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LANGUAGE PATHOLY AND LANGUAGE THERAPY

S.D. Sharma

Localizationists believe that the frontal lobe in the left cerebral hemisphere in the brain is the speech and language centre. If this centre is not intact, some aspects or the ability to perceive, process or produce language may certainly be disturbed.[1] This state of brain is a diseased state and an individual suffering from this sort of brain disturbance (disease) is said to be aphasic (diseased or sick). Aphasia is a diseased condition which encompasses numerous syndromes of communicative impairments in Speaking, Writing, Listening and Reading (SWRL)--the four fundamental communicative skills now very essential for students, teachers, researchers and professionals.[2]

Two questions are of great interest to us at this juncture to ask: (1) How does the brain system encode and decode speech and language?; and (2) Are the components of language--phonology syntax, semantics, pragmatics--neuroanatomically distinct and therefore vulnerable to separate impairment and disorder (disease).[3] In 1861, Paul Broca, a French surgeon and anatomist, established the fact that language was produced from the left cerebral hemisphere. In 1874, Carl Wernicke, a young German physician, proved that lesions in the left posterior temporal lobe affected speech comprehension.[4] Wernicke's hypothesis strengthened Broca's claim that left hemisphere structures were paramountly needed for speech. This also gave birth to a heated discussion as to whether different areas within the left hemisphere fulfil different linguistic functions. Advances in linguistics particularly in phonetics and pragmatics have now substantiated the fact that specific neuroanatomic structures of the left hemisphere are absolutely vital for speech and language.[5] Today it has scientifically been proved that 70 percent of all individuals with damage or deficiency or wrong formation of linguistic grooves (chips) in the left hemisphere will lead to language disorders (diseases) as compared to only 1 percent in right hemisphere. In 1949, J. Wada reported that the injection of sodium amytal into the carotid (main artery on the language-dominant side of the brain) induces a temporary aphasis (disease).

In 1959, Wilder Penfield and LaMar Roberts, Neurosurgeons at the Montreal Neurological Institute, removed portions on the brain affecting speech and language.

Correct speech habits form correct mental grooves or channels to communicate ideas.[6] The basic cellular units of speech are neurons, which are approximately 12 billion in number. Each speech neuron is composed of a cell body, dendrites (receptors) and axon (conductive mechanism). The spinal cord acts as a cable through which streams of neuronal messages between the body and the brain are transmitted.[7] Located in the parietal lobe, at the upper end of the lateral sulcus, is the cortical area known as the *angular gyrus*, in which functions necessary to speech, reading and writing are interrelated.

The massive transverse fiber tract known as the *corpus callosum* is particularly important for speech and communication. It is only through the smooth and balanced functioning of the *corpus callosum* that the left hemisphere successfully communicates with the right hemisphere. It is estimated that the *corpus callosum* has the capacity to carry 4 billion impulses per second. *Thalamus* as well as cortical system produces speech and language. In fact, left *thalamus* is a very fast relay station, receiving nerve fibre projections from the cortex and the lower nervous system structures. *Dichotic listening* technique proves the fact that a harmony between the left and the right hemispheres facilitates the task of effective communication of ideas.

The left hemisphere has 9 linguistic specializations, namely —(i) Speech, (ii) Writing, (iii) Temporal-order Judgments, (iv) Language, (v) Reading, (vi) Associative thought, (vii) Calculation, (viii) Analytic processing, and (ix) Right visual field. Likewise, the right hemisphere has 7 linguistic specializations, viz., (i) Holistic processing, (ii) Stereognosis, (iii) Nonverbal environmental sounds, (iv) Visuospatial skills, (v) Nonverbal ideation, (vi) Recognition and memory of melodies, and (vii) Left visual field. The above linguistic specializations of the left and the right hemispheres are complementary to each other. However, recent researches undertaken by such eminent language scientists as M. Dennis, H.

Whitaker, R. Brookshire, H. Spinnler, D. Kimura and M.L. Kean have proved the fact that the right hemisphere does not have the same potential for speech and language specialization as the left has. The above named linguists have also substantiated the fact that both the hemispheres must be equipped with 16 specific language specializations, i.e., 9 in the left and 7 in the right as enumerated above. The disbalance or disease emerges the moment the fine balance between the both is somehow disturbed. Correct language teaching is, therefore, essential to form such language channels or grooves as are essential to sustain this equilibrium.

As a result of disturbance in the fine balance between the language functions of both the hemispheres, a number of diseases are found amongst university students, particularly amongst the students of science and technology. Some glaring language diseases found galore are listed below:

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1. Schizophernic Aphasia
2. Diffused Aphasia
3. Focussed Aphasia
4. Conduction Aphasia
5. Graphic Aphasia
6. Phonic Aphasia
7. Agrammatical Aphasia
8. Dysgraphia
9. Dyslogia
10. Purealexia
11. Verbal Alexia
12. Literal Alexia
13. Dysarthria
14. Anarthria
15. Stuttering
16. Dystexia
17. Agraphia
18. Jargonophasia
19. Polyglott
20. Enunciation Disorder
21. Speech Disorder

22. Receptive or Sensory Disease
23. Dysphasic Disease
24. Atrophy
25. Expressive Aphasics
26. Amensic Aphasia

It must be noted very cerefully that students are endowed genetically with a Universal Granomar (UG) or the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) which is said to account for special capabilities for acquiring a language. The experiments with Washoe, Koko and Kanzi in the recent times in the USA and other countries have proved this fact. On the basis of his LAD/UG, a student learns a language and in this process of language learning, language channels of L^1 and L^2 *et al* are formed in his brain. However, the clash between L^1 and L^2 is a common phenomenon because of a number of factors.[8]

Aesthetics of high order mainly depends on the fine equilibrium between the left and the right hemispheres or the brain. Charles Darwin, the father of modern evolutionism, failed to appreciate Shakespeare's dramas because his left hemisphere was damaged and he developed a particular disease known as *atrophy*, which is a sort of paralysis of thinking and ideas.[9] Too much scientific studies without any aesthetic interest is injurious to brain.

NRA (Neutron, Receptor and Axon) Balance Theory is a recent breakthrough in the domain of Neuroanatomic structures and Phonetics, which recommends sufficient study and practice of music, literature, language and aesthetics to correct a number of language diseases. This effort is now known as language pathology and language therapy. In Indian context, NRA Balance Theory may only fructify if there is sufficient language laboratory infrastructure and well-trained and well-groomed language teachers. By the time, students reach the university portals for the pursuit of higher learning, their language channels are almost hardened. Their aesthetic taste, too, is already vulgarized. They also suffer from a number of language diseases, as enumerated above, and certainly it becomes a hard nut to crack to rejuvenate aesthetic sense in them.

However, based on pragmatism and empiricism it is suggested

that (i) for neuron, correct speech habits are to be formed; (ii) Phonetics, syntax and grammar must be taught in their right perspectives; (iii) select poets having sonorous quality of language must be taught to aphasics of schizophrenic, diffused and focussed disorders; (iv) for conduction, graphic and phonic aphasics, use of AVR Eye-Span Trainer SRA Reading Accelerator, AVR Reading Rateometer and Excel-O-Reader Systems are recommended; (v) SS Reading methods are recommended for those suffering from the language disease of Dyslogia, Literal Alexia and Dysgraphia; (vi) use of Sonograph, Pitchmeter, Speechstretcher, Endoscope, Kymograph, Chromograph and Breathing Flask is recommended for the language patients of Anarthria, Polyglott Aphasia and Expressive Aphasia.

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THE CONCEPT OF THE POET IN EARLY GREEK POETRY

Ranjan Ghosh

The Greek poetry was nurtured under the welcome shade of political freedom, and their art thrived under the laws of free society. Poetry, being a serious public concern, easily became the cornerstone of education and civic life. It was a 'delightful' thing that was capable of 'enchantment'; it was not strictly utilitarian, for divinity in the form of an inspiration by the gods or the Muses cannot be overlooked. It existed as an art, a craft, that requires talent, training and long practice. So the concept of the poet as a teacher, as an enchanter, as a divinely inspired individual and as a craftsman come through quite clearly. Since the nature of poetry has varied through the development of Greek civilization, different concepts of the poet have also surfaced.

We can safely begin with Bassett's brilliance: "A 'poet' is he who gives to material at his disposal a particular, individual quality and existence.... The only reason for the creative effort of the early 'poet', as poet, was the joy in the making, which, because of his humanity or for some other reason, he shared with his audience. There is strong evidence that Homer had no other purpose than this–a fact which, if established, gives to our oldest literary document the added value of being poetry in its pure state."[1] According to tradition, *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were composed by the wayfaring singer named Homer, whose name is used collectively for all epic poets just as the name of Vyasa is used as the author of the *Mahabharata*. Homer was more of a singer than a poet in the modern sense of the term--a singer with the gift of 'invention,' the invention of the myth centering around his epic. Odysseus is said to be skilful in telling tales, but is also said to be 'knowledgeable as a singer' (11, 368). As the singer moved from place to place standing before many strangers' door, he is said to have learnt the minds of many men (*Odyssey*, 1,3). The word 'bard,' 'singer,' occurs only once is *Iliad* (11.24.720), but representations of bard appear many times in *Odyssey*. Words of praise for the bard come from Odysseus and the bard sings "all too according to the order of things," *lien kata*

kosmon.[2] He is the man who has the ability to provide precise representations of reality. Also, the poet knows *thelkteria*,'enchanting things.' The Sirens who stood for the bard could boast of the requisite 'enchantment,' and that was why their listeners were enraptured. A silence descended on the Phaeacians as they listened to the song of the Sirens. Also, When Odysseus finished his lengthy tale in the palace of Alcinous, an enchanting silence settled over the audience. The speaker is eulogised on his grace as a word-weaver, having the genius and the craft of the singer; here hearing him is as soothingly remarkable as drinking the good wine of the patron. This is an obvious pointer to the skill of the master poet who has his listeners under his spell and charms them into being partakers of the life which his imagination has created. Goldhill, quite introspectively, cites another instance. Eumaeus describes the stranger to Penelope in the following way:

> Such things he tells, he would enchant [thelgein] your very heart...
> As when a man looks at a bard, who has learnt from
> the god to sing words pleasing to mortals;
> and they violently desire to hear him, when he sings.
> So that man sitting in the hall kept enchanting (thelgein) me.
> (17.514, 518-21)

The compelling power of the poet's speech has an obvious Vedic analogy. In the *Rig Veda* speech becomes identified with the creator. The point to be noted is that the power of language grows in the hands of the Poet.

There is a passage is the *Odyssey* that speaks of the art of learning the songs. Here the singer Phemius boasts that he is self-taught and god has implanted songs of all sorts in his spirit:

> I am a poet who sings for gods and men. I am *autodidaktos*, and a god breathed into my breast songs of every sort.... (22, 347)

For our purpose this passage is very significant as it contains the point about creativity. Phemius points out that the songs that he sings are not repetition of the songs that he has learnt or heard but are produced by himself. The word *autodidaktos* merely points to it. However, self-teaching does not obviate the divine aid. By considering the source of his inspiration as mysterious, he implicitly admits the transcendent presence and the creative force embodied in the mythic muse. He sings a very 'new' song--the artistic form

of the epic chant--which is the poetic creation. In *Iliad* (2,485) we are told that the Muses were the original poets who experienced the epic events as eye-witnesses and transmitted knowledge of them to later men. The point is that poetry is a sort of knowledge and the poet when he is blessed by the muses comes to have a sort of privileged access to knowledge. Here we touch upon the question of divine inspiration. Borrowing from Democritus, Plato points out that just as iron filings become magnetised through the power of the magnet, so the poet is inspired through the divine power. Thus, from Homer we arrive at a concept which clearly demonstrates the poet as a man possessed with a divine vision (*darshna*) and powers of description (*vernana*), breathing like the creator in Genesis, the breath of life into the image which he had made. Such a concept of the poet as the divine singer occurs in the *Rig Veda* where Brihaspati, essentially a man, is deified on account of his superior talents and achievements. As a matter of fact, in the *Rig Veda* X.91.3, God is spoken of as a poet:

> Most skilful with Thy powers, most wise with wisdom,
> O God, Thou art a Poet knowing all with thy poetic wisdom.
> Master of good things, Thou, the One, art the Lord
> Of what the heaven and the earth produce.[3]

There are occasions when through the poet a god's voice speaks to a moral. The higher power is revealed through more than the human range of the words. The poet has the unobstructed view. He sees life steadily and sees it whole. With his imagination and preternatural vision he is like one of Plato's souls that hastens back to earth after a thousand years amidst the indescribable sights and experiences of heaven. Homer's poetry has the quality to reveal new beauties and enlarge the dimensions of human spirit. It is a concept of the 'true' poet who reads betwen the cold dark lines of the world, exhibiting the sublimity of life.

We come to an altogether different world away from the world of heroes with Hesoid. *Iliad* ignores the ordinary existence of the ordinary people. Hesoid, by contrast, in *Works* and *Days* pictures the daily life of men. He tells us that the Muses had instructed him to sing his song. He is a self-conscious poet who knows about his power which permits him to ignore the narrow limitions of direct

physical experience. He has never been to the sea, but he can have the knowledge of seafaring through the Muses. The *Theogony* opens with a song of praise to the Muses. It is they who "once taught Hesoid beautiful song as he tended his sheep under holy Helicon" (22-3), and "they gave me a staff, plucking a fine branch of flourishing bay, and breathed in me a divine voice, so that I might sing of what was to come and what had been. And they commanded me to hymn the race of the blessed immortals and always to sing of themselves first and last" (30-4).[4] So, with the acceptance that the Muses are skilful in speaking and gave Hesoid resounding speech, we can highlight two points: (a) language of poetry is a departure from ordinary speech; (b) the poetic genius or *pratibha*. Hesoid states it categorically that the Muses released him from the lowly animal existence and blessed him. Indeed, the power of the poet and that of the king are of the same kind and origin. By the side of the kingly function which comes from Zeus stands the singer's function which comes from Apollo and the Muses. Both are distinguished by the gift of attractive and persuasive speech. The *Vedas* speak of the poet as *vakpati*, the lord of speech. The Greeks attested his extraordinariness in this regard. Another dimension of Hesoid is his keen awareness of the moral corruption of man. In both *Theogony* and *Works and Days* we come across a picture of the decay of human morality, and the poet's belief in the divine justice. Hesoid's realism does not forsake myth altogether. He dichotomizes power between *aidos* and *nemesis*. The two conceptions describe the feeling for moral values and for the sanctity of justice and these two concepts have corresponding symbolism in the hawk and the nightingale. The nightingale whose name means the songstress represents the poet. The poet's function is to declare the blessedness of justice called *dike*.

Coming down the ages we find that Theognis also flags off his composition with a prayer and a short hymn of praise to Apollo. This is relevant because of the divine favour bestowed on the poet. Even the goddess Aphrodite favours the poet with a life that is luxuriously open to the sacred power of a grand passion. Believing in the dictum that which has beauty is loved for beautiful implied physical and

moral beauty together. This love for the beautiful and an affixation on noble deeds set the tone of his whole work. He professes to enshrine the lessons of life in his verses and truly enough, for he believes in disbursing knowledge when one is the friend of the Muse--inventing, composing and imparting in his own style. Parhaps here is a pointer to *sophia and aretai.*

As the precursor of the sophistic enlightenment, Simonides is remarkable for his skill in art and profound in his wise perception. Like Xenophanes and Archilochus, he breaks with the tradition and walking out of the conventional elucidation of words like *agathos, kakos, aischros* ('goodly,' 'mean,' 'shameful') emphasizes with prophetic insight the uniqueness of intention, justice and laws of society that parpetuate the glory of the city and the philosophic wisdom that acknowledges the limitations of humanity. Endowed with the power of pathos that is proverbial, Simonides works with a remarkable fluency and rhythm that has Dionysius in a state of admiration. His ability to delineate the fundamental human predicament with rhythmic unity and fluidity speaks glowingly of his poetic acumen. He knew the just exercise of his poetic spirit to clothe an emotion, which would otherwise have suffered cold neglect. He exhibits the poet's 'ability' to feel the sympathy, and puts his finger on the right tissue of human suffering. He concretizes a given human situation with vitalising power cloaked in the lustre of a language that seldom divorces it from its natural spontaneity. Dionysius praised his choice of words and his accuracy in combining them, and the ancient critics spoke eloquently about his sweetness and elegance. Under a confused glow of a disintegrating tradition, Simonides works fiercely with typical Ionian clarity and the 'adhesiveness' of the poet's mind that comprehends the bizarrerie of circumstances to infuse a warmth--a warmth that is embosomed in a new feeling for man and his growth in and with nature. He removes the logs from our eyes and makes us perceive the principles that honour acceptability and sensibility in life. He emanates as the prophet with a radiant creative power that becalms a besotted herd. This is an interesting angle in the formation of the concept of the poet.

With Sappho we come closer to our conception of the poet as the feeling self who can wrest a song from the sorrow and turn her joys into a melody. It was in Sappho's nature to react passionately and get driven to extremity in crisis. She is graced by the Muses and combines a melody that is true to the nature of a true poet. Her feminine nature knows only devotion to grace, the pain of spiritual passion and perceptive intelligence. In her poetry the topical is allied with the eternal in perfect balance. In fact, such a balance and genius find their strong feet in Pindar. Unlike Bacchylides, his art is never lucid, though not abstruse or orotund. It is the stamp of the brilliant mind of the poet working at his masterly best. *Theognidea* may have maxims, but it requires the poet's art to survive. Pindar wields language with a sublime power couching his soaring thoughts deftly, demonstrating in the process his inward strength and stability. The realm of his poetry paves enchantingly the roads that lead one to the 'inner resources' and leaves all exit doors closed. It is a self-contained universe manifesting the power of Parminides or Heraclitus with the radiance of the inner power that calibrates the emotion and acts of the heroes and the gods and untangles the intricate nature of men.

It is within the power of the poet to strike a rapport between values and their manifestation in life. He engineers a relationship between the pregnant past and the prospective present, and the cross-relations declare a 'power' that leads one to a higher governing reality. Pindar's art profoundly professes poetry as the universal medium. His choral songs weld music and words, and exhibit a wholeness. The extraordinary intensity of the poetic spirit surfaces in the victory odes, and Pindar lays great faith on the principle that achievements have a thirst for song. In the fifth triad of the first *Pythian* ode, Pindar emboldens his language on the anvil of truth as often he has done in his other odes. He admits the function of the poet as being the voice and conscience of the community, according the right emphasis on correct judgment. Being apothegmatic--harping on the need to be righteous, truthful and liberal--he transpires wisdom and indeed the treasury of songs that we have seen as being the soulful and artful effusions of the poet

creates the luminous sanctuary of immortality. This has obvious Vedic connection in that Dirghatamas, one of the most important of the poet-philosophers of *Rig Veda*, points at the holy nexus between access to truth and immortality. Pindar emphasizes the immortality conferred by poetry and the image of Apollo's golden lyre (significantly contrasted with the music of Dionysus) that bespeaks of a soothing harmony. This 'harmony' pacifies all the wild forces of the divine world, reemphasizing thereby the poet's power. In fact, the profundity of Homeric and Pindaric creations invariably point to *pratibha*. It is the power of the mind that makes Homer or Pindar see the subject of their poems as steeped in beauty, rendering in the process in apt language a picture of beauty they have seen. The concept of the poet combines *smrti* or recollection, *mati* or farsightedness, *buddhi* or intellect and *prajna* or intuition (poetic imagination). For Homer many a time it is a yogin's yogic perception. They have the creative talent or *Karayitri Pratibha;* it is *sahaja* or inborn.

The Greeks, indeed, have created a new world of poetry (*nirmiti*). With due regard to Mammata (*kavyaprakasa*), the poets with Homer in particular have exhibited the nine Rasas (love, humour, pathos, terrible, heroic, fearful, repugnant, wonderous and peaceful). Rajasekhara in *Kavyamimamsa* admits of the three types of poets of which I attribute the Greek poets to belong to two categories, namely the *sarasvata-kavi* and the *abhyasika-kavi*. Also, Ksemendra speaks of two factors that go to the making of a poet, viz. (a) divine favour, and (b) human effort (*kavikanthabharana*). Indeed, if Homer, Hesoid and Pindar belong to the first category, Simonides, Theognis, Bacchylides, Alcman, Ibycus, Mimnermus, Anacreon and the rest partaking in parts from the first division belong primarily to the second category. However, the discussion cannot end without a brief reference to Plato, a born poet and lover of poetry, who disclaimed it for higher truth of philosophy. In the corpus of Plato's *Dialogues* there are tributes to the vocation of the poet which are no less striking than the picture of the poet as the dealer of half-truth that we have in the *Republic*. The poet is either gripped by enthousiasmos (*Apology* 21-2; *Ion; Meno*) or the principle

of mimesis, and indeed he is a victim of a madness that is beyond his control. Despite his tirade and banishment of the poets, there is a wistful admission of the lingering attractiveness of poetry in the *Republic*. Plato may be taken to have paid the highest tribute to the poet when he points out that the Muses are ten in number. The tenth, said Plato, was Sappho, the Greek lyric poet. Outwardly, he bore an attitude of an obscurantist trying to muzzle the poetic impulse; but inwardly he emphasized on *techne* or the artful representation of men and actions but with a communication from the soul. I conclude this discussion with the following lines from Keats's poem "To Homer":

> Aye on the shores of darkness there is light,
> And precipices show untrodden green,
> There is a budding Morrow in midnight,
> There is a triple sight in blindness keen;

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SHAKESPEARE'S DOUBLE VISION IN RELATION TO GOOD AND EVIL

Seema Raizada

Shakespeare's plays display almost every facet of good and evil apart and in varying combinations. In this respect, characters and their actions are inseparable, since the state of the characters being good or evil is invariably associated with their actions. Whenever such characters reveal their thoughts in soliloquies or dialogues, they serve as a prelude to their actions or show their bent of mind which might ensue in action. It is only when Shakespeare intends to present a character in a symbolic way as well that he lends him the quality of absolute goodness or absolute evil. The heroines of the last plays and villains like Aaron, Iago and Iachimo are of that absolute category. They are envisioned positively or negatively, although Shakespeare's creative power endows each one of them with an individuality, filling us with attraction or revulsion in consonance with their goodness or wickedness. Barring these, the rest of his characters show mixed traits--good and evil in a varying proportion along with such other traits, appearing in some characters, which can be viewed as good or evil at different or at the same time. These are envisioned in the light of the double vision and yield a fascinating analysis. Their actions are accordingly good or evil just as their positive or negative attributes come into play, and sometimes, chameleon-like, they seem to act unexpectedly in a way which contradicts their earlier nature. Clearly, there is a doub le strain, which has gone into their making in their very inception at the visionary source in the dramatist's mind.

It is a universally accepted truth that 'good' is invariably positive while 'evil' is negative. In drama, right from the Greek dramatists to the moderns like T.S. Eliot and O'Neill, both these values have been the pre-eminent or sole themes of which the plot and characters are a medium of explication. The conflict of good and evil is a perennial theme of all literature, and it is most intensified in drama because this mode is distinguished by its

intensity. Finally, both good and evil are associated with moral implications and are limited at some point by the presence of the contrary element, but at the highest point of intensity they tend to be absolute.

Unlike the Greeks, Shakespeare shifts the responsibility for evil entirely to man even when there is a supernatural agency or another individual to act as its source. Hence his actions are also due to his volition. The focus is shifted entirely to the inner self and in the initial stage of the assault of evil, the negative vision presents its working. This revelation of the impact of evil and its working within the mind of the character distinguishes Shakespeare from other dramatists. It is more comprehensively seen in his tragedies. In *Romeo and Juliet,* where the inner world is not revealed, evil works externally. In *Antony and Cleopatra, Coriolanus* and *Timon,* the evil is given a more complex representation. The presentation of evil in these tragedies, as also in the last plays, has an inner dimension, but the technique of double vision in its working in relation to good is more subtle in his great tragedies.

In *Julius Ceasar* there is no obvious source of evil in the world of Rome except what may be called Caesar's excessive power which breeds fear in the minds of the conspiratiors, the excessive idealism of Brutus and the hybris of Ceasar which is due to his excessive confidence in himself. In a way, *Julius Ceasar* can be called a drama of excess like his great four tragedies. The reaction of the first of these evils--i.e., fear on the minds of the characters--is almost similar to that in *Macbeth.* They commit a crime which makes the situation worse. Cassius is the spokesman of this sense of fear, which initiates the action leading to the assassination of Ceasar and the subbequent events. The double vision presents it positively as a patriotic feeling, but negatively as an outcome of envy and personal ill-will. When Cassius speaks of "many of the best respect in Rome... groaning underneath this age's yoke,"[1] he speaks for others' longing for liberty and a life of self-respect. This is positive vision, evident in his following utterance:

> Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world
> Like a Colossus, and we petty men

Walk under his huge legs, and peep about
To find ourselves dishonourable graves.
Men at some time are masters of their fates:
The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves, that we are underlings.[2]

What is prompting him is a general cause. He speaks for all Romans, and in the last two lines for all men in all ages. It shows the positive vision geared to project a rightful cause.

But when Cassius speaks of Caesar more personally, comparing himself with him, it is the negative vision showing that in addition to more exalted motives, he is also envious of Caesar and resents his greatness:

I cannot tell what you and other men
Think of this life; but, for my single self,
I had as lief not be as live to be
In awe of such a thing as I myself.
I was born free as Caesar, so were you;
We both have fed well, and we can both
Endure the winter's cold as well as he:[3]

Evil is presented in all the three references, given above. In the first two, it is tyranny of dictatorship, while in the third it is personal envy. It is not yet given an inner dimension which we find in the soliloquy of Brutus, "It must be by his death...." The following two images of evil lie embedded in this revelation of the inner landscape of Brutus's mind:

And therefore think him as a serpent's egg,
Which, hatch'd, would as his kind grow mischievous,
And kill him in the shell.[4]

From Brutus' point of view these become points in the argument for killing Caesar, and both are based on a possibility, and not on a fact. This situation is presented by the double vision showing the honesty and sincerity of Brutus, while at the same time exposing the fallacy of his idealism. This is the way in which the whole character of Brutus in conceived. The fact of their belonging entirely to an imaginary world and yet subsequently used as concrete reasons for action makes for an additional quality in this representation of evil which extends to plays immediately following *Julius Caesar*, viz. *Hamlet* and *Othello*. Incidentally, this also becomes a movement from imaginary to concrete and from partial

to absolute evil.

In *Hamlet* the treatment of evil with reference to character and action is similar to, and yet in contrast with, that in *Julius Caesar*. The mental landscape is more fully revealed and the effect of evil is more comprehensively presented. The similarity lies in the fallacious reasoning; but whereas the hypothesis of Brutus is grounded on a possibility, that of Hamlet is based on fact. But thereafter, Hamlet's speculations move at a tangent away from that fact, and in place of the false hypothesis of Brutus leading to action, the true hypothesis of Hamlet leads him away from action. It is an interesting case of evil or the thought triggered off by evil serving to swell it out of bounds like the genie in the story arising from the bottle.

What happens to Hamlet at the first impact of evil is a twofold reaction on his mind: first, there is the stamp of one defect in his nature beginning to "do out" all his noble substance "to its own scandal"; second, he proportionately magnifies the evil till it overwhelms all experience and all existence:

> How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable,
> Seem to me all the uses of this world![5]

No wonder the whole universe becomes sterile, foul and dust-like, as he subsequently puts it to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern:

> ... this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appeareth no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours.[6]

The evil in Claudius is presented in the light of double vision: the negative vision presents his crime--his 'deed' like his "most painted word"--, while his repentance in the prayer scene displays a touch of positive vision.

Hamlet's acts, such as killing Polonius and mentally tormenting Ophelia in the Nunnery Scene driving her to madness and death, are a manifestation of the working of evil on his mind. Although there is nothing like absolute evil in *Hamlet*, the all-enveloping sense of sickness, rottenness and malignacy appearing in the images of ulcer, impostume and disease shows that Shakespeare is more exclusively preoccupied with the effect of evil on the

human psyche in this play than in any other tragedy. Hamlet's actions show how an excess of this consciousness atrophies the power of action, at least of right action.

Apropos of the role of evil in *Hamlet*, Bradley, otherwise a very penetrating critic, does not go very far. He "calls his mother's action an eruption of coarse sensuality,"[7] and feels that the subsequent revelation of his father's murder and his mother's adultery contribute to the "central mass of diseased feeling."[8] The impact of this evil is to wound his soul and Hamlet's entire thinking only lacerates it. What Bradley misses is deep insight into Hamlet's psyche.

Wilson Knight goes deeper and quotes William James from *The Varieties of Religious Experience* to show the working of evil on Hamlet's mind:

> ... you see how the entire consciousness of the poor man is so choked with the feeling of evil that the sense of there being any good in the world is lost for him altogether. His attention excludes it, cannot admit it: the sun has left his heaven.[9]

For Wilson Knight the effect of evil is manifested in Hamlet's sickness of soul, his death-consciousness and his attitude of negation:

> His consciousness, functioning in terms of evil and negation, sees Hell but not Heaven. But the intuitive faith, or love, or purpose, by which we must live if we are to remain sane, of these things, which are drawn from a timeless reality within the soul, Hamlet is unmercifully bereft. Therefore he dwells on the foul appearances of sex, the hideous decay of flesh, the deceit of beauty... the torments of eternity.[10]

In other words, Hamlet lives in an Inferno and that is the utmost limit to which evil can drive a man. It happens in *Othello* and *King Lear* again and more tangibly. These two plays explore greater depths of that abyss of hell-fire, variously called in these plays as "roast in sulphur"[11] and "bound upon a wheel of fire."[12]

In *Hamlet* the double vision provides two facets of Hamlet all along the action. The positive vision focuses the image of Hamlet as he was before the onslaught of evil and recurrently brings before us his better side to set off the rash, impulsive and sometimes brutal part of him which, like a ruined piece of nature, appears to us in his derangement. The treatment of Ophelia is

followed by his escape into the world of the players and talk with Horatio; the killing of Polonius is followed by the priest-like role with his mother; the scuffle with Laertes is followed by the description of his state like a gentle dove; and all his soliloquies reveal his god-like reason and thoughts that wander through eternity. Above all, just after his brutal image in the Nunnery Scene, there is the image of "the courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye, tongue, sword;" it is the positive vision of the dramatist alternating with the negative vision. Together, these two visions make up the character of the man who is an angel at one time and talks of drinking hot blood at another--the character whom Shakespeare's art has so "gingerly" presented.

In *Hamlet* the sweep of evil over the largest area of human psyche has been shown; the concentrated presentation of its furthest limit follows in *Othello* and the two sorts combine in *King Lear.* Bradley has analyzed remarkably well the functioning of evil in the scheme of *Othello.* What he says of Iago as an embodiment of evil in character and action can hardly be improved: "Iago's plot is Iago's character in action; and it is built on his knowledge of Othello's character...."[13] This statement also implies that Othello's character has a flaw, which exactly responds to Iago's evil. In other words, there is something akin to evil in Othello without which Iago's evil would not find a way into his mind. What awes the reader or the spectator is the absolute control Iago has on Othello just like a beast of prey holding its victim which can not escape its jaws.

It is clear that Iago and his actions are conceived by the dramatist's negative vision, and there is no trace of the positive vision because Iago does not manifest a single positive trait even for a moment. There is no doubt that Shakespeare has created him as an embodiment of absolute evil, and Bradley rightly affirms: "Evil has nowhere else been portrayed with such mastery as in the character of Iago."[14] This "absolute evil" in human embodiment not only destroys the world of Othello and Desdemona physically, but also tries to destroy Othello spiritually. In other words, he takes him to damnation. Othello asks Lodovico at the

end:

> Will you, I prey, demand that demi-devil
> Why he hath thus ensnar'd my soul and body?[15]

In Othello's act of murdering Desdemona we find annihilation of love--the very virtue which could redeem him. Othello's last speech is ample evidence of his final despair at this loss. Othello has eternally lost what Lear has regained in Cordelia's love. It can not be retrieved even in the life after death--the faith on which *Antony and Cleopatra* is built. To read any suggestion of regeneration in Othello's dying speech is illusory.

What emerges from the above discussion is that Shakespeare's negative vision portrays, to the very limit, the physical and spiritual devastation under the impact of evil when it tends to be absolute. After this Shakespeare seems to have been questing how evil can be controlled and overcome, while at the same time his positive vision elaborates the role of good. This is manifested as love which is used as a power to curb and transform evil. With *King Lear* the quest already seems to have gone a long way. Earlier, it can also be seen moving to some kind of resolution in the two problem plays--*All's Well* and *Measure for Measure*. *Troilus and Cressida*, written almost at the same time as *Hamlet*, asserts the presence of similar evil. In the words of Thersites:

> Here is such patchery, such juggling and such knaveryl All the argument is a whore and a cuckold--a good quarrel to draw emulous factions and bleed to death upon. Now the dry serpigo on the subject, and war and lechery confound all![16]

The imagery evokes rottenness and disease apparently beyond cure:

> Now the rotten diseases of the south, the guts-griping, ruptures, catarrhs, loads o' gravel in the back, lethargies, cold palsies, raw eyes, dirt-rotten livers, wheezing lungs, bladders full of imposthume, sciaticas, limekilns i'th' palm, incurable bone-ache and the rivell'd fee-simple of the tetter, take and take again....[17]

In *Measure for Measure*, although a later play, the malady is shown to be at a pitch:

> None, but that there is so great fever on goodness, that the dissolution of it must cure it.[18]

All's Well approaches the problem by making a statement which can be taken to be one of the ways in which Shakespeare solves

it. The French lord at Florence, talking of ertram's affairs, says:

> The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together--our virtues would be proud, if our faults whipt them not; and our crimes would despair, if they were not cherish'd by our virtues.[19]

We can now derive a few conclusions about Shakespeare's treatment of good and evil. His presentation of evil can be seen as a mounting curve. The earlier encounters with evil in *Titus Andronicus* and *Richard III* are like two sharp peaks of an undulating land, which give way to a pleasant plain with evil only like a hillock here and there. The happy comedies contain evil, which presents no real threat to happiness. Then, in *Julius Caesar* evil is so ambiguously presented as to be indistinguishable from good. Subsequently, the curve mounts steeply in *Hamlet* where it again moves evenly after evil reaches a certain pitch. In the Problem Plays like *Troilus and Cressida* and *Measure for Measure*, it maintains the same pitch. *All's Well*, dated earlier and appearing in a completed form at this period, shows the lower level comparable to *Much Ado*. Then, the highest point in this landscape reaches with *Othello*. In *King Lear*, we come to a more comprehensive stretch on a slightly lower level of intensity as though the height of one single manifestation is shared by three. In *Macbeth*, we find a renewal of the intensity of *Othello*, but part of it goes to the poetic atmosphere and it is also split in three manifestations. Thereafter, Shakespeare's mode of presentation changes and he envisions evil not only as inseparable from good (which is a part of his old mode), but sometimes gives it an ambiguity as in *Antony and Cleopatra*. However, he evolves it, in a final movement, into absolute good in this play. In *Coriolanus* and *Timon*, which are the last plays of his tragic period, evil acquires more general embodiments and after a movement on a comparatively lower pitch in the two Roman plays, it casts a dark shadow in *Timon* before sinking to a lower key of general embodiments in the last plays and co-existing with good as a part of the scheme of things.

What is noteworthy as an incidental fact is that the supernatural machinary, which was used by the Greek dramatists to usher in and finally purge the evil, is used by Shakespeare generally as a doubtful manifestation of evil. The usual touch of ambiguity is perceptible in his presentation of the supernatural. In the Last

Plays, the effects of ambiguity are maintained as a technique. Evil is no longer absolute; it seems to be a part of the scheme of things as was suggested in a statement in *All' Well.* The final implication is that like good, it has to be accepted. It can be transformed and the evildoer can be redeemed. Even this transformation does not seem to be final. It is Shakespeare's technique of double vision which accounts for all these doubts and ambiguities in his delineation of evil as in everything else. The characters and their actions are presented positively or negatively or ambiguously as he envisions them in "the gag and bone shop his heart."[20]

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SHAKESPEARE POSTMODERNIZED: TO WHAT EFFECT ?

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The picture of Shakespeare studies in the last twenty-five years has changed beyond recognition. We still have such traditional journals as the *Shakespeare Quarterly* and the annual *Shakespeare Survey*, but, apart from critical and interpretative works on Shakespeare's life, times and stage, we now face a plethora of theorizing on Shakespeare's plays. They range from structuralism to post-structuralism (deconstruction) with feminism, reader response, neo-Freudianism (*a la* Lacon) and neo-Marxism thrown in. So many different, nay contradictory and conflicting, approaches are vying with one another, each claiming to blaze a new trail.

Postmodernism (to use the more convenient umbralla term) was rather slow to arrive in the field of hakespeare studies. The earliest attempts at feminist readings started with *The Stranger in Shakespeare* (1972) by Leslie Fiedler. It was followed by an anthology, the *Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare* (1980) edited by C. Lenz *et. al.* The contributors adopted a more or less favourable attitude towards Shakespeare because of the strength shown by some female characters in an otherwise male-dominated world. Similarly, Germaine Greer (*Shakespeare*, 1986) saw merits in Shakespeare's rejection of the archetypal image of the 'passive woman.' On the other hand, Coppelia Kahn (*Man's Estate*, 1981) and Marilyn French (*Shakespeare's Division of Experience*, 1982) found fault with the playwright because of the ethos of male chauvinism dominant in his works. With the passage of time, this kind of reading gained upper hand. Lisa Jardine (*Still Harping on Daughters*, 1983) and Kathleen McLuskie ('The Patriarchal ard,' 1985) contested the positive and progressive picture of Shakespeare as a benign egalitarian. Feminist critics explored in detail the codes of phallocentricism and dramatic convention by which sexual difference was represented by Shakespeare.

Since the 1980s there is a boom of new approaches inspired

by theories borrowed from other disciplines. Foucauldian theory of power was harnessed to a brand of shame-faced Marxism in the works of New Historicists. Jonathan Dollimore made a splash with his *Radical Tragedy* (1984). Mikhail Bakhtin Provided the model for *Carnival and Theater* (1985) by Michael Bristol. Both Foucault and Lacan cast their shadows on Francis Barker (*Tremulous Private Body*, 1984). Semiotics inspired Kier Elam (*Shakespeare's Universe of Discourse*, 1984). Two collections of articles, *Alternative Shakespeare* (edited by John Drakakis, 1985) and *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory* (edited by Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman, 1985) provide a mosaic of diverse approaches. *Political Shakespeare* (edited by Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield, 1985) is another example of this new political emphasis.

Critiques of critics have not lagged behind. A. C. Bradley and John Dover Wilson have suffered in the hands of Terence Hawkes (*That Shakespeherian Rag*, 1986). So have Frank Kermode and the postmodernist Marilyn French in Malcolm Evans' *Signifying Nothing*, 1986. As Chris Baldick succinctly sums up: "Shakespeare criticism has thus transmuted from textual study of the cultural history of representations."[1]

No student of Shakespeare can remain blind to the "contemporary critical quarrels" (a Brian Vickers subtitles his work (*Appropriating Shakespeare*, 1993)). At the same time, one cannot help asking oneself: how many recent works on Shakespeare have really enriched our understanding of the plays? Some postmodernists have claimed that there has been a 'paradigm shift' in the field of literary criticism, comparable to the Copernican Revolution.[2] So far, nothing of substance has appeared to justify this tall claim. No single point of view has been able to prove its validity and establish its viability--no authentic insight into Shakespeare's tragic vision had been provided, nor a general theory of his comedies. A postmodernist might retort by saying that pluralism is the hallmark of this paradigm shift. Instead of having a unitary approach, we are now advised to accept the proposition that there might be several approaches to Shakespeare, all equally valid. To this, we may humbly point out that this is not an earth-shaking development. Right from the

seventeenth century, there has been more than a single approach to Shakespeare. Russian Marxists in the 1930s offered a sociological approach to Shakespeare. Similarly, the Freudians brought out their own version of Shakespeare.

Since there are no set rules of the game and no referee, subjective impressions and one-track search for evidence in support of one's pet theory can never be excluded from the field of literary criticism. However, can we not expect some amount of rigour and respect to at least a minimum of objective criteria ? For the present, we may leave out those schools, which refuse to subscribe to objectivity (such as the Reader Response-wallahs and Deconstructionists). However, what about the New Historicists ? They are bent on moving as far away from the texts as they like and then come back all of a sudden to a particular speech in some play as if that were enough to prove their point. The essentially fictive character of literature is simply forgotten. One is inclined to believe that the New Historicists have missed their vocation. They could have been good economic historians, but have come to a wrong discipline. The New Historicists are eager to find a mere mirror image of the times in literature. If the image tallies with the facts culled from non-literary sources, well and good; if not, the worse for the writer. Alan Sinfield's study of *Macbeth* is a case in point. He finds fault with Shakespeare because he conformed to the Jamesian ideology of the state. Since there were other views available to Shakespeare, Sinfield thinks that he should have made use of them.[3] This is an instance of utter subjectivism--like a petulant child, Sinfield would like to have what *he* wants, and if he is denied it, he will blame both the play and the playwright.

All the recent studies included in the New Casebooks *Macbeth* may be faulted on two counts: (a) making the marginal appear as the focal by a sleight-of-mind (Sinfield's view of the two doctors in the play as the prototypes of the conservative and liberal intellectuals respectively, p.134); and (b) using the play as a peg to hang their own ideas on (Janet Adelman and Marilyn French provided two glaring examples). Following this line of thought, Cedric Watts has branded *Macbeth* as conscious "royalist propaganda" ![4] That

Shakespeare here makes a case for rebellion against a usurper-king is summarily glossed over as a 'special case.' He would like Shakespeare to have followed Holinshed at every step faithfully and closely. The study ends with the following coda:

> I speculate that [if Shakespeare had done so] the result might have been a more complex, realistic and engaging play than the powerfully eloquent work of political mystification which we have now inherited.

This is an excellent instance of the 'might-have-been' school of thought so devastatingly polemicized by E.H. Carr.[6]

As a contrast to all this, let us look back at the Marxist criticism of Shakespeare in the 1930s and 1940s. There were similar attacks on the playwright, for he had despised the common people and seen the world through the eyes of a well-to-do townsman. But even then some other Marxists pointed out that there was something anachronistic about this reproach; we should not expect a poet of the sixteenth century to take his stand on the side of the proletariat which did not exist at that time. This is when Kenneth Muir published his seminal essay on Shakespeare and the cash-nexus, demonstrating that Marx was a Shakespearean rather than Shakespeare a Marxist.[7]

In fact, the Marxists, particularly the British Marxists, did not lose sight of the aesthetic aspect of literature. The essays included in *Shake peare in a Changing World* (1964) bear ample testimony to the balanced, dialectical view adopted by the writers (Marxists and near-Marxists) in their approaches to the individual plays. Arnold Kettle, the editor of the volume, had the good sense to declare: "Any approach to literature that does not start from the recognition of the pleasure we get from it must always be suspect."[8] He reminds us how the Chartists drew inspiration from Shakespeare's health and celebrated his birthdays. The 'veritable Shakespeare cult in the Marx family' is also mentioned.

Neo-Marxists like Terry Eagleton lack this kind of bifocal vision, and they are prone to play havoc with the plays and boldly impose their own 're-readings.' Ideology is out to replace human relationships. This is how a neo-Marxist attempts at revolutionizing the study of *Macbeth:*

> To any unprejudiced reader--which would seem to exclude Shakespeare himself, his contemporary audiences and almost all literary critics--it s surely clear that positive value In *Macbeth* lies with the three witches. The witches are the heroines of the piece, however little the play itself recognizes the fact and however much the critics may have set out to defend them.[9]

Such an 'unprejudiced reader' could only be Eagleton himself or his admirer like Dollimore or Sinfield. This is literary judgment run wild. Subjectivism gets the upper hand over everything including the text of the play itself. How far things have gone may be guessed from a recent attempt to out-Marx Marx. R.C. White is surprised that Marx did not appreciate Falstaff's subversive potential but rather made him a figure of fun.[10] 'Subversion' is now the in-word. One must discover it, even at the risk of ignoring the plain meaning ! This is even more interesting because White is apparently not a Marxist. This is enough to show the all-pervading influence of the New Historicists and neo-Marxists.

Thanks to television, literature (including drama) no longer provides the much needed entertainment and edification to people that it has been supposed to do so long. The new waves of literary theory have widened the gulf between the readers and the theorizers of literature. An ordinary member of the audience (or a televiewer) can never hope to comprehend these works laden with the jargons of so many different schools. Literary criticism in general and Shakespeare criticism in particular have become the property usurped by a handful of initiates--not so much in literature itself but in literary thory alone. Earlier critics could write with precision and in a readily comprehensible language. Now, thanks to the postmodernists, literary criticism is beyond understanding. Unless one masters the esoteric terminology of this or that school, one is not permitted to cross the thereshold. I, for myself, do not think that these fads will last long. As with all fashions, these too will pass. However, the saddest part of all this is that the present trend will fail to leave hardly anything worth reading. A future historian of Shakespeare criticism may brand the last quarter of the twentieth century as an interlude of confusion worst confounded.

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FATHERS ARE NOT INFALLIBLE: REVEAL A. MILLER, P.B. SHELLEY AND W. SHAKESPEARE

Brahma Dutta Sharma

No doubt, Manu teaches

इयं लोकं मातृ भक्त्या पितु भक्त्या तु मध्यमं।
गुरू शुश्रुषया त्वेवं ब्रह्मलोकं समुश्नते।।[1]

(By serving one's mother one attains the immanent world, by serving one's father one attains the middle world, and by one's devotion to one's teacher one attains the transcendent world of the Brahma Loka), and there figure in *Taittiriyopanishad* the moral instruction *"pitri devo bhava"*[2] (Treat your father as your god), signifying thereby that the father is not only to be obeyed but also to be worshipped, and Cassabianca's behaviour is regarded as a model for the sons because he acted strictly according to the instructions of his father and even though he died burning on the burning deck, in doing so he did not budge even an inch from the spot where his father had instructed him to wait for his father; but at least three Western Dramatists, namely, Arthur Miller, P.B. Shelley and William Shakespeare depict in their dramas--*Death of a Salesman, The Cenci,* and *Pericles respectively*--fathers as ethically fallible, doing moral wrongs even to their children.

In Arthur Miller's drama, *Death of a Salesman,* the protagonist Willy Loman is found by his own son Biff in a hotel in the company, behaving lewdly, Loman does not even admit the fact of his lewdness and goes on telling lies until he has found himself absolutely cornered.

Biff's non-cooperative behaviour during his father's life-time after this incident makes it evident that he wanted his father to be upright in his marital life and to be a faithful husband. No doubt, when Biff himself tries to get through the examination by influencing the Mathematics teacher and also wants his father to use his influence in his favour, he is not keeping himself confined to uprightness and is making an attempt to do what an upright person will not attempt. This means that Biff is not absolutely upright. But even a person who is not upright wants his near and dear ones to behave in a way that does not put him to shame and not to stoop

too low. When Willy Loman is trying to conceal the fact of his lewdness, it is obvious that he considers his behaviour to be too low to be justified. One can commit a wrong out of ignorance, no doubt, but if one does a wrong that one considers too low for oneself to have done, one has not remained true to one's own conscience. It is such a misdeed of his father that Biff resents. No doubt, Biff's is not the best course of action, as in case he had chosen to make his own behaviour exemplary he would have done good to both himself and his father. Yet by choosing to punish his father for his misdeed by resorting to truancy he does succeed in making his father's conscience constantly pricking him for his misdeed for years together.

In P.B. Shelley's poetic drama, he enci, a father commits the heinous sin of incest when he not only violates his daughter Beatrice but also resorts to the use of force in doing so. When he orders Andrea: " 'Bid Beatrice attend me in her chamber/This evening:--no, at midnight and alone' " (The enci I,I,11.145-45), it has not been mentioned explicitly as to what the Cenci wants to do and why he wants his young daughter Beatrice to attend him in her chamber, yet it is not difficult for the reader to infer that he wants his daughter to gratify his lust. That the Cenci is attracted towards his daughter by her beauty and has incestuous designs over her come to light also from the fact that some of the expressions he uses to describe some of the limbs of his daughter express his feeling of sensuality as, according to him, she has "golden hair" (The Cenci IV,i,1.6), "bright loveliness" (The Cenci IV,i,1.121), "love-enkindled lips" (The Cenci IV,i,1.133), "fine limbs" (The Cenci IV,i,1.133), and "life-darting eyes" (The Cenci IV,i,1.135).

The situation is such that even though the Cenci charges Beatrice with " 'disobedient insolence' " (The Cenci II,i,1.107), and one knows that she is acting in violation of the spirit embodied in Manu's teaching

बाल्ये पितुर्वशे तिष्ठेत् पाणि ग्रहस्य यौवने।
पुत्राणां भर्तरि प्रेते न भजेत् स्त्री स्वतन्त्रताम्।।[4]

(It is the duty of a woman to obey her father during her childhood, her husband during her youth and her sons during her widowhood,

and never to desire independence)
the reader is in full sympathy with the girl and wishes God to grant her prayer when she says: " 'O that the earth would gape ! Hide me, O God !' " (The Cenci II,i,1.iii), and soon comes the scene in which the reader, to his utter dismay, hears her reveal to Orsino:

Welcome, Friend !
I have to tell you that, since last we met,
I have endured a wrong so great and strange,
That neither life nor death can give me rest.
Ask me not what it is, for there are deeds
Which have no form, sufferings which have no tongue.
Orsino. And what is he who has thus injured you ?
Beatrice. The man they call my father: a dread name.
(The Canci III, i, 11. 137-44)

The suggestion is that this father had made his daughter a victim of his lust against her wishes.

In Shakespeare's drama, Pericles, Prince of Tyre, there figures a very wicked father named Antiochus who has developed incestuous relations with his daughter and who is so shrewd that he also wins her consent. The fact comes to light when we come to know the meaning of the daughter's riddle which she wants Pericles to solve:

I am no viper, yet I feed
On mother's flesh which did me breed.
I sought a husband, in which labour
I found that kindness in a father.
He's father, son, and husband mild;
I mother, wife, and yet his child.
(Pericles I,i, 11. 64-69)

The daughter seems to be proud of her incestuous relations. Pericles interprets the riddle to himself, while addressing Antiochus in his thoughts, as

... with foul incest to abuse your soul;
Where now you're both a father and a son
By your untimely claspings with your child--
Which pleasure fits a husband not a father--
And she an eater of her mother's flesh
By the defiling of her parents bed;...
(Pericles I,i, 11. 126-31)

and Antiochus' telling himself

He hath found the meaning, ...
(Pericles I,i, 1. 143)

make the fact crystal clear.

Such fathers are not to be obeyed and deserve punishment. It is unreasonable on the part of the Pope in Shelley's drama *The Cenci* to feel disturbed at the offspring's punishing the fathers and to express his feelings in these words:

> Parricide grows so rife
> That soon, for some just cause no doubt, the young
> Will strangle us all, dozing in our chairs,
> Authority, and power, and hoary hair
> Are grown crimes capital.
>
> (*The Cenci* V,iv,11. 20-24)

In fact, he himself admits that the punishment the offspring inflict on the fathers is just, because if a step is just one has to welcome it and if one does not welcome it one has to assert that it is unjust. Shelley's Pope is unreasonable as he describes the cause as just and yet regards the behaviour of the young as faulty.

One is all praise for P.B. Shelley's Beatrice even though she not only disobeys her father but also curses him and gets him murdered. Biff shouts at his father, discontinues his studies and stops playing and, at last, even creates conditions in which the father has to opt out of the world when he commits suicide. He is not wrong in making his father feel guilty for being lewd in his conduct, and his telling his father: " 'You fake ! You phony little fake ! You fake !' "[5] In this case the father's threats " 'I gave you an order ! Biff, come back here or I'll beat you ! Come back here ! I'll whip you !' "[6] not only go unheeded to but also sound hollow and ridiculous. Here is a father who is guilty of having done what an authority figure is not expected to do and having tried to cheat the son as a result of which the son no longer regards him as an authority figure.

Of these two girls, namely, Beatrice and the daughter of Antiochus, even though Antiochus' daughter is an obedient one while the Cenci's daughter is not obedient at all, Beatrice is definitely virtuous, while Antiochus' daughter is not, because virtue lies not in obeying A,B, or C but in remaining virtuous in one's thought, word, and deed. No doubt, since Beatrice has been subjected to the horrible unnameable deed by her father, she has lost the purity of her body, but the purity of her soul has remained intact. Nay, by

making hired murderers kill her father she expiates the impurity with which her body has been contaminated. But the daughter of Antiochus, by becoming a willing partner in the incestuous relations with her father, has become a sinner and has lost all claims to virtue.

The fact that these dramatists regard the conduct of each of these fathers as immoral comes to light when we turn our attention to the fact that punishments are inflicted on all these fathers on account of these misdeeds of theirs. So far as Willy Loman is concerned, his own son becomes an instrument in the process of punishment that comes to him. Biff starts committing shameful deeds like stealing, and the concern this conduct of his arouses in his father's mind leads the father to commit suicide so that the insurance money that comes to the family on his death is used by Biff to enable himself to start at least a tolerably decent business. Since Willy resolves to commit suicide chiefly for the benefit of his wife, the person wronged by his misconduct, as he says to Ben: "' ' Cause she's suffered, Ben, the woman has suffered' " (*Arthur Miller's Collected Plays,* p.212), it is obvious that he is being forced by circumstances to commit suicide only for his immoral act at Boston. This signifies that even though apparently Willy Loman commits suicide, actually speaking it is Biff who has indirectly killed his father for his infidelity to his mother. And the fact reminds us of William Shakespeare's view embodied in the following words:

> One sin I know another doth provoke:
> Murder's as near to lust as flame to smoke.
> (*Pericles* I,i, 11.137-38)

The Cenci in Shelley's drama is murdered, as the following report of Marzio, a hired murderer reporting the fact to Beatrice and her step-mother Lucretia, evidences:

> *Marzio.* We strangled him that there might be no blood,
> And then we threw his heavy corpse i' the garden
> Under the balcony; 'twill seem it fell.
> (*The Cenci* IV,iii, 11.45-47)

For the heinous sin of incest Antiochus gets a punishment which is quite appropriate and seems to have come from the Divine Being, as Helicanus informs Escanes:

> Antiochus, from incest liv'd not free;
> For which, the most high gods not minding longer

To withhold the vengeance that they had in store,
Due to this heinous capital offence,
Even in the height and pride of all his glory,
When he was seated in a chariot
Of an inestimable value, and his daughter with him,
A fire from heaven came and shrivell'd up
Their bodies, even to loathing; for they stunk
That all those eyes ador'd them ere their fall
Scorn now their hand should give them burial.
(Pericles II,iv, 11.2-12)

All this signifies that according to these three dramatists it is not always safe to obey the father, and that a deed does not become ethically sound only because the father or some such other authority wants it to be done.

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COLERIDGE, WORDSWORTH AND SHELLEY: INTERACTIONS AND INTERTEXTUALITY

R.S. Pathak

According to David Lodge, the most significant characteristics of postmodernist writings include open-endedness, contradiction, permutation, discontinuity, randomness, excess and short-circuit.[1] And the chief weapons in the armoury of postmodernist writers are said to be: intertextuality, self-reflectivity, narrative complexity, merging of high and low literature, allegory, historicism, pastiche and parody.[2] Some of these features, particularly parody, can be found in earlier writings also. Parody is, in fact, "as old as poetry itself."[3] The best parody surpasses mere imitation and stands on its own. In literary history we come across interesting cases of interactions and intertextuality, a set of which are discussed in the present paper.

Wordsworth's *Peter Bell* was written as a reposte to Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. It is a well-known fact that the two poet-friends made some unsuccessful efforts at literary collaboration. The Prefatory Note to "The Wanderings of Cain," for example, tells us how the whole scheme of collaboration in a poem about Cain "broke up in a laugh: and the Ancient Mariner was written instead" (*PW* I, pp.285-87). Although Wordsworth failed to collaborate on account of "the exceeding ridiculousness of the whole scheme," the two poets busied themselves mentally with the subject of guilt, suffering, expiation and wandering. Both *The Ancient Mariner* and *Peter Bell* bear traces of two traditional figures Cain and the Wandering Jew (portrayed in Lewis's *The Monk*, which Coleridge reviewed in *The Critical Review* of February 1797).

If we broadly trust Coleridge's account, "The Wanderings of Cain" was begun as a composition-core, and *The Ancient Mariner* was taken up jointly in November 1797 to raise money to pay the expenses of a walking tour.[4] The latter poem was completed by Coleridge and was included in the *Lyrical Ballads* brought out in the middle of September, 1798. Owing to differences in their nature and sensibility, as we know, Wordsworth was not happy with *The*

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Ancient Mariner. In an ungenerous and disingenuous note on Coleridge's poem, he complained that the Mariner as portrayed by Coleridge "does not act, but is continuously acted upon."[5] Wordsworth wrote *Peter Bell*, on the advice of Charles Lamb, as a kind of rejoinder to *The Ancient Mariner* to show that poetry could be written without "persons and characters supernatural." Both the poems deal with redemptive remorse following an act of cruelty to an inoffensive living creature.

The story of *Peter Bell* is believed to have originated in a newspaper account of how an ass was found "hanging his head over a canal in a wretched posture" before its master's dead body was discovered in the water,[6] though some of the details of Peter's past inhumanity might have been drawn from what the rover told the poet in Wales. While writing *Peter Bell* Wordsworth set himself to compose a work which should be as nearly parallel as possible to *The Ancient Mariner* in the theme and meaning of its story and in the final impression aimed at, but it sought to obtain these effects through a natural instead of a supernatural means.

Peter Bell is a lawless man insensitive to the beauties of nature. Coming to the edges of the Swale, he espies a solitary ass and plans to steal it. He mounts the ass to seek the cottage of its drowned owner to tell his widow about the tragedy. His spiritual experiences on the ride make him a reformed man. Peter had long withstood nature's benign influences and had never responded to its moral intimations:

> In vain, through every changeful year,
> Did Nature lead him as before;
> A primrose by a river's brim
> A yellow primrose was to him,
> And it was nothing more.

But when the ass returns home, the grief of its master's family moves Peter and, not unlike the Ancient Mariner,

> ...Peter [is] taught to feel
> That man's heart is a holy thing;
> And Nature, through a world of death,
> Breathes into him a sacred breath,
> More searching than the breath of spring.

A holy sense imbues Peter with a human sympathy such as he had

never felt. The joy of the son who returns and heaps affection on the ass is more than he can bear. He forsakes a life of crime and "after ten months' melancholy," becomes "a good honest man."

Ironically enough, Wordsworth composed *Peter Bell* the same year as *Tintern Abbey*. *Peter Bell* has won admiration from diverse quarters. Matthew Arnold, for example, announced: "I am a Wordsworthian. I can read with pleasure and edification *Peter Bell.*"[7] While Ernest de Selincourt thought Wordsworth justified in regarding it as "one of his greatest imaginative poems," Mary Moorman called it his "most brilliant narrative poem." One finds, however, much to desire in it. The ludicrous character of certain parts of the poem diverts our attention from its merits. Summing up his impression of the poem, Bernard Groom observes that "Of genuine poetry there are few traces. It is only when Peter's cruelty begins to recoil on himself that the story becomes poetically alive."[8] The intermittent touches of lyrical beauty land the poet in the old dilemma of the "two voices" which were ridiculed by J.K. Stephen as follows:

> There are two Voices: one is of the deep;
> It learns the storm-cloud's thundrous melody,
> Now roars, now murmurs with the changing sea,
> Now bird-like pipes, now closes soft in sleep.
> And one is of an old half-witted sheep
> Which bleats articulate monotony,
> And indicates that two and one are three,
> That grass is green, lakes damp, and mountains steep,
> And, Wordsworth, both are thine.

Peter Bell was received with much hilarity and made the subject of many parodies. James Russell Lowell noticed a climactic moment in the tale of Peter Bell and the ass:

> *Now*--like a tempest shattered bark,
> That overwhelmed and prostrate lies,
> And in a moment to the verge
> Is lifted of a foaming surge--
> Full suddenly the Ass doth rise!

Later on, Tennyson also noticed what he called the thick-ankled element in Wordsworth's verses.[9] Wordsworth's poetry at times stumbles into bathos and becomes discordant.

II

No parody of Wardsworth's poem is more significant than Shelley's. Shelley's *Peter Bell the Third* was written within "six or seven days" of the Manchester 'massacre' which took place on 16 August 1819, although the poem must have been conceived in the poet's creative unconscious as early as mid-June (*Mary Shelley's Journal*, pp. 125-26). In her Note to Shelley's *Poems* (2nd ed.; 1839), Mrs. Shelley says that the *Examiner* review of Wordsworth's *Peter Bell* "reached us at Leghorn." Shelley probably recieved the issues of the *Examiner* of 25 April, 2 May and 9 May 1819 in mid-June, which contained, respectively, Keats's anonymous notice of J.H. Reynolds's skit on Wordsworth's forthcoming *Peter Bell;* Leigh Hunt's scatching review of Wordsworth's poem; and Hunt's comparative study of Shelley's *Rosalind and Helen* with Wordsworth's *Peter Bell.* A study by John Buxom also testifies to the fact that *Peter Bell the Third* was conceived by the poet just after receiving the issues of the *Examiner.*[10]

Since Reynolds had rushed to print his skit *Peter Bell: A Lyrical Ballad* (popularly known as 'Peter Bell the Second') one full week ahead of Wordsworth's poem, it could not have been a direct parody of the latter's *Peter Bell.* Reynolds's poem includes nevertheless a general satire on Wordsworth's ponderous philosophising over commonplace objects, fake-looking sympathy for the rustics and some of his verbal tricks. In his burlesque manner, Reynolds presents Peter frequenting the Cumberland churchyard, laboriously reading and commenting on the epitaphs of Wordsworthian rustics like Simon Lee, Betty Foy, Alice Fell and so on, and, finally, coming upon a stone inscription that reads: "Here lieth W.W./Who nevermore will trouble you, trouble you."

III

In the dedicatory note to *The Witch of Atlas* (written in August 1820) Shelley humorously contrasted his poem with Wordsworth's *Peter Bell.* Whereas the Witch takes only three days in putting on a light dress of "flowing metre," Peter takes nineteen years in making up his proud dandy self with "a dress like King Lear's," and yet his infernal essence cannot be concealed. Wordsworth's "slow, dull

care" in retouching *Peter Bell* did not yield desired results because "Heaven and Earth conspire to foil/The over-busy gardener's blundering toil." Shelley's suave Horatian satire exposes the weaknesses of *Peter Bell* and its creator.

Shelley did not think it prudent to publish *Peter Bell the Third* until 1839. In the Dedication to the poem, he distinguishes four stages in Wordsworth's poetic deterioration: "He was at first sublime, pathetic, impressive, profound; then dull; then prosy and dull; and now dull--O, so very dull ! it is is an ultra-legitimate dullness." *Peter Bell* represents to Shelley the fourth stage of Wordsworth's creative career.

Shelley starts his poem from a verse which he thought uproariously funny, and which Wordsworth omitted from later editions of *Peter Bell:*

> Is it a party in a parlour?
> Cramm'd just as they on earth were crammed,
> Some sipping punch, some sipping tea,
> But as you by their faces see,
> All silent and damn'd !

Shelley's intention in his poem was to uncover the thought of damnation hidden in it, suggesting a sinister wickedness behind the apparent innocence of Peter (and, by implication, of Wordsworth).

Shelley had been a great admirer of Wordsworth's poetry, but later he condemned him (as his sonnet "To Wordsworth" shows) as a deserter of Truth and Liberty. In the Prologue to his *Peter Bell the Third* Shelley deals humorously with the three Peter Bells, which he regards as three stages in the evolution of the same person. The 'antenatal Peter' of Reynolds was mild and smug; in Wordsworth's hands he became 'a polygamic Potter'; and Shelley's is 'eternally damned.' *Peter Bell the Third* sets out to dramatise the damnation not so much of Peter as of his creator, i.e. Wordsworth.

Shelley's anguish and indignation were incited by Wordsworth's gradual drift towards conservatism and reactionary politics and philosophical and emotional egotism in poetry. In 1813 Wordsworth was appointed as the Distributor of Stamps for Cumberland and Westmorland. (And in 1843, on Southey's death, Sir Robert Peel made him the Poet Laureate.) In the 1818 election from the

Westmorland constituency Wordsworth, without openly compaigning against Henry Brougham, was believed to have done a lot on the sly by writing anonymous verses. One of Shelley's letters written to Peacock on 25 July 1818 expresses his disillusionment with the senior poet:

> I wish you had sent me some of the overflowing villainy of those apostles. What a beastly and pitiful wretch that Wordsworth ! That such a man should be such a poet ! I can compare him with no one but Simonides, that flatter of the Sicilian tyrants, and at the same time the most natural and tender of lyric poets.[11]

Wordsworth was condemned as an 'apostate' because he did not publicly oppose the Manchester massacre, tacitly supported the Six Acts and Corn Acts and was against the movement for the Reform Bill. Even Keats, a great admirer of Wordsworth's poetry, was left unimpressed by him. He wrote to George and Thomas Keats on 21 February 1818: "I am sorry that Wordsworth has left a bad impression wherever he visited in town by his egoism, vanity and bigotry." Later, writing to Richard Wodehouse on 27 October 1818, Keats distinguished his own poetical character from what he called the Wordsworthian 'egotistical sublime.' He was visibly annoyed when in April 181 Wordsworth's *Peter Bell* was notified for publication, as is evident from his letter to George and Georgiana of 14 February-3 May 181 : "Wordsworth is going to publish a poem called Peter Bell--what a perverse fellow it is ! Why will he talk about Peter Bells ![12]

Peter Bell the Third expresses Shelley's humorous banter and anger and even pity mixed with admiration for Wordsworth. Shelley's satire, says Mrs. Shelley, operates at the 'ideal' or aesthetic plane. It is, however, not merely an ideal 'warning' against apostacy but also a narration of the reality about Wordsworth as Shelley came to perceive.

Wordsworth's *Peter Bell* ends with Peter, "spiritually reformed," desiring to press the ass's master's widow "to his chest." Starting his poem with this very clue, Shelley suggests that Peter's reformation is only skin-deep--visible only "from his dress and mein," his old self being warmed up by "fresh-imported Hell-fire". Peter is identified with Wordsworth with his affected tone of holiness and religio sity:

His accent caught a nasal twang;
He oiled his hair; there might be heared
The grace of God in every word
Which Peter said or sang.

In Part II of the poem Shelley describes the Devil and his encounter with Peter. Shelley presents Southey as one of the incarnations of the Devil, who receives "the butt of sack" and makes "A fortune by the gainful trade/Of giving soldiers rations bad" and who tours Wordsworth's countryside "to see what was *romantic* there."

Taking a panoramic view of the contemporary scene, Shelley presents London as the seat of the Devil:

Hell is a city much like London--
A populous and a smoky city;
There are all sorts of people undone.

Peter Bell the Third, as Stephen Spender points out, changes "from mocking imitation of Wordsworth to savage satire on London," and the "effective satire" springs from "a boisterous side of Shelley which does not fit with the usual idea of his genius."[13] Shelley's description of London reminds us of Dr. Johnson's poem "London" and anticipates T.S. Eliot's London in "The Burial of the Dead" in *The Waste Land.* Shelley lumps together Tory ministers, upstart journalists, government spies and half-baked leaders--"a set/Of thieves... by themselves are sent/Similar thieves to represent." He also lashes the seducers given "over ladies/To lean, and flirt, and stare, and simper" as also degenerate society women "mewing/... Of their own virtue, and pursuing/ Their gentle sisters to their ruin."

In Parts IV onward Shelley's attack is focused on Wordsworth under the headings Sin, Grace, Damnation and Double Damnation. Wordsworth is thought to be an agent of the Establishment--"a toad-like lump of limb and feature" with a muddled mind and "loose fat smile." His prudery and sermonising are exposed ruthlessly. Ultimately, all people except "some half-idiot and half-knave" desert the "charm district" where Peter lives; only some reckless persons like Southey living within a radius of seven miles cannot escape.

The various treatments of the story of Peter Bell, their inceptions and twists and turns thus present interesting cases of interactions and intertextuality in one of the most significant periods of English

literature. The above analysis shows how the same theme treated by different writers assumes different focus and force depending upon the nature and sensibility of the writer. It also shows that a parody is not always attempted to denounce downright the original writer and that there is a tinge of admiration and kindredness between the different writers.

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The word 'parody' is derived from Greek *parodia*, meaning 'a song sung beside,' i.e. a comic imitation of a serious poem.

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DICKENS AND HIS PSYCHOLOGICAL COMPLEXES

Deepika Srivastava

In case one wishes to comprehend fully an artist's vision of life, as depicted in his writings, it is essential to be acquainted with the various aspects of his personality, his emotional makeup and his view of life. It is an acknowledged fact that however detached a writer may be, he is bound to reveal himself, inadvertently or otherwise, in his writings. There might be some differences of degree, but, by and large, the typical stamp of the writer is usually conspicuous in his writings.

There are writers who are intensely subjective and there are others who are predominantly objective or totally objective. The difference is not so much of kind as of degree. This fact is of great relevance especially in the discussion of a novelist like Dickens whose style has a typical subjective flavour and who can be easily bracketed with other eminent subjective writers like Goethe, Tolstoy, Gorky, Lamb, D.H. Lawrence and Hemingway. Whether he writes about the French Revolution in *A Tale of Two Cities,* or shows his concern with the court of Chancery in *Bleak House,* or writes about the workers' strike, the wretched misery of the poor, the miserable plight of children or the unsatisfactory state of education, the subject of his novels is usually he himself. His novels are his own personal experiences in disguise and his personality cannot remain submerged in them for long. Outwardly Dickens might have appeared to be placid, content and happy, but inwardly he was a volcano of deeply felt emotions and experiences, which errupted only when the creative frenzy overtook him.

Dickens's emotional health depended on his reliving his experiences in the works of art. For him, as for Lawrence later on, art had therapeutic functions. Spilka rightly observes that Dickens's "own arrested emotions sharply defined his creative sensibility."[1] What the critic is referring to are the shattering, traumatic experiences of the novelist's childhood and youth, his emotional sicknesses, so to speak. The novelist endeavours to cure them by resorting to

"cognitive analysis." Lawrence points out the efficacy of this method by stating that one can get rid of his feelings of guilt, shame, anguish, agony by writing about them: "one sheds one's sicknesses in books-repeats and presents again one's emotions, to be master of them."[2]

One must delve deep into the psyche of a writer to learn about his vital, creative concerns. Dickens had undergone some terrible, traumatic experiences that had made an indelible impression on his mind and had far-reaching consequences in his life. These were the nerve-shattering events that occurred to his father, his observation of the dismal, desolate life in the debtor's prison, his deep love and attachment for his mother and sister, the humiliations that he suffered as a young boy, his unhappy relationship with his wife, the premature death of his sister-in-law to whom he was emotionally attached, and the over-powering personality and dominance of his mistress, together with his dissatisfaction with his children. The origin of his concern with them may have been due to a variety of circumstantial factors of which we shall never know enough since the details about the period of his life when these incidents occurred are obscure. What the critic can do is to attempt to gauge how Dickens finally came to terms with these haunting preoccupations through a close study of his novels which, in fact, are the record of his struggle with them.

When Dickens in 1845 or 1846 wrote some fragments of his autobiography, he recapitulated for the first time the shame of his father's imprisonment and of his own employment at Warren's blacking factory. These two were the most traumatic events of his life and were revealed in confidence to John Forster after a lapse of twenty years of their occurrence. The suppression of these memories, however, made his novels richer, providing them with one of the most vital images of his fictional world--the contrast of the warm, congenial atmosphere of a family within and the desolate grim street and unfriendly wastelands outside.

It is in homeless, unfriendly and sordid outside world that the lost children of Dickens have their origin, wretched and miserable. Angus Wilson very pertinently points out in *The World of Charles Dickens:*

> From these days come the many lost children, poor and abandoned. From these days come also a certain righteousness, a certain hardness in Dickens's life, that he acquired to save himself from the pit he had nearly fallen into.[3]

Dickens had a deep respect for his father and mother before his father's arrest and imprisonment. But little by little his dreams were shattered and he found himself abandoned, uncared for, underfed, with no aim or purpose in life, very much like the children he has portrayed with "no advice, no counsel, no encouragement, no consolation, no support from anyone that I can call to mind, so help me God."[4]

But things were not really bad in the beginning. He was born in a comfortable family and grew up in an age which would openly flaunt its aristocratic contempt for the middle classes. The financial ups and downs of his family made the atmosphere somewhat taut and this was sufficient to produce the nervous tension present in his earliest memories. Dickens was barely seven months old when his parents had to shift to cheaper accommodation. Unfortunately, the financial position worsened and the bright days were soon to end. The family had to leave Chatham and shift to London. Probably Dickens was allowed to stay on for a short while so that he would finish his school term. If this be true, the rest of the family all piled up in the coach with the lone Charles seeing them off. The departure of the Micawber family for Plymouth in *David Copperfield* is reminiscent of this incident and vividly reflects the deep gash made in the young boy's mind and the crumbling down of his hopes and aspirations.

But more was to follow. Around the time he was twelve, he was to undergo an experience which turned into the greatest catastrophe of his life. This particular incident was so deeply embedded and became so thoroughly absorbed in his imagination that it greatly affected the rest of his emotional life. The event was undoubtedly the warehouse episode. Though it lasted only a few months, six to be precise, it left an indelible mark on his mind and was the most powerful experience of his life. The job, which transformed his personality and landed him into another world, was offered by James Lamert, a distant connection of the family, who

himself was manager of the warehouse. His parents readily accepted the offer and for this Charles never forgave them. The despair, the agony that was so cruelly inflicted on him was so deep that years later when he attained fame and glory, he spoke with genuine gravity:

> I often forget in my dreams that I have a dear wife and children: even that I am a man, and wander desolately back to that time of my life.[5]

The relevance of this incident in forming the emotional subject matter of his novels can not be exaggerated. As Edmund Wilson points out:

> The work of Dickens's whole career was an attempt to digest these early shocks and hardships, to explain them to himself, to justify himself in relation to them to give an intelligible and tolerable picture of a world in which such things could occur.[6]

The experiences of childhood do make a lasting impression, as "it is impossible to relive one's childhood without experiencing acute emotion."[7] The misery of those abandoned months, the supressed shame, the loneliness and desolation, bit so deeply into his inner being that he became the unparalleled monarch in his depiction and identification with the outcast, which touched the Dickensian reader so much. Such compassion and pathos were perhaps found nowhere else except in Dostoevsky, Gissing and Jack London. Dickens wrote about the humiliation in *David Copperfield:*

> When I tread the old ground I do not wonder that I seem to see and pity going on before me, an innocent romantic boy, making his imaginative world out of such strange experience and sordid things.[8]

It was due to his pangs of anguish and misery that he could lend that peculiar tint of solitude and deprivation in the portrayal of Little Nell, Esther and Florence Dombey.

Apart from these traumas, he underwent similar nerve-shattering disappointments in the sphere of love. All his love liaisons ended up in sheer frustrations and completely shattered his conception of himself as a romantic hero thereby destroying his faith in his destiny. One of the major defects of the Dickensian writings is the total absense of any sympathy with or understanding for women. The source of his imaginative shortcoming, which spoilt so much of his style and art and brought intense misery in his life, was based on the second great trauma of his youth--the unfulfilled love he

nurtured for Maria Beadnell. It was a case of mismatched backgrounds--the insecurity surrounding the Dickens household and the charms and grandeur of the Beadnell's family. What these four years of loving her did to him, he could never forget. His misery made his earlier sufferings more agonizing and pathetic. His unhappiness hardened his determination to make it in life at all cost. Because of these experiences, he had set himself to fight his way out of obscurity and poverty. As a result of his frustrated affair, he exhibited in his writings, while dealing with love, an idealized unreality or a kind of comic pathos. All said and done, the behaviour of the two women, his mother and Maria, both in whom he had placed deep trust, had a curious effect in making him project women in their numerous vanities and silliness in some portrayals, whereas in others, he tried to bring in those qualities which he aspired for in women but never could find in them--the image of half-girl, half-angel, who by her sheer purity and innocence leads her man to the path of Heaven.

Since there was an underlying mother fixation in Dickens, he beautifully showed the anguish of a son on being separated from his mother in *David Copperfield,* when David bites his step father's hand. David marries Dora bacause she is an exact replica of his mother. Dora is patterned exactly on his mother, who is lovable but not loving. Clara Copperfield is the child-wife whom her son regards as the ideal woman and simply dotes on her. But she is snatched from him by his step-father and now the maternal void is filled by another Clara (Peggotty). David is content and acknowledges her as his mother's substitute. After maturing, he searches for his mother's substitute in Little Emily. When later in the novel, he seeks shelter with Miss. Trotwood, he comes across Dora for whom he feels the same kind of love he felt for his mother.

Time, hard work and also a determined spirit contributed in making Dickens get over the memory of Maria so much so that barely three years after the affair ended, Dickens started getting serious about Catherine Hogarth. Her father, George Hogarth, was his senior on the *Chronicle*, and Dickens fell for and married his eldest daughter who had little resemblance to his first love. But, as

Edgar Johnson comments, "She was not seldom in low spirits, with feelings of vague crossness, of causeless melancholy."[9] The slavish adoration he had for Maria was not to be repeated; he was determined not to be ill-treated again, though he earnestly loved Catherine. But it was rather strange that even before marriage could take place, quarrels became a regular feature between them and Dickens could never understand her cold behaviour and would often reproach her for it. However, after a patch-up all would be well. Often his "dearest Kate" made up by coming to him along with her sister, Mary, to share breakfast with Charles. It was not long before the two got married, but the love was momentous and the marriage was as unsuccessful as it could be.

The marriage, however, brought him into contact with Mary, his sister-in-law, who made her way more deeply into Dickens's heart than either his wife or anyone else for that matter. She was an emotional support, an anchor for him and had exercised a profound influence on his life till her premature death after a year of the marriage. However, at seventeen, Mary died, and understandably, his grief was violent. Gradually, the grief healed with the passage of time, but she continued to appear to him in his dreams as a spirit. As a tribute to her, he portrayed her in most of his earlier novels, especially in the characterization of Little Nell in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, a novel written probably to heal the deep wound caused by the premature death of Mary. No body would miss Nell the way he would. Apropos of this, he says:

> It is a very painful thing to me, that I really cannot express my sorrow. Old wounds bleed afresh when I only think of the way of doing it. What the actual doing it will be, God knows... Dear Mary died yesterday, when I think of this sad story.[10]

Indeed, she lived on in his imagination. Throughout his entire literary career his writings had glimpses of her radiant image in some form or the other. Ruth Pinch in *Martin Chuzzlewit* glows with the same tenderness and love; and again in *Dombey and Son*, Florence Dombey, showering unending devotion on her brother Paul, and father Mr. Dombey, is patterned once again on his beloved Mary; in *David Copperfield*, the serene and angel-like Agnes is Mary reborn; and in *Little Dorrit*, the sacrifical spirit of Amy is reminiscent

of Mary Hogarth.

While describing his young characters who fell victim to death, Dickens brought in a reverential pathos, which was induced surely by the memory of Mary's death. It was agonizingly present while Little Nell lay dying, and six years later, when he was to compose the death scene of Paul Dombey, it came flashing in his memory once more. It was solely due to her angel-like presence in the novelist's life that the fading away of David Copperfield's "foolish and simpering" child-bride, Dora, is given an aura of sublime dignity. Even in the last novel he wrote, *Our Mutual Friend,* the echoes of Mary's loss still vibrate with passion and ardour in the death of Betty Higden's grand-child, little Jonny.

It was at this crucial juncture that many marital discords started resounding and many factors were responsible for the total failure of the alliance. Some include Georgina Hogarth's name, too, in the long list of reasons given for the breaking-up of the marriage, but Dickens denied the allegation almost vehemently:

> No one can understand this but Georgina, who has seen it grow from year to year, and who is the best, the most unselfish, and the most devoted of human creatures. Her sister Mary, who died suddenly and who lived with us before her, understood it as well in the first months of our marriage.[11]

Over and over again in the later years, both husband and wife found it impossible to carry on with the farce of being married, and Catherine finally opted for separation. But the children were their first consideration and for their sake, they had to put on the appearance of being together. It was during these months of anguish that Ellen Lawless Ternan entered his life like a breeze of fresh air in 1857. The eighteen-year old, who played a minor role in the Manchester performances of *The Frozen Deep,* greatly fascinated him. To him she was like a princess, who he wanted to flee away with.

Eventually, he had her as his mistress, though he continued to deny furiously any guilt in his relations with the beautiful girl of eighteen, old enough to be his daughter. In the indignant ardour of his deep attachment, he resented the fact of Ellen's name being dragged into a controversy which amounted to mar her reputation. His wife's bitter suspicions enraged him all the more. Eventually,

Catherine left the house, and Dickens fervently endeavoured to make some compromise short of public separation. He had to maintain appearances as he feared that the Victorian society and its censures might adversely affect his financial security, if his books ceased to draw attention owing to this affair. So, an arrangement was worked out: Catherine was to live in a house of her own and receive 600 annually. The eldest son would go with her, the rest of the children would stay with their father. But suddenly news got round that Mr. Hogarth and Helen Hogarth, two members of a family whom he had helped unconditionally, were tarnishing his good name. Dickens was enraged and ordered that they should retract their sordid accusations, else he would pay nothing to Catherine. Finally, another settlement was agreed upon and he ultimately got freed from his wife. Both of them suffered irrevocably. He was a staunch believer of the fact that all his sufferings had resulted from the mistake of a marriage contracted in his youth.

Thus began the period when the relationship between Dickens and Ellen deepened into a liaison. It was not possible for them to enter into wedlock, but she moved over at Gad's Hill, where Dickens was staying with Georgina. She accepted Ellen by showering endearments (dearest Ellen), though Dickens's daughter, Mary, was quite against the young woman, born a year later than herself. The affair, however, could not last--Ellen was ashamed of being the mistress and Dickens could no longer carry the facade. According to Nisbet:

> Dickens was seized by a sense of panic that the discovery of the real skeleton in his cupboard would destroy him. At the same time, however, sense of panic was strangely coupled with a strong sense of confidence that he could and would control the public he had learned to know so well during the twenty years it had idolized him.[12]

Dickens could never come to terms with the dark hidden side of himself and his 'Anima'--the magical symbol of woman in us, as Jung calls it--and this remained something which he could never attain. Had he found a stable and satisfying relationship, it would have certainly healed the impaired spirit of the great novelist.

Ellen's valuable contribution to the English novel cannot be denied. Her personality left an indelible mark on Dickens's later

works. He was obsessed with her--there is a striking similarity between her and Dickens's heroines like Estella Provis, Bella Wilfer and Helena Landless. When Dickens was infatuated with her first there was an innocence about her, which greatly resembled the pure innocence of the children portrayed earlier. But gradually, intimacy revealed her otherwise. Hence later he changed his concept totally and projected his heroines resembling her as firm, hard in their dispositions, livelier and more sexual, as can be seen in the portrayals of Estella, Bella Wilfer, Rosebud and Helen Landless:

> From Ellen Terman, Charles Dickens acquired late in his career some sense of what it was like to be a woman. In his association with her, he finally entered the large company of Victorian respectable men with secret lives.[13]

It is something of a shock to see how exactly Dickens's understanding of the details of his own life parallels his conception of life in the novels. What is striking is not so much the use of his own particulars as story material, but rather the application of his artistic principles to mould them and adapt the details wonderfully in his novels. His fatalistic view of life, the strong conviction that Fortune has not dealt fairly with him, corresponds precisely with the impression of his stories. In spite of his immense popularity and success, he was never totally satisfied with life and inadvertently in his novels, he often reverted back to his own character. Novelists generaly identify with themselves, but Dickens's involvement with his emotional make up is so coherent that anyone can see the resemblances. In all his creations and fantasies, there are flashes of his own experiences, glimpses of his own anguish, and fragments of his own life. Because of his rich and varied life, his writings become doubly rich and powerful, where fantasy and realism are immortally blended together. His novels are, therefore, endowed bountifully with his emotional experiences and reflect his own visions and aspirations.

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RETURN OF THE NATIVE WOMAN IN CANADIAN LITERATURE

Shyam Asnani

A Native Woman in Canada still bears the burden of double marginalization. With the aboriginal language dead and literature demanded, the Native Canadian society faces the imminent threat of being deprived of the traditional wisdom embodied in tribal lore. Until recently "Native" was a conventional figure in Canadian Literature but not a voice.

But over the years, the "Margins" have discovered the ways of speaking vociferously from the fringes of power. They have started contributing creatively not only to their tribal culture, but to the national culture as well. The publication of *Slash*[1] by Jeannette Armstrong and *I Am Woman*[2] by Lee Maracle marks an augury of the emergence of Native culture as a forceful presence on the Canadian literary scene. Both writers are women Natives; both books have appeared in the same year. Both draw the attention to the absence of authentic Native Texts in the Canadian canon, and both advance an alternate canon from what has been an "invisible" visible minority; both question the issue of "cultural appropriation," the strategy whereby creative literature by Native in general, and by Native women in particular, has been ruthlessly and systematically marginalized by the "dominant discourses."

Whereas Marcale's book addresses the Native people in desperate circumstances who need to recover the broken threads of their lives, in *Slash* Armstrong identifies decolonization of race, sex, and class as the solution to the systematic oppression, and this cannot be achieved without an examination of the ways in which these oppressions affect individuals and groups. Employing different strategies of dis/placement and decentring of existing subject-positions, these two Native writers challenge the established canons of address and representation. Through their re-presentation of their political agenda as feminists and Natives, framed and staged as tentative narrative truths, both signify their "otherness" in the very act of refusing the trope of subjugation. Both envision the survival of "what is human in an inhuman world" and present the possibility

of a radically new ending to the story.

These two Native writers articulate with infinite wisdom and anguish of what it is to be a Native woman.. They do not narrate the experiences of the distant past but of our age. Anger and loss and pain pervade both the books, but they are not bereft of hope. That both end looking at the potential of the future rather than at the bleakness and agony of the past is only the most plausible of the ways in that they open up possibility rather than dogmatically close it down.

Some of the pernicious consequences of sexism, racism, and classism for Native Women in Canadian society are documented in such books as Maria Campbell's *Halfbreed*[3] and Beatrice Culletion's *April Raintree.*[4] which illustrate the truth of Maracle's assertion that, like sexism, "racism is for us, not an ideology in the abstract, but a very real and practical part of our lives" (*IAW* 3). In *Slash,* however, Jeannette Armstrong (An Okangan writer) provides a more thorough and complex description of racism, sexism, and classism as the by-products of colonialism. Armstrong also identifies decolonization as the solution to the systematic oppression and as the "means to defuse specific issues such as native land claims, which are easier to deal with from a position of self-sufficiency."[5] However, decolonization cannot be achieved, or even contemplated for that matter, without an investigation of the ways these oppressions affect individuals and groups. As one woman in *Slash* puts it:

> The only way that we can really regain control is for us to really change. It means that we're going to rebuild our self; rebuild our health, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. We're a long way from being totally in control over our lives. In fact we can't even talk about it, except we know that it is possible and that it is what we are moving toward (*Slash*, 218).

Slash is the story of one Indian man's search for "a way out of this living death (caused by colonialism and the resulting oppression) by way of prison, spiritual confirmation, and active political struggle" (*Ryga*, 9). Armstrong exposes the fake ideas and debunks the choices that White acculturation has forced on Native people in Canada. Even when Slash has "seen through the fake idea that society must be built on the repression of disssent, he is still faced with the simplistic choice offered to him by the dominant

discourse: to assimilate or vanish. He discovers that there is something terribly wrong with the dominant "liberal" ideology's promise that western democratic society offers equality for all, and a free choice to minority group members. At first it might seem like a choice, albeit a limited one: assimilate or vanish. In practice because of the combination of institutionalized racism and economic marginalization, even those who choose assimilation are "usually unable to succeed on White terms. And to do so they usually have to repudiate their past, their culture and even their family. The brutal reality imposed by structural racism means that for a 'visible minority' even those that do attempt assimilation rarely succeed: 'assimilate or vanish.' becomes simply 'vanish': into the wilderness, into death, slums and skid row, into the economic and social margin, the margin whose major purpose is to affirm the centrality and superiority of White culture.

When the story opens Thomas Kelasket, also known as Slash, is an acutely sensitive boy in Grade VI from a happy stable family living a traditional life on a good resere. His troubles begin when he is forced to attend a town school off the reserve. He studies hard and makes good marks, but is confronted with culture shock. Trying to come to grips with social prejudice, he begins to question and think, "I don't know who is right any more, he confesses to a friend. Slash has become a troubled teenager. He is caught up in the political ideological imbroglio of the militant phase of the American Indian movement in the 1960s. Slash indulges in all passionate and tense restlessness of a period when oppressed and powerless people, moving together, changed themselves and their country profoundly and permanently. He travels back and forth between the US and Canada, joining sit-ins, blockades, protest rallies and demonstrations, participating in discussion after discussion, and always listening to a variety of points of view from the most assimilationist to the most radical. And always there was no agreement, no tidy solution.

Slash learns that he has been hailed as part of a generation, not just as an individual. He says, "I was important as one person but more important as a part of everything else. That being so, I

realized, I carried the weight of all my people as we each did.... I saw then that each one of us who faltered, was irreplaceable and a loss to all. In that way, I learned how important and how precious my existence was" (p.203). Instead of being interpellated as subjects by a "society that neither loved us nor wanted us to be a part of it" as "second class citizens" (p.249) the characters in this novel and its Native readers, are hailed as precious members of a threatened group. The novel appropriately ends with the vision of a child who represents the future generation: Slash and Maegi's son Morton "Little Child" is exhorted by Slash in these words: "You are our hope. You are an Indian of a special generation. Your world will be hard but you will grow up proud to be an Indian.... You will be the generation to help them White men change because you won't be filled with hate...." (p.250).

The book, thus, not only gives a condensed and fictionalized historical account of the rise of Native activism in Canada and the U.S. since the 1960s, but also as it does so shows Slash working his way through his experience of endless debates, meetings, marches, occupations, demonstrations, some peaceful, some brutally repressed by police force, to a political position. Significantly, neither the Native subject position nor this political position is presented as obvious, or as a fait accompli, but as the result of a continuing process of struggle.

Slash knows the futility of having special status in the Constitution, for those given the special status cannot reproduce their culture. He therefore realizes that moral and literal ownership of the land is all that provides a base for that cultural reproduction: "We did't need anybody's Constitution, what we have is our own already. We hold rights to the land and to nationhood.... We want to keep it. They are trying to make us hand it over by telling us that we have no choice. That's a lot of bull" (p.214). It doesn't seem surprising that having gained these insights, Slash settles down, marries Maeg and they have a child. Nor does it seem surprising that he develops the position that the settlement of land claims to get economic power is dangerous without recognizing the need to remedy the effects of cultural dispossession: "Not too many realize

the biggest victories won't be in politics and deals made, but in the putting back together of the shambles of our people in their thinking and attitudes.... Even if one-quarter of the people come out stronger about being Indian, it would be worthwhile. The heck with what happens in politics. We would grow in numbers because we would pass it on to our kids, and someday there would be better days for our people in the new world" (pp.148-49). The central meassage pervading the entire narrative is that a faith that process and struggle are more important than conclusive settlements or final answers. When aboriginal rights are recognized in the Constitution Slash is appalled:

> Many of our leaders would be living up to get compensation on their lands. That would be the worst devastation of all. Our rights would be empty words on paper that had no compassion for what is human on the land.... We would no longer know freedom as a people (p.249).

For Slash, the two decades were an educational experience characterized by excruciating pain, abject frustration and systematic marginalization. Like the archetypal hero in search of truth, Slash the political activist emerges from the debris of his mentally delibitating experiences stronger and wiser, choosing to return home to the community of his reserve. When he realizes that his old Chief had said the same things he had heard from the Elders and medicine people of the different tribes he visited across North America: "I thought about how much farther ahead I would have been if I had listened to my own parents teach me those things while I was growing up. Instead it hadn't been good enough. I had to look for other solutions. I realized that there were people like me who had all that teaching right at home and had completely missed the point" (p.214). Like the archetypal hero, Slash had to suffer before he reached wisdom. With a better understanding of the whole Indian Rights Movement, he is content to settle down in the hope that the next generation, symbolized in his young son, would gain same advantages and be in a position to live with honour, pride, and dignity.

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REREADING RELIGION IN THE NOVELS OF ALICE WALKER

Prasanta Kumar Panda

Feminists have always considered religions as one of the tools in the hand of the patriarchal tradition to keep women in their depraved position. In practice this belief has given scope to feminists to explore new avenues as writers. Alice Walker, one of the most controversial authors, who calls herself a womanist rather than a feminist, celebrates her questions on religion in her novels. She has a rare dexterity in moving to and fro in history as well as in different geographical surroundings to question the practices which make women suffer. Her novels force the readers to reread religion with a view to finding out domains where patriarchy fails to see the fault in giving women lesser position than men, reasoning out in their favor with the help of religion. With this theoretical orientation I shall explore the web of the novels in question to prove rereading religion is one of the tasks Walker has undertaken to expose sexual politics operational in Christianity. In other words, Walker tries to demonstrate her capacity to challenge the patriarchal orientation in reading and writing fiction that hides men's injustice to women by simply taking the excuse of religion. Men, owing to their physical superiority, have always tried to dominate women in every field of life. Though for a time span they have felt women are superior to them because they can produce life which men cannot, the religious sanctions put them almost in chains--they have always been treated like slaves of their husbands.

Rituals always play an important role in the life of people concerned with religion. Being conscious about it Walker tries to neutralize its effect in one of her novels. *Meridian,* Ruth D. Weston has made a beautiful analysis of this truth in the following lines: "The novel concludes with an episode in which Truman performs a ritual of confirmation in acceptance of his new role" (1987, 103). Further, Walker tries to dismentle the ultimate prerogative of the male by attributing it to Meridian, which shows she is conscious about the questions she puts through a character. She fabricates this novel as a ground "to explore the relation between men and women, and

why women are always condemned for doing what men do as an expression of their masculinity. Why are women so easily 'tramps' and 'traitors' when men are heroes for engaging in the same activity" (1986, 256).

This is not only true in the level of personal relationship but also regarding their position in the political arena where religion has played an important role till recently. Before the transgression we get glimpses of her consciousness in her activities that reflect in first believing in Christianity and then rejecting it--because it fails to provide social justice--totally engrosses herself in the Civil Rights Movements. She remembers her childhood days when she used to visit Church with a sense of enthusiasm and ecstasy related to the experience unique only because it is a part of her being Christian. Her lost faith is reflected in her political activity. First she declines to kill for the sake of revolution, just because a Christian is not expected to kill. But later when she realizes religion cannot bring any social change for the better she expresses her willingness to kill. Walker makes it clear in her symbolic act of quoting Akhmatova's poem "The Last Toast":

> I drink to our ruined house
> to the dolor of my life,
> to our loneliness together;
> and to you I raise my glass,
> to lying lips that have betrayed us,
> to dead cold, pitiless eyes,
> and to the hard realities:
> that the world is brutal and coarse,
> that God in fact has not saved us (1976, 125).

This can be considered as a rereading of the lines sang in a church she listened to at the age of thirteen, sitting next to her mother. The enchanting voices of the girls, the women, and the stalwart fathers enticed her but she was unable to submit herself before the master. "But she had sat mute watching her friends walking past her bench accepting Christ, acknowledging God as their Master, Jesus their saviour, and her heart fluttered like that of a bird about to be stoned" (Walker, 1976, 16). Walker has shown Meridian as a person putting a question mark to the system of submitting one's ownself before God for nothing.

In *The Color Purple* the interdiction "You should better not tell nobody but God" (Walker, 1982, 3) under which Celie writes her letters to Father the God about her sexual exploitation is nothing but an outright mockery of her silence compared to the silence of God. We become sure of it when Shug urges hesitant Squeak to tell the story of her rape before them: "If you cannot tell us, who you gone tell, God" (Walker, 1982, 167). We are forced to think so because she knows like all the sources of strength in this world that can rescue her from the drudgery, God is a distant possibility. It goes without saying that her letters cannot bridge such a gap between reality and illusion. The connection she produces in the body of the letters she writes stands for reality and God stands for illusion. The connection she produces in the body of the letters, therefore, must not bring any sign of redemption for her. James C. Hall has summed it up in his pithy statement, "Celie's path to selfhood involves the evaporation of patriarchal Christianity (1992,90).

Rereading religion in Walker does not end with a note of interdiction as in case of existing Christian texts. Rather, it is full of interrogations. For example, Celie thinks deeply about the gender of God, because she feels it plays a major role in the life of a woman like her. She prefers 'it' as a pronoun for God instead of 'he' or 'she' because it has no gender. Later we find Shug doing the work of reading religion for Celie when she says, it is not possible to perceive anything but 'he' as God. Shug explains the situation in the following words: "Men corrupt everything.... He on your box of grits, in your head, and all over the radio. He try to make you think he everywhere. Soon as you think he everywhere, you think he everywhere, you think he God" (Walker, 1982,168). One can see this is essentially feminist rereading of the mind of the woman who on her own fails to see anything good in God that can favor her. She expresses her feeling in the following words: "He been there so long, he don't want to budge. He threaten lightning, floods, and arthquakes" (Ibidem). Thus the omniscient God is vindictive rather than beneficial to those who doubt his capacity and wish to dethrone him as Celie wishes to do. In other words, in the eyes of Celie, there is no fundamental difference between a die-hard patriarch and God.

The Color Purple further gives us occasion to rethink about the concept of prayer as a private affair and experiments can be made on it to suit one's own purposes. As in case of Celie it is writing to God, about things she cannot speak to anybody else. But when Celie starts writing to Nettie, her lost sister and now a missionary in the dark continent of South Africa--nearer as compared to God in her imagination--she peculiarly concludes them with 'amen,' which was missing in her letter to God. This implies, when one prays it need not necessarily directed towards God, it can be enything or anybody you love and respect and hope for some respite from existing society and situations. This indicates the attitude of Celie, in a very upright and practical manner, substitutes Nettie for God, which is a questionable act in Christianity. Walker seems to advocate a practical method of substitution that abounds in our day to day life, instead of giving priority to the absolute faith in God.

The character that brings about a lot of change in the life of Celie can be seen as an iconoclast as well as an antithesis of the Christian way of life. Shug's life style is a rejection of the values of Christianity as the basis of social life. Despite her horrible condition, when she was brought to the household of Celie, she finds a way to endure: "Ain't nothing wrong with Shug Avery. She is just sick. Sicker than anybody I have seen. She sicker than my Mama when she die. But she more evil than my mama and that keep her alive (43). This statement of Celie makes it clear that there lies some strength in being anti-Christian in nature. To supplement to this belief later Celie records the emergence of a different kind of religious consciousness: I wash her body, it feel like I'm praying" (45). Surprisingly, Shug's presence makes Celie feel more at ease than she used to feel her own home when Shug was not there. Through these episodes Walker wants to reverse the Christian way of marital life--a single spouse at a time. Further, she suggests, thorough Shug's extramarital involvements, whatever is considered vice in woman according to the Christian tradition can provide some of them a comfortable position in soceity.

It is not difficult to see religion as the source of a sense of guilt and shame with the tenacity Shug has shown in her behaviour. We find it as an implied truth in one of the letters of Nettie:

> I remember one time you said your life made you so ashamed you could not even talk about it to God. You had to write it, bad as you thought your writing was. Well, now I know what you mear.t. And whatever God will read letters or not, I know you will go on writing them; which is guidence enough for me (116).

The artifice of Celie's writing structures the function of God in the silence created by the patriarchal power it represents Nettie only makes it explicit by expressing doubt about Celie's access to God and God's willingness to save her.

The world of religion in *The Temple of My Familiar* reflects the power politics in an ancient society yet to learn the intricacies of the class division between the sexes. Even in such a primordial situation there remains some codes which can be called as a part of their religion and played a role in favor of men. Though the society was considered matriarchal in nature and the women held positions of importance, it solely depended upon the goodwill and mercy of the menfolk. Walker's tale tell mode of presenting this truth makes this look trivial on the surface but its deep structure meaning is very powerful to note: "Only women had been priests. Yes ! This is what they say. But really in the beginning they were not priests to themselves. It was the men who made them priests" (48).

Priesthood was not sanctioned to women on the basis of their appearance, nor for their dexterity to dress in colors, it was the whim of men in the position of taking decision which made them Goddess and slaves in turn.

> There were in earliest days, raids on women's temples, which existed in the sacred grooves of trees, with the women and children dragged out by their hair and forced to marry into male dominated tribes. The ones who were not forced to do this were either executed or sold into a tribe whose language was different (63-64).

Men believed women alone are capable of creating life and were jealous of it. To overcome this lack in them--that they cannot give birth like women--they started operating their bodies to make them capable of it. But these experiments proved to be extremely frustrating as Zede speaks about it to Arvedya in the following words:

> It was during this period of rebellion (against the piresthood of women who could give birth) that the men decided they could and would be priests. That they could be the ones through whom life passed ! They began to operate

> on themselves, cutting off and flinging away their maleness, and trying to fashion a hole through which life could pass (57).

Further, Shug's new religion (170), later expressed in detail in her Gospel (287-89) provides a new orientation for a reader of *The Temple of My Familiar* to think Walker tries to debunk the existing religion which cannot satisfy the needs of the black women in the new society. This belief is still strengthened as we find Celie and Shug start preaching this new religion in their new house (170). In this connection what James C. Hall says regarding *The Color Purple* holds good for *The Temple of My Familiar*: "Walker's religious universe is self-inventive. It marks the debris through the absence so far as it directs attention to the creative process" (1992, 90). In this light Shug's Gospel can be called a fruit of a selfinventive process against the patriarchal hegemony and its religious infrastructure.

Walker's own perspective about an immaculate conception and its implication in the life of a common woman outside wedlock makes it clear that she intends her readers to reread religion. Olivia reflects upon the birth of Jesus in the following lines:

> I felt almost as if I am product of immaculate conception like Jesus, who did not know who his biological father was either. I have often thought it was the lack of knowledge of his earthly father that led him to his heavenly one, for there is in all of us a yearning to know our won sourse, and no sourse is likely to seem too far fatched to a lonely fatherless child. This was considered blasphemous thought when I returned to express it, but the question of who impregnated Mary, that young Jewish girl, under what possibly grim sircumstances--because of my mother's sad experience as a young woman--was always much on my mind. If Joseph was not the father of Jesus, 'and God in heaven' was not, and Mary because of custom, fear or depression could not speak up about what had actually happened to her, who was the father (173).

The blasphemous analysis of Bible and its concept of immaculate conception continues to hunt the characters of Walker's as they are unable to comprehend on the basis of what happens to them physically.

Tashi in *Possessing the Secret of Joy* reflects upon the Biolical origin of immaculate conception and finds herself both mentally and physically sick to such an extent as her marital life almost collapses. She considers her union with Adam as useless and sexually unsuccessful. Remembering the story of God's breaking open the

earth for the union, she thinks her husband--though loved by her--only breaks her open whenever he approaches her for intercourse. Tashi reflects:

> So this is how there could have been an immaculate conception, he'd said bitterly, when I told him I was pregnant; meaning literally. Bible scholar as he was after three months of trying, he failed to penetrate me. Each time he touched me I bled. Each time he moved against me I winced. There was nothing he could do that did not hurt. Still somehow I became pregnant with Benny (60).

Walker doubts the authority of the Bible as it also plays a role in propagating the stories otherwise incredible. In other words, if one can believe in the occurrence of immaculate birth of Christ, it is not difficult to believe either in the story of Grisule, related to the union of God and earth, to the leader's story Tashi comes across while she is in the jail--about the unclean parts of Women which need circumcision. Tashi's mind is overburdened with these enigmatic myths and stories which have caused a lot of suffering for the women down the centuries. This is why her Psychiatrist is incapable of doing anything positive to restore her mental balance.

One of Walker's stories in *In Love and Trouble* provides us with a clue to support the type of rereading persued in this paper. In this story Walker makes a more direct and rational attack on Christianity. The young woman in the story titled "The Diary of an African Nun" is looking out of her window, subconsciously asking the question to herself about her choice of becoming a nun. She is frustrated by the contrdiction between her title and the emptiness of the catholic church as well as her own life. She feels she is a wife of Christ (Walker, 1973, 114). But she is incapable of feeling like a bride. She asks:

> How long must I sit by my wondow before I lure you down from sky? Pale lover who never knows the dance and could not do it !
> I bear your colors, I am in your livery. I belong to you. Will you not come down and take me (Walker, 1973, 115).

If she is considered a wife of Christ, why would she not expect to be allowed to fulfil her 'wifely duties'? To consumate the marriage? To have children? Her dejection over the absence of Christ as a groom echoes as a rejection of the religion which has proposed such a position for her.

Walker doubts the authority of the religious scriptures on the

basis of rationality that appeals to every skeptic. She has been consistent in her effort to build a consciousness in the mind of the readers that can provide new insight into the already read scriptures to find more meaning in them which is not conducive for the women of free spirit. This rereading provides us with a scope to have an inkling that Walker had a similar endeavour when she started writing her novels. She makes it possible to raise some questions which have long been bearing the signs of blasphemy. Yet it is not difficult to notice she has a faith of her own which is not guided by the patriachal faith of monotheism nor a God who can be apathetic towards women in general.

Walker's religious orientation can be summarised as an attempt to neutralize the effect of any ism that gives men a privileged position in the social order. She upholds a faith that helps each believer to sustain his or her love for people and things around. She is full of faith for the people who do not believe in the class struggle between the sexes as a sanction of religion. So her challenge to patriarchal God cannot be considered as an act of desperation, rather it attempts to celebrate a profoundly creative and socially enlightening beginning for a new religion. By attacking religion in its Christian foundation Walker celebrates her authorship which is based on the symbolic reversal of it for the sake of a more rational trend in society.

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THE THEME OF RENUNCIATION IN R.K. NARAYAN'S FICTION

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The theme of renunciation has been treated by Narayan with varying points of view. In *The Vendor of Sweets*, Jagan's resolve to leave home and start living in natural surroundings in the forest across the river has been treated ironically. The writer exposes the duplicity and sham behaviour of the protagonist in regard to his obsession with concepts like *Brahmacharya*, abnegation of greed for money and a penchant for the Gandhian way of living based upon simplicity and non-violence. Jagan's nagging double-mindedness while going to his wife, Ambika, after marriage makes one laugh in one's sleeve. He takes a mat and sleeps in the night away from his wife in the open with an excuse that he feels too suffocated inside the room due to heat. The following lines mockingly reveal his state of mind:

> He felt fatigued by all the apparatus of sex, its promises and its futility, the sadness and the sweatness at the end of it all, ... that one drop of white blood was equal to forty drops of red blood, and that seminal waste and nervous exhaustion reduced one's longevity,the essence of all achievement being celibacy and conservation.[1]

Jagan's determination to leave his house and live in isolation in the retreat across the river "... to watch a goddess come out of the stone"[2] is suggestive of his resolution for renunciation. But the irony of the situation lies in the way he does it. First, it is not voluntary as a natural corollary of progression in life's propounded stages. Rather he decides to do so more out of a sense of frustration and disillusionment that overpowers him owing to family circumstances such as his son Mali's disregardful attitude and his illicit co-habitation with an American girl, Grace, a fact which has irretrievably shaken his conservative thoughts about purity and probity. His renunciation is, therefore, born from certain compulsive reasons. He says:

> I have probably outlived my purpose in this house. If I live for ten or fifteen years more, it will have to be on a differnet plane. At sixty one is reborn and enters a new janama.[3]

The ironical tones in the delineation of his renunciation become

more pronounced in the way he thinks of entering into it like Buddha: "... though he would prefer to walk off, just walk, as the Buddha did when he got enlightenment.[4] But he actually does it the reverse way. Before leaving home, he collects a few things in a bundle, key of the back door of the house and, to cap it all, the bank book in his pocket. On enquiry from his cousin where he is going, Jagan says: "... I am going somewhere, not carrying more than what my shoulder can bear. All that I need is in that bag...."[5] To this, his cousin's remarks are very revealing as he comments sarcastically: "Including the bank book, I suppose", asked the cousin: "which is a compact way of carrying things."[6] The above sequence of events related to the protagonist's drift into so-called life of renunciation exposes unequivocally his hypocrisy. He fails to disengage himself from his pre-occupations with wordly cares about his shop, the safety of his bank balance, etc., after his going away.

Raju's swamihood in *The Guide* is likewise fake and a ruse used for getting his livelihood unearned. The parasitic tendencies which are typical of his nature get fully manifested when after a term in jail he is released. Failing to decide what to do and where to go, an unexpected turn of events is caused in his life by the credulous simplicity of a villager, Velan, who by chance passes by the isolated place where Raju is sitting brooding over his future. The villagers come to him together imploring to him with folded hands that he should not move elsewhere and start living in their empty village temple mistaking him for a sadhu who has renounced wordly abode and desires. He is plied with gifts of fruits and food. Raju's conundrum of how to earn his living gets resolved automatically. He takes to this new leaf in his life, grows beards, preaches and blesses people. His self-deception is explicit in these lines:

> He spoke to them on godliness, cleanliness, the characters in the epics; he addressed them on all kinds of things. He was hypnotised by his own voice, he felt himself growing in stature as he saw the upturned faces of the children shining in half-light he spoke.[7]

Irony of fate overtakes the protagonist in the end. He becomes a victim to the circumstances he has been trying hard to build up by deludng the simple-minded villagers. The wide-spread drought conditions and a rumour which is believed as truth by the villagers

that the Swami is undergoing penance by forgoing all kinds of food for the removal of famine and for bringing rains force him reluctantly into observing fast unto death. The pangs of hunger harass him and at night when all the villagers have gone back, he thinks of eating stale banana pieces stealthily. But he cannot as Velan is keeping watch at night for Swami's safety and service. Raju's idea of flight away from that place unnoticed also fails to materialise due to the impending apprehensions of probable detection and the humiliating consequences to follow thereafter. Thus, he is caught inextricably into a desperate situation of his own creation. He is left with no alternative but to undertake the fast in a resigned mood. He thinks: "If by avoiding food I should help the trees bloom, and the grass grow, why not do it thoroughly?"[8]

It is a strange quirk of fate that the swamihood which Raju assumes as an easy sufterfuge to satisfy his daily physical needs lands him into the dark alley of imposed renunciation in real terms. The author comments on it in these words:

> For the first time in his life he was making an earnest effort; for the first time he was learning the thrill of full application, outside money and love; for the first time he was doing a thing in which he was not personally interested.[9]

Continued abstinence from food enfeebles Raju's physical powers. Standing in the midst of shallow water of the shrunken river and being helped upon Velan's shoulders, he utters in a condition of dazed self-delusion: "Velan it is raining in the hills. I can feel it coming up my feet, up my legs--" He sagged down.[10] In this way, the involuntary and circumstantially forced renunciation of Raju culminates into the tragic end of his life. He pays dearly for this falsely assumed identity. Thus, through the characterisation of Jagan and Raju, Narayan presents two cases of mock renunciation motivated by ulterior motives and not by a serious, genuine realisation.

A Tiger for Malgudi depects in the hermit the portraiture of a person who has genuinely gone into the state of renunciation. The hermit, before leaving home, is used to a lavish style of life. He is given to all sorts of worldly pre-occupations, physical pleasures and comforts. But one day suddenly he gives it up all taking virtually nothing with him and retires into isolation among forests and hills. He explains to the tiger, Raja, his past and present life in these words:

> I was a man of the world, busy and active and living by the clock, scrutinizing my bank book, greeting and smiling at all and sundry because I was anxious to be treated as a respectable man in society. One day it seemed all wrong, a senseless repetition of activities, where one's head always throbbed with the next plan ... and I abruptly shed everything including (but for a bare minimum) clothes, and fled away from wife, children, home possessions, all of which seemed intolerable.[11]

His manner of renouncing home and hearth is very much reminiscent of Buddha's as he says:

> At midnight, I softly drew the bolt of our back door, opening on the sands of Sarayu behind our house at Ellamman Street, while others slept, and left very much in the manner of Siddhartha...[12]

Thereafter there is no going back for him. His total absorption into deep meditation brings about a radical transformation in his thoughts, actions and bearing. The hermit's magical taming influence upon the tiger, Raja, is a telling testimony to the mysterious powers he has succeeded in achieving through a life of rigorous discipline, self-control and concentration. Moreover, the meeting between the hermit and his wife in the secluded place in the jungle where he is living reveals his absolute disconnection from his previous life. No amount of memories of his past lustful life roused by his desperate wife moves him. He remains stony and repeatedly refuses her offer for his return or for his permission to let her live with him in that place. The hermit tries his best to make her understand his present condition of complete mental detachment from his previous self. He expresses this to his wife while saying ".... What you see is my old shell; inside it is all changed. You can't share my life."[13] In the true demeanour of a relinquisher of the world he sums up 'My past does not exist for me nor a future. I live for the moment and that awareness is enough for me.'[14] Dwelling further upon his present state of mind, the hermit adds that he has erased from his mind his name and identity and all that it implies. Conclusively, he asks his wife to go back as it would be unthinkable for him to slide back exhorting her 'You must live your own life and leave me to live mine and end it my own way.'[15]

The hermit's shaking off of the mundane existence is irrevocable since he has sunk deep into this new phase of living. Convinced of her husband's irreversible, resolute metamorphosis, the hermit's

wife leaves the place and hurries back down the hill after wiping tears from her eyes. The hermit sits 'motionless in his seat and closed his eyes in meditation.'[16] His philosophy of life expounded by him to the tiger, after his wife's departure, truly reflects his mental condition of equanimity and self-conquest subsisting in a realised soul. He says:

> No relationship, human or other, or association of any kind could last forever. Separation is the law of life right from the mother's womb. One has to accept it if one has to live in God's plans.[17]

Among women characters Sriram's granny in *Waiting for the Mahatma* and Raman's old aunt in *The Painter of Signs* belong to the class of people whose renunciation is spontaneous and natural. Sriram's granny, after her miraculous revival from the pyre, decides to spend the remaining days of her life in Benaras on the banks of the holy river, Ganges. The Fund Office manager's information to Sriram in the jail about his granny's way of living is truly in accordance with the conventional mode of renouncing the world and living in holy environment of the river Ganges at a religious, sacred place. It is thought to be a sure way to godliness. He says:

> ... There is a whole street of them, old people who have retired there to the banks of the great Ganges, awaiting their end.... That's it is enjoined upon old people in the shastras. No one could wait for a happier end.[18]

The desire of Raman's old aunt to leave home and go on a pilgrimage to places like Amarnath, Badrinath, Hardwar, etc., also fall in the orthodox line of thought permeating the Hindu philosophy of life in old age. Indubitably, the aunt is highly upset by Raman's decision to marry Daisy who is of different caste and religion. Instead of getting embroiled into this unsavoury sort of existence, she seeks escape in the thought of ending her religious journey at Kasi and to live there till death. She reveals her plan to Raman:

> ... At my age, with a few years left, people generally do not want to return. A visit to Kasi is the end... It is the ambition of everyone of my generation to conclude this existence at Kasi, to be finally dissolved into the Ganges. That's the most auspicious end to one's life.[19]

It can be reasonably concluded that Narayan displays both the sides of the coin, i.e., Characters who revel in make-believe state of renunciation and also those who conscientiously adopt and live it as a way of life.

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[2]Ibid., p.191.

[3]Ibid., p.182.

[4]Ibid., pp.182-83.

[5]Ibid., pp.190-91.

[6]Ibid., p.191.

[7]R.K. Narayan, *The Guide* (Mysore: Indian Thought Publications, 1991), p.47.

[8]Ibid., pp.237-38.

[9]Ibid., p.238.

[10]Ibid., p.247.

[11]R.K. Narayan, *A Tiger for Malgudi* (Mysore: Indian Thought Publications, 1991), p.161.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Ibid., p.171.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Ibid., p.173.

[17]Ibid., p.174.

[18]R.K. Narayan, *Waiting for the Mahatma* (Mysore: Indian Thought Publications, 1993), p.204.

[19]R.K. Narayan, *The Painter of Sings* (Mysore: Indian Thought Publications, 1991), p.152.

THE DARK HOLDS NO TERROR: A STORY OF MOTHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIP

Rashmi Gaur
Pallavi

The Dark Holds No Terror exhibits the trauma of a girl-child who has suffered bullying and curtailment of activity by her mother, but who, nonetheless, wants to assert her identity as an autonomous individual in life. This girl-child Saru grows up as a victim of her mother's sexist and gender-based bias, which reduces her later life into a desperate struggle to overcome the initial victimisation, to justify her decisions to her mother who no longer acknowledges her as a daughter, and to find out a new meaning in her life which could enable her to develop and nurture a balanced perspective towards her diversified roles as a mother, as a wife, and as a career woman. Although Sashi Deshpande has taken up other problems, too, which are faced by a woman in today's chauvinist society, yet the strange mother-daughter relationship is centrally significant to the understanding of this novel: the mother, who has inculcated the norms of a closed-minded conservative society in which a woman is morally bound to prefer a son; and the daughter, who is yet to come to terms to her mother's diktats about her secondary status in the family. Saru's mother never forgave her daughter for being alive after her brother had drowned, and Saru never forgot the traumatizing effect of her mother's hysterical outburst, "You did it. You did this. You killed him.... You killed him. Why didn't you die? Why are you alive, when he's dead?" (191).[1] The words follow her for days, months, years, all her life, and at every juncture she turns back to this very moment and measures her feelings and achievements upto the total loss of inner quietude so unabashedly underlined by her mother's words.

Mothers share a very strange and complex relationship with their daughters. The daughter is for the mother at once her double and another person. The mother can be overweeningly affectionate and may saddle the girl-child with her own destiny, thinking that it

is wiser to make a traditional woman of her. But the mother can also be hostile towards her daughter and treat her with a sense of Freudian rivalry. The social environment, which has moulded the psyche of the mother as a woman, also makes the young uninitiated girl-child a special object of the mother's persecution. Society treats the male offspring as an ultimate panacea to all problems, but the girl-child is an unwanted burden, as she cannot fulfil the parental needs or ungratified ambitions within the given social calculus. The plentitude, warmth and value given to a male child is denied to the girl, which makes her either depressed or rebellious. If this negative and destructive social force is not countered by the affection and loving care of her mother, the daughter is condemned to a life of bitterness, and is made to lose sight of the implacable grandeur of life. With a suggestive clarity of prose rhapsodies, *The Dark Holds No Terror* presents before us the emotional undulations of the complicated mother-daughter relationship, the balanced beauty of which is so vital for the development of a healthy woman. Even as a child, the protagonist of the novel Saru is aware of her mother's preference for her brother Dhruva. Reminiscent of her adolescence, in order to understand her present, Saru recollects that there was "always a puja on Dhruva's birthday. A festive lunch in the afternoon and an aarti in the evening. My birthdays were almost the same--but there was no puja" (168-69). Her mother's nonchalant attitude makes Saru believe that her birth was a terrible experience for her mother. After Dhruva's death the family takes up a perpetual mourning and there are no celebrations. Saru particularly remembers her fifteenth birthday, as on this occasion she had received her first gift--a pair of earrings--from her friend Smita. However, she spurns the gift given to her on the same occasion by her mother, because she thinks that it was given under obligations and her feelings were not important to her mother. Saru's experiences at home have made her discover inferiority in herself as a fixed and preordained essence. In her adolescence she is treated by her mother as an adult rival. Her mother means to show that she still has the upper hand and the daughter's vivacity or curiosity, outside her domain, shall not be tolerated. Saru's fifteenth birthday illustrates this attitude in

graphic details:

'Why are you so late?'
'We went for a walk.'
'A walk? Such a long time? Don't you know it's dark?'
.... I kept silent and that enraged her even more.
'Can't you talk? Am I so much below your notice? you can talk to your friends for hours, but you can't speak a sentence to your mother. What am I? An enemy?
'is it such a crime to go for a walk?' I burst out.
'Walk? Didn't you think you could have helped me at home? There are the vegetables to be cut, the butter milk to be churned....'
A huge anger filled me making me almost blind. What about me? It was my birthday.
Did she remember that other girls had gifts and smiles and festive meals. While I? (p.170)

This episode brings out the inherent ambivalence of mother-daughter relationship. Simone de Beauvoir has made this basic contradiction further clear when she remarks, "The mother likes to rule alone over her feminine universe; she wants to be unique, irreplaceable--she scolds her daughter severely if, after two days' absence, she finds the house in disorder; but she is filled with anger and fear if she finds that the life of the family goes on perfectly well without her. She cannot bear to have her daughter become really her double, a substitute for herself."[2]

Saru's mother is guilty only to the extent of unconditionally acquiescing to them. The society, which has imposed unjust gender mores, is not questioned by her at any step. She has been taught to rear a girl in a particular fashion, and she does it with implicit faith in that teaching. Being herself a victim of social conditioning she is unable to perceive the cruelty which she is perpetuating. Saru is made to realize that being a girl she is inferior to her brother in every respect:

"Don't go out in the sun. You'll get even darker.
Who cares?
We have to care if you don't. We have to get you married.
I don't want to get married.
Will you live with us all your life?
Why not?
You can't
And Dhruva?
He's different. He's a boy."(45)

The dialogue clearly brings forth the manner in which the whole "boy-girl child syndrome" is perpetuated and rationalized even by the allegedly educated and liberal Indian middle-class people. A girl is always made to feel like a bird of passage in her parental home. What appals us is not only the humiliation inflicted upon the girl, but also the "unquestioning acceptance of a collective consciousnes and the blind submission to generations of conditioning."[4] The indoctrination of a girl child, which Simone de Beauvoir had noted as being a part of the socio-cultural conditioning of a girl, is still a part of Indian culture, and *The Dark Holds No Terror* underlines this fact. Saru's buoyance and gregariousness is gradually suffocated by her mother's constant criticism and fault finding. She is made to feel ugly and undesirable. Saru's mother thinks that physical beauty is a precondition of worldly success for a girl and is constantly critical of her daughter's appearance. Even the natural growing up is made shameful for her. She is segregated, served from distance in a separate cup and plate and, in general, made to feel a pariah (62). This treatment is also a part of the collective male response towards anything feminine. As a girl grows up, she is made to feel different and conscious about revealing her femininity to the male members of the family: "You should be careful now about how you behave. Don't come out in your petticoat like that. Not even if it's only your father who's around" (62). An aversion to her own femininity is slowly and deliberately encouraged in the child till she cries out in horror: "If you're a woman, I don't want to be one" (63).

Saru's defiance towards her mother is a strange mingling of her careeristic ambitions and traditional options which she often cherishes in her dreams. She wants to be a self-reliant person, but at the same time she dreams of a superior conquering male who will give her the meaning of her life. Her mother's attitude has given rise not only to a remorse but also to a revolt. The mere presence of her mother under the same roof makes her a culprit, and she realizes that in order not to be like her she has to acquire a medical degree: "To get married and end up doing just what your mother did, seemed to me not only terrible but damnable." (140) The image of a lady doctor, seen in her childhood, becomes a source of

inspiration for her, and she aspires for the similar detachment and superiority. However, she is forced to seek her father's support for her admission to the medical college. Her father, for the first time, is decisively on her side. Although Saru is not able to make out whether his was the fight for her or against her and feels that she has been used as a weapon, yet for the first time in her life, she is close to fulfil her ambition. Her total refusal to talk to her mother projects the hatred which she has carried inside her for her mother throughout her childhood. Her father's support signifies a victory for Saru; she would be finally free from her mother, but this victory is tinged with the sour taste of hatred for her mother: "I hated her. I wanted to hurt her, wound her, make her suffer." (142) For her mother she remains to be a responsibility which cannot be evaded as she is a girl and hence requires dowry to get married.

Saru emerges as a sad yet vivacious girl on account of the thinly woven intricate web of her inner landscape. Lost in the labyrinthine complexity of her emotions, she feels shattered and humiliated when the parents fail to show any sympathy towards her. Her tentative approaches to regain a foothold on life, her external recoiling at affection while pining for it in her innermost dreams bring her very close to Nellie, the girl-child-heroine of Dostoyevsky's *The Insulted and Humiliated.* The shadows of her unhappy relationship with her mother darken her adolescence, her early youth and even her first love. Later on at every success in her life, she hesitates and wants to turn back, as if to seek her mother's approval, as if to tell her that despite everything she has done to her, she is happy and successful. She is not very defiant; beneath the facade of her wanton defiance lies a lonely, trembling and insecure girl, who wants to be accepted, loved and cherished by someone; a lonely, trembling and insecure girl who has always been spurned and rebuffed by her mother. Her love for Manohar is also tinged with this feeling of insecurity: "And still, for long the fear was there; the secret fear that behind each loving word, behind each kiss, lay the enemy, the snake, the monster of rejection. Sometime, some day, I thought, the truth will out and I will know I was never loved."(66) She marries Manohar against her parents' wish.

The Dark Holds No Terror also touches upon the man-woman relationship within the institution of marriage in our contemporary society. Women are always explained and defined with reference to marriage, as this is the destiny "*traditionally offered to women by society*".[5] Shashi Deshpande has discussed several problems related to it in this novel. On the one hand, there are faceless wives of Manu's friends who do not register any emotion on their face and serve as "*nameIsss waiter*" (159), and on the other are those wives who have learnt to make clever yet clandestine compromise. The insipid marriage kills the partners gradually. In most of the cases we find that woman is the worse sufferer. Smita has to change her name and is ignominiously dependent on her husband. She does not have any freedom to spend money according to her desire and asks Saru to lend her some money, Vidya, the incipient women's libber, is made to surrender theatre, her indescribable passion, after marriage. Many other women are also portrayed, serving in the background as wives, too insignificant to be noticed as individuals. Saru ultimately realizes that marriage is not a guarantee of happy fulfilment: "It's easy to generalize, she thought, and say she is bitter because she never married, never bore a child. But that would be as stupid as calling me fulfilled because I got married and have borne two children." (121) Moreso, marriage normally subordinates wife to husband, and so the problem of their natural relations is posed most sharply to the woman. Marriage also idealizes female martyrdom. Saru realizes it in her own relationship with Manohar, which sags visibly once her identity as a "*lady doctor*" is established in her circle. She is a proud possession for her husband since the very beginning of their marriage. But when her professional identity is forged, he feels threatened. He cannot tolerate that his wife enjoys better social prestige, and it gradually destroys their marriage. She feels that "the human personality has an infinite capacity for growth. And so the esteem with which I was surrounded made me inches taller. But perhaps, the same thing that made me inches taller, made him inches shorter. He had been the young man and I his bride. Now I was the lady doctor and he was my husband." (42) The male-dominated Indian society does not allow tolerance for a better

woman even within a marriage. Such a woman always finds herself alone; there is no comfort in marriage, or in goint back to one's parents. She also knows that success in marriage means manipulating and manoeuvering her relationship with her husband according to the socially accepted norms and flaunting it all the time. Her intellect, her achievement, her career and her ambitions are the stigmas she shall have to carry forever like the dead albatross. Centuries of diabolic conditioning have left their mark on Saru's psyche too, and she unequivocally acquiesces to her feeling of guilt.

Saru's relationship with Boozie, her professional mentor, is also an escapade which initially gives a pleasure and a sense of acceptance to her. She is like an incomplete sculpture and he has chiselled and moulded it to perfection. He has also helped her in the initial years of her married life. Manu deliberately does not question her about the nature of her relationship with Boozie or about the financial help which she has constantly recieved from him. Manu's sense of inferiority changes him into a sadist who gets pleasure by insulting his wife with sheer physical violence. He attacks his wife like an animal, hurting her with brutal cruelty. Saru does not, and, in fact, cannot oppose it initially. Her early relationship with her mother has moulded her psyche to accept drudgery and self-negation as norms of routine existence and to treat herself as an undesirable person in a subconscious manner. Even when she protests against it, it results in an escape to her father. But her attempts to distance herself from her married surrounding ultimately provide her with a fortitude to overcome her phantoms and approach a little closer to the naked reality. She drives out her disatisfaction and her preference for futile sufferings and internalizes the truth that the struggle towards a more constructive hold on life is enough to fill a person's heart. She also realizes that she has to fight out the darkness herself and that the parental home cannot be a refuge. Nobody else can help her out; in order to live without fear she will have to look into the face of reality and grapple with it alone.

Saru wanted to escape from the narrow and stifling domestic life as a child by repudiating her mother's authority, which had been made uglier and more violent as she had lost her prestige. She

wishes not to be like her mother, while adoring women who have escaped from feminine servitude. Her determination to get a first division to seek admission to a medical college is an extension of her deep-rooted desire to carve a life for herself, which would be different from her mother's. Her dreams are realized, for a brief span, in her marriage, but the social expectations and the traditional male psyche of her husband shatter them again. After distancing herself from her family she realizes that one has to grow up to know that the dark holds no terror, and that "the terrors are inside us all the time. We carry them within us, and like traitors they spring out, when we least expect them, to scratch and maul." (85) Also, she accepts her loneliness and tries to transcend it, "All right, so I'm alone. But so's everyone else. Human beings--they're going to fail you. But because there's just us, because there's noone else, we have to go on trying. If we can't believe in ourselves, we're sunk. (220) She ultimately determines to face her husband and assert her own independent individuality. This confidence imparts a casual and flippant touch to her demeanour towards the end of the novel. The denouement of *The Dark Holds No Terror* tells us that women should not only be independent, but they should also believe in their strength. A woman has to put these varied experiences into a proper perspective and maintain her individuality, for only then she can realize a true selfhood: "My life is my own--somehow she felt as if she had found it now, the connecting link. It means you are not just a strutting, grimacing puppet, standing futilely on the stage for a brief while between areas of darkness. If I have been a puppet it is because I made myself one. I have been clinging to the tennous shadow of a marriage whose substance has long since disintegrated because I have been afraid of proving my mother right." (220)

By means of the portrayal of a succession of sensations and impressions, *The Dark Holds No Terror* presents the deeply complex and emotional relationship of a daughter with her mother. Shashi Deshpande never eschews the contemporary context and therefore this novel has a particular significance for today's Indian society in which the girls have to put up not only with the social discrimination, but also with the victimization by their mothers. The novel underlines

the urgency of transforming the social ethos to make it more conducive to the development of individuality among girls. The flashback technique of the novel enables Saru to rummage through those past incidents which define the mode of the sensitive mother-daughter relationship in an ordinary middle class family. The epigraph of the novel is very appropriate, indeed:

> You are your own refuge;
> there is no other refuge.
> This refuge is hard to achieve.

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[1]All the textual references are from *The Dark Holds No Terror* (New Delhi: Penguin Books Ltd., 1990).

[2]Simone de Beauvior, *The Second Sex*, tr. H.M. Parshely (London: Four spuare Books Limited, 1961), pp.229-30.

[3]Vrinda Nabar, *Caste as Woman* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1995), p.56.

[4]Ibid., p.60.

[5]Simone de Beauvior, *The Second Sex*, p.148.

THE MUSE REMAINS HIS ONLY JOY: THE POET IS NOT A SUITABLE BOY

K.K. Kapoor

Let me explain at the very outset that the caption is a Kakoli couplet. Such couplets--interspersed in the text of Vikram Seth's mega-novel, *A Suitable Boy*,--are the brain-children of the Anglicized Chatterji household. Amit Chatterji--Seth's alter-ego--is a recognised Indian English poet, working on an ambitious novel. His sisters, Meenakshi and Kakoli, are ameteur poetesses who revel in rhyming couplets, though his younger brother, Dipankar, is too serious to indulge in such frivolity.

A Suitable Boy is a multi-dimensional novel with diverse strands woven into a fascinating pattern of motifs. It is a love and marriage romance, a la Jane Austen; it is reminiscent of Fielding and Dickens in its vast array of characters and sweeping panorama of life; it contains uproarious Wodehousian comedy; and, simultaneously, it is a chronicle of the first decade of Indian Independence. The novel is bedecked with sparkling vignettes of Indian life and culture, displaying almost every festival of the Hindu and Muslim calendar. Vikram Seth looks back with nostalgia at the dying culture of *shayari, taqalluf,* and *tawaifs,* and shudders at the snobbery of an Anglicized upper class that dismisses anything Indian as third-rate. And, above all, he perceives the looming terrors of communalism, casteism, nepotism, corruption, and lumpenization that threaten to overwhelm the Indian polity.

A Suitable Boy is a novel with an attitude--flippant, irreverent, and ironical. This attitude can best be understood by Seth's comments on and references to Indian English literature. At a gathering of the Brahmpur Literary Society, where Amit Chatterji has been invited to recite his poems, the Chairman--Mr. Nowrojee--stands up to introduce the chief guest:

> He introduced the speaker as 'not the least of those who have merged the vigour of the West with a sensibility distinctly Indian' and then proceeded to treat his audience to a disquisition on the word 'sensibility.' Having touched on several senses of the word 'sensible' he continued to other adjectives: sensitive, sensile, sensate, sensuous and sensual.[1]

Clearly, Vikram Seth has little sympathy for such sweeping

generalizations as 'Indian sensibility.'

Throughout *A Suitable Boy* Vikram Seth attacks the 'holy cows' of Indian English literature with gay abandon; he sneers, laughs and shudders. The established icons like Sarojini Naidu, Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo and Raja Rao are treated with irony, their cliches exposed and their obtuseness ridiculed. They are presented without their glorifying aura, and indeed they have feet of clay. Vikram Seth has no patience with self-proclaimed patriots singing the glory of Mother Indian and exhorting their unsuspecting readers to great deeds of sacrifice. A poem presented by one Mr. Makhijani--an apparent pastiche of Sarojini Naidu--at a gathering of the Brahmpur Literary Society moves the audience to tears of boredom:

> Who a child has not seen drinking milk
> At bright breasts of Mother, rags she wears or silks ?
> Love of mild Mother like rain-racked gift of cloud
> In poet's words Mother to thee I bow....
>
> From shore of Kanyakumari to Kashmir,
> From tiger of Assam to rampant beast of Gir
> Freedom's dawn now bathing, laving her face,
> Tremble of jetty locks is Ganga's grace....
>
> B.G. Tilak from Maharashtra hailed
> 'Swaraj my birthright is' he ever wailed....
> Mahatma came to us like summer 'andhi'
> Sweeping the dungs and dirt was M.K. Gandhi....
>
> Then when the British left after all
> We had as our P.M. our own Jawaharlal
> Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Christians rever him
> Parsis, Jains, Buddhists endear him....
>
> We are all masters, each a Raja or Rani;
> No slaVE, OR HIGH OR LOW, SAYS Makhijani.... (p. 152ff).

These verses, crudely formed and rudely rhymed, need no explanation. Seth is out to ridicule the purveyors of patriotic cliches, though some readers may find this irreverence rather shocking.

The much-acclaimed votaries of mysticism and Bhakti, Tagore and Sri Aurobindo, have been treated with a mock-seriousness that is Seth's forte. Amit's younger brother, Dipankar,

> was a dreamer. He had studied economics but spent most of his time reading about the poet and patriot Sri Aurobindo, whose flaccid mystical verse he was (to Amit's disgust) at present deeply engrossed in. (p. 386; Emphasis

added).

There are several other references to Indian philsophical concepts like Unity, Duality, Infinity, and Mystery, and everytime Vikram Seth seems to speak with his tongue firmly in his cheeks. At a Chatterji get-together a socialite gets hold of Dipankar:

> Oh no, no, Dipankar.... You don't understand--the fundamental construct of Indian civilization is the Square--the four stages of life, the four purposes of life... even the four arms of our ancient symbol, the Swastika? (p.399).

Another Grand Dame of Culture hears Dipankar talking about the intrinsic essence of life. Dipankar ultimately comes to this conclusion:

> The spiritual source of India is not in Zero or Unity or Duality or even the Trinity, but Infinity itself. (p.717)

Vikram Seth's point is that all this philosophical hard-sell may sound exotic and highly profound, but, in the ultimate analysis it leaves the reader somewhat bewildered. Bernard Lopez, a South American ambassador, comes up with this query to Amit Chatterji:

> 'What is all this about 'being' and birds and boats and the river of life that we find in Indian poetry, the great Tagore unexcluded?' (p.415)

Amit hardly has any answer to this loaded question, but Dr. Ila Chattopadhyaya, a Professor of English, comes up with a devastating reposte in another context:

> 'I've never understood what the "spiritual context" means. Spiritual matters are an utter waste of time. (p.462)

Kakoli of the couplets fame totally agrees with Dr. Ila Chattopadhyaya, and sings of Rabindranath Tagore in these irreverent words:

> Kakoli, who had been force-fed, almost from birth, with Rabindrsangeet, now warbled out to the tune of a truncated 'Shankhochero bihavlata nijere apoman':
>
> Robi Babu, R. Tagore, O, he's such a bore !
> Robi Babu, R. Tagore, O, he's such a bore !
> O, he's su-uch a bore,
> Such a, such a bore
> Such a, such a bore ! (p.411)

Vikram Seth's sane advice to the aspiring Indian poets is that they should not try to sell Indian exotica to attract curious Western readers. Secondly, they should try to keep their emotions firmly on a tight leash, sentimental tear-jerking being poor poetry. Amit Çhatterji, a poet-novelist who is Seth's alter-ego, tells his fiancee, Lata, that "it's a consolation in times of deep grief to know that the

world, by and large, does not care." (p.1137). Amit burnt a number of his early poems because "it was awful poetry.... Embarrassingly bad. Self-indulgent. Dishonest (p.485). Yet, ironically, Amit's most popular poem is both exotic and sentimental. This poem--"The Fever Bird"--is a lyric addressed to the Indian love-bird, Papiha:

The fever bird sang out last night.
I could not sleep, try as I might.

My brain was split, my spirit raw.
I looked into the garden, saw

The shadow of the amaltas
Shake slightly on the moonlit grass....

The call, the brain-sick triple note-
A bone of pain stuck in its throat. (p.949).

This is pure romantic pulp, totally at variance from Vikram Seth's declared attitude of flippant cynicism. Perhaps, it is Seth's way of cocking a snook at the Indian Romantic Revivalists.

What kind of poetry does Vikram Seth approve of ? Again, we have to go to the effervescent Kakoli for the answer:

Actually.... *Abol Tabol* is the only good book in the whole of Bengali literature:

.....

Oh yes, and I like the *Sketches of Hutom the Owl.* (p.411)

Kakoli lisps in numbers as the numbers come natural to her. There are any number of brilliant Kakoli couplets, and, interestingly Vikram Seth has used Kakoli couplets for his foreword as well as his contents table. Let us take a sampler of the Kakoli couplets:

Luscious Lata, is it hard
Being wife of famous bard ?
Kissing missing everyday,
Cuddling, muddling all the way. (p.881)

Foreign woman is so shameless
Indian also is not blameless....
Foreign woman is a vulture
Goes against our ancient culture (p.945).

This inimitable piece is a collaborative effort of Amit and Kakoli:

Roly poly Mr. Kohli
Walking slowly up the stairs.
Holy souly Mrs. Kohli
Comes and takes him unawares.

Mr. Kohli base and lowly,
Stares at choli, dreams of lust,

As the holy Mrs. Kohli
With her pallu hides her bust. (p.1337).

Apart from these frivolous jingles, there is a small piece recited by Amit Chatterji that seems to enjoy the authorial approval. In keeping with the Seth doctrine, this poem is cynical and satiric, far away from the romantic pulp and mystic bagasse that usually qualifies as good Indian English poetry:

God of pebbles, help us, now the poll is past,
Not to spurn the small bribes, but to snatch the vast,
To attack the right cause, to defend the wrong,
To exploit the helpless and to protect the strong.
To our peculations and our victims add,
Mighty Lord, we pray thee, make us very bad. (p.1252).

It may not be great poetry, but it does reflect the overwhelming sense of disappointment and disillusionment that engulfed all right-thinking men in the years following the independence.

The bottom-line is that poetry may be noble profession, but the Indian English poets hardly qualify as first-rate achievers. It is interesting to note that Amit, the poet-novelist, and Haresh Khanna, the cobbler (he works as a foreman for the Praha Shoe Company), are rivals for Lata's hand, if we exclude her first love, Kabir Durrani, the cricketer. Amit's sister, Meenakshi, is confident that "this...would make a very poor rival to Amit". (p.931). Yet Haresh emerges as a proud and self-confident man who believes in the dignity and significance of his chosen vacation. Vikram Seth writes approvingly of Haresh's devotion to his adopted craft. Ultimately Lata realises that she would be far happier with the practical Haresh than with the temperamental Amit. She thinks about her two suitors:

Amit... He's a poet and a novelist. He wants thinks laid on for him. Meals, hot water, a running household, a dog, a lawn, a Muse. And why not ? After all he did write *The Fever Bird*....
Haresh is practical, he's forceful, he isn't cynical.
He gets things done and helps people without making a fuss about it. (p.1297).

So it turns out to be that it is not the poet but the cobbler who is accepted as *the suitable boy*. What price Indian English poetry?

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[1]V. Seth, *A Suitable Boy* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1994), p.1251. All susequent references are to this edition only and the page numbers have been given in parenthesis.

LOTUS OR THE PEEPAL TREE: A STUDY OF T.V. REDDY'S POETRY

I.K. Sharma

Not long ago the *Indian Book Chronicle* carried a few articles which put a question mark on the merit and status of many leading Indian English poets. Partly subversive in nature, the articles were aimed at a small number of university and college teacher-poets who, in the words of the writer, have formed a sort of teachers' cooperative. With liberal support flowing in their favour from certain corners, national and international, the poets had managed to influence the literary scene in the country. As a consequence of this, they have blocked the way for new talents waiting in the wings. This apart, the writer expressed doubt about their excellence in the art of reading poetry in public. But long before the articles appeared, a college teacher of English damned the poetry of established poets on grounds of content and other literary strategies. Of late, young critics equipped with new vocabulary have begun to look a bit defiantly at them. They also express their annoyance with them on the ground that these prominent poets have consistently tried to dissociate themselves with the past of Indian English poetry. These poets as a group are supremely conscious of their worth and position, and they show a feeling of repulsion towards the poets of older generation. They probably think that poets of the past as a whole form a pool of worthless toads, and they have nothing meaningful to offer to them. They consider themselves as the inaugurator of modern age in the English poetry of India. Well, this background serves a twofold purpose. One, it informs the reader that Indian English poetry is passing through a phase of convulsions. That is, the new generation of readers does not unthinkingly accept what has been approvingly said about these poets. They do not say: 'time to change'; they say: times have changed. It is a sure evidence of growth. Two, it tells us that there are poets outside this group who have been knocking at the gate of the Muse for quite some time, and their claim is not altogether unjustified. Their output is considerable and they deserve critical attention.

One such poet is T. Vasudev Reddy--a person of utter humility and quiet strength. In his academic career he followed his own whims, his own track. Without a guide he did his Ph. D. on Jane Austen; without any training he wrote a novel *The Vultures.* Without any profit and patronage in view he began to compose poems in English and has so far brought out four volumes of verse: *When Grief Rains* (1984), *The Broken Rhyms* (1987), *The Fleeting Bubbles* (1989), and *Melting Melodies* (1994). Also, he has done a book of criticism apart from writing critical articles every now and then. In this paper I am primarily concerned with his poetry.

Ready belongs to Telugu-speaking region which has given a taste or revolutionary fervour to Indian literature through the writings of Sri Sri, Sheshendra, Cherabandraju, and Dalit poetry. For instance,

> The workshop of my mind
> emits blazes of thought
> and spreads all around
> the smoke of wild tire.
> Sri Sri
>
> I shall emerge
> the poet of nakedness
> breaking out the pillar of
> stagnated poetry
> like a wrathful naked Narsimha !
> Cherabandraju

Such statements Indian English poetry lacks; but such lines, I guess, tutored the muse of the poet. They shaped his worldview and also made a way into his poetry. After all a poet writing in English in India imbibes the spirit of regional literature without any conscious effort. He draws it from the very air he breathes in:

> If you stir me
> You cannot stop me
> I shall be as uncontrollable
> as the Bay of Bengal.
> Do not remove the ashes
> lest the embers of my soul
> should sparkle and blaze forth.
> ("My Soul's Plea," *TBR*, p.44)

He shares the same primitive energy and tone of his native poets; he employs the same plangent language.

Let us now have a look at the attitude of the poet towards

modern poetry. He is opposed to poetry that leaps into obscurity, ambiguity or abstractions:

A poem nowadays
is only to be read
and break one's head
in several ways
with the so-called hammer
("A Poem," *TBR*, p.39)

Much of modern poetry, in his viewpoint, is a 'curse,' a kind of 'versified algebra.' In his opinion an artist should stay close to the common reader. His own poetry? Mercifully, it is free from masks and allusions from other literary works. His voice is plain and his language direct. He shapes his emotions without involving any sophisticated use of language.

His poetic universe comprises two worlds: one represented by lotus and the other by the peepal tree. The lotus draws him towards his private self. The poet feels lost in a culture where no love grows. Around him he finds 'smiles conceal the stabs' and the near-ones fill 'my sinking stomach/with pots of words.' In a mood of despair he cries:

'I cannot speak to any one but my own negative'
("Futility," *WGR*, p.24)

I am alone, forsaken man
I see myself burnt unmercifully
on the pyre of my wounded feelings
which are crushed between the grinding jaws
of my kith and kin,
("A Forlorn Soul," *TFB*, p.9)

Such statements demonstrate the fact that the period in which they were written was for the poet a period of loss, suffering, and hurt, and alienation from those who claim to be close and also from society. But this mood was not to stay long. A wave of happy wisdom, i.e. commonsense, jolted him into a new consciousness, and he wrote:

Why should I waste
my short span of life
by thinking of those
that laugh at my sorrows
.....
I am in the Lotus island

("Potent Drop," *WGR*, p.22)

I presume these autobiographical references do not make his poetry in any way singular, although they have their own validity in the overall framework of study. What makes him different is his opening up of a new territory in the realm of English poetry in India. The anthologies, brought out by Oxford, Vikas, Macmillan and others, I think, do not carry a single poem that centres round the theme of peasantry. To me, he seems to be the first poet who has introduced fields, farmer and his suffering. His deep acquaintance with the peasantry enables him to articulate their grievances in a forthright manner. Stuck in custom, trapped by nature, and tricked by traders and politicians, these immobiles of unfragmented community stay unrewarded all along their life. The hard work they put in ensures them, in the end, only 'a hut,' 'a broken cot,' and 'the sun-burnt crop.' They live on the earth, for the earth and for the children of the earth, and yet they are slowly going beneath the earth. Why should this voluminous exploitation of these simple souls persist?--seems to be the pointed question these poems are raising.

The peasants are the people who make the land 'pregnant with golden grain,' yet they

pulled on the drudgery
like the dumb bull that ploughed
("Farmer," *TBR*, p.9)

Their children:

piercing cry of the child
struggling in vain
to suck the bony breast
of a famished mother
whose naked misery in wrapped by
the sable shroud of endless night.
("Endless Night," *WGR*, p.31)

And their women break the rocks and

Beneath the pale peepal tree
by the fast drying pond
in that double roasted hamlet
women stand like expiring candles
("Women of the Village," *TFB*, p.1)

Here lies the justification of four words we see on the face of

his books: 'grief' in the first, 'broken' in the second, 'fleeting' in the third, and 'melting' in the fourth. Put together they form a long sentence of pain. With this massive weight of pain inside his heart, the poet undertakes a journey to the sacred hills and lays before the Lord of Seven Hills his plates of offerings (naivedya). Like a good devotee, he speaks in the beginning all that would please the celestial ego:

> Let me light the wick dipped in ghee
> at thy altar on the pillar lamp
> Let the light embrace and engulf me
> like a worm near the luminous lamp
> ("On the Sacred Hills," *MM*, p.43)

So far the critic in the poet has been lying dormant. Awake, he rolls out his list of grievances:

> While we struggle for rags and ramnants
> you roll in gold and gloat in diamonds
> and sit in solitude on the heights of wealth
> and pamper the vultures and blackmarketeers

Then the voice turns suddenly aggressive:

> Don't look at us like the eagle
> that flies and pries for its prey

Further, like a good thiest with a modern sensibility (in whom feeling and rationalism go together) he states:

> Our hearts *sue* and hands *pray*

Public prosecution and private posture well brought out; traditional virtue and modern spirit well-balanced !

On the basis of the foregoing analysis of Reddy's poetry, the impression should not be that he has not written on other subjects of public interest. He has. But his chief contribution for which he might be remembered in the larger context of Indian English poetry is his delineation of the farmer's plight with painful honesty.

A.N. DWIVEDI AS A POET

O.P. Budholia

A.N. Dwivedi.a poet, a critic and a university teacher, outlines the multifarious variety and complexity of Indian life in his poetry. He expands that creative faculty in his poetry which becomes suggestive and symbolic for disclosing social injustice and economic disparities which are rampant in our contemporary society. The operative lawlessness, social disorderliness and political corruption turn him occasionally to be a silent spectator of the rough and tumble of human existence. Sometimes, the nostalgic mood can also be traceable in his poems. The two volumes of his poetry,[1] published so far. unveil forcefully his restlessness for social, political and economic issues in general and deterioration of human values in particular. The role of imagination and the creative process, scenes and situations, education centres and their campus life, love and the conspiracy of human relations, social ills, political corruption, moral degeneration, Indian ethos and modern apathy, human values, rites and superstitions and the note of feminity--all these are dealt with minute precision in his poetry.

The poems like "The Game of Politics", Reflections;" "All kings Elite", "What a Pity !" and "Whither Our Democracy" exemplify the poet's fearlessness to expose the foul play of politics not only in public life but in the campuses of the universities, too. The poet becomes serious and the sorrow visits the innermost corner of his psyche when he recites ironically the formation and functioning of Janta Party. He keeps an eye on the situation that leaders of this party are in a hurry to fill "their purses and caps with money" and he, like a disinterested onlooker, weighs against this endless drama of politics-"God knows in what extent."[2] These leaders enjoyed the power and pelf even at the cost of external dangers for the country. The nostalgic mood surrounds his consciousness and sometimes he gives an account of the happiness of men in his past memories. This nostalgia of the poet prompts him to look at the positive points of the British reign and he compares them with the present day administration of the government. With a sorrow--stricken heart he longs for the past:

Where have gone the standards
set by Gandhi, Nehru n Subhas ?
Whither has fled the visionary dream
of a sovereign democratic republic.[3]

There is an abiding restlessness in him for the future of Indian democracy. He becomes symbolic and suggestive when he uses the images of "sharks n whales" for the jeopardy of the well-knit fabric of our democratic system.

Immersed entirely for the concern of humanity, en masse, Dwivedi highlights those social problems which bring society down to meet the deterioration of human values. The economic hardships writ large in India make man proportionately yield to any extent for committing social crimes and individual sins. The entire compass of modern Indian poetry rotates around the romantic, the progressive and the experimental perspectives. Man is the centre of the subject matter of contemporary literature. As a matter of fact, a modern poet combines with full dexterity the heart with the mind and the temporal with the spiritual. The influence of the western poets like T.S. Eliot, Dylan Thomas and Ezra Pound is an often-occurring phenomenon in the method and manner of the contemporary Indian poetry in English. Dwivedi, letting the rope of his mind loose for laying up his consciousness for a wider canvas of noble thoughts from all sides, remains firmly rooted for the inspiration of his emotional and intellectual growth in indigenous culture.

The poems like "The Conquerer of Sense", "The Slum Dwellers", "The Rickshaw Wallah", "The Beggar", "The Shoemaker", "Two Faces of Love", "If I were ....." and "Our Freedom in Peril" make the poet aware to feel and to realize all the injustices, cruelties and inhumanities between man and man in our society. How graphic in his visualization the poet is when he characterizes like a cinematographer the inner pangs and throes of a shoemaker on the road ! Mark the following lines:

His stich in the sole
was a stich in my soul
I saw his face, thin n pale
telling a lot about
His famished family tattered clothes

a mere dhoti, kurta n cap
confirmed his sad story[4]

The heart of the poet sinks down and in a pensive mood he finds himself in utter helplessness for cooperating such poor and downtrodden men. No sense of caste, creed and religion ever assails the mind of the poet. He, thus, attains that height of human sensitiveness where a man only incorporates his entire energy of mind for the service of the neglected people of our society. Empathetic as he is for the lot of these poor people. It is rather an unmanageable task to prowl in to human psyche and to disclose what lies inside the unconscious chain of repressed desires, dormant impulses and deeper emotions of human consciousness, but a poet like Dwivedi's calibre makes it accessible to all in the following lines:

They seldom grumble, seldom grudge
the inexorable harsh decree of destiny
before whom even the bravest shiver[5]

Dwivedi too finds his emotional outlet against "the creator's strange scheme"[6] for the lot of these poor people. The lot of these ill-fated slum dwellers is no better "than the brood of chickens." There are constant problems for their existence in the society. There comes a vibration in the heart of the poet after seeing the sufferings of the poor. The very sight of "half-clad, half-fed" rickshow puller is so disenchanting and hallucinating that it disrupts the inner peace of the poet's mind. He raises a question thus:

Is this the social order
dreamt by our wise leaders ?
The exploitation of man by man
When shall we put a ban[7]

Dwivedi undoubtedly shares the Indian ethos and modern apathy; he also uses the traditional images in his poetry. The treasure of his poetic content comes from the indigenous sources and some other beautiful objects of nature. However, it does not mean that he ceases to be a poet of modern sensibility for the subject -matter of his poetry. As opposed to the traditional approach of composition, he heavily leans upon the basic human problems like ill-feeding, ill-cladding, hunger, the lust for power and the suffering of the beggar and scavengers for showing the sense of

modernity. The poem like "The Beggar" upsets the tranquil mood of the poet and makes an inroad into his mind so piericingly as he intends to share the sufferings and helplessness of the poor with equal compunction. The beggar in his "soiled rags" looks at the unseen malignant forces with frustration and deep depression:

> Death snarls at him
> like an angry dog at a stranger
> disease hits him hard
> like the strap of a cruel master
> lashing a shivering slave;
> destruction scowls at him
> like the ravages of a bitter war
> upsetting all calculations
> destiny mocks at him at every step
> like a power-drunkvictor
> at the vanguished.[8]

The poet switches over from one problem to another and brings forth the movement and vision of the decaying norms of society. He holds society as a living entity and, therefore, regards it responsible for its moral degeneration. His long poem entitled *Reflections* raises certain moral, social and political issues. The strike in offices and colleges, the problem of human rights, the recurrent election, the longing for Rama Rajya, the deeper nostalgic mood, the hoodlums of leaders, the onctroversial issues for secularism are wonderfuliy linked with an image of "scarecrow" for envisioning the bleak future of a country like India with a residue of setting it right through the grace of God only. He does not spare even economic shambles and criminal fast-eating into the entrails of the society.

Modern age witnesses an all round devaluation of human values. Dwivedi conceptualizes a modern man as a rudderless boat, knowing not which way lies his destination of life. The phrases applied to a modern young man in his poetry--"dark dipped," "moth-eaten," "lizard-shaped" and "chameleon hued"--leave man with no stand but he swings like pendulum of clock. He loses his will to exist. The poet sketches his condition as

> Evil mesmerized n crime-impelled,
> sense-bereft n sound propelled
> modern man jettisons forth,

like a mirage to fight.[9]

Man as the chief transgressor for all social and moral values, is deeply and subtly analysed for his psychogenic traits by the poet. The sufferings, obstacles and hardships are man-made phenomenon. He brings forth the working of lower impulses and the inner instincts of human mind. He regards poverty as the root cause of all evils. As a social realist, he touches the root of social ills and economic disparities. How subtly and psychologically, he analyses the working of the hidden motives of human psyche when he deals with the condition of a woman beggar in the society ! Not her poverty and pitiable condition evoke any sympathy of man, but her physique and her body language communicate a silent message which invite the lecherous and vulture-like man to be ready for any help to her. On her part, she also succumbs to her lower instincts and gets ready for the hunger of the flesh:

The long repressed libido
of a widow or widower
Sometimes erupts volcano-like
n engulfs her or him entirely
This libidinous hunger is fiercer
Than the hunger of the beggar
It is fiercer than that
of a pair of hawks or eagles
suspended in the mid-air
in an ecstatic bout of sex act.[10]

The poet also deals deftly with the current and burning issues of feminity in his poetry. A modern woman is self-reliant and has her own foot-hold to stand for, yet there are other psychological obstacles which attract the poet to deal with them in his poetry. The poem, "A Working Woman", deals with an issue of gender equality through dialogues between man and woman. Here, the poet cogitates on the inner reflections, leading to their strained relations. Their snobbery and their assumptions create an antithesis to work on their mutual relations at home:

Perks n privileges
are your sole concern
wordly glow n glamour
impels you to earn;

n most of your earnings
go to puff, power n bun[11]

The poet knows beforehand the age-old suffering and misery of woman. The modern woman does not accept male-dominance at the cost of her self-respect. As she is economically self-reliant and socially aware, she has almost overcome the image of being a toy to her male-counterpart. Dwivedi makes a modern woman answer with self-confidence all the charges hitherto levelled against her:

I am no burden
On my earning spouse
I am a bread winner,
with no fear of divorce
I have a car n bunglow
n a matron-louse.[12]

As the poet analyses the leitmotif of modern man and woman, he, like a thinker, contemplates the multifarious aspects of human relations objectively. Rooted entirely for his arguments in Indian culture, the poet highlights and assigns the positive role of a woman for cultural and social intergration. The suggestions through symbols recur in his poetry for relieving the strained relations and complexities of human behaviour. Here is an example which exhibits his feminine sensibility:

No nation can be built
Without woman-power
no society can prosper
without her dower
so, she must play her role
at this crucial hour[13]

Yet another remarkable aspect of Dwivedi's poetry is his visionary perceptions. Deeply ingrained in the religion of humanity for his poetic sensibility, Dwivedi delves deep for divulging Anandam theory of Indian poetics in his compositions. The sharing with contemporaneity does not deactivate his imaginative perceptions for higher vision. Riding on the wings of poesy, he soars high to grasp the moral and spiritual height of supermind and makes it accessible and intelligible to common readers. The following lines communicate his higher vision:

The Whriling dance of Time
leaves me dazed n dashed
and I strive to reach
the slippery shore of Eternity

.....

conscience-stricken, I grope
for my resplendent Angel
who wants me to shine sinless
by making myself pure
and emerging the thick fog.[14]

The imagery of "fog" reminds one of the philosophic vision of *The Bhagavadgita* for the purity of heart and soul. It is the fog which hides the radiance of the soul, it is the prime cause of darkness and ignorance. As the ego of man vanishes, he comes closer to perceive the inner glow of God, "the great effulgent AUM."[15] This stage of realization brings him nearer to the teahings of *Srimad Bhagavadgita* wherein one finds the real source of human happiness through divine knowledge. The imagery of smoke invites a striking parallel with the image of "fog." There is a stress again and again in the technings of *The Bhagavadgita* for winning over one's senses and the working of lower impulses for absolving oneself from all sins, fears and every kind of doubts. The poet also relieves himself from all sins, fears and doubts after overcoming all his passions and sensual flights of human mind:

Having travelled a long way,
I am now fully prepared .
to have behind the old raiment
n merge in to transcendent.[16]

Dwivedi stands nearer to the aesthetic theory of Coleridge. Here is an extract from "The Birth of a Poem" which invites a parallel with that of Coleridge's theory of poetry:

A poem impinges itself
upon the cousciousness
of its creator, who
ever keeps the doors
of his imagination open
to allow fresh gusts in[17]

The opening of the door followed by the words "imagination" and "fresh gusts" suggests symbolically the reception of the primary

imagination. But this primary imagination does not supply the essential subject for poetry. The outward experiences along with the inner glow of higher vision form the total psyche which plays its role like the 'esemplastic imagination' with rich "reservoir of consciousness n complexes."[18]

Dwivedi, like T.S. Eliot, thinks of combining the past with the present. He pleads in favour of synthesizing "some thing old and new" which is called by T.S. Eliot "Tradition and Individual Talent." Dwivedi seems to be influenced by Eliot for combining the past experiences with the present consciousness. To Dwivedi, like Eliot, poetry is a process which retains

> ... something old and new
> recalling something loved and lost'
> digging up fresh experiences,
> n stirring novel ideas n emotions.[19]

Again, Dwivedi, like T.S. Eliot, regards the poet like grafter who prunes and selects the ideas which are appropriate material for the poetic composition:

> The birth of a poem
> is like the birth of a child
> The creator must feel
> the throes of a mother
> in the process of creation[20]

The real worth of Dwivedi's poetry consists of its effects on the readers. His poetry creates a sense of flavour (rasa) through sound (dhwani) and it becomes synonymous with the principles of Indian poetics--"Vakyam rasatmakam Kavyam." The modern lingustic theory insists upon the simplicity of language. Without any ostentation, his language is simple yet suggestive. In a few words, there are many fructiferous meanings in his poetry. Emotive and evocative as he is in the use of his language, the poet creates a wide vista of material and spiritual aspects in his poetry. Here is an example:

> Tick, tick, tick
> the clock ticks
> marching forward n
> caring for none,

big or small
rich or poor[21]

The clock beautifully and symbolically sketches the entire life from birth to death. Like Shakespeare's "wheel" image in *King Lear*, the ticking of the clock brings forth the conception of time and timelessness and like the flow of a river, the pendulum of the clock creates a deeper sense of movement and vision in this poem.

Symbolism, imagery and indirectness are the hallmarks of contemporary literature. Dwivedi, too, gleans freely the images form indigenous culture. Here are some fruitful images first form *Random Reflections* and then form *Fine Frenzy* which bring into focus the poet's liking for symbolic and suggestive expression and his indebtedness to Indian ethos, scenes and situations. The images like "the serpentine waves," "a tireless traveller," "a hundred-hued rainbow," "the whirling dance of Time," nature as "comely woman," death as "an angry dog," "chilly wind" "the flapping wings" of "a restless bird,"[22] mirror as "the glassy sentinel," poet as "painter" and "sculptor," communalism as "a poison tree"[23] present the multiple movement and vision, x-ray the contemporary Indian society and vision forth the remedial measures for human happiness.

Dewivedi in his compositions works on faithfully to the metrical and musical requirements of the pattern chosen for his poetry. He has employed skilfully the trends of heroic couplet and verse libre. In addition to it, he has also used unmistakable comic sense, sparkling wit and humour. Some of his poems are replete with irony and satire. However, an overall analysis of the entire corpus of his poetry discloses the dominance of vision over the form. In a word, the two volumes of Dr. Dwivedi's poetry exhibit an impressive beginning, and we hope for a flower yet to be fully blossomed in the times to come.

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[3]Ibid., p.6.

[4] *Random Reflections*, p.41.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid., p.43.

[7] Ibid., p.42.

[8] *Fine Frenzy*, p.47.

[9] Ibid., p.85.

[10] Ibid., p.94.

[11] Ibid., p.95.

[12] Ibid., p.97.

[13] *Random Reflections*, p.19.

[14] Ibid., p.20.

[15] *Fine Frenzy*, p.76.

[16] Ibid., p.108.

[17] Ibid.

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[20] *Random Reflections*, p.35.

[21] *Fine Frenzy*, p.48.

[22] *Random Reflections*, pp.17-64.

[23] *Fine Frenzy*, pp.8-80.

AN INTERVIEW WITH R.K. NARAYAN

Shrihari Telang

It was on 15 April, 1999, a red-letter day in my life when in the company of Shri Bansi Lal, a friend of my uncle from Hyderabad, at 11 a.m. sharp appointment was made a day earlier by Mr. Chandrashekharan, the son-in-law of Shri R.K. Narayan. When we reached an old man of 94 was seen sitting on a chair. As we both rushed in to touch his feet, he stood up. The talk that ensued is as followed:

R.K. Narayan : (Most unwilling to get his feet touched) oh, no, no !

Shrihari Telang : Sir, all the way from Gwalior, I have come to seek your blessings.

Narayan : (Retorting) I hate this word blessing. Who am I to bless you ? All human beings are same.

Mr. Lal : (Taking my side) Please, don't take it otherwise.

Narayan : I do not like idolatory. I am not god. Why did you bring garlands and fruits for me? Only politicians do like this. Let me be a man.

Telang : Sorry Sir, Sorry Sir. I brought these items out of my overjoy and enthusiasm.

Mr. Chandrashekharan interrupted and came to our help asking us to sit.

Narayan : (Pointing towards Mr. Lal) Why did you come ?

Mr. Lal : We have come to meet you.

Narayan : Why ? Whatever I wanted to say, I said in my books. I am there in my books.

Telang : Sir, I am Shrihari Telang. I am doing Ph.D. on your novels and have come here to seek your blessigs.

Narayan : Go ahead, but do not expect anything from me.

Narayan : Why are you so keen on Ph.D. ?

Telang : Sir, I may find a better job after Ph.D. and, moreover, it was my mother's wish that her son should have a doctorate. I lost her last year.

Narayan : How many books of mine have you read ?

Telang : Only a few--*The Financial Expert*, *The Guide* and *The English Teacher*. I don't have the complete

collection of your novels. In Gwalior, some novels are not available. That's why I came to Hyderabad. Your novels are very interesting.

Narayan : Did you get the collection ?

Telang : Yes, Sir.

Telang : (Taking a little liberty) Sir, in which of your novels, the maximum human values are there ?

Narayan : (Cleverly avoiding the answer) You find yourself.

Narayan : What did you find in *The Financial Expert* ?

Telang : Sir, through the character of Margayya in the novel, you have given a message to the mankind that people who are mad after money are ultimately ruined. Margayya was completely ruined. This money-lust leads a man nowhere.

Narayan : (Bursting into langhter added) This money is worse than a bacteria. It is an insect.

By this time his mood completely changed and I found him happy. Now Mr. Chandrashekharan entered bringing the stale garlands, sweet packet and fruits which I had taken there the night before. He asked us to offer these things.

Telang : Sir, if you don't mind. May I please take your photograph ?

Narayan : O.K. (Seeing my camera exclaimed) Brand new, a new camera.

Telang : Sir, to take your photo, I purchased it last might from Pandy Market.

Narayan : How much did you spend for it. ?

Telang : Sir, Rs. 2750.

Narayan : You seem to be rich, you have a lot of money. You are extravagant, absolutely extravagant. If you wanted it, you could have taken it from him (Pointing his Son-in-law) why did you spend money? He has got three or four cameras.

Chandrashekharan : For two-three photographs, I could have given my camera and for that I would have charged you hundred rupees.

Telang : I am ready to pay you even without this favour.

Narayan : How is Madras ?

Telang : Wonderful city. Everything is wonderful here.

Narayan : (Repeating) You are extravagant.

Telang : (Submitting with due humility) Sir, I am not rich. I belong to a mediocre family. Today I am very happy. Till I saw you, I was restless. Now, I am very very happy. I did it all out of my over-enthusiasm.

Narayan : You must put your overenthusiasm in check.

Mr. Lal : Sir, when we go to any temple, we bring something and offer it to our God. You are our god. We have received 'Prasadam' also.

Narayan : (To this explanation, langhed and asked) Do you do the same for every author you meet ?

Telang : No, Sir, it's only for you. As I am doing research work on your novels, this is especially for you.

Mr. Lal : (Asking chandrashekharan) Can we take him out for lunch with us ?

Chandrashekharan : No, now he has stopped going out for lunch and dinners. He only goes with his daughter.

Telang and Mr. Lal give him a copy of *The English Teacher* with a humble request.

Telang : Sir, please write a line in it for my encouragement and inspiration.

Narayan : (With shaking hands wrote) One line can express much and this is the line.

Telang : Thank you, sir.
Sir, if I come to Madras in future, may I visit you?

Narayan : (Smiling) Yes, you can, but must write a letter before you come here.

Now a long pause prevailed and Narayan became silent.

Telang and Mr. Lal : (Taking his leave) Thank you, Sir, thank you so much for sparing your precious time. Thank you, thank you, thank you once again, Sir.

BOOK REVIEWS

SURENDRANATH MINAJAGI, *VINAYAKA KRISHNA GOKAK*

(New Delhi: Sahitya Academy, 1999), pp. 115, Rs.25.

Basavaraj Naikar

Dr. V.K. Gokak had a multi-faceted personality; he was a great teacher of English, an orator, an administrator, an educationist, a poet, a prose writer, a novelist, a dramatist and an epic poet all rolled into one. Obviously, it is not an easy task for any one to give a comprehensive picture of such a multi-faceted personality as V.K. Gokak. It is a matter of pleasure to note that Dr. Surendranath Minajagi, a well-known Professor of English at Vallabh Vidyanagar, has risen to the occasion and has done a wonderful job.

Dr. Minajagi's intention is to introduce the broad outlines of Gokak's variegated achievement to the non-Kannada reader. He has divided his book into six chapters and discusses different phases and aspects of Gokak's literary accomplishments. In the first chapter, he offers a brief biographical sketch of Dr. Gokak and shows how a tall and lanky brahmin boy from Savanur was educated at Karnatak Arts College and later became a graduate of the University of Oxford. He also offers a brief picture of Dr. Gokak's professional career as Principal of Fergueson College at Pune, of Willingdon College at Sangli, as Professor of English at Osmania University and Director of the Central Institute of English at Hyderabad, as Vice-Chancellor of Bangalore University and of Sri Satya Sai Institute of Higher Learning at Puttaparti. He then traces the influence of Sri Aurobindo, D.R. Bendre, Matthew Arnold and Shelley on his bilingual poetic personality.

In the second chapter, he highlights the idealism and dreaming nature of Gokak as expressed in his early poems like *Kalopasaka*. He shows how Dr. Gokak was deeply influenced by the British romantic poets especially Shelley. In the third chapter, Dr. Minajagi discusses Dr. Gokak's poetics of integralism or *samanvaya* and shows how he tried to synthesize the Eastern and Western aesthetics

and philosophy. In the fourth chapter, the later poems of modernist mode like *Sea-Songs, In Life's Temple* and *Heaven and Earth* are discussed quite elaborately. In the fifth chapter, Dr. Minajagi has discussed the dreaminess, idealism and synthsizing vision of Dr. Gokak as expressed in his epic novel *Narahari* and epic proper *Bharata Sindhu Rashmi*. Then Dr. Minajagi traces Dr. Gokak's achievement as playwright, essayist and literary critic in a very brief manner.

On the whole, Dr. Minajagi's monograph on V.K. Gokak succeeds in offering a panoramic picture of the poet's gigantic achievements and helps the non-Kannada reader to place him in the national literary perspective.

P. K. SINGH, *REALISM IN THE ROMANCES OF SHAKESPEARE*

(Calcutta: Writers Workshop, 1993), pp. 113, Rs.100

Basavaraj Naikar

In spite of the difficulty of understanding Shakespeare and the bewildering bulk of Shakespeare criticism produced all over the world, Shakespeare is read and enjoyed by people in India. Shakespeare's tragedies were very popular with Indian readers until recently. But now the Last Plays or Romances have attracted the attention of Indian scholars who feel that these plays have a greater affinity with the Hindu sensibility, philosophy and literature than the tragedies. P.K. Singh's slender book on Shakespeare's Romances is a welcome addition to the Indian scholarship. He concentrates on the realistic element to be found in the four Romances--*Pericles, Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*--which provided the foundation of hard facts for the artistic superstructure. He offers a brief survey of critical views on Shakespeare's last plays and then proceeds to analyse them individually. The book makes delightful reading as the author wears his scholarship lightly and attracts our attention by his subtlity of perception and strict adherence to precise point of view. He has shown to the Indian scholars, especially the young ones, that Shakespeare need not be a bugbear but could be quite approachable, if one has deep love for the bard.

KUHU SHARMA, *D.H. LAWRENCE AND THE POETIC NOVEL*

(Delhi: K.K. Publications, 1998), pp.214, Rs. 500.00

Susheel Kumar Sharma

D.H. Lawrence is one of the most versatile, controversial and enigmatic literary personalities of the 20th century English Literature. His contending the accepted moral code and propounding an alternative one drew flakes from the conservative English society, and his books were even banned. Whether there is any boundary between poetry and fiction and whether Lawrence is a poet or a novelist are some of the difficult questions to answer in 'ayes' and 'nays'. In these days of deconstruction even the genres are losing meaning. In this context Kuhu Sharma's bold and original book on Lawrence is a praiseworthy effort and should be hailed as a noticeable contribution to Lawrence scholarship.

The book has been divided into eight chapters. "The Poetic Novel and Its Growth in England" is the first chapter of the book, which has been divided into three sections, viz. 'The Evolution of the Concept of the Poetic Novel,' 'The Nature of the Poetic Novel' and 'The Poetic Novel upto the Times of Lawrence'. In the first section, Kuhu Sharma evolves the concept of the poetic novel on the basis of the opinions expressed by critics and litterateurs. Their views on the form, themes, languages, descriptions, character delineation and the handling of human emotions and figures of speech are highlighted. In the second section the concerns of a poetic novelist are discussed. Kuhu enumerates them as "the living relationship between art and life" (p.11), "remarkable interest in the individual" (p.12), "manner of narration" (p.12), "the use of evocative prose-poetry" (p.13)," poetic atmosphere ... by the use of symbol and metaphor" (p.14) etc. She aptly concludes, "... a novel, being poetic, does not mean that it is written in poetry or poetic prose having a certain rhyme scheme and rhythm. It is not the mere manipulation of words or highly imaginative and intensely emotional expression which make the novel poetic.... The extensive use of symbols, figures of speech and imagery enables prose fiction to

achieve poetic heights" (pp.15-6). In the third and last section of the chapter, "a survey of the poetic strain in the novels of D.H. Lawrence's predecessors and contemporaries" (p.16) has been undertaken. Among those discussed here include Walter Scott, Dickens, Bronte Sisters, George Eliot, George Meredith, Thomas Hardy, Joseph Conrad, Henry James, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf.

As the title of the second chapter-- "Lawrence's Exposition of the Poetic Novel: *The White Peacock*"--suggests the writer undertakes to discuss Lawrence's first major novel here. She is not the first person to notice the poetic qualities of this novel as she refers to many critics who before her have referred to "poetic thoughts" (p.34) and "dominant lyrical note" (p.34) in the book. But, I am sure, she is the first critic to find poetry in the very title of the book. To her the book is "an intensely poetic portrayal of 'the changing rainbow of human relationships,' " (p.34).

The third chapter of the book is titled "The Poet-Novelist's First Masterpiece: *Sons and Lovers*". According to the author, *Sons and Lovers* "Presents a highly imaginative and an emotionally complex picture of life and fully demonstrates the novelist's power to translate passion into words" (p.55), and it is this that, according to Kuhu, makes the novel poetic. She discusses several scenes from the novel like Mrs. Morel's death, Mr. Morel's returning home in drunken condition, the visit of Paul and Miriam to the garden, coming across of a man with red stallion by Paul, Miriam and Clara to highlight the "poetic imagination" of Lawrence as depicted through these scenes. She also discusses various images and symbols in the book which are used by Lawrence to make the novel "look like a pastoral-symbolistic narrative poem in prose" (p.67).

"His Dramatic Poem in Prose: *The Rainbow*" is the fourth chapter of the book. Though *The Rainbow* was charged with obscenity, yet to Kuhu Sharma the book is a result of "poetic spontaneity and outburst" (p.79) and has all the "patent features of genuine poetry" (p.79), Kuhu's thesis in the chapter is that the novel "presents a poetic delineation of human relationships, particularly man-woman relationship, with all their tensions and

conflicts" (p.80). Minor characters in *The Rainbow* are shown having symbolic significance; for example, the taxi driver "symbolically presents a foil to Anton" and the taximan is a symbol of sheer vitality" (p.93). Ritual scenes in the novel are considered as "specimens of wonderful dramatic poetry, immensely rich in symbolic significance" (p.93).

The fifth chapter entitled "The Acme of the Novelist's Poetry: *Women in Love*" is the longest chapter of the book. Kuhu Sharma agrees with critics like F.R. Leavis, Keith Alldritt and F.H. Langman who have hailed *Women in Love* to be the best novel of Lawrence. But her considerations in regarding it so seem to be different as she writes, "... the book evinces the apex of the novelist's poetic genius, manifested in the dramatic-lyrical note, deep and complex passions, natural descriptions, symbolic motifs, poetic delineation of episodes and characters to explore and develop the main theme, poetic imagery and language, etc." (p.107) The relationships between Birkin and Ursula, Gerald and Gudrun, Birkin and Gerald, Birkin and Hermione are discussed, in detail, because these relationships have been "treated dramatically and poetically" (p.112) by Lawrence. Symbolic significance of various characters, besides other symbols, are pointed out in the next part of the chapter.

The novels like The *Lost Girl, Aaron's Rod, Kangaroo* and *The Plumed Serpent* have been taken up in the next chapter entitled "A Decline in His Poetic Powers: The Novels of Travel." In the very opening paragraph Kuhu Sharma endeavours to establish that "Lawrence could never again scale the heights" and that" [there is] a general decline in his mind and art" (p.141). She enumerates the following four reasons for these novels being inferior to his major fiction: "they are novels of travel which are bound to upset an artist's mental concentration required for creating a great work; secondly, they are marred by the elements of reportage and documentary interest; thirdly, all of them were written in a great haste and the novelist could not give them adequate attention to make them good works of art; and lastly, in them the artist deviates from his central concerns and becomes more of a preacher and prophet, indulging a bit too much in cultural, political and religious issues" (p.141).

She goes on to trace out poetic scenes, symbols, imagery, etc.

The seventh chapter of the book is titled "His 'Ballad-Like Lyricism': *Lady Chatterley's Lover*". Like other chapters, this one also opens with the opinions of various critics, and their difference of opinion is highlighted. Kuhu, however, opines that as "a poetic novel, too, it fully exhibits the poet-novelist's powers at their best" (p.165). In her view, "The lyrical intensity and spontaneity of the novel emanates from the very concept of the novel, i.e., tenderness in human ralationships and phallic consciousness as the central reality of life." She discusses this consciousness in detail. The chapter aptly ends with a long quotation from the novel itself--extracted to highlight "passional intensity and sensuousness of genuine poetry" (p.187)

The last chapter of the book "Summing-Up" has roughly two parts--the first summarizes the discussion in the foregoing chapters one by one and the second forms a conclusion in which the themes and style of D.H. Lawrence are praised. The book also has an elaborate bibliography divided into primary sources (further divided into 'Fiction,' 'Plays,' 'Poems' and 'Other Writings') and secondary sources (classified as 'Works on D.H. Lawrence' and 'Other Works Consulted'). There is hardly any research article in the bibliography. The printing of the book is largely clear though at places words appear to be broken because the letters are not clear and well made out. The book is priced very high and thus is meant not for an individual's purchase but only for the libraries.

RAMESH K. SRIVASTAVA, *THE NOVELS OF KAMALA MARKANDAYA*

(Amritsar: Guru Nanak Dev University, 1998), pp.323 + vii, Rs. 500.00

R.K. Sharma

This book--a collection of twenty two articles--on Kamala Markandaya is a critical evalution of her novels. It is a collection of twenty two research papers, written at different occasions for seminars and conferences and already have been published in literary journals and anthologies. The novels, which have been discussed, are: *Nectar in a Sieve, Some Inner Fury, A Silence of Desire, Possession, A Handful of Rice, The Coffer Dams, Two Virgins, The Nowhere Man,* and *The Golden Honeycomb.* The book evaluates Markandaya's novels from various points of view, viz. rural and urban life, love and death, faith and science, feminism, colonial consciousness, freedom, symbolism and style, etc.

Six articles are related to the novel, *Nectar in a Sieve.* As a result, all the novels have not found equal critical attention. The critic is aware of this fact and writes about the thread of unity in all of them. Dr. Srivastava finds some of her novels as the genuine picture of rural India, focusing on the miserable plight of landless farmers in *Nectar in a Sieve* and poignant tale of grim poverty and gnawing hunger in *A Handful of Rice.* Most of the characters in the novel, *Nectar in a Sieve,* are typically rural. Rukmani, Nathan, Janki, Kunthi and many more nameless characters have an unmistakable rural bearing. For Nathan and Rukmani, their efforts to bring happiness in the family become only momentarily successful. If at all they are blessed with nectar--which in concrete terms would mean factors that give them happiness, such as the birth of sons, the marriage of Ira and reaping of good harvest--they soon realise that sieve, and not nectar is meant for them. "But the world is not completely devoid of justice. Markandaya has woven into the plot of the novel a fine alternating pattern of hope and fear because life consists of both" (p.3). In the view of Dr. Srivastava, "the novel is a modern tragedy in which Aristotlean concepts are not strongly

adhered to" (p.41).

A Handful of Rice belongs to the same group as it depicts an impractical youth, wriggling out of his rural shell into the city in search of better life. The Critic finds the opening scene of the novel identical to the one in "The Bishop's Candlesticks" in which the convict demands food on the point of knife. Likewise, Ravishankar thereatens a forced entry into the house and demands food. The title embodies the theme of hunger, which is reinforced in the novel by the frequent recurrence of the word 'rice'. The novel is a pathetic chronicle of man's vain struggle for food and the brutal demolition of his dreams. The structure of the novel is circular because it begins with Ravi's quest for food and shelter and ends with his continuing struggle for a handful of rice.

The themes of love, death and feminism are explored in her two novels, viz. *Some Inner Fury* and *Possession. Some Inner Fury* depicts the kind of love as it existed in the Westernised, upper class Indian families of the 1940s. The love relationships operate on many levels--between Mira, an Indian girl, and Richard, an Englishman; between Kitsmay, a Westernised husband, and Premala, a typical Indian wife. The critic finds "some traces of Kamala Markandaya herself when she had married Mr. Taylor and had finally settled in England" (p.61). The themes of love and death interact with and intensify each other. Richard's death tests Mira's love in the same way as Premala's death tests Kitsmay's.

The female authors experience an anti-patriarchal rage which gets reflected in their works. It can be seen in Markandaya's Caroline, the central character in *Possession*. Dr. Srivastava compares this novel with *Macbeth* and Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. Mrs. Henchard is passive and can not control events but must adjust herself to them. Though Valmiki is male, he is passive and adjusts himself to his sale to Caroline by his parents. Hardy's novel shows the sale of a woman and *Possession* deals with that of a male. The author avers: "In *Possession*, it is a woman's world in which the male is manipulated, purchased, commanded, exploited and taken around like a pet" (p.126).

The Nowhere Man and The Golden Honeycomb concentrate on Identity and Freedom. He refers to Indian English Novelists like Mulk Raj Anand, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Ruth P. Jhabwala and Anita Desai, who have been abroad for long stretches of time and have experienced the threat to their identity. Shrinivas, Vasantha and their children face this problem in various degrees in *The Nowhere Man*. Dr. Srivastava brings out the message of *The Golden Honeycomb* that the history of almost every nation highlights the fact that the urge for freedom can be delayed but certainly not denied; it has to come to all, without any distinction of caste, creed and culture.

The seasoned critic examines Markandaya's style and narrative technique in separate chapters. If her style is the image of her mind, it is also the image of her characters, events and the actions which it attempts to portary. She has a perfect command of English, and uses it with grace and pliability, now fast, now slow, now standing still. The long and short sentences, even sentence-fragments, make her style truly living. Every writer has some blemishes, and this is true of Markandaya also. For instance, she has grossly mismanaged details at a number of places, and often confuses Deepavali with Holi and shows the birth of an illegitimate child as a welcome event in the rural society of India.

Surely this critical examination of Kamala Markandaya's novels by Dr. Ramesh K. Srivastava is useful not only for research scholars but also for teachers and students. However, I very much wish that the learned critic should have used the widely accepted term "Indian English" in place of "Indo-Anglian" in this admirable book.

RAJ KAMAL JHA, *THE BLUE BEDSPREAD*

(London: Picador, 1999)

Sanjoy Saksena

Anyone who reads *The Blue Bedspread* is first of all struck by Raj Kamal Jha's prose. Though the novel can easily be bracketed as a psychological one in the text-book fashion, the style defies the reader's imagination; it is at once loaded with images and violative of syntax. The two together combine to create a bizarre effect--transport one into a twilight world of illusion and reality, and as the story unfolds it builds in us a tension, a groping for facts as they exist in this mundane world because the narrator with his gripping, sharp descriptions transports us into his own world trapped in a despondent slough built by a guilty fancy. It is the sort of world in which sinning introverts and perverts live. But it is not an entirely unfamiliar world--the story is based in an Indian city, Calcutta, and about people one could be rubbing shoulders with, without knowing their inner afflictions and searing sexual relationships. The disjunctions in the narrative put the reader's patience to test. It is like listening to a mental case who can't order his confessions in a proper sequence. One is almost left guessing whether it is neuroticism coming out or Jha examining our abilities to put a sad life's puzzles and missing links together. The way the narrative has been structured is an endurance test for one's memory, move as it does back and forth, and one is forced to return to the novel after one is through with it. We are simply pushed into a maze of events and descriptions which follow no systematic paradigm and the narrative swings like an erratic Foucault's pendulum.

The narrator who paints "half-remembered scenes" forgets to give clues that an ordinary listener would require to grasp the situation firmly but amusingly gives us graphic descriptions of the surroundings--the shapes and shades of light and so on. '*How do you remember all this ?' he asks.* (p.214). Though one might be willing to make all kinds of allowances in a generous mood, but, then, one thinks: are one's limits of endurance not being pushed too far. *The Blue Badspread* is certainly not light reading. In the very

first line of the novel the narrator says: "I could begin with my name but forget it, why waste time, it does not matter in this city of twelve million names." One can understand that a person caught up in infestive paranoia should forget his name but that he should remain entirely oblivious of names that matter so much to him is a little too much to digest. It is amazing that addresses and locations should be remembered clearly but the names of key characters... trust him... ! Curiously, he remembers the name of "the Superintendent of Police, Lake Town, B. Block, Calcutta 700 089, Mr. M.K. Chatterjee," address and all that. To push the main thrust of the argument further, one is inclined to believe that there is an attempt on the part of Raj Kamal Jha to give "flat characters" a palpable life. He withholds their names deliberately, without diminishing their importance in any way, and shows how characters such as these contribute in making our reality or the reality dismal of those who are the principal players in his maiden novel unbearable. The man who lives in the flat above and beats up his wife ! We do not know his wife's name nor do we know the names of many of those who cris-cross Jha's canvas. But this couple is significant because its discordial relationship casts an infectious shadow on the minds of the *brother* and *sister*. There are those whose names we do not miss, e.g. the names of Bhabani the maid-servant's husband and son. They are people one could run into at any street corner and Jha by making them nameless highlights their commonness for us--the fact that they have little individuality and their relative insignificance in the scheme of things. Be as it may, even these characters have a role to play in shaping the mental makeup of those characters who matter as far as the novel is concerned.

But there is an instance when the *brother's* memory works miraculously well and relates to Miss Sarah Parker of the Mesmeric Institute whom he misses because he is unable to handle the baby and put it to sleep. The fellow also remembers her address and the name of her successor Dr. Chapagnon who "called himself a thought reader." Even the names of the quarrelsome parents of the brother and sister who partake in the unholy ritual of incest are missing. Do members of a family or groups not use them? This

robbing characters of their names amounts to stealing a little of their identity and dialogue its naturalness and probability. Folks appear like people in a psychologist's case study where names are withheld and but for Jha's poetic descriptions the novel would have been reduced to that level. If the attempt on his part has been to reduce the *brother* and *sister* to everyman and everywoman: I am sorry, I have my reservations. The average Calcuttan for me does not indulge in incest and those rare ones who do because of a quirk of fate not merely deserve our sympathy but our attention towards the sad poetry in their emotions which Jha has brought out succintly.

The Blue Bedspread is a novel which is likely to evoke sharp reactions--not merely because of its theme but also because of its technique. Ever since Arundhati Roy's violation of the syntax and chutneyfication of the English language received accolades from the learned judges of the Booker Award Committee, it seems taking liberties with language has become fashionable, specially in India. Sometimes it is done with success but when it is reduced to a trope one is likely to see it given up. The authorial prerogatives have been pushed too far, often at the expense of meaning because one would suspect here effect takes precedence. Jha talks about buying a "pouch" of milk. The words pack and bag are also commonly used in this country. Or is that Calcutta English ? When he says "slippers go slap-slap on the cement floor" one does hear the familiar sound of rubber bathroom slippers come alive. 'Slap' may not be a good word to use but it does bring the experience back to those who have been through it. There is yet another very interesting Indianism, a literal translation from the native tongue which brings out the meaning clearly: "wash the unslept sleep from eyes." It's *the unslept sleep* which does the trick for those who have an ear for Hindi as well as Indian English. But where Jha describes the busy Chowringhee traffic by using--"To and fro, to and fro"--one feels that he over does it. Not content he comes up with yet another one: "... I stand in the verandra, nothing to do, watching, the birds in the cage, fly *around and around.*" (p.3). Going by wholescale indulgence in this latest fad in Indian writing in English, Jha is full of restraint and does not fall into the nativistic net. The tendency of late has been

among writers to over shoot the mark to such an extent as the next step would reduce Indian English to the level of pigeon English—a language that may not have much interest for people living in other parts of the world.

Jha's style has a touch of magic realism about it--that fashionable genre which originated in Latin America and found favour with contemporary Anglo-American practitioners of fiction. Where Jha actually fascinates is the manner in which he tries to restructure and render common linguistic constructions which leave one floating in the realm of metaphorical interpretation. For example, in "Dead Pigeon" there is the moving parallel between the old man's suicide and the death of a baby pigeon which has escaped from its cage in the oil mill. Jha also has a rare gift for accreting common place details of things which exist for us and are apparently insignificant, but in their totality contribute a lot in shaping our mental make-up--psychological states which make the stuff of life. We are made to feel how ordinary people caught in the mire of existence get mixed up with their household effects, both for the better and sometimes for the worse. The blue bedspread itself, towels, drapes, balcony, washbasins... which are taken for granted as being there have a role to play in the scheme of things. Men and women who collect banal paraphernalia are moved by it. We drift into a mind-set which is unorthodox; brought about by Jha's inimitable lexis and structural deviancy. The cumulative impact of all this is that we are sucked into what has been described as "mind style"--a way of making readers experience the transcribed emotional states and feelings like a voyeur. The intensity in all that has happened on the blue bedspread and due to it is such that one feels that after a point Jha "does'nt have to lie any more, twist facts to flesh out his fiction" (p.227). The lie that is fiction itself becomes the truth.

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