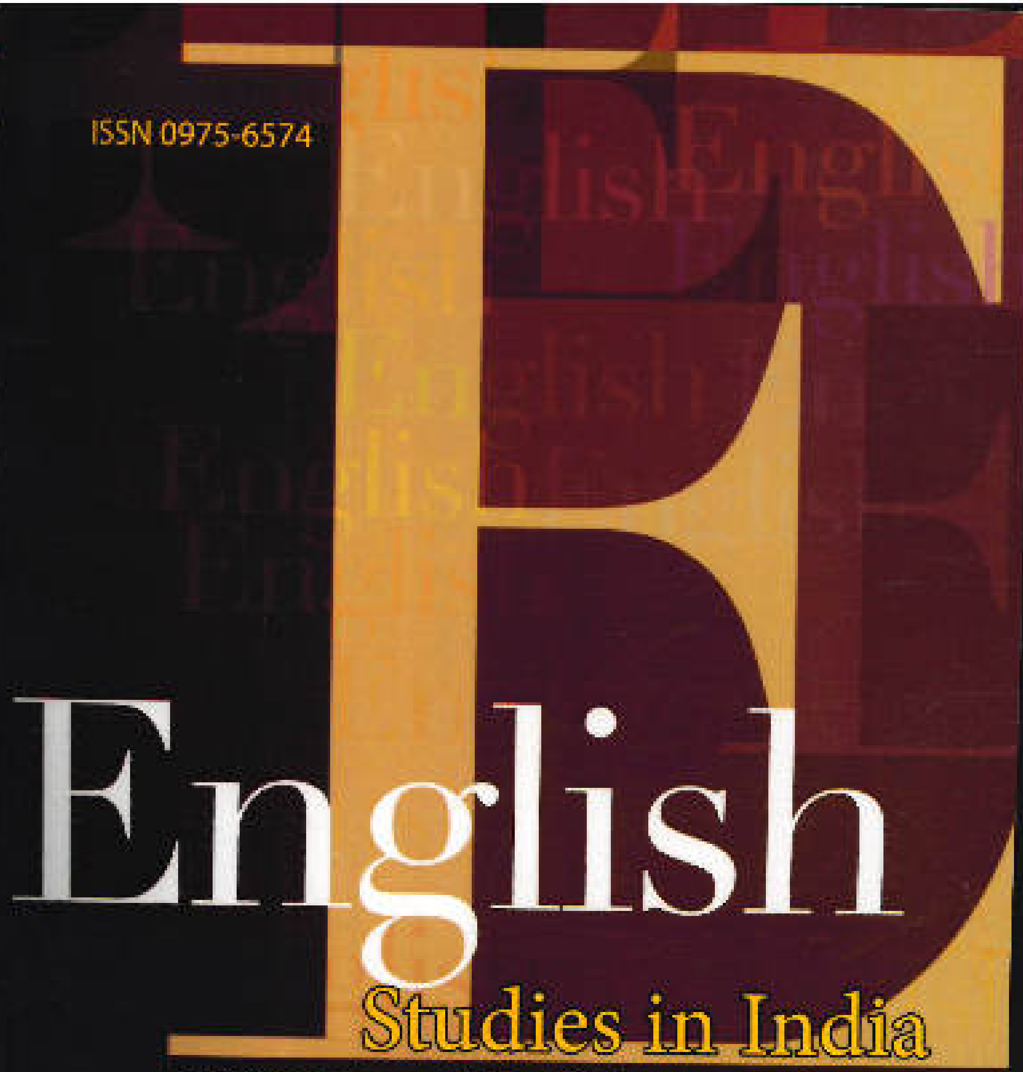
English
Studies in India

ISSN 0975-6574



English
Studies in India

A Refereed Journal of English Literature and Language

Vol. 20 January 2012

Department of English
University of Kashmir

ISSN 0975-6574

English
Studies in India

A Refereed Journal of English Literature and Language

Vol. 20 *January 2012*

Editor
Mohammad Aslam

Department of English
University of Kashmir
Srinagar

Advisory Board

- Professor G K Das, former Professor of English, University of Delhi
- Professor Harish Narang, former Professor of English, JNU, New Delhi
- Professor M L Raina, former Professor of English, Punjab University, Chandigarh
- Professor Malashri Lal, Joint Director, South Campus, University of Delhi, Delhi
- Professor Badri Raina, former Professor of English, University of Delhi
- Professor Manju Jaidka, Professor of English, Punjab University, Chandigarh
- Professor Imtiaz Hasnain, Department of Linguistics, AMU, Aligarh
- Professor Sukhdev Singh, Department of English, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar

Acknowledgements

The editor expresses gratitude to the following for reviewing the articles/ translations published in this volume:

- Professor M L Raina, former Chairman, English Department, Punjab University, Chandigarh
- Professor G K Das, former Head, English Department, University of Delhi
- Professor Sumanyu Satpathy, English Department, Arts Faculty Building, University of Delhi
- Professor Anil Raina, English Department, Punjab University Chandigarh
- Professor Lily Want, Department of English, University of Kashmir

© Department of English 2012

Published by
Lily Want
Head
Department of English
University of Kashmir
Srinagar 190 006

English Studies in India is a refereed journal of literature and language published annually by the Department of English, University of Kashmir.

Contributions are welcome which should be addressed to the Head, Department of English, University of Kashmir, Srinagar 190 006, Kashmir (India). Manuscripts submitted should be sent in duplicate, typeset in Microsoft Office XP or in the 'Compatibility mode' in Office 2007. They can also be emailed at: lilywant@yahoo.co.in. However, hard copies should be sent by post for proof-reading.
Only research articles are accepted for publication. Unused manuscripts can be returned to the authors if accompanied by stamped and self-addressed envelopes.

The editors or the department are not responsible for any plagiarism, if at all, resorted to by any contributor. A contributor must furnish to the editor a certificate that the article has not been published anywhere else. Views expressed in the articles are of their respective writers and not of the department.

We do not accept handwritten articles or articles that do not follow the recommended style.

Subscription Rate: Rs 200.00 per annum/issue

Printed at: Images & Impressions, New Delhi 110 002

Computer typeset by: Mohammad Aslam

Note for Contributors

Articles sent to *English Studies in India* must follow the style and format given below. Notes should be worked into the text if they help clarify, otherwise just omit them. Use intra-text citations with all references consolidated into final alphabetised section. The proper style/format for citations is as follows:

Non-paginated

(Author[s] Year)	-No comma between author(s) and date. Eg (Derrida 1985) or (Wimsatt and Brooks 1999)
(Author[s] Year 1, Year 2, etc)	- Comma between dates of successive publications by same author(s). Eg. (Chomsky 1960, 1974) or (Rao 1979a, 1979b)
(Authors[s]-1 Year, Author[s]-2 Year)	- Semi-colon between different authors or sets of authors. Eg. (Lasswell and Kaplan 1950; Rajan 1964)

Paginated

(Author[s] Year: Pages)	-Use of colon with no preceding or succeeding or sets between. Years and pages. Eg (Derrida 1985: 10-12)

The rules apply to multiple works by the same author(s) or multiple sets of authors. For citation from author(s) just previously cited, (author: page no).

Examples of References

Ayer, AJ. 1997. *Language, Truth and Logic*. Penguin: Harmondsworth.

Giles, H. 1977. *Language, Ethnicity and Intergroup Relations*. London: Academic Press.

Killam, GD. 1977. *The Writings of Chinua Achebe*. Rev ed. London: Heinemann.

Soyika, Wole. 1967. "The Writer in a Modern State". *The Writer in Modern Africa*, ed Peter Wastberg. NY: African Publishing Corporation.

Contents

ISSN 0975-6574

English Studies in India *Volume 20* *January 2012*

Articles

Lawrence and Gandhi as Environmentalists with a Difference 1
G K Das, former Professor of English, University of Delhi

Mikhail Bakhtin: The Politics of Language and Genre 15
Badri Raina, former Professor of English, University of Delhi

English Studies In India: What Business Are We in? 35
Anil Raina, Professor of English, Punjab University, Chandigarh

Literary Text in a Globalized Context: Emanating Cultural Locations and Reader Technologies 43
Anu Vashisht, Government Women's College, Parade, Jammu

Sweet Water–Stolen Land:* A Re-enactment of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies 55
Virendar Khatkar, G.N.Khalsa College, Yamuna Nagar, Haryana

The Carnivalesque in Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* 66
A R N Hanuman, A.U. College of Engineering (A), Visakhapatnam

Poetic Influence and Individuality in the Indo-Persian Ghazal: Ghalib and his Literary Precursors 73
Mufti Mudasir, English Department, University of Kashmir

Poetry of Sylvia Plath: Dialouge of Death and Pleasure 84
Manpreet Kour, Govt Degree College, Poloura, Jammu

Decolonization and Migrant Sensibility in V S Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* 93
Namrata Nistandra, Doaba College, Jalandhar, Punjab

The Republic of English: Egalitarian Impulses at Work in Indian Writing in English 101
Iffat Maqbool, English Department, University of Kashmir

Stuffed with the Realer Passions: Exploring Lyricisim in Spender's Poems 109
Sayed Sarwar Hussain, College of Languages & Translation, King Saud University

The Whisky Priest's Journey to Sainthood: A Study of Graham Greene's ***The Power and the Glory*** 121
Tasleem A War, English Department, University of Kashmir

Poetry

Thank You, Harold Pinter 131
Badri Raina, former Professor of English, University of Delhi

Translations

Destiny *(Akhter Mohiuddin)* 133

Mother's Boy *(Mohiuddin Reshi)* 137
Mohammad Aslam, English Department, University of Kashmir

Festal Lights from Across *(Hari Krishan Kaul)* 139
Nusrat Jan, English Department, University of Kashmir

Ghazal *(Wali Mohammad 'Aseer Kishtwari')* 147
A N Dhar, former Professor of English, University of Kashmir

Book Review

Revaluations: Forgotten Classics of Criticism Revisited 149
M L Raina, former Professor of English, Punjab University, Chandigarh

Lawrence and Gandhi as Environmentalists with a Difference

G K Das

> "…whoever makes anything with real interest, puts life into it, and makes it a little fountain of life for the next comer. Therefore a Gandhi weaver is transmitting life to others—and that is the great charity." (Lawrence 1982: 28)
>
> "…I am sure Gandhi is right for India…I am sure every *race* and nation will have to fight, and fight hard, to survive the machine…" (Lawrence 1929: 424)

D H Lawrence (1885-1945) and Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) were geniuses with striking dissimilarities and similarities. The crucial difference between them could be summed up in a sentence–that while Lawrence was a passionate believer in the life of the body, Gandhi valued asceticism and held soul-life to be supreme. As revolutionaries, their voices of dissent were directed against mechanization, modernization, environmental destruction, authoritarianism, tyranny and oppression. Yet Lawrence's fierce individualism gave him a very different identity from that of Gandhi, whose mission it was, as it were, to remain a man of the people.

In post-World-War- I gloomy Europe, Lawrence saw no hope for humanity and declared it to be a 'dead letter'; Gandhi, on the other hand, was emerging in India as a messiah of hope, freedom and happiness through his vision of self-rule. Lawrence's political opinion wavered at different stages of his life. He found nothing worthwhile in the decadent British aristocracy and was initially in close sympathy with the working- class population to be disillusioned afterwards, however, by their unspiritual aspiration for money and lack of vision. He had little sympathy with the middle-class intelligentsia with their snobbery, moral hypocrisy and lack of verve. Toying for some time with the fascist idea of the leadership of a (supposedly) racially superior people, he ultimately came round to the view that neither a superior form of Fascism, nor Socialism was the right politics, and visualized a utopia in the form of a self-sufficient community life of 'fulfilled individuals', with no blind materialism. Gandhi, on the other hand, steadfastly adhered to democracy as the best possible form of government; although as a leader of the Indian National Congress, he would have liked the Congress to keep out of power politics and involve itself in active work with the people. His vision of 'Gram Swaraj' (self-sufficient village economy) however, remains to this day by and large as an ideal, yet to be actualized–almost as utopian as Marx's ideal of a classless society, or like Lawrence's own project 'Rananim' that never saw the light of day. What we gain from geniuses is not so much a redefinition of an ideal social order in terms of their own vision, but a hard core of new thought as well as guidance for practical action that lies behind their vision.

Lawrence's rethinking of possibilities of renewal of life and values in significant ways followed a realistic as well as spiritual path as did Gandhi's. Their analysis of the malaise of civilization and possible ways of reform were in many ways similar. A return to the old community life, close to the earth and nature, based on manual labor and community-centered values, seemingly bordering on primitivism was the panacea, according to them. To both machinery was evil, and things made by man made a lot of sense. Lawrence saw more meaning in the 'Gandhi weaver' who for him was an image of the fulfilled individual, than in the machine- minding man.

> ...weaving, carving, building–this is the flow of life,' Lawrence told Earl Brewster, 'life flows into the object–and life *flows out again* to the beholder. So that whoever makes anything with real interest, puts life into it, and makes it a little fountain of life for the next comer. Therefore a Gandhi weaver is transmitting life to others–and that is the great charity.
>
> (Lawrence 1961:28)

Lawrence saw that Gandhi protesting industrialization as detrimental to India's agricultural economy, favored the use of the spinning wheel, not the handloom, for the latter could not be introduced in every home while it was possible to so install the former. According to Gandhi, 'Agriculture does not need revolutionary changes. The Indian peasant requires a supplementary industry. The most natural is the introduction of the spinning wheel...The restoration therefore, of the spinning-wheel solves the economic problem of India at a stroke....'(Gandhi 1922: 401).

In his lifetime Lawrence saw how large scale industrial mining had ruined the environment and created an existential crisis for people by alienating them from the natural environment and from their cultural inheritance. He thought the ugly barracks in Nottingham where the mineworkers resided and their drab life in the coal pits had warped their mind. Gandhi in the same vein deplored the dismal condition of millions of rural artisans and peasants turned factory-workers in India. Lawrence lamented Nottingham's sprawling growth into an 'amorphous agglomeration,' and its loss of character as a city. 'There is no Nottingham, in the sense that there is Siena....The New cities of America are much more genuine cities, in the Roman sense, than is London or Manchester. Even Edinburgh used to be more of a true city than any town England ever produced' (Lawrence1961: 139).

Lawrence looked for 'beauty, dignity, and a certain splendor' in cities. His vision of a clean new life to come is reflected in Ursula Brangwen's vision of the earth's new architecture, at the end of *The Rainbow*.

> ...the rainbow stood on the earth. She knew that the sordid people who crept hard-scaled and separate on the face of the earth's corruption were living still, that the rainbow was arched in their blood and quiver to life in their spirit, that they would cast off their horny covering of disintegration,

> that new, clean, naked bodies would issue to a new germination, to a new growth rising to the light and the wind of heaven. She saw in the rainbow the earth's new architecture, the old brittle corruption of houses and factories swept away ....
>
> (Lawrence 1970: 495-96)

Nearly a century intervenes between that text and our own time, to-day, when environment is a global agenda of prime concern. Several thousands of people, including UN delegations, NGOs, trade unions, business and city officials, researchers and Parliamentarians met at the Habitat II UN Conference on Human Settlements held in Istanbul in the summer of 1996. Extensive debates took place on matters relating to housing rights, sustainable urban settlement targets and the challenges of rising mega cities in the coming years. Some alarming facts were observed: that globally cities were growing by one million each week , that one-third of the world's urban population live in sub-standard housing, that by the year 2025, nearly two-thirds of the world's population will be living in cities. According to the British architect Sir Richard Rogers, the question before Environmentalists to-day is 'how do we leave future generations unpolluted land, air, water, and a rich diversity of material resources both animal and mineral?' (Lederer 1966: 7). Sir Richard who constructed a new court building in Bordeaux, without artificial air-conditioning and with air pipes passing through a waterfall in the vicinity, visualizes that the future will see solar cities and buildings with solar technology: "The sun is the earth's only energy source...A solar age will replace the industrial age.'

Similar environmental concern was felt by Lawrence, as he thought of the rapidly growing tide of industrialization. In contrast to industrial England is his portrayal of old agricultural England in *The Rainbow*, where he depicts the life of the Brangwens of an earlier generation: 'They knew the intercourse between heaven and earth, sunshine drawn into the breast and bowels, the rain sucked up in the day time, nakedness that comes under the wind in autumn, showing the birds, nests no longer worth hiding'.

(Lawrence 1970:8)

Exponents of environment to-day look at their movement as a revolution. According to them the Environmental revolution was preceded by two earlier revolutions: first, the agricultural revolution which began some ten thousand years ago as a result of the discovery of farming; second, the Industrial revolution which was heralded by the invention of the steam engine converting coal energy into mechanical power and progressed for two centuries. The contribution of the Industrial revolution is evaluated in terms of increased output of raw materials and manufactured goods. But the Environmental revolution, its exponents say, 'will be judged by whether it can shift the world economy onto an environmentally sustainable development path, one that leads to better economic security, healthier life-styles, a worldwide improvement in the human condition'(Brown 1992: 175).

Lawrence was an environmentalist with a difference, as was Gandhi. Economic security and a process of social transformation with its central emphasis on economic wellbeing did not have priority in their vision of things. For them the crucial issue was how to restore and preserve our rootedness in the earth. 'We are bleeding at the roots,' wrote Lawrence, 'because we are cut off from the earth and sun and stars...We must go back to into relation, vivid and nourishing relation, to the cosmos and the Universe' (Lawrence 1993: 323).

Gandhi too was a strong advocate of a life lived in close contact with nature, amid nourishing natural resources–earth, water, sunlight and air–which essentially meant to him village-life, manual labor, farming, and a feeling of harmony and fullness. In this he was in some ways influenced by the beliefs and practices of Edward Carpenter, and Thoreau, whose classic work *Walden* had much fascination for Lawrence also. Gandhi and Lawrence both drew inspiration from the fact that simplicity of life with fewer wants, dignity of labor, self-help and enrichment of the quality of life through a sustained responsiveness to the vibrant natural environment were some of the ideas that Thoreau believed in and practiced. Like Thoreau, they too bemoaned the degradation of natural environment in the process of development and modernization.

Gandhi's comments on environmental degradation as a grim aspect of modern civilization appeared in his writings in the columns of *Indian Opinion*, published in South Africa in 1908. These writings, translated into English from the original Gujarati, later came out as his little book *Hind Swaraj or the Indian Home Rule* (1909). Gandhi once described his book as 'a condemnation of modern civilization.' In chapter v, titled 'The Condition of England,' he blames modern civilization for the degraded condition of the English people. 'It is not due to any particular fault of the English people, but the condition is due to modern civilization. It is a civilization only in name. Under it the nations of Europe, are becoming degraded and ruined day by day' (Gandhi 1968: 47).

Two chapters of *Hind Swaraj* are devoted to the subject 'Civilization' and one to 'Machinery.' In these pages Gandhi sharply criticizes materialism, large scale industrialization and mechanization. He deplores that better-built houses in Europe, replacement of manual labor by steam engine in farming, industrial production, and growth of mines and factories with the objective of amassing wealth were being mistakenly identified with civilization. He remarks: 'Civilization is not an incurable disease, but it should never be forgotten that the English people are at present afflicted by it' (Gandhi 1996: 33).

Lawrence and Gandhi basically took the same position in on the state of deterioration of Western civilization. Lawrence did not think that the machine as such was an evil thing. He would, therefore, disagree with Gandhi who outright condemned machinery.

> Machinery is like a snake-hole, which may contain one to a hundred snakes. Where there is machinery there are large cities; and where there are large cities, there are tram cars, railways... Honest physicians will tell you that where means of artificial locomotion have increased, the health of the people has suffered. .. it is necessary to realize that machinery is bad. We shall then be able gradually to do away with it. Nature has not provided any way by whereby we may reach a desired goal all of a sudden. If, instead of welcoming machinery as a boon, we should look upon it as an evil, it would ultimately go.
>
> (Gandhi 1996:83-84)

Gandhi's 'desired goal' was preservation of India's traditional civilization and culture, which were still alive in the villages. He knew that although villagers were getting impoverished and their dwellings looked like 'dung heaps' in 'squalid surroundings,'(Gandhi 1998: 184) culturally, life in the village had largely remained free from Westernization. 'Japan has become Westernized,' he observed, 'of China nothing can be said; but India is still, somehow or other, sound at the base' (Gandhi 1996:8). He advocated development of village handicrafts, spinning, weaving and other cottage industries that provided occupation and earning to families. He thought handicrafts were the hallmark of village economy and culture. As Lawrence once told Earl Brewster, the 'Gandhi weaver' who was traditionally engaged in manual labor and in making beautiful objects, was "transmitting life" to the community.

Gandhi advocated a system of 'basic' education, in place of mere book learning. The education system, in his view, should create opportunities for the pupil for developing manual skills and it should impart creative and occupational training as an integral part of learning, thus paving the way for a self-sufficient family/village economy (*gram swaraj*). Lawrence's own view of education was significantly similar to Gandhi's. The flawed education system in 19th century Britain with its focus on enlightenment and mental learning was not only a matter of personal experience for Lawrence, but it often is commented on in his writings–in the narration of Ursula Brangwen's experience as a school teacher, in *The Rainbow*, for example. An education system based on book learning having little touch with actualities, can indeed result in a callous unconcern for the environment, as indeed it has happened in most parts of the world.

Lawrence would not agree with Gandhi, however, in supporting any system built on total rejection of the machine. 'Now there is a railing against the machine, as if it were an evil thing. And the thinkers talk about the return to the medieval system of handicrafts. Which is absurd…I do honor to the machine and its inventor,' he remarks in his 'Study of Thomas Hardy.' 'It will produce what we want and save us the necessity of much labor, which is what it was invented for' (Gandhi 1996: 426-27). Despite this point of difference, however, Lawrence comes close to Gandhi in his view on the machine. 'Do we use the machine to produce goods for our need, or is it used as a muck-rake for raking together heaps of money…Why, when man, in his godly effort has produced a means to freedom, do we make it a means to more slavery?' (Gandhi 1996: 8) In taking an ideological position, both Gandhi and Lawrence thus took near- identical stand.

Their views on urbanization and its effects on the life of people were similar. Lawrence's description of social changes that urbanization had brought about in Britain in the 19th century and Gandhi's comments on the Indian situation at the turn of the last century reflect a common concern over the rapidly deteriorating environment and changing human condition. Migrant women and men from the countryside, alienated from their land and natural heritage, were turning to slave labor in industry and factories. Lawrence's narration of the degraded condition of miners in Nottinghamshire, when mining industry was mechanized, and Gandhi's description of the dismal condition of factory workers in the cotton mills of Gujarat are astute comments on environmental change under the impact of large scale industrialization. Acknowledging the fact that the establishment of mills and factories brought some economic well-being, Gandhi remarked, however, that it had also led to degradation of the physical and moral health of people:

> By reproducing Manchester in India, we shall keep our money at the price of our blood, because our very moral being will be sapped, and I call in support of my statement the very mill-hands as witnesses. And those who have amassed wealth out of factories are not likely to be better than other rich men. It would be folly to assume that an Indian Rockefeller would be better than the American Rockefeller.
>
> (Gandhi 1996: 8)

Lawrence's narration of the social situation in question is vivid in *Sons and Lovers*. The two settings to the life-story of the miners in the opening chapter, 'Hell Row' and 'The Bottoms,' foreground the change: '…some sixty years ago, a sudden change took place. The gin-pits were elbowed aside by the large mines of the financiers.' The 'notorious' Hell Row, where the colliers lived, was burned down making way for The Bottoms built by the company. There 'the actual conditions of living … were quite unsavory because people must live in the kitchen, and the kitchen opened on to that nasty alley of ash-pits.' (Lawrence 1992: 9-10) We are told that Mrs Morel had to move to 'The Bottoms' rather reluctantly, but found herself lucky to have an 'end house,' with an 'extra strip of garden' that gave her a sense of 'superiority.' The house had a little front garden also, where Mrs Morel could occasionally escape from her 'struggle with poverty and ugliness and meanness' (Lawrence 1992:13).

For the young Paul Morel, similarly, 'Willey Farm', is a retreat from the industrial environment and its dehydrating consequences on personal life: the life of feeling, imagination and art. With some wildness around it and Miriam at its centre, Willey Farm's integrated emotive ambience enlarges and enriches Paul's life. From the retreat he must, however, return to the drab reality.

> One evening he came home later to his lodging. The fire was burning low; everybody was in bed. He threw on some more coal, glanced at the table, and decided he wanted no supper. .. he saw the dim smoke wavering up the chimney. Presently two mice came out, cautiously nibbling the fallen crumbs. He watched them as it were from a long way off. ..Far away he could hear the sharp clinking of the trucks on the railway… The two mice, careering wildly, scampered cheekily over his slippers.
>
> (Lawrence1992:455)

Paul's road to liberation from the prison -house of industrialism lies in his resolute resistance to it. Only by rejecting the pressures of industrialism, and not being a part of it, may he come to a sense of one's own being. The point is illustrated by a symbolic episode in the story. In Chapter xi "The Test on Miriam', there is a gorgeous picture of cherry trees in fruit at the Willey Farm: 'The trees at the back of the house, very large and tall, hung thick with scarlet and crimson drops, under dark leaves.' Paul and Edgar are gathering the fruit. Paul climbs the tree, and drunk in excitement, tears off 'handful after handful of sleek cool-fleshed fruit. Cherries touch his ears and his neck.' Miriam standing by the tree exclaims in admiration: 'How high you are!' At this moment, we notice that beside her on the rhubarb-leaves, are 'four dead birds, thieves that have been shot.' Paul then sees some 'cherry -stones hanging quite bleached, like skeletons picked clear of flesh'. As he scrambles down with his basket, his shirt sleeve gets torn. There is a subtle point that the narrative seems to make here with the three symbols used: the four birds that have been shot, the cherry stones hanging like skeletons, and Paul's torn shirt sleeves. Paul is gently admonished for 'drunken' aggression on environment: in his greed for ravishing the fruit bearing cherry tree, he is more of a predator than the birds who ate the cherries and were shot. The symbolism of the dead birds is also reminiscent of that of the dead mother rabbit and the three other little ones in Lawrence's story 'Adolf;' it is reminiscent as well of 'the piercing death cry of elephants dying at the hands of the last of the Amazons,' in Lawrence's mythic short piece 'The Elephants of Dionysus' (Lawrence 1974:59). The symbolic episode does alert us to the threat to wild life, a key environmental issue.

Gandhi's faith in non-violence, and his reverence for life in any form were not only ingrained in him by his religious faith, they were also the most pragmatic way, according to him, of leading a good life. He labored hard to ensure provision of clean habitation for people, and believed in a simple life lived in tune with nature. Reading Thoreau's *Walden*, he came under his spiritual influence. Both Thoreau and Gandhi have indeed been models for the Environmentalists.

Eminent Environmentalists such as E F Schumacher (*Small is Beautiful: Economics As If People* Mattered, 1973) and Ivan Illich(*Towards a History of Needs*, 1978)critique the use of heavy machinery on a large scale for economic development, and the consumerist philosophy that productivity and growth alone measure quality of life. Both Lawrence and Gandhi indeed anticipated that view and pleaded for a reordering of the social system by conservation and judicious use of the earth's natural resources. They both criticized Britain's imperial ambition that had led to debasement of the human condition under colonial rule. Ursula Brangwen in *The Rainbow* pooh-poohs the idea that Skerbensky was going to India for being 'somebody' there. Gandhi in *Hind Swaraj* castigates the expansive ambition of imperial administration in India. 'Its object was to increase its commerce and to make money…someone asked the late President Kruger,' recalls Gandhi, 'whether there was gold in the moon. He replied that it was highly unlikely because, if there were, the English would have annexed it' (Gandhi 1996:36-37).

Gerald Crich, the industrial magnate and believer in modernization as development, in *Women in Love*, is doomed to destruction. His was the type who went to trade in India, and established an empire of money and power. To Ursula, the 'empire stinks!' The British in India had railways and big industries built to expand trade and commerce, which for good or bad, turned Indians to a consumerist population. 'They wish to convert the whole world into a vast market for their goods,' (Gandhi 1996:37) remarks Gandhi. In the process of economic exploitation they gave little thought to conservation of India's vast wealth of biodiversity.

Biodiversity is an important item on the environmentalist agenda to-day. Scientists believe that the total species of life-forms is between 10 and 80 million, out of which only a tiny fraction has been identified. Most of these are small animals, such as insects and mollusks. Lawrence's keen interest in plants, flowers and animals–domestic and wild–is well known. Animal life and activity forms an important part in the body of his work. His poems on snake, lizard, tortoise, bat, turkey-cock, humming bird, blue jay, Kangaroo, mountain lion, red wolf, elephant, he-goat, she-goat, ass, bibble, mosquito etc demonstrate intense curiosity in organic life in any form. He admired the great ambience of biological resources of the pre-industrial world amid which the Aztecs of old pre-colonial Mexico, the Etruscans, and the Buddhist monks in ancient India– lived and built great civilizations. In contrast to which he sees that

> [o]urs is essentially a tragic age, so we refuse to take it tragically. The cataclysm has happened, we are among the ruins, we start to build up new little habitats, to have new little hopes. It is rather hardwork: there is now no smooth road into the future: but we go round or scramble over the obstacles. But we have got to live, no matter how many skies have fallen.
>
> (Lawrence 1974:52)

The opening passage of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* expresses an anguished yearning for survival and for social and environmental reconstruction in the post-world-war I situation. The story is set in a smoky, filthy coal-and-iron industrial site with the 'stench of sulfurous combustion of the earth's excrement', polluted by the toxic effects of industrial poisons. It is possible to escape to a fine nearby park, however, and across the park to a wood. The wood is the remnant of what was once a great forest. It has some old oak–trees which their owner is anxious to protect. He has the feeling that these trees were his own through generations, and they must remain inviolate. There is a clearing nearby from where trees had been felled to make trench timber during the war. The denuded place is being replanted by the owner, a war-crippled upper class individual. His wife, less upper-class, a country-looking girl, is full of unusual energy. She represents the spirit of the park and the wood. There is a game keeper to look after the park and the birds. A creature of the earth and nature, he is to be the lover of the woman and lead her to fulfillment. Their love becomes the source-spring of life for her in the soulless land.

The novel is Lawrence's fable of the possibility of new life, in a dying world. With the realization that industrialism cannot be wished away, there is the moral: 'we must live and learn.' It is possible by re-ordering environment to conserve the roots of life and to rebuild it on that foundation.

> So it is: we all have our roots in earth. And it is our roots that now need a little attention, need the hard soil eased away from them, and softened so that a little fresh air can come to them, and they can breathe. For by pretending to have no roots, we have trodden the earth so hard over them that they are starving and stifling below the soil….
>
> (Lawrence 1974:280)

Lawrence here gives most direct expression to his environmental instinct and program. Protection of animal habitats, parks and woodlands is essential, as he sees, for preservation of biological diversity. Environmentalists admit that although their movement has largely been an economic agenda, in spirit it is a social revolution concerned with re-prioritization of values. We are to recognize our inheritance to the earth and her natural systems. Like Lawrence and Gandhi, we are to revere not squander away our natural resources. As Environmentalists believe, "strong visionary leaders can accelerate the Environmental Revolution" (Lawrence 1992:178).

References

Brown, Lester R. 1993. 'Launching the Environmental Revolution,' *State of the World*, World Watch Institute India. New Delhi: Horizon Books India.

Hazary, Narayan et al (eds). 1998. *Eternal Gandhi*. Delhi: APH Publishing Corporation.

Lederer, Edith M. 1996. Report in *Times of India*, 7 June.

MacDonald Edward D ed. 1961. 'Nottingham and Mining Countryside'. *Phoenix : The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence*. London: William Heinemann.

Sagar, Keith and James T Boulton ed. 1929. *Collected Letters of D H Lawrence*, Vol. vii. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gandhi, Mahatma. 1942. *Collected Works* Vol.22. New Delhi: Government of India Publication Division.

Gandhi, Mahatma. 1996. *Hind Swaraj or the Indian Home Rule*. Ahmadabad: Navajivan Publishing House.

Lawrence, D. H. 1928. *Ten Paintings*. Manchester: Carcanet New Press.

Lawrence, D.H. 1961. Apropos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and other essays. UK: Penguin.

Lawrence, D H. 1992. *Sons and Lovers* ed. Carl and Helen Baron. Cambridge: CUP.

Lawrence, D. H. 1993. *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, ed. Michael Squires. Cambridge: CUP.

of refracted and refracting
/context, protagonist/
seem, that Bakhtin
theorization. In
akhtin is able
ustrations
entious.
s by

Mikhail Bakh
Languag

Although Mikhail Bakt
only with the publi
Imagination [originall *voprosy literatury i estetiki*. Moscow, 1915; hereafter it will be referred to as DI) that Bakhtin has become an important new factor in the debate on cultural production and critical theory. Western scholarship is busily catching up with him, although book-length studies are not yet numerous. Much of this catching-up has to do with a readjustment and relocation of positions with respect of language/meaning, form/signification, genre/inter-pretation–positions that are handed down both from structural linguistics [and structural theorization generally], and from post-structuralist extensions and reversals of structuralism at various points. Within the Marxist theory also, Bakhtin has caused a revision of aesthetic postulations that held ground between the 1930sand the 1970s [Lukacs to Goldmann].

It is obvious at first sight itself that to the interested third-world practitioner of criticism/evaluation–at least to a sect, one that will hopefully grow and prosper–Bakhtin offers very welcome new ground after the historically less appropriatable (in fact-historically *alienating!* tendencies of structuralist and post-structuralist thought, even after one has counted the value of their critique of earlier critical practices (such as of Formalism and American New Criticism]. For a start, Bakhtin's great strength seems his avowal everywhere that the shaping of experience into specific language styles and genres

---

* Courtesy: *Journal of Arts & Ideas*, and reprinted by permission of the author. Style changed to suit the journal.

Sagar, Keith and James T Boulton ed. 1929. *Collected Letters of D H Lawrence*, Vol. vii. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gandhi, Mahatma. 1942. *Collected Works* Vol.22. New Delhi: Government of India Publication Division.

Gandhi, Mahatma. 1996. *Hind Swaraj or the Indian Home Rule.* Ahmadabad: Navajivan Publishing House.

Lawrence, D. H. 1928. *Ten Paintings.* Manchester: Carcanet New Press.

Lawrence, D.H. 1961. Apropos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and other essays. UK: Penguin.

Lawrence. D H. 1992. *Sons and Lovers* ed. Carl and Helen Baron. Cambridge: CUP.

Lawrence, D. H. 1993. *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, ed. Michael Squires. Cambridge: CUP.

Mikhail Bakhtin: The Politics of Language and Genre[*]

Badri Raina

Although Mikhail Bakhtin's work dates from the 1920s, it is only with the publication in 1981 of *The Dialogical Imagination* [originally as four essays in *Voprosy literatury i estetiki*. Moscow, 1915; hereafter it will be referred to as DI) that Bakhtin has become an important new factor in the debate on cultural production and critical theory. Western scholarship is busily catching up with him, although book-length studies are not yet numerous. Much of this catching-up has to do with a readjustment and relocation of positions with respect of language/meaning, form/signification, genre/inter-pretation–positions that are handed down both from structural linguistics [and structural theorization generally], and from post-structuralist extensions and reversals of structuralism at various points. Within the Marxist theory also, Bakhtin has caused a revision of aesthetic postulations that held ground between the 1930sand the 1970s [Lukacs to Goldmann].

It is obvious at first sight itself that to the interested third-world practitioner of criticism/evaluation–at least to a sect, one that will hopefully grow and prosper–Bakhtin offers very welcome new ground after the historically less appropriatable (in fact-historically *alienating!* tendencies of structuralist and post-structuralist thought, even after one has counted the value of their critique of earlier critical practices (such as of Formalism and American New Criticism]. For a start, Bakhtin's great strength seems his avowal everywhere that the shaping of experience into specific language styles and genres is essentially a process of the transformation of lived control-mechanisms into aesthetics. Rooting himself openly in a matrix of the ideologies of the historically neglected, Bakhtin is well-placed to dethrone the particular mediations of other ideologies and aesthetic practices that often masquerade as objective Universals. If in the process of decentering the 'high' stylistics of established linguistic power-structures Bakhtin risks the contradiction of privileging alternate styles and genres [such as the novel] this involves, to my mind, no loss either of the forthrightness or the historical/critical value of his enterprise. Bakhtin's whole view of languages/ forms is coloured without ambiguity by his perception of the ubiquitous meta-cultural fact of class-struggle. In a sense, therefore, the pre-given of Bakhtin's explorations is that aesthetic and formal contentions in literary/cultural debate are always the expressions of *actual* social contentions within specific historical contexts. Further, this involves Bakhtin's recognition that 'literature' as a specialized cultural practice makes appropriations of reality in methodo-logically self-conscious and *interested* ways. This recognition allows him to exceed the 'reflection' theory of the aesthetic act–one most commonly associated with Lukacs, which is not to limit Lukacsian theorization merely to a naturalist realism, since we do know that in positing a divide within a capitalist/mass society between the "hero" [with a 'soul either larger or smaller than the 'world'] and the 'world', and in locating the enactment of that divide within the novel, Lukacs offers a historical [although romantic-historical] dynamics for the genre [within still a bourgeois aesthetics]. What does remain true, though, is that the radicalizing potential of the novelistic process–indeed, the force of the impulsion behind that process–tends to escape Lukacs. Thus, instead of view-ing the novel as a *necessary* dislocation of a centralised/epical world-order [and, therefore, a force for the *future*] Lukacs' contemplation of the novel is tinged with the sadness of nostalgia. For Lukacs, then, the main virtue of the novel lies in mirroring, revealing a historical *malaise* characterized by isolation and emptiness rather than by a *productive* jostling between the stabilizers of the past and the claimants of a world-in-the-making. It is perhaps such a shift in perspective that has tended to generate fresh theorization within Marxian aesthetics [Althusser, Macherey, Eagleton] which speaks to/of the dialectics of refracted and refracting ideologies [as between author/reader, text/context, protagonist/ milieu] within literary production. And, it would seem, that Bakhtin must have [in the actual writing] anticipated such theorization. In his analysis of genres [Epic, Tragedy, Lyric, Novel] Bakhtin is able to push those theoretical dynamics to revolutionary demonstrations as he shows how *classical* genres rest in sup-pressions of contentious, multi-languaged [heteroglot] ideologies while the novel thrives by admitting a plethora of competing centrifugal voices–voices that denote concrete historical *subjects*.

---

[*] Courtesy: *Journal of Arts & Ideas*, and reprinted by permission of the author. Style changed to suit the journal.

This short paper is proposed only as an *outline* of the *connections* of Bakhtin's full argument of what seem the *necessary* coordinates of his cultural enquiry from the 1920s onwards. Even preeminently as the spokesman for heterogeneity, there is an essential conceptual unity in Bakhtin's output: *The Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1929, rpt., 1963). *Rabelais and His World* (1940., pub., 1965) and the four essays brought together in *The Dialogic: Imagination* (1975, trans. 1981) all relate, as cultural arguments, in an inseparable way to the view that Volosinov/Bakhtin (one and the same?) take of language and language-production in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1929), a work that offers the first considered Marxist theory of language. The occasion is provided by Saussure's attempt, at the turn of the century, to produce a scientific language theory as well as by the Formalist's attempt a little later to build on Saussure towards a scientific analysis of the 'literariness' of texts.

Although Saussure admitted language to be a 'social' act and a system of relations, his keenness to evolve a scientific theory obliged him effectively to deride and relegate the functional/social aspects of language use and formation. He chose instead to emphasize that all language use by the actual speaking individual (*le parole*) is made possible by an *a priori* scheme (structure) of what he thought to be invariant rules (*la langue*). Thus diachrony or the historical *process* of the transformation/transmutation of languages (Saussure would say language) was to be subordinated as an object of study to the synchronic stabilities of a linguistic structure. Although Saussure's own all-important postulation about the arbitrary status of signifiers within the linguistic sign ought to have been for him the surest evidence of the contingent nature of language and hence a condition of its dissolution into history, Saussure dismissed the fact as being riddled with too many variables to be of any 'objective' and lasting value. *La langue*, on the other hand, stood as something autonomous (even though an abstraction), a rented and god-like structure of self-adjusting language elements above and beyond the reach of capricious human agencies.

Two contradictions disable Saussure's theorization: one, all so-called invariant structures are in the first place, *products*, so that what seem like stable 'synchronic moments in cultural life are at bottom always at the mercy of a more assuredly continuous diachrony; (e.g., the BBC for some time now has accepted and admitted into language use vocabularies, phraseologies, and variant combinations of language elements that would earlier have been not only sacrilegious but inconceivable according to 'standard' practice). Two, it follows that structure is itself always being structured by a contaminating parole. It is at this level of the new linguistic problematic that Volosinov/Bakhtin make their entry, just as later on Bakhtin will correct another major, though related and understandable inadequacy of structuralist thought–its inability to provide a theory of the novel, a genre too diffuse to allow a rigorously centralized categorization (and diffuse because too insistently and embarrassingly inclusive of the cacophonies of the lived interaction of social languages–Bakhtin's term will be 'polyglossia'). In fact, what a structuralist bias would designate the novel's greatest weakness–the seemingly endless proliferation of voices within it–Bakhtin will see as its greatest strength, and so provide not merely a new aesthetic but a political insight of far- reaching import. He will also suggest that 'polyglossia'–the inundation of a centralized unitary (Saussure's 'structured') genre/style by opposing (and opposed) multiplicity of *actual* social voices–will not possess *merely*, a countering virtue but will indeed, in a truly polyphonic novel, produce a *new* structure characterized by a continuous, total and tension filled inter-texuality. The socially constitutive/creative play of such collision of discourses/ideologies will be seen as a unity *exceeding* and qualitatively *transforming* a more limited/limiting Saussurean structure. In the process Bakhtin will play the politics of the older and privileged genres and yield the politics of the novel, of the 'polyphonic' novel, that is, since even novels can be centralized, 'poetic' and monologic (Bakhtin's example is Tolstoy).

Although it had seemed that the Formalists who came after Saussure had at least partially contributed to historicizing aesthetics by arguing that texts find identity only within 'literary systems', their more primary concern with promoting the concept of the text's 'literariness' tended to introvert attention to formal devices to a point where the processes and conditions of literary change were again subordinated as objects of study. Again, whereas the Formalists veered away from perpetrating the concept of 'metaphysic of the text' (very much at the heart of the American New Critical enterprise), their favoured emphasis remained on the mystique of the aesthetic as against the cognitive or communicative function. Jakobson, for example, argued that in poetic use the common significations of language are aborted so that the word acquires an excess of difficult (Barthes (1977:162) was to think such difficulty a bulwark against the coarse and reductive thinginess of a capitalist culture) and charged auto-referential meaning in opposition to the 'ordinary' outward referentiality of common usage. In sum, like Saussure, the Formalists were unable to account for literary change except, as a hopeless gesture, in terms of a general passage of time; all things change with time, and so do genres and conventions. By extension, the Formalists saw history as consecutive chronology rather than as a *directed* propulsion of forces in contention.

Volosinov/Bakhtin begin by reversing Saussure's formulations as well as the ideological grounding and fall out of those formulations. Whereas Saussure and the Formalists placed language and literariness beyond the reach of the mundane, Volosinov/Bakhtin place at the centre of linguistic analysis the con-crete speaker. They see language not as an autonomous and abstract structure but as a ceaseless flow of 'utterance' within the lived 'heteroglossis' of social interpenetrations, or a historical interanimation of *sociolects.* Informed by a conflict-centred view of language–as opposed to a unitary and monoglot view–Volosinov/ Bakhtin propose that being socially determined, the actual use and meaning of the signifier is reciprocally conditioned by *whose* word it is and for *whom* it is meant:

> This is the order that the actual generative process of language follows: social intercourse is generated (stemming from the basis); in it, verbal communication and interaction are generated and, in the latter, forms of speech performance are generated; finally this generative process is reflected in the change of language forms.
>
> Volosinov 1973:96

The constitutive characteristic of language then is a constant interanimation between *unmerged* voices–what Bakhtin calls 'dialogism'. For Bakhtin, it follows, *style* will take precedence over grammar, since in concrete historical use every word carries an *intended* stylistic charge as well as the tremor of immediate anticipation within *living* dialogic context. Words do not inhabit some remotely secure landscape in an abstract void but are form out of a dialogue with other words, expecting an answer; nor can words escape the 'profound influence of the answering word that it anticipates' (DI, 280). This external and internal dialogism of words determined by their historical inheritance and intended inflection, by the tension of their acquired polysemanticity, Bakhtin finds exem-plified most profoundly in Dostoevsky in whose fiction every word is, as it were, a 'side-glancing word'. Bakhtin also suggests how Dostoevsky extends the precarious doubleness of words toward a larger methodological principle which is coterminously expressive of the novelist's mistrust of an individual's claim to a totally integrated (monologic) status/authority: Dostoevsky 'strives to make two persons out of every contradiction in order to dramatize the contradiction and reveal it extensively ' (Bakhtin 1973). It is of course also the case that 'single' characters in Dostoevsky contain within themselves an inhering doubleness as well.

The inference, then, is that the so-called transcendental authority of structure is something socially contrived and prospers best only in societies that are able to shut out linguistic diversity; in other words, only when 'high' styles/ideologies are protected from penetration by contaminating 'low' styles/ideologies does structure attain the authority of myth. If the contention between different linguistic voices embedded in the specifics of concrete social existence constitutes a tussle for social control, 'prestige' languages: (the 'standard', the 'normative') seek to subordinate, and 'subordinate' languages seek ways of deflecting or undermining that control (Bakhtin's study of styles in Rabelais is, indeed, a fine demonstration of this power-play as we shall see.) This theoretical framework then enables Bakhtin to relativise *the* 'standard' and *the* 'norm' itself and to show it as only one among possible utterances seeking domination.

The attempt at standardizing language, at reducing words to monologic reference involves violent appropriation because 'the word in language is half someone else's', since all discourse 'lives on the boundary between its own context and another alien context' (DI, 216,284). Bakhtin dwells at length on the marks such appropriation leaves on generic formations: thus he detects in poetic style the intention to privatise language, to make it carry a wholly personal resonance. In Epic and Tragedy language serves to forge a false (monologic) unity of signification–usually around the life of the hero who is thought to stand for the whole community–in class interest. Were it contended that major poets have extensively used dialogic or public voices in poetic style (Auden, Neruda) Batktin, one supposes, would turn around to locate in such experiments essentially moments of novelistic transformation. Similarly, perhaps, with the Brechtian version of the Epic, and tragic plays written by John Arden or Peter Weiss, it would indeed seem strong proof of Bakhtin's theorization about genres that such instances as I mention in poetry and drama of departures from the injunctions of 'high' classical norms happened at times of or in conditions of momentous historical questioning–in the wake of the rise of fascism and of revolutionary upheavals in Latin America.

Bakhtin's sociolinguistics, rooted as it is in cultural life, is able to anticipate and answer Deconstructionist extensions of the structuralist scepticism of utterance (concrete individual speech act). By simply stretching Saussure's argument about the arbitrariness of the signifier to the signified as well and thereby producing the position that all signifieds are themselves signifiers, Derrida evolved a grammatology of continuous 'absence'. Only the *aporia* (literally, 'unpassable road') of endless pointing or interpretation encompasses human existence, whereas Idealist metaphysics has for centuries perpetrated the falsehood of a reachable/knowable final/full presence/meaning. Ironically, almost tragically, this conclusion makes sense for Derrida because he argues metaphysically about metaphysics, abstractly about abstraction. As Allon White suggests, Derrida turns *aporia* into a new 'transcendental signified': to wit, it is certain that certainty does not exist. It is not astonishing that makers of critical opinion quickly seized upon Deconstruction and turned it into a 'car-nival of scepticism' (again in Allon White's eloquent phrase)--a new and metaphysically sanctioned extension of bourgeois individualist right to 'play' and privacy. Not trapped into conceding metaphysical argument, Bakhtin demonstrates the *oporia* to be the consequence of an inability or unwillingness to see the *socially* constitutive role of heteroglossia. While Derrida extracts from Saussure's scientism the paradox of anarchic plurality (anarchic because metaphysically bewildering), Bakhtin shows that *plurality* (linguistic and social) to be the principle condition of the forging of an inclusive community (of words/voices/social groups), within both literature and life. Derridean despair about *differance* (or the perennial deferring of full 'presence') disappears once the shift from *la langue to le parole* is made, since texts are shown to be specific performances within a social discourse rather than abstract repositories of competence. Where Deconstruction zooms in only on,the slippages, the fault-lines and the crevices in the geological formation of discourse, Bakhtin sees also the strata and the formations between them. Perhaps even more importantly, he shows the slippages and the fault-lines to be historically illuminating and pregnant *breaches* in the unitary unbrokenness of social monologism.

Bakhtin can, therefore, theorize that any abstract objectivist theory of language is usually coterminous with the language *or* the dominant social class. All canonical grammars, norms, theories of structure in effect *exclude the utterance* of a great mass of people. Such grammars of class seek to enshrine a pure language anterior to actual speech use. As suggested earlier, such a pure language is best found in 'high' poetic style (the joy of Allen Tate and Cleanth Brooks). Therein the ordinary word is sought to be removed as far as possible from majority-use, elevated into a hieroglyphic, a totem of private meaning to which the decoding key rests with the poet and at best with his elected critical Sancho Panza (the William Blake/ Northrop Frye combine are a fine example of this). Similarly, the classical Epic and Tragedy exclude heteroglossia, privileg-ing a centralised discourse of lofty ideals within a paternal social formation. These traditional genres (myth, epic, tragedy) represent a 'monoglossic absolutism' sealed off from 'intertextual interference'. The irony perhaps is that within these genres as well the strain of the effort to suppress other discourses is often present along a scale of success or failure.

Novel and Novelization

The full value of Bakhtin's concept of what constitutes the novelistic moment in history, of novelization, and of the novel as a genre registers itself when it is placed next to some of the other, more familiar, constructs of the novel. For example, Lukacs in his *The Theory of the Novel* (1971 approaches the sociology of the novel by counterposing the age of the epic and the age of the novel. But this opposition in Lukacs is coloured by his romantic nostalgia for what he considers to have been the harmonious, organic, and total character of the epic community--a totality reflected in his view in the closed structure of the Homeric epic. Since the epic age was an age or certainty (Lukacs does not bother much to examine the *content* of that certainty, in the sense that he does not always locate the *specific roots* of this forged certainty), there was no real separation or antagonism between the individual and the community. The epic, then, remains for Lukacs the perfect genre. In contrast, Lukacs argued (after Hegel who saw the novel as the 'modern bourgeois epic'), that the novel is the epic of a society in which wholeness has been lost and in which the sensitive, alienated, individual, the hero-seeker, finds himself in a world of 'transcendental home-lessness'. Yet, the novel is a problematic genre because while it seeks epic-like homogeneity and wholeness it is unable to achieve it and ends up as a failed epic because it is located in an era when no perfect rounded accomplishments are possible.

In his critique of Lukacs' model, Ference Feher argued, expectedly, that Lukacs presents an essentially mystical sociology of the epic age of its ideal character, that its structures were based on a slave economy and that its stabilities were merely the expressions of an unchanging autocratic hierarchy. These, indeed, are the values faithfully reflected in the classical epic. In contrast, the novel, equally faithfully, represented the prosaic formlessness of a new social life–that of bourgeois society. In Bakhtin one finds an advance over both Lukacs and his critic, Feher.

In the first place, Bakhtin exceeds Feher's critique of the epic by pushing it and redirecting it in order to reveal the true nature of the mystification. Bakhin argues that the epic 'has come down to us in an absolutely completed and generic form, whose constitutive feature is the transferral of the world it describes to an absolute past of national beginnings and peak times' (DI, 15). Further, such a concept of an 'absolute past' is not an innocuously chronological concept but an *evaluating* category; whatever happened 'first' or earlier' is made into a valorized temporal category, reaching back to the comforting myth of unsullied sources and origins (Derridean false 'presence). Bakhtin then goes on simply to reverse Lukacs' counters. The novel does not *seek* a lost unity and is not therefore a failed epic. On the contrary, the novel throws all kinds of spanners and monkey wrenches into closed and class-based concepts of wholeness, constantly driving into the open the divergent, competing and polyphonic tensions of ongoing historical struggle. The novel refuses to enter into this conspiracy or 'the organic unity of the highest order' (DI, 4). Bakhtin shows the Lukacsian problematic as a mistaken conception, a theoretical (and hence aesthetic) error. If Lukacs saw the novel (at least one kind of novel) as romantically

anticapitalist, Bakhtin shows the novel generally to be hard-headedly revealing of contradictions, irrepressibly and often irrelevantly (Rabelais, Sterne, Fielding) iconoclastic, disallowing 'high' ideologies to settle into and dominate the full social and generic space.

Within his overarching thesis about the interaction between phases of cultural life and an accompanying transformation of genres, 'novel' for Bakhtin is that force within a given literary system which reveals the limits or the ideological constraints of that system. In speaking of the 'novelization' of older genres and cultural styles Bakhtin is able to account for the fairly long history of prose fictions before the 'rise of the novel' as essentially the history of the struggle between the centralizing' high' official verbal-ideology on the one side and the centrifugal 'low' social pull on the other a struggle emerging out of actual social antagonisms through the ages:

> At the time when major divisions of the poetic genres were developing under the influence of the unifying, centralising, centripetal forces of verbal-ideological life, the novel–and those artistic prose genres that gravi-tate toward it–was being historically shaped by the current of decentralizing, centrifugal forces. At the time when poetry was accomplishing the task of cultural, national and political centralization of the verbal-ideological world in the higher official socioideological levels on the lower levels, on the stages of local fairs and at buffoon spectacles, the heteroglossia of the clown sounded forth, ridiculing all "languages" and dialects; there developed the literature of the *fabliaux* and *Schwanke of* street songs, folksayings, anecdotes, where there was no language center at all, where there was to be found a lively play with the "Languages" of poets, scholars, monks, knights and others, where all "languages" were masks and where no language could, claim to be an authentic, incontestable face.
>
> (DI,112-213)

Recognizing that literary systems habitually comprise canons, Bakhtin characterizes the novelistic impulse as fundamentally anti-canonical, as enemy to the consolidation of a master/mastering language/style. This impulse Bakhtin finds expressed most thoroughly in Rabelais: "'In Rabelais. . .a parodic attitude toward almost all forms of ideological discourse-philosophical, moral, scholarly, rhetorical, poetic and in particular the pathos-charged forms of discourse–was intensified to the point where it became a parody of the very act of conceptualizing anything in language" (DI. 309). (I shall return to Rabelais in a while.) Indeed with respect to the novel, parody acquires for Bakhtin an understandably privileged status. Through the novel's parodic enterprise the other genres 'become more free and flexible, their language renews itself by incorporating extraliterary heteroglossia', thus. 'they become dialogized permeated with laughter, irony, humor. elements *of* self-parody.' More explicitly, 'the novel inserts into these other genres an indeterminacy. a certain semantic open-endedness, a living contact with unfinished, still evolving contemporary reality (the 'open-ended present' DI, 1). Parody in this sense may be seen as the uncontrolled 'other' that refuses to be taken in by the high seriousness of mimetic art. By extension, parody empties the pretence of such art to the credibility or a holistic selection. Clearly, Bakhtin comes out on quite the opposite pole from Lukacs' valorized category-the finished and closed epic. The novel or the novelistic impulse is seen as a. powerful polemic against verbal–ideological vested interest. What is uniquely to the advantage of the novel form, then, is the fact that it can ingest and contain other forms and still retain its status as novel, whereas other genres cannot entertain novelistic elements without a depletion of their identities as fixed genres. Thus, while 'high' genres favour a monologic style the polyphonic novel 'hybridizes' disparate styles and voices within its prosy abundance. Bakhtin provides instances of hybridization–the deployment of other and opposed voices within a common syntax in a 'concealed form' without the use of formal markers that visibly set-off one voice from another–from Dicken's *Little Dorrit* (D, 303-307) with elaborate commentary in order *to* establish the full value/recognition of novelistic style. Likewise, the novel uses the technique of 'stratification', enabling a further demarcation of styles both within instances of high discourse and low discourse. It is owing to this sort of proliferation that Bakhtin considers the novel 'of all verbal genres the least susceptible to aestheticism', since every speaking person in a novel is in a sense an 'ideologue', even aestheticism must appear in the novel as a discourse. Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray* is seen as an example of this, as well as the early work of Thomas Mann (DI, 333).

Bakhtin's theoretical postulation about the emergence of the novelistic moment is that at certain points in history–which he designates as 'Galilean' moments owing to breakaway developments in the wider, objective social conditions (we shall see how these relate to Rabelais, for instance) breaches are made in the dominant monoglossia of the 'Ptolemaic" world of unified singular and closed consciousness, resulting in infusions of newfound polyglossia. At such moment prose emerges as a novelizing force to represent speaking persons and their multiple and often opposed ideological worlds. Such breaches destroy two myths at once: 'the myth *of* language that presumes to be the only language, and the myth of a language that presumes to be completely unified' (DI, 68). Through invading polyglossia languages emerge as social images which can be held against one another, tested and contested:

> The novel is the expression of a Galilean perception of language, one that denies the absolutism of a single and unitary language-that is, that refuses to acknowledge its own language as the sole verbal and semantic center of the ideological world. ....The novel begins by presuming a verbal and semantic decentering of the ideological world, a certain linguistic home-lessness of literary consciousness, which no longer possesses a sacrosanct and unitary linguistic medium for containing ideological thought.
>
> (DI, 366-67)

Contrary to some received notions about the novel as a genre whose rise is fixed at *a* particular point in history (usually, the eighteenth century), Bakhtin speaks of a whole pre-history of novelistic moments. Through an embracingly inventive concept–that of 'chronotope'–Bakhtin examines this pre-history of novelistic sub-genres from the Greek Romance in the Hellenic age well up to Dostoevsky. The 'chronotope' is seen as "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships...artistically expressed in literature' (DI, 84). At each of the novelistic moments Bakhtin isolates, the novelizations of older forms (including antecedent novel forms) expresses itself through a historically unique space-time combine, where *time* remains the primary category in" the chronotope. Bakhtin provides surprising, defamiliarizing, and historically interpenetrating theoretical connections between the opposition of the unifying and relativising tendencies in literary history and similar occurrences in other, apparently disparate, cultural explorations. In a throw-back to Donne as it were, Bakhtin is able to produce conceits which bring into focus the concealed connections between seemingly unrelated cultural activities. Thus monoglossia is likened to the tendency of Newton's work in Mechanics, and Einstein is seen as the patron of a scientific polyglossia:

> The problems encountered by the author...in the polyphonic novel are far deeper, and more complex than those to be found in the homophonic (monologic) novel. Einstein's world possesses a far deeper and more complex unity than Newton's; it is a higher level of unity, of a qualitatively different order.
>
> (DI, 16)

One may in passing alert oneself to what appears a new problematic (with respect to the novel) generated by Bakhtin's theorization. This involves the fact that Bakhtin tends to carry together two potentially opposed and contradictory definitions of the term 'novel'. He sees 'novel' both as a fixed genre (characterized at all historical points of the 'Galilean' breach by heteroglossia and Intertexual play) as well as a historical process. In the first case ('novel' as genre) its associative qualities are seen as non-tempolar categories; in the second (novel as process) the emphasis is placed on the continuing and radicalizing force of the novelistic impulse which yields the 'novelization' of older forms/styles/ideologies. How is this to be reconciled? One's response at the outset is that in any case (or perhaps in *either* case) what Bakhtin offers is far too valuable to be quibbled about. If he creates a problem, Bakhtin also supplies a major strategy (a strategy which is simultaneously a major perception) to bridge and mediate what he must consider more as the two prongs of an attack rather than as a bad case of eating the cake and wishing to have it too; I refer to his formulation/ elaboration of the conjoining concept of the 'chronotope'. The 'chronotope' preserves for him both the primary determinant (time) and the subordinate but aesthetically ordering/distributing territory (space). In the 'chronotope' Bakhtin produces a historically illuminating/ revealing connection between the fixed characteristics of what he designates 'novel' and the particular expression heteroglossia will take at a particular moment of the historical breach. Thus 'novelization' is seen as a process in time which solidifies (again for the time) into a uniquely shaped formal combine (the novel) depending on the specific character of the dominant historical urge. There is also, autonomously, great value in the very perception that a novel is what is, in effect, always incomplete, in the making, poised along options, alert against the claims of any universal structure and, therefore, continually responsive to the call of the discarded marginalized/emergent voice.

Bakhtin's full working out of the various novelistic chronotopes (DI, 84-258) from the Greek Romance through Petronius's *Satyricon*, Apuleus's *The Golden Ass* (the adventure novel of everyday life), ancient biography and autobiography (Plato's *Apology* and *Phaedo;* the 'life course of one seeking knowledge'), Chivalric Romance; the Rogue, Clown; and Fool in the novel (with their right to be 'other', like Apuleus's Ass, Lazarilo, Pueblo) upto the Rabelaisean chronotope is far too detailed a presentation to be encapsulated here. I shall take up briefly only the last as proof supporting Bakhtin's generalization about the implications–linguistic, generic, and political–of the invasion of the Ptolemaic by the full Galilean breach.

In *Rabelais and His World* Bakhtin argues that prior to the European Renaissance there did not exist a space within which a literature of renewal could breathe. The high eschatological worldview of the official middle ages served the class interests of the controlling clergy. Thus, all forms of folk humour and derision remained in suppressed isolation, although their decentering power was often acute as when the ass that Jesus rode was placed at the 'centre of Christian iconography rather than Jesus of Mary. What carnival there was, was essentially an innocuous activity and allowed to have a separate and regulated status. With the Galilean sweep of that historical event we call the Renaissance, a number of related and transforming developments took place in the wider social reality. For instance, the development of printing undermined Papal hegemony and lay centres of education began to proliferate; the powerful social influence of the dissemination of vernacular scripture caused a qualitatively new and radical interaction between Church ideology and popular culture; the new trading class rising in the wake of a spurt of nationalisms fairly decisively brought down feudal authority structures. Altogether, these events connoted a momentous historical breach and novelistic occurrence; of this Bakhtin proposes Rabelais, in addition to many others, as the most extreme spokesman. With Rabelais the function of folk humour was transformed, it was brought into relation with the official ideology. New formal devices parodied that ideology and exposed it as a residual worldview:

> 'The culture of folk-humor that had been shaped during many centuries and that had defended the people's creativity in non-official forms, in verbal expression or spectacle could now rise to the high level of literature and ideology and fertilize it....This thousand year old laughter not only fertilized literature but was itself fertilised by humanist knowledge and advanced literary techniques.
>
> Bakhtin in Iswosky 1968:6

In *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel* the earthy, the folk word, the scatological, irreverent and contradictory became a decentering critique of the language image–that is, the full worldview–of the establishment. Objects and totems invested with high mythic value by official culture are deconstructed by Rabelais to produce inversions which mock at that culture. For example, the belfry of a monastery is likened to a phallus and a sermon to a prolonged fart. Likewise, bells connoting the imperious voice of' ecclesiastical authority are brought down to the status of cowbells or bells tied to horse's halters amidst the piss and the dung. Rabelais' organizing vision of human corporeality functions as a provocative assertion of the claims of the material over the medieval other-worldly. It symbolizes the irrepressible and regenerating body of the mass of an irresistible people, a force which 'opposes the serious medieval world of fear and oppression with all its intimidating and intimidated ideology' (Bakhtin in Iswoky 1968:226). Rabelais thus destroys abstractions by drawing all ideas into the body and by locating the soul in the blood.

I have, then, tried to *outline* broadly something of the content and critical quality of Bakhtin's work in relation to a few of the other available constructs for the writing and reading of literature, as well as of its connectedness to other cultural practices. What does, in sum, Bakhtin do for us? At the risk of repeating myself, he deconstructs for us received notions about language, exposing the ideological spectrum that lies concealed behind the so-called unitary version of 'structure' and of that which we were/are told constitute the 'standard'. He takes the stuffing out of age-old Aristotelian/mimetic theories/classifications of the true nature of art and the hierarchy of genres, revealing the bases of such theories/classifications, at least partially, in localized historical/class existence. He evaluates/holds precious literary/cultural production/categories not for their established status but for how they relate to the here-and-now, to realities that are in-the-making. Consequently, he defines and finds a worth in the novel (the 'polyphonic' novel, to be precise) which it has been traditionally denied. Equally, he sensitizes us to the historical/ aesthetic contributions of the so-called low forms of cultural expression–folksong, streetslang, pub-talk, anecdotage (if that neologism be 'permitted'), more embracing forms of parody, and so on–enunciating the countering critical thrust of these, and kindred, expressions in relation to more sanctioned forms.

A word, however, may be said in amelioration of the charge made against traditional forms. If it is the case that dialogy is a primary and *inherent* condition of all language operation–indeed the condition of the very existence of a language–then it stands to reason that Epic, Lyric, Tragedy cannot arbitrarily be excluded from that stipulation. The inference, then, is twofold: one, that in these genres dialogy remains suppressed (as the expression of an ideological act); and, two, that often and in fair measure the monologism attributed to texts within these genres is an *ascribed* monologism–the result of an *interested* hermeneutics. From that it would follow that a countering critical enterprise can well enter these genres/texts at the seams where the suppression shows (however faintly) and *render* the muted dialogy boldly apparent. Even in the most centralized of Epics/Tragedies there *are* voices which if attended to can yield rich cultural reward. My own favourite instance of this is the scene in *Macbeth* wherein the bleeding Sergeant returns from the field of battle, is accosted by King Duncan and entourage, is made to relate (indeed, is *shown* only too happy to relate) the full saga of Macbeth's *loyal* bravery *while still bleeding*, and is sent off to a doctor only when it becomes apparent that he simply cannot carry on. One recalls how reduced (dialogized) Duncan appeared in Roman Polanski's rendering of the scene: the loyalties seemed not only bathed in blood but *anterior* to bleeding human need. Perhaps, then, the ideology of the reading act is crucially involved in determining the degree and extent of the dialogic or monologic status of a text in question. And a countering interpretative enterprise must save genres and styles from a permanent delegation to an unamenable absolutism.

In the end, this is perhaps the most significant thing we take away from Bakhtin: reading him we can hardly read a whole spectrum of cultural producers (for such are the writers of 'literature') quite as we might have gone on to read without his intervention, just as a sharpened awareness today of the history or women's exclusion from human destiny over millennia puts some of the 'greats' of cultural history (Mr. Yeats for one) into some jeopardy. We can hardly be charmed any more by that allusion to politically active/conscious/demanding females as 'hysterical women' or by the nicely limiting and ceremonious categories or prayer for his (or anybody's) daughter. Bakhtin's as well as the feminist intervention simultaneously oblige us to rethink what it is that constitutes 'greatness' *per se* or to ask whether it is at all either possible or important to make those questionable distinctions. At any rate, they teach us to be wary of received/establishment opinions in such matters. Is it also not deeply ironical, as Wayne Booth (1982) points out, that in Bakhtin himself–the passionate spokesman for polyglossia–there seems a silence on the subject of women's utterance?

So you see, none of us is perfect; only some put themselves to greater trouble. Clearly, Bakhtin is such a one. Yet, nothing would more directly defeat his iconoclastic enterprise, his crusade against absolutism (Stalin ruled while he wrote) than that we turn him now into *the* new god of theory, *the* god with the magic rain for fertilizing arid critical hypocrisies into *the* critical truth.

References

Bakhtin, Mikhail. 1973. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Trans. W Rostel. USA: Ann Arbor.

Barthes, Ronald. 1977. "From Work to Text". *Image-Music-Text*. Trans. Stephen Heath. Glasgow: Collins.

Booth, Wayne. 1982. "Freedom of Interpretation: Bakhtin and the Challenge of Feminist Criticism". *Critical Enquiry* 9, 2 (September): 45-76.

Holoquist, Michael (ed.) 1981. *The Dialogic Imagination*. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Holoquist. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Iswosky, Helene (ed). 1968. *Rabelais and His World*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Lukacs. 1971. *The Theory of the Novel.* Cambridge Massachusetts.

Todorov, Tzvetan. 1984. *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle.* Trans. Wlad Godzich. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Volosinov, V. 1973. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language.* New York: Seminar Press.

English Studies In India: What Business Are We in?

Anil Raina

For whom are we doing what we are doing when we do literary criticism?

(Barbara Christian: "The Race for Theory")

The paper deals with certain common issues concerning English studies in India that have engaged literary academics (like Gauri Vishwanathan, Rajeshwari Sunder Rajan, Svati Joshi, etc.) for a long time, but which lately, have assumed proportions that need more sustained attention now. The reason for concern arises out of the desire of our policy planners for the rapid expansion of higher education in India. The desire is laudable, but what worries one is its vehement pursuit, with not much corresponding effort made to question the nature, or improve the quality of education imparted. To quote a news report from *The Financial Express* of June 5, 2007:

> The University Grants Commission (UGC) has prepared a road map to achieve 15 per cent enrolment in higher education by 2012, with special focus on backward areas and minority sections. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at the national level at present is only ten per cent in the relevant age group of 18-23 years… The UGC is ready with its higher education policy to be implemented under the 11th Plan (2007-12) that has the target of bringing another 45-50 lakh students to college between 2007-08 and 2011-12.

One is aware that the democratization of higher education is going to come at a cost, but we need to ensure that the cost is not too high. When we hear of university-industry interface or the necessity of having Placement cells in all Humanities Departments including English, we know we are in a different world from the one we had inherited. The new world we have to respond to or/and adapt to is the globalized, capitalist world of mass consumerism.

Traditionally, the role of the University in creation and dissemination of knowledge has been distinct from that of polytechnics, with their emphasis on vocational skills. Universities could and did engage in applied research, but would not ignore pure research, as immediate application of new knowledge was not a test of their usefulness. However, with focus now on quantitative expansion of higher education, such distinctions are blurred, and we seem to look for immediate visible results, right from the UGC through the Vice Chancellors down to students and teachers. In spite of some feeble protests from old-school humanists, higher education is expected to cater to the demands of the new economy, and not to some undefined vital human need. We have moved far away from the Nehruvian idealism of "A University stands for humanism, for tolerance, for reason, for the adventure of ideas and for the search of truth. It stands for the onward march of the human race towards ever higher objectives. If the universities discharge their duties adequately, then it is well with the Nation and the People." With more and more private universities/institutes coming up, we need to admit, whether we like it or not, that higher education has been commercialized at the cost of 'the adventure of ideas.' In business lingo, we are now a service industry. In such a changed scenario, those of us involved in English Studies, too, need to ask some inconvenient questions about the relevance and nature of what we are doing, and how long can we continue to remain satisfied with the business of issuing certificates only? Is it not time we started transmitting skills and propagating knowledge of a useful type. Tough decisions need to be taken, decisions that may not suit the currently trained in English Literature teachers.

The fact, then, is that we are engaged in a business – the business of providing/selling a service, which to use the management guru Philip Kotler's definition, implies any activity or benefit that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything. In our case, the Establishment represented by the Faculty is the selling party, while the students are the buying party. What is under debate is the nature of the service to be provided.

Until now, our planning was done from top-down, because we believed in following the model of a controlled economy. There were hardly any inputs from below in planning our higher education. In a market economy, however, the first step is to identify the basic need of the consumer, which in our case is the student. What do our students expect of us? Are they interested in the development of a specific kind of expertise or in accumulation of knowledge, or in merely seeking a certification? Unfortunately, there have been no major efforts to collect statistical data on the perceived needs of our clientele, and as such, these are based on more or less intelligent guesses. It is high time we redefined our objectives by identifying scientifically the nature of the needs of the students we are catering to. At the same time, we should not forget that Literature often problematises these needs; it works on us imperceptibly to help us question what otherwise we might take as for granted. As an example, let me mention Leo Tolstoy's short story "How Much Land Does a Man Need?" (1886), which, without any direct preaching, helps us distinguish between need and greed, prompting James Joyce to say that it is "the greatest story that the literature of the world knows."

The first question to be asked is about the objectives of the Departments of English in India, what I call the "why" question. The "what" (curriculum/syllabus) and the "how" (methodology of teaching and Testing) are dependent on the Objectives, and cannot be answered till the "why" is answered.

In the past, the objectives were implicitly related to the underlying humanist worldview, in which the humanizing power of Liberal education/literature was taken for granted. From Aristotle to Arnold, there have been implicit or explicit references to cultivation of detachment, rational enquiry, skepticism, and disinterested pursuit of excellence, and the role of classics in it. The Greek notion of fine arts as distinct from useful arts tilts the balance towards higher pleasures/sensibility as against the more material needs. And much later in the eighteenth century, Immanuel Kant's categorization of aesthetic faculty as characterized by 'purposeless purposiveness' brought to the fore the special faculty of the Aesthetic as far removed from the political, the moral, and the religious. The value of Kantian disinterestedness was further amplified by Matthew Arnold in the nineteenth century when the non-utilitarian view of the aesthetic object was transferred to the study of the aesthetic object/literary work as well. Though Kant, the great thinker of the Enlightenment, believed that the aesthetic faculty, like the other two faculties of the Mind, the rational and the intuitive, was potentially inherent in all human beings, the realization of the inherent potential, even if granted, was always going to be a tricky issue, bringing in questions of power and authority. Conservative critics like Matthew Arnold, T. S. Eliot and F. R. Leavis, responded by making the intellectual elite, well trained in the classics and the Tradition, the custodians of culture in general. The literary intellectual's job was to save the humankind, and the present day university teacher of English in India is happy to carry on sharing that burden. The problem with such an approach is not that it is elitist (even democracies are elitist except that there is more frequent circulation of the elites) but that it does not fit into, to borrow Fredric Jameson's phrase, the cultural logic of (late-) capitalism.

In contrast to conservative critics, radical theorists like Marxists, and later on feminists and postcolonialists, stress the role of ideology in literature, and the consequent ideological indoctrination that literature may be involved in. Literature becomes a tool of creating hegemony (or counter-hegemony), as is evident in the foundations of class, gender or colonial power. With the advent of literary theory seventies onwards, the radical models have been publicized quite a lot, though their popularity is still to be reflected properly in curriculum and evaluation methodologies. One could redesign syllabi accordingly, but the problem here is that the dominant order no more needs literature to form Subjects; it uses the ad-industry to do that, and as far as the counter-hegemonists are concerned, the market either has no place for them or has the canny ability to incorporate them.

So, should we continue to teach English literature as we have been doing till now? The problem is that the benefit we derive from literature, of whatever nature that may be, is directly proportional to our proficiency in the language in which it is made available to us. That 'proficiency' perhaps was not a problem when the numbers involved were not large. But with expansion consequent on democratization (with roughly two hundred thousand persons acquiring a Masters in English every year in India), it is a common experience that a majority of them have degrees but no proficiency in language, nor have they benefitted from the study of Literature in any way, humanistic or otherwise. The government subsidizes English studies in India, with no returns. It is not that I am against the study of literature or in favour of abolishing Departments of English literature. I, on the other hand, believe that literature (but not necessarily only English literature) should be made a minor but compulsory component at all levels of education, because the utopian impulse that it contains, and its Nay-saying ability, its ceaseless questioning of all that is accepted as infallible, are vital ingredients in keeping the human spirit alive. It alone can help us realize the human potential of what Wilhelm Dilthey calls the 'common potential to be other than [what we] are.' (Hirsch Jr. 258) As far as specialization in English literature goes, it will have to be limited to those who in addition to being proficient in language have an aptitude for it. We need to stop enrolling thousands of students into literature programs, and focus on a small but dedicated number. But we have to stop asking those few associated with the literature departments questions regarding their relevance, because it is the job of literature departments to pose alternatives to the dominant notion of what is considered relevant by the powers of a particular time. The literature department cannot be and should not be assessed in terms of the placements it provides to its students, or the direct benefits it brings to the society, but only as a playground for a minority, that keeps ideas alive. That may sound elitist, but that is the need of the day.

But what about the current majority of students that will be then kept out of those departments? In the current scenario, where the capitalist model of economy has been more or less adopted by the Indian Government, the distinction between higher and vocational education does not hold any more. Education is a way of chiseling human beings to fit into the slots that the vast capitalist machinery generates to keep the human beings and the system alive at once. The shift from literature studies to communication skills, for example, means a shift from producing human beings to producing a typist, a telephone operator, or a hotel receptionist. But can we resist the demands of the Market? Unless we have a viable alternative to global capitalism, pragmatism demands that we adjust to it, by looking afresh at the needs of our students in the world as it comes to them. The mission and the overall objectives of English language departments will have to focus on their immediate needs vis-à-vis the job market, and the process can be initiated by doing some self-introspection. What are the job avenues currently available to the student of English literature? I list the major ones: teaching in schools and colleges, print media jobs like editing, copywriting, proofreading, public relations, jobs in advertising industry, jobs with translation agencies including interpreting, jobs as campaign managers and speechwriters, civil services, and lately new media scripting and website production. These jobs involve language skills, teaching skills, interpersonal skills, critical thinking, cultural knowledge, etc. But do we prepare our students for any of these? It is time, we use **Philip Kotler's** ideas as given in *Principles of Marketing*, and ask ourselves the general question "What business are we in?" and then the sub-questions like:

i. Are we in the business of developing professional skills, and if so, of what type?

ii. Are we in the business of creating special skills or preparing students for a specific vocation, and if so, then what types of vocations?

iii. Are we in the business of transmission and propagation of knowledge, and if so, can we define that knowledge and differentiate it from other varieties. This primarily relates to research in literature.

iv. Are we in the business of creating new knowledge, and if so, what have we achieved till now?

v. Are we in the business of providing basic knowledge and training to people, which will enable them to reach a level where they can make further choices? The answer to this can help us design courses in Humanities.

In India, having a degree in any discipline was, for a long time, a passport to a decent job, particularly because higher education was hard to come by. Earning a degree, therefore, was an aim in itself. However, with the private sector gradually becoming a major source of white-collar employment, the degree alone will not suffice. One must have learnt some skills or picked up some knowledge along with the Degree to become eligible for employment. In such a situation, literary education, *per se*, is of no help in the market. We need to shift our attention to English language teaching. We need to develop language skills among our students, and for those who want to join teaching, we need to teach them teaching skills. Literature, too, may be taught in language departments, but now for its role in teaching higher language skills and not for its humanizing potential. After all, literature, among other things, is also a specialized form of language use. Rhetoric was an important component of classical and medieval western curricula. It is in the teaching of rhetoric, that language and literature can come together.

The UGC, too, needs to revamp the syllabus for its NET, if we are to link education to the job market. We know that there are very high chances of a Masters in English in India ending up as a teacher in a school or a college, where he would be primarily teaching English language. In the Master's program, however, he is neither taught language nor taught how to teach it. And when the UGC tests him for his fitness as a college lecturer through the NET, he is tested on his information and knowledge about literature and literary theory. There is no testing of his language or teaching skills, resulting in a complete mismatch between what he learns, what he is tested on, and what he is supposed to teach later on. Such anomalies will have to be taken care of.

The paper, therefore, argues that because of the demand for English Language Proficiency, we need to invest highly in English Language and ELT Courses as separate from EngLit courses, so that we are able to produce people with good language skills, and high quality teachers of English in vast numbers. At the same time, liberal education with its humanizing power needs to be incorporated at all levels of Higher Education not as part of English language but as a separate course in Humanities. To this end, we could continue to teach English Literature to a few students with a special aptitude for that, not as we do now with an Anglo-centric accent, but as a crucial component of World Literatures made available through translations, that can help us instill human and secular values among our students.

References

Chrisitan, Barbara. 1987. "The Race for Theory." *Cultural Critique* 6. Spring 1987: 51-63.

Financial Express. The. June 5, 2007.

Hirsch Jr., E. D. 1988. "Faulty Perspectives." *Modern Criticism and Theory*. Ed. David Lodge. London: Longman.

Kotler, Philip. 2009. Philip Kotler's *Principles of Marketing* 13th edition. Prentice Hall.

Literary Text in a Globalized Context: Emanating Cultural Locations and Reader Technologies

Ashu Vashisht

Literary texts in all the major genres–fiction, poetry, and drama–written from late 1960's onwards have posed many questions for the reader in terms of multi-ethnicity, gender issues and marketplace transactions. A good number of texts written across the globe have frequently come under the scanner of literary theory, philosophy, anthropology and even psychoanalysis. Writers of postmodern narratives have made their texts pose many ontological questions, i.e. questions of being. These works try to make an attempt to convey to the reader, the scholar, as well as the teacher the kind of world we are living in. Such literary texts in a globalized context cumulatively constitute a methodology and technique of making up the world and making sense of it.

The author-reader relationship now embodies a chord of understanding with the text the reader studies. Predetermined reader attitudes do not work now in context of unconventional texts involving characteristic devices and strategies. These strategies seek to pluralize the fictional world itself and secondly laying bare the ways in which fictional worlds are made. At times, what happens with these texts in that strategies are evolved for driving a wedge between text and world, splitting them apart and pitting them on against the other. It is in this very context that Leslie Fiedler strikes the correct note when he says that postmodern textuality encapsulates and conveys the message which he termed as "Cross the Border-Close the Gap". Fiedler's statement becomes multi-dimensionalcum-multi-contextual as it involves the author-text, the reader-text, and the author-reader planes of understanding and evaluation. Again it is the same combination which eventually determines the methodology of interpreting a literary text by applying such yardsticks as literary theory, philosophy, anthropology, psycho-analysis and what not.

The reader-text relationship has now assumed broad-based connotations. Multi-ethnicity, gender problematics and cross-cultural constructs now determine and rule the roost vis-à-vis the appeal, status and value of a literary text. Works of African- American, Indo-Anglian, Jewish-American writers alongwith diasporic texts dominate the interest of readers, publishers and literary critics. Women Canadian writers like Margaret Atwood and Margaret Lawrence, Indian writers in English, Black American women writers such as Gloria Naylor and Toni Morrison are being read passionately and widely along with Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, Shashi Deshpande, Arun Joshi etc. The message comes straight, simple and strong: it is only an interdisciplinary-cum-cross- cultural spectrum which now arouses the curiosity of readers and markets, publishers and editors. Crass-commercialism now pulls the strings much stronger, shapes and determines the reader-text relationship with an emphasis on intellect and creativity not mattering much. Books are being written purely with an eye on their selling value and the attraction for the readers such texts can generate.

The writer these days as an artist has to construct and dwell in "Conceptual Universe" of his own. And he considers his literary word as the best bet not only for the market but also with the compulsive notion of global acceptance. It would not be proper now to discuss a few modern-cum-postmodern texts as creative exercises in narratology which every reader, scholar, literary critic and teacher has to approach with an open mind and a flexible stance.

An attempt will be made now to analyse two divergent and somewhat challenging texts from two different socio-cultural milieus: Frank Waters. *Woman At Otowi Crossing* (1966) and Bernard Malamuds's *Dubin's Lives* (1979) would merit attention here. Both these works become specimens denoting a community of sensibility with a divergent spectrum of presentation involving different ways of understanding the world and making sense of it. *Woman at Otowi Crossing* is a work of the American West, in reality based upon the life of Edith Warner, an American lady who ran a tearoom at Otowi Crossing, just below Los Alamos in the United States. Helen Chalmers is the central protagonist, a close-friend, of the first atomic scientists, who used to frequent her teashop, Helen herself forms a kind of bridge, a connecting link between two antithetical orientations and value systems: the passive, intuitive, docile nature of the Indians on one side, and, on the other front, the lady herself as a product of the power-oriented, aggressive, rational White world. Frank Waters rightly says "... a primary concern of all peoples everywhere is their relationship to their land" (Waters 1964: 14-15). Such a relationship constitutes the basic source of conflict between the White and the Red Races on the American Continent.

Waters himself proclaims "this theme of conflicting relationships to their earth has provided something of a thematic continuity in all my books, novel and non-fiction" (Frank Waters, *South Dakota Review*, 14-15). These words of the author himself conform of the basic recurrent motif witnessed in every novelist of the American West: an intrinsic, itinerant, as well as the psychological and metaphysical bond between the Western fictional protagonist and his or her environment or landscape. Helen Chalmers, in *Woman At Otowi Crossing*, gradually assumes the mythic 'Woman' title, as the people around her recognize her acquisition of mystic powers. She runs away from a frustrating marriage in the East, leaving an infant daughter, and has been making a living for twenty years by running a small lunch room on the bank of the Rio Grande in New Mexico. The entire text of the novel gravitates around Helen herself and the horrible futility she feels when an existential moment precipitates as a crisis. Facing a time of intense, international, financial and personal pressure when the world is drifting toward World War-II, Helen discovers a tumour in her breast and the imminent possibility of her own death suddenly becomes a looming, inevitable fact. Helen undergoes a sudden awakening and in a flash she comprehends the indivisible unity of "one immortal existence that had never had a beginning nor would ever have an end" (Waters 1971:30).

This "cataclysmic explosion bursts asunder the shell of the world around her, revealing its inner reality with its brilliant flash" (30). This serves as the central incident of the novel, as having perceived the central truth. Helen, henceforth, becomes a totally different person:

> All her fears, worries and anxieties were gone. She felt freed of the past, not only from her personal, remembered life, but detached from that pattern of repetitive human passion which long before her time had begot at last her own faulty, personal self. It was as if she had just been reborn with all the freshness, purity and innocence of one entering the world for the first time *(W.O.C,* 31).

At this stage, the textual narrative attains great heights and reader is made to grapple with Helen's sudden mystical status. Helen, herself, feels content to lie at the very core of her newly metamorphosed being and watch it revolve about her. Helen Chalmers attains a level of understanding commensurate with that of saints or sages. The reader can himself see that the Four parts of the novel correspond to the four stages of the Helen's mystical journey: Awakening, Purgation, Illumination, Unification. It takes Helen sometime to adjust to the vast and seemingly impersonal consciousness she has entered into. The vision she has is of a great unity making her realize that one's oldest relationship may quickly dissolve:

> Something's happened inside me. I can't explain it because I don't understand it. But it's changed my whole life- the way I see us, everything! If I could only explain how it suddenly shook me awake and made everything clear! (*W.O.C.*, 61)

She even tells her lover Jack Turner, that her moment of illumination was not an "emotional upset" as Turner had said: Instead it was an avenue into a widely shared vision, an emergence. Helen starts writing a secret journal and writes down everything as it happens. She writes:

> [T]hen you'll understand that what is happening to me is simply an awakening to my true Self, the real ME. Not the physical body, the conscious mind, the personality with which I'd always identified myself. But the ME behind all these (*W.O.C.*, 137).

Short of being an apocalyptist, Frank Waters makes the *Woman At Otowi Crossing* almost the Western Book of Revelations. Such an idea gains momentum when in addition to the puzzling and almost incomprehensible relationship between Helen's mystic inside and the atomic break through, Emily, Helen's daughter, gets engrossed in her own existential predicament, especially the search for her own identity. The message of the author sounds innovative as well as disturbing from the textual perspective. In the context of the Western novel what the reader gets to view is the dissolution and disintegration of an awakened mystical self in a demoniac human world. The awe-inspiring landscape and terrain of the American West comes under the shadow of the apocalypse, the apocalypse of the human self and the human society.

Emily, as Helen's daughter, as already printed out, while engaged in the search for her own identity as well as her mother's, drives herself :

> into the world of anthropology and into a detailed study of the origins of Aztech civilization. Waters pictures her academic searching and her artifact-digging as displacement activities for her true search, which is for a personal wholeness and for a deep emotional attachment in a continuum with her heritage.... If there is a tragic character in novel, it is she because her capacities for love and openness were thwarted and eventually self-destroyed.
>
> (Lyon 1973:125)

The mother-daughter combination compells the reader to ponder over the inevitability of human interdependence, interspersed with a sprinkling of metaphysical reflection. The idea of *Woman At Otowi Crossing* as a book has to distinguish the text from the book. It is the text and not the book which determines the viability in the market-place. All the same, the readers should bear in mind that the destruction of the book because of the market-value of a given text, paradoxically denudes the surface of the text. For example, as a novel of the American West the *Woman At Otowi Crossing* may not have hit the jackpot in the global market yet as a text it is a divine inscription in the heart and the soul. While reading such a book as the *Woman At Otowi Crossing* one must encounter oneself within it, enter into a dialogue within its signs, speak and respond to oneself in its pages. This is what happens with texts which engage the reader with the principles of higher philosophy and Nature's way of making humans understand questions related to the Being, forming the very essence of existence. While reading *Woman At Otowi Crossing* what any conscious reader can feel and experience is a kind of modification well within the platonic diagram "writing of the soul and of the body, writing of the interior and of the exterior, writing of conscious and of the passions, as there is a voice of the soul and of the body" (Derrida 1967:249). Coming back to *Woman At Otowi Crossing* the same inference holds true and good. The readers is left with no chance to pass any judgment over the book as it is the text, the text of the holy voice of Nature in the awesome landscape of the American West that "merges with the divine inscription and perception; one must encounter oneself within it..." (Rivkin and Ryan, 1151). The basic priority of Frank Waters in this Novel is to depict an existential odyssey of a mother and her daughter, as both the women become victims of alienation as consequence of their own inner compulsions and their total immersion, as well as absorption, in the anthropological and geographical heritage of the Western landscape and civilization *Woman At Otowi Crossing*, more as a text and less as a book, can finally be defined as an unforgettable sermon on the sanctity and inviolability of the individual human self and the land on which it lives and dies.

Dubins's Lives

Another work which deserves mention in context of the reader-text polemics is Bernard Malamud's late 20th century novel *Dubin's Lives* (1979). While reading the text of this novel it becomes quite apparent that *Dubin's Lives* is a departure from those earlier works of archetypal victimization such as *The Assistant*, *The Fixer* and *The Tenants*. The central protagonist, Dubin, is a successful freelance biographer who lives comfortably in a small town. Keeping fit, he strides and sometimes runs through a landscape of fields, woods, barns, covered bridges and mountains. He is in no sense a victim, the bearer of a superior moral inside. The protagonists in Malamud's earlier fictions are helplessly sealed in their egos and their Guests for a new life always lead to failure. The biographer in *Dubin's lives*, engages himself in a task of "Shaping, illumining lives". (Bernard Malamud, *Dubin's Lives* (1979: 25) of others by "writing a truthful biography" (*D.L.* 38) of them. Biographies are also texts of particular kind extracting art from experience. Dubin has been writing biographies because he thinks that "he would understand better.... He felt he had deepened, extended his life; had become Dubin the biographer...." (*D.L.* 112). Gradually, Dubin's profession becomes his alibi not to live his own life, while at the same time providing himself with a way, although an illusory one, to break the boundaries of his existence: "Everybody's life is mine unlived. One writes lives one cannot live. To live forever is a human hunger....." (*D.L* 123) Prufrock had measured out his life with measuring spoons. "Dubin in books resurrecting the lives of other" (*D.L.* 17). These lines reveal Dubin's personality and focus upon his strongly narcissistic attitude. It is quite obvious that the biographer Dubin, as the hero, simply engages himself in fighting the truth of his own mortality, declaiming "it's mad to die" (*D.L.* 346). The men and women in the fictional world of *Dubin's Lives* while flitting across the pages of the text must learn to negotiate with care the claims on perception and behavior of two fierce antagonists. Who are these antagonists? One sensible and the other intelligible, both serve as linguistic textual signs, necessarily opposing each other and at the same time supposing and requiring each other. One is the regenerative anarchy of the sexual impulse and the other the productive discipline of the minds's work, isolating the self, denying passion and inhibiting human connection. As a text of challenging perceptions, *Dubin's Lives* reflects men and women who have to learn to negotiate carefully the claims on perception and behavior. There is an ongoing struggle between instinct and intellect which controls the structure and the metaphysics of the novel besides the fate of its actors, Malamud depicts an unusually brilliant insight in his grasp of the biographer's art, and a human being's confrontation with his own mortality.

Resorting to inter-textuality and mere parody, Dubin gets busy in writing "The passion of D H Lawrence" (*D.L.* 20), whose identical divided consciousness becomes the presiding spirit of *Dubin's Lives*. For Dubin who personifies a fragmented sensibility, Lawrence is "the essential broken self" (*D.L.* 35). No wonder than, Dubin himself qualifies as an intellectual as well as an anti-intellectual theorist, who, paradoxically "wants man to risk himself for a plenitude of life through love" (*D.L.* 335), at the same time vehemently denouncing women "whose evil power over blood..." (*D.L.* 335) emasculated males. Art dissolves into social life and models itself upon a commodity form in true postmodernist style by labeling the human public as "stinking humanity" (*D.L.* 335) besides "equating socialism with Syphilis" (*D.L.* 335)

Dubin's Lives, as a novelistic text, also qualifies as an infallible work of postmodernism with a fairly potent market value, being replete with an anarchist version epistemology, the "guerilla skirmishes of a paralogism which induces "ruptures, instabilities, paradoxes and micro-catastrophic discontinuities" (Tak 2004: 395-396).

What makes *Dubin's Lives* not only a postmodernist problematic text but also a nightmare of a global narrative is the central protagonist Dubin's expertise in devouring the lives of others including his own. These days a plethora of biographical texts are getting published across the world which sell well by arousing the curiosity and excitement in readers. Fundamentally what Dubin does is to regard his work as a religious vocation, by performing his duties with the destructive and isolating fanaticism of a zealot. Dubin's

wife, Kitty, says with increasing anger as Dubin drifts into depression and impotence:

> may be you ought not to have gotten married, so you could give your life to your biographies... I doubt you really enjoy being with people ... you're either reading or writing biographies, or thinking your biographical, thoughts" (*D.L.* 120).

By contemplating the lives of others Dubin not only exercises a moral and ethical palimpsest, but also gains knowledge which finally permits him to assess the worth of his own existence:

> Biography-literary or otherwise-teaches you the conduct of life. Those who write about life reflect about life. The unconscious is mirrored in a man's acts and words. If he watches and listens to himself, sooner or later he begins to see the contours of unconscious self... You see in others what you are (*D.L.*147).

By writing about lives, Dubin discovers an effective way of realizing his peculiar self-absorption. This helps him to recompose himself to the essential spirit of life something witnessed in the case of D H Lawrence.

The anti-climax comes when Dubin forgets that writing a biography does not "occupy the same temporal terrain or logical space as its antagonists...." (Tak, 396). Dubin should have learned that writing biography is not life as lived, the bitter lesson the hero learns when his structured life dissolves into sensual and professional importance:

> Dubin forgot what he read as he was reading it and much of what he had recently read. Books fell apart in his head; or went up in smoke... He remembered only the bare bones of what he must know to keep working on his biography. He forgot the contents of his novels.... When he read what he had written about him, it seemed to Dubin that someone else had written it... (*D.L.* 343)

What becomes obvious is that Dubin suffers from a breakdown of his creative imagination and the same operates as a deconstructive force within his mind. This is postmodernist disruption of textuality. While pursuing an unmediated encounter with reality, Dubin's writing of biographies becomes both action and a reflection upon that action. What happens in *Dubin's Lives* is that "avant-garde postmodernism takes the dissolution of art into social life..." (A H Tak. 405), also becoming identified as the de-institutionalization of art. The same gets borne out by the ironic structure of the novel which also emphasizes the discrepancy as Dubin misjudges the events of his past, misperceives his parental role, and misinterprets the facts of his own marriage. Finally, it is Freud who reminds Dubin with telling impact that "anyone turning biographer has committed himself to lies, to concealment, to hypocrisy, to flattery....for biographical truth is not to be had, and even if it were it couldn't be useful" (D.L. 330). This statement regarding the art of the biographer as applied to Dubin conforms to the postmodernist repertoire of ideas, definitions and terms which looked contradictory and juxtaposed. Dubin himself, as a postmodernist, novelistic hero, makes the text of his biography as denoting an unproductive culture, becoming ambiguous and atomized. What actually Dubin is doing is seeking his identity by rendering his biographical texts as masks and mirrors. Not only this, he resorts to the very nature of *bricolage* which means to make use of materials and tools actually not intended for the task in hand. Dubin's use of bricolage symbolizes a challenge to the reader to judge the text as an aesthetic production, even as meta-literature.

What complicates matters textually as well as creatively is Dubin's failure as his life continually crumbled. He seeks answers to his own dilemmas. What becomes textually revealing is the emblematic way in which Malamud uses marriage in *Dubin's Lives*. Marfiage as an equivocal institution may be necessary, even indispensable, but more often than not it becomes an experience of constraint, restricting freedom, inhibiting desire. For Dubin, marriage establishes a controlled and controllable environment in which he intends to shape the form of life. Dubin, as the alienated self, perceives the institution of marriage as an enclosure, diminishing the need for the elaborate network of personal connection. The biographer views marriage as a methodology of seclusion, which makes it hardly surprising that Dubin should so obsessively fear age, death and importance. For him, marriage does not possess a personal context, it is only a qualified success.

The conclusion remains somehow ambiguous. At the end Dubin is unable to adopt new models and to create a new life for himself "haunted by his past, but unable to learn from it, he accumulates sterile suffering" (Salzberg 1987:185). Malamud makes *Dubin's Lives* a memorable text about unfulfilled life and the epiphanies of disappointment and loss. The reader knows for certain that textually the biographer has chosen to commit himself of the ideal of disciplined work. If at all the reader wants to evaluate *Dubin's Lives* as a text and pass some kind of judgement one must bear in mind that Dubin, like his creator, is par-excellence the writer of the half life, the shabby region of mediocre attainment between pure wish-fulfillment and total disaster. Malamud possesses a perfect pitch for the language of poignancy and loss. In tune with the feature of American national existence, Dubin draws lives of quiet desperation and remains trapped in the prison of his own subjectivity.

Before concluding it would be pertinent to observe that in the context of the current globalization and market-place literatures both these texts, *Woman at Otowi Crossing* and *Dubin's Lives* denote the changes in the way Language and Literature are being produced, perceived and used. It also signifies an important formulation which is an urgent need to reconfigure creative boundaries besides the truth the English texts have been and are being used as tools of empowerment to arm readers with the ability to negotiate the sweeping changes in context of economic, cultural and historical truths. Such texts also limit the distinction between the critic and the writer. The role of the reader lies in comprehending the poetic or fictional material (the universe of the text involved). The writer works by means of concepts and the critic by means of science, leaving the reader to interpret science of concepts, particularly those which look wholly transparent. What we ultimately infer in the his writer-text-reader trilogy is the reversing of means and ends: "signifieds change into signifiers, and vice versa" (Tak, 348).

A disturbing scenario which has now emerged vis-à-vis the text- reader-market equation is the stark truth that texts in this postmodernist age have become literary tools to be moulded and manipulated, to break down the barrier between the high and the low and above all to create an ironic Linguistic Utopia in which language loses depth, character, and opacity. Regardless of any interpretation or definition constructed to denote the postmodernist viability of literary texts and the status of the reader, the most appropriate way of concluding the concept would be to say that now Stephen Dedalus represents Telemachus, Leopold Bloom stands for Ulysses and Molly Bloom becomes Penelope.

References

Derrida, Jacques "Of Grammatology" (1967:249) quoted in Julie Rivkin and Micheal Ryan, ed. *Literary Theory: An Anthology.* Blackwell, (2005:1151).

Hassan, Ihab. 1985. "Culture of Postmodernism", an excerpt from *Modernism in the Plural: Challenges and Perspectives.* University of Illinois Press.

Lyon, Thomas J. 1973. *Frank Waters.* New York: Twayne Publishers.

Malamud, Bernard. 1979. *Dubin's Lives.* Penguin : London.

Salzberg, Joel. 1987. *Critical Essays on Bernard Malamud.* Boston, Mass.: G.K. Hall & Co.

Tak A H ed. 2004. *Critical Perspectives,* Srinagar: Deptt. of English, University of Kashmir.

Waters, Frank, 1964. "The Western Novel: A Symposium", *South Dakota Review* (Autumn).

Waters, Frank, 1971. *Woman At Otowi Crossing.* Chicago: Swallow Press.

Sweet Water–Stolen Land: A Re-enactment of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*

Virender Khatkar

Most colonial discourses seem to portray that civilization is the sole domain of Whites who imperilled their lives to spread the light of civilization among uncivilized, brutal and cannibalistic natives. In other words the process of colonialism according to these narratives is not that of exploitation and plunder, but a heroic and philanthropic exercise. This attitude of colonial advocates like Rudyard Kipling was known from the very beginning, but post-colonial writers like Chinua Achebe have unearthed a similar hidden attitude in the works of writers like Joseph Conrad who were considered sympathetic to the natives. On the whole colonial narratives seem to portray the natives as uncivilized brutes and the expeditions made by adventure loving whites for civilizing the natives as imperative and desirable. This kind of attitude is not only present in creative writers but also in the historians like Charles Pearson, who was hailed as "prophet of decolonization," (Lake, 2004) described the process of colonization as a positive developmental work that was necessary for the upliftment of the natives around the world: "we are bound, wherever we go, to establish peace and order; to make roads, and open up rivers to commerce; to familiarise other nations with a self-government which will one day make them independent of ourselves" (Cited in Lake, 2004).

In 1954, William Golding published a novel *Lord of the Flies* which seemed to convey an important message that civilization is not among the inherent traits of the human beings; rather it is nurtured among the people by parents and other civilized people of the society. Civilization is an adornment which men get rid of as soon as they get an opportunity. Eons of civilized and social life have not been able to kill the savage beast in human beings. Civilization is only a temporary condition, a fragile and brittle coating put on by the society. More importantly the theme in the novel is developed through a group of boys who are stranded on an uninhabited island.

A scene which clearly tells about Goldings intention in the novel is where one of the younger boys Henry is observed by one of the older boys Roger:

> Roger stooped, picked up a stone aimed, and threw it at Henry- threw it to miss. The stone- that token of preposterous time- bounced five yards to the right and fell in the water. Roger gathered a handful of stones and began to throw them. Yet there was a space around Henry, perhaps six yards in diameter, into which he dared not to throw. Here, invisible yet strong, was the protection of parents and school and policemen and the law. Roger's arm was conditioned by a civilization that knew nothing of him and was in ruins.
>
> Golding, 1954:62

In the paragraph Golding makes it clear that civilization is a process of conditioning, or rather a process of sending the essential human nature into a slumber by the fear of police, army and other law enforcing agencies. But once a human being finds himself in a condition where these agencies are absent, atavistic urges of essentially savage human beings start coming to the surface and men turn into fierce predators that prey upon other human beings. This is testified by the example of Roger. In the beginning Roger does not dare to throw stones at Henry however, as the story progresses the layers of conditioned self are shorn and he becomes a savage who kills Piggy by hurling a mighty rock at him. The episode presents an "erosion of restraint, the return of stone age" (Singh 1997).

Though the immediate inspiration of Golding's story may have been different, it finds a real life parallel in Australia, a continent considered as an uninhabited island by the British convicts who went there.

The paper is the study of the novel *Sweet Water- Stolen Land* by Philip McLaren which seems to suggest that the whites who arrived in Australia regressed to a primitive stage. It is important to note that Australia was selected as a convict colony by the British. Following the closing off of America as the destination for the convicts, the lawbreakers were fast accumulating in the jails of England. A speech made by Lord Sydney to the commissioners of treasury in August 1786, emphasizes the scale of crisis faced by the country:

> My lords,
>
> The several gaols and places of confinement of felons in this kingdom being in so overcrowded a state that the greatest danger is to be apprehended, not only from their escape, but from infectious distempers, which may hourly be expected to break out among them, his Majesty, desirous of preventing by every possible means the ill consequences which might happen from either of these causes, has been pleased to signify me his royal commands that measures should immediately be pursued for sending out of this kingdom such of the convicts as are under sentence or order of transportation.
>
> (cited in Collingwood 2000).

This speech made clear that the continent of Australia was to be used as *a* place for disposal of "human trash."(Hughes, 1986: 144).

The whites who went out on colonial missions were fed on the theories that the "Negro is a stage in the slow evolution of monkey into man" (Fanon, 1967: 17), so the 'negro' was given a sub-human status. The case of Aborigines was even worse because there was no government or law enforcing agency in Australia. The seat of authority, Britain, was far away from the continent and the communication system was not well-developed. So the settlers met the same situation as faced by the Shipwrecked children in *Lord of the Flies*. But the process in Australia was perhaps speedier than in its narrative analogy because the people who came to Australia were all criminals considered uncivilized in their own society. Their descent into savagery was even sharper when compared to Golding's Children. Moreover, the whites found that the Aborigines could be easily decimated as their spears were no match for European guns. The colony that was settled as matter of shame became a real source of shame in the twentieth century when the various massacres of the helpless Aborigines were discovered.

The novel describes one of the most horrendous massacres in Australia that is known as 'Myall Creek massacre'. The Aborigines at Myall Creek were butchered without any motive. The novelist describes a scene in which helpless old men, women and children were butchered:

> Kilmeister shouted loudly as he took one of the younger children aside. The three-year old girl was half-unconscious with the shock of having just seen her mother hacked to death, but she kicked and cried as she was thrown to ground. Kilmeister pulled her head back and with one blow of his sword decapitated her head from her little body. Blood pulsed from the neck as the body fell to ground he held her head by the hair. Her eyes were still open and her mouth gaped wide. He raised it overhead and yelled as he swung it high and far. After this each of children was systematically taken aside. Their heads were decapitated from their small bodies and thrown well out of the yard in frenzied, bloody gestures of triumph.
>
> McLaren 1993:120

The crime becomes even graver when one comes to know that the Aborigines who were slaughtered by the Whites were, in fact, invited to the cattle station by Kilmeister himself "for their safety and protection from the gangs of marauding stockmen who were roaming the district slaughtering any Aborigines they could find"(http://www. en.wikipedia.org). Kilmeister's action can certainly be equated with the actions of inhuman Jack of *Lord of the Flies* who "makes things break up like they do" (Golding, 1954:139).

Lord of the Flies was a result of Golding's disillusionment with Western civilization especially after the world war. Before the war he believed in the "perfectibility of social man" (Golding, Fable, 1965, p. 86), but after the war he discovered "what one man could do to another" (Golding, Fable, 1965, p. 86). He was visibly upset with the crimes that "were done skilfully, coldly, by educated men, doctors, lawyers, by men with a tradition of civilization behind them, to beings of their own kind" (Golding, Fable,1965:87). In Australia too, the civilized people who came as missionaries lost their prized attributes of being cultured and civilized becoming demons who killed people and sexually exploited children placed under their control. The novel presents a story of one such missionary, Karl, who kills fellow white people to save his mission. The descent of these people to morbidity shows that European civilization was indeed dependent on law enforcing agencies. In the absence of effective and unbiased policing, people became brutal murderers knowing they could go scotfree. The way in which Karl murders his victims is even more horrifying and shows that his descent to barbarism is complete:

> He walked into the next room: there in the moonlight streaming through the window he clearly saw the Lumsdens asleep on their blood. He raised the club over his head and brought it down with tremendous force upon Brian's head. His skull sounded like a dry hollow log as it cracked under the force of the blow. Brain tissue sprayed over the bed and onto the side of Helen's face. She awoke in a fit of confusion. Karl raised the nulla-nulla again and looked coldly into her pleading eyes. Her loud, high pitched screams filled the small room with terror as he brought down the heavy club down. She managed to bring her left arm up to protect her head but her forearm crunched easily when the club hit, pushing her arm into her head.
>
> McLaren 1993:77

An interesting thing to note is that Philip McLaren is not the only Aboriginal novelist to portray the missionaries as a killer. Another important Aboriginal novelist Alexis Wright portrays Errol Jipp as missionary who is brutal and ruthless. In fact her novel *Plains of Promise* is woven around the story of a girl who is sexually exploited at a tender age of nine years by Jipp and is impregnated by him. These instances clearly show that the morals of those considered civilised rapidly withered down in absence of security and law-enforcement. That there was no effective government or law enforcing agency at that time is probably clear from the Black Wars.

The Black Wars were a period of conflict between the British Colonialists and the Tasmanian Aborigines. In these wars, the entire population of the Aborigines was wiped out by the whites. During Black Wars, a declaration was published in a newspaper:

> We make no pompous display of philanthropy. We say this unequivocally SELF DEFENCE IS THE FIRST LAW OF NATURE. THE GOVERNMENT MUST REMOVE THE NATIVES- IF NOT THEY WILL BE HUNTED DOWN LIKE WILD BEASTS AND DESTROYED!
>
> Anonymous 1826:1

Anyone can easily understand that the above quoted declaration is not a request, but a warning to the government to remove the Aborigines from their own land, making clear that the government as a law enforcing agency was not strong enough to save the Aborigines from the wrath of the settlers. Clearly, Whites did not consider the Aborigines legal owners of the land because for the colonisers the colonised have "no culture, no civilization, and no long historical past" (Fanon, 1967:35). Since the Aborigines had no civilization, so they had no right to own land. On the other hand, police force, the civilizing force of the whites and the potent arm of the government which helped it in maintaining law and order existed for the whites only. For the Aborigines the policemen were rapists (McLaren 1993:36) and torturers.

In fact the method used for killing the Aborigines itself testifies that the invaders had lost their human attributes:

> Tactics for hunting down Tasmanian included riding out on the horse back to shoot them, setting out steel traps to catch them, and putting out poison flour where they might find and eat it. Shepherds cut off the penis and testicles of aboriginal men to watch the men sun a few yards before dying. At a hill christened Mount Victory, settlers slaughtered 30 Tasmanians and threw their bodies over a cliff. One party of police killed 70 Tasmanians and dashed out children's brains.
>
> (Cited in Rashidi 2002)

> While doing all these things the whites did not worry about being called uncivilized because for the whites, their colour itself was a proof of their being civilized and being virtuous (Fanon, 1967, p. 45). So they did not need deeds to show that they were civilized; whiteness covered all the vices. On the other hand the blackness of the Aborigines hid all their virtues. The only thing that was visible in the blacks was their blackness, the colour of the night, the colour which hid sins and dangers; so they were fit to be exterminated. The savagery of the whites never came under the scanner because whatever the whites did was within the confines of civilization. But actions such as those described certainly confirm Golding's belief that man is a "fallen being."
>
> Golding 1965: 88

It is surprising that people who were friendly and cultured for the whites were fiends for the Aborigines. In 1883, the British High Commissioner Arthur Hamilton Gordon wrote privately to his friend William Gladstone, Prime Minister of England:

> The habit of regarding the native as vermin, to be cleared off the face of the earth, has given the average Queenslander a tone of brutality and cruelty in dealing with the "blacks" which is very difficult to anyone who does not know it, as I

> do, to realize. I have heard men of culture and refinement, of the greatest humanity and kindness to the fellow whites, and who when you meet them here at home you would pronounce to be incapable of such deeds, talk not only of the wholesale butchery (for the iniquity of that may sometimes be disguised from themselves) but of the individual murder of the natives, exactly they would talk of a day's sport or having to kill some troublesome animal.
>
> (Cited in Collingwood 2000)

The letter clearly indicates that the whites living in Australia were living dual lives like Dr. Jekyll and Hyde. While most of the times when they were with the fellow whites they behaved like Dr. Jekyll, but they became savages when they had to deal with the natives. This behaviour again confirms the role of law enforcing agencies. The whites were very careful in dealings with the fellow whites because they knew that any criminal offence done to the whites will not be tolerated, on the other hand any crime done against the Aborigines will not be noticed. The letter also makes clear that the native's life was equivalent to that of an animal which was fit to be hunted because they were considered uncivilized.

The European model of civilization was largely based on the outward achievement of the human beings or "the application of human effort to practical, productive labour" (Cited in Kricken, 2011).To be recognized as civilization or culture, a community needed to achieve visible symbols of human growth and progress. The idea included a mastery over nature; a will to dominate nature for the sustenance of human lives. It certainly included agriculture, and the other important factor was technology as it was assumed that advancement in technology symbolised the advancement in civilization. "Can we expect" asked David Hume "that a government will be well modelled by a people, who know not how to make a spinning wheel, or to employ a loom to advantage?" (273).The stress in Europe was certainly on the outward symbols and it is important to note that the Europeans thought that civilizing values and ideas were things that needed to be taught. Even the central argument in the Western political theory has been that "human beings are not reasonable" and that "some process of cultivation, refinement, education or formation of public reason is a crucial dimension of a peaceful and productive society" (Kricken 2011).

The British considered themselves as the torch bearers of civilization, moulded into highly civilized objects by the institutions like Cambridge and Oxford; trained to be afraid of law enforcing agencies. On the other hand, the Aborigines neither had institutes of higher learning to churn out objects considered civilized by European standards nor had learnt to dominate nature. In Aboriginal society each child had to learn about the community and duties towards the society that the adults committed themselves to throughout their lives.

The Aborigines had been for thousands of years leading a civilized life, which not only respected the sanctity of human lives but also the sanctity of every other life form and land without any government and law enforcing agencies, whereas in the same circumstances, Western civilization withered away almost immediately. In fact the Aboriginal society defied the theories propounded by the Western philosophers that man is inherently savage. Regression of the whites in Australia showed that civilization and its values do not lie in using and inventing new tools, in wearing new clothes and dining in fine cutlery, rather it lies in respecting the human values, respecting fellow human beings and in inherently respecting the laws framed by the society rather than due to fear of police or government. In the novel this is shown through the character of Manduk who does not wear any clothes. Karl tells him that he "must cover his genitals if he wanted to stay on the mission" (McLaren 2011:141). The difference is clear: Manduk lives naked, but he respects human life. The outwards symbols of civilization are not important to him; he is civilized to the core of his heart when compared to Karl who though a priest by profession, which is among the most respected professions in the so called civilized world, yet fails in keeping his virtues intact and becomes cold blooded murderer.

There is no doubt that Australia was a special case as it was not an organised society. The other countries which were colonised by the British were organised to some extent, so the invaders had to give at least a few concessions to the natives. The Aborigines were living in a kind of utopia where they were unaware of feelings like greed or hatred. They had evolved into such a society where respecting the rights of others was a part of nature and not nurture. On the other hand, the whites who arrived in Australia were greedy individuals, the convicts, who were not used to earning their livelihood by working hard, but by stealing, robbing and killing. In Britain there were checks on them, but in Australia they found an open ground to inflict their atrocities and reveal their elemental selves. Most of the Aboriginal writers have shown that their society was more civilized than the whites who came in Australia to kill and loot. The failure of the whites in Australia essentially shows that nurturing alone can not make a person civilised, rather it has to come from within. Australia was the land where the masks of civilization were torn from the face of the civilized people and they were seen in their true colours.

References

Anonymous. 1826 (December 1). *Colonial Times and Tasmanian Advertiser*. Retrieved from http://www.trove.nla.gov.au

Collingwood-Whittick, Sheila. 2000. "Re-presenting the Australian Aborigine: Challenging Colonial Discourse through Autoethnography." *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 38:2, 110-131.

Fanon, Frantz. 1967. *Black Skin White Masks*. (Charles Lamb Markmann, Trans.). New York: Grove Press Inc.

Golding, William. 1965."Fable." *The Hot Gates and Other Occasional Pieces*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & world.

Golding, William. 1954. *Lord of the Flies*. New York: Perigee.

Hughes, Robert. 1986. *The Fatal Shore*. London: Harvill Press.

Hume, David. 1987. *Essays Moral, Political and Literary*. Indianapolis: Liberty Classics.

Kricken, Robert van. 2011. "Three faces of Civilization: 'In the beginning all the world was Ireland.' " *The Sociological Review*, 59, 24-47.

Lake, Marilyn. 2004. "The White Man under Siege: New Histories of Race in the nineteenth Century and the advent of White Australia." *History Workshop Journal*, 58, 41-62.

McLaren, Philip. 1993. *Sweet Water-Stolen land*. St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press.

Rashidi, Runoko. http://www.cwo.com/~lucumi/tasmania.html

Singh, Minnie. 1997. "The Government of Boys: Golding's Lord of the Flies and Ballantyne's Coral Island." *Children's Literature*, 25, 205-213.

The Carnivalesque in Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*

A R N Hanuman

Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is based largely on his experiences with the mentally challenged at Veteran's Hospital in Menlo Park. Through the conflict between the two major characters, Nurse Ratched and Randle Patrick McMurphy, the novel explores the themes of conflict and conformity, ideas that were widely discussed at a time when the United States was committed to opposing communism and totalitarian regimes around the world. Kesey's approach, directing criticism at American institutions themselves, was revolutionary and thus the novel, published in 1962, was an immediate success.

Cuckoo's Nest is notable for the variety of interpretive responses it has evoked. It has been treated as comedy, most extensively by Ronald Wallace, who believes that McMurphy functions as a "Dionysian Lord of Misrule" who "presides over a comic fertility ritual and restores instinctual life to the patients." (115). Raymond Olderman interprets the novel as a romance centering on the waste-land theme, in which McMurphy is a:

> ... successful Grail Knight, who frees the Fisher King and the human spirit for a single symbolic and transcendent moment of affirmation. (51)

In its righteous anger, its rejection of authority, and its celebration of irrepressible nonconformity, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is a perfect example of the carnivalesque in that it questions the monolithic bureaucratic order, rejects stereotyped sexual roles in the process of subverting the established hegemony to create a better sense of identity and life. In addition to reflecting the brash, irreverent personality of the 1960s, the novel also develops the theme of the struggle of a heroic (if flawed) individual in conflict with the status quo, a recurrent theme in American literature. Viewed through the carnival lens the novel tries to secure freedom from such attitudes by celebrating and valorizing all that is hard, in the process subverting all that is 'high and holy'.

Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of "carnivalesque" refers to a source of 'liberation, destruction and renewal'. The origin and meaning of the carnivalesque can be best understood by analyzing the concept of the carnival. In the carnival, social hierarchies of everyday life are profaned and overturned by normally suppressed voices and energies. Thus fools become wise, kings become beggars; opposites are mingled (fact and fantasy, heaven and hell). Official seriousness quite often is a mask that conceals pious pretentions and false authorities. Carnival tries to secure this freedom by celebrating and valorizing all that is low, in the process subverting all that is high and holy. Bakhtin likens the carnivalesque in literature to the type of activity that often takes place in the carnivals of the popular culture which sought a release, a freedom from all that is official, authoritarian and serious.

In the carnival lens, Big Nurse, masked under the official, authoritarian life makes the life in the ward 'miserable' and stands for the 'high-ideal', and Mc Murphy, who degrades the 'combine' stands for the low. In the Carnivalesque-grotesque literature, women are usually presented non-ideally, either as destructive of the male, or as a contrast to male behavior. In *Cuckoo's Nest* too, Big Nurse Ratched in her non-ideal authoritarian acts with "avarice, jealousy, stupidity, hypocrisy, bigotry, sterile senility, false heroism, and abstract idealism" (*Rabelais*, 240) in keeping control over the men on the ward in her own system of mechanical surveillance and mind control. She is not a lone tyrant, however. As the Chief points out:

> ...it's not just the Big Nurse by herself, but it's the whole Combine, the nation-wide Combine that's the really big force, and the nurse is just a high-ranking official for them.
>
> (*Cuckoo's Nest*, 181)

The ward – "a factory for the Combine is for "fixing up mistakes made in the neighbourhoods and in the schools and in the churches..."(38) – is one of the places where those who do not conform end up. The Combine is clearly an imaginative construct that describes the dominant social order in America during the 1950s. The madness, Kesey projects through McMurphy is akin to the idea of madness suggested by Bakhtin:

> Madness makes men look at the world with different eyes...In folk grotesque madness is a gay parody of official reason.
>
> (*Rabelais*, 39)

The Chief's belief – the reality of the Combine is not just a "crazy" conspiracy theory – is a lucid metaphor for the repressive effects of the dominant ideology. The idea that capitalist America is a model of social and economic justice may in fact be more fictional than the Chief's conspiracy theory. The Chief's crazy talk, like that of Colonel Matterson, has a logic of its own. For Kesey the Chief and his people represent Native Americans, a position of integration with nature and an alternative society to that of the Combine. Bakhtin observes that Rabelais set his story in an intimate familiar world in the author's homeland and its immediate surroundings – "The immediate foreground of his images in the world he had lived in and the people he closely knew" (*Rabelais*, 445). Here, the story revolves around the Oregon Mental Asylum.

According to the theory of Dr. Spivey, a resident doctor of the asylum, the Big Nurse's ward is "a little world inside that is a made-to-scale prototype of the big world Outside" (*Cuckoo's Nest*, 47). Consistent with this theory is the Big Nurse's justification for her iron-clad rules: "A good many of you are in here because you could not adjust to the rules of society in the Outside world" (171). The ward is an accurate replica of the "Outside world." What is wrong with the ward and the Big Nurse is also wrong with the world outside and its Big Brother-like powers: the hospital is part of the same conspiracy, the same mechanizing system. This system is one which claims to be "democratic," and so Dr. Spivey maintains that his model of the larger society is a "democratic ward run completely by the patients and their votes...much like your own democratic, free neighborhhoods" (47).

McMurphy, like the Chief, is a kind of natural man, someone still free of the Combine's control. He brings with his laughter "the man, smell of dust and dirt from the open fields, and sweat, and work"(88). "The Combine hasn't got to him in all these years" (89) says the Chief, and speculates on how McMurphy has managed this:

> May be he growed up so wild all over the country, batting around from one place to another, never around one town longer'n a few months when he was a kid so a school never got much a hold on him...keeping on the move so much that the Combine never had a chance to get anything installed.
>
> (*Cuckoo's Nest*, 89)

But there is a cost for this freedom from the system. The system is "big" and the novel implies that it is only a matter of time until individual rebels are brought to heel. Describing McMurphy's seemingly heroic struggle against the Combine, the Chief says,

> the thing he was fighting, you couldn't whip it for good. All you could do was keep on whipping it, till you couldn't come out any more and somebody else had to take your place.
>
> (*Cuckoo's Nest*, 265)

The men in the ward have been "whipped" by the Big Nurse. She has taken away their ability to laugh and replaced it with fear. When McMurphy arrives and sees this, he tells them,

> A man go around lettin' a woman whip him down till he can't laugh any more, and he loses one of the biggest edges he's got on his side.
>
> (*Cuckoo's Nest*, 66)

McMurphy secures their masculinity through various forms of male bonding. Kesey always felt the need for strong men in this world. McMurphy tries to restore the men's masculinity through various forms of male bonding. Gambling, drinking, and whoring also serve to unite men, and McMurphy succeeds in initiating a few in the ward into these activities as well. These activities are shared by the men on the fishing excursion, as well as in the novel's conclusion, when the all-male ward rises in rebellion against the Big Nurse. At night, while the Nurse is gone, they take over the ward and violate its order and sanctity by throwing a drunken party, typical of carnival celebration of bodily lower stratum (*Rabelais*, 317).

McMurphy's attack on the Big Nurse, following Billy's suicide, shows how Kesey has set this up (either consciously or unconsciously) to be a rape, and the language that the Chief uses to describe the scene indicates clearly that this is a sexual attack. According to the logic expressed in the conversations between McMurphy and the others, it is only the sexual violation of the Big Nurse – the tearing of her dress – that can guarantee a conclusive victory for the men of the ward. Only this can get to the root of the trouble and restore their lost masculinity. It is distinctly apparent that this act is committed as a collective act. McMurphy represents the group. He is sent forward as a sacrificial hero – 'just the stud to handle the job' – but he pays the price of the scapegoat for his action. While stressing on carnival decrowning, Bakhtin observes that under the ritual act of decrowning lies the "very core of the sense of the carnival world- the pathos of shifts and changes, of death and renewal (*Problems*, 124).

Bakhtin designates "abusive language, insulting words and indecent expressions, profanities and oaths" as the special genres of billingsgate. Examples of the billingsgate can be found in abundance in *Cuckoo's Nest:*

- A bitch? But a moment ago she was a ball-cutter, then a buzzard – or was it a chicken?" (58)

  "Fffuck the wife," Ruckly says (46).

  Cocksucker! Washington, you're nothing but a..." (261).

Such speech broke the norms of official speech and entered the familiar sphere of the everyday life. Being filled with the carnival spirit they have acquired a general tone of laughter.

The Chief executes the lobotomized McMurphy by smothering him and allows for the final transference, begun with the original handshake, of McMurphy's life force to himself:

> The big, hard body had a tough grip on life. It fought a long time against having it taken away, flailing and thrashing around so much I finally had to lie full length on top of it and scissor the kicking legs with mine while I mashed the pillow into the face. I lay there on top of the body for what seemed days. Until the thrashing stopped.
>
> (*Cuckoo's Nest*, 309)

The death of McMurphy in the novel can also be interpreted in carnivalesque terms. The degradation and destruction of McMurphy's life: death is seen as regeneration in carnival lens. Thus, McMurphy is dead but his spirit fills the ward. It is clear that he has beaten Big Nurse and damaged the Combine. It is not only McMurphy's own struggle which is at issue in this novel. For one thing, McMurphy comes to represent the only hope for salvation open to his fellow inmates, a salvation which he brings about through the tutelage of example, making them aware of their own manhood in the dual senses of masculinity and humanity. It is only after committing the act of smothering McMurphy to death that the Chief leaves the ward. He throws the control panel through the screen of the tub room window and leaps out "into the moonlight" (310). Then he runs "across the grounds in the direction I remembered seeing the dog go, toward the highway" (310). At this point, the narrative finally catches with the present moment in which the Chief speaks to the reader.

In brief the novel concerns the nature of individual freedom at political, social and psychological levels. To sum up the central conflict is a singular version of the archetypal struggle between the forces of good and evil or freedom and bondage in which victory is achieved through intervention of a savior or sacrificial hero. Through the character of McMurphy, Ken Kesey in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* emphatically states that one must be strong to survive and stronger to prevail with drive for independence and freedom, the two most valued qualities that gave America its character.

References

Bakhtin, Mikhail. 1968. *Rabelais and His World*, tr. Hélène Iswolsky. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. 1984. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. and tr. Caryl Emerson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Blessing, Richard. 1971. "The Moving Target: Ken Kesey's Evolving Hero," *Journal of Popular Culture* 4 : 615-27.

Kesey, Ken. 1962. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. New York: Viking Press.

Olderman, Raymond M. 1972. *Beyond the Waste Land: A study of the American Novel in the Nineteen-Sixties*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press.

Wallace, Ronald. 1979. *The Last Laugh: Form and Affirmation in the Contemporary American Comic Novel*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press.

Poetic Influence and Individuality in the Indo-Persian Ghazal: Ghalib and his Literary Precursors

Mufti Mudasir

zauq-e fikr Ghalib raa burdah zi anjuman birun

baa Zuhuri u Sa'ib mahv-e hamzabaani haast

Flair for deep reflection put Ghalib out of the gathering

And now he is busy conversing with Zuhuri and Sa'ib.

(Ghalib)

The relation between literary influence and originality has been at the centre of many interesting debates in the modern critical thought. The present paper aims to discuss this problem with relation to the Indo-Persian ghazal. Contrary to the contention of some Western critics such as Harold Bloom that poetic influence always proceeds by misreading of the literary precursors by the late-comer poet, I argue that the Persian literary tradition evinces a much more dynamic relation between the poets and their predecessors which is far removed from Bloom's thesis of literary history as a tale of parricidal battles between the Titans of the past and their descendants. I try to examine various ways in which poets have engaged with their predecessors' texts to create their own space in the tradition. Taking the example of Ghalib (1797-1869), the last great poet of Persian in the Indian subcontinent as an illustration, I uphold Eliot's critical position regarding tradition as a continuously evolving phenomenon in which the works of the earlier poets are creatively appropriated and not misread by the later poets.

Eliot, in his well-known essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent', remarks that any poet who wants to write poetry beyond his twenty-fifth birthday needs to cultivate a sense of the literary tradition to which he belongs. He insists that the idea of originality has been often misunderstood to mean that a poet's originality lies in his ability to create something entirely novel. Contesting this view, he argues that no poet can write anything original in this sense and no poet can find a place in the tradition unless he possesses the critical sense which enables him to appropriate it creatively. In Eliot's own words:

> We dwell with satisfaction upon the poet's difference from his predecessors, especially his immediate predecessors; we endeavour to find something that can be isolated in order to be enjoyed. Whereas if we approach a poet without this prejudice we shall often find that not only the best, but the most individual parts of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously. And I do not mean the impressionable period of adolescence, but the period of full maturity. (1921:36)

And long before Eliot, Coleridge, in his characteristic style, said something which strikingly anticipated Eliot's concept: "A poet ought not to pick nature's pocket: let him borrow, and so borrow as to repay in the very act of borrowing" (Coleridge 1990:205).

The idea of appropriating a preexisting text was never alien to the Persian ghazal poet and one may even say that if there is a classic example of how poems are made from other poems, the Persian ghazal and especially the Mughal-Safawid ghazal provides an ideal example. To begin with, the Persian ghazal is a highly conventional literary form which has exhibited a remarkable degree of structural and thematic tenacity over a period of eight centuries or so. With its fixed metres, well-established images and tropes and a peculiar form where all verses end with a refrain, it is not surprising that repetitions and imitations of previous texts are a common feature in the ghazal. This highly conventional nature of the ghazal imposes certain restrictions on its practitioner, constraining his freedom of expression to fit the form. Ghalib's complaint that he needs some other form to express himself as the ghazal is too rigid to accommodate his imaginative flights is thus perfectly understandable.

But how has the ghazal retained its status as the crown of Persian poetry if there has been little for the individual poets to innovate? To understand this we need to see the complex relationship between the literary tradition as *langue* and individual works as *parole*. On the one hand the generic structure and formal patterns put in place by the tradition demand conformity from poets and on the other no poet can just repeat what his predecessors have said without somehow saying something 'new'. This tension between the need for conformity and an equally urgent one for originality is a common heritage of all serious poets and the capacity of the poets to negotiate it to their advantage has largely determined the extent of their success in the ghazal tradition.

A cursory look at the Persian ghazal tradition reveals various ways of intertextual engagement. One can enumerate *tazmeen* (quoting directly from another poet), *javab guyi* (writing response-poems), *istiqbal* (lit. welcoming, the practice of reworking the theme of an earlier ghazal but retaining its formal structure) and *tasarruf* (lit. appropriation, altering a word or two of a text) as the principal intertextual techniques. Among these a study of *istiqbal* and *jawab guyi* (the two are sometimes taken to be synonymous) can offer valuable insights into the kind of dialogue between a model poem and its response. A response-ghazal is invariably written in the same *zameen* (lit. ground, meaning the formal structure which includes metre, rhyme and refrain) as the model ghazal and often includes some verses which redo themes of the original.

The Classical works of criticism in both Arabic and Persian traditions devoted considerable space to the discussions of *sariqa* (lit. theft) or plagiarism. Given the characteristics of the ghazal discussed above, it is not surprising that poets were acutely aware of the risk of inviting the charge of literary theft. As a result an important distinction was made between *sariqa* and *tavaarud* (unintentional coincidence), the latter understandably exempted from reproach. How much the Indo-Persian poets were obsessed with charges of *sariqa* becomes evident as one discovers that almost all of them stressed their originality by repudiating any possible accusations of plagiarism. Thus Ghani Kashmiri (d. 1669), while accusing others of stealing his themes, claims that he never stole from anyone:

> *yaaraan burdand shi'r-i maa raa*
> *afsoos ki naam-i maa na burdand*
> Friends have *taken* my verses
> Pity, they did not *take* my name.
> *Deedam ki nukta sanjaan duzdand shi'r-e mardum*
> *Mun neez shi'r-e khud raa duzdeedam az hareefaan*
> I saw that poets steal each others' verses.
> I am still retrieving mine which the rivals have stolen.

No wonder then, that when Ghani was once openly accused of plagiarism, he was so dismayed that he abandoned writing poetry until he had proved the accusation baseless:

> *Gul-e bi khaar-e gulzaar-e khamushi cheedani daarad*
> *Zabaan-e guftuga raa hamchun nafarmaan pas-e sar kun*
> The thornless rose of the garden of silence is worth picking.
> Lay off the prattling tongue like an unruly slave.

And, Ghani's contemporary Kaleem Kaashaani (d. 1651) refuted the charges of theft thus:

> *Chiguna ma'naye ghairi buram ki ma'naye khwish*
> *Dubarah bastan duzdi ast dar shari'at-e man*
> How can I borrow others' themes when in my creed
> Redepicting my own ones is no less than theft?

Ghalib, in one of his letters to Tufta, refutes the charge that he used a ghazal of Naziri Nishaapuri (d.1612) as the model and merely altered some words to create his own poem. 'Poetry', he says, 'is creating meanings not measuring rhymes'. The statement is important because for Ghalib, as for other *sabk-e hindi* poets (the

poets of the Indian style), the essence of poetry lies in *ma'nae aafrini*, meaning-creation. This meaning-creation could not, however, be achieved without assimilating the works of the past writers. In other words, a poet's excellence would always be tested against those of the past masters while some kind of novelty was still demanded of him. The mere presence of similar or even identical leitmotifs, images and tropes would not insinuate plagiarism if only some twist in the final meaning was discernable. And when there was enough extra-literary evidence that no plagiarism had taken place, even strikingly similar verses would be explained as instances of coincidence, an example being the one given by Azad Bilgrami in *Sarve Azad* where he quotes three quite similar verses of Sa'ib Tabrizi (d.1677-8), Saleem Tehrani (d. 1648) and Ghani.

The dynamic engagement with the tradition which this situation necessitated meant that the poet had to have both a critical and a creative sensibility or to use Eliot's concept, there could be no creative sensibility without a critical one. The poets would often try to prove their skills by intervening in an antecedent text, usually by an ingenious alteration of the context, thus creating their own distinct meaning. The very practice of *javab guyi* or *istiqbal* implied that the poet is producing something novel which can at least measure up to, if not actually excel, the precursor's text. Adherence to certain fixed formal patterns, however, made this task very difficult and only the genuinely talented could produce something which was simultaneously conventional and original. The literary forerunner's text was both a challenge and guide for the poet who would most often express an attitude of acknowledgement and deep admiration for the forerunner while actually trying to prove his own mettle.

To explicate the idea of creative appropriation of the literary forebears' texts, let us turn to Ghalib. Ghalib is the fitting example of what Harold Bloom calls a 'belated' poet. He wrote at a time when Persian was breathing its last in India, and is rightly acknowledged as the last great Persian poet of the subcontinent. It is, therefore, exciting to see how Ghalib, coming so to say at the end, produced his own corpus of Persian lyrical poetry by a creative appropriation of the texts of his literary precursors. It is well-known that Ghalib considered himself a poet of Persian *par excellence* and prided himself on being the only one among his contemporaries who could match the great masters of the past. Almost snobbish towards the poets of the Indian origin who strived to produce verses in Persian, he thought his own far excelled theirs as well as his own Urdu ghazals:

> *Faarsi been taa bibeeni naqsh haay rang rang*
> *Bugzar az majmuae Urdu ki bi rang-e man ast*
> Look to my Persian to see myriad-coloured constructions
> Skip the Urdu collection, my bland achievement.

And he never forgave his contemporaries for denying him the recognition he thought he deserved:

> *Ghalib-e sukhta jaan raa chi ba guftaar aari*
> *Ba diyari ki nadaanand Naziri zi Qateel*
> What for did You inspire the tormented Ghalib to speech
> In a land where they can't tell Naziri from Qateel?

And, again:

> *Tu aiki mahv-e sukhan gustaraan-e pishini*
> *Mabaash munkir-e Ghalib ki dar zamaanaye tust*
> O you, so engrossed in the poets of a bygone age.
> Don't turn away from Ghalib because he lives in yours.

In the afterword to his Persian *divan*, Ghalib expresses his indebtedness to Naziri, Urfi (d. 1590), Zuhuri (d. 1615), Talib Amuli (d.1627) and Ali Hazin (d. 1766) all great ghazal writers of the Iranian origin who had settled in India, and describes how they inspired him and how he managed to woo their spirits to guide his artistic genius in the paths of poetry. He recalls how in the beginning he had tended to stray into the dark alleys of literary anarchism and mistaken many idiosyncrasies for originality before he was rescued by these gracious souls. He calls himself a fellow-traveller treading the same path as they and describes how they pitied his lot and agreed to be his instructors. Ali Hazin, Talib, Urfi, Zuhuri and Naziri, all offered him their blessings and helped the latent talent to bear fruit. Pleased at his feat, he indulges himself, calling his pen 'a cock pheasant in gait, a musical bird in singing, a peacock in glory and a phoenix in flight' (Ghalib 1969: 453).

Of the aforementioned, it is Urfi, Zuhuri and Naziri with whom Ghalib seems to be almost preoccupied. Not only does he project them as his constant sources of inspiration, he also claims to have followed them in letter and spirit to reach the zenith of ghazal-writing. He uses almost all the strategies of intertextuality mentioned above, sometimes reproducing their verses and juxtaposing them with his own and sometimes altering them slightly or significantly. These reconfigurations of their texts are almost invariably aimed to prove his own poetic skills as the two texts are assumed to be simultaneously present in the reader's mind. In all this, Ghalib is well-aware of the danger of being labelled a mere *mutashaa'ir* (a poetaster), one who can at best reproduce earlier texts with only slight variations. Writing response-ghazals or modelling his own on one of theirs, therefore, reveals his self-confidence and belief that even his worst enemies could match the model and response poems and be forced to admit his greatness.

For Zuhuri, Ghalib has immense respect and admiration. His towering figure assumes almost a ubiquitous presence in many ghazals as Ghalib repeatedly turns to him, acknowledging his indebtedness, but also suggesting that only he, among the later poets, can hold a candle to him:

> *Maaraa madad zi faiz-e Zuhuri ast dar sukhan*
> *Chun jam-e baadah raatiba khwaar-e khuneem maa*
> In poetry, I look to Zuhuri's abundance for sustenance
> Like the wine-cup which draws constantly from the jar
>
> *Ba nazm u nasr-e maulana Zuhuri zinda am Ghalib*
> *Rag-e jaan karda am shirauza awraaq-e kitaabash raa*
> The prose and poetry of Zuhuri keep me alive, Ghalib.
> With my jugular vein I have bound his scattered pages.
>
> *Darin sateezah Zuhuri gavah-e Ghalib bas*
> *"man u zi kuye tu 'azm-e safar durugh durugh"*
> In this dispute Ghalib presents Zuhuri as his sole witness.
> "I, and thinking of abandoning your street? A lie, a lie!"

Sometimes the reverence reaches its climax and Ghalib confesses that he is no more than a supplicant at Zuhuri's door:

Zalah bardaar-e Zuhuri baash Ghalib bahas cheest
Dar sukhan darvishi baayad na dukaan daari
Grab victuals from Zuhuri's table, Ghalib, why dispute?
In poetry one needs to be a beggar not a shopkeeper.

But parallel to this confession runs an equally persistent strain of self-assertion. Zuhuri, says Ghalib, was undoubtedly great, but unlike him had the fortune of living in times much more favourable to poets and poetry. What is more, he claims he is no less than Zuhuri in talent but does not have a patron like him:

Ghalib ba shi'r kam zi Zuhuri nayam wali
Aadil Shaah-e sukhan ras-e daryaa navaal ku
Ghalib, in poetry I am no less than Zuhuri,
But where is my Adil Shah, that bountiful Connoisseur of verse?

Moreover, if there is anyone who has kept Zuhuri's spirit alive, it is he:

Ghalib az man shivaye nutq-e Zuhuri zindah gasht
Az nava jaan dar tan-e saaz-e bayaanash karda am
Ghalib, the style of Zuhuri's speech lives through me
My songs infuse life in the tune of his expressions.

This simultaneous expression of deep gratitude and claim to be equal is again noticed in verses mentioning Urfi:

Chun nanaazad sukhan az marhamat-e dahar ba khwish
Ki baru Urfi u Ghalib ba iwaz baaz dihad
Why shouldn't poetry be proud, when Time has favoured it,
Giving it the likes of Urfi and Ghalib as recompense?

Kaifiyat-e Urfi talab az teenat-e Ghalib
Jam-e digraan baadaye shiraz nadaarad
Looking for Urfi's magic? Seek it from Ghalib's genius.
Others' goblets do not contain the wine of Shiraz.

Qaafiyah Ghalib chu nist purs zi Urfi
agar man farhang budami chi ghamasti
If rhyme eludes you Ghalib, ask Urfi.
"What worries would I have, if I were a dictionary?"

The hemistiches in quotes indicate that Ghalib wrote these ghazals in the *zameen* or the ground of composition of their ghazals, using a verse of theirs as *tazmeen* or quotation only in *maqta* (signature-verse).

To further elucidate this idea, let us look at a few verses of Naziri's ghazal with the refrain '*chi haz*', on which Ghalib modelled one of his. Naziri's opens thus:

Agar tu na shinavi az naala hay zaar chi haz
Wagar tu na nigari az chashm-e ashk baar chi haz
If you turn a deaf ear, what good are cries to me?
If you turn a blind eye, what good are tears to me?

Ba chashm-e maa dar u deevaar-e bustaan mastand
Tura ki baadah nami nushi az bahar chi haz
My eye has got the garden drunk to its core.
If you keep abstaining, what good is spring to you?

Kaleed-e qufl-e hama ganjhaa bamaa daadand
Badast-e maa chu na daadand ikhtiyaar chi haz
If the keys to all the treasures they entrusted to us
But deprived us of freedom, what good are they to us?

Ghalib opening verse or *matla* reworks the second verse of Naziri:

Maraa ki baadah na daaram zi ruzgaar chi haz
Tura ki hast wa nayaashaami az bahaar chi haz
Since I have no wine, what good is life to me?
You have it but will not drink, what good is spring to you?

The third verse in Naziri pivots on the word *ikhtiyaar* translated above as 'freedom'. Ghalib uses the same word which translates better as 'ability':

Dar aanchi man natavaanam zi ihtiyaat chi sood
Badaanchi doost na khwaahad zi ikhtiyaar chi baz
Where I am not able, what is the point in abstinence?
'Where the beloved is not willing, what good is ability'?

It is only in his *maqta* or signature verse that Ghalib uses the first hemistich of Naziri's *matla* as *tazmeen*:

Ba arz-e ghussa Naziri wakeel-e Ghalib bas
Agar tu na shunidi az naala hay zaar chi baz
To recount his tale of distress, Ghalib invokes Naziri alone.
"If you turn a deaf ear, what good are cries to me"?

Ghalib's first biographer Haali, whose *Yaadgaar-e Ghalib* is still considered by many as the best exposition of his life and works, compares two ghazals, each of Naziri and Zuhuri, with two of Ghalib's written in the same *zameen*, offering his comments on their relative merit. Evaluative judgments apart, the point to be noted is Ghalib's creative engagement with the texts of his forebears to carve out a place for himself in the Persian ghazal tradition. Ghalib's intervention in the texts of Naziri, Zuhuri, Urfi and other poets offers a remarkable instance of Eliot's idea that the past influences the present and is, in turn, shaped and altered by it. A genuine poet like Ghalib assimilates the formal and thematic tropes of the tradition but refreshes it with the stamp of his distinct voice. In Ghalib one can hardly find any signs of grim and oppressive psychology of belatedness which might force him into some kind of 'poetic misprision'. Nor is he a mere imitator of his precursors. Instead, one finds what Eliot would call a creative appropriation of the tradition, an evidence of the sense of obligation to the past masters, a frank admission of their achievements but also such interventions which improve and infuse a new life in the tradition. Ghalib's example is a vindication of the Coleridgean thesis that it is only by borrowing, but borrowing in a way as to repay in the very act of borrowing, that one can lay any genuine claim to poetry.

References

Bloom, Harold. 1973. *The Anxiety of Influence*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor .1990. *Specimens of the Table Talk of S T Coleridge*. ed Kathleen Coburn and B.Winer. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Eliot, T S. 1921. "Tradition and Individual Talent". *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism*. London: Methuen.

Ghalib, Mirza. 1969. *Ghazaliyaat-e Faarsi*. ed Sayyid Wazirul Hassan Abidi. Lahore: Punjab University Press.

Haali, Altaf Hussain. 1958.*Yaadgaar-e Ghalib*. Allahabad: Ray Publishers.

Kashmiri, Mulla Tahir Ghani. 1982. *Divan-e Ghani*. ed Ali Jawad Zaidi. Srinagar: J&K Academy of Arts, Culture and Languages.

Nishapuri, Naziri. 1965. *Kulliyaat-e Naziri*. Tehran: Persian Press.

Shirazi, Urfi. 1958. *Divan-e Urfi Shirazi*. Shiraz: Matba-e Hafizi.

Turshizi, Zuhuri. 1934. *Divan-e Zuhuri*. Shiraz: Matba-e Hafizi.

Poetry of Sylvia Plath: Dialogue of Death and Pleasure

Manpreet Kour

Poetry writing in the United States of America experienced a noticeable change from 1925 onwards when the phenomenon called modernism came to be practiced as a literary form and a powerful nuance. The notable poets who dominated Twentieth century American poetry were inventing, through their new poems, new forms of constitutive identity; in remaking language, they strove to reinvent themselves. Elizabeth Bishop, Anne Sexton, Robert Lowell, Andrienne Rich and Sylvia Plath, to name a few fall in the category. These poets opted for a course of experimentation and a strategy of the imagination against despair. Sylvia Plath becomes one such writer whose themes pertained to a private, obviously intolerable hurt. In almost all the poems which Plath wrote, she went on to illustrate in a chronic fashion the struggle of the fractured self in search of an identity which had been lost since she was eight years old.

Plath's work is read extensively in today's world as an urgent statement about the need for a recomposition of the self, struggling constantly against the poet's own personal schizophrenia and the schizoid society which surrounded her. She used unconventional poetic devices, themes, visions and images to exhibit he volatile, vibrant genius. Her characters engage in creating themselves, reshaping the world around them to give significance to the actions and places in which they spiritually and actually reside.

The First Collection of poems *The Colossus* (1960) written by Sylvia Plath is categorized as a first published compendium of her poetry. Plath's maturity as a poet combined with an unsettling creative finesse becomes the dominant feature of *The Colossus*. The poems in this collection were written between 1956 and 1959. A haunting personal transparency, brutal frankness and an endearing cohesiveness form the role-playing matrix in *The Colossus*.

The poems in the *The Colossus* reflect an unnerving disorientation in Plath's poetic psyche or the inner self, thereby projecting to the reader a fractured persona lost in the "opposition between negative vision of death and a positive pattern of self-transformation" (Jon 1979:48). At the time of writing the poems contained in *The Colossus* Plath had already recognized an itinerant necessity of dramatizing her own psychic and psychological turbulence by means of a language imbued with diverse dramatic forms.

The very poetic vocabulary in the poem "The Colossus" symbolizes an ironic Emersonian self-reliance mirroring hopelessness and confusion. Cumulatively, *The Colossus* in conformity with other poetic compositions of Plath "implies a flight from one reality to another" (Sam 1972:3) with escapism as a "wider cluster of associations" (Sam1972:4). The poet in the true confessional mode weaves the organic and inorganic worlds of her phenomenological environment.

Perhaps you consider yourself on oracle,
Mouthpiece of the dead, or of some god or other.
Thirty years now I have labored
To dredge the silt from your throat.
I am none the wiser.

Sealing little ladders with gluepots and pails of lysol
I crawl like an ant in mourning
Over the weedy acres of your brow
To mend the immense skull-plates and clear
The bald, white tumuli of your eyes.

"The Colossus" thematically structures itself as a poem about rebirth, or rather, about the hoped for rebirth of the dead father. This image of father strides across the poetess's psychic landscape like a giant and the modern Electra which Plath can be called, longs to bring back to life, Phoenix-like, the late father. Not only this, these lines above from "The Colossus" also reflect, "the desire to reclaim a lost dead love and the simultaneous recognition...." (Jon 1979: 55) of a compelling reality, "to treat death's omnipresent figure" (Jon 1979:57). The poetic persona of Plath nourishes an intense desire to bring back to life her dead father and enjoy his new life and living as a resurrected lover.

The figure of the dead father is a colossus who, infact, strides with giant leaps across his daughter's imagination thereby making Plath engrossed in tackling certain, "Radical questions" which "engage the total quality of our life...." (Ihab 1971:XVII). These questions are questions of being, Throughout *The Colossus*, Plath tries hard to change consciousness, to banish death from her midst. In this manner, she assumes a radical innocence about her own self, her existence and the very parameters and objectives of her life and living.

A creatively fine and hybridized image of Plath's treatment of the or death theme, in *The Colossus* is the poem "Mushrooms", a poem in which she gives a narrative voice and a human consciousness to natural objects. The mushrooms as eatable things are viewed as a form of menacing animal life.

Sylvia Plath's uncontrollable imagination fantasizes about mushrooms as creatures who like animals can move about and have a mobility similar to them. For example, the roots of the mushrooms become human toes, their stems are likened to noses and caps are viewed as fists. The fantasizing power of the poetess attains a crescendo when she anticipates the mushrooms as objects who quietly move across the forest like an army of soldiers. Plath's visual imagination enriched with the power of fantasy can be seen through the poem:

"Overnight, very
Whitely, discreetly,
very quietly

Our toes our noses
Take hold on the loam,
Acquire the air.

Nobody sees us,
Stops us, betrays us;
The small grains make room.

Soft fists insist on
Heaving the needles,
The leafy bedding."

Plath creates a demonic mishmash which intermingles the human, the animal and the vegetable worlds. The narrative voice in the poem is that of the mushrooms who are given a consciousness of their own something akin to what we get in John Wyndham's *The Day of the Triffids*. The triffids are also parasitic plants like the mushrooms and in Wyndham's novel as in Plath's poem, these demonic plants possess a mind of their own and seem to dominate the landscape wherever they grow. Plath's mushrooms gloat over their inheriting the earth by morning. Even as edible things, mushrooms are basically parasitic fungi which come out of the bowels of the earth especially during thunder and rain. In giving the mushrooms a life of their own and an expanding consciousness, Plath, "largely personifies the vast, menacing, stupid powers of nature" (Northrop 1973:147). As ugly parasites from the vegetable world, the mushrooms as the central protagonists in the poem "Mushrooms" constitutes the poetry of "Silence".

The poem "Two views of a Cadaver Room" can be defined as a poem in which Sylvia Plath settles scores with John Keats, the famous English romantic poet. The very expression "Cadsver Room" denotes a mortuary in which Plath's imagination being inundated by a deluge of *Death* gives a very grim reply to Keats's romantic nations of beauty, art and human life in his famous ode titled "Ode on a Grecian Urn". In his famous ode, Keats gives the clear indication that the immortality of art compensates for human existence "Two Views of a Cadaver Room" becomes a harsh rebuttal to Keats's poetic consolation that the pagan lover's frozen for eternity on the surface of the Grecian Urn in the form of aesthetic engravings may remain, "forever young", and may live forever with the lover's beloved retaining her beauty and youth for times immemorial. But in case of Plath's lovers, in "Two Views of a Cadaver Room" the unheard melodies are no longer sweeter. For Plath, the immortality of art is no solace for the compelling reality and presence of death. In fact, towards the end of the poem Plath directly quarrels with Keats.

The first view of the "Cadaver Room" presents a mortuary in which four men are examining human corpses presenting a very sterile and lifeless setting. The atmosphere in the mortuary is presented realistically with a poetic rationale which forms a preamble to the eerie ambience of death. The use of deconstructive imagery represents the horrific nature of death as a force which destroys the mind and life of a person producing message that Plath."seem to have no absolute necessity for being...." (Peter 1966:76-77) and the Cadaver Room involved Plath's self-destructive art, a kind of chronic destructiveness with, "the imagination of dying as the climactic experience of living" (Douglas 1978:323-24). The setting is established in a dissecting in a dissecting room pregnant with a total absence of emotions. The governing factor is a scientific and impersonal environment. As usual, Plath hybridizes the human and animal worlds of demonic imagery by describing human corpses in the cadaver room as "black and burnt turkey". Expressions: "He hands he the cut-out heart like a cracked heirloom" signify gloom and annihilation, the dominant factors in Plath's own life.

Heirlooms are valuable objects embodying the memory of someone, just like the heart, which is often symbolized as a person's identity.

> "The day she visited the dissecting room
> They had four men laid out, black as burnt turkey,
>
> Already half unstrung. A vinegary fume
> Of the death vats clung to them;"

The second view of the "Cadaver Room" in the second part of the poem offers Plath's strong rebuttal to the Keatsian fusion of art and beauty as a recipe for immorality. The very opening lines of the second part, "panorama of smoke and slaughter" and "Two people only are blind to the carrion army...," constitute the triumph of death, the overriding impulse of Death which presides over the worlds of Plath's mind and psyche. In the dissertion room, Plath focuses our attention on a pair of lovers playing in the lower right-hand corner of the painting. They dally with a leaflet of music, oblivious to the chaos around them and the skeleton above, fiddling a violin over "this little country, Foolish, Delicate". The lovers portrayed in the painting referred to in this poem occupy their own little world oblivious to its expected destruction. These lovers are "foolish" and totally unaware that destruction which death implies will "Triumph" over them and their love. Quite clearly, because of this very fixation the immortality of art constituted no compensation or consolation for the occurance of death in case of Plath herself. This dominance of death, the victory of *Death* over *Life* both literal and psychic in the knowing mind of the poetess, explains why for Sylvia Plath poetry did not become reason enough or any kind of motivation or inspiration for her to live. Eventually, she too landed in the cadaver room. Obviously because of the compelling pull of death, love takes a back-seat in this poem.

Plath's attitude toward love in this poem is ambivalent. It is at once a fragile, precious value, but also "Foolish", a perverse whim of Brueghel that only adds to the grotesque carnage in the rest of the painting. It becomes queerly out of place for depicting a young man handing his sweet heart an artificially preserved heart as a love token. The hegemonistic appropriation of death over human life, including that of Sylvia Plath's existence, renders the triumph of love as an absurd artifice. Even more bizarre than the comparison of the pair of lovers is Plath's yoking of the antiseptic, black-and-white modernity of the cadaver room with the imaginative excess of Breughel. But in Plath's world, back-and-white patterns are forms of concealment; they dissemble with blandness where a malign purpose may exist.

"In Breughel's panorama of smoke and slaughter
Two people only are blind to the carrion army:"

In "Two views of a Cadaver Room", the Breueghel's painting comes as a refreshing breeze and this painting in the midst of talk about death & frightening dead bodies becomes a landscape of love. Plath portrays a love scene while talking about Breueghel's painting and she does it, "in a quiet, unperturbed voice". "Two views of a Cadaver Room" displays the impact of neurotic impulses which continuously afflicted Plath's mind and psyche, with the neuroticism becoming a pure product of *Death-Life* conflict, irony and juxtaposition.

Another poem titled "All the Dead Dears" also demonstrates intense preoccupation with the death and the dead. In all probability Plath visited an Archaeological Museum in Cambridge where she saw a stone coffin belonging to the fourth century AD containing the skeleton of a woman besides one of a mouse and a shrew. The ankle-bone of the female skeleton seem to have been slightly gnawn, thereby infusing in Plath's mind a series of morbid images and patterns concerning around death and humans who were already dead.

The entire poem hinges upon a poetic rendition of the dead people, especially the skeleton of the woman in the museum. Plath identifies, herself with encased dead woman's skeleton, imagining all the time that soon she may as well acquire the same form. The skeleton of the dead woman in the case darts an "granite grin". Plath is so much bitten by the death-bug that she soon envisions her life being sucked in from her body thereby qualifying her as one among the dead:

"How they grip us through thin and thick,
These barnacle dead!"

The words that the museum lady is no kin of the poetess and "yet kin she is" and she will suck the blood and even the bone marrow clean out of her body involves a highly dominant pulse of *Death* which exercises a gaint-like grip and power over Plath's mind destruction, surrendering herself to experience without any regard for conventional morality. On reading *The Colossus* any intelligent reader can simply get committed to an imagination which thrills as well as horrifies, inspires as well as horrifies, inspires as well as alienates onself from things like consciousness, self-repudiation and above all belongingness.

References

Blue Farb, Sam. 1972. *The Escape Motif in the American Novel.* OHIO: University Press.

Davisison, Peter.1966. "Inhabited by a Cry: The Last Poetry of Sylvia Plath". *Atlantic Monthly* , 2 August (76-7 7).

Frye. Northrop. 1973. *The Anatomy of Criticism.* Princeton: University Press.

Hassan, Ihab. 1971. *The Dismemberment of Orpheus: Towards a Postmodernist Literature.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Hill, Douglas.1978. "Living and Dying". *Canadian Forum* 58 (323-24).

Rosenblott, Jon. 1979. *Sylvia Plath The Poetry of Initiation.* Chapell Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

Decolonization and Migrant Sensibility in V S Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*

Namrata Nistandra

V S Naipaul is a Trinidadian novelist and essayist of Indian descent. Rated as a fine writer, he has been acclaimed both for his fiction as well as non-fiction. A number of literary awards have come his way; the prominent ones being the Somerset Maugham Award (1960), the Hawthornden Prize (1964), the W H Smith Literary Award (1968), the Booker Prize (1971) and to cap it all the Nobel Prize in Literature (2001). Most of his novels are set in the developing countries and the Swedish Academy praises his work for fathoming the realities of "suppressed histories". His work has evoked strong responses and it is either considered "orientalist or a true representation of postcolonial realities" (Raja 2005:224). The reactions to Naipaul are "divided along political and/or geographic lines; conservatives from the western world love him; and leftists from the rest of the world hate him" (Dalleo 2001). In this paper, I take up his novel *A Bend in the River* to study his fictionalization of history and the attitudes that inform his representation of postcolonial Africa.

A Bend in the River (1979) attempts to represent the chaos in Africa at the time of Independence. Set in an unnamed place in the heart of Africa, the novel marks the transition of the country from the colonial to the postcolonial times. The narrative is focalized through Salim, an Indian Muslim whose family has lived in the East Coast of Africa and who migrates to the Centre of Africa in the wake of political upheaval. The narrative gaze includes the Indian community that comprises of Nazruddin, the merchant, Inder, the son of a wealthy family and the couple Shobha and Mahesh. They are all in search of meaningful life in Africa but it constantly eludes them. A European couple Raymond and Yvette also try to cope with the changing realities around them and the loss of status that comes with decolonization. The narrative is divided into four parts: the Second Rebellion, the New Domain, the Big Man and the Battle. The narrative begins with the chaos in Africa at the time of decolonization and the deeper chaos that characterizes the country as it gets a new Government. In this paper, I make use of Frantz Fanon's analysis of colonial and postcolonial societies to look at Naipaul's text. However, Naipaul's perspective differs from the one offered by Fanon in one significant way. Whereas for Fanon, decolonization is a positive and necessary change; for Naipaul it is a negative one. My focus is on the theme of migrant sensibility and also on the manner Africa has been represented in the novel.

Though the novel is set in an unnamed place in the centre of Africa, critics have drawn parallels to actual places and events. The cosmopolitan city at the coast is compared to Zanzibar; whereas some details of the pogrom resemble the Zanzibar Revolution. This Revolution saw the overthrow of the Sultan of Zanzibar and his mainly Arab Government by local African revolutionaries in 1964. The novel's Big Man is loosely identified as Mobutu Sese Seko and the events parallel the transformation of Belgian Congo into Zaire. The comparisons get credence as Naipaul had visited Zaire in 1975. In an article titled 'A New King for the Congo', Naipaul describes the re-naming of the Congo, which used to be a Belgian colony into an African kingdom called Zaire. He also talks about the rise of Joseph Mobutu, a journalist, who becomes the king of the new kingdom. These details can easily be traced in a thinly disguised form in the novel.

The observations and analysis made by Frantz Fanon in his book *The Wretched of the Earth* are particularly useful in understanding the paradigm of decolonization. For Fanon, decolonization is always a violent phenomenon. The colonial world is a compartmentalized world based on the principle of reciprocal exclusivity. The settler's world is that of foreigners and it has all the good things imaginable. The natives on the contrary languish in misery and the only thing they dream of is to exchange places with the colonizers. The native mind is conditioned into thinking that violence is the only means of recreating a self and empowering it: "The violence which has ruled over the ordering of the colonial world, which has ceaselessly drummed the rhythm for the destruction of native social forms…that same violence will be claimed and taken over by the native at the moment when, deciding to embody history in his own person, he surges into the forbidden quarters" (Fanon 2001: 31). Further, the colonial world is a Manichean world. The native is considered the epitome of evil and therefore is dehumanized as an Other. Fanon further analyzes that in the period of decolonization, the colonized masses act out the very values they have been fed on. "The native is an oppressed person whose permanent dream is to become the persecutor" (Fanon 2001:41).

The natural outcome of decolonization is a society based on unjust power sharing. In fact for a majority of people independence changes nothing. There is a time lag between the leaders of the nationalist party and the masses and a feeling of antagonism between the country people and the town people. They are still governed by the primary Manichaeism of the colonial times and this leads to loot of national resources and legal robbery. "The national front which has forced colonialism to withdraw cracks up, and wastes the victory it has gained" (Fanon 2001:128). The accumulation of wealth in a few hands gives rise to rage among people and national consciousness becomes an empty shell.

Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* recounts the incidents of wars and killings that are reported even months after independence. The town Salim tries to settle down in is more than half destroyed. The European suburbs have been burnt down and the gardens cannot be distinguished from the streets. The monuments of white people are smashed making it is more or less a ghost town. "It was unnerving, the depth of that African rage, the wish to destroy, regardless of the consequences" (Naipaul 2002:30). Salim feels isolated and trapped in his own world. The place is unsafe to travel because the boundaries between tribal areas have become important once again. Salim feels he is living in a kind of wreckage. There are hordes of people coming from the rural areas into towns and the times are of fear and madness. Other Indians like Shobha and Mahesh also feel they have wasted their lives in Africa.

In the novel, the initial phase of rebellion is followed by relative calm and a period of boom when the traders make money and the new leaders consolidate their powers. This is seen in the rise of the Big Man and a ubiquitous atmosphere of corruption. The President's photographs and statues of his mother are put up at various public places that are symptomatic of the megalomania of the new ruler. Intellectuals like Raymond are put to the task of bringing out a collection of the President's speeches. As the novel progresses, Raymond is disillusioned with his position in the country. The wealthy Inder too feels cynical at the loss of his status and earlier privileged existence. Salim fears that in the new order, black men might assume the lies of white men. He realizes that the greater the official, the greater is the degree of crookedness. There is no hope left for foreigners like Salim because of the policy of nationalization being implemented by the President: "We're all going to hell, and every man knows this in his bones. We're being killed. Nothing has any meaning" (Naipaul 2002:319).

The lack of settled life and a failure to find home is another important theme in the novel. Almost all the characters are drifting from chaos to a deeper chaos. Salim never lives in his flat as one lives in a home. The flat belonged to a Belgian woman artist who had abandoned it at the time of independence. Without a conscious will, Salim converts it into an untidy junkyard with a smelly kitchen. He pensively thinks that he would neither inherit a house nor pass it to his children. All his life has been spent in waiting and he is alarmed to see the decay in himself: "I had visions of beggary and decrepitude; the man not of Africa lost in Africa, no longer with strength or purpose to hold his own" (Naipaul 2002:207-8). The lack of home is reflected in the poverty of relationships of the protagonist.

The protagonist neither has a home nor any meaningful relation with any woman. Salim's attitude to women reflects his misogyny and sadism. The common element in his relations with women is his lack of love and respect for them. He has numerous encounters with what he describes as brothel women. Salim is fascinated by Yvette, the European woman and for the first time in his life realizes the pleasure of reciprocity but it is a short lived phase. He uses Yvette as an escape to forget the dullness and tension of the place. He does not wish to involve himself with people trapped in a situation like his own. On one occasion, Salim beats Yvette first with his hand and then with his foot and then abuses her sexually before beating her up again. After this, he is conscious only of his aching palm and does not bother about the misery of the woman. The worst aspect of this humiliating episode is that the woman is shown comfortable with abuse and even asking for it.

The protagonist's treatment of woman as Other also extends to his Othering of the natives. In the beginning of the novel, Salim tells us that he has developed the habit of detaching himself from a familiar scene and tries to consider it from a distance. The Africans are frequently described in the novel as strange and unfriendly. The African villages are hidden villages with black nights and empty days. The world of the Africans is presented as a secret and mysterious world where Africans are safe and could retreat to whenever they wished. The novel is replete with stereotypical ideas about Africans. African women are represented as having a sexual casualness about them: "women slept with men whenever they were asked; a man could knock on any woman's door and sleep with her" (Naipaul 2003: 44). Naipaul "consigns African society to a state of degradation which recognizes no scruple or taboo in its limitless corruption of desire" (Spurr 1993:182). Salim sleeps around with African women but he makes sure that nobody finds it out. Even Salim's servant thinks that an African woman is an animal. The text repeatedly constructs the Africans as Other and dehumanizes them.

Placing Naipaul's novel in the tradition of writing about Africa, it can be concluded that *A Bend in the River* offers a reductive image of Africa. Spurr argues that writing in the colonial as well as postcolonial phase is characterized by some rhetorical strategies. These are "a kind of repertoire for colonial discourse, a range of tropes, conceptual categories, and logical operations available for purposes of representation" (Spurr 1993:3). Spurr discusses the different rhetorical modes that are found in the depiction of the Third World. These are: surveillance, appropriation, aestheticisation, classification, debasement, negation, affirmation, idealisation, insubstantialisation, naturalisation, and eroticisation. In *A Bend in the River*, many of these rhetorical modes have been employed;

prominent among these are debasement, negation and eroticisation. The description of Africans as mysterious, inaccessible and believing in the world of the spirit is an attempt at debasement. Africans are represented as inhabiting the dark bush and eager to go back to their primitive ways. Africans possess "a rage against metal, machinery, wires, everything that was not of the forest and Africa" (Naipaul 2002:91). In Naipaul's books, Africa is seen as a "dream-like and threatening place that resists understanding that eats away at reason and the technological products of reason" (Coetzee 2001:10). In this way, Naipaul constructs a vision that views Africa as primitive.

Naipaul's novel can be seen as a text that perpetuates the "myth of the Dark Continent" (Brantlinger 1985:166). In his essay "Victorians and Africans: The Genealogy of the Myth of the Dark Continent", Brantlinger puts forward the argument that Africa "grew 'dark' as Victorian explorers, missionaries, and scientists flooded it with light, because the light was reflected through an imperialist ideology that urged the abolition of 'savage customs' in the name of civilization" (Brantlinger 1985:166). Africans are often described by Naipaul as hordes of people who embody a bizarre sense of violence that is "like a forest fire that goes underground and burns unseen along the roots of trees it has already destroyed and then erupts in scorched land where it has little to feed on, so in the middle of destruction and want the wish to destroy flared up again" (Naipaul 2002:76). The natives are in tune with the world of the spirit as contrasted with the world of reason. Zabeth is the only African woman described in the book. She is portrayed as a mysterious woman who uses pungent odours to repel men and feels safe in the knowledge that she comes from some secret refuge and can go back whenever she wishes so. The African people are also generalized as being addicted to alcohol: "Beer was part of people's food here; children drank it; people began drinking from early in the morning" (Naipaul 2002: 44). In another instance in the text, Naipaul describes the manager of the Bigburgher restaurant thus: "as with most Africans, he needed just a little of the weak local beer to top up and get high" (Naipaul 2002:260).

Naipaul's representation of Africa in the novel has often being compared with Joseph Conrad's depiction of Africa in *Heart of Darkness*. In his essay "Conrad's Darkness", Naipaul pays homage to the great writer: "Conrad's value to me is that he is someone who sixty or seventy years ago meditated on my world, a world I recognize today. I feel this about no other writer of the century" (Naipaul 1974:219). In fact, Naipaul has been criticised by Chinua Achebe and Edward Said for presenting Africa as a primitive society. The text does emerge as an imperialistic discourse as it writes about the periphery for the consumption of the centre. The text presents the first world as benign and being defiled by the third world. In the novel, Father Huismans is a humanist to the core. Employing the strategy of aestheticization, Father Huismans is portrayed as a lover of Africa. He undertakes arduous journeys into the remote parts of Africa to collect masks supposed to embody magic. His death at the hands of Africans reinforces the idea of the benevolent white man and the senselessness of African masses. A European woman's flat and another woman's body are defiled by the Indian Salim. In fact, Fawzia Afzal-Khan argues that much of Naipaul's work reflects self-hatred as an ideological response. She points out that "Naipaul endorses the…Western Orientalist notions about Third World cultures and societies" (6). She reads a deeper motive in this: "The more he wishes to ally himself to the West, the more he must distance himself from and disparage colonial and postcolonial societies" (Khan 1993:13). At the end of the novel, Salim migrates from Africa in search of a new home.

A Bend in the River is not the only work of Naipaul set in Africa. The other texts are *In a Free State*, "The Crocodiles of Yamoussoukro", and *Half a Life*. *In a Free State* (1971) recounts the chaos in Africa at the time of independence and conveys the message that decolonization proved a sheer waste in Africa. The text constructs the stereotypical images of Africans as violent, superstitious and unable to govern themselves. The negative traits in their temperament are kept in check because of European influence. "The Crocodiles of Yamoussoukro" also presents Africans as indulging in magical rites and practices and Africa as a dark and unfathomable place full of mysterious powers. *Half a Life* (2001) too presents Africans as superstitious, primitive and ignorant. It can be concluded that Naipaul's vision of Africa continues to remain static. And the pessimism and atavism of *A Bend in the River* is one instance where Naipaul perpetuates the myth of Africa as a dark continent and produces an Othering discourse.

References

Brantlinger, Patrick. 1985. "Victorians and Africans: The Genealogy of the Myth of the Dark Continent." *Critical Inquiry,* 12, 1:166-203.

Coetzee, J.M. 2001. "Naipaul in Africa-The Razor's Edge." *The New York Review of Books,* XLVIII.17:8-10.

Dalleo, Rafe. 1998. *V.S. Naipaul: A Materialist Reading*. Amherst: University of Mass Press. (available at http://upra.upr.clu.edu/caribnet/cudjoe/reviewx.html last assessed on 24 Dec. 2010)

Fanon, Frantz. 2001. *The Wretched of the Earth*. London: Penguin.

Khan, Fawzia Afzal. 1993. *Cultural Imperialism and the Indo-English Novel*. Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania University Press.

Naipaul. V.S. 2002. *A Bend in the River*. London: Picador.

——— 1975. "A New King for the Congo", *The New York Review of Books,* 26 June.

——— 1974. "Conrad's Darkness", *The Return of Eva Peron*. New York: Alfred A Knopf : 205-28.

Raja, Masood. 2005."Reading the Postcolony in the Center: V.S. Naipaul's A Bend in the River." *South Asian Review: Special Issue on V.S. Naipaul,* 26.1: 224-39.

Said, Edward. 1979. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage.

Spurr, David. 1993. *The Rhetoric of Empiric; Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

The Republic of English: Egalitarian Impulses at work in Indian Writing in English

Iffat Maqbool

Indian Writing in English or India's literary engagement with the English language began its journey in the latter part of the nineteenth century and continues even today. This impressive body of writing has made its presence felt at the national as well as the international levels. In its diverse thematic engagements, its innovative linguistic forays, its constant renewals of form. IWE has come far ahead of its counterparts- that is literatures written in English from other ex-colonies. The reasons for this being firstly, the diversity of the Indian cultural terrain and the resultant adoption of peculiar and region-specific concerns and secondly the adamant refusal of the Indian writers to accept a derived, stagnant form of the English language or to perpetuate a non-native tradition. Ever innovative and versatile, Indian English Writing has made important interventions in Standard English so as to evolve a totally home-grown variety of Angrezi. Ever revisionary and radical and never written under any "anxiety" principle, IWE has never remained inert, stagnant or imitative- from *Kanthapura* to *The White Tiger* in the novel, from Nissim Ezekiel to Aga Shahid Ali in poetry and from Asif Currimbhoy to Mahesh Dattani in Drama, IWE has wrested itself from the colonizer's gaze and successfully sustained a live, alert connection with its own traditions.

One of the commonest charges against Indian English is that of a lack of "authenticity". The advocates of regional writing claim that English can never truly represent India. The Bhasha vs English divide and the Bharat vs India divide is too familiar to all.

English writing in India is attacked on the grounds that it is largely incapable of imagining India. But a closer scrutiny of IWE reveals that far from being distanced from the authentic Indian experience, IWE has consistently engaged itself with some of the most crucial cultural issues of contemporary India. Indian Writing in English need not therefore signify a silencing or othering of indigenous forms since IWE has never disengaged itself from hardcore Indian realities. Complicit with local or native culture, it continues to intervene fruitfully in the multifaceted Indian experience. Whether it is the early nationalistic endeavor of the political novel of the 1930's, the feminist canon that established itself by the 70's or the fresh innovations of the 1980's, IWE has never lost sight of Nation-centric subjects. While it is too trite to mention the role of the Indian English novel in the nascent period of India's Nationalism (Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand and R. K. Narayan), it is worthwhile to survey some evidences from the recent past.

Anita Desai, while inaugurating her own brand of Feminism, simultaneously commits herself to crucial cultural debates. Foregrounding the issue of minorities in novels like *Baumgartner's Bombay* and *In Custody*, she writes passionately about the politically charged landscape and its implications for minority groups in India. *In Custody* in particular is a highly sensitive novel that speaks on behalf of the Urdu language and its correspondent culture. Written in English, the novel is surcharged with an Urdu sub-text, in fact the so-called English novel has become a *Shah re Ashob* or lament for a lost city- the marginalization of Muslims, their ghettoization, their neglect at the hands of apathetic governments, their sense of impotence in the heart of the Indian capital New Delhi is enacted with such compassion that one wonders if an Indian novel could be more "Indian" than this. Desai,often hailed for her psychological brand of fiction, clearly represents through her complicity with local experiênce, authentic Indian experience.Desai herself comments: " If literature, if art has any purpose then it is to show one, bravely and uncomprosingly,the plain face of truth …Once you have told the truth ,you have broken free of society, of its prisons. You have entered the realm of freedom" (Rao 2003:109). It can therefore be argued that Anita Desai's novels perform acts of truth-telling about India whether through her protagonists who challenge the domestic milieu and its constricting codes or in the aforementioned novels which have a decided political thrust.

Upamanyu Chatterjee's *English, August* and *The Mammaries of the Welfare State* are dark satires on the workings of the bureaucratic system in India. Agastya is the conscience bearer of the bewildered modern Indian, trapped within a corrupt and servile milieu. Madna the archetypal Indian town is an administrative nightmare. Agastya is something of a cult figure in Indian writing in English, an Indian counterpart to J D Salinger's equally tortured protagonist Holden Caulfield in *Catcher in the Rye*. He is often described as one of the funniest yet saddest characters in Indian Writing in English, precisely because he combines in himself the detached humour as well as a moral outrage at the daily horrors that he witnesses in this novel of Self-discovery. The "particularity" of the novel has been acclaimed and it is often cited as a classic in interpreting the "mind of modern India".

In recent years, Mahesh Dattani's socially relevant theatre and his complete naturalization of English, used without any sense of postcolonial unease, has equipped IWE with a fresh dramatic idiom. Inventing a theatre-activism of sorts through his deeply committed and conscientious plays, Dattani foregrounds the dilemmas of the "great Indian middle class" in the form of gender issues, queer culture and communalism. The first Indian playwright to use English, Dattani broke fresh ground with his astute exploration of contemporary urban Indian ethical crises- creating a vibrant public space to debate longstanding and taboo subjects in his plays. In his play *Final Solutions* Dattani pleads for inter-faith understanding between Hindus and Muslims in the culture of mistrust and paranoia that so characterizes the post-Babri Masjid Era–all this not as eavesdropper, but with a passionate and active desire to participate in the major cultural issues of the day.

Gopal Gandhi's historical verse-play *Dara Shukoh* (1993) much like Girish Karnad's *Tughlaq*, is an attempt at historical revisionism and the desire to unsubscribe to officially sanctioned views of the Islamic phase in India is evident in the play. Positing the visionary, scholar-prince Dara Shikoh as a counter to the antithetical representations of the Mughals as "zealots" and "marauders",Gopal Gandhi re-inscribes the scholarly heir-apparent to Shah Jahan in the national imaginary, too often and too readily identified with the more "orthodox" Aurangzeb. Dara Shikoh's passionate plea for a selfless political ideal, his stress on the syncretic texture of India or Indianness, his moral dilemma at the gap between personal ambition and the larger good of a nation is captured brilliantly by Gopal Gandhi:

> India is a sanctuary for
> The world's earliest faiths …
> But more India gives protection
> As our sage sayeth
> To the faith underlying all faiths:
> That Man is half-divine
> Is meant to complete the process…
> By giving up strife, envy, deceit,
> Notions of "mine" and "thine."
>
> (Gandhi 2010:85)

Or

> India needs a thinker
> On the Peacock Throne….
> That will transform Delhi's ruler
> From a sway-sozzled, lusty
> King of varying demeanor
> Into India's first Trustee."
>
> (Gandhi 2010:27)

No one can miss the relevance of an ethical-political ideal, extremely relevant in today's volatile political Indian climate.

Written in English, yet orchestrated with a brilliant sense of periodicity as well as contemporainety, *Dara Shukoh's* idiom is itself symbolic of a new linguistic syncreticism in Indian writing in English: the play is a fascinating interplay of Modern Indian English, Urdu, Mughal court culture, current political jargon etc.

Indian English Writing therefore is essentially a literature that is deeply committed to issues of belonging and representation. Writing in English need not necessarily mean disengagement with native culture. Considering the complete vernacularization of English that has been going on ever since Indians took to writing in English, writing in Bhasha and writing in English need not be oppositional categories. Far from being "fake texts", these works serve the purpose of a well-defined Identitarian literature. Markand Paranjpe comments: "…vernacularization is an enabling way of righting the asymmetrical balances of power between English and the other Indian languages" (Paranjpe 2010:91).

IWE need not therefore be attacked on account of its "Englishness" as the question is "what Englishness?" The dispute as to whether Indian English writers have a lesser claim to "represent" India than its regional counterparts is a fallacious one, a claim that summarily disregards the enormous contribution of Indian English writers in engaging in a constructive dialogue regarding issues of individual and collective nature. (Indian)English then becomes a means of redressal, to carve out an individual idiom out of the constricting code of English discourse. Since Indian English carries the inflections of which ever indigenous language the writer is self-consciously utilizing, it is pertinent to hail it as a welcome and liberating medium of expression as in the words of Vinay Dharwadker: …the highly crafted "English" of Indian English literature is full of the long shadows of the Indian languages. The indigenous languages are among the social, political and aesthetic elements that have penetrated the English language in its alien environment on the subcontinent…they have leaked continuously into this literature through the aperture that opened inside it two hundred years ago (Paranjpe 2010:25). Notwithstanding this identification with regional languages, Indian English per se effortlessly articulates the culture-specificities of the Indian nation. The coming of age of Indian English is pointed out by Aijaz Ahmed in his analysis of *The God of Small Things*: "Roy's prose is not only superb but also representative. She is the first Indian writer in English where a marvelous stylistic resource becomes available for provincial, vernacular culture without any effect of exoticism or estrangement…" (Kumar et al 2010:117).

Pertinently, the heterogeneous fabric of the Indian Republic, constituted by a diverse criss-cross of cultures and languages, finds a powerful mediator in English: erasing mutual intelligibility and incomprehension, English enables a cultural transmission across the country. The amorphous Idea of India as an assimilative, secular, tolerant nation is often tied up with the usage of the "neutral" English language that "belongs" to no particular region and wonderfully belongs to all. This consolidating power of the English language makes the population acquiesce in the notion of a homogenous Republic that is otherwise pulled in different directions by contradictory forces. English therefore acts as arbiter in the vexed linguistic issue that confronts the nation since independence. If Indian Nationalism took off in response to British colonization, IWE further reinforced and bridged the compex, plural texture of the Indian Nation-State.

English is not only a neutral language in Indian power-politics, but increasingly important for true democratization and social equity. The marginalization of Dalits, a grim evidence of a long-standing social fissure, finds redressal through the English language: English is a language Dalit-Bahujans can aspire to unlike classical Sanskrit which they were kept away from. Many Dalit thinkers and writers have begun to realize the role of English as a means of empowerment and rehabilitation within the national paradigm.Kancha Iliah wrote his fierce anti-discourse *Why I am not a Hindu* in English- a language that equips his oppressed sensibility with a new-counter-idiom in order to dismantle and reveal the discrepancies and injustices meted out to a sizable population of India.

He reaches out in order to "liberate themselves from class exploitation and oppression." Arguing from a subaltern position in English, Kancha Iliah pleads for an "egalitarian India":

> Let me make it clear, however, that I am not writing this book to convince suspicious brahminical minds; I am writing this book for all those who have open minds. My request to Brahmin, Baniya and Neo-Kshatriya intellectuals is this: For about three thousand years you people learnt only how to teach and what to teach others – the Dalitbahujans.Now in your own interest and in the interest of this great country you must learn to listen and to read what we have to say.
>
> (Iliah 2009:xii)

English, thus, armours intellectual-activists like Iliah to unlearn a centuries-old negative self-image and the book amounts to an ideological weapon in the hands of the hitherto tongue-tied social and religious other. Iliah moves with an agility and ease within a new conceptual universe, devoid of the discriminatory discourse embedded in the old one. It has been said that one who owns the tongue owns the story and writing in this case has a rich transformative, redemptive potential:

> For those who have been denied the right to write a text, writing a text of their own history and that of the Other is also a process of their socio-political movement….It breaks the shackles of those who were denied writing. Writing becomes a weapon of the weak. When a historical struggle becomes invisible, it does not kindle the fire of liberation.
>
> Iliah 2009:133-34

A text like *Why I am not a Hindu* although written in English intervenes constructively in the aim of a de-castesized Indian society. It makes intelligible the history of a long-silenced social group, and in the process challenges essentialist and often obfuscating versions of historical truth. Changing the reference point and the reference book, Kancha Iliah's English text is a crucial moment of self-affirmation and cultural independence from dogma and casteism.

Meena Kandaswamy, the first Indian woman Dalit poet says that writing poetry in English offers her a "point-blank range" to counter and rectify casteist imbalance. Her themes include academic oppression, Reservation, women's issues. Interestingly she claims to counter dominant ideologies within Indian English literature itself that refuse to accommodate the sub-castes. Identifying the subversive potential of a language like English to "challenge a language, its patterns of thought, its prejudices and its enshrined encapsulated inequalities. Though languages have their hierarchies firmly in place and though they tend to be degrading to Dalits, they are a level playing field. I can offer my resistance through language" (Online: 2009) This, she states, could lend more credibility to the mainstream, giving it a makeover, making it more authentic and real.

The role of Indian Writing in English can further be enhanced by the translation of indigenous literatures into English. In this sense,IWE need not necessarily mean literatures written primarily in English but could be broadened to include literature conveyed through the English language.This enabling power of translation has a transformative potential in the Indian context since it hastens an inter-local inter-hegemonic sharing.English departments need not be abolished.A reorientation of syllabi to include non-English literatures through English would certainly restore imbalances created through an unthinking adherence to the "English" canon.

References

Gandhi, Gandhi.2010.Dara *Shukoh*.New Delhi.Tranquebar Press.

Iliah, Kancha. 2009. *Why I am not a Hindu*. Kolkota.Samya.

Kandaswamy, Meena. 2009. http://journals.sfu.ca/pocol/index.php/pct/article/view/909/883.

Kumar et al(eds).2010.*Focus India Postcolonial Narratives of the Nation*. New Delhi: Pencraft International.

Paranjpe, Prasad (eds). *Indian English and Vernacular India*. 2010. , New Delhi: Dorling Kindersley.

Rao et al (eds). 2003. *Postcolonial Theory and Literature*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers.

Stuffed with the Realer Passions: Exploring Lyricisim in Spender's Poems

Syed Sarwar Hussain

The generation of young writers who were emerging in the 'thirties – Auden, Spender, Day Lewis, MacNeice, etc., among poets, and Isherwood, Waugh, Greene, Orwell, Powell, etc., among novelists – formed a kind of literary brotherhood on account of some of the important things they had in common, in addition to generational identity and the four years of the First World War behind them. Though they did not experience the First World War as grown up people, they carried it in their childhood memory to their maturing years as writers and poets. Auden was an established poet of this group whose impact was deeply felt by all the other emerging poets. The earliest poet to be Auden's unabashed disciple and imitator was Cecil Day Lewis whose verse changed rapidly from a neo-Georgian to an Audenesque manner. One of the sections of Day Lewis' *Transitional Poems* of 1929 contains an epigraph from Auden, and his *The Magnetic Mountain* (1933) is even modelled on Auden.

Stephen Spender too, like his contemporaries, was influenced by the themes and concerns that shaped Auden's creative output in particular and the spirit of war, expanding industrialization, and radical socialism that haunted the turbulent 'thirties, in general. But Spender was a transcendental poet, and he went beyond the concerns and confines of his contemporaries in his own way. He appears to have possessed a tougher and more poetic personality. The unmistakenly creative element that singles him out from the MacSpaunday Group of poets, and which pervades his poetry, is the lyrical impulse, the dreamy, nostalgic sensibility, and the everlasting hope in love and human relationships.

Spender considers poetry as "an attempt to imagine the universal nature of man's being in terms of the transitory forms of the present in which a generation lives . . ."(Spender 1977: 86). It is the poet's acute introspection into existential reality, his sensitivity, his profound realisation that one can always dive down the depth of the glorious past and emerge from there "stuffed with the realer passions of the earth" in order to transform the war ridden, crumbling modern world into a beautiful world of love and hope, that singles him out of the Auden generation, and establishes him as a truly individual poet with regard to theme and its treatment. In his selection 'Selected Poems' (1975), the opening stanza of the poem 'I Think Continually of Those . . .' reflects Spender's sincere concern and hope that the world can still be a better place to live:

> I think continually of those who were truly great
> Who, from the womb, remembered the soul's history
> Through corridors of light where the hours are suns
> Endless and singing. Whose lovely ambition
> Was that their lips still touched with fire,
> Should tell of the spirit clothed from head to foot in song,
> And who hoarded from the Spring branches
> The desires falling across their bodies like blossoms."

(Spender 1975:27)

One of the most enduring aspects of Spender's lyric genius is its unwavering optimism even in such poems where the poet's thematic concerns are not isolated from those of his contemporaries. The war, the ensuing wreckage, the loss of values and *weltanschauung*, and the impact of scientific inventions on the European mind and life, all shape his poetry, but they do not tear him away from the beauty of existence. The poet derives poetic and personal inspiration from the scientific contributions of the same modern world that had also contributed, to a devastating degree, to the annihilation of life and love. In his poem 'The Express', the poet finds aesthetic pleasure and inspiration from the rattling noise of railway trains,

> Streaming through metal landscape on her lines,
> She plunges new eras of white happiness,
> Where speed throws up strange shapes, broad curves
> And parallels clean like trajectories fro guns.
> At last, further than Edinburgh or Rome,
> Beyond the crest of the world, she reaches night
> Where only a low stream-line brightness
> Of phosphorus on the tossing hills is light.
> Ah, like a comet through a flame, she moves entranced,
> Wrapt in her music no bird song, no, nor bough
> Breaking with honey buds, shall ever equal.

(Spender 1975:31)

Much more than a means of conveyance that has brought distances closer, and made travelling more comfortable and affordable, the train, to the introspective poet, becomes a symbol of happiness, and that too 'white' happiness – the colour that carries all colours in it, and provides a kind of pleasure that is untainted and sheer. The poet uses the train as a symbol of hope and brightness. Its movement has an unrivalled music that is more appealing than the 'bird song', more mellifluous than the breaking of the bough 'with honey buds'.

"Redeeming the world by introspection" (Mac Neice 1938:205), is Louis MacNeice's phrase which he has appropriately ascribed to Spender's poetry. In his autobiography *World Within World*, Spender appears to have arrived at almost the same conclusion while explaining his problems and preoccupations as a poet during the critical Oxford days:

> Looking back at myself as I was at the age of nineteen, across a gulf of more than twenty years, it seems to me that my problem was that of the idealist, rather than the innocent ... In poetry I wished to achieve a purely inspirational kind of writing which rejected the modern life of day-today living.

(Spender 1977:189)

Spender's Oxford poems, particularly his later ones, substantiate his poetic spirit. The redeeming feature of these poems is, to a larger extent, the poet's attempt at self-searching. Behind the veil of social or political concerns, they reveal the emotional and romantic impulse that pervades his memory and poetry. He connects his immediate inspirations with similar historical experiences that lie stored in his memory. In one of his poems, he records his pre-occupation with memory and experience through which the world is redeemed:

> This aristocrat, superb of all instinct
> With death close linked
> Had paced the enormous clouds, almost had won,
> War on the sun;
> Till now, like Icarus, mid-ocean drowned
> Hands, wings are found.

(Spender 1975:13)

Icarus is the symbol of fallen inspiration. The poet goes down the memory lane and calls him into being, vividly recording the image of Icarus from the depths of the past. The romantic tale of how lofty but reckless ambitions are thwarted has been enlivened to portray the lingering existential reality in delicately personal, expressive, and melodious verse.

The post-war years had drained the young English poets of the time of all their optimism. Whatever optimism was there, it was because poets like Cornford and Day Lewis believed in the ultimate victory of the political cause for which they were fighting. Cornford says,

> Then let my private battle with my nerves,
> The fear of pain, whose pain survives,
> The love that tears me by the roots,
> The loveliness that claws my guts,
> Fuse in the wielded front our fight preserves.

(Cornford 1939:69-70)

Here all the personal feelings and experiences of love, fear, pain and the ensuing suffering are merged to give life and meaning to the political and social cause, more particularly in the case of Cornford, to the communist cause. So, for him personal feelings and relationships become subservient to political ideology, and are in fact employed to inspire and awaken it. In Spender, on the other hand, there is no clear cause for his optimism. His poetry, by and large, is the expression of an observing self. It is at once gentle and optimistic, with a gift for the consoling image, like when he envisions the "valley with its gilt and evening look" (Spender 1975:34), and when he discovers quite hopefully that "There runs the quick perspective of the future," (Spender 1975:34), even as the poet experiences the existential presence of poverty and suffering. In the glummest moments of grief and hopelessness, the lyrical mind of the poet, never fails to express, though vaguely, the compelling urge to redeem the world:

> . . . surely from hunger
> We may strike fire, like fire from flint.

(Spender 1933:47)

Hope is not drowned in the flood of post-war crisis, as it happened in Eliot's *The Waste Land*. Spender believes in the "spring-like resources of the tiger" (Spender 1933:48), which will sprout forth to give strength to the ailing humanity. The poet conjures the *Spirit of Hope*, from the wreck that he observes all around him,

> Let the elements that fall make me of finer mixture
> Not struck from sorrow, but vast joys, and learning laughter.

(Spender 1933:62)

Disillusionment and bitterness that the contemporary experiences have bestowed on the poet's mind and his creative talent during the 'thirties, do not distort the poet's vision. The visionary poet that Spender was, he saw and realised fully well through his poetry that it is delight and love which are the enduring elements that shape and affirm existence. The distinctive feature of Spender's poetic oeuvre is a direct result of an unbending faith in the survival of delight and love. The visual thirst offered by the emotional and moral barrenness of the contemporary world, fails to stop the sense perception from fervently relishing the promising and timeless image of the horizon and its persuasive grace:

> Eye, gazzle, delicate wanderer
> Drinker of horizon's fluid line.

(Spender 1969:64)

Spender's lyrical poetry goes beyond the aesthetic and the sentimental. In one of his poems, for example, he describes his body as real "which wolves are free to oppress and gnaw." (Spender 1969: 20), in another, he describes the scene observed from a running train, "Like the quick spool of a film". (Spender 1969: 24), in yet another, he describes what different living is:

> Different living is not living in different places
> But creating in the mind a map
> And willing on that map a desert
> Pinnacled mountain, or saving resort.

(Spender 1969:25)

Some of Spender's lyrics provide vivid pictures of men and objects. In the year 1931, Spender composed two poems 'What I Expected was' (Spender 1969:31) and 'I think continually of those who were truly great' (Spender 1969: 47). Both poems deal with heroism, but this heroism is of an uncommon kind. It is not chivalry, victory, or expression of physical might that the poet considers as the elements of heroism. It implies a young man's dreams, not of brave deeds, but of the prised personal behaviour. Samuel Hynes, in his book *The Auden Generation*, rightly observes that the underlying theme of wistful hope and courage, running through both the poems is "understandable, perhaps almost inevitable, for such a young man in a critical time; for a great crisis seems to demand great action, and offer youth a chance to enter maturity in a gesture of public glory" (Hynes 1976:67). Thus the images of hope and of the evocation of glorious good deeds from the past serve as a consoling therapy for a diseased generation.

In 'What I Expected was', the poet offers a contrast between what the young man had expected and what he actually discovered. What he had expected was that he would grow strong and then he would shake the rocks. He had dreamt of a heroic adult self, but what he discovered was an unheroic reality, of "the gradual day, weakening the will and leaking the brightness away" (Spender 1969: 31). This nostalgic realisation of the self, becoming corrupt,

> The lack of good to touch,
> The fading of body and soul
> – Smoke before wind,
> Corrupt, unsubstantial.

(Spender 1969:31)

the decay of all material existence, the corruption of the soul, the "lack of good" that is felt in every relationship, and the blurring of the vision to watch the wind wrapping around, is a melancholic realization that the poet's world has gone badly adrift, and is in urgent need of navigation to follow the right course.

Spender's lyrics do not always proclaim the existence of hope. They are just not paeans of triumph and revival. They are also requiems, mournful expressions of the loss of all that gave meaning to life and love. The loss of hope is elegiacally presented in the following lines from the poem:

> What I expected, was
> Thunder, fighting,
> Long struggles with men
> And climbing.
> After continual straining
> I should grow strong;
> Then the rocks would shake,
> And I rest long.

(Spender 1969:31)

Expectations belie reality as the poet ruefully observes later in the poem. Sicknesses, grief, inaction, all combine to destroy the dream of rejuvenation and hope. The social suffering cripples the mind, and takes away from it the power of promise and optimism:

> The wearing of Time
> And the watching of cripples pass
> With limbs shaped like questions
> In their odd twist,
> The pulverous grief
> Melting the bones with pity,
> The sick falling from earth –
> These I could not foresee.

(Spender 1969:31)

Commenting on this stanza, Samuel Hynes observes:

> Cripples, the grieving, the sick – they are figures from the public world, urgent and demanding pity; their presence in the poem corresponds to the presence in the world outside, of urgent suffering – the poor, the underfed, the unemployed. That is to say, they stand for the pressure of public issues upon private feelings, and the pity that they claim turns the theme of the poem – the failure to achieve heroism – from a private theme to a public one. There is no answer to the question that is posed by the cripples' limbs, but the question has been asked and noted, and public life has been brought into the private, lyric world.

(Hynes 1976:69)

The immediate appeal of the poem lies in its sentimental realisation of a deep and utter sense of loss. And the loss is observed more as a personal tragedy than a public one. A deep and disturbing sense of grief and pity, poses perplexing questions hammering the mind. These personal feelings of utter helplessness and immobility trouble the poetic spirit.

The impulse that pervades through Spender's lyric poetry also endows it with a kind of permanence, an enduring realisation that the observer and the sufferer is none other than the poet himself, the ubiquitous 'I' of the Romantic poetry. Being a lyricist, Spender keeps himself at the pivotal centre of most of his poems, and floods them with the personal pronouns 'I' and 'me':

> I felt the whole rebel, feared mutiny
> And turned away,
> Thinking, if these were tricklings through a dam,
> I must have love enough to run a factory on.

(Hynes 1976:148-149)

The almost Wordsworthian *egotistic* transcendence from the mundane and the overtly public experiences that weighed down the poetic sensibility of most of the poets of the 'thirties generation, marks a turning point in Spender's poetry. Spender, however, does not, like the romantics, try to find solace, pleasure and a kind of eternal existence in the elements of nature, and is not driven by the sheer force and presence of the woods, the trees, the hills and vales, to ruminate over the life of man and the meaning of it. He turns inward, to his own self, and discovers the ultimate power of love cloistered there – a love which has turned him into a rebel who has the power transform and activate the sick and materialistic world. This love finds its fulfilment, not in the exterior aspects of nature, but in the human heart itself. Spender's love evokes a sense of nostalgia, an awakening of the memory where he still finds the presence of those 'tricklings' whose sheer power and intensity can make it possible for the poet to run an entire factory. This is Spender's poetic philosophy, and it proclaims that it is love and hope that can even affect and rejuvenate the modern world ridden by science and technology. The mundane and the materialistic existence, for Spender, is charged and moved by the force of love. It is the deep and, to a certain extent, wistful feeling of nostalgia that moves Spender's lyrical poetry. The poet wallows in it to remember his typically personal experiences of his relationship with his loved ones who are lost into history but whose arms still surround him, and whom he still watches as blossoming and growing. He considers them as his own, a part of his own self, though far away from him. This intense involvement with his subjective experiences is an obvious aspect of Spender's poetry. These experiences do not remain with him as passive reminders, but as a concrete existence shaping and moving his physical world. This exactly is the sustaining feature of his lyrical poetry.

His 'Elegy for the Spanish poet', for example, is inevitably set in the context of the Civil War and appears to be related to the outer world rather than the inner. But here again the reader is misled, for even that world is more or less a mirror of the inner landscape, a parable of the sense of the poet's own personal loss:

> O let the violent time
> Cut eyes into my limbs
> As the sky is pierced with stars that look upon
> The map of pain,
> For only when the terrible river
> Of grief and indignation
> Has poured through all my brain
> Can I make from lamentation
> A world of happiness,
> And another constellation,
> With your voice that still rejoices
> In the centre of its night,
> As, buried in this night,
> The stars burn with their brilliant light.

(Spender 1939:107)

Though titled as an Elegy, the poem does not lament the loss of someone snatched away by the cruel hands of "violent times". The stars that look upon the "map of pain", that the poet's whole being has been turned into, do not put the poet to grief and suffering. Though they make him reminisce the hurt that has cut his eyes into his limb, they do, nevertheless, make him remember the voice that still has the power and motivation to fill him with joy. He exults in the existence of that voice which shines like the "brilliant light" of a "burning star", transforming the entire universe into a gleaming "constellation", the shimmer of which can be realized through the mind's eye by only a visionary poet, an instinctively lyric poet.

Examples abound in Spender's poetical works where the lyric intensity, and the spontaneity and effusions of emotions are present in their fullest sense. The enduring quality of his verses lies in their essential and complete exploitation of the possibilities of lyric poetry. Their song like ease and felicity, their musical appeal, their hauntingly romantic aura, their intensely emotional and melancholic realization of the sense of loss, their essentially personal and compellingly imaginative exploration of hope and fulfilment in the face of pain and suffering, all blend together to present him as a poet with an exceptional lyric genius especially in times when the social and political compulsions were turning his contemporaries to a more topically realistic kind of poetry. Spender's poetry, then, is characterized more by a quality of outpouring emotion than by any specific mannerism, and they have been praised for revealing the poet's talent for symphonic structures and sustained movement.

References

Auden, W. H. 1959. *Collected Shorter Poems 1930-1944*. London: Faber & Faber Ltd.

Cornford, John. March 1939. *Full Moon at Tiers: Before The Storming Of Huesca*. Left Review, Volume Three, No. 2. London.

Hynes, Samuel. 1976. *The Auden Generation; Literature and Politics in England in the 1930s*. London: Faber and Faber Ltd.

Lewis, Cecil Day. 1954. *The Complete Poems*. London: Faber & Faber Ltd.

Mac Neice, Louis. 1938. *Modern Poetry: A Personal Essay*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Phythian, B. A. 1970. *Considering Poetry; An Approach to Criticism*. London: The English Universities Press.

Spender, Stephen. 1969. *Collected Poems*. London: Faber & Faber Ltd.

______________. 1933. *Poems*. London: Faber & Faber Ltd.

______________. 1975. *Selected Poems*. London: Faber & Faber Ltd.

______________. 1939. *The Still Centre*. London: Faber & Faber Ltd.

______________. 1977. *World Within World*. London: Faber & Faber Ltd.

Wordsworth, William. 1973. *Poetical Works*. ed. E. D. Selincourt. London: Oxford University Press.

The Whisky Priest's Journey to Sainthood: A Study of Graham Greene's *The Power and the Glory*

Tasleem Ahmad War

Graham Greene is the novelist who has evoked a sharp critical response, reprobation and adulation at the same time. At many places, he calls himself a Catholic Atheist, a phrase which makes him a figure full of paradox, ambiguity and surprise. The said oxymoron is equally applicable to the protagonists of the three novels which have been called his Catholic trilogy, *The Heart of the Matter* (1948), *The Power and the Glory* (1940) and *The Human Factor* (1978). Although all these novels have a Catholic background yet all of them go beyond the conventional Catholicism. Critics and readers have expressed diametrically opposite reactions towards these novels because of the element of unconventionality in them. Notwithstanding this fact, his characters seem infallibly human and a bundle of vices and virtues. As a result of this, it becomes difficult for readers and critics to define these characters in watertight compartments.

The Power and the Glory tells us the story of a Priest who carries on his appointed task of spreading the message of Christ in a state in which a revolutionary government has outlawed religion, caused all priests either to run away or to accept its dictates and settle down in matrimony or to be executed on the charge of treason. The Whisky-Priest, the protagonist of the story, who remains unnamed throughout the novel, is the sole representative of the church left in the state. Standing in stark contrast to him is Padre Jose who, in order to save his worthless skin, has renounced his religion, married a gross, coarse and mean woman, and settled down in ordinary domestic life. On the other hand the Whisky Priest carries his entire solitary struggle for the best part of eight years. The novel ends with the ideological conflict between the Priest and the pursuing atheist lieutenant, drawing out the novel's central oppositions and ironies: loyalty and betrayal, hope and despair, success and failure and the desire for peace. The morning of his execution, the Priest feels he has been a terrible disappointment to God, yet the structure and the texture of the story leave the reader with no doubt of his sanctity. In this connection, Mark Bosco (Bosco 2004:50) says that "Greene masterfully conveys a strikingly contemporary hagiography that has a popular and immediate appeal beyond its religious signification." According to R W B Lewis, (Lewis, cited in Hynes 1973:49) the religious quality of a saint or a martyr in the plot is of special interest and many interpretations tend to take the work as a novel based on religious concepts and they see the priest as "a genuine martyr" and interpret the theme of the work as Greene's challenge to conventional Catholic ideas. Jae Suck Choi remarks that "when the reader perceives the Priest as a martyr, the reader takes the Priest's trespasses against the church's commandments lightly and Greene successfully persuades the reader to accept the Priest as a martyr because of his good intentions". (Choi 2002:92-93) The peculiar plot of the novel is similar to that of a picaresque novel. Without the protection of the Church, the Priest goes through his dangerous life as a rogue, a rootless outrider, like a *picaro* who has to live by his wits in the predicament. R W B Lewis interpreted the Priest's character "as one of a rogue and his life as a traditional picaresque one, though he commented that the giggle keeping the balance on the paradox makes him also a saint." (Hynes 1973:51)

First of all, it is important to know that there are two main sources of this great novel, the 'Mexican material' and 'accounts of saints'. The Mexican material is Greene's *The Lawless Roads* (1939), which is an account of Greene's journey in spring 1938. It describes the general situation and the regions which were depicted in *The Power and the Glory*. One model for the Whisky-Priest was evidently Father Miguel Pro Juarez, a Jesuit who had landed at Veracruz in July 1926. Shortly afterwards, President Calles closed the churches and made the administering of the sacraments a criminal offence. Pro continued to give communion clandestinely and is eventually caught and executed by firing squad on 23 November 1927. Another model for the whisky-priest was a priest in Chiapas, who was so drunk at a boy's christening that he baptized him with a girl's name, Brigitta. In *The Power and the Glory*, Brigitta is the name of the hero's illegitimate child, and the episode of misnaming is cited on p.30.

There is another kind of source-material that lies behind *The Power and the Glory*: literary or cinematic works dealing with martyrdom and sainthood. Joan of Arc was canonised in 1920, Sir Thomas More in 1935. Greene reviewed with disgust a German film, *Joan of Arc* (1935), which seemed to him to be Nazi propaganda glorifying the treacherous Charles VII and belittling the martyr. On the other hand, he admired T S Eliot work and praised *Murder in the Cathedral*, which had been successfully performed at Canterbury in 1935 and was later filmed. This verse drama depicted Archbishop Thomas Becket's defiance of secular authority. Another renowned modern work about the making of a saint was Shaw's *Saint Joan*, 1923. In the 1920s and 1930s, priests had been persecuted not only in Mexico but elsewhere also. During the Spanish Civil War, many priests were shot by communist and anarchist forces. In the Soviet Union, religious orders were persecuted by the Stalinist state. In Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy, the relationship between the Churches and authority was fraught and complicated. In short, the prospect of martyrdom was, for a priest in various part of the world, a looming reality during the time when Greene, the Catholic convert, was making his way as a novelist.

The epigraph from Dryden established the theme of pursuit whish reads like this: "Th'inclosure narrow'dd; the sagacious power/ Of hounds and death drew nearer every hour." The Priest who is the hero of the tale is trapped in a highly dangerous situation. His duty is to serve the flock, the catholic community in his Mexican state. There any active priest may be arrested and shot. He also has a duty to stay alive so as to continue his service to God. So he is divided between a duty to remain and duty to escape. From the first chapter, the tension is established. The Priest reaches a port where waits a steamboat on which he might escape; but, though he is disguised, he is sought by a sick woman who needs to confess her sins. Reluctantly, he goes to her, and, as he does so, he hears the steamboat leaving. On the second occasion, he actually does escape into a neighbouring state, spends a few days with a German-American Mr Lehr and his sister but when Mestizo implores him to listen to the dying confession of an American gangster named James Calver, though fully aware of the possibility of betrayal by the Mestizo and being arrested by the police, the Whisky Priest returns to the state, is arrested and subsequently shot.

This is thus a novel about the making of a holy martyr, possibly of a saint. One obvious paradox is that the hero, this candidate for canonisation, regards himself as a failure. He repeatedly upbraids himself for his sins and inadequacies. He tells the lieutenant eventually that he expects damnation for himself:

> Pride's the worst thing of all. I thought I was a fine fellow to have stayed when the others had gone. And when I thought I was so grand I could make up my own rules. I gave up fasting, daily Mass. I neglected my prayers- and one day because I was drunk and lonely-well, you know how it was, I got a child. It was all pride. Just pride because I'd stayed. I wasn't any use, but I stayed.
>
> (Greene 1940:246-7)

The Whisky Priest's past and present point to the modes of existence elaborated by Soren Kierkegard in his philosophy of Christian Existentialism. He is Charles Peguy's "sinner at the heart of Christianity," who realizes that Christ is intimately linked with every sinner:

> It was for this world that Christ died; the more evil you saw and heard about you. The greater glory lay around the death...It was too easy to die for what was good...it needed a God to die for the half-hearted and the corrupt.
>
> (Greene 1940:97)

The Priest participates in a "mystical substitution," a theological form of scapegoat in which he takes upon his shoulders the sins not only of the world but also of the Church. He comes to realize himself like a true saint when he goes through the darkest period of his life. Through it all, as author Scott Turrow recently put it,

> he emerges as a figure of intense humility and faith, willing to sacrifice himself to attend in secret to the devoted and utterly unaware of his own goodness.
>
> (Turrow 2010:23)

He goes about performing his priestly duties. There is no hatred in his heart, not even for those who betray him. He is full of remorse for his sins. He has an unswerving faith in Christian doctrines. He commits number of sins. It is followed by penance and penitence without which there is no grace possible. He is redeemed of all his sins when he feels and develops a mystical understanding into the heart of things and empathises with the suffering humanity. The Whisky-Priest also goes through different stages of sin and eventually dedicates his life to the people. He is also like Coleridge's ancient mariner from the poem *The Rime of Ancient Mariner*, (Coleridge 1798) who shoots the albatross dead with his crossbow, incurs the wrath of the Divine and achieves salvation only when he develops an empathetic feeling towards the lower creatures of the world also and thus bursts:

> He prayeth best who loveth best
> All things both great and small.
>
> (Coleridge 1798)

The Whisky Priest is travelling into a path of the Christian mystic who has to discard ego and pride to achieve a sense of humility. He begins a great and stirring adventure that moves the soul from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God. Despite all the degradation and corruption, the Priest willingly endangers himself to pursue a call for duty to hear confessions and to provide absolution. He is painfully conscious of his guilt or unworthiness and that makes him pray:

> O God! Forgive me. I am a proud, lustful greedy man. I have loved authority too much. These people are martyrs-protecting me with their own lives. They deserve a martyr to care for them not a fool like me, who loves all the wrong things.
>
> (Greene 1940:64)

His pain is excruciating and heart rending, he cries in pain when he meets his illegitimate child: "God give me any kind of death without contrition, in a state of sin-only save the child". (Greene 1940:127) He attains noble heights with this realization that "one mustn't have human affections or rather one must love every soul as if it were one's own child. The passion to protect must extend itself over a world" (Greene 1940:82). Cedric Watts says that

> the hot pursuit of the lieutenant is responsible for the making of a holy martyr, possible of a saint. One obvious paradox is that the hero, this candidate for canonization, regards himself as a failure. He repeatedly upbraids himself for his sins and inadequacies. The catalogue, admittedly, is quite full. He is semi-alcoholic and has fathered an illegitimate child.
>
> (Watts 2003:181)

The Whisky-Priest is a human being with all the flaws and weaknesses of a man and a true Christian; he is aware and conscious of those flaws. The awareness of his sins was his first step to move towards God. When he is imprisoned for consuming liquor, the old woman recognises him and bursts that we have a martyr here. The Priest giggled; he could not stop himself and said:

> I don't think martyrs are like this...Martyrs are holy men. It is wrong to think that just because one dies...no I tell you. I am in a state of mortal sin. I have done things I could only whisper them in the confessions....My children, you must

> never think that holy martyrs are like me. You have a name for me. Oh! I've heard you used it before now. I am a whisky-priest.
>
> (Greene 1940:82)

It is only a saint who has completely annihilated his self. Who can be so candid and bold? The chief quality that leads an ordinary Priest to sainthood is his heart overwhelming with love, care and affection for the suffering humanity.

> ....perhaps after all he was not at the moment afraid of damnation-even the fear of pain was in the background. He felt only an immense disappointment because he had to go to God empty handed with nothing done at all. It seemed to him at that moment, that it would have been easy to have been a saint. It would only have needed a little restraint and a little courage.
>
> (Greene 1940:126-127)

He is a figure of grace because he strives to follow the contrast in conjunction with his vocation. But his most admirable qualities are his humility and purity of motivation. He has been so trampled by his sins and is so humble because of it that his actions are almost completely without desire for vainglory or reward. He thinks of himself as damned and therefore acts according to his obligations to his vocation even though he is in constant danger of being caught and executed by the lieutenant who is hot on his trail. Another interesting aspect of the novel is that the Priest's sins cause him to have a heightened sense of pity and empathy for his fellow men. For example, when confronted with a revolting man whom he knows wants to turn him in to the police for a considerable reward, he remains steadfast and straightforward and seeks God's apology for the sins he has committed. And again, his compassion is revealed in another passage:

> When you visualized a man or woman carefully, you could always begin to feel pity–that was a quality God's image carried with it. When you saw the liens at the corners of the

> eyes, the shape of the mouth, how the hair grew, it was impossible to hate. Hate was just a failure of imagination.
>
> (Greene 1940:130)

The Priest's state of misery, self-disgust, near-despair, longing for grace and insight into the nature of sin combine to make him a true saint. He achieves a Christ like stature when he is betrayed by one of his followers, trapped and then executed. Just as Christ knew when he was delivering a sermon to his disciples that Judas is a traitor and would reveal his identity, similarly, the Whisky-Priest knew it beforehand that the half-caste has set a trap for him. In the morning of the day of his execution, he is trying to remember God, "O God, I am sorry and beg pardon for all my sins" (Greene 1940:184) and then he repents "I have done nothing for anybody. I might just as well have never lived". (Greene1940:184) According to Cedric Watts,

> He felt only an immense disappointment because he had to go to God empty-handed, with nothing done at all.....He knew now that at the end there was only one thing that counted to be a saint.
>
> (Wattz 2003:122)

he achieves sublime heights, because, ironically, he has already made the supreme sacrifice by putting his life at stake when he knew that the half-caste is a betrayer and informer, but had decided to follow the call for duty. Just as *Murder in the Cathedral* had emphasized, the martyr has to do the right thing for the right reason. If a person were to say, 'I wish to be martyred so as to become a saint', that person would be expressing the sin of pride and would therefore not deserve to become a saint. Thomas, in the play, achieves the right combination of passivity and activity: inner submission to the will of God; a due humility. The more Greene's Whisky-Priest upbraids himself for his failings, the more he, too, expresses the virtue of humility.

After the execution of the Whisky-Priest, the lieutenant feels a curious vacuum, a vacancy, instead of satisfaction. The death of the Priest leaves him aimless. "The spring of action seemed to be broken. He felt without a purpose as if life had drained out of the world". (Greene 1940:268) Another relevant point that Greene highlights is the example of the boy Luis. In the end, when he learns that the shabby priest with the "funny smell" who had been in their very house was also put to death, had now also become a martyr, he has a change of heart and he spits on the revolver of the lieutenant.

> It brought it home to one–to have had a hero in the house, though it had only been for twenty-four hours. And he was the last. There were no more priests and no more heroes.
>
> (Greene 1940:270)

With Luis' act of rebellion, Greene hints that the Priest's execution has created an awakening among the people of the need of spiritual rehabilitation. It is precisely because of this that Greene does not end the novel with the execution of the Priest but moves forward and highlights the impact of the execution on the executioner and all the others concerned. At night when a knock at the door informs him of someone's arrival and when that stranger turns out to be a new Priest, Luis instinctively bows down and kisses the Priest's hand, even before the Priest can mention his name. Thus the Whisky-Priest's prayer is answered and a worthy Priest comes to take his place.

References

Bosco, Mark.2004. *The Catholic Imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Choi, Jae Suck. 2002. *Perception of Religious Faith in the Work of Graham Greene*. London: Middleton Press.

Greene, Graham. 1940. *The Power and the Glory*. London: Heinemann.

Hynes, Samuel. 1973. "The Trilogy". *A Collection of Critical Essays*. London: Prentice Hall International.

Turrow, Scott. 2010. *Feeling 'The Power and the Glory'*. U.S: Penguin Classics.

Yeats, W. B. 1921. "Michael Robartes and the Dancer". *Easter 1916*. Dublin: Cuala Press.

Watts, Cedric. 2003. *Greene*. Singapore: Pearson Education.

Thank You, Harold Pinter

Badri Raina

Dear Laureate of the rakish headgear,
not many writers there have been
who refused the cunning
that conflates the red wound of life
with the rainbow deceptions of art,
rendering invisible the bullet-bespattered
corpse under the comforting tapestry
of an imagined fable.

You are the rare one.
The days' dangerous warlords
have their insouciant fun
greatly despoiled that a truth-telling
recalcitrant such as you,
rail as you do with souls' honour
at the litany of their murderous misdeeds,
should have been bestowed the Nobel.

But, in having done so,
you have sounded the shepherd's horn
of simple-minded, caring sanity
on behalf of a beleaguered humanity.
You have called to account
the blood-dripping vanity
of the god-deluded wolf
that leads the imperial gung-ho.

Moses of our misbegotten time,
the punishing rod of your annunciation
has struck a telling blow
at the Pharoah of the day.
You have loosened the terrified tongue
of the paralysed powerless,
filling the world's strangulated lung
with a gale of forthright air
that carries the promise of sweeping
into the backyard both Bush and Blair.

Caretaker of the oppressed,
the tune you sing
with unmitigated passion
inaugurates our return
to the loving table of the spacious
common room
in a long-awaited homecoming.

Destiny

Akhter Mohiuddin

People say that P N came and said to his father, "Father, why don't you think about Bunty____________? Ram Chander did not say anything. He inhaled smoke from hookah and left a plume of it from his mouth.

P N waited for a reply, but when his father said nothing, he continued, "I addressed you, Father!"

"I heard; I heard", Pandit Ram Chander said, touching his mouth with the hookah pipe. P N was dumb.

Pandit Ram Chander kept silent for a while and then called Bunty___

"Where're you, you tramp!"

Bunty came. A youngster of 20, with thatch of hair on the head, a broad neck, wearing *loch*[*]. He was quite untidy. Looking at his face, one would guess he hated everybody, especially his grandfather.

"Get me some tobacco for the *chillum*", Pandit Ram Chancer asked Bunty.

Bunty got his hand underneath his *loch* and started filling the *chillum* with tobacco.

---

[*] A loose garment made of pure Kashmir tweed, called *pheran* in Kashmir and by Kashmiri Muslims.

"I remember your mother", Pandit Ram Chander said to his son P N without looking at anybody. "Poor lady! She's gone!" Pandit Ram Chander heaved a sigh and then laughed. "She dragged that puppy out of the house where it was eaten up by stray dogs!"

P N got angry because the Pandit was not talking sense. P N had a son, Bunty, who neither studied nor was capable of doing any work. Other children were good but this son was a problem. After seeking advice from friends, doctors, saints and dervishes, he now came to his father and asked him about his son. But, the father was at times talking about Mother and at times about the puppy. Anger made P N speechless.

Bunty filled the *chillum* with tobacco, kept live charcoal over it and putting the *chillum* on the pipe started going out. Pandit Ram Chander puffed the pipe and breathed out smoke. He said to Bunty, "Sit down. Why are you in a hurry?" After this, he turned to his son: "Listen. This is about the time when I was working as a steno to the boss. It was 1965 (Hindu calendar). I would often visit boss's home–service is servitude. One day, when I went there, I found all the servants happy. They were felicitating the boss and his wife. On enquiring, I was told that their bitch had had puppies. That's why they were happy".

Pandit Ram Chander continued puffing hookah and said, "I also went in and felicitated the boss. The boss was sitting near the bitch, and his wife was also there. There were four puppies. They were suckling and the couple was laughing. I congratulated them".

Pandit Ram Chander laughed, puffed in hookah and continued, "The boss looked at me with a smile as if he had found some wealth. I said to him, just for the sake of saying, 'Sir, could you give me one puppy? I have a great desire to have a dog!' His wife wouldn't agree. She said that you would need money. I said, 'I would spend that on it.' The boss was happy on listening to my reply and promised that he would give me a puppy".

Puffing away his hookah, Pandit Ram Chander smiled again. This caused a gag, and he coughed. Settling down, he continued,

"Do you listen? At last, a day was fixed. The boss told me to come to his house. When I went there, I saw some other officers and their wives had also come. Different dishes had been made. They had supper and, then, puppies were distributed. Each one took it own and I was also given one. Whosoever got a puppy from the boss, he was very happy as if he got some wealth. They were kissing their puppies, and, eventually, they rode the carriages and went to their homes with the puppies."

"I also took the puppy in the lap and giving me ten rupees, the boss said, 'You must give it milk. Fulfill your desire, but the dog is tongueless. You must take its care.' I kept ten rupees in my pocket. Taking the puppy in my lap, I started for home on foot."

Pandit Ram Chander put the pipe on the ground, glancing at his son and waiting for a moment, he said, "Did you listen? I came home with the puppy. On reaching home, your mother quarrelled with me. She said, 'What did you get here? It is filthy. It would unclean everything here'. I told her that the boss very kindly and affectionately gave me this puppy and also ten rupees for its feeding. But, she didn't agree. She would not even look at the puppy, let alone touching it. I would feed it with milk, play with it and brush it with my *loch*."

"One month passed like this and then the boss called me and asked, 'Is the dog okay?' I answered, "My Lord, yes." The boss took out a tenner and gave it to me. He said to me, 'You must feed it well'. I replied in affirmative."

"But, when I reached home in the evening, I couldn't find the dog there. I asked your mother and she said that she had no idea. After a long search, I found it. It was lying dead in the corner of our compound. They say it was caught by stray dogs and killed."

"I got scared. If the boss heard about it, he would dismiss me from service. I couldn't sleep for the entire night. I did not dare to see the boss for some days. But, when he didn't mention the dog for a long time, I also forgot about it. On the first salary day, the boss called me and gave me a tenner. I didn't tell him that the dog was dead. I got the tenner and spent it. I had become habitual of receiving ten rupees every month."

"After almost a year, the officers invited one another. I was told that it was anniversary of the puppies which was why the wives had also come. Whosoever had taken a puppy from my boss, he would invite him. The boss would take me along; they would treat me like their relative. Giving me a tenner after tenner, they would tell me to spend it on the puppy........"

P N couldn't control himself now. Cutting Pandit Ram Chander short, he said, "OK. Let it go the dogs. I was asking about Bunty. What would happen to him?"

Pandit Ram Chander looked at his son, the tilak brightened like a blaze and angrily he said, "Who am I to say this? Am I a saint or scholar? Get out___"

P N left angrily. Pandit Ram Chander turned to Bunty and in a sweet voice said to him, "Son, fill up the *chillum* with tobacco!"

Translated from Kashmiri by Mohammad Aslam

Mother's Boy

Mohiuddin Reshi

"Don't tease him. Let him sit here. He feels more comfortable with me."

"What will he do if he goes out?"

"What? His fate will lead him to his goal."

"*laejivas balayi*[*]! He's my darling!"

"Darling! He's Mother's Boy. He won't do anything!"

In the middle of the night, Javed suddenly remembered his home and recollected all those moments when, as a boy, he clung to his mother while his sisters would tease him for this. Tears started rolling down his eyes because he had not seen his mother for five years now and was roaming on hills, following his masters and, thus, becoming stone-hearted.

In his childhood, whenever there were thunder and lightning, his heart would beat heavily, and he would cling to his mother and feared to come out until it was calm again. Mother would say that they should fear Allah's wrath and seek His forgiveness. However, today when thunder and lightning strike mountains, he carries arms on his shoulder and himself makes thunders and lightning. He has become skilled in making thunders and lightning. He was told that his heart had really become stone and was sent away along with some of his companions.

---

[*] Literally meaning, "May I become sacrifice for him".

He roamed about many hills, creating thunder and lightning, but soon Javed felt that thunder and lightning caused fire only and brought no solace. He started repenting and thought of giving up. But, his friend did not like his giving up and, calling him Mother's Boy, they dumped him, once for all, in his mother's heart.

Translated from Kashmiri by Mohammad Aslam

Festal Lights from Across

Hari Krishan Koul

Nath Jee and Pyari were watching *Chakhri* on the television – watching but not really hearing anything for they had lowered its volume considerably. Suddenly two sounds burst forth simultaneously, startling them–one, the shrill whistle of the pressure cooker from the kitchen and the other, the banging of the door downstairs. Pyari got up and lowered the flame of the gas in the kitchen. Nath Jee waited for a while but when no one called out or climbed the stairs, he too got up quietly.

"Where are you going?" Pyari asked, returning from the kitchen.

"The door banged downstairs but no one has turned up."

"If there were someone he would surely have shown up. Sit down."

Nath Jee paid no heed but walked towards the window. Annoyed, Pyari began muttering to herself, "Let him remain glued to the window. As if others have nothing better to do than come and gossip with him!"

She increased the volume of the television. The singer seemed to be playing on his own heartstrings. Moving his head to and fro he entreated soulfully, "Spend the night here or else pick up the dagger to smite." Nath Jee opened the window. Darkness was creeping in and he could not see anything. The door had banged or was it his imagination? Anger at Gula, the carpenter, flared up. That man! Again he had not fixed the bolt and the spring. A mere push from outside and the door opened, then it shut with a loud bang.

Quite possible that a passer-by might have given it a nudge if only to irritate Masterjee.

Nath Jee cast a look on the kuchha road outside, taking in the broad metalled one which it joined. Across was a willow grove with some trees growing on the dry land and others in water. Beyond stretched another road, then the bank and finally the river. On the other side was the main road where, along the hem of the mountain, were nestled the army hospital, the canteen and a long line of Officer's Quarters. All these could be discerned clearly during the day but in the night everything was indistinct. Only the Quarters could be made out clearly, lit as these were by bright lights. They provided a festal illumination in the surrounding darkness.

"Is someone out there?" Pyari asked. Nath Jee shook his head. "Why don't you close the window then? You are letting the cold in."

Nath Jee ignored her and remarked instead. "Do you know- in the evenings the view from here is worth seeing. The lights from the army barracks shining across the river remind one of Bombay."

"And when did you go to Bombay? How come this sight reminds you of a similar one out there?"asked Pyari in a mocking tone.

"When did I say I have been to Bombay? Maybe I have seen something like this in films or perhaps I intuitively visualised that the lights on Marine Drive must be illuminating the sea in the dark in a similar fashion."

'Didn't he plead with you last winter and the year before. You should have gone." Pyari said softly.

Nath Jee closed the window, came back and sat at his usual place.For a while he was silent, then he answered Pyari with a question, "How could I have gone? Every month I have to deposit a thousand rupees towards the house loan. And then during winter holidays one can engage two or three tuition groups. More importantly, who would have stayed here?"

"Let it be, at least now we have a tenant downstairs."

"Yes, that's right but it is only this year that he has come."

Nath Jee sighed. Something was bothering Pyari too. Getting up she went to the kitchen and switched the gas off. Nath Jee quietly took out the Atlas from under the books. Opening the page on North America, he had just started looking at its map when Pyari came back. Hurriedly he hid the Atlas under a register kept on a nearby rack.

'When will you eat?" Pyari enquired.

Nath Jee glanced at the television, an expert was talking about various types of fertilizers. "It's still early, not even seven yet."

"O.K. Then I'll warm the dinner a little later."

"What's for dinner?"

"The same as was for lunch. Didn't I say, go and buy yourself an ounce or two. But you never listen."Nath Jee glowered at her. She began a little fearfully, "Look you could have eaten it. Nobody has forbidden me, its just that I don't like it."

"Why don't you like it? All because of me! If I hadn't mentioned once that they sell it openly around Pari Village, Kakapora and other places…"

"Please don't remind me of it once again. I feel sick." Nath Jee saw Pyari shudder with distaste. Downstairs the door banged again. Nath Jee rose quickly but Pyari made him sit again.

"It's not our door. It's Mir Sahib's. "

"How can you tell?"

"My eyes might have begun to fail, not my ears. They are still sharp. There's little else I do the whole day apart from listening to the banging of these doors. Can't I distinguish one from the other! Unlike you, I don't spend the whole day at school."

"Oh, damned be the school. It's the headmastership that's bothering me. Even then I manage to be back by two-thirty or three. Someday the Officer or the Minister will turn up for inspection after two – thirty and then I am done for, that's for sure. Next week there is going to be a full–moon night. The other teachers want to stay back in Pampore and enjoy the sight of saffron blossoms in the full moon. But I am playing the spoilsport."

"Why?"

"What will you do here all alone?"

Prevaricating, Pyari said "Go and bolt the doors—both the inside one and the outer. No one will come now."

For some reason Nath Jee was sure that someone or the other would visit them; could be a relative, a friend, or an old neighbour. Being a Saturday, it was a holiday. Whosoever was to come would come that very day. No question of coming the next day. Who would wish to miss the serial *Mahabharata* or the afternoon matinee show and set out for these boondocks on a sunday. But as yet no one had turned up. Nath Jee wondered why?

"Get up now and bolt the doors." Pyari's voice brought Nath Jee out of his reverie.

"No, let's wait.Guptajee from downstairs might turn up. He had told me that he would return within a week's time. Won't arrive before eight or nine from Jammu, now will he?"

Pyari was completely taken in by Nath Jee's story which was, to tell the truth, a pack of lies. Before leaving for Amritsar, Guptajee had clearly told Nath Jee that he would be returning to Kashmir only in March to settle his bills etc.

"What a tenant! Paying the rent for the whole year but spending not more than fifty or sixty days here."

"Yes, it is rather strange," Nath Jee opened the newspaper and held it in front of him.

Pyari remarked, "We had kept a tenant thinking that he would keep watch but now we have to guard his things too along with our own. We have to be watchmen of someone else's house."

"Watchmen of someone else's house?" Nath Jee was surprised but once he grasped the import of Pyari's utterance he chided her with the words,"Don't talk foolishly.You should show more sense."

Nath Jee had asked Pyari to behave sensibly but his eyes too were moist. Removing his glasses, he wiped his tears quietly and began reading the newspaper. Pyari got up, went to the kitchen and returned with a rice tray. She began to clear the rice but was unable to see clearly in the tube–light. Nath Jee removed his glasses and passed them on to his wife. With the glasses on Pyari began to clean the rice. Nath Jee folded the paper to watch the television. A doctor was talking about diseases that commonly beset the elderly. Nath Jee felt that he showed the symptoms of all those diseases. Getting up, he switched off the television .With the newspaper folded and the television switched off, he became restless. He could talk to Pyari but she was busy with the rice. He began to think. Had he done the right thing in building a house here, so far from the city? To be honest his old house was nothing more than a muddy shack whose walls could give way any moment. If it was still erect, it was because of God's grace. At night when one turned in one's sleep, the whole structure shook. That was the reason why he had hesitated to go near Pyari for a long time after their marriage. Despite this, the couple had managed to live in the dilapidated place for more than fifty years. Bita too had been born here and it was here that he grew up. But once he finished his training and got a job outside, he announced that he would not come to Kashmir unless something was done about the house. Nath Jee too realised that if Bita was to marry it would be a shame to bring someone's daughter to that coop.With all his savings and a loan of two lacs he built a two-storey house on the outskirts of the town. And Bita! He neither married nor did he settle in Kashmir! The year before last he had visited them for a month, but had stayed only for seventeen days last year . And this year? Two months back he had gone to Canada. God only knew when he would return! Whether he would or not?

"Shall I warm the dinner?"Pyari was done with the rice. She returned the glasses to Nath Jee.

"Wait a little while. Let's listen to the news first." He opened the newspaper and began reading the headlines while listening to the news on the television as well.By the time he finished with the news, listening both to the Kashmiri and the Urdu version and glancing at several pages of the paper. Pyari had spread his bedding on the low bed and hers on the floor.

"Why make the other bed?" Nath Jee queried hesitantly. "You too slip into my bed."

"You have no shame." Pyari angrily retorted.

Nath Jee slapped his brow in frustation. "When did you ever understand me!What I meant was that you have to make two beds every day and then every three or four days you have to wash the covers. You are not upto so much hard work now. If you too slept in my bed, your load would get reduced by half."

"Yes, yes, I heard you."Pyari gestured in a manner which reminded Nath Jee of a much younger Pyari. He began reminiscing.

"Listen, shall I warm the dinner now?When will we eat!"

"Heat it. Better finish it off."Nath Jee retorted, muttering to himself, " A long night waits, so be it."

Dinner over, Nath Jee was still listening to the news telecast from Delhi when Pyari returned from the kitchen, done with the washing. "You're still up?"

"Yes, its too early to turn in."

"Why don't you get into the bed, you'll feel warmer."

Nath Jee got up and switched off the television. He got into bed, a register in his hand.

"Shall I turn the light off?" Pyari asked.

"Alright. I will put the table-lamp on. Have to go through some papers from school."

Pyari switched off the light. Nath Jee put the table- lamp on and began turning the pages of the register.

"You keep awake. I am dog-tired." Saying this, Pyari slipped into her bed ready to doze off.

"No wonder! Two quilt covers, two bed sheets and so many other clothes.Not easy to wash the huge pile."

Pyari turned her back to Nath Jee. Was she really sleepy or huffed at his rebuke? He couldn't tell. Quietly he put the register away and took out the Atlas which he had hidden earlier. Opening the page on the map of North America, he began looking carefully. Here is Canada and this is its capital Otawa. And here is Halifax where Bita must be right now. Not very far from Otawa. Near the seashore too, that is why the weather must be nice as in Bombay, even though it is up in the north. That is all so well, poor Bita could never stand the cold! Lights must be shining across the sea as they do in Bombay. Suddenly it dawned on Nath Jee that something was wrong with him. For some reason the vision of festal lights across the dark waters was haunting his mind. Was it because the illumination, the electric lights, the sun's rays–all rediated a warmth which somehow pleased. Maybe he wanted to bask in this warmth but how could he? It was on the other side while he was on this one, and the dark sea stretched in between.

"Have you fallen asleep? Weren't you complaining about turning in early?"Pyari's voice woke Nath Jee up. He had actually dozed off.

"Get up, someone has opened the door. I can't understand who it is you keep waiting for with the doors unbolted day and night. Others have better things to do than to come and chat with you. Come on, make a move before someone loots the house."Pyari had come out of the bed and was moving about agitatedly.

"Hope it isn't GuptaJee, after all?" Nath Jee picked up a torch and went downstairs.

Gathering courage Pyari opened the window slightly and peeped out. She could make out some shadowy figures. One short and full, the other tall but narrower. She heard Nath Jee shouting:

"Shoo, Shoo. May you perish, you blasted creatures!"

Pyari breathed a sigh of relief. Closing the window she slipped back into bed. After shooing the cows aways and bolting the doors, Nath Jee climbed back.

"Doesn't anyone look for them?" Pyari asked."They wander about even in the night. Doesn't the milkman who milks them in the morning bother to find out where they are after dark?"

"If only they gave milk!" A sigh escaped Nath Jee. "These poor creatures have run dry, that is why they are left to wander." Pyari too sighed.

"Rains were plenty this year," Nath Jee continued musing aloud."Last year the prices of fodder shot up because of the drought. Farmers and milkmen sold their cows and old bulls to butchers. Since then this stuff is freely available in Pari Village, Kakapora and Kilar."

Nath Jee could have bitten off his tongue but the deed was done. He glanced at Pyari with some trepidation. She grimaced with distaste once again and turned pale. Yet she replied calmly. "Given to the butchers to be slaughtered. What an act of mercy! Better that the throat's of the poor hapless creatures be slit than they be left behind uncared for."

Nath Jee guessed that Pyari was sobbing underneath the quilt. He too slipped quietly into bed, switched the table-lamp off and covered himself with the quilt from head to toe.

Translated from the Kashmiri by Nusrat Jan

Ghazal

Wali Mohammad 'Aseer Kishtwari'

O beloved, stay awhile
and listen to my love-lyric;
my pain has grown most intense!
My heart is bleeding for love,
and my ferry-boat
is caught up in a storm
raging on all sides!

O nightingale, don't grumble
nor exhibit your anguish;
shed your tears gently
and listen to my love-song!

It looks as if
flower-beds are afire,
the green belt has been-
trampled upon;
come you, love,
just take a look
at the spoiled scene!

The dark night
is accentuating my grief,
and the heart
is palpitating fast;
listen, a beloved, to my love-song!

Young brides lost their pride here,
and the daffodils their fortune;
cannibals prevail all around,
pray, heed my love-lyric !

The damsel is disturbed, the fragrant plant (*sombul*)
is tearful;
now who is there to express
his grouse and to whom?

When the ability
to judge a thing true or false
has been lost, bronze naturally sells here
very dear as gold;
listen, 0 beloved, to my love-lyric !

The intruder and trouble-maker,
who burnt the porch of
the standard-bearer's shrine—-
who precisely was this man?
Listen, love to my doleful lyric!

I wrote these painful verses
out of my zeal;
pray, lend your ear to them
to judge the rhythmic beat;
0 beloved, listen to my love-lyric!

Translated from Kashmiri by A N Dhar

Revaluations: Forgotten Classics of Criticism Revisited*

M L Raina

Hans Mayer: Steppenwolf and Everyman: Outsiders and Conformists in Contemporary Literature. Translated from German by Jack. D. Zipes.
Apollo Editions, New York.

Hans Mayer belongs to the generation of Marxist thinkers who rose to prominence at a time when the orthodoxies of doctrinaire Marxism were driving away free thought not only from the Soviet Union and other communist countries, but also from within the Marxist parties in the West. Born in 1907, he has been a contemporary of such eminent intellectuals as Ernst Bloch, Ernst Fischer, Walter Benjamin, George Lukacs, Theodor Adorno, Frederic Antal and Arnold Hauser in the Germanic tradition, as well as of Henri Lefebvre, Merleau Ponty, Roger Garaudy and Louis Althusser in the French tradition. Their Marxism owes nothing to the iron-clad obiter dicta emanating from the likes of Zhdanov and his thought police, or even to the pronouncements of Lenin himself as made in that egregious party pamphlet called 'Party Organization and Party Literature'. Fischer's *Art and Ideology* (1964), Garaudy's *Realism without Walls* (1962) and Della V Volpe's *Critique of Taste* (1979) combine the basic philosophical insights derived from dialectical materialism with a profound belief in the status of art as an intrinsically valuable product of the human imagination. They recall the Marx of *Grundrisse* (see, Hobsbawn 2011: 121-126).

---

* Editorial note: This section will feature reassessments of some forgotten classics of literary criticism and theory. Contributions are welcome.

Unlike Lukacs, who started in the Enlightenment tradition of humanism but compromised with the Stalinist orthodoxy, these writers and critics respect the integrity of an art work while endeavouring to interpret its socio-economic relevance. But the relevance does not stop short at tracing the homologies of socio-economic and literary structures as in Lucien Goldmann and the later Lukacs, but embraces a larger structure of value systems and recognitions, particularly the recognition of an artist's worth in spite of his/her ideological commitments. It was Sartre who summed up this point of view by suggesting that "Mallarme was a bourgeois poet, but not all bourgeois poets are Mallarmes".

Taking their cue from Gyorgi Plekhanov and Franz Mehring well before doctrinaire Marxism choked independent thinking about the arts in Communist countries, Mayer and others like him steered a course midway between a total capitulation to the economic determinism of the Stalinist variety and the effete aestheticism of the late nineteenth and twentieth century art theory (Adorno was the only one who never accepted the so-called scientism of the vulgar Marxist aesthetic theory current in the Soviet Union.

Admittedly an admirer of Lukacs's 'early para-Marxism', Hans Mayer does not aspire to build a theory of literature the way the Hungarian savant does. Lukacs provides an Aristotlean framework for a work of art grounded in class struggle. Mayer's guidelines come from Hegel's dialectic that sees an unequal tension between forms and concerns of art and literature. Even though both claim allegiance to Marx, both are bourgeois European intellectuals who reject the bourgeois tradition, Mayer with sympathy and Lukacs with apparent disdain (in his later references to Solzhenitsyan, there is an appreciative realisation of the non-conformism of the Russian writer). In the course of his development as a Marxist critic, Mayer, like Benjamin and Adorno, perceives the contradictions in the late stages of Capitalism and fashions his writing to preserve the humanitarian aspects of bourgeois culture. Since a fair number of essays in this collection deal with German bourgeois writers, his effort is to detect anti-bourgeois traces in these writers in order to link them to his own individual vision of socialist culture. As Jack Zipes says in his introduction to the present book, "The theme of German self-criticism is one of the leitmotifs of the German literary development". Mayer is faithful to that inheritance.

Very few Marxist critics have engaged with contemporary literature with as much sympathy as Mayer. Like Ernst Fischer in *Art and Ideology*, Mayer reads contemporary literature as inseparable from historical and social dynamics. Unlike Lukacs's denunciations of Joyce and Kafka and of modernism in general, Mayer's readings involve that voluntary effort of understanding which alone makes a gifted writer accessible to a discriminating reader(see, Lukacs 1962: 17-92 and Lunn 1982: 9-32). It is this effort of understanding, this attempt to enter the inner working of an art object's configurations of means and ends that constitutes the specific function of criticism in Mayer.

Like Adorno, Mayer writes about Bertolt Brecht (the longest essay in this collection is on the playwright), but differs from him both in approach and interpretative strategy (for details see, Adorno 1992). Like Adorno again, he chooses the most adaptable and resilient mode of literary expression, the essay, as a critical vehicle (see, Adorno 1992: 3-23). This makes for easy accessibility of an intelligent reader and allows a direct exchange with the writer.

The present book of essays is not a random selection or a simple appendage to Mayer's more substantial book *Outsiders* (published in English by M.I.T Press). It is unified by a theme: outsiders and conformists, people who act as counterweights to the average bourgeois men and women, and their role in contemporary literary consciousness. These people live on the margins of society, are designated mavericks by the social and political establishments of their times and exercise a destabilizing influence on conventional patterns of behaviour. They are not the wretched of the earth by any means. They are of the bourgeois social world but don't consider themselves as belonging to it in any positive way. To use the current weasel word so dear to postcolonial critics, they are that society's 'Other'. They are 'steppenwolves' after the anti-hero of Hermann Hesse's novel of that name.

Everyman(originating in the medieval morality play of that name) in Mayer's reckoning is an average bourgeois individual, probably an anonymous faceless figure we meet without even bothering to question his/her identity, but who, given the levelling of the social order under Capitalism, claim a democracy ' of equal citizenship with feudal lords'. The Steppenwolf, on the other hand, is a fringe figure, not really a rebel but rather an eccentric 'who departs from the community'. He does not threaten the social order, even though he is its not-so-hidden underside. As Mayer writes in the title essay, "those eccentrics in society who voluntarily kept their distance from the ordinary routine were never seriously or strictly isolated. On the contrary such eccentrics were generally highly esteemed and secretly admired by those people whose society they disdained".

The Steppenwolf uses low profile techniques such as 'false compliance, foot-dragging, feigned ignorance', to quote James Scott's *Weapons of the Weak*, to register their presence in society. It is in this way that Mayer's non-conformists operate in literature. Mayer reads a whole range of writers from Musil, Durrenmatt (whose play *the physicists* brought fresh air on to the Stuffy English stage in the early sixties), Mann, Grass, Ionescoe, Pasternak and many more to draw a comprehensive map of the various kinds of non-conformism in contemporary writing. The result is a welcome departure from not only the stolidity of the many dogmas of Lukacsian Marxism, but also from the kind of hammer-and-tongs ideological critique practiced by today's saloon-bar Marxists who have re-colonised post-colonial studies by merely positioning themselves in the safe enclaves of the bourgeois academy in Europe and America.

Here it is relevant to mention that Hans Mayer left East Germany as late as 1963,two years after the Wall, and cannot be accused of harbouring ill-feelings about the then GDR. His sympathies continued to remain with the socialist ideal. His identification, therefore , with Hamlets, Harry Hellers, Ulrichs, Oscar Matzareths, Felix Krulls, Fabrice dell Donzios and Yuri Zhivagos—all in one way or another standing at a tangent to their societies—foregrounds an independence of spirit challenging the built-in oppressiveness of Communist regimes in general. Without openly calling into question that oppressiveness and ranging up and down and across historical and geographical boundaries, he highlights the significance of dissent within bourgeois and communist societies in equal measure.

Though not a literary theorist in the purest sense, Hans Mayer is deeply concerned with the function of criticism in contemporary literary culture. In stressing the significance of history, he does not neglect aesthetic issues. Thus he sees the 'indifference' of Yuri Zhivago, his reluctance to commit himself in action, as a reason for the 'failed epic character' of Pasternak's novel. In a statement that neatly sums up the dissonance of content and form in the novel, Mayer suggests that the "story of Zhivago is a story of fundamental non-commitment. Unless one understands this trait in his character, Zhivago's life becomes incomprehensible…The reader will time and again demand logic and results from a life that expressly refused both". How different is this assessment from the open denunciation of Zhivago by party hacks who hounded him to death and how close to Edmund Wilson's response at the time of the novel's publication in late fifties of the last century. In Musil's Ulrich Mayer accounts for the 'disposability' of the hero inasmuch as he fails to act meaningfully (one is at once reminded of Goncharov's Oblamov) and, as a consequence, fails also to 'determine all possibilities in advance'. In Gunther Grass's *Tin Drum* and Thomas Mann's *Felix Krull* the same imbalance between the urge to be a part of reality and, at the same time, to be outside it accounts for the unevenness of structure which Mayer seems not to deplore at all. As he says in the essay on Grass and Mann, 'it is more difficult in contemporary literature than ever before to attribute any kind of idea, action to the writer himself. The bourgeois epoch of a literature which strives for the self-realisation of the artist is at an end". Consequently, both Oskar Matzareth in Grass's novel and Felix Krull in Mann's parody epic illusions of the classic bourgeois novel… Both prefer artifice to individuality and both thrive as 'roles' and 'fictions' rather than as full-blooded characters—a result of the late capitalist attack on an individual's reality.

The long essay on Brecht draws attention to the playwright's fascination with criminals like Richard, Coriolanus, Macheath, Edward and others of their ilk—all from the outer edges of accepted social behaviour. Brecht found positive traits in them and saw them as the only genuine representatives of the rapacious capitalist system in which even Galileo had to compromise with truth for his own survival. This confirms Mayer's own belief that steppenwolves survive by virtue of their compromises. Brecht's famous irony, displayed in the rationale for war presented by soldier characters in Mother *Courage*, turns all heroic notions upside down and reveals a gnawing cupidity beneath elegant social facades. It is in such a system that the steppenwolves survive, sometimes comfortably as in Brecht and sometimes uneasily as in Thomas Mann and Boris Pasternak.

Shakespeare's fools, Homer's Theristes, Moliere's Alceste, court jesters, comic commentators in classic Sanskrit drama as well as servants and other lower-class characters—have existed in literature since earliest times as healthy antidotes to the stuffy formalities of the class system. Mayer, however, sees them as replacing the bourgeois Everyman in contemporary society, thus showing up the inherent pathology of the social system. We can draw our own conclusions from this.One: there is no possibility of returning to the heroic ideal in our time.Two: that febrile modernity ('motion without memory' in Paul Virilo's words) precludes the integration of the individual with society, a prospect gleefully celebrated in the illusionary bacchanalia of the 'postmodern condition'.

Looking philosophically at the outsider phenomenon, some of us at least can delight in the spectacle of a non-conformist like Shakespeare's Apemantus ' shaming these woods/by putting on the cunning of a carper'.

References

Hobsbawn, Eric. 2011. *How to Change the World: Marx and Marxism.* London: Little Brown and Company.

Lukacs, Georg. 1962. *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism*, trans. John and Necke Mander. London: Merlin Press.

Lunn, Eugene. 1982. *Marxism and Modernism: An Historical Study of Lukacs, Brecht, Benjamin and Adorno*. Berkley: University of California Press.

Adorno, Theodor W. 1992. *Notes to Literature 2*, trans. Sherry Weber Nicholson. Nw York: Columbia University Press.