustration. He often beats her physically hitting her with flower vase pots on her head which cause bumps and injuries on her head. Baby Kochamma, despite her rabid love for Father Mulligan and her conversion to Catholic Church for his sake, miserably fails to get him in marriage. She has to lead a life of a spinstress throughout.

Bennan John Ipe and his son, Chacko, are veritable examples of male chauvinism. Inspite of their being highly educated they fail to shed off this innate male-ego. The author's comment that "Chacko told Estha and Rahel that Ammu had no Locusts Stand I"[4] is illustrative of his chauvinistic tendencies regardless of his Oxfordian background. He thinks himself as the master of all the property including the family factory--Paradise Pickles and Preserves--though Ammu too puts in no less labour in looking after the factory work. His double standards of spurious morality get manifested in the way he banishes his sister from the house for her sexual relationship with Velutha whereas in his own case his "feudal libido" comes into free play. He indulges in uninhibited sexual contacts with women working in his factory.

The scourge of rigid caste system in Ayemenem (nee the Indian society) and naked brutality of the police system are convincingly evidenced in the torture and inhuman treatment to which Velutha--a Paravan is put. He is deprived of the opportunity of developing his innate engineering skill to full fruition due to his social inferior position. Still, by dint of his sheer devotion, he succeeds in becoming a perfect corpenter and a skilled hand in tackling mechanical jobs in the factory and other domestic gadgets. Mammachi's remarks "that if only he hadn't been a Paravan, he

might have become an engineer"[5] constitute a proof enough to prove the cruelty and injustice done to even potentially promising talented persons of the untouchable caste since generations. Besides, Velutha's sexual relationship with Ammu, a caste Christian, costs him his life. This act becomes doubly punishable because of his untouchable status. The whole traditional social system gets threatened by this heinous, dare-devil action of a Pariah. Baby Kochamma, being roused to irrepressible fury, gets all the distorted facts recorded in the F.I.R. The Police Inspector, Thomas Mathew, belonging to the same caste, too, responds to her ire at the same wavelength. Hence, excessive, unnecessary police force is applied to secure the total decimation of Velutha. A posse of six Touchable policemen finds him lying asleep in the back verandah of the History House. All of them in one go start kicking and trampling upon his flat body with heavy boots. His badly bruised shattered body in a state of unconsciousness is brought to the police station as a trophy won valiantly in a fiercely fought war. Then, Thomas Mathew behaves in the most unabashed manner with Ammu and her children. He ealls her a *Veshya* and her children as illegitimate ones. He taps at her nipples with his baton like one who points out towards good pieces of tomatoes in a heap with some object.

The political scenario, too, in Ayemenem is no better. Roy exposes the double-facedness and hypocrisy of the communist leaders of what they profess and what they practise. K.N.M. Pillai, considered by the villagers as the E.M.S. Namboodripad of Ayemenem, indulges in double dealings. Heis shrewd in protecting his own business interest. He warns Chacko against the proximity of Velutha who is his party card-holder worker because other workers of higher caste in the latter's factory resent it. The preaching of equity and social justice for the deprived sections of the society—a kernel princeiple of his Communist Party--holds no validity for him because he can not afford to lose his business of printing labels for prckles and jams if Chacko is put to some labour trouble. He changes his son's name from Lenin to Levin when the latter starts residing in Delhi, and does business dealings with embassies like that of Germany. Pillai's sudden disassociation with Velutha after his affair with Ammu further testifies to his political chicanery. Also, working women in his factory are exploited by him for the satisfaction of his libidinous desires. Moreover, the Communist rule under

E.M.S. Namboodripad ultimately is caught into its own contradictions and ultimately leads to an atmospere of civil strife and Naxalism in the state.

Thus, the socio-religio-political mores and ethos prevailing in Ayemenem are thoroughly polluted with chicanery, deceit, hypocrisy, injustice and sham human behaviour. An atmosphere of "Heart of Darkness" overwhelms and perverts everything that exists here. Ammu and her two-egg twins are the worst sufferers. They have to suffer the traumatic experience of separation and self-alienation. Kari Saipu's History House across the river evokes connotations of a bizarre, haunted place where gory scenes of police atrocity, socially prohibited sexual assuagement between Velutha and Ammu and the tragedy of drowning of Sophie Mol--a young Western child—into the river take place. The odd, perverse action of Murlidhavan—the Orange drink and Lemon drink Man in the Abhilash Talkies—handing over his penis into Estha's hand and asking the latter to move it up and down till the seminal discharge further deepens the down-slide depravity of human beings to which an Ayemenem child innocently falls a victim. A greater tragedy of Sophie Mol's sudden, accidental death by drowning into Meenachal river represents the reassertion of dark forces. An ambience of unbreakable gloom, suspicions, anger and incrimination envelopes the whole house. The result is the disintegration and an irreversible sway of despair all around. Obviously, "Heart of Darkness" appropriately sums up symbolically the nightmarish quality of life delineated in the novel.

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LAND REFORMS IN P.V. NARASIMHA RAO'S *THE INSIDER*

Brahma Dutta Sharma

In his novel, *The Insider,* P.V. Narasimha Rao takes up for treatment the 'welfare' measure of land reforms,[1] and a study of his treatment can enable one to find out what he thinks of this measure adopted by some governments as a part of their welfare programmes. Nehru gave chiefly two arguments in support of the measure of taking 'surplus' land from land-owners and giving it to the landless peasants: first, that the peasantry were very poor and were crying loudly and piteously for relief; secondly, that in many countries of the world big land-owners had already been divested of their 'surplus' land and it had been given to the landless peasants. Neither of these arguments is an ethical justification of the measure. In the novel *The Insider,* too, it is Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru who wants the land-ceiling laws to be implemented and writes letters to the Chief Ministers of the states to that effect. The Ministers and the legislators of the Congress Party accept it on the ground that it was a part "of the ruling party's progressive initiatives, which the masses had endorsed in the [previous] election,"[2] but there is no argument in the novel justifying the measure either on ethical grounds or on the grounds of justice. Even Anand, the protagonist of the novel, gives no argument in support of land reforms, and even though as Chief Minister he makes sincere efforts to bring them about and to take 'surplus' land from the landlords through ceiling laws, he does that because "[t]hrough its manifesto, Anand's party had promised certain social change" (*I.*, pp.222-23) and because "[h]e was was now one of those wielding state power, primarily in order to bring about the promised transformation" (*I.*, p.223).

But the novel is replete with the mention of difficulties one will have to encounter in case one chooses to implement the programme of land reforms and most of the characters here have been shown to have been aware of the fact that the measure of land-reforms is a very arduous task for a government to accomplish in the conditions prevalent in India. The narrator in the novel mentions

the first difficulty when he reports that it is almost impossible to make a farmer part with his land (*I.*, p.290). Chaudhury does not find any justification behind the government's forcing a farmer to part with his land as the farmer has committed no misdeed or crime by becoming the owner of a farm. By using the expression "brute majority" he indicates that he considers it to be a misuse of power on the part of a government to make a farm-owner part with his land. Chaudhury draws attention to another difficulty when he mentions the fact that a farmer's attachment to his land is unseverable (*I.*, p.290). The third difficulty Chaudhury mentions is that in India one who sells his land is looked down upon by the other members of the society, with the result that one does one's best not to part with one's land (*I.*, p.290). This signifies that the issue has a sentimental dimension too.

Both Chaudhury and Anand are aware of the fact that it is unfair to impose ceiling on the rural agricultural land when there is no ceiling on the urban property. Chaudhury draws attention to a weakness in the government's policy when he raises a question to this effect, as the narrator reports: "How is it, he asked no one in particular as he paced the room, that the man in the city would amass money and property to any extent and not be subject to any ceiling whatsoever? Was that air? Was that just?" (*I.*, pp.290-91). Anand raises this question a little more forcefully when the narrator reports him to be brooding: "Then there was the twin of rural land: urban land. Over the years, the government had encted laws of sorts on ceilings for rural agricultural land. However, the expensive land belonging to the rich in the cities had no ceiling imposed on it. Whatever the niceties of the argument, the undivided ruling party could not justify this discrimination. The farmers had accused the government of a pro-urban bias. There was no way to counter the accusation by argument" (*I.*, p.616). If it is immoral to divest the rich of their land in the urban areas, it is equally immoral to divest the rich of their land in the rural areas. By that logic they should have withdrawn all laws for ceiling on rural land. In other words the novelist rejects the measure of land reforms also on the ground that it is a proof of the government's pro-urban bias, and a government

which is biased has no right to remain in power.

The arguments advanced in favour of land-reforms have several other weaknesses too. It is erroneous, for instance to hold that in order to improve the economic condition of the masses, it is inevitable to deprive the rich of the provileges as there are a thousand and one ways to raise the masses economically. The narrator in the novel, *The Insider*, does not regard the measure of land-reforms as the only solution of the problem of the peasants' poverty as the programme of land-reforms dies its natural death when the demand for land is replaced by the demand for jobs. The fact is reported by Anand in the following passage: "By the time [Indira Gandhi] returned [to power in 1980], new generation had taken over throughout the country, there was a radical change in their aspirations. Thanks to the spread of education, the hunger for land began slowly giving way to the hunger for jobs. It took time for this to be realized at higher levels" (*I.*, p.766). Thus Narasimha Rao suggests that it would have been better if the measure of land reforms had not been made a part of the party's programme.

There are clear indications in the novel that even Rao's Mrs. Indira Gandhi, who is believed to regard the programme as her favourite,.does not like it to be implemented as it is she who gives a responsibility other than that of land-reforms to Anand when the latter has made all his preparations to implement the programme and is very likely to implement it to the utter discomfiture of the land-owners. The fact comes to light from the following report of the narrator:

> Suppose, Chaudhury reasoned, Indira Gandhi found her own position endangered because of Anand's effort-found out through her own closest well-wishers that the smoothest way to resolve the situation was to ease Anand out so 'he could concentrate on larger issues which required greater dedication and intellectual prowess...
>
> Eventually each one of these tasks was achieved quietly ...Indira Gandhi was saved from the land relations crisis. Anand was put on an onerous party assignment .... (*The Insider*, p.765)

In fact, in his heart of hearts even Anand does not like the rural land-ceiling law to be implemented as he does not make any complaint when he is shifted from the chair of the Chief Minister to that of a functionary in his political party. While reporting his

reaction to this step of Mrs. Gandhi he says: "Anand was put on an onerous party assignment; if he felt anything about the change of assignment and the reason behind it, he didn't utter a word about it" (*I.*, p.765). If Anand had been genuinely in favour of the programme of land-reforms, he would not have remained quiet on his being shifted to an organization other than a government one.

The measure of land-reforms, as described in the novel, is divisive as it can be adopted opportunistically only in the times of peace and puts the government in an embarassing situation in the days of war because in the days of war it has to depend a great deal on the support of the lobby of the land-lords and cannot afford to antagonize them. The fact comes to light when we read the following report of the narrator about Anand's colleagues' reaction at his zeal for the programme of land-reforms: "Who would bother about land-reforms when the nation was under threat of war? Colleagues seized the chance to mock his obsession. Don't you see you're becoming a laughing stock? Is this the time to alienate the landlord lobby? How can you press for such a controversial and divisive measure, when the need of the hour is total unity? What are the dictates of patriotism at this crucial moment? Have you thought of that? ... Fuming in utter exasperation, Anand made no reply. He had least expected Field Marshal Ayub Khan of Pakistan to become the ally of India's landlords overnight" (*I.*, p.447). The fact of the matter is that it is imprudent to think that a government can afford to antagonize a section of society in the times of peace but not in the times of war. A government exists to do justice rather than to endear itself to one section of society and antagonize another. It is cowardly on its part to let one of its programmes lie buried in a file for it cannot afford to antagonize a lobby at that time, and then to snatch land from the members of that lobby the moment the war is over.

Anand also reports that there prevailed at least in his state a widespread opposition of the very philosophy of ceilings as he observes: "Almost every newspaper in the state, except out-and-out communist organs, tried to find fault with the Bill--indeed, the very idea of land ceilings and the philosophy behind it" (*I.*, p.759).

The suggestion is that all but communists considered the philosophy behind the idea of land ceilings to be erroneous. And the communists believe that the state is a tool of repression in the hands of one class to be used against another, rather than an institution treating all alike and seeing to it that justice is done to each and everybody.

Even Chief Minister Chaudhury has been shown to be aware of the threat from the landlord lobby in case the measure of land-ceiling laws are implemented, as is evident from the report: "It was nothing less than suicide for the ruling party to expropriate from the landlords a portion of the land they had held for generations. Several members of the party, especially those who owned extensive landed property themselves, had uttered cries of warning. Chaudhury had heard them all out with the utmost patience" (*I.*, pp.292-93).

Very little support for the measure comes from the ministers of the Congress Party. In this party there exist three kinds of members: first, there are simple people like Anand who believe the measure to be an integral part of the party programme, and so work for it in all earnestness; secondly, there are people like Chaudhury, Mahendranath, and Shekhar who are out to see that the measure is not implemented even if it remains a part of the party's manifesto; thirdly, there are people like Mrs. Indira Gandhi who speak for the measure and issue orders to the concerned to the effect that it be implemented and yet see to it that the measure remains unimplemented, and those who are entrusted with the task of implementing it are not allowed to implement it. Even those political leaders who speak for socialism believe that socialist measures cannot be implemented. For instance, Chaudhury whom the narrator describes as "an aggressive socialist" (*I.*, p.133) regards socialism as political philosophy which cannot be implemented (Ibid.). This leader, according to the narrator has learnt "how to mouth his party's ideology ritually and endlessly, without believing a word of it" (*I.*, p.134). Thus, this leader believes that socialism cannot be implemented and speaks for socialism only for the consumption of the masses. The narrator also asserts that in the party Chaudhury is not the only expert "in the nauseating art of political make up" (*I.*, p.134) and that the number of hollow socialists is quite large

(*I.*, p.134). Shekhar's remark that " '... both [Mahendranth and Chaudhury] are enemies of socialism though they are equally impressive in mouthing it night and day. Mahendranth talks of nothing but the poor and the downtrodden' " (*I.*, p.172). Anand's observation--" 'I don't credit our state leadership with any socialist ideology either...' " (*I.*, p.172)--substantiates the fact that the state leadership of the Congress Party is opposed to the political philosophy of socialism, and hence also to the measure of land-reforms.

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[1]The term "land-reforms" is being used here in the sense of the government's taking 'surplus' land from the big landholders and giving it to the landless peasants in accordance with the popular slogan 'land to the tiller'.

[2]P.V. Narasimha Rao, *The Insider* (Delhi: Viking, 1998), p.293. All the subsequent quotations from the text refer to this edition of the novel (*I.* for short).

RECENT KIWI FICTION: EXPRESSION OF NATIONAL CONCIOUSNESS

R.K. Singh

In the last fifty years some very fine authors in almost every literary genre have helped establish the New Zealandness of New Zealand writings: poet-playwright James K. Baxter and historian-poet Keith Sinclair; novelists Dan Davin, David Ballantyne, Sylvia Ashton-Warner, Ian Cross, Janet Frame, Maurice Shadbolt, and Maurice Gee; and short story writers Roderick Finlayson, Maurice Duggan, O.E. Middleton, and Phillip Wilson. They all render New Zealand scene and setting in idioms that are native and techniques that are progressive; they all resist the temptations of the expatriate life. Critics have tried to canonise some of them, placing writers like Katherine Mansfield, Frank Sargeson, Janet Frame, Allen Curnow, and James K. Baxter in the front rank.

The remarkable growth of New Zealand writing and rapid expansion of theme not only reflects national consciousness but also makes New Zealand literature a very complex area of work and study. With my limited exposure and access to resources, I find that recent New Zealand writers share some of the worldwide trends in literary practices: While they assert their distinct society, culture, language, and landscape, they are *international* in their approach and attitude; they demonstrate a greater degree of mutual tolerance of each other, despite strong views.

Though some of them may appear to be in search of their identity, they do take note of the changes taking place in the traditional 'Kiwi' society under the multinational capitalism and processes of globalisation. They imagine a New Zealand which incorporates a 'personal space' for each of the writers just as sometimes they create a land of their own vision. Certain authors of British descent who evince a sense of emotional isolation or loneliness present New Zealand as a mere background; their characters tend to look away from their remote island setting in New Zealand and recall overseas travel or long to be somewhere else, or embrace American popular culture.

Recent New Zealand writers are also sensitive to issues like

sexual abuse, child abuse, racial inequalities, ethnic tension, gang culture, unemployment and all such ineluctable problems besetting colonised societies. They are not shy of dealing with horror and cruelty of people's predicament. They boldly expose New Zealanders' prejudices on the basis of religious affiliations (Brethren, Baptist, Salvation Army, Methodist, Presbytarian, Church of England, and Jews, Chinese, etc), or racial discriminations (Pakeha Superior to Maori, or English people superior to Pakeha and the rest inferior), or mixed blood natives (Pakeha/Maori), and social hierarchy on the basis of occupation, marriage, trade etc. A writer like Alan Duff, an important published voice among Maoris, writes from within the society with clear understanding of their oral culture and tradition. He seriously raises issues of race relations, evoking the sordid, violent and grinding despair of the slums of Maoris. Some of the publishing success in recent years--Alan Duff's *Once Were Warriors,* Witi Ihimaera's *The Matriarch,* Patricia Grace's *Potiki* and *Cousins,* Michael King's *Te Puia,* and Ranginui Walker's *Struggle Without End* sound a resurgence in Maori consciousness and aspirations in the 1990s. Perhaps Walker's *Nga Pepa A Ranginui* (1996, Penguin) should be a good reading to follow the current trends in cultural expression in New Zealand: The book presents a Maori perspective against the overwhelming odds of Pakeha fundamentalism.

Viewing fiction as a mode of cultural communication which reflects the different mindset in different contexts, let's examine some of the recent publications. Alan Duff's novel *Once Were Warriors* (1994),[1] first published in 1990 and also an award-winning film, deals with race relations and reveals darker aspects of domestic violence, sexual abuse, racial tensions, gang culture, unemployment and such other unpleasant issues bothering the contemporary New Zealand society. Duff seeks to explore the causes of growing sense of despair, hopelessness and sordidness in the social milieu he creates: The World of Jake, Beth, their children and associates is that of "a slum full of mad Maoris having all-night weekend parties." And juxtapposing this is the world of "the car-loving successful-appearing white maggot shits." The targets of his anger are many

and they often lie at the heart of Maoridom. However, one can notice Duff's ambivalent attitude to the sociological issues he addresses himself, or to the way he examines the "warrior" versus "slave" polarity or to the strategies he seems to propose against the cultural, political or economic exploitation of his characters in the novel.

Another celebrated novelist Maurice Shadbolt exploits the contemporary social scene to his advantage, seriously concerned as he has been with New Zealand's social history. As a fictioneer, he creates his "own mythology of the New Zealand's past" and focuses on interpersonal relationships, especially of expatriates and intellectuals fighting nostalgia and their country's cultural and physical isolation (cf. *One of Ben's: A Tribe Transported* (1993) and *House of Strife* (1993). In his latest novel *The House of Strife* (1993), which is part of Shadbolt's trilogy on the New Zealand interethnic civil wars (the other two novels being *Season of the Jew* (1986) and *Monday's Warriors* (1990), he reconstructs with his interpretative genius the cultural and social dimensions of the Maoris of the Victorian era. His narrator recounts the events of mid-1840s in the Bay of Islands, displaying the famous and infamous as ordinary.

But Patricia Grace, another skilled writer like Shadbolt, concentrates on the significance of the family and the strong role women play in holding together everything and everyone in the family with their resilience. Her *Cousins* (1993)[2] is a serious story narrated in a sombre tone against the backdrop of separation, loss, and fragmentation. It centres on three Maori women--Maka, Makareta and Missy--and their connection through the common linkage of the family, transcending actual blood relationships. She explores the associated questions of belonging, identity, role, ancestry, and the future.

Gaelyn Gordon's *Above the Suspicion* (1990) and *Strained Relations* (1991) are satirical novels written in the detective mode, but turning the conventions on their head. The novels establish her reputation as a comic novelist, though she insists she is a serious novelist. Her *Last Summer* (1993),[3] though satirical, is "deadly serious" in that it reads as a compelling story with dark undertones. It's villain is an evangelist whose sins include child molestation and

rape. Like Kim McGregor's *Warriors of Truth* (1994) which deals with the issues of childhood sexual abuse, Marilyn Duckworth's twelfth novel *Leather Wings* (1995) draws readers' attention to child and sexual abuse in all forms.

Mike Johnson structures an outrageous tale of cruelty and childhood in Canterbury in his second novel, *Dumb Show* (1997), which has been called a Kiwi Gothic. With a humane vision, Mike Johnson portrays "horribleness and humaneness" together in *Dumb Show*.[4] The acts of cruelty are outrageous but the novel eventually rises above them; the novelist brings to life the human characters and the animals. It's largely from the perspectives of four children that we see the adults, who are variously monstrous, derelict or deranged, yet capable of change and growth. The cruel and nasty couple Honk and Pi rule the household with a savage and inflexible control and suppress all queries, particularly about unburied bones of the recent past. Princess, a child on the brink of puberty, is the novel's central character, a beautiful person, to whom the natural world is luminous. Her deepest relationship is with a young boy, Pito. She is subjected to vicious physical and sexual abuse by her brother, Judd, yet she manages by gently mimicry (dumb Show) to bring her shattered father back from madness, his constant hallucinatory war experiences.

The Family Man (1993)[5] by Ian Cross, a bureaucrat turned Wellington Writer, reveals the reality of marriage and family, the special love of children, the danger of taking too much granted with those we love, the continuing growth of personality and spirit which must be found within or outside the relationship. Cross places his protagonist Bob Grey in the milieu of the Wellington of 1960s. Bob describes himself as "married, three kids, no money worries, good at his job", but he ends up as a lonely and ailing man with his wife gone, family scattered, and few remaining friends. The reader, with the advantage of having known the future, is able to understand the irony of the words with which the younger Bob Grey concludes the novel: "Nothings wrong". As a socially conscious writer, Ian Cross creates the environment of newspaper offices and depicts political gossip, pub sessions, petty rivalries, and secret ambitions

for better things.

If *The Family Man* is set in Wellington, C.K. Stead's *All Visitors Ashore* (1995), which was first published in 1984, is set in Auckland. With more than half-dozen novels to his credit, Stead cleverly designs the novel, weaving into its structure the "real" Auckland literary scene around the mid-century: author, poet and playwright James K. Baxter, novelist Janet Frame and her mentor Frank Sargeson, poet Fairburn and others "are indeterminately fictionalised players in the drama centering in large part around or parallel to the 1951 Waterfront strike, an industrial-relation and political event, which still rings in the corridors of this nation's becoming. The title, inasmuch as it related to the peregrinations of New Zealand's literary fraternity between the New and the Old Countries, gives the novel a further sonorous social and literary reference."[6]

Indigenous Pacific writing, howsoever an independent discipline, has added to New Zealand literature: Albert Maori Kiki, Hone Tuwhare, Witi Ihimaera, Vincent Eri, Keri Hulme, Patricia Grace, Albert Wendt and several others have contributed to its study. Albert Wendt's recent novel *Black Rainbow* (1995)[7] not only examines the ways in which cultural and personal identities develop in the South Pacific, but also provides an idea of the narrative techniques employed, ranging from Maori and Pacific Islands tradition to detective fiction. The novelist traces his narrator's forced journey throughout Aotearoa/New Zealand in a quest set by the ruling Tribunal, which first separates him from his wife and children and then, in order to televise their reunion, demands that he finds his family. In the face of the regime's efforts to orchestrate all relationships, the narrator attempts to locate not only his family but also his cultural history. The search is by no means predictable, as Wendt emphasises that the family can be complicit with the Tribunal and that history itself comprises narratives that change according to teller and circumstance. Further, the narrator discovers that he has many past identities. This emphasis on self-reflexive elements of identity and history extends Wendt's earlier presentation of the self-creating narratives offered by his Western Samoan characters in *Leaves of the Banyan Tree* (1979)."[8]

Stephanie Johnson seems to share Wendt's quest when she interweaves histories and relationships in *The Heart's Wild Surf* (1996),[9] evoking a journey between islands washed by the same sea. She displays how things fall apart and run out of control where the West meets the Pacific in an island hothouse. The novel traces the fortunes of three inter-connected families in Fiji immediately after the end of the World War I and during the time of the great influenza epidemic. In large part, *The Heart's Wild Surf* is the story of young Olive McNab and her growing up and gathering awareness of self and the people around her. She struggles with issues of love—of family, parents, siblings, and of and for others. The story is narrated variously not only from her point of view but also through the standpoint of others: her father, stricken first by the imminent and then ultimate death of his former actress wife; a wild and free visitor Agnes Perkins-Green and her lesbian companion Constance Prime-Belcher; Adela McNab, Olive's dying mother, and many others.

Barbara Anderson's *Proud Garments* (1996)[10] is conventional, dealing with people who have beautiful clothes but nothing of substance underneath: "all hair oil and no socks." Henry (a successful textiles importer) and Rosa are a relatively successful couple imposed upon by their son Rufus, his girlfriend Gaby, and Rosa's sister Bianca. Guests from hell, they manipulate and blackmail their way to a better future. Henry wants to protect his wife and mother from discovering the skeletons in the family cupboard, but they prove themselves more than able to cope. The novelist does not seek to moralise or pass judgment. She is rather objective. Her style is fresh just as the story is fast-paced, witty, and interesting.

Leaving (1996)[11] is Carol Sinclair's first novel, exploring what it means to be a sensitive, sexually curious but not over-confident girl, whose life is constrained by the Brethren regulations. "I am a stranger here within a foreign land,/my home is far away upon a golden strand..." sings Lydia at the Brethren Gospel Hall in Marion Street on Sunday mornings in Wellington in the 1950s. Lydia is Brethren, and Brethren are different. But she does not want to be different or ashamed and she is both. She is ashamed of her

parents' behaviour, for she lives as an orphan. As the story opens, she and her brother have gone to live with their grandparents, who are gentle and loving. Lydia finds Rod "the most flamboyant person in Brooklyn"; he thinks she is "not bad, not bad at all." Lydia already has a boy-friend, Chris, who is organised and efficient. He is confident and authoritative, and he has allayed any doubts she might have about the sinfulness of their actions. It's just that after Lydia meets Rod, his love-making, ideas and suggestions leave her feeling "nothing much." Lydia's sense of abandonment and of feeling different leave a vivid and poignant impression. The novelist's description of Lydia's job--she is a trainee copywriter/typist for an ad agency--are funny not just because she is so earnest in her ruthless elimination of all superlatives, but because Sinclair is also satirising the worthiness of New Zealand society at the time. Lydia's future at the end of the novel remains unresolved. She is aware that she is at the crossroads and it looks as if she might have to struggle up the narrow way with Chris after all, but she is not certain: "She bursts into loud sobs again."

Fat (1996)[12] is Raewyn Alexander's first but revealing novel about hitherto unexplored life in a redlight district of Auckland, New Zealand. The novelist, who is also a poet, looks through her mind, memory and senses, perhaps with a veiled sadness, and brings into focus something real, turning inside out, to expose "a world New Zealand keeps quiet about." Raewyn Alexander structures several strands of the fiction about women and men in the sex industry and its sub-culture that evoke a universal condition through their particularity. Demonstrating a perfect grip over her subject with an admirable sense of objectivity, she peeps into the psyche of her major characters. Poppy, a woman living off the earnings of a prostitute, explores her self and circumstances which bring her in the service of Ho, "Auckland's most notorious madam," who keeps her operation well-hidden. Everyone and everything in the *Fat* world is revealed through the first-person narration of Poppy.

The novel is not without its ironic import. For example, in the *Fat* world it is women who lay down their preferences or norms for entertaining a male, whatever his social or money power (unless

Poppy clears a client, he cannot go to Iris), and at the same time they must submit to the things they don't like, accept Ho's surveillance, avoid talking to the male staff, etc. To Poppy, it's not only the money but life which is interesting. Written with a poet's pen, Raewyn Alexander reflects her sensitive humanity. Her novel is a product of patient observation, imagination, and wisdom. It is a significant social document, a commentary on the middle-class craving for the goodies of life. As it is serious, without a trace of vulgarity or obscenity, licentious allusions, or even eroticism, *Fat* belongs to the refined, high literature which allows survival of love in a society plagued by commercial sexuality.

Thus, we see most of the recent New Zealand novelists have been trying to expose what has remained virtually concealed within. They share a common seriousness with a peculiar mix of, what Bill Manhire calls, "raw and genteel." There is a shared response to the pressures of survival just as there is an attempt to find the "power of language and the imagination," negotiating cultural and historical issues as well as the country's postcolonial position in a growing pluralist, multicultural society. With confidence, curiosity and commitment, they exhibit a matured vision and insight, and write with freshness and grittiness. Their expression of the emotional landscape vis-a-vis the differences (Pakeha/Maori, for example) and the blending of the Western/European/other minorities and tradtitional Maori way turns positive in discovering national consciousness.

Some women novelists with their female mode of perception and gender concerns tend to exclude men or depict them as low in their attempt to picture the diversity of reality and to create the literary 'whole' of New Zealand. Yet, they stand for unity, oneness, and love. We also get a view of women's social role and their impulse as artists who take due note of the plights of immigrants, wanderers and rootless, of the social underdogs and the victims of economic imperialism as well as the evils of industrialisation, consumerism, and materialism, and decline in native virtues and moral standards.

However, along with their male counterparts they search for

cohesive coexistence, highlighting ethnic or community aspirations and emerging mixed cultural values. They focus on interpersonal relationships, especially of expatriates and intellectuals who seem to be fighting inner emptiness, nostalgia and/or their cultural and physical isolation. They all look for meaning in everyday life, articulating impulses of love, friendliness, generosity, venturesomeness. They all reflect on larger social and national issues with a genuine concern for the future, boldly raising voice against war, political and bureaucratic bungling, oppression and exploitation of the weak and vulnerable, religious and sexual orthodoxy, everyday selfishness and meanness, family violence and child abuse. They demonstrate a keen interest in exploring newer ways of looking at things that often accord ironical twists to many real-life events and inter-mingling of post-colonialist and post-modernist vision.

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SUBTERRANEAN READINGS: THE SELF-DECONSTRUCTIVE TEXT OF FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY'S *NOTES FROM UNDERGROUND*

Pramod K. Nayar

This paper seeks to demonstrate how Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground* (1864) is a self-deconstructive text.[1] Keeping in mind, in the foreground, the Derridean "methodolgy" that there is no *single* deconstruction, my paper relies upon the graphocentrism of Dostoevsky's text to excavate its inherent aporia(s).

To break ground: the text purports to be autobiographical. Also, simultaneously, fictional. We are on less firm ground when we realise that the narrator (who is unnamed throughout) is deliberately calling attention to his falsifications. He writes: "I was a bad civil servant... I was lying when I said just now that I was a bad civil servant. I was lying out of spite" (15-6). We recognise that the narrator is playing a game. He adds, after giving us a clue about the fictionality of his narrative: "I too will talk about myself"(17).

This game of offering a "truth" and simultaneously placing it under erasure occurs throughout *Notes*. His jokes are "full of self-distrust" (25). He states: "Gentlemen, of course I am joking ... but you know you mustn't take everything I say for a joke" (39). At the farewell party for Zverkov he exclaims: "I detest empty phrases and phrasemongers" (76). Such examples could be multiplied.

What the Underground Man is doing is a classical Derridean move: self consciously fictionalising and drawing our attention to this exercise, telling us to distrust his text. Peter Conradi comes close to identifying this deconstructive feature of *Notes* when he writes: "The exposure of one *lie* opens up the possibility that he may now be practising a new one" (Conradi: 34, emphasis mine).[2]

The narrative of *Notes* is itself reliant upon écriture-as-text. When the Underground Man hectors Liza she finds his talk "bookish" (95). She is humiliated when he reveals to her that his words were *empty* of sympathy though they were *sympathetic* words (115). His cruelty, he admits, was "so artificial, so intellectual, so contrived,

so *bookish* that I could not sustain it for a minute..." (120, emphasis Dostoevsky's). Words thus signify everything for Liza and simultaneously nothing.

The Derridean emphasis on language's aporias is adequately ploughed in *Notes*. Throughout the field of the narrative we have mention of writing. The Underground Man writes a libellous (i.e., falsified, fictional) story (54). Liza preserves a love letter (101-2). The Underground Man sends a letter of apology to Simonov (103-4). And, of course, the very act of writing the *Notes* as the Underground Man tells us so often.

This bring us to the next self-deconstructive stratum of *Notes*. The Underground Man, in a sense, disappears from life into the underground. However, he asserts his identity when he *writes* the *Notes* (Conradi: 38). Writing is, thus, an attempt to inscribe his presence, the materiality of his existence upon the world. He is making a figure, a mark, revealing a character. (Character, the *Oxford English Dictionary* would tell us is to make a mark, incise, cut a figure, or write). He is presenting a face. Thus, prosopopoiea: giving a face, a name, a physiognomy. However, this "autobiographical" strategy de-faces the man. Paul de Man in his influential essay "Autobiography as De-Facement" has demonstrated how the trope of prosopopoiea collapses in autobiography.[3] In this case, the trope is *recognisable* as he a *trope*, never as he anything else. When the protagonist (the "anti-hero," as calls himself) refers us to the fictionality of his representations he is deconstructing his own rhetorical device. He writes: "...all the features of an anti-hero have *purposely* been collected" (122, emphasis Dostoevsky's). Face/physiognomy also provides fertile soil for other (deconstructive?) purposes. All these, juxtaposed with the rhetorical devices that call attention to themselves, provide an interesting hunting ground for the reader: "I hated my face... and I even suspected there was something servile about it... I made agonising effort... to *give* my face the most well-bred expression I could manage" (47, emphasis mine). He wants his face to look "terribly clever" (48). He disguises himself (puts on a face) or enacts a role (56-7, 81, 85, 114), promenades (83) and tries to literally "cut a

figure" (77, 79). Such an emphasis on the materiality of the trope of prosopopoiea effectively cuts the ground from under its own construction.

The face, its physiognomy, is assumed to reflect, have a one-to-one correspondence with the character inside (Miller: 32).[4] But in *Notes* the character revels in contradicting himself: emotions, thinking, words and so on, Though his face looks servile, (or so he believes, imagines, i.e., creates, *fictionalising* his own face), he seeks to be as independent as possible (47). The prostitute Olympia rejects him because he has a "funny face" (81). He hides his face when Liza visits him (117). He is metaphorically hiding the face of his character. Or is he ?

Is it the character of a weak man?. He goes underground of his own volition. He rates choice and man's will/fancy/individuality above anything else. One should "act directly contrary to one's own best interests. One's own free and unfettered volition, one's own caprice... that is the one best and greatest good..." (33- 4).

Such a character disguises his "real" face. He is insulted when an officer moves him out of the way (52). He nurses this humiliation "for forty years... remembering the insult in the minutest and most shameful detail and constantly *adding* even more shameful details..." (21-2, emphasis mine). Revenge becomes a passion for him. The humiliation is secreted, *buried,* like the passion.

How does the protagonist extract revenge? He does not face the *problem* directly, or utilise his passion. He wants to confront, (i.e., head-on) the officer. The *problema*--the officer--is to be tackled, even physically, from the *front,* not obliquely. But the "problem" is also a cover, an excuse (Derrida, 1992: 10).[5]

The Underground Man steps *aside,* "like a ball" (57). Here the man's character-portrayal is again self-deconstructive. Proposing (or posing-in-advance; propose) to confront the man directly, he posits a face. Then by stepping aside, he has (i) avoided the problem, therefore the problem is his excuse (ii) kept the secret (of his insult).

The non-response in *Notes* is also a deconstructive strategy. The officer ignores Underground Man on the street, in the market

place. The Underground Man does not respond to his insult. The people at Zverkov's party ignore him (78). The prostitute Olympia does not accept him (81). Apollon refuses to be baited into any response by the Underground Man (111). Following Derrida[6], the non-responses in *Notes* add up to a certain deconstructive text. The non-responses mark a refusal to endorse situations. It also questions the "hero's" *ability* to respond, in the first place (as illustrated in his "confronation" with the officer). The non-response is also out of politeness or rudeness in *Notes*. The Underground Man is rudely ignored. And Apollon's silent reproach is a result of the politeness that marks the master-servant relationship.

Such a self-deconstructive portrayal of his own character and situation is a ceremonial event for Underground Man. The "ceremony" figures predominantly in the text. Ceremonies contain faces and presentations, literally. We have noted the Underground Man's disguise and prosopopoiea. Then there is his elaborate, ceremonial, planning of revenge. The farewell party--a ceremonial occasion--is also an "event" in his life.

There is no ceremony without a secret (Derrida, 1992: 8).[7] Participants carry secrets. Here the Underground Man conceals (secrets) his insult from the officer, even at the moment of his "ceremonial" revenge. Revenge is itself a ceremony, primarily in secret, known only to the Underground Man. (A secret ceremony, the secret *of* a ceremony). At the ritual farewell party he is ceremonious in his toast, but is also rude (76-7), which is not allowed at ceremonies. He keeps his emotions to himself at the table, in the true nature of a participant at the ritual (The active participant at the ceremony may be partaking of the ritual by being *passive*, as Derrida argues: 6).[8]

The act of writing, a ritual, is itself interrogated by the Underground Man. His metaphor of the "Underground," of being insect-like and so on, are self-deconstructive. (John Jones sees "ground" as a "master metaphor": 84).[9]

The metaphor is usurious in its usury. It promises more than it gives (Derrida, 1982: 209).[10] The Underground Man, as Conradi suggests, plans an alternative vision. His speech of an alternate

life to Liza (96-102) is an example. Also, the references to living of one's own will leads him to visualise "something different" (Conradi: 39-40). He writes "... it isn't the underground that is better, but something different, entirely different..." (43).

A promise is held out: the metaphor of the underground conceals (literally too) the vision of "something different." Yet we (the readers) are denied this, since he himself would "never find" it (43). The expectations held out is only, again, a *trope* in itself; nothing more but something like the "promised land." The usurous metaphor asserts and denies itself like any textual rhetorical strategy, as de Man would argue.[11]

Notes from Underground does not, in "true" deconstructive fashion (if there is one), conclude. The "paradoxical writer," we are told, "could not help going on," suggesting a continuing text. But, for the "author" (?) "it seems that this will be a good place to stop" (123) i.e., it is censored, ceremoniously perhaps. We are hauled back to the narrative and its fictionality by the "conclusion." The text becomes, for readers, a play of language itself. We have seen how, at every stage, the Underground Man has undercut our understanding of his narrative by revealing the duplicity of his text. *Notes from Underground* may then be seen as a self-deconstructing text, since deconstruction requires the break-down of text from within itself. The text is, for both the Underground Man and its readers, "more than a language, and no more of a language" (Derrida, 1986: 15).[12] The "subterranean" reading raises to the surface the buried, cavernous landscape of the Underground Man's text.

What are the implications of reading *Notes from Underground* as a self-deconstructive text?

The deliberate play of/on language forces us to question the integrity of "autobiography." Autobiography here is a fictionalising of the self at two levels: for the reader (who is alerted by the text) and for the narrator himself.

The "ground realities" (to play upon the text's own terms) are realities as perceived in *language*. For example, the "reality" of the insult is *added to* by the Underground Man. His reality is a fictionalising, a projection. Truth here is an accident of words/

language.

The Underground Man *describes* (i.e. to write about) the insult to us. He also de-scribes (a removal of writing) the same simultaneously. He paints a self for us. The text, seen until now as existential, portrays the self's existence as extant only in the speaker's inscription of it. This is the philosophical riddle that *Notes from Underground* offers up to us.

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KANT'S CONCEPTS OF IMAGINATION AND GENIUS: A RE-READING

Ranjan Ghosh

In Kant's critical framework Imagination is treated as a transcendental faculty, though its empirical, psychological character has also been taken into consideration. Kant, unlike Hume and Descartes, has given a positive evaluation of imagination in the context of acquiring knowledge. For Plato, Descartes and Hume, it is antithetical to reason. In Kant we find a distinction between the transcendental and the psychological aspects of the concept of imagination. In the *Critique of Pure Reason,* there are two important issues which need a careful study. One is the distinction between the transcendental and the empirical imagination, and the other is the idea of schematization as connected with the productive imagination.

The actual operation of imagination in this context is called the transcendental schema. The entire discussion of schematism presupposes the transcendental deduction because it deals with the union of the sense-manifold and the pure concepts. Speaking very generally it brings about a reconciliation between the 'empirical' and the 'a priori.' It is transcendental imagination, which through the schema translates the categories in terms of time, thus giving them a natural affinity with the sense-manifold that has already been ordered in time. This is the most important function of imagination, for it is only through the combining of the sensibility with the understanding that knowledge is possible.

We can dwell on the concept of schema for a while because it may reveal certain points which are important in bringing out the role of imagination. Kant calls schema the 'third thing,' for obviously it can not be identified either with sensibility or with understanding. Its function is to bring about a fusion of the two. For him it has a two-fold character by virtue of which it can bridge the gap between sensibility and understanding. It may be said that the productive imagination works from the concepts to the sense-manifold, whereas it is schematism which operates from the sense-manifold to the

concepts. So imagination is the link between concepts and data. It is that what imagination does for concepts, time does for data.

However, according to Kant, it is transcendental and not empirical imagination that is at work in schematism. Transcendental imagination, for Kant, has a highly mysterious character. Its function is to give rise to schema. Kant does not make clear how exactly imagination gives rise to the schema and how the schema functions. His programme of the reconciliation between empiricism and rationalism hinges upon the function of the schema. Kant assigns an important place to imagination, which, according to him, brings about such a reconciliation. This makes imagination an important condition for the very possibility of knowledge.

Kant uses the word imagination in both the technical and the ordinary senses of the term. And the problem that arises is that of the relationship between these two understandings of imagination. These two have been left unconnected by Kant himself. It becomes necessary to locate the connection between the two imaginations because one feels a lurking suspicion that the notion of the transcendental imagination is systematically misleading. The functions of the transcendental imagination seem so radically different from those of the empirical imagination that only the name imagination seems common to both. Similarly, within the context of schematism itself, Kant insists that it is the transcendental imagination which is at work. The transcendental imagination does not involve images, for it is not empirical. But if it is performing the function of combining sense manifolds with the help of an image, it is intermediate. If this is so, the transcendental imagination seems to be functioning like the empirical imagination in some way.

When we move from the *Critique of Pure Reason* to the *Critique of Practical Reason,* what immediately strikes one is Kant's emphatic rejection of the role of imagination in the context of morality. The reason being the distinction Kant makes between understanding and reason. We know that the faculty of understanding requires certain material to be given to it in the form of sense manifold. The function of the understanding is to effect an ordering and systematization. Understanding is not autonomous, for it

presupposes the functioning of sensibility which provides the sense manifolds. But reason, which is operative in the sphere of morality, is not dependent upon any other faculty for its functioning. It is autonomous. It can determine a particular action or decision on its own. The rational moral will is such as it can by its own autonomy give rise to the moral action. Because of this autonomy of reason, there is no need for schema in the *Critique of Practical Reason.*

In its applicative function, imagination sees to the proper employment of rules. In this case imagination itself is rule bound; it does not give rise to rules. Rather, it takes care of the correct implication of the rules that already exist. But Kant argues that even though this imagination follows rules, it is also spontaneous. It is not itself directed by any rules, even though it cannot invent new rules. Kant points out that the judgment of taste, although subjective, is not arbitrary, but also claims a certain universal argument. According to him, such a universality is possible because when one makes such a judgment of taste, he is expressing a certain disinterested delight. This pleasure is not bound up with any desire or inclination on his part. This disinterested delight leads him to expect that all would agree with him. This possibility of agreement is the distinctive universality of taste.

Basically, the equation of imagining presupposes the context of perception. Hence, any discussion of imagining or of imagination is a discussion of the relationship between imagination and perception. Both Hume and Kant regard imagination as a connecting or uniting power. However, this power operates in two different domains. One is where imagination connects perceptions of different objects of the same kind and the other is where the imagination connects different perceptions of the same objects of a given kind.

It may be mentioned in this context that no discussion on imagination can be deemed complete without an elucidation of what Kant means by *genius:* "*Genius* is the talent (or natural gift) which gives the rule to art. Since talent, as the innate productive faculty of the artist, belongs itself to nature, we may express the matter thus: Genius is the innate mental disposition (ingenium) through which nature gives the rule to art."[1] This innate mental disposition

is bound to vary from person to person. No definite rules can guide the production of beautiful objects as the artist is not conscious of how he creates them. So, for Kant, originality is the essential characteristic of genius. On the basis of *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, we may point out that originality itself has two aspects: the first is 'non Imitative production' and the second is 'discovering what cannot be taught or learned.' Such originality, although rare, is potentially fanatical, since it is by definition disciplined by neither an object nor a canon. Consequently, Kant attempts to limit it by proposing that 'originality of imagination is called genius when it harmonises with concepts,' a thought which he expanded and developed further in the third Critique.[2] The power of artistic creation is vitalistic or organic. Talent cannot be learnt; it is imparted to every artist immediately by the hand of nature, and so it dies with him until nature endows another in the same way so that he only needs an example in order to put in operation in a similar fashion the talent of which he is conscious.[3] Although the product of beauty cannot be imitated, yet the ideas of the artist as expressed through his work can stimulate another artist provided he is endowed with genius. This means the excitation of the productive capacity of another person who does not imitate (*Nachahmung*) but follows (*Nachfolge*) in an 'original' way. However, originality cannot be the absolute condition for fine art. "Now since the originality of the talent constitutes an essential (though not the only) element in the character of genius, shallow heads believe that they cannot better show themselves to be full-blown geniuses than by throwing off the constraints of all rules; they believe, in effect, that one could make a braver show on the back of a wild horse than on the back of a trained animal. Genius can only furnish rich *material* for products of beautiful art; its execution and its *form* require talent cultivated in the schools in order to make such a use of this material as will stand examination by the judgement.[4]

In fact, *Geist*, for Kant, is the power of the creative genius. It is a capacity that brings under its coordinated sway the transient and the momentary play of human feelings. It is worthwhile for us to note that empirical laws cannot give birth to the subtleties of

expression and imagination. The *Geist* has its own form of expression and the artist endowed with it communicates universally. Makkreel[5] points out that this spirit holds an important place in Kant's aesthetics. It is the enlivening principle of the mind, a detailed characterizations of which occur in the *Reflexionen zur Anthropologie.* This spirit is not a special talent but that which activates all talents. This is what is truly creative and is applied not only to the artist's mind but also to the work itself. True, Kant finds the spirit of an art as a systematic method which contains a comprehensive idea (zusammen-hangende). Cassirer[6] prefers to render it as 'soul.' *Geist* is simply that which brings about this harmony of the faculties of the mind (subjective or formal purposiveness). It gives life to the work of art, and a work of art which is *ohne Geist* is lifeless since, although in accordance with the rules of taste, its representation does not make us feel the harmonious relation of our mental powers. As long as the artist does no more than not disobey the rules of taste he cannot produce a genuine work of art. He himself is soulless (*ohne Geist*). What he lacks is *Geist,* the animating principle of the mind. It, thus, produces the harmonious motions of the powers of the mind (was die Gemiits Krafte zweckmassig in Schwung versetzt). In fact, the life in a work of art is provided by it, and what is soulless (*geistlos*) forbids the experience of a harmonious relation of our mental powers. So art needs not merely obey the rules of taste for that renders it *ohne Geist* and it is this that vitalises the workings of imagination and understanding.

Kant finds a certain relation between imagination and understanding which constitutes genius. It expresses itself in the free harmony between imagination and understanding and presupposes a proportion and disposition of these faculties that are not guided by mere obedience to rules, but is produced by the nature of the subject. "In the employment of the imagination for cognition, it submits to the constraints of the understanding and is subject to the limitation of being conformable to the concept of the latter. On the contrary, in an aesthetical point of view it is free to furnish unsought, over and above that agreement with a concept, abundance of undeveloped material for the understanding, to which the

understanding paid no regard in its concept but which it applies, though not objectively for cognition, yet subjectively to quicken the cognitive powers and therefore also indirectly to cognitions."[7] Genius, thus, properly consists in the happy relation between these faculties. It shows itself in the enunciation or expression of aesthetical ideas and in contradistinction to reproductive or the productive imagination, thus, represents the imagination as 'free.' Obviously, art gains a new rule and talent manifests itself. Coleman[8] quite rightly finds that Kant's own protoromantic predilections led him into a theory of metaphor that has rather limited application to the fine art. His theory of artistic genius suffers from similar restrictions in that it is apparently founded upon a sharp distinction between the biological or organic, and the mechanical.

For Kant, art is a solution to neither a practical nor an intellectual problem. However, Genius and Imagination certainly contribute to the refined intellectual accretion as one delves into the inner strata of the romantic consciousness and to the understanding of poetry. Genius, in Kant's discourse, has lent a special emphasis on the uniqueness of the poet; in imagination, the 'Agent in all human perception,' he boldly underlines the power to produce a distinctive language of poetry.

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BOOK REVIEWS

M.K. NAIK (ED.), *TALES TOLD BY AN IDIOT: SHORT STORIES BY MULK RAJ ANAND*

(New Delhi: Jaico Publishing House, 1999), pp.247, Rs. 95.00

Atma Ram

Although Mulk Raj Anand is a world-famous novelist, creatively active for the last seven decades, and a great deal of research is being done on him all over the world, it is difficult to find a complete set of his books in any library in India. Many of his works are out of print. There is a dire need to re-issue most of them, particularly the 'collections' of his shorter fiction. It is in this respect that volumes like *Things Have a Way of Working Out...* (Orient Paperbacks, 1998), and the book under review, *Tales Told by an Idiot* (1999) are most significant and timely titles.

Tales Told by an Idiot comprises 22 stories of Dr. Mulk Raj Anand. Prof. M.K. Naik provides a very perceptive Introduction and later appends a Select Bibliography. He has not given the stories in a chronological order, in order of appearance or writing time. He follows a meaningful pattern, and arranges the stories according to their basic themes or motifs: lyric awareness, tears in the heart of things, the social scene, the comic vein, and the probing mind. The stories included are quite representative and revealing: "The Lost Child", "Lullaby", "Birth", "The Village Idyll", "Five Short Fables", "Little Chicks"; "Lajwanti", "The Parrot in the Cage", "The Gold Watch", "Old Bapu", "The Cobbler and the Machine"; "The Power of Darkness", "The Tractor and the Corn Goddess", "A Kashmir Idyll", "The Price of Bananas"; "A Pair of Mustachios", "The Signature", "The Two Lady Rams", "The Liar"; "The Tamarind Tree", "The Silver Bangles", and "The Thief".

Professor M.K. Naik has done very commendable work, pioneering in many respects, in the field of Indian English Literature. His criticism is original and authentic. His study of Anand's writings is deep and comprehensive. The selection of stories is thus very interesting. It is not easy to offer 22 stories out of over 200 to provide a "feel" of Mulk Raj Anand's shorter fiction. But Prof. Naik has done

a fairly good job. "The Lost Child", the author's most popular story, was included in 1934 in *Great Short Stories of the World* (London, Odham). For almost all, it is his best short story. Its two movies have been made, and it figures in several anthologies of English short stories. M.K. Naik, too, and rightly so, opens his 'Selection' with this immortal work of fiction.

However, besides "The Lost Child", Naik has presented a judious sampling. And, in his introductory analysis, he puts the stories in a specific perspective. This is of considerable help and interest to the reader. The general reader may go direct to the stories, but a serious student of Anand's fiction may frequently turn to the editor's critical observations contained in the Introduction.

Personal choices and preferences may be different. But the 'selections' given in *Tales Told by an Idiot* are largely representative of Anand's shorter fiction. Many of them figure in 'collections' of short stories prescribed for school and college students. These also give fine specimens of his art as a writer--his preoccupation with the rural folk, his robust humanism and empathy for the poor and the down-trodden, his revolt, his Indian English, and so on.

However, one feels that at least one story should not have been omitted, i.e. "The Barber's Trade Union". It is, indeed, one of the best stories written by Anand. Secondly, the Select Bibliography should have been revised and updated. Dr. Naik's book was first published in 1977, Indian edition in 1984, and the present one is a reprint. But much has been written meanwhile and over the years on and by Anand, around 28 critiques.

But all in all, *Tales Told by an Idiot* is a very useful and interesting 'collection' of Dr Anand's short stories. Beautifully printed and impressively brought out, the book is completely free from printing mistakes. One strongly feels that Anand's works should be re-issued in such splendid and attractive paperbacks. Surely, Jaico Publishing House has done a very good job in this publication. Anand would particularly be read for his stories, though novels like *Untouchable* are also classics--its more than half a million copies in 24 languages have been sold.

EMKEN (M.K. NAIK), *BEOWULF & ALL THAT*

(Calcutta: A Writer's Workshop Red-bird Book, 1999), pp.33, Rs.80.00

H.C. Gupta

Emken's history-making *Beowulf & All That*, presenting a videographic and cinematographic edition of English literary history, is a welcome addition to historical as well as light-verse literature. A collection of 125 clerihews, it is a marigold, or better merry-gold, with a thousand petals cultivated on Indian soil and fancifully arrayed and dyed in English colours. The author has explained his work with the sub-title "An Unorthodox History of English Literature in Comic Verse." A history of histories, it takes in its purview directly or indirectly, English men of letters, celebrated and obscure—Shakespeare as well as Mrs Hemans and others--; historical figures—Queen Elizabeth I, The Earl of Essex, Winston Churchill--; thinkers—Thomas Hobbes, Adam Smith, Jeremy Bentham, F.H. Bradley--; and literary works--*Beowulf* and *The Authorised Version of the Bible*.Comprehensively, it begins with *Beowulf* and ends with Ted Hughes, thus encompassing a period of more than a thousand years.

The writer's frontispiece has one of his clerihews on Shakespeare, which I, as reviewer, would use in a slightly modified form for Emken: "As a spear-dancer, Emken / Is a peerless Muse's man / But he is (no) great shakes / As a baker of cakes." Transfiguring dull historical facts, Emken has musingly portrayed the careers and characters of English people of his choice in amusing four-line verses. Interestingly, he has baked cakes with 'mild' or 'Bitter' that do not leave a bad taste in the reader's mouth.

The clerihew 114 gives us an idea of Emken's meaning of history: "Geography is about maps / And biography about chaps, / History is what / Chaps do to maps." In the clerihew 26, he gives a clue to his art of verification -- "We moderns prefer / The doggerel of undress." Having all the frankness and fearlessness of an 'unacknowledged legislator of mankind', Emken discovers historical truths and invents his own aesthetics to present them. The clerihews speak volumes of the writer's unorthodox turn of mind and interrogation of accepted history. The unorthodox matter of this book

comprises history, biograohy, geography, psychology, philosophy, humanities, arts, sciences, social sciences, and what not. The canvas is spread wide to take in its fold a number of beings, fauna and flora, games and sports, diseases, medicines, dishes and drinks, etc. The unorthodox aesthetics resorts to lampoon and limerick clones, literary quips, hypes, puzzles and riddles.

A few illustrations will substantiate the reviewing remarks made so far and will bring out that Prof. Naik is quite serious about his business. Sex-cult dovetails the clerihews. All the seven clerihews on Queen Elizabeth, The Earl of Essex and The Earl of Surrey deal in sex. One of them is: "The Earl of Essex / Confessed that he'd had sex / With Liza of Lambeth / And fellatio with Lady Macbeth." One of the clerihews on The Authorized Version of the Bible is: "Moses / Didn't wonder, "Where the noses/Went during kisses" / He knew he was born for near-misses." Wonderfully, in his running commentary on sex and sex-games, Emken sings of modern Sweden, too: "The moral of Paradise Lost / Is that an apple cost/ Far more in ancient Eden / Than in modern Sweden." Slyly, he gives a hit to William Wordsworth: " 'That the Stern Daughter of the Voice of God' / Spoke to him only in the land of his birth / And not on a sister shore, is the burden of the mystery, / Said Annette Vallon, speaking of Wordsworth". The idiom used for Henry James' sexual practices is voyeuristic: "Henry James / Loved sex-games / He invented many a new / Turn of the screw." The evocative use of puns in the following clerihew is masterly: "W.B. Yeats / Resolved to subsist only on *dates* / and *prawn- / Curry*, till he won Maud Gonne." (The underlined words are edibles as well as sex-games.) Emken can be all funny as in " 'Tears, idle tears', / I know not what they mean: / 'Cook, slicing onions': / that sums up the scene"; or versify lampoons as in "Alexander Pope / Courted [sic] Lady Hester Stanhope / She said, "Hope and Mope", / You dope, you can't cope". He impishly is slanderous as in "The proper study of mankind / Is Man / And the improper study of mankind is Woman"; or clownishly reflective as in "A little learning is a prestigious thing / Drink not / But swear by the Pierian Spring." And he plays the invidous buffon too as in "It's hardly surprising that John Donne / Felt 'undone' / On marrying Ann / He speaks for every man." It is difficult to say

whether the professor here is simply humorous or mystifyingly confessional. At first sight, he is unfair in bowling a bumper at the fair-sex. Or, perhaps, he is just when one keeps in mind his history and the English Eve.

Though the largest number of the Clerihews consist of two rhyming couplets in the fashion of Edmund Clerihew Bentley, the inventor of this epigrammatic verse-form, yet Emken is as unorthodox in his versification as in his unorthodoxical matter. There are experiments of all sorts--six-line derihews--,derihews with even or uneven or three lines rhyming together. The lines vary in length from one syllable to fifteen syllables, from one word to twelve words. The smallest derihew has only nine words and the biggest 37 words. One line ends with the compound word-making hyphen, and one begins with 's.

The men of letters appear in strict chronogical order, which has been decided by their date of birth, with the only exception of T.S. Eliot, who precedes James Joyce. There are a few printing errors: the words as printed are given in single inverted commas and the number of the derihew within brackets--'courred' (41), 'Maddiug' (44), 'Sweaing'(46), 'Alymer' (59), 'though' (65), 'wrotes' (75), 'not' (77), 'couut' and 'neckaces' (82), and Gandi (112).

Emken's endearing virtue is that he meets the challenge of being true to himself as well as to history. Being comical and amusing is his forte. He is charming and enlightening. Here is a jesting Pilate who has the knack of handling bitter truths artistically. Here is superb dig at Wordsworth, the universally acknowledged high priest of Nature: "William Wordsworth / Thought two birds worth / A poem each / But no fruit--not even the peach". The to-date decision on 'whether Bacon wrote Shakespeare or not' is given categorically: "Lord Bacon / Was very much shaken / To hear / That Shakespeare wrote Shakespeare".

History, in the correct sense of the word, should deal not only with the accolades but also with the blushes of historical figures. Like a perfect historian, Emken has delinked himself from his personal bias. And like a updated man of letters, he brings in operation a whole artillery of artistic device at his command; irony, sarcasm, wit , pun, fun, satire, humour; images, symbols, allusions,

references, quotations, misquotations, adaptations; and words, dated, coined, slang, colloquial. In fine, the Collection subliminally presents the three-fold senses of the term 'history'-- the Greek sense of 'judgment', the Latin sense of 'enquiry', and our sense of 'Itihas' (it happpened so.). Full of allusions, obscure incidents and textual and geographical references, the work is abstruse.

On the whole, this work pales history tomes and all writers of comic verse into insignificance for its varied riches. Prof. Naik's is not the art of the orthodox historian-- the art of lying convincingly--, but the art of a creative artist-historian--the art of enlightening while delighting. As an unfailing test of genius lies in seeing things in a different way in a different light, it is, surely, a work of genius. The clerihews taken together, as interpreted by me, convey the teleological meaning, which is given in these lines of the writer: "Life like a dome/ Of many-coloured glass' / Shows holes." The figures are three dimensional and the work multi-faceted. The verses, sinewy and luscious, forged in the white heat of fanciful creation, are, to use the oft-used terminology of a nurse, fully developed off-springs of quick conception and easy delivery. I would like to adapt to advantages Emken's clerihew on E.C. Bentley to characterize the man and his work: "M.K. Naik expertly / As a man is saintly / But his light verse / Is impish or perfidious." (See clerihew 113 for its original.).

SHORMISHTHA PANJA (ED.), *MANY INDIAS, MANY LITERATURES*

(Delhi: Book Land, 1999), pp.210 + vii, Rs.130.00

A. Raghu

Many Indias, Many Literatures, edited by Shormishtha Panja, is one of the most remarkable anthologies on contemporary Indian writing I have come across in recent years. Remarkable it is for a number of reasons. First of all, though it runs into only some two hundred and odd pages, it is quite comprehensive. It touches poetry, drama, fiction and short story, and is brought to a close by a survey of the current trends in Urdu literature. It covers the literatures in most of the major Indian languages including English. Among the authors discussed are Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Mohan Rakesh, Vijay Tendulkar, R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, Nissim Ezekiel and Jayanta Mahapatra. The writers themselves are almost as eminent as their subjects: Jayanta Mahapatra, K.Sachitanandan, Venkat Swaminathan and Kirti Jain are among them. The divergences in the perspectives of the contributors and the plurality of their approaches are the basic strengths of the volume.

In her introductory essay, Panja makes short work of the contentions of the homogenising traditions which see Indian literature as a unity devoid of serious differences. She takes on, among others, Sisir Kumar Das, K.M. George, and C.D. Narasimhaiah. Panja observes that these scholars argue that there is a single Indian literature, something they are hard put to define with any degree of plausible specificity. The generalities they claim to identify as the characteristics of Indian literature would be true of any literature, not just Indian. Otherwise they hegemonically confine Indian literature within a single religious framework. Panja deserves to be congratulated for the boldness of her counter-arguments and for the lucidity with which she presents them. However, they fail to convince me fully. The very fact that she speaks of many Indias shows that there is something common and this something common is something very basic. That this is indefinable does not make it absent.

Jayanta Mahapatra's "Large Words, A Small Silence" has a

depth and a passion that demands and rewards close reading and analysis. B. Mangalam's translation of the interview C.S. Lakshmi (the Tamil writer who uses the pseudonym Ambai) gave to the magazine *Kalchchuvadu* narrates the story of a woman who found it difficult to accept the framework and the values of a patriarchal order and explored the options that do not demand complete collaboration with the order. It could act as an inspiration and as a paradigm for others placed in similar contexts. But at moments, the alert reader is forced to wonder whether even Lakshmi does not possess a treacherous heart which stands in the way of her being completely happy with the role she has embraced and the path she has charted for herself.

I find it difficult to agree with Sumanyu Satpathy, the author of the essay, "Ezekiel's India and Mahapatra's India: A Fresh Look at Their Poetry." Though brilliant, the writer appears to underestimate the work of Ezekiel and overestimate that of Mahapatra. However, his arguments certainly deserve attention and admiration even when there is disagreement.

One of the best pieces in the volume is Panja's essay which works out a comparative/contrastive study of Rabindranath Tagore's *Ghore-Baire* and Satyajit Ray's film version of the novel. Tagore's perspective on swadeshi--much blurred in the film--is of topical significance in the India of today.

The book is essential reading for all students of Indian literature, or as Panja puts it, literatures.

SUSHEEL KUMAR SHARMA, *FROM THE CORE WITHIN*

(New Delhi: Creative Books, 1999), pp.72, Rs. 80.00

O.P. Mathur

About the community of the teachers of English in India it may well be said, "Of the making of verses there is no end." Sometimes these 'poems' appear to be little more than prose arbitrarily cut up into lines of varied length which, if restored into their original prose, seem to read better. But a small number of these collections of verse do not easily yield to such a 'plastic surgery.' There is some real poetic inspiration in them where the poet has felt his feelings and thought his thoughts himself, in which, as in the book under review, the poems arise 'from the core within.' Some random facets of modern life touch his heart and father his cerebration, making him aware of the values obliterated and erased by the remorseless wheels of modern heartless civilization. Many of Sharma's poems arise from the fount of pity and anger transmuted into unsentimental reflection and an implied re-assertion of the right values. The first three poems appear to define, perhaps unintentedly, the basics of the poet's approach--a conscience going on a journey of observation and searching for 'brains', purposeful reasoning, just 'wandering for naught.' The poem that follows, 'A Painting in Blood,' depicts the poet's encounter with mankind, with his hands gory, guilty and self-destructive. He portrays the sufferings of mankind as his own, who is both the suffererer and by his mute tolerance, amounting to acquiescence, a cause of the suffering. He goes on with his survey of the scene of mankind--the roofless sleeping on railway platforms and dreaming horrible dreams, a clerk reminiscing of his mother crushed while picking crumbs from between railway lines, generations of Indians 'progressing' in the modes of their deaths from the old fatal diseases to the modern, a hungry beggar dreaming of a comfortable life, the sufferers of the Gulf War, the travails of the Kashmiri Pandits encountering a politically pathetic philosophy of 'tolerance', and so on. The distorted faces on a T.V. screen present the modern world in miniature. The touchingly simple poem 'Ways of the World' ironically depicts the two value-systems of the past and present generations:

They say
I'm abnormal
for
I pay enough to the rickshaw puller
I pay enough to a vegetable vender
I pay attention to my students
I spend enough to purchase books.

They say
I'm carrying dead load
of my old parents memories of
my childhood, dead values.

Such a 'civilization' deserves a conflagaration symbolized by the fire-crackers, to bring on a new order. For a solution the poet goes on his 'Quest for a Chitrakoot' and an allegory of the growing youth with an unexpected resilience

The mother thought that
Its sonor was it a daughter ?
Was struck by the pollution or the bacteria.
It cried over its vulnerability and infirmity.
The flower was ready to multiply itself
How come the mother as oblivious of the fact. ('Survival')

This firm optism in the future of mankind is a fitting conclusion to the poet's quest, though perhaps the means of achieving such a welcome stage--a pagan-like love of nature--needs to be transcended into an exploration and assertion of our ancient faith in the oneness of man, nature, and God and in the ultimate salvation of man.

There are a number of poems on various other subjects which can be said to fill the picture of the human pursuits. But by and large the book is suffused with love and pity for mankind expressed both directly and allegorically:

He drew my attention to the beauteous trees
I pointed to the roots which made the tree stand.
He showed me a mile long queue of ants
I pointed to the grains that they
were carrying to their homes....

He showed me the chirping birds
I interpreted:
'Live in peace, live in harmony.' ('Nainital-III')

It is the poet's sincerity and depth of emotion combined with a restrained use of imagery and the over-all deceptive but penetrating simplicity of discourse which draws the attention of a sensitive reader and lifts the book from out of the commonplace.

ANURAG SHARMA, AMITABH SANJIT, *IS WAS WILL BE* (SHORT STORIES)

(Meerut: D.J. Publications, 1999), pp.111, Rs.150.00

Qamar Alam

The present volume of short stories--*Is Was Will Be*--is an admirable attempt by two authors Anurag Sharma and Amitabh Sanjit. In the present times the genre of short story has become popular for two reasons: the reader's awareness of the dimensions of time and the writer's vision of life in a short structural pattern. In the contemporary society man shares many things with others and witnesses the hazards of strained human relationships. As an individual he is obsessed with his individual pursuit for existence and a search for peace and amity in society. The book has been dedicated to Time. The epigraph of the book from the Bhagwad-Gita--काल: कलयता महम (of calculators I am Time)--stresses the might of an invisible protagonist that pervades the entire pattern of this volume.

The introductory remarks by Anurag Sharma in the name of proto-story bring into being the range and the definitive purpose of creative art. To him, all creative art is a 'process' Art being a synthetic process binds the writer and the reader into a single whole. As an objective creation of mind, and not of man, the creation of art reveals the common purposiveness to both. Emulating Virginia Woolf, T.S. Eliot and Anita Desai, the authors of these stories also combine the parts of time into a single stream and reveal "the existence of all time in one time" (p.iii). Anurag Sharma is so influenced by the time pattern of T.S. Eliot ("In my beginning is my end"—East Coker and "Time the destroyer is time the preserver"—*Four Quartets*) as he makes some of Eliot's lines the kernel sentences in his stories--"In my beginning is my end" (p.28). Thus, time as the chief protagonist exists "shapeless like an amoeba" in the entire structural pattern of these stories.

As a matter of fact, the philosophical rationalization becomes the leit-motif of these stories. The authors link all the inborn and innate instincts and impulses of man with the dynamic and cyclic scheme of time. This book, thus, begins and ends with the higher moral principles of life. The last story 'The Tower' reveals the universal validity of cause and effect.

Inspite of these allusions, these stories are not philosophical

treatise. The authors exhibit their literary skill in revealing the social, realistic and existential points of view. The story "The Bridge" projects a vision of existential pursuit. Menu's mother, a tuberculosis patient, strives to exist independently in the society she belongs to. An unwavering, unbroken and obstinate lady leaves her father's home with an ailing child for a village. She passes through many ordeals. As a child Manu realizes the pangs and psychological obsessions of the woman, his mother. He even links the deteriorating health of his mother with the movement of time. To him, "The morning means not the chirping of birds but the coughing of his Ma." Himself a patient of hapatitis, Manu becomes nostalgic and connects his past with the present.

Yet another story, "An Exile," also deals with the existential pursuits of the protagonist. It describes the cruel role of the city and its sensibility. Avadh Kishore is torn between two worlds: one fading and decaying, and worries for the other yet to be born in days to come. The city as an organic entity obsesses him deeply and waters down all his creative faculty. At times the obsession of the city and its sensibility is so deep that it causes in him "nausea, nervousness, schizophrenia."

On the level of art, this collection of short stories exhibits some brilliant examples of stylistic experimentation in the traditional art form. The story "Empathy" has certain syntactic deviations with the use of regional varieties of the English language. Mr. Bal Mukund Verma uses typical "UPian accent' while pronouncing the name of his dog as 'Taamy,' instead of Tommy. There are some instances of non-verbal language. Manu's mother, while suffering from continuous bleeding due to sores of tuberculosis, presents a wonderful example of non-verbal language. The use of various images and metaphors gives an impression of the use of synchronic language. The images like 'elegant pines' with their 'bushy heads,' 'the slopes of Shivalik Hills,' 'the slender leafy needles' and 'a warm turpentine smell' (p.82) are an example of poetic-prose with Keatsian imagination. Sometimes, phrases like 'complexion wheatish,' 'cheeks punctured' and 'face turned red' (p.47) show the translative method of the authors.

To conclude, this collection of short stories by Anurag and Amitabh is an excellent attempt that should find a place in the genre of Indian Short Story in English.

GAJENDRA KUMAR, *INDO-ANGLIAN NOVEL CRITICISM: TRADITION AND ACHIEVEMENT*

(Patna: Novelty & Co., 1999), pp. 140, Rs. 300.00

K.K. Sharma

This book is commendable, for it is marked by the newness of the subject and meets the urgent need for a full-length study of Indian English fiction-criticism. The author has taken into account the whole gamut of Indian English novel-criticism before and after the colonial era. Not only this, he sincerely endeavours to examine the roots and growth of Indian fiction criticism in English, though certainly not comprehensively. The blurb states that the study embodies the quest for the poetics of the novel, that it concentrates on the relationship between the novel and society from cultural, sociological, mythic and stylistic perspectives, and that the Indian English critics have applied comparative approaches, phenomenology, Marxism, structuralism, post-structuralism, deconstruction, feminism, colonialism, post-colonialism, etc., to their evaluations of Indian English fiction. But the claim made is a tall one, for all these have been just touched and have not been adequately explored. In the "Foreword," Gajendra Kumar asserts that Indian English novel-criticism "focuses mainly on the structure of the novel and the symbiosis of its component parts, and not on the novel as representative or non-representative of mimetic reality and morality. It is centred upon the aesthetic basis of the art of narrative, and not upon the writer's moral intention." But this sweeping remark is faulty, for C.D. Narasimhaiah is a champion of values in criticism, and K.R.S. Iyengar is essentially a humanist, and so is M.K. Naik. Gajendra Kumar's assertion may hold good only in the case of Meenakshi Mukherjee.

The book under review consists of six chapters, of which the first and the last are "Prologue" and "Epilogue" respectively. Chapter II, entitled "Roots", traces critically the rise of the Indian novel in English. There is nothing notable in this chapter except the concluding, hold observations: "Thus, the postcolonial theorist's list of priority is derived not from the direct investigation of postcolonial societies' needs and concern but from studying a narrow band of literary texts. The postcolonial theorists make the unwarranted assumption that these writers and literary texts contributed by them truly represent the people of a land. It's not enough. The postcolonial theorists have to justify their claim, only then they can champion the causes" (p.42).

Chapter III of the book is devoted to the novelist-critics. Bankimchandra Chatterjee, the creator of the first Indian novel in English, was also the first to make some incisive remarks about the novel as literary genre. Ganjendra Kumar pertinently refers to the first Indian English novelist's opinion that the "purpose of history can be accomplished in a novel" (p.44). Also, he cites the most relevant theory-statements of novelists like Lal Behari Day, Prem Chand, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, Anita Desai, Kamala Markandaya, Rama Mehta, Nayantara Sahgal, Shobha De and Shashi Tharoor. This chapter suffers from a serious omission in that it does not at all touch Bhabani Bhattacharya who has given us quite a cogent poetics of the novel in his famous article, "Literature and Social Reality," and in the numberous interviews and letters. The next chapter deals with "The Twice Born Fiction Theory", which forms the basis of Meenakshi Mukherjee's published doctoral thesis on Indian English fiction. The entire chapter is about her criticism of the novel, and there is nothing remarkable in it but for the remark made in the last paragraph: "As a critic Meenakshi Mukherjee's approach is genuine and individual rather than merely correct and competent. Throughout her critical framework, the sense of 'Indianness' rings up which provides an independent status to Indo-Anglian novel criticism" (p.88). Chapter V elaborates and accentuates the fact that the Indian English fictional criticism is kaleidoscopic in nature, and that it does not lead us to any definite theory of the novel. Inevitably, the final conclusion of the author is that "Indo-Anglian novel criticism becomes a part of intellectual tradition of criticism upon which the impact of English criticism, Russian criticism and European criticism is quite discernible" (p.120).

The book is not free from some glaring blemishes. In the first place, the use of the term "Indo-Anglian" is certainly inappropriate because now for more than two decades the universally accepted term is "Indian English." Then, the author must be very particular about the use of the definite article 'the' before novel or Indo-Anglian novel, etc.; often he does not put 'the' before novel. Besides, the documentation is unmistakably faulty; he should have followed the *MLA Style Sheet*.

Notwithstanding these weaknesses, the book, on the whole, is indubitably interesting and fruitful, for it is very informative. Hence, it must be read by every student/scholar of Indian English fiction, since it is very rich in useful details pertaining to this subject of vital interest and importance.

RANJAN GHOSH, *ELUSIVE SPARK*

(Dibrugarh: N.L. Publishers, 2000), pp. 207, Rs. 120.00

Jibon Krishna Bannerjee

The subject of the volume is rather striking, arousing curiosity and interest. Bringing together Mathew Arnold and Robert Frost for comparative study is rather an unusual approach and obviously a difficult proposition. The title *Elusive Spark* itself seems to presuppose a juxtaposition of the abstract and the concrete. Arnold and Frost belong to two different times, cultures and socio-economic milieu far removed from each other. Admittedly, these differing, even contrary factors, cannot stand as far in discovering some common grounds in the poetic world of the two poets, though apparently a remote feasibility. That happens in the areas of ideas and Ranjan Ghosh has rushed in where angles fear to tread.

However, a deeper scrutiny of the work shows that Ghosh has struggled to grapple with the complex task of exploring the issues of the crisis of man and the philosophy of his existing. In order to bring home this crisis of 'being' or 'nothingness,' Ghosh has tried to coalesce relevant materials from the Chinese, Tibetan, Vedic, Greek and Buddhist literatures. Thus an oriental consciousness, comprising ideas, feelings, intentions, images and symbols, surfaces in some selected poems of Arnold and Frost.

In the course of his writing, Ghosh calls on the best oriental authorities to determine how far the poets concerned deal with the age-old question of the true nature of life. The author says, "The 'crisis' in man which I have named 'worm' has always turned under the chariot dust of his Shambolic inner order, awaiting Arnold's Hellenic vision and Frost's Star-splitting game." One wishes he could avoid the vague terms and concentrate more on "the differential and the conceptual" in life in concrete terms with suitable illustrations. I believe Ghosh has not been able to bring out the 'isolation' in clear terms. The manner in which Ghosh brings in the Tibetan and Lao-tzu concepts to reveal the crisis of faith in Arnold does not convince me much. In trying to pinpoint this crisis, there is a tendency to overpower the reader with scholarship. While dealing with themes of isolation, extinction and limitation of man in Frost and Arnold's poetry, Ghosh brings in Sri Aurobindo, Tagore, St. Augustine,

Gibran, Sappho, Cicero, Cluang-tse, Pindar, Plato, the Vedas, Upanishads, the Bible, the Quran, Kant, Kierkegaard, Russell, Patanjali, Shakespeare, Kalidasa, Mallarme, Lorca, Spinoza, Hegel, Swami Vivekananda, Heidegger, Zen Buddhists, Sri Ramakrishna, Auden, T.S. Eliot, and a host of other poets, philosophers, social and political thinkers. The range of scholarship of the author should be appreciated, but the reader stands the risk of being maned in the labyrinth of so many judgments, and as a result the author's own conviction has the chance of being a causality. Ghosh himself admits that "poets are not abstract thinkers failing to comprehend the Gestalt of reality." Then why so much of abstract light to be shed on poems to bring forth the inner meanings which have 'gestalt or reality' ('Summer Night', 'Rugby Chapel', 'Stopping by Woods', 'Birches', for example). Ghosh makes use of literary theories to indulge in intensely close yet difficult appreciation of the poems. 'Birches', 'Stopping by Woods', and 'The Scholar-Gipsy' are typical instances of it.

Surprisingly, Arnold is better and more elaborately treated than Frost. In fact, Ghosh's thesis is based mostly on Arnold's poems, though his book contains nine poems of Arnold and sixteen of Frost. Regrettably, he does not bring under consideration Frost's 'Home Burial', 'Death of the Hired Man' and 'The Gum Gatherer'--the central concerns of which are man's alienation from his fellow men that makes him lead a life of isolation, fear and loveliness. Finally, one may differ on a number of comments of the author, given the novelty of the approach, but the work can in no way be dismissed as a young scholar's over-zealous venture into a risky area where he has brought in vis-a-vis two seemingly remotely related colossal figures in two great poetic literatures of the World. No doubt, the illuminating discussions enlighten us and our horizon of knowledge about Arnold and Frost is widened. The unmistakable impression that finally emerges from the a close analysis assures us of great promise. There are valuable suggestions for aspiring scholars of Arnold and Frost, of the former especially.

The hard cover get-up is impressive not usually found in Indian publications, the computer laser setting is good by any standard, and there is hardly any printing error.

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