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To

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The Madras Review of English Studies
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1. DIVINATION, EXPIATION, RITUAL AND MAGIC IN *THE WASTE LAND* : INDIAN IDEAS THAT HAVE SHAPED INNER STRUCTURE OF *THE WASTE LAND* .

Sankaran Ravindran

Even in a casual reading of *The Waste Land*, a reader will have to confront a specific Indian context in the last section of the poem, "What the Thunder Said." The words, "Datta," "Dayadhvam," and "Damyata" that give an explicit moral mooring to the poem and the formal Upanishadic ending, "Shanti, Shanti, Shanti" that concludes the poem have shaped what can specifically be called Indian in *The Waste Land.* In critical readings of the poem, the word India or Indian very often refers to the last section of the poem. But that which is Indian in "What the Thunder Said" is very much on the surface of the poem, which criticism cannot ignore and readers cannot overlook. Those Indian ideas which critical readings as well as casual readings unavoidably confront in the last section of the poem are not the only Indian elements or ideas in *The Waste Land.*

In fact, an Indian reader need not go to the last section of the poem to come across matters related to Indian tradition. Elements of Indian tradition can be seen shaping the poem right from the beginning itself. Those elements, it can be shown, silently inhabit the inner structure of the poem as a whole and function as the unifying thread. My attempt in this paper is to argue that *The Waste Land* can be read in an Indian traditional context and that such a reading will enable the Indian students and scholars to respond to the poem with enhanced efficeiency. Often the ideas like the "Grail", the "Fisher King", and the "ritual-questions" appear to make the poem very complex or obscure. Nevertheless, if it is understood that these ideas were originally Indian and have come back into the poem with changes due to their undergoing the processes of Westernization, the poem will be more appealing and meaningful than what it is otherwise. Besides, it can also be argued that the unifying elements in the poem are a few familiar Indian ideas.

As it is widely believed in scholarly circles that either Tiresias or the Fisher King should be believed to be the unifying thread in

the poem, my proposition that traditional Indian ideas of divination, expiation, ritual, and magic are the main controlling and meaning-giving factors in *The Waste Land* may sound provocative. However, even those who are committed to read the poem the way Western critics have read it, will agree that the poem implies through its references to the fertility cult and the Grail symbolism, the urgent need to have a unified consciousness, a consciousness which can harmoniously respond to the rhythms of nature, which can hold procreation as sacred or divine, and which can give great importance to human actions and words. It is precisely in this respect that the poem becomes an externalization and dramatization of a few Indian ideas or beliefs.

Attempting to trace the causes of a natural calamity or personal misfortune to some wrong deeds or sin committed singly or collectively, knowingly or unknowingly, is a part of traditional Indian response to life, nature, and God. Premature death of individuals, drought or flood that can hit the land or outbreak of cataclysmic events that can wreck devastation on life can make an Indian mind reflect over the wrath of God aroused through the wrong deeds of man. The belief that the cosmos is a well organized and balanced entity, the equilibrium of which can be disturbed through unnatural and unholy deeds of human beings, is traditionally Indian. Therefore, to restore the lost equilibrium between man and the rest of the universe or to successfully combat a threatening calamity necessitates, first, discovering its cause, secondly, undergoing expiatory experiences or performing rituals to propitate the angry Gods or divine powers.

Attempts to discover the cause or causes of the misfortune with an intention to set things right is divination. *The Waste Land*, which suggests that the illness of the Fisher King and the barrenness of the land could be remedied through a knight asking or answering ritual questions and that the disintegrating modern society could be cured of its malady though spiritual awakening, can be interpreted as a poem written out of divinatory impulse. The belief that some foul or unnatural deed should have brought about the Fisher King's misfortune and the plight of his people is strongly suggested through the myth of the Fisher King. Similarly the idea that the illness of the modern world might have sprung from a clear deviation from the cosmic rules is also suggested in the poem. Therefore, the poem as a whole is a divinatory pursuit.

Divination, as the root meaning of the word states, is the discovery of the will of the Gods.[1] Divinatory processes are employed either "to foresee calamity in order to forestall it" or "to discover the source of trouble to remove it".[2] English poets who can be called primitivists have suggested to us, in one way or another, that creative writing should endeavour to harmonize the disturbed rhythms of the world. D. H. Lawrence's emphasis on vital consciousness and his efforts to integrate human conciousness with the primitive and the primal through his poems on animals and birds can also be seen in the context of divination. Lawrence writes as if he has discovered the cause of man's tragic experiences. Lawrence believed that cosmic unity or harmony was disturbed by man's false sophistication and wrong sense of intellectual accomplishments. Therefore, *The Waste Land* is not a solitary example for creative writing sprouting from a sense of human aberration and endeavouring to administer through poetry a therapeutic effect on the consciousness of mankind. Ted Hughes's poetry is another example of creative writing displaying awareness of an illness of the human consciousness and its making serious efforts to offer an effective cure. William Blake seems to share the belief that poetry has a therapeutic value. However, in no another great poem by any other writer can these ideas be found forming the basic inner structures as they do in *The Waste Land.*

The beliefs that the entire cosmos is a unity and a well integrated totality and that any violation of any vital cosmic principle will result in some form of natural calamity are essentially Indian. In such an integrated and unified cosmos, the individual's fate is, to a great extent, related to the cosmic pattern. These beliefs are the basis of divination. It is aptly said:

> The reasoning behind divination is that human fate is not haphazard but is part of a wider cosmic pattern. The total pattern of the universe is known only to the divine power that established it, but certain signs are also part of this pattern and reflect an indivuduals fate.[3]

In *The Waste Land* the affliction from which the Fisher King suffers and the drought by which his land has gone barren are symptoms of some violation of natural laws. Natural laws are divine laws as well. It is not difficult for an Indian mind to understand this belief because Indian tradition has always upheld the "dharmaraja", the righteous King, whose right or wrong deed can result in the cosmos responding with sympathy or with hostility.

As the king was the most conspicuous person in an early system of social structuring, the emphasis on the good or the evil effects of his deeds was meant to drive home the idea that human actions have a cosmic significance.

That the Fisher King's illness or impotency could blight his land is not a fictitious proposition to an Indian.

> It was precisely upon the virtue and justice of any King that the falling of the rains and ripening of the crops in due season directly depended. When the King's virtue fails, the order of Nature is disturbed.[4]

This belief was so widespread in India that there may hardly be any traditional Indian who might be unfamiliar with this belief. Commenting on this belief, Ananda Coomaraswamy has argued:

> The ideal Kingships embodied in the original conception of Varuna may be said to have persisted in Indian culture upto the present day; it is very evident in the person of Rama. The ideal King is a dharamaraja, an incarnation of justice, and the fertility and prosperity of the country depend upon the King's virtue; the direct connection between justice and rainfall here involved is highly significatnt.[5]

The relation between the Fisher King's illness and the barrenness of his land makes more sense in the context of this Indian belief. It is as if the Fisher King, his impotency and the barrenness of his land that are adumbrated in *The Waste Land* are dramatizations of the Indian belief in the concept of "dharmaraja". It is also relevant in this context to point out that Coomarasway has argued that the idea of the Fisher King has its roots in India. Coomaraswamy has observed that the Fisher King might be a westernized version of Varuna, the water-God of India.[6] Varuna who took away Bhadra, the daughter of Soma, was punished by Sage Utatya, Bhadra's husband. The Sage drank up the waters and left the land a salt desert. Upon Varuna's surrendering Bhadra, the waters were released. Thus the world was freed from drought.[7] Incest or adultery on the part of the ruler could result in the sufferings of his people. Even Gods were not free from cosmic rules. Many episodes of violation of chastity in *The Waste Land* become significant in the background of this Indian belief because the implications through these episodes can be that such violations have resulted in the illness of the modern world.

If the Fisher King has to regain his lost vitality, a knight of commendably great prowess has to ask ritual questions when the Grail is presented to the knight in the Fisher King's castle.[8] The

question should be the right one to elicit the right answer. The right question is "Whom does the grail serve?" And the right answer is "The Grail serves the *Grail King*."[9] That the Grail does not serve the Fisher King is sufficiently emphasized in the answer. The Grail itself is a wish-granting talisman and is one of the possessions of the Fisher King. The idea of a wish-granting talisman does not dismay an Indian because Indian-tradition is replete with persons possessing wish-granting talismans. The Great Rshi, Jamadagni, Parasurama's father, had "Kamadhenu", Draupathi was given a vessel, "Akshayapatra" by the Sun God, "Kubera... is said to possess a 'beloved' thing which gives immortality to mortals, makes the blind see, and restores youth to the old."[10] In the famous Tamil book *Manimekhalai*, the heroine Manimekhalai has a bowl called "Amrta Surabhi" in her hands and it is an all-wish-granting talisman. But, the Fisher King's wish to regain his fertility will not be granted till he hears a knight asking the right ritual question and the answer to that question, which will reorient his consciousness with an awareness that every thing in this universe is meant to serve the Grail King, who must be God himself. The Fisher King has to understand that the source of all kinds of prosperity and vitality is God. The Fisher King's illness is symbolic and it connotes lack of spiritual awareness. He has failed to be aware of God and the cosmic design. Material propserity deviod of spiritual awakening creates an impotency. The cure for that disease is in awakening and vitalizing of the spiritual dimension of consciousness.

The idea of ritual questions and ritual answers and their capacity to bring about magical changes in the human consciousness can be explained from within Indian tradition. As the explanation should help a reader of *The Waste Land* understand how ritual questions and ritual answers can magically cure illness or give life to the dead, referring to an episode from *The Mahabharata* will be very useful.[11] In the days of Pandavas' life in forests (vanavas), Yama the God of death, in concealment, warned each one of the thirsty Pandavas that he should answer Yama's questions before he drank water from a nearby lake, or he would die. Except Yudhishtira, all others ignored Yama's warning and tried to subdue Yama with physical strength, but all of them fell dead on the spot. Yudhishtira who answered the questions pleased Yama and got his brothers alive through his ritual answers. The first question that Yama asked was "Who weighs more than the earth?" And the right

answer was "mother". It is a ritual answer because it cannot be taken literally. The exoteric part of the answer, which is the literal sense, should be rejected and the esoteric part, the symbolic sense, should be grasped. The belief that the mother is more important than the earth emphasizes a dharmic aspect. Therefore ritual answers are meant to strengthen or impart spiritual knowledge. Moreover, in this episode, life, water and spiritual knowledge are equated. One who is spiritually alive is allowed to drink water. The ritual questions and the ritual answers in this episode tell us that it is out of ignorance that one believes that one possesses life due to one's merit. The prerequiste to possess life, the episode emphasizes, is to be awake to a higher reality which is the spiritual dimension of life. Having physical might alone does not guarantee life in the real sense. Such a life is death-in-life. Spiritual enlightenment gets symbolized in the episode as life and as water. To drink water, that is, to realize the essence of life, one should be spiritually enlightened. The relation among life, death, water, and ritual answers are best illustrated in this episode. The idea that the Fisher King can get back his vitality if a knight asks or answers ritual questions is a westernised version of an age-old Indian idea and therefore to grasp the intricacy of ritual questions and answers suggested in *The Waste Land*, an awareness of the original Indian background is essential.

Divinatory act is followed up with ritual, either in the form of expiation or in the form of performance of rituals. Expiation itself is a ritual because the emphasis in expiatioin is not as much on the deed of suffering that one may undergo as on the inner awakening through suffering. Here, again, the suffering inflicted on the body is the exoteric aspect, the stress laid on the necessity to kindle the inner spark is the esoteric. A knight undertaking a perilous journey into one's own inner reality; it is a journey to discover some vital, inner, spiritual dimensions. The physical struggle, the exoteric aspect, is important so long as it suggests the inner struggle to discover the highest truth. Such expiatory experiences also highlight the belief that the highest truth is in the self. Sri Aurobindo has aptly put this idea across to us:

> Knowledge itself was a travelling and a reaching, or a finding and a winning; the revalation comes only at the end, the highest was the prize of a final victory. There is continually in the Veda, the image of the journey, the soul's search on the path of truth.[12]

Therefore, the journey motif in *The Waste Land* of the protagonist moving from Europe, through the Middle East, to the Himavat, or the idea of the Knight undertaking a journey to cure the Fisher King's illness--is highly symbolic and esoteric, and it can be understood as an expiatory deed.

Expiation (which itself is a ritual) and ritual questions and answers are intended to revitalize consciousness. The understanding that the inner, spiritual, dimension of consciousness of the self is the meaning-giving factor in life effects magical changes in human beings. That understanding is the beginning of life. The threat, either from external nature or from inside the human body, and the subsequent loss of vitality in life are overcome through rituals which re-establish the lost circuits. Divination is the first moment to regain what is lost or being lost in terms of spiritual life.

The Waste Land is a dramatization of divination, expiation, ritual, and magic or it is about discovering the cause of a malady, undergoing spiritually-oriented expiatory experiences, and through ritual effecting magical revitalization of human consciousness. The ideas of the Fisher King, the Grail, undertaking a ritual journey, and asking or answering ritual questions that we discern in the background of *The Waste Land* become clearer to us when we relate them to their original Indian counterparts. *The Waste Land* has an inner structure which is a highly symbolic and esoteric level of meaning. That inner structure which holds the poem as a totality or unity is shaped through divinatory pursuit through the performance of ritual and magical transformation of consciousness.

Notes

1. "Divination", *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica,* p.916
2. "Divination", *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica,* p.917.
3. "Divination", *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica,* p.196.
4. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Yaksas* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1971), p. 29.
5. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, p. 28.
6. "The fundamental theme of the maimed King, and consequent cosmic disaster, necessitating a ritual designed to secure the freeing of the waters, is ... plainly traceable in India, where it must once have existed in a more definite and unified form than that in which it now survives", Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, p. 47.

7. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, p. 34.

8. "The essential features of the Grail legend of Western Europe are the existence of a land ruled by a grat King, the 'Fisher King', whose land and castle are by the sea; upon his vitality the prosperity and fertility of the country depend, but not withstanding that he possesses an all-wish-granting talisman (the Grail itself), often described as an inexhaustible bowl or dish, but sometimes a gem, he lies wounded 'in the lains' and impotent, or apparently dead and his country is a waste land, parched by drought and barren. The Grail quest is achieved, when the hero visiting the castle of the Fisher King and witnessing the ritual of the Grail procession and other marvels, inquires their meaning; immediately the wounded King is restored to vigor, the rivers once more flow in their channels, and the land is verdant". Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, p. 37.

9. Robert A. Johnson, *He: Understanding Masculine Psychology* (New York: Perennial Library, 1977), p. 81.

10. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, p.40.

11. "Aranya Parvam", *The Mahabharata.*

12. Sri Aurobindo, *Sri Aurobindo : The Secret of the Veda* Vol. 10 (Pondicherry : Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, 1971), p.8.

2. INSCAPE AND *ULLURAI*

P. Marudanayagam

Hopkins, the most influential poet of the Victorian age for modern writers, was a great technical inventor. The critical terms 'inscape' and 'instress' are central to his sensibility and technique. To him, a poem was worth reading only if it adequately represented some unique reality. "A poem constructed with all the skill and beauty in the world was yet defective if it lacked that specific 'inscape' which was more than merely a formal requirement for it was the quaranty of truth."[1]

'Inscape', 'Utterance', 'prepossession', 'sake' and 'self' were some of the words he used for the concepts of inscape and scape, stress and interests, before he finally chose the now well-known terms. 'Sake' is "that being a thing has outside itself, as a voice by its echo... and also that in the thing by virtue of which it has this being abroad, and that is something, distinctive, marked specifically or individually speaking, as for a voice and echo clearness, for a reflected image, light, brightness"[2]. 'Self', is a total being, "a centre and a surrounding area or circumference... two elements which we may call the inset and the outsetting or display"[3].

His critical and philosophical terminology follows the counsel of Trench and Barnes. He is interested in forming words with the help of Old English roots and suffixes and using them in the place of Latinic terms. 'Inwit' (for 'conscience') and Barnes's 'inwoning' (subjective) suggest 'instress' and 'inscape'. So it is reasonable to suppose that 'inscape' and 'instress' mean 'inner scape' and 'inner stress'. An etymological study of 'scape' and 'stress' indicates that the basic meaning of 'inscape' is 'internal form' and that of 'instress', 'internal energy'. But he added new meanings to the terms.

The two terms are first used in his "Note-Books" when he makes certain observations on the Greek philosopher Parmenides. Hopkins says, "His great text, which he repeats with religious conviction, is that Being is and Not-being is not - which perhaps one can say, a little over-defining his meaning, means that all things are upheld by instress and are meaningless without it. His feeling for instress, for the flush and-foredrawn, and for inscape is most striking and from this one can understand Plato's reverence

for him as the great father of Realism"[4]. Here 'instress' seems to imply a supernatural force which binds the finite one.

In addition to Parmenides, there were other sources to which Hopkins must have been indebted for his theory of inscape and instress. Plato's doctrine of forms and Aristotle's ideas on organic unity must have helped him much. Certain great passages in the Greek tragedies might have also provided him with certain clues. In these passages, in addition to the surface meaning, there is a hidden meaning, conveyed through metaphors, Hopkins's term for which is "underthought". There is a certain parallel to the double terms in Hopkins's work, for inscape is often readily perceived, while instress is sometimes hard to detect.[5]

He had clear ideas of 'inscape' and 'instress' long before he knew Scotus's commentary on the "Sentences". But Scotus, the on

> ... who of all men most sawys my spirits to peace;
> Of realty the rarest-veined unraveller; a not
> Rivalled insight, be rival Italy or Greece"[6]

must have certainly provided a complete philosophical justification of his view. He also got from the doctrine of Scotus an aesthetic sanction and a moral justification for his love for poetry and painting. Scotus, the upholder of the doctrine of the Immaculate conception of Mary, was opposed to the theory of Aquinas that the intellect does not know particulars. Scotus's contention was that the intellect has got a direct but confused knowledge of particulars. The reality of a tree, this tree, is not that it partakes in some abstract idea of tree but that it is a blend of unique qualities (texture, shape, colour) which give it individual essence. Scotus called this essence 'haecceitas' which means 'thisness'. Hopkins seized this idea with delight, because he believed in the particularity of Nature. Everything in Nature is unique to him[7].

Hopkins's view of poetic creation, with its concepts of inscape and instress, corresponds to the Scotist view that the first act of knowledge is a confused intuition, a union of sense and intellect in which the mind is conscious of the object as a living Nature. This institution is then contracted by the sense "to a particular glimpse"[8]. It is in the second act that knowledge proceeds from the concrete and particular to the abstract and universal. Hopkins identified the Scotist special concept of the singular with his own concept of 'inscape' and the *primum actum* with his experience of 'instress'.

Critics are not unanimous in their explanations of these two terms because they are used in a bewildering variety of contexts by Hopkins himself. In his 'Journal', in one place, he observes: "All the world is full of inscape, and chance left free to act falls into an order as well as purpose".[9] In one of his letters of 1879, he writes, "But as air, melody is what strikes me most of all in music and design in painting, so design, pattern or what I am in the habit of calling 'inscape' is what I about all aim at in poetry. Now it is the virtue of design, pattern or inscape to be distinctive"[10]

In his "Journal" we come across a number of descriptions of things, looked at from a personal angle. It is clear that they are all attempts to inscape nature. Here is one such wrestling with words:

> A fine sunset; the higher sky dead clear blue bridged by a broad slant causeway rising from right to left of wisped or grass cloud, the wisps lying across: the sundown yellow, moist with light but ending at the top in a foam of delicate white pearling and spotted with big tufts of cloud in colour russet between brown and purple but edged with brassy light.

There is a true and a false 'instress' of nature, for as he says elsewhere, "when you look hard at a thing it seems to look hard at you"; yet only by constantly refreshing the mind by looking hard and long in this way can you "remember or believe how deep the inscape of things is"[12] An imperfect form of inscape is called 'idiom' by him.

Hopkins uses 'instress' with subtle shiftings of meaning. At times, it even becomes a synonym of 'inscape'. But very often it has a distinct meaning. Mentioning the Lady Chapel at Ely, he wrote that it "has its walls bordered all round with an ogee-canopied arcade of great richness... The all-powerfulness of instress in mode and the immediate of its effect are very remarkable."[13]

Writing about the poet Barnes, he said,

> His poems use to charm me also by their west country 'instress' a most peculiar product of England, which I associate with airs like Weeping Winefred, Polly Oliver, or Poor Mary Ann with Herrick and Herbert, with the Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Welsh landscape, and above all with the smell of oxeyes and apple lofts; this instress is helped by particular rhythms and these Barness employs.[14]

Many critics have attempted to interpret the two terms. According to Fr. Peters, inscape is "the unified complex of those sensible qualities of the object of perception that strikes us as inseparably belonging to and most typical of it, so that through the knowledge of this unified complex of sense-data we may gain an insight into the individual essence of the object"[15]. He feels that instress stands for "two distinct and separate things, related to each other as cause and effect; as a cause instress refers for Hopkins to that core of being or inherent energy which is the actuality of the object; as effect instress stands for the specifically individual impression the object makes on man."[16]

> Accroding to Austin Warren : Being so central a word in his vocabulary and motif in his mental life, it moves through some range of meaning; from sense-perceived pattern to inner form. The prefix seems to imply a contrary, an outer-scape-as if to say that an inscape is not mechnically or inertly present, but requires personal action, attention, a seeing and 'seeing into.'[17]

Marjorie C. Downing feels that if the Scotistic theory of individuation has been helpful as an analogue of inscape, the Scotistic theory of knowledge is eqully helpful as a philosophic parallel to instress. "Inscape, then, whether it be of a flower, a scene in Wales, one of Purcell's airs, or a boy bugler, is the 'bead of being', is 'rarest-veined' reality, and it is perceived not by the poet's senses alone, but by the whole man in an immediate, intuitive act. And when each mortal thing 'deals' out that being indoors each one dwells, it does so by means of the instress which is the core of that being, and which exerts its pressure on the mind and senses of the person intuiting it."[18]

James Reeves contends that by 'inscape' Hopkins meant much the same as Roger Fry meant by the once fashionable term 'significant form', "the differnce being that Fry never made it clear what his idea of form was significant of: Hopkins had no such doubt - he was confident that the form or inscape was significant of God's presence in all things."[19]

W. H. Gardner points out that to Hopkins "an inscape was something more than a delightful sensory impression : it was an insight, by Divine grace, into the ultimate reality-seeing the pattern, air, melody in things from, as it were, God's side."[20]

Donald Mcchesney observes that "the wonder of nature, to Hopkins, was that it is a never-ending source of inscapes--patterns of shape, sound, light and colour, revealing the infinite energies of God. The myriad forms of nature are all unique, separately inscaped by God. Each thing, from the lowest piece of inanimate matter to the most highly pitched, selved and distinctive thing in creation, the mind of man, has its own inscape, which gives it its own 'self' or identity"

A study of the different interpretations given above will reveal that the terms 'inscape' and 'instress', as employed by Hopkins, have all these shades of meaning which are closely related to one another. This is the reason why Elizabeth Wight is able to find six definitions for each of the terms - scape, stress and instress. Hopkins, occasionally, uses the term "scape" in the conventional way, as part of a compound word, signifying a natural scene. Cloudscapes, landscapes and treescapes are often used in his poem and prose writings. It is well known that there is a splendid use of landscapes in 'Pied Beauty', 'Penmaen Pool' and 'Ribblesdale'. One important significance of 'scape' is the 'frame' of something. In a painting of Christ, Hopkins notes the feet have "a scapeless look". He differentiates between inscape and scape when he speaks of Rembrandt as a "master of scaping rather than inscape"[21]. Also, "Scape signifies a pattern of movement or change and a law for the shapes or sequence of the changes. Flouncing fish make 'scapes of motion."[22] 'Inscape' may also connote a relationship of parts to the whole object and the unifying or arranging of natural phenomena in proper relation to each other. He occasionally finds inscape in dying things, as the horned violet. 'Instress' is very often used in the sense of a pressure of energy arising from within, which brings a natural phenomenon into being. It is also used to indicate the charm of a natural phenomenon and the mood created by the interaction of nature and observer. As a verb, it means 'stressing in', 'put into the mind', as in "The Wreck", st.5. "Since, though he is under the world's splendour and wonder, His mystery must be instressed, stressed; For I greet him the days I meet him, and bless when I understand".

As Elizabeth Wight has done, it is possible to see certain points of similarity between Hopkins's concepts of inscape and instress and Coleridge's organic theory. Scape as a form imposed from outside may recall to us Coleridge's idea of mechanic form:

> The form is mechanic when on any given material we impress a predetermined form... as when to a mass of wet clay we give whatever shape we wish it to retain when hardened.[23]

Hopkins's conception of inscape has remarkable relation to Coleridge's organic form.

> The organic ... is innate; it shapes as it develops itself from within; and the fulness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form[24]

There is a frequent use of this theory in his evaluation of other poets and artists. Act, to Hopkins, has nothing to do with the reproduction of surface reality. It has much to do with the shape or pattern imposed by the artist on his raw material--paint, words, stones etc. He praises Whistler for possessing the feeling for inscape. The Pre-Raphaelites Millais and Holman Hunt are found to be wanting in instress and inscape. Poetry that lacks inscape is written in what he calls Parnassian. Parts of Pope and Tennyson are condemned because of this. The importance that he gives to this idea is revealed in his judgement of Sir Samuel Ferguson ·

> ... he was a poet as the Irish are full of feeling, high thoughts, flow of verse, point, often fine imagery and other virtues, but the essential and only lasting thing left out-what I call inscape, that is, species or individually distinctive beauty of style.[25]

The sonnet, "As Kingfishers catch fire, dragonfiles draw flame" at once explains and illustrates Hopkins's concept of inscape. In the octave, we are told how we can recognize things in an instant by a characteristic flash of colour or the individual sound of a note. The Kingfishers' back, breast and wings scintillate fire as the sun's rays catch it. The dragonfly spurts forth flame like a blow-pipe. Even little stones tossed down the shaft of a well produce distinctive musical notes. Everything questioned with a 'who are you?' receives a ready response.

> As Kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame,
> As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
> stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's
> Bow swing finds tongue to fling out broad its name;
> Each mortal thing does one thing and the same;
> Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
> Selves-goes its self; myself it speaks and spells
> Crying what I do is me; for that I came".

The best example of inscape is to be found in "The Windhover" which has attracted more than a hundred interpretations. The

poet's perception of the essential nature of the Kestrel is successfully recaptured in the first part, a glowing tribute to its beauty, courage and skill witnessed in different movements:

> I caught this morning morning's minion, Kingdom of daylight's
> dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding
> Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding
> High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing
> In his ecstacy! then off, off forth on swing,
> As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend; the hurl and gilding
> Rebuffed the high wind. My heart in hiding
> Stirred for a bird, - the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!

Drawing our attention to Hopkins's unusual word-consciousness here, Dr. Geoffrey Hartman remarks that the poem's very continuity seems to derive from an on-the-wing multiplication of the sound of one word in the next, like a series of accelerating explosions: 'morning' to 'morning's' to 'minion' and the intricate contrasting and echoing assonances and consonant chimes which follow.

In "Harry Ploughman" he attempts "a direct picture of a ploughman, without after thought" but fails to achieve the desired effect because there are many verbal conundrums and excessive elaboration of details:

> Hard as hurdle arms, with a broth of goldish flue
> Breathed round; the rack of ribs; the scooped flanks; lank
> Rope-over thing; Knee-nave; and bareelled shank -
> Head and foot, should'er and shank -
> By a grey eye's heed steered well, one crew, fall to;
> Stand at stress. Each limb's barrowy brown, his thew
> That onewhere curded, onewhere sucked or sank -
> Soared or sank -
> Though as a beechbole firm, finds his, as at a roll-call, rank
> And features, in flesh, what deed he each must do -
> His sinew-service where do.

Even the most enthusiastic reader of the passage will miss the wood for the trees and share the experience of C. Day Lewis, who says, "If Harry is a monumental figure, then I get only a fly's eye view of it, a series of blinding close-ups, as if I were crawling laboriously from limb to limb over the surface of a corrugated, undemonstrative statue".

Tolkappiyam calls the technique of using a natural scene to describe act or agent *Ullurai Uvamam*, hidden metaphor or implicit comparison. A correlation of the landscapes and their con-

tents to the human scene, an inset is a structural feature within the poem. As Ramanujan has observed, it leaves out all the points of comparison and all explicit markers of comparison and integrates the different elements of the poem and shapes its message. "The inset is essentially a metonymy, an inpresentia relationship, where both terms are present, where the signifier and the signified belong to the same universe, share the same landscape".[26] It is a source of aesthetic pleasure to deduce the details of the action from the details of the setting.

Here is a poem from the celebrated classic, *Akananuru*:

What she said,
thinking of him crossing the wilderness alone.

The round blazing sun
Creeps in the sky,
raging as a fire
in the forest

and the silk-cotton tree
is leafless
yet in flower
without a bud,

like a long array
of red lamps
in the month of Karthikai
lit happily
by bustling women,

in the fruitless forest
where the pools are dry, dusty.

If only
He'd spend the time with me,
it would go fast,
If only he'd walk swiftly with me
on the dunes
overhung with flowering bough,
all fragrant,
where the forest stream flows now
and the sand
is laid out like a woman's bodice,

he could have what arms desire,
loving embraces,
body entering body,

and then my guiltless eyes
that now fill
ceaselessly like barren pools

fed by secret springs
could put aside
their daily sorrow
and find some sleep.[27]

When we go through this poem by Avvaiyar, we do feel, as Hopkins did, that "All the world is full of inscape". If inscape is the uniquesness of an observed object, if it is "the expression of the inner core of individuality, perceived in moments of insight by an onlooker who is full of harmony with the being he is observing", here are copy-book examples of it in the descriptions of the sun, the cotton tree and the sand.

In another poem in the same anthology we get splendid inscapes of horses and deer :

What he said
to his charioteer, on his way back.

Friend, drive softly here
Put aside the whip for now.
Slow down
these leaping pairs of legs
these majestic horses
galloping in style
as if to music

Think of the stag, his twisted antlers
like banana stems
after the clustering bud
and the one big blossom
have dropped
think of the lovely bamboo-legged doe
ready in desire:
if they hear the clatter of horse and chariot,
how can they mate
at their usual deed of night?[28]

Hopkins employs a wide range of devices of rhythm and sound to inscape his language into shapes. He achieves a high degree of complexity by the use of the Welsh art of cynghanedd (Kung-hanneth), a sophisticated series of techniques for making intricate and beautiful patterns of speech-sound, his two favourite patterns being what he calls vowelling-on and vowelling-off and also complex alliterative patterns.

The passage in "Spring",

Nothing is so beautiful as spring, when weeds, in
wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush

is a simple example of vowelling-on, which is internal rhyming. Vowelling-off or using contrasting vowel sounds or running up or down a scale of vowels is found in a description like.

> Cucokoo-echoing, bell-swarmed, lark-charmed, rook-racked, river-rounded (Duns Scotu's Oxford).

These devices help him gain onomatopoeic effects but occasionally they are used in the spirit of pure play also since he believed that the sound-pattern may be enjoyed for its own sake in addition to the interest of meaning.

The Sangam poets who eschewed initial rhymes were fond of internal rhymes, alliterations and meaningful combinations of vowel-sounds. The semantic potentiality, the suggestive richness and the sound of every word they use seem to have been carefully weighed by them. For example, in the first poem of *Kuruntokai*, the repetition of the word 'chem' meaning 'red', the alliterations and the vowel variations contribute to the total effect of the poem. Refusing the lover's gift of red flower, the heroine's girl friend says to him : "She belongs to the hill of the Red One which is full of red glory lilies, flowers of blood; the battlefield where the Red One crushes the demons is red; his arrow shafts are red; and the tusks of his elephants are also red".

But there are differences between Hopkins's inscapes and the Sangam poet's *Ullurais*. For the English poet, inscape was connected with God's presence in the world, and each separate species through its inscape reflects some part of God's all-inclusive perfection. In the minute and breath-taking details given by the Tamil poets in their descriptions of the sights and sounds of nature, God's presence is not stressed even though according to the *Akam* Convention each of the four regions is presided over by a deity.

The tendency to see God in everything is witnessed in the writings of later Tamil poets like Thayumanavar. Hopkins has many pure nature poems to his credit. But the Sangam poet was not interested in mere nature description or imagism. To him, the human being is more impartant than his natural surroundings and a landscape without an appropriate human mood would be "a signifier without a signified". Even where *Ullurais* were concerned, the Sangam poet had the advantage of a tradition and a well-established convention. Though Hopkins was indebted to Duns

Scotus for his concept of inscape, its conscious poetic use was his own.

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3. SANSKRIT DRAMA: ITS CONTINUITY OF STRUCTURE

Michael Lockwood & A. Vishnu Bhat

The classical Sanskrit play develops in two major stages. First, there is a kind of pre-natal stage, which is the prologue or introduction. This leads directly to the second stage, the play proper. The prologue opens with a prayer of invocation (the Nāndī), and the play proper closes with a prayer of benediction (the Bharatavākyam).

The Nāndī must originally have been a simple prayer invoking God's blessing and protection for the performance, performers, and audience. However, the classical dramatists have taken this body of verse and infused it with genetic elements of the play itself. This group of elements is the first source of organic continuity in the structure of a Sanskrit play. The elements are in the form of suggestive meanings (dhvani) of words and passages which go beyond the mere surface level. They may hint at the various characters of the play and suggest something of the nature of the play. The Nāndī, thus, becomes the embryo of the play, its elements difficult to distinguish. At a first reading or hearing of the Nāndī, it would be virtually impossible for the sharpest of minds to make out the significance of these elements. But as the play proceeds, it becomes possible to grasp their meaning.

Immediately following the Nāndī, there is a little preliminary playlet in which the Sūtradhāra continues the introduction of the play. At this stage, he is usually joined by an actress or actor assistant, and through their conversation, the elements hinted at in the Nāndī are developed further. The title of the play and the author's name are mentioned. Not only in the subject matter of their conversation, but also in their very own persons, the Sūtradhāra and his assistant foreshadow specific characters and situational relationships in the play proper.

Besides the group of genetic elements introduced in the Nāndī, the Sūtradhāra provides in himself a second strand of continuity which stretches from the Nāndī to the Bharatavākyam. His participation in all parts of the play is a thread (sūtra) which has been lost sight of during the last thousand years. An occasional commentator or scholar has referred to the 'ancient practice' of a major role in a Sanskrit drama (in the play proper) being played by the Sūtradhāra himself. The Sūtradhāra and his assistant in Bhavabhūti's play,

Mālatī, Mādhava, even tell the audience explicitly that the Sūtradhāra is going to take the hero's part in the play proper. However, we believe that we are the first to point out the fact that this practice is not occasional, but rather is fundamental to the orginally intended organic continuity in *all* the great classical Sanskrit plays.

To put it boldly, the Sūtradhāra *necessarily* becomes the leading male character in the play proper in *all* of the great classical Sanskrit plays. In his physical person, he carries the strand (sūtra) of continuity from the reciting of the opening Nāndī ślōka through the introduction and then through the play proper (as the leading man), and it is he who in the end recites tthe Bharatavākyam which brings the play to a close.

As a corollary, it follows that the Sūtradhāra's assistant (the Vidushaka or Natī) necessarily is one of the major supporting actors in the play proper. In a sense, the Sūtradhāra and his assistant are 'born again' in the play proper.

The third aspect of continuity in the structure of a classical Sanskrit play follows from the previous two. The Sūtradhāra does not cease to be the Sūtradhāra when he assumes the lead role in the play proper. The leading male role of a Sanskrit drama is thus a two-dimensional character throughout the play proper. Analogously, the Sūtradhāra's assistant is also a two-dimensional character in the play proper.

What we have, is a play within a play. The play proper is a play within the introductory playlet. The play proper is meta-drama in relation to the drama of the prologue. In one important sense, the introductory playlet does not end with the beginning of the play proper. It only ends when the play proper ends.

In the farce, *Bhagavadajjuka Prahasanam,* written by King Mahe-ndravarman around the beginning of the seventh century, A. D., the continuity provided by the Sūtradhāra (Director) and the dual personalities of him (Director/Mendicant) and his assistant (Buffoon/Disciple) are clearly evident in the play proper.

In the prologue of this farce, the Director's assistant, the Buffoon, asks him what type of play he is going to produce. The Director answers that he is going to produce a farce. The Buffoon ironically responds that he doesn't know anything about farcical comedy. The Director then tells him that no one can understand a thing without being taught. The Buffoon, (again, ironically) answers that, in that case, it is the Director himself, who must teach him what a farce is. The Director is only too happy to oblige, and he ushers in the

play proper with these words: "Since you are determined to become enlightened, follow me as the Disciple follows the Mendicant".

The Director and his assistant make their exit at this point, and after a quick change in costume and make-up, they immediately come back on stage, this time in the leading roles of the Mendicant and his Disciple. It does not take too much imagination to realize that the whole play proper of *Bhagavadajjuka* is but an extended lesson taught by the Director to his assistant, who proves to be the most exasperating, rebellious, and taunting pupil! It is clear that there is a play within a play. The introductory playlet which involves the Director with the task of teaching his assistant what a farce is does not end until the lesson ends - at the end of the play proper.

Now, there is one particular line toward the end of the play which can only make sense if we, the audience, are aware that the same actor is simultaneously both the assistant and the Disciple. The text has the "Disciple" say: "All right, I *now* have learned what Farce is!" But we know that it is not really the Disciple part of his split personality in the meta-drama saying this. It is the assistant part in the introductory-level drama acknowledging that he has finally learned his lesson at the hands of his teacher, the Director. The Disciple has, in fact, learned nothing!

We have indentified here three principles of organic continuity in the structure of the classifcal Sanskrit drama. The first principle has been much discussed by the old commentators and by modern scholars. The second and third principles, however, which orginally must have been so obvious as to need no comment, had, ironically, slipped into the depths of oblivion.

We shall further illustrate the above principles with an analysis of the prologues of the two plays, *Chārudatta and The Little Clay Cart.*

The Little Clay Cart has been called the most realistic of classical Indian dramas. In its prologue, the author of the play is identified as King Śūdraka who died at the age of a hundred years and ten days. Obviously if King Śūdraka were the author of this play, he could not have written this part of the prologue. To complicate the matter further, this play appears to be a later adaptation of a drama called *Chārudatta,* one of the cycle of thirteen plays discovered by Pandit Ganapati Sastri, who ascribed them all to the early poet Bhāsa. Ganapati Sastri identified Bhāsa as the author of these plays on the basis of circumstantial evidence, for there is no mention in the plays

themselves of any author.

The Little Clay Cart is complete, and has ten acts. *Chārudatta* is incomplete, and abruptly breaks off at the end of the fourth act. Whoever it was who wrote *Chārudatta* had a most inventive mind, and was not in the least afraid of ignoring convention when he was so pleased. *The Little Clay Cart,* on the other hand, though more elegantly sophisticated in language, was less conventional in its structure. An understanding of this difference can be gained by looking at the prologues of the two plays.

CHĀRUDATTA

The Prologue of *Chārudatta* opens without benefit of Nāndīślōka. The absence of the Nāndī is surely not international, but rather due to the fragmentary condition of the text.

The author of *Chārudatta* quite boldly has the Sūtradhāra speaking Prakrit throughout the prologue. This is unique in a Sanskrit play. There is a simple reason for this oddity, however. In all the other great Sanskrit plays, the Sūtradhāra goes on to take the Sanskrit-speaking, leading male role in the play proper. In *Chārudatta* alone, the Sūtradhāra goes on to play the part of a Prakrit-speaking comic companion of the Hero.

The Sūtradhāra enters telling us how hungry he is after long hours of rehearsing. He hopes his wife will have his morning meal ready for him, and as he enters his house, he notes encouraging signs of the preparation of food. This obsession with food is characteristic of the comedian Maitreya whose role he will assume in the play proper. The uncertainty about food in his own home anticipates the opening speech of Maitreya. Meeting his wife, the Sūtradhāra asks her if there is food for him in the house. His wife, the Actress, describes various delicious dishes. When he, in near disbelief, asks her if all this good food is really in his house, she jokingly tells him, "No, it is available in the market". In frustrated anger, he calls her 'an-ārya' ('ignoble'), and curses her to be similarly frustrated in her hopes. The dramatic irony here, of course, is that in the role of the 'anārya' courtesan Vasantasēnā, in the play proper, the Actress is going to face great frustration before she finally attains her desire of becoming the lawful wife of her lover, the noble and generous merchant, Chārudatta.

To return to the prologue, when the Sūtradhāra gets angry with his actress wife, she tries to calm him, telling him she was only joking about the food. In fact, all of the good things she described are ready

to be eaten. They are, she says, part of a ritual she is performing in order to obtain a noble husband. The Sūtradhāra is quick to ask his wife whether it is in this life (jāti) or her next life she seeks a noble husband. Her answer is that it is in her next life. The dramatic irony here is that her Prakrit-speaking husband, the Sūtradhāra, will be 'born again' in the play proper as the Hero's Prakrit-speaking comic companion, Maitreya. The Actress will be 'born again' as the courtesan Vasantasēnā, and she will eventually win a noble (Sanskrit-speaking) hubsband, Chārudatta, who in another sense of the word 'jāti' belongs to a different caste.

At the 'end' of the prologue, the Sūtradhāra is on the lookout for a Brahmin to officiate at the cerēmony of his wife's ritual—the ceremony being the play proper:

> *Sūtradhāra:* Now, where can I get a poor Brahmin? *(Looking around).* Ah! Here comes noble Maitreya, noble Chārudatta's friend. I'll invite him. *(Walking toward him.) Sir, I invite you to take a meal at my home...*
>
> *(Off-Stage Voice)* You must invite somebody else. I am not free.

The Sūtradhāra repeats his invitation, and exits. The Sūtradhāra next assumes the role of the Brahmin, Maitreya, and returns immediately on stage, repeating: "You must invite somebody else. I am not free". He then continues with a long monologue about the hard times he has fallen on, specifically owing to lack of food.

THE LITTLE CLAY CART

The author of *The Little Clay Cart* has borrowed extensively borrowed from the four extant acts of *Chārudatta.* But this playwright has chosen to fall back on the convention of the identity of the Sūtradhāra and the Hero of the play proper. Because of this decision, the Sūtradhāra opens the prologue speaking Sanskrit, and rather artificially switches to Prakrit when he begins conversing with his wife. Ravenous, he asks if there is anything to eat in the house. His wife, the Actress, describes a variety of dishes. When her husband asks whether this food is really in the house or she is joking, she tells him that it is available in the market. The Sūtradhāra curses his wife, saying to her, "May your own hopes be dashed, as you have dashed mine." The Actress begs his forgiveness, and says she was only joking. The food is there, and she is performing a ritual in order to obtain a noble husband. The Sūtradhāra asks her whether she seeks such a husband in this world (lōka) or the next (para-lōka).

Actress: In the next, of course,

Sūtradhāra: Now look at this, gentlemen! *(He appeals to the audience).* I have to pay for the food so she will find a noble husband in the next world!

Actress: Please, please, sir! I am doing this so you will be my husband in the next world.

The dramatic irony here, in this version, is that her husband, the Sūtradhāra, will be 'born again' in the play proper as the Hero, Chārudatta. The Actress will be 'born again' as the courtesan Vasantasenā. And the two of them will be united in marriage at the end of the play proper. It follows from this analysis that the play itself, is to be viewed as constituting the very ritual the Actress wants to perform in order to obtain a noble husband in the 'next world'.

Keeping in mind these various aspects of the organic continuity in the development of each play, *Chārudatta* reveals a more direct handling of the prologue. The Sūtradhāra's obsession with food is appropriate when he is to take Maitreya's role in the play proper. There is certainly not the same directness in *The Little Clay Cart,* where the Sūtradhāra assumes the role of Chārudatta, a noble soul whose concern about food is only a reflection of his concern about his sad state of poverty, and his inability to give support to others.

To recapitulate, then, one of our basic theses has been the insistence on the indentity of all of the following persons: the person who recites the opening invocation (the Nāndī), the person who introduces the play proper, the hero of the play, and the person who recites the closing benediction (the Bharatavākyam).

The scholarly world, however, seems rather uncertain of these indentities. Here is a sample of views regarding the identity of the Sūtradhāra as reciter of the Nāndī and the Sthāpaka as the introducer of the play:

Sten Konow (1901), with reference to the *Karpūra-Mañjarī:*

> ...the sūtradhāra was not on the stage between the end of the nāndī and that of the prastāvanā.[1]

A. B. Keith (1924):

> ... another person, similar in appearance and qualities to the Sūtradhāra, is to enter and produce the play, a function which gives him the style of introducer, Sthāpaka.[2]

Surendra Nath Shastri (1961):

> After the recitation of the *Nāndī*, Sūtradhāra is supposed to get out of the stage and another actor very much resembling him is to enter and introduce the occasion of the enactment of the drama, its title and the author. He is technically called the Establisher (Sthāpaka) or the Introducer.[3]

Harutmut-Ortwin Feistel (1972), interpreting the *Nāṭya-Śāstra:*

> After having recited the *prarocanā, the sūtradhāra...* leaves, another member of the troupe, imitating the sūtradhāra's costume, gait and manners of speech, enters, the so-called *sthāpaka.*[4]

We need not labor the point further. This failure by scholars to recognize the identity of the Sūtradhāra and the Sthāpaka is a result of too literal a reading of the *Nāṭya-Śastra* and the *Daśarūpaka* and this in spite of Abhinavagupta's clear warning: *"Sūtradhāra ēva sthāpaka iti sūtradhāraḥ pūruvaraṅgaṁ prayujya sthāpakaḥ san praviśēd-iti na bhinna kartṛkatā/"*

> ("The Sūtradhāra himself is the Sthāpaka. After performing the preliminaries, the Sūtradhāra should assume the role of the Sthāpaka and appear on the stage. This being the case, dont distinguish them!")

H. H. Wilson, more than a hundred and fifty years ago, had guessed correctly:

> It seems not unlikely that it was the intention of the original writers, although the commentators may not have understood it, to discriminate between the real and assumed personage of the *Sūtradhāra,* who spoke benediction in his own character or as a Brahman, which he must have been, and then carried on the dialogue of the prelude as the manager of the theatrical corps.[5]

When it comes to the question of the Sūtradhāra/Sthāpaka taking a role in the play proper, there is recognition among some scholars that he *may* often take *some* role:

M. Winternitz (1909-20):

> The sūtradhāra was generally the main actor, who played the chief rôle, that is the hero.[6]

Surendra Nath Shastri (1961)

> (The Sūtradhāra) is the actor-in-chief, and assumes the rôle of some character in the play.[7]

H. W. Wells (1963):

> The Producer at times evolves into a character of the play.[8]

V. Raghavan (1966):

> ...on the ancient Sanskrit stage, there was the practice of the character or characters of the opening scene of the play figuring in the *prastāvanā*, as the Sūtradhāra and the *Naṭa*.[9]

I. Shekhar (1977):

> Since the Sūtradhāra managed the entire show... he had to take any role when an artist was missing or the troupe wanted to economise.[10]

All of these are qualified statements using such terms 'generally', 'some', 'at times', etc. Shekhar would have the Sūtradhāra's choice of role depend on filling in for someone missing or on matters of economy.

In contrast, our view is that the prologue of a Sanskrit drama is carefully crafted by the playwright so that by aesthetic design the Sūtradhāra must take up the hero's role, and his assistant must assume the role of a specific character in the play proper—not just *some* role.

If we may be allowed to adapt Abhinavagupta's dictum: *Sthāpaka ēva pradhāna-pātra iti sthāpakaḥ prastāvanāṁ prayujya pradhāna-pātras-san praviśēd-iti na bhinna kartṛkatā*

> (The Sthāpaka himself is the leading actor. After performing the Prastāvanā, the Sthāpaka should assume the role of the leading actor and appear on the stage. This being the case, don't distinguish them!)

From its beginning to its end, the Sanskrit play, thus, reveals an unfolding continuity and unity in its structural development which commentators have perceptively compared with the development of a living organism.

Notes

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9. V. Raghavan, *"Kūḍiyāṭṭam - Its Form and Significance as Sanskrit Drama", The Saṁskṛita Raṅga Annual,* vol. 5, p. 84.
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4. *THE WORLD OF NAGARAJ*

B. Parvathi

Speaking of the Indian literary scene is, in fact, discussing the work of master novelists like Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao, whose consistent contribution spreads over a period of fifty five years since their first publication in 1935. R. K. Narayan among them is, perhaps, the most widely read and appreciated novelist in recent times, thanks to the work of translators in over fourteen languages, film producers and T. V. *The Guide* and *The Financial Expert* were filmed. *The Vendor of Sweets* was televised and was a great success as *Swami and Friends* and *Malgudi Days* were widely acclaimed. Apart from these timetested achievements Narayan's contribution since 1976 is rich, varied and aesthetically satisfying. With *The Painter of Signs* (1976) began a new phase in the history of Malgudi bringing forth novels like *A Tiger for Malgudi, The Talkative Man, The World of Nagaraj*, collections of stories, *Malgudi Days, Under the Banyan Tree, Stories Old and New*, and collection of essays *A Writer's Nightmare*. The focus of the present paper, however, is on the novels and the latest in particular.

The setting of the novels is Malgudi. Its people breathe the same ethos, things are basically same except for a few surface changes. Events take place but character is all that matters. Each novel has a central character but there are others living in this world of Malgudi, who have somehow managed to stay back and appear in succeeding novels. Jayaraj who has taken up photoframing, Nataraj the printer, Varma glued to his counter and cash box at the Boardless, Raman the sign-painter, Sambu, the Talkative Man, new faces like Bari, Coomar, Jesu Doss, Gupta, the drunken enginner who for some reason insists he is wifeless but not a widower, the old and the new librarian, the doctor, Kavu Pundit, with the exception of old Gaffur, the adjournment lawyer and the stingy landlord, live here. Several changes have taken place with the addition of new schools and colleges, shops, market area, the New Extension and Housing Board - but the original inhabitants reside in Ellamman street, Kabir street, Vinayak Mudali Street, etc.

Modernity has set its foot in Malgudi. There is a lot of activity on the Menpi hills and talk of a hydro-electric project. The mes-

sage of family planning is brought and resolutely spread in surrounding villages by the tenacity of the new woman Daisy who sacrifices self for the sake of social good; and there is Raman the sign-painter and expert in calligraphy falling in love with Daisy, wedded in the 'Gandharva' style, only to be left alone by her departure. He remains faithful in love, as Krishna does. This, in brief, is the story of *The Painter of Signs.*

The next novel *A Tiger for Malgudi* is an interesting deviation from the rest -- it is a fable on a larger scale. Narayan's most outstanding work not from one but several points of view, we find in it a superb blending of theme, plot, structure, narrative technique and character portrayal. The comic overtones and the philosophic undertones are finely tuned. Raja the tiger is an animal and a symbol too. The soul in Raja is awakened by the Master and he tries to become a better being. Just as a person needs guidance or divine intervention for spiritual enlightenment -- here portrayed in Raja and the Master -- so also the people need a power, i.e., Raja to induce fear into their minds as a first step towards self-restraint and discipline. The Master himself is a seeker of Truth or God. The Master, Raja and the people are all at various stages of self-realisation.

The Talkative Man materialises from Narayan's short stories as a teller of impossible and incredible tales, the man about town and a self-appointed journalist, though no one waits eagerly for his news at the other end. His nosing around makes him a familiar figure to such an extent that a totally westernized and mysterious man from Timbuctoo, on a UN assignment, comes searching for him. Rangan, alias Rann, shrouded in deceit and falsehood, exploits the talkative man's helping nature and proves to be the proverbial camel in TM's own house. Rann exudes a peculiar charm, quite disturbing, especially to parents or grandparents of innocent young girls. The TM intervenes at the right moment, turns up and frustrates Rann's proposed elopement with the old librarian's grand daughter. The extent of damage to the poor girl is not dwelt upon. The disturbing outside element is thrown out: this is all that Malgudi needs.

The World of Nagaraj tells a different story. As Professor K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar observes, "Human nature is presented voraciously... each new novel is a jerk of the kaleidoscope when a new changing

pattern emerges to hold our attention". The central character Nagaraj loves and lives a different life. All characters for some reason or other choose a vocation: Ramani works for an insurance company; Krishna is a teacher; Srinivas runs a journal; money-lending is Margayya's business; Sriram's love for Bharati makes him a satyagrahi, a follower of Gandhiji; Raju is a master showman who makes the most of all situations; Jagan is a dedicated sweet-vendor; Raman, a graduate, loves calligraphy and calls himself a lettering artist; the talkative man also dabbles in journalism for the love of it. But Nagaraj is one of the privileged inhabitants of the Kabir Street's landed 'aristocracy'. Although he believes himself to be a man with a mission, queries about the mission would only disturb his peace of mind. However, he discovers that his mission is to bring to light the life of the divine sage Narada.

Nagaraj lived in the Kabir Street house with his parents and elder brother Gopu. Gopu is said to be an ideal and model student. He feels vastly superior to Nagaraj and orders him about. He occupies the best room in the house, appropriates a table and chair of which Nagaraj cannot even dream of. Graduation with a first class and marriage enhance his status and never once does he think of work. His wife Charu builds him up into a celebrity whose rare company sends mother into ecstacy. Father's death upsets everything. Gopu, business-like and perhaps goaded by his wife, divides property, takes a major share of it and walks out on his grief-stricken mother. She lives with Nagaraj and his wife Sita in the vast house. Despite lack of cordiality from Gopu and Charu, Sita who bears no children, loves and looks after Tim and brings him up herself, leaving Charu with a lot of free time. However, what upsets Nagaraj is Tim's going away with his parents to the village. Tim grows up in the village, studies in a school five miles away. One way, he comes to stay with his uncle and aunt. Gopu's habitual application of 'unleashed donkey' to his son is the reason for his coming away to Malgudi. Nagaraj's old mother falls ill and dies. Tim is very attentive to his grandmother. Her death creates a certain kind of vacuum in the ancient house.

Nagaraj admits Tim in Albert Mission College but comes to know from the Talkative Man Ramu, his neighbour, that Tim has dropped out. His association with 'Kismet', a sort of club, upsets Nagaraj very much. In addition, Gopu blames Nagaraj for not keeping check on Tim. Nagaraj becomes the victim of worry. For

diversion he turns to learning and writing about Narada. A fanatic for Sanskrit, Kavu Pundit, whom Nagaraj approaches, proves to be of no help. Nagaraj confides his troubles to Bari, a man from north India; Bari has a 'Narad Puran' with him, promises to read from it and when he reads Nagaraj takes copious notes. At first, it is his worry about Tim, then it is Tim's wife who distracts him from writing with her blaring harmonium music. Tim and Saroja behave exactly as Gopu and Charu did in the past taking Nagaraj and Sita for granted. Nagaraj's inability to appreciate Saroja's music drives Tim mad and they leave home to stay near Kismet where he works.

This comes as another shock to Nagaraj. Gopu's arrival strikes him dumb, and renders him incapable of any coherent speech or meaningful action. 'Inane' is the word Gopu flings at Nagaraj on all occasions. After a scene at Kismet where Tim resolutely refuses to see his father, Gopu leaves Malgudi in a rage, all of which Nagaraj comes to know from the talkative man. Gopu's letter disowning Tim upsets him, and he tries to overcome this shock by yielding afresh to the work on Narada. Just as he and Sita reschedule their lives to a really independent life, Tim walks in with Saroja as though it is the most natural thing to do. This time Saroja comes with a new weapon a 'leg harmonium' which dispels any hope Nagaraj cherishes about Narada. Not even one of the thousands of Gods comes to the rescue of Nagaraj. Project Narada is abandoned.

Like Raman Nagaraj has the habit of speaking audibly and inaudibly. He is more detached than most of Malgudi's men because of his temperament. He is content to be what he is except for his Narada mission and the love he has for Tim. These two things make him happy. "It was his nature to feel grateful to small mercies."[1] Nagaraj can neither talk nor act independently because of his yielding temperament. In addition to this "Nagaraj's nature had no resistance of any kind in it" (111). If he does not talk back to people, it is due to the fact that he speaks truth which they cannot bear. His silence makes him look like an 'idiot', and an 'unobservant fool', because it is "Not in his nature to retort openly..." He is 'wishy washy and dreamy' as father calls him and when he gets married to Sita, also 'a timid soul', "his qualification was not his personality but his family."(25) Be it his family or friends or wife he makes no demands for it is not in his nature to make demands on her or on any one.

The brothers are startlingly opposite in their temperaments: Gopu uninhibitedly gives vent to his anger towards Nagaraj, calls him 'a contented cudchewing cow,' while Nagaraj indulges himself in thinking of his brother as a 'boor' who has no place in his mind except for dung, cattle, manure and the gober gas plant - his minor deity. At the time of division of property Nagaraj bargains for freedom and comfort rather than an equal share. Being childless, he dotes over Tim and is almost heart-broken when Gopu walks away from Kabir Street. However Tim's arrival, after a quarrel with his father, makes Nagarj and Sita very happy. Tim loves his uncle, follows him to Albert Mission College but drops out quietly. Tim avoids Nagaraj, chats occasionally with his aunt and escapes both with his charmingly elusive manner. Nagaraj is confronted by his brother now on the issue of Tim working at a shady place called 'Kismet', but has no answers. However, Nagaraj finds the dispute settled with the marriage of Tim. He faces a new problem in the form of Saroja's music when she asks for his opinion. He is torn 'between candour and dippomacy'. What hurts Nagaraj most in his relationship with his brother is the latter's accusation of irresponsibility. Gopu disowns his son, assigns Tim the duty of lighting Nagaraj's funeral pyre, as an adopted son. This picture "Overwhelmed him with self-pity and tears streamed down his cheeks and he was convulsed with an involuntary sob"(172).

He discovers the truth "that he was born in an unsympathetic world unsuspected by him all these days"(145) and finally resigns himself to his nature. One more discovery, of the evil part of his nature, gives him some satisfaction in the catastrophe that should befall his brother.

> May be ... a thunderbolt hitting his gobar gas plant or ... a pest attacking his farm or a poisonous seed spreading amongst his grass, lying prostrate his cattle,... his hundreds of coconut, banana, mango and guava trees gone, ... his farmhouse attached for unpaid taxes... thrown out ...(174)

This dispels some of his gloom.

In short, Nagaraj is, as Sita never tires of pointing out, obsessed with thoughts about his brother, "the writer of offensive postcards", "a rustic who wears a tuft and dabbles in mud and manure like a baby"(54) who in turn concludes that "... Nagaraj seemed impervious to the value of agriculture, horticulture or any culture"(54).

In contrast, Nagaraj takes pride in the literary wealth that lies hidden deep within him and comes out occasionally with an appropriate quotation. Shakespeare, Milton, the Bible, Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* and, of course, his interest in Narada place him on a higher plane of existence, though unreckoned by his fellow beings. Like the pyol, his resort and asylum, Narada also gives a sense of direction to his life. He contemplates on Narada, meditates, wonders, and at last decides to delve deep into the sage's life. Sita does not share his enthusiasm for Narada. Why does he not write about Sri Krishna? He seeks Kavu Pundits' help. Kavu Pundit rails at all 'mlecha bhashas', but hardly shows interest in reading about Narada in 'devabhasha'. A casual talk with Bari reveals the existence of 'Narad Puran' about 'Narad Mahraj' which he promises to read to Nagaraj. This gives him the freedom to render his work in English so as to reach people of the world. He even decides to render the subject attractive with a few touches of humour. He takes notes while Bari reads out to him, and in the morning wearing his ochre clothes in the puja room he sets on his mission. In this process he gets into webs of distracting thoughts and circumstances, the prime one being the piercing sound of Saroja's harmonium. "His whole attention was on the harmonium, following and suffering every note"(133). At first it is the piercing music, then the endless rain that envelops the world before its birth for thousands of years. It is beyond Nagaraj's understanding. "Nagaraj shuddered at the picture of it and felt grateful to be living at the present time..."(135).

Frivolous as it may appear Nagaraj's fear and gratitude are not feigned. Days pass, the deluge continues and the Purana does not go beyond 'Cosmology and Cataclysm' to Creation and Nagaraj finds fault with the writer for lack of economy. Here is an added burden to his already overloaded mind. How to reduce twenty five pages of gloom to a few lines? Any and all questions and problems in the routine of daily life point in the direction of Narada and elicit only a series of incoherent, irrelevant mumblings. Narada is a master musician for whose sake Nagaraj sends up a prayer from "the jungle of harmonium lovers". In spite of all the trouble from Gopu, Tim and Charu, Nagaraj firmly resolves not to give up Narada. After Gopu's final departure both Sita and Nagaraj shedding their worries and anxieties plan for a new future. He feels that

> life's pendulam,... was coming back to normal, which meant that in the back-ground Narada would once again appear and lend a meaning to daily existence...

> No speculations about Tim... No need to hunt for ear plugs. The house had become suddenly quiet; absolute calm prevailed. Sita too looked relieved and had shed her irritations and anxieties. Above all, he was free from responsibilities and custody of Tim (177).

As a free man, looking back at the notes on Narada, Nagaraj finds them absolutely senseless. Yet, he cannot abandon

> a personality who had occupied his thoughts ... for years(180)

His resolve to meditate in order

> that the sage might reveal himself to him in a vision(181).

is foiled by Tim's sudden and unexpected homecoming. Not only does he plan to feed white ants with his notes but also wear ochre clothes to remain silent and buy a lot of cotton wool to shield his ears from the blast of music.

As an individual, Nagaraj is liked and tolerated by all, except his brother. His place in society is secure as in his family, though moments of defeat, are inevitable. Nagaraj never willingly leaves the security of his home. He symbolizes the frustrations and failures of some of Malgudi's individuals who are never destined to succeed in anything they attempt to do. He is not destined to enjoy freedom, forever playing second fiddle to his brother, brother's son and the son's wife. Krishna, Srinivasa, Raman, the talkative man - all have something to go back to and work -- Nagaraj has only his pyol. Except for Sita his wife, he is a non-entity. There are times when even he takes her for granted but immediately corrects himself. Considering the fact that Sita too is like him, no wonder Nagaraj sometimes feels superior except when practical matters are concerned. He thinks:

> Ninety nine percent of husbands must be practising diplomacy for survival... If men weren't crafty family structure would have crumbled long ago(68).

He also says to himself

> You must never listen to women. They will not let you do anything worthwhile than buying brinjals and cucumber and mustard and rice,...(81).

Nagaraj, on the whole, is different from the rest of the Malgudi tribe. He is not incorrigible like Margayya or Jagan since there is

nothing about him that can be corrected. He is too docile and defenceless in a bewildering world.

The reasons are not hard to discover. The magic touch of Malgudi is not as potent as it was or should be. There are digs at characters but the usual punch is no longer felt. So far, Malgudi has breathed an air of mild but effective satire, mocking irony, light but serious touches of conern; this atmosphere, portraying life as it is and should be is pierced in this novel by the harsh light of reality thrown on its unpleasant and painful aspects. To come to grips with it is not an easy task. There is danger in living in the vicinity of a fellow like Vasu, but there is nothing in living with Nagaraj. That makes a lot of difference.

The world cannot live with its saints nor does it let them live in it. They are safer in framed photographs or on pedestals in public places. And the world cannot put up with its humble, timid folk too. But humanity is a combination of these two types and more. It is not with a chuckle that one can close this novel but with an enveloping sense of sadness. The world of Nagaraj has shrunk to the proportions of his pyol.

Notes

1. R. K. Narayan, *The World of Nagaraj* (Mysore: Indian Thought Publications, 1990), p. 94. Further citations are indicated in parentheses.

5. VIMALA RAINA'S HISTORICAL IMAGINATION

M. A. Jeyaraju

Vimala Raina's historical novel Ambapali (1962) tells the story of the famed courtesan of Vaishali, the first woman to be admitted by Buddha to his Sangh. In recreating Ambapali and her times Raina displays admirable historical imagination.

In her introduction to the novel, Raina states that, fascinated by Ambapali's name and her title of *Nagar Vadhu Jan Path Kalyani*, or "City's Bride, Saviour of the People", she read many books on her, but could find in none her distinct beauty of body and sould and that the strange course of Ambapali's life raised in her mind a picture "which clamoured to be brought to life" (v). Raina's fictional end, evidently, is not mere recreation, but apotheosis of Ambapali. It is a gratifying critical exercises to trace the working of Raina's historical and traditional accounts that achieve her fictional goal without violating the laws of artistic truth.

Radha Kumud Mookerji, the historian, says that, from Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jain sources, Megasthenes's rich but unreliable *Indika*, records left by Greek historians and reports left by the Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang, historians have put together a "provisional account" of the age of Magadhan imperialism(18).

Raina, exercising her artistic licence with fine discrimination, rejects outright all that might besmirch the personality of Ambapali or detract from her role as the pivot upon which the whole story turns. She so modifies historical and traditional accounts relating to Ajat Shatru that his passion for Ambapali becomes his *raison d' etre.*

Raina rejects all the historical accounts which hold that Ambapali's son was sired by Bimbasar (Mookerji 20; Nihar Ranjan Ray 528; R. C. Majumdar 569). Pointing out, in her introduction to the novel, that there are others who say that Ambapali loved Ajat Shatru and bore him a son named Vimal Kund, Raina rationalises that the confusion "is due to the fact that the tale at first connected Ambapali with the Magadh Samrat. The people who heard the tale later added the name--some of Bimbasar and some of Ajat Shatru" (vi). Historians are unable to fix the chronology of

the period exactly and there are two opinions about even the date of Buddha's death (Mookerji 36). In the circumstances Raina chooses to trace Ambapali's life "along with Buddha's quest for Nirvana," sincer her name is found more in Buddhist lore than in political history and the quest convinces her that "there are greater reasons for Ajat Shatru to have been the one who came into Ambapali's life" (*Ambapali*, Introduction vi).

Raina rejects the Buddhist tradition that Ajat Shatru, instigated by Buddha's wicked and jealous cousin Devadatta, killed Bimbasar and later confessed the patricide to Buddha. She also rejects the Jain tradition tha Ajat Shatru put his father in prison, but repenting of it later, went to the prison with an iron club to break the fetters and Bimbasar, in fear, took poison and killed himself (Mookerji 22).

Raina retains the historical accounts of Ajat Shatru's war-mongering expansionism, his conquest of the political confederacy of Eastern India headed by the Lichchavi Republic of Vaishali, Buddha's presence in the area during the time, the cunning destruction of the inner unity of the Lichchavies by Ajat Shatru's secret agents, the building of the fortress of Pataliputra on the banks of the Ganges for strategic convenience in the war with Vaishali, the Magadhians using two deadly weapons called the *Mahasilakantakara* and the *Rathamusala* to ravage Vaishali and the war lasting more than sixteen years (Mookerji 23-26).

In order to provide a fitting foil to Ajat Shatru in Vidu Rath, the son of King Presenjit of Kosala by a morganatic marriage, Raina modifies history and portrays Presentjit as a timid, selfish, sensual and stupid old man. According to history the gift of the revenue of Kashi, given to Magadh when Bimbasar married the Kosalan princess, was revoked by Presenjit when Ajat Shatru killed his father and caused the death, by grief, of his Kosalan mother. The revocation provoked a war, in which, Ajat Shatru, though initially victorious, was later ambushed and forced to surrender. Subsequently, however, peace was made and Presenjit freed Ajat Shatru and gave him his daughter Vajira in marriage along with the revenue of Kashi (Mookerji 23). But, in Raina's novel, Vidu Rath refuses, in sheer definance, to pay Magadh the revenue of Kashi, Ajat Shatru reacts to it by marching on Kosala and Presenjit pusillanimously welcomes him and gives him his daughter in marriage along with the revenue of Kashi (115-28).

According to Buddhist tradition the war between Magadh and Vaishali was provoked by the latter's violation of an agreement to share equally the produce of a jewel-mine at the foot of a hill on the boundary between the two countries (Mookerji 23). Raina merely mentions hills with mines yielding a valuable chemical and precious stones *(Ambapali* 82; 166). Jain tradition holds that the bone of contention was the Magadh State elephant named Seyanaga and a huge necklace of eighteen strings of pearls given by Bimbasar to his younger sons Halla and Vehalla, who fled with both and sought the protection of their maternal gradfather Rajah Chetak of Vaishali (Mookerji 23). Raina merely includes a report that Ajat Shatru's younger brothers Halla and Bhalla brought to Vaishali the state jewels and the best trained elephants of Magadh, that Ajat Shatru asked Rajah Chetak to send his brothers back to Magadh or at least return the jewels or face a war and that Rajah Chetak refused to oblige him (Ambapali 223-24). All this modification of history is evidently motivated by Raina's design of making Ajat Shatru's passion for Ambapali the *raison de guerre.*

According to some texts, Ambapali's father, Mahanama, a rich citizen of Vaishali, faced with numerous suitors, including princes, seeking her hand in marriage, placed the matter before the Lichchavi *gana* or assembly. The members of the assembly, upon seeing Ambapali, decided that she was a *"stri-ratna* (jewel of a woman)" and so decreed, in accordance with their convention, that she was not to be married to anyone, but was to be enjoyed by the *gana.* Thereupon Ambapali decided to lead the life of a public woman (Majumdar 568-69). Rejecting this account, Raina adopts instead the legend of Ambapali the foundling *(Ambapali 6).* Exercising fine craftsmanship, Raina avoids the least suggestion of volition on Ambapali's part in her being elected *raj nartaki* or court dancer of Vaishali and any tinge of sensuality in her life thereafter.

Ambapali's meeting with Buddha, her entertaining him in her palace, her being honoured with a discourse by him and her presenting a park to him are recorded in history (Majumdar 569-70). Raina displays fine artistry in recreating these incidents.

Ambapali, as portrayed by Raina in her novel, is beautiful, charming and generous. She loves Vaishali intensely. She falls in love with the disguised Ajat Shatru, consummates a *ghandarva* marriage with him and conceives of him. However, the moment she discovers that he is the Magadh Monster she turns him away,

immune to all his temptations. When, in order to repossess her, he lays waste Vaishali and comes to claim her, she accosts him saffron-robed and with her silken tresses shorn, mocking his bloody triumph. She takes him on a tour of the devastation he has wrought and shows him their teen-aged son Vimal Kund, who, dressed as a common *bhikku,* is preaching the message of Buddha to the widowed and the wounded, and who declines *Samrat* Ajat Shatru's crown even as alms. Having conquered herself and the material world, Ambapali ultimately finds her proper niche in Buddha's Sangh and as the leader of his mission to Sri Lanka.

K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar rightly says, "Vimala Raina deserves all credit as much for the choice of her theme as for the portrayal of her heroine" (475-76). The success of Raina's historical novel *Ambapali* is primarily due to her admirable historical imagination.

Notes

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6. ILLUSION TO DISILLUSIONMENT A STUDY OF NAIPAUL'S *IN A FREE STATE*

M. S. Nagarajan & Y. Somalatha

With all our most holy illusions knocked
Higher than Gilderoy's kite
We have had a jolly good lesson, and it
Serves us jolly well right!
- Rudyard Kipling.

The modern writers hold an attitude towards the human condition in relation to their beliefs. This is due to their heightened curiosity about man's presence in the world. The third-world writer, V. S. Naipaul, who has tremendous confidence in his perception of the world, takes upon himself the task of addressing directly to 'the live' issues of our times. With his vision of an ordered universe, he examines the contemporary chaos, and thus punctures the illusions regarding human existence.

Naipaul's peculiar vision of human predicament, as delineated in his fiction, has a three dimensional significance - historical, social and psychological. He creates the socio-historical condition and renders the characters according to its needs. In characterisation he unfolds historical process, and evinces deep interest in society and individual psychology. The result is a unique form of art which analyses the reality that confronts humanity in such circumstances. It is unfortunate that a writer like Naipaul, whose work has lofty humanistic value, is undeservingly dispraised for his political affiliations. This is a problem of intentional fallacy. We should put aside speculations about the intentions of the author and consider the work 'itself'.

The present study takes up Naipaul's novelette "In A Free State" for an exploration of psychological implications of the work. The key concept of the novelette is the expatriate figure in another culture. The locale is set in a newly independent state in Africa, the political situation of which is similar to that of Uganda in 1966. As Naipaul greatly deviates from actual history, we intend to overlook the basic confusion of periods, places and personalities. After their emancipation from colonical rule, the Africans, whose loyalties are tribal rather than national, indulge themselves in tribal warfare.

The power-game is between the King and the President. Amidst this political turmoil, on a day when the uneasy mutters of coup reached their peak, two expatriate whites undertake a long journey by road, from the capital to the safety of their compound. The plot of the story is woven around the bitter experiences and humiliations which the protagonist encounters on his way to destination.

Bobby, a homo-sexual, heady with liberal ideas towards the post-colonial societies, craves to belong to the free state of Africa. He hopes against hope that Africa has still something to offer him. His companion in the car, Linda, is a representative figure of a hard bitten and agressive colonial wife. Her thorough settler's attitude guards her against vulnerable exposure to African offensiveness. The stirring events on the long journey strip Bobby of his empty ideals. At the end of the long drive, Bobby stands bereft of his cherished illusions.

The journey of Bobby and Linda is generally viewed by readers and critics as a political allegory which concerns itself with the colonial recession. Landeg White says that, "Bobby's and Linda's journey is, in one sense, a tour of the country examining the colonial ruins"(196.) But the present study attempts to emphasize the fact that Naipaul's major concern is the human aspect of the story rather than the issues of politics. To substantiate we quote John Theime who is of the opinion that, "As formal political allegory the story may be said to stand for colonical retreat, but as always Naipaul is more interested in the human implications of his fable"(Theime 196).

The novelette "In A Free State" holds out a number of themes for the perusal of a keen reader. Themes like--alienation, prejudices and assumptions, rootlessness, journey-motif, absence of rebellion, paradox of freedom, iniquities of post-colonial societies and cross-cultural ethos. Yet, the focus of attention of the present study is on the theme of illusion. The study is fixed in the context of human relations. The futile half-relations of human beings lead to uncertainty regarding life itself. The incoherence of the world turned every human being into an exile. The universal struggle of mankind is to understand the society into which he is thrown and to be understood by it. But one's own illusions belie one's acceptance of the world. Careful not to go in pursuit of meanings at the expense of character, we try to review Bobby, the protagonist of the

novelette as a study in disillusionment.

The novelette is tightly packed with powerful events. Each incident reinforces the total attitude of the book. Each is worth considering in detail. Herein we take up a few prominent episodes to divulge our angle of view.

After fixing the context of the book the novelist proceeds to narrate a violently perturbing scene in the capital's interracial pick-up spot. Bobby, wearing his saffron 'native shirt' designed and woven in Holland is the centre of the scene. Visualizing himself as a lover of equality he befriends a Zulu male whore. To acquaint the Zulu with his liberal views regarding colour differences Bobby says, "If I come into the world again I want to come with your colour" (107). This unfortunate reference to racism hardens the Zulu who spits on Bobby's face. Accepting this deep humiliation, with his face set in a stupid half-smile, Bobby walks out. This blatant insult is but the beginning for an onset of insults that are to be heaped on Bobby. Trying to deny the colour differences, he hinted at the inherent inferiority of Blacks. This shows his condescension towards Africans of which he himself is unaware. At this stage of the novelette Bobby is stuck fast in his illusory notions. Being a homosexual he desires physical contact with the Zulu. But he tries to make it sound like companionship merging colour discrimination. He is false to himself.

For a speculation upon the theme of illusion, an orientation of the relationship between Bobby and Linda is of immense value. In the morning of that fateful day, Bobby's spirit of adventure is subdued, for he has to take Linda along with him. Talking of their previous understanding Naipaul says, "It was one of those difficult half-relatioships, with uncertainty rather than suspicion on both sides" (109-10). Both of them heard appealing stories about each other. They prepare themselves for the meeting like actors in a play. This sort of condition produces either hypocrisy or self-deception. "In associating a homosexual with a man-eating woman, Naipaul abolishes what would normally be an expected influence in these circumstances, the force of sexual attraction. So that the situation can develop in a wholly free state in which the two protagonists act upon one another purely as persons emancipated from everything but themselves and the position they are in" (Walsh 69). As the emancipation from themselves is not contemplated, throughout the novelette, the relationship remains half-made. Linda's prejudices

and Bobby's illusions made their relationship artificial and sterile.

Irrespective of the African response, Bobby waves at them from his car. He is eager to establish a relationship with the anonymous crowd, whereas he has no inclination to improve upon his association with Linda. The motive behind is his anxiety to remain close to people on the surface of solitude.

Bobby always conceals his real intentions by means camouflage of liberal sentiments. The incident that takes place at the Esher filling station is a glaring example of his criminal deception of himself. In the absence of their boss, the Africans at the filling station feel hesitant to approach the car. Bobby encourages them with his friendly voice and laughter. He is infuriated by Linda's impatience and hates her for uttering 'pathetic' in such a tone of voice. But, when he realizes that the windscreen of the car is scratched by the small African who belongs to the King's tribe, he grows furious. He is liberal in talk but not in action. He deals with the African in the most outrageous way. In spite of his appropriate noises about equality, Bobby is on the side of power. Later, in the car he repents for destroying the pathetic dignity of the small African. He vacillates between uncritical admiration and cynical contempt for the Africans. Only at the end of the novelette, freed from his illusions, Bobby becomes aware of his stand.

Bobby's life in Africa seemed whole because of his power of illusion. His reiteration of 'My life is here' is the outcome of that misconception. In order to stay in Africa he acts out his part in the fantasy play. After the confession to Linda, of his nervous breakdown for once he is true to himself - "You do terrible things to prove to yourself that you are a real person" (154). His recollections of the past and his dreams of a fantasy resort on the top of a hill gives the reader an impression that he seeks a definition of his self in terms of anything but the compelling present reality. He dwells either in the memory of the past or in a world of fantasy rather than in the vivid flash of the present.

The most exasperating scene of the novelette occurs on the protagonists' nocturnal walk at the colonel's. An angry pack of dogs chase them on the deserted road. This event has no logical or relevant connections to the general atmosphere of the novelette. It gives us a sense that the universe might at any moment relapse into anger and lunacy. The horrifying incident seems to suggest

that what is real is the sense of menace.

Soon after, follow Bobby's overtures to the barboy. Exhausted by the panic of the nightmarish chase by dogs, Bobby sinks deep into solitary melancholy. He projects his own sorrowful mood on the barboy, Carolus, and sympathises with his condition of distress. He doesn't understand that there is more to people than their distress - that they are real people. Bobby makes a half-hearted attempt to teach the boy. There is dishonesty in this, because he is motivated by selfish, sexual impulses. The next morning Bobby is terrified by the threatening advances of Carolus for money, and yields to his demand. Later, he tries to convince himself that he has misread the boy's face. Yet he feels awful. The trouble with Bobby is that he dare not abandon his liberal sentiments. To preserve them he denies himself his natural feelings and reactions.

After the murder of the King, Bobby's encounter with a group of President's soliders proves disastrous. Despite the warning of his instinct he walks to the midst of them to enquire about the curfew. For no apparent reason, the soliders grow wild and beat him to the extent that his wrist bone is fractured. The act of violence on the part of the soldiers arises out of the need to exercise power over others as an assertion to themselves of their successful existence. Bobby's illusion of humanism blinds him to the obvious portents of danger. This is the highest penalty he paid for his misconceptions concerning human kind. He is disillusioned.

Back in the safety of the government compound, Bobby spends a restless night. In the morning his houseboy Luke laughs at his pathetic predicament with a broken wrist. Bobby is hurt that his private sphere is invaded. His immediate thought is to leave the compound. But he cannot forgo the safety of the compound. Hence he forgoes his liberal views and decides to sack Luke. The progression toward disillusionment is complete.

In the context of disillusionment one is reminded of Henrik Ibsen who says, "rob the average man of his illusions, and you rob him also of his happiness". The disillusioned protagonist of the novelette is no more happy. Through the depiction of the character of Bobby, Naipaul seems to warn the reader against obsession with personal quests and psychological motives. He devalues the rewards of self-deception. One should look at the world afresh and learn to live authentically. The individual should gain the freedom -

to perceive the world undestroyed by his illusory ideologies and sentimentalities.

Like all of Naipaul's fictional works "In A Free State" ends in despair and disillusionment. It is difficult for us to accept his fierce pessimistic view of human situation. The precariousness of existence delineated in his works is like 'hanging on to the cliff-edge by one's finger nails.' To conclude our argument regarding Naipaul's vision of humanity, it is worth quoting R. D. Hamner's view - "Naipaul's Tiresian vision may appear unnecessarily bleak, but reality upon which his sensitive intelligence plays is our reality and we profit from his insights"(74).

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7. "THE THINKING MAN'S WASTELAND": A PERSPECTIVE ON SAUL BELLOW'S *THE DEAN'S DECEMBER*

G. Neelakantan

Saul Bellow's continual strictures against the wasteland outlook notwithstanding, there is an unmistakable mood of despair which looms large over every one of his novels. In a typical Bellow novel, this mood, dominant though, is dispelled to a considerable degree by the "clarity of consciousness"[1] which evolves out of the protagonist's struggle in the modern wasteland. The telescoping of polar moods and the consequent wresting of an affirmation characteristic of Bellow's fiction, however, leads to a curious ambivalence. Significantly enough, *The Dean's December* [2] (1982) makes a radical departure from the rest of Bellow's canon till date in its apparently unambivalent stance. It embodies a world-view that partakes of the "unrelieved pessimism" of the literature of the wasteland mode, even though such stance assumes the "clarity of consciousness" which has characterized all of Bellow's novelistic affirmations. As Malcolm Bradbury observes it is the "tone" that has acquired a "new" quality,[3] and the tone, I believe, is evocative of the apocalyptic doom presaged in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four*. This study proposes to analyze in a cogent fashion both the wasteland situation and the nature and tone of affirmation obtainable in *The Dean's December*.

Apocalyptic in tone, *The Dean's December* shows Bellow trying to come to terms with a world that is irredeemably corrupt. The pessimistic tone of the novel arises out of the grisly vision of the cities. *The Dean's December* treats of two cities - Chicago in America and Bucharest in the East - which though removed in space, are yet alike in the nature of evil that haunts them. Both these cities are thoroughly "atrophying" in character, and with the "sub-savage"(154) machinery of power at their command are also inimical to everything that is "human" in nature. Thus Bellow brings to bear on this novel a vision of universal wasteland encompassing both the "rotten West" (133) and the iron-curtained East.

The Dean's December opens on an atmosphere of twilight dark-

ness in Bucharest where the Cordes are on a visit to attend on the dying Valeria, mother of Minna Corde. This darkness is syndromic of the dreaded wasteland disease withering life in the East. Bucharest, it appears, is haunted by a "livid-death moment" (9) before nightfall. To Albert Corde, this city seems macabre with its power to annihilate all human values. Adopting egalitarianism in principle, the communist government is strangely contented with keeping its citizens perpetually in want. The typical city scenario emerges from the following description: "Aged women rose at four to stand in line for a few eggs, a small ration of sausages, three or four spotted pears. Corde had seen the shops and the produce, the gloomy queues - brown, gray, black, mud colors, and an atmosphere of compulsory exercise in the prison yard"(56).

Familiar as he is with the contents of the mail addressed to his wife from the Civil Rights Organization, Corde has gained "a fairly complete idea of how things are in this part of the world - forced labor, mental hospitals for dissenters, censorship"(67). His experience in Bucharest testifies to the charges of the Organization against the communist hegemony. Valeria and her husband, Corde's in-laws, were earlier party members and Valeria had even served on the cabinet with a ministerial portfolio, after the death of her husband. But her subsequent estrangement from the communist regime compelled her to send her daughter Minna from the tyrannical system to the USA.

Arriving in Bucharest, the Cordes are disappointed to realize that they are even denied the right to visit Valeria frequently in the party hospital. The sense of human community suffers disintegration, under the state's requirement that everyone should keep the others under surveillance and report to the party any suspicious activities on their part. Iaonna, Valeria's concierge, often referred to as being very loyal to Valeria, for example, is herself an informer on her mistress. Corde guesses that the praises of Tanti Gigi, Valeri's sister, about Iaonna are far from genuine but understands that such hypocrisies are necessary to survive in Bucharest.

If this is the state of affairs in the East, they are no better in America considered the cradle of democracy. With a predominant black population, Chicago becomes representative of the "rotten West" (133). As L. H. Goldman perceptively argues, "... Black becomes a symbol, in Bellow's works, for the state of affairs in which society finds itself."[4] Crime, violence, philistinism, and sexual frenzy bedevil

Chicago. Professor of Journalism in a Chicago college, and incidently its dean too, Corde is dismayed by the state of "moral corruption" in the social institutions of this city and personally investigates the matter and reports his investigation for *The Harper*. The apocalyptic tone of his articles and his implicating certain people for being callous to the atrocities committed in the prisons and hospitals earn him a lot of displeasure and ill-will. To compound the situation, his efforts to bring before law the murders behind the death of Rick Lester, a married student of the college, assume a racial dimension. Corde suspects the involment of two blacks in the murder of Lester. In their misplaced enthusiasm to espouse the cause of the underdog, both his nephew and his cousin gang up and rouse racial antipathy against Corde. Besides, the press which had earlier suffered his vitriolic criticism joins his detractors to embarrass him. It is under such adverse circumstances that Corde leaves Chicago to attend on the ailing Valeria in Bucharest.

Chicago of *The Dean's December*, unlike the Chicago of most of Bellow's novels, does not have any "ambivalent underpinnings". Strangely enough, there is nothing to neutralize the horror and malevolence of Chicago and the portrayal is clearly apocalyptic in vein. In the "feverland"(152) of Chicago, primitivism and babylonishness reign supreme. Investigating the atrocities perpetrated in the prisons of Chicago, Corde brings to light drug-trafficking, rackets, homosexual rape, violence and torture. Perhaps, the situation warrants the doubt that "anti-Christ" has already descended on this city. Many of the fear-ridden inhabitants of Chicago flee it and settle down elsewhere. Bellow states the motive behind the apocalyptic vein of Corde's articles in the following passage: "It wasn't as if Corde had made a beeline for the blight. Nor did he write about it because of the opportunities it offered for romantic despair; nor in a spirit of middle-class elegy or nostalgia. He was even aware that the population moving away from blighted areas had improved its condition in new neighborhoods. But also it was fear that had made it move. Also, it was desolation that was left behind, endless square miles of ruin."(165)

The craze for "sexual niggerhood" is so rampant in the Bellovian wasteland that sexual morality has, perhaps, ceased being any virtue at all. Sex is often associated with sickness and death in *The Dean's December*. Corde often refers to the "sexual epidemic"(43) gripping the West to which he himself had been a prey

once. Though there is no way of ascertaining why Lucas Ebry and the black whore (suspects in the murder of Lester) were in Rick Lester's place, Corde himself suspects that Lester might have brought them there for wild sex. Similarly, the criminals in Chicago prisons are described as an abominable lot given to heinous sexual crimes. They indulge in sodomy, buggering, and homosexual rape and such satanic activities often lead to permanent psychic wreck of the victims and, in worst cases, also to death. Max Detillion, Corde's cousin, whose chief pastime is womanizing is another of those "personification(s) of Eros"(98). Corde realizes, however, that he is as much responsible as others in letting sexual promiscuity become a collective historical phenomenon : "Oh, those sexual offences! He was by the strictest maritial standards decent, mature, intelligent, responsible, and an excellent husband. But within the historical currents he could not be viewed from the positive aspect because he was a representative of the rotten West, lacking ballast, the product of an undesirable historical development, a corrupted branch of humanity"(133).

Chicago, in its mindless hostility to life, becomes a veritable city of destruction and death. While crime and cruel death are overlooked, pity, paradoxically, is lavished on the criminals for their psychological and social maladjustments. To cite an instance, a psychopath named Mitchell abducts a woman and kills her after repeatedly raping her. The lawyer who defends Mitchell wants him condoned because "certain human and social failures"(201) are responsible for his defendant's crim Corde is disturbed knowing that no value whatever is accorded human existence by such self-appointed humanists. Likewise, in Lester's case everyone wants to slight the enormity of the crime and thus insure against possible reprisals from the blacks who hold the city in thrall. It is only Corde who wants justice done to the murdered and this naturally makes him unpopular with the whites who have their own vested interest in hushing up the facts of the case.

While the blac celebrate by their anarchic ways in Chicago, in Bucharest it is the organized regimentation of communism that denudes everything of human significance. Though deprived economically, the blacks of Chicago enjoy a kind of political sovereignty that ensures both their right to crime and immunity from prosecution. Thus *The Dean's December* is clearly a political novel and it indicts the political systems of both the East and the West

for bringing "misery and mayhem" to the human community.

Behind Corde's apocalyptic writing about Chicago, there is a fervor to evoke among his fellow-citizens the thirst for order, moral clarity, and faith in the human community. Making himself "the moralist of seeing"(125), Corde in all these articles espouses "the noble ideas of the West in their American form"(125). He is differnt from other apocalyptics in that he does not want "the dying generations"(226) living in Chicago to bring upon themselves ruin and death as some extreme doomsters desire. Corde believes that it is not wholly impossible to check the dangerous trend in Chicago and pave way for its amelioration. Even with the near unbearable conditions in Chicago, he would not like to leave Chicago and settle a place with less "city-vexation". Knowing full well that "a man without a city is either a beast or a god"(226), Corde prefers to stay on at Chicago and fight his lonely battles as a dignified human being among the human beasts thriving there.

Trying to figure out the reason behind his writing of the apocalyptic articles on Chicago, Corde understands that it was to find out what "mood" went into the building of this city. Like all great cities of the past, he finds Chicago a "centre of delusion and bondage, death"(281). Surveying this city, Corde realizes that it is a monstrous "wilderness"(205). In a mood of intense despair, he muses thus: "Christ, the human curve had sunk down to base level, had gone itself. The visible one didn't bear looking at" (188). Corde is convinced that the terminal point has already been reached in human affairs, and all that one can do is to look within oneself and purge one's consciousness. "But for a fellow like me, the real temptation of abyssifying is to hope that the approach of the 'last days' might be liberating, might compel us to reconsider deeply, earnestly. In these last days we have a right and even a duty to purge our understanding"(274). Bellow's perception in this novel is almost Conradian both in its awareness of evil and the relentless pursuit to know the cause behind its manifestation. Even while Corde sounds pessimistic, there is a passionate longing on his part to understand the real behind appearances and to come to terms with it. Such a "choiceless awareness" is redemptive in character because it helps one to shed all delusions and attain to a kind of liberation.

The closing scene of *The Dean's December* has a deep symbolic purport. The Cordes are seen at the observatory at Mount Palomar

where Minna has an appointment. Viewing the heavens from the end of a telescope, Corde finds the stars hazed by atmospheric disturbances. The nebulousness of the starry skies probably suggests that man's vision at the present suffers from a lack of spiritual clarity. Knowing the haziness of the skies for "distortions of the atmosphere"(306), Corde reflects: "And what he saw with his eyes was not even the real heavens"(306). Bellow, perhaps, is suggesting that there is hope for mankind in that it might yet glimpse into the true and the real. In presenting his protagonist Corde as an absolutely honest human being who attempts to see beyond appearance, Bellow asserts that humanity survives on the strength of individuals like Corde.

Though *The Dean's December* is in many ways a profoundly disturbing novel, Bellow does not fail to underscrore the possibilities for life. Bellow does justice by Corde in assuring him personal redemption. There is, however, no indication that he has a similar reward for the society. Perhaps, in such a distribution of poetic justice there lies the essential message that nothing short of a thorough change in the human consciousness can fertilize the modern wasteland.

In its projection of a singularly horrific vision of life, *The Dean's December* makes a departure from the rest of Bellow's canon to date. It is open to specualtion whether the absence of Jewish sensibility is the cause of Bellow's pessimism in *The Dean's December*. Such a speculation, however, does not provide a satisfactory clue. Does the strain of pessimism then indicate a *volte-face* in Bellow's attitude to the "wasteland ideology"? Bellow, it seems to me, has not become any less animated in his opposition to the wasteland outlook on life. Perhaps, the clue for the pessimistic stance lies in what Bellow himself had said in one of his speeches: "This (wasteland pessimism) is one of the traditions on which literature has lived uncritically. But it is the task of artists and critics in every generation to look with their own eyes. Perhaps, they will see even worse evils, but they will at least be seeing for themselves[5] (italics mine). In mapping the modern consciousness, Bellow has seen into the depth of human depravity and *The Dean's December* is a firm testament to that reality.

Notes

1. I am indebted to Shiv P. Kumar for this apt and useful phrase. See his article "From Kavanah to Mitzvah : A Perspective on *Herzog* and *Mr. Sammler's Planet*" in *Indian Journal of American Studies*, 10, 2 (July 1980), 30
2. Saul Bellow, *The Dean's December* (New York : Harper and Row, 1982: rpt. New York: Penguin Books, 1984). Further references to this work are cited in the text.
3. Malcolm Bradbury, *Saul Bellow* (London : Methuen, 1982), p.96.
4. Liela H. Goldman, *Saul Bellow's Moral Vision: A Critical Study of the Jewish Experience* (New York : Irvington Publishers, 1983), p. 239.
5. Saul Bellow, "The Thinking Man's Wasteland", *Saturday Review*, April 3, 1965, 20.

8. RICHARDSON'S FEMINISM

Ujwala Patil

Samuel Richardson was one of the few important eighteenth century writers who looked at life from the woman's point of view, and who showed a keen understanding of their problems. We are conscious of a feminine consciousness in his novels, of an interest in woman not as a sexual stereotype but as an individual.

His works take on a new meaning in the light of feminism. His novels evidence immense psychological penetration in the investigation of the problem of sexual politics, and indicate that the area of struggle for sexual equality is not merely economic, social and political, but psychological and emotional as well. We are told, he was always happiest in feminine society, believing, as he once confided to Miss Highmore after the tedium of three meetings with his friend "the good Dr. Heberdeen," "that there is nothing either improving or delightful out of the company of intelligent women."[1] It is a plausible conjecture that Richardson's experiences as amanuensis of the young women who came to him to write their love letters may have given him that interest in women and that comprehension of them which distinguishes him from the other writers of his century.

Fielding's heroines are conventional in conception. Sophia Western is the accomplished type of the "man's woman" of the eighteenth century. Squire Western's sister, the unsought, unmated woman is sketched with contempt; so is Smollett's Tabby in *Humphry Clinker*. In contrast, Richardson's single women, Miss Towers and Miss Clements, are both learned and respectable. Fielding's Amelia, who earns everybody's approbation, does not have scholarship; and unlike Richardson's Clarissa, she thrives on her depedent status. Even Defoe whose heroine Moll Flanders Virginia Woolf admired so much because to her she represented a heroine who so fully realised one of the ideals of feminism, makes no demand for the abolition of artificial distinctions between the sexes. Richardson's struggles were in the direction of liberating women from being considered mere sex-objects. He defined contemporary opinion by insisting that they also were, in the fullest sense, human beings like men, gifted with equal capacities. The underlying goal is no

less than a reconditioning of the people to accept sex equality as the norm of social and personal behaviour. It would mean a redefinition of the relation between men and women. Interestingly, this is the basic issue of the Women's Liberation Movement.

Richardson's novels are representative of his feminist ideology. This intention is manifest in the choice of subject matter, of situations, and even of imagery. In all the three novels. *(Pamela, Clarissa Harlowe,* and *Sir Charles Grandison),* the story most concerns itself with the preservation of virtue, where "virtue" (erroneously) is equated with chastity. The choice is significant, in that, of all the virtues, chastity more than any other pointedly centres round sex. Moreover, a double significance in this subject is evident, when we remember that Richardson has been popularly recognised as both an admirer of the female sex and a writer of conduct books. In Richardson, chastity takes on both its moral and physical aspects. The attempt of the male characters on the virtue of the heroines can be symbolically viewed as an attempt to denigrate them to the status of sex objects.

There are in Richardson recurring situations abductions: rapes, and attempted rapes, and totalitarian impulses by families or individuals. These situations Richardson exploits to illuminate the "woman's problem" and to assert the injustice in its existence.

In his novels, the male lovers enjoy a uniformly superior social position over the female ones. It involves a complex scheme of symbolism when viewed with a reference to the relationship between the sexes. By creating a difference in the social standings of the lovers, Richardson implied that the relationship between the sexes is to be viewed in a political light, where politics "shall refer to power structured relationships, arrangements whereby one group of persons is controlled by another..."[2]

In *Pamela,* when Mr. B. fails to make Pamela yield to his vile designs, he tries to assert his authority. In a dominating tone he asks her, "Do you know to whom you speak?" and we know, since we have already been alerted by Pamela's poor parents in their warning to her "... yet I tremble to think what a sad hazard a poor maiden of little more than fifteen years of age stands against the temptations of this world, and a designing gentleman, if he should prove so, who has so much 'power' to oblige, and has a kind of 'authority' to command as your master." The significance of class

distinction is further illuminated when Pamela in her imprisonment on Mr. B's Lincolnshire estate, refelcting on the helplessness of her parents to render any help, tragically comments: "For what can the abject poor do against the mighty rich, when they are determined to oppress?[3]

Again in *Clarissa* Lovelace's whole affair with Miss Betterton centres round his egotistical desire to subdue the arrogance of the middle-class which dreams of "raising itself" to belong to the aristorcracry. The main incentive behind Lovelace's continued oppression of Clarissa is his rage at the Harlowe family's pretences to aristocratic life-style and their pride in their "acquired fortunes" Another moral implication in Richardson's dramatization of class society, refers to the double standard of morality. Mr. B., Lovelace, and Sir Hargrave Pollexfen in *Sir Charles Grandison*, all belong to the upper class of society, and enjoy aristocratic licentiousness sanctioned by the eighteenth-century moral code. Lovelace proudly declares, "My predominant passion is 'girl' not 'gold'; nor value I this, but it helps me to that and gives me independence."[4]

Richardson's propagandistic zeal in the cause of women is manifest even in the choice of his narrative technique. The epistolary technique, besides affording scope to write of the "moment" becomes indicative of the intellectual emancipation of women, for the intellect was just one of the things denied to the eighteenth-century women. Harriet Byron comments:

> who I, a woman, know anything of Latin and Greek! I know but one lady who is mistress of both; and she finds herself so much owl among the birds, that she wants of all things to be thought to have unlearned them... In what a situation, Lucy, are we women! - If we have some little genius, and have taken pains to cultivate it, we must be thought guilty of affectation, whether we appear desirous to conceal it, or submit to have it called forth"[5].

Her bitter irony indicates the anti-intellectual attitude of the age towards women, and hence the significance of Richardson's narrative technique. B.L. Reid's disgust with Pamela's learning is understandable because he ignores the fact that it has another important functional implication. Pamela's range of knowledge which disgusts Reid, is Richardson's deliberately conceived idea.

Richardson's Clarissa Harlowe is all mind. Belford's panegyric of Clarissa's intellecutal accomplishments is only one of Richardson's many zealous expressions. In the eighteenth-century fashion, Belford

goes to the length of saying:

> She is all mind: and were she to meet with a man all mind likewise, why should the charming qualities she is mistress of be endangered? Why should such an angel be plunged so low as into the vulgar offices of domestic life? Were she mine, I should hardly wish to see her a mother, unless there were a kind of moral certainity that minds like hers be propagated. For why, in short, should not the work of bodies be left to mere bodies?

And concludes that there is:

> ...more exalted pleasure in intellectual friendship, than ever than couldst taste in the gross fumes of sensuality?[6]

This is indeed an instance of Richardson's radicalism. The only education the high minds of the eighteenth-century allowed women was a training in nothing but the superficial accomplishments. Why, they argued, should a girl who was to be married at sixteen or seventeen years of age be educated for any purpose but that of attracting men? The basis of the training was sexual. Reading and reflection were regarded as privileges of men only. In the eighteenth century for her personal happines, her social status and her economic prosperity, marriage was for a woman an indispensable condition. Richardson, however, protested against this traditional view and Belford's praise of Clarissa as an intellectual is significant. Higher education for women on an equal basis with men was one of the chief objectives of the feminists, and Clarissa's acceptance as an intellectual implies such an objective in Richardson. It implies that marriage is not the only goal. Women should be given opportunities to realize their potentialities with freedom. It indicates a revolt against stereotype attitudes. The aim of the Women's Liberation Movement too, is to free women from being victimised by stereotype attitudes.

Richardson's attitudes to marriage also manifest his interest in the feminist cause. First of all he demanded that every woman should have a right to choose her partner.

Unreasonable parental authority did not receive his moral sanction. Anna Howe explains to Clarissa,

> You must not, your uncle tells my mother, dispute their authority. Authority! what a full word is that in the mouth of a narrow-minded person, who happened to be born thirty years before one! Of your uncles I speak; for as to the parental authority, that ought to be sacred. But should not parents have reason for what they do?[7]

That Richardson gave his women freedom to question implicit obedience is a great stride towards the recognition of woman's free will, in the exercising of which lies the key to liberation. Clarissa's tragedy is a severe criticism of the unreasonableness of unlimited parental authority.

Harriet Byron is independent of her family in the choice of a husband, and she marries Richardson's ideal man, Sir Charles Grandison.

Dependent on the state of legal and economic supremacy is the psychological attitude of the sexes to each other.[8] Richardson only too well recognised the importance of economic independence and legal justice. It is important to understand that economic independence was consciously as well as unconciously perceived to be a direct threat to male authority.[9] The serious implications inherent in economic dependence, Richardson conveyed through Clarissa's intensified tragedy. The sexist prejudices of her partriachal family deny her the right to own the property her grandfather has left her. Anna Howe realizes the importance of economic independence and urges Clarissa to assert her right and demand the property that rightly belongs to her. She even suggests litigation in order to secure the estate. Clarissa decides against litigating for two reasons; because of her filial piety and also because the legal system is full of loopholes to the disadvantage of women. Had Clarissa been economically independent it is a plausible conjecture that her tragedy would have been much abated, for Clarissa has the courage to seek a personal lifestyle. In spite of her stringent circumstancees she refuses to appeal to her family for economic help. No one more than she realized the significance of economic independence.

The eighteenth century feminine code of delicacy imposed restrictions on woman's free expression and contributed in no less a degree to keep her in a subordinated position. Dr. Johnson, Richardson's friend, was of the opinion that "the delicacy of the sex should always be inviolably preserved, in eating, in exercise, in dress, and in everything".[10] Thus a tight net of prejudices surrounded and hampered all her movements. Women were expected to cultivate mildness of manner, a subdued and soft tone of voice, and were warned to avoid conversation upon learned subjects. "If you happen to have learning, keep it a profound secret, especially from men, who generally look with a jealous and malignant eye on

a woman of great parts and a cultivated understanding". That was the warning given to her.

But Richardson was an avowed reformer in this sphere. Harriet Byron, who yearns to own her love for Sir Charles, feels restricted from doing so because of the taboo imposed by the code, and she, being naturally open and sincere, finds it even more difficult to contain herself and questions the code.

> ... Delicacy ... is often a misleader; an idol, at whose shrine we sometimes offer up our sincerity; but in that case it should be called indelicacy.
>
> ... But why indeed, ... should women be blamed, for owning modestly a passion for a worthy and suitable object? .. what littleness is there in the custom that compels us to be insincere? ... (pp. 35-36).

Harriet's reference to "custom" which blames "women" for frankness of expression, points to the fact that woman's suppression has nothing to do with their "inherent nature" but is the natural outcome of a man-made culture, an example of how taboos linger on in the form of prejudices and social habits.

Richardson's heroines Pamela and Clarissa insist on reformation in the morals of their suitors, before they can even think of giving consent to proposals of marriage. Harriet Byron does not have this problem, for Sir Charles, as pure as Richardson's women, is a virgin until marriage. This is an instance of Richardson's plea for a single standard of morality. Richardson's acceptance of Sally Godfrey in *Pamela* and Mrs Oldham in *Sir Charles Grandison* indicates a struggle toward this single standard. The struggle is also manifest in the suggestions made by Miss Towers and Lady Davers and others, including the men, with regard to reinstating the so-called "fallen women".

Richardson's conscious attitude toward the single standard of morality resembles the attitudes of the Victorians, described as "illogical" by Kate Millet. She perceives the goal of a sexual revolution to be "a permisive single standard of sexual freedom."[12] Richardson, however, showed a slight, unconscious leaning towards the acceptance of a permissive single standard of sexual freedom. It comes out in his tendency of making excuses for the "fallen women", of placing blame on the men, who were too artful for the innocent women.

Sir Charles Grandison's benevolent behaviour toward Mrs. Old-

ham and the children born of free-living with his father is also an indication of the same tolerant attitude. If man's licentiousness can be tolerated, a woman's weakness too can receive a permissive attention. Even Lady Davers, who has given us an impression of a conservative woman in her behaviour toward her brother and Pamela, adopts quite a liberal attitude towards Sally who has "given into the plot upon him;" and has "sacrificed" her honour. Even Pamela's acceptance of the child and Sally Godfrey indicates a certain toleration of her moral weakness. Though Richardson would never have given way to the temptation of open toleration, it is quite believable the thought might have occùred to him, in view of his great love for the female sex.

Richardson in all these attitudes indicates the desirability of a change - a change which would alleviate the anti-feminism of a society that we now regard as tyrannically patriarchal.

The analysis of Richardson's feminism directs our attention, at least by implication, to the fact that the general tone of his novels is one of regret for women's limited opportunities for fulfillment as human beings. Richardson looks forward to a time men and women, without denying their differences, could function as true equals.

Notes

1. A. D. McKillop, *Samuel Richardson: Printer and Novelist* (Chapel Hill, 1936), p. 189.
2. Kate Millett, "Theory of Sexual Politics" in *Sexual Politics* (New York, 1970), p. 23.
3. Samuel Richardson, *Pamela*, Everyman's Edition (London, 1914) Vol. 1 p. 83. All references will be from this edition.
4. Samuel Richardson, *The History of Clarissa Harlowe* (London, 1932), Vol. II, p. 39. All references will be from this edition.
5. Samuel Richardson, *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* (New York, 1970), Vol. I, p. 57, 60. All references will be from this edition.
6. *Clarissa*, Vol. II, p. 243-244, Vol. IV, p. 16.
7. *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. 64.
8. Viola Klein, *The Feminine Character* (London, 1946), p. 9.
9. Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (New York, 1970), p. 87.
10. Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel* (Berkeley, 1957), p. 162.
11. Dr. John Gregory, *A Father's Legacy to His Daughters*. Quoted in *The Feminine Character* p. 37.

BOOK REVIEWS

Malavika Kapur, *The Lost Soul and Other Stories.* New World Literature Series: New Delhi, B. R. Publishing Corporation, 1989, 68 pages. Rs. 75.

I must confess at the very beginning that I was put off by the title, *The Lost Soul and Other Stories.* I expected the collection to be either drearily metaphysical and other worldly or morbid and maudlin. Suprisingly, when I did start reading the book I read the stories almost at one sitting, held captive by an old-fashioned story teller. R. K. Narayanan once described himself as a simple story teller and there is nothing like a good story well told.

In the Preface Malavika Kapur claims that all her stories are pure fiction with each peice based on reality and reality in her case is her experience as wife, mother and psychologist. The stories are chatty, almost gossipy, with a female narrator. When the narator is male the switchover is difficult to accept.

In Kapur, the psychologist, is very much in evidence, but the stories are not clinical case studies but reveal a rare compassion and understanding of human nature. *The Last Soul,* about an American student of anthropology and her interest in bhootas (the last souls) is riveting, till the very end, when the sudden shift from the natural to the supernatural is difficult to accept. In *Poppa ketapetl,* about a dolls' museum, while the symbolism of the doll-collecting is clearly conveyed, it is difficult is accept the fact of a talking doll. *The Poltergiest Monkey* is more belivable. The stories that deal with the supernatural require more than a willing suspension of disbelief. In contrast the stories that deal with the ordinary are fascinating. *It is Not There any More* a story about a generous old lady. *The Perfect Llonghnut* about a less than perfect marriage is a delightful story suggesting as it does that sanity and imperfection go together.

The finest story in the collection is *The Organic Expert.* There is humour and irony and at the same time condemnation of a system where corruption is literally turned into a fine art. Malavika Kapur's strength as a writer lies in her capacity to evoke places and thereby give a credible background to her stories of rogues and misfits, as in *The Conman of Coonoor.*

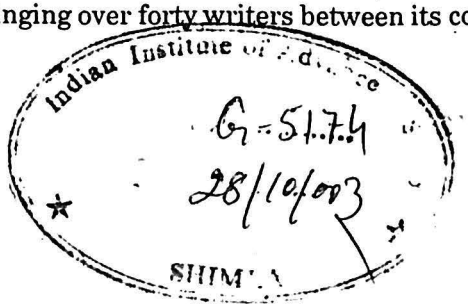
Beatrix D'Souza

V. Sivaramakrishnan. *The African Mind - A Literary Perspective.* Bombay: Bharatiya Vidhya Bhavan, 1990. 139 pages. Rs. 35.

Seventeen pages of general, special introductions and forwards prefixed to this 140 page book, work overtime to reiterate how well the author is suited to exhibit to the world in general and India in particular - Africa, through its literature. A three year stint at Tanzania and a lively interest in African life were motivation enough for this book - a collection of sixteen articles published in the Bhavan's journal during 1981-83. Re-publication after nearly a decade requires updating, which at times will move to the extent of rewriting the entire article, for such is the influence of sound critical writing. Sivaramakrishnan tactfully negotiates this problem, by simply avoiding it. What we have in the guise of a literary perspective is just a series of summaries of the better known works of well known authors, the lesser known works of established writers and the virtually unknown works of authors who in most cases are mere names to the general reader. Anticipating the problems the reading public would face with the last mentioned category of writers, Sivaramakrishnan has thoughtfully included biographical sketches of all novelists, poets and essayists mentioned in the book.

Beginning with Gurudev Tagore's short poem on Africa, the book takes on Chinua Achebe and James Ngugi, who with Alex Hailey and Naipaul (included on the basis of their writings on Africa), are the only ones to get a chapter all to themselves. The other thirty odd get clubbed together in twos, threes and sundries (eg: Mphalele... and others, Songs in the Air and Chants in the Crypt) to fit into a dozen chapters. Though the book's foreword writer C. Subramaniam compliments Sivaramakrishnan, "As literature holds up the mirror to life, he has concentrated on the novels, plays and poems of African writers" (page vi), the writer has thought it fit to brush aside the playwright in the Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka with a cursory mention to concenterate on telling us the story of *Interpreters.*

This collection, dedicated to Nelson Mandela, seems to have only succeeded in bringing over forty writers between its covers at a very moderate price.



GEETHA. K.

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Madras-600 029 Telephone : 616911