



Mr Basavaraj S. Naikar who has been working as a lecturer in English and who has worked upon Shakespeare's Last Plays for a Ph.D., is known for his bilingual scholarship. He has translated many English and Kannada works into Kannada and English respectively. Besides, he has published his reviews and articles in various Indian and foreign journals like **Indian Literature**, **Creative Moment** and **World Literature Today** etc. His present work, **Critical Articles on Nirad C. Chaudhuri** is intended to introduce the critical spirit of Chaudhuri's major works in a fairly impartial fashion and their personal passion separate



Library

IAS, Shimla

In 820 C 393 C



G2096

CRITICAL ARTICLES
ON
NIRAD C. CHAUDHURI

BASAVARAJ S. NAIKAR

820
C 393 C



**INDIAN INSTITUTE OF
ADVANCED STUDY
LIBRARY SIMLA**

Sivaranjani Nilaya
Kotur Complex
Malapur Road
Dharwad 580 008
Ph: (0836) 347204

1-11-97.

BSA Nair

CRITICAL ARTICLES
ON
NIRAD C. CHAUDHURI

BASAVARAJ S. NAIKAR

SIVARANJANI PUBLICATIONS
DHARWAD - 580008

CRITICAL ARTICLES ON NIRAD C. CHAUDHURI

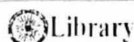
by-Basavaraj S. Naikar, ^{Reader} ~~Lecturer~~ in English,

^{Kannada} Gulbarga University, Gulbarga-585106

Karnataka State, India ^{Dharwad -3}

1985, 1000 copies.

© Author



Library

IAS, Shimla

In 820 C 393 C



G2096

For Copies : Write to the author.

Price : Paperback, Rs. 50- \$ 10. £ 5

Hardbound, Rs. 100. \$ 20. £ 10

In 820
C 393 C

Printed by :

Sri VIJAYA N. HOSKERI LPT (Madras)

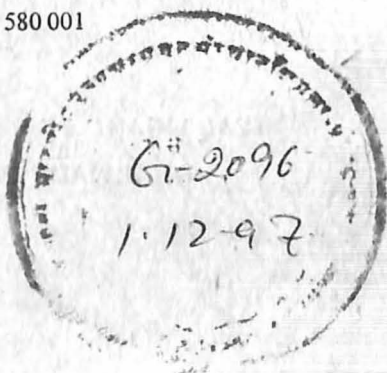
Vijaya Printing Press

Vijaya Road, Dharwad, 580 001

Published by :

Sivaranjani Publications

Dharwad - 580008



AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I record my warm regards to my teachers and well wishers like Professor T. R. Rajasekharaiah, Dr. M. K. Naik, Dr. Shankar Mokashi-Punekar and Dr. G. S. Balarama Gupta among others who inspire me to continue my pursuit of knowledge in spite of the various difficulties and hindrances involved in it.

Similarly I am thankful to my friends like Dr. Sareshchandra Chulkimath and Dr. S. G. Ghataphanadi who watch my intellectual growth with affection and appreciation. I am no less thankful to Sri Vijaya Hoskeri for the fast and neat printing.

'Sivaranjani'
Malapur Road,
Dharwad-8

BASAVARAJ S. NAIKAR

CONTENTS

Introduction

1. Autobiography as Descriptive Ethnology	1
2. A Passage to England : A Travelogue	24
3. Essay as Satire : The Continent of Circe	42
4. To Live or Not to Live : An Essay	73
5. The Intellectual in India	93
6. Chaudhuri's Prose Style	105



TO
MY WELL-WISHER
DR. G. S. BALARAMA GUPTA
WITH LOVE



INTRODUCTION

Nirad C. Chaudhuri who is one of the very few original thinkers of India, has attracted the attention of serious students and thinkers all over the world. Although basically a student of history, he has made a name for himself in the realm of Indo-English literature both for his clear-cut ideas and for his incisive style. Because of his almost microscopic observation combined with a historical perspective and an objective, at times, even ruthless analysis of the the Indian life around him, Mr. Chaudhuri whips the fellow Indians into new consciousness of the matters and issues that are normally taken for granted and shocks them by disturbing their lethargy, puritanism, smugness and snobbery. A robust intellectual as he is, he never shies away from the ugly, the sham, the indecent, the private and the snobbish but, on the contrary, has the courage to look them into the face and discuss and analyse them with a scientist's detachment. Though wrongly accused by the puritanical Indians as a pessimist, Mr. Chaudhuri is an optimist and idealist who is disappointed to know that the Indians are not, somehow, able to live upto the ideals cherished by themselves. That is the reason whv Mr. Chaudhuri attacks them for the discordance between their principles and practice in a scathing fashion and exhibits the Swiftian anger. His is a satiric vision supported by historical knowledge and

scientific analysis. Another important feature of his personality is his English style which communicates his ideas with a sincerity and vigour not to be found in the anglicised, convent-fed snobbish style of other writers of India.

The present collection of critical articles is intended to give a broad picture of his personality as expressed in the five important books of his. Although strictly speaking these essays are not connected with one another, there is no doubt that they throw light upon one another. It should also be remembered that the book should not be taken to be a thesis containing innumerable references and footnotes. Here is an attempt to understand Mr. Chaudhuri's works from a sympathetic point of view and to counterbalance the unsympathetic approach of anti-Chaudhuri readers and critics.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY AS DESCRIPTIVE ETHNOLOGY

That an Indian writer in English could be most successful in his first work is something unexpected in India. Though an unknown Indian, Nirad C. Chaudhuri became known to the world only through his maiden work which was, paradoxically enough, written not in the teenage but when he was at the threshold of his fiftieth year. **The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian** has earned for him an important place in the belle-letters of Indian writing in English. Whereas it has earned the critical appreciation of the Western readers, not excluding the famous American psychologist like Erik Erikson, it has incurred the wrath of Indian readers consequent upon its unusual method of presentation. The autobiography of the author; no matter who he is, generally presents a picture of the growth of consciousness of the man including the inevitable crisis and conciliation of conscience. The autobiographer therefore, tends to be subjective and the objective element comes only as subordinate or as a background. But Chaudhuri's method is different from the conventional one in that he gives us the picture of the objective world shaping the subjective element itself. He wants to show how the subjective element itself is decided, limited and conditioned by the objective world. The modern anthropology and psychology have already established the fact that man is nothing but a product of the hereditary and environmental forces. Nirad C. Chaudhuri deeply influenced by these sciences wants to interpret human life in the light of this scientific knowledge. That is the

reason way his autobiography strikes the reader as something unusual because of his novel technique of writing. That accounts for his unwillingness to call his book by the blanket term called 'autobiography'. Showing the similarity and contrast between himself and the other great autobiographical writers like Askarov, Renan, Anatole France and Tagore etc. Chaudhuri says that though he resembles them in his recapitulation of childhood memories, he sharply differs from them in shifting the stress from the individual to the environment. "Like these great writers," says Chaudhuri, "I too began to be reminiscent of my childhood when I had long passed my youth. But I am not like them, calling up its memories and recording them either as things interesting in themselves or as a foil to my later life. It is not the aim of this book to create that kind of romantic interest or contrast. There is no room in it, since it is more of an exercise in descriptive ethnology than autobiography, for presenting it as a submerged city of Ys or as the times when the intimations of immortality lay about us. If there is to be any vanished or vanishing Atlantis to speak of in this book, it should and would be all our life lived till yesterday. All that we have learnt, all that we have acquired, and all that we have prized is threatened with extinction. We do not know how the end will come, whether through a cataclysmic holocaust or slow, putrid decay. But regarding the eventual extinction there does not seem to be any uncertainty." The high seriousness of Chaudhuri's approach to life enables him to recognise the complexity of life, the interdependence of character and environment, and the simultaneous existence of contraries in life. Man's life, according to him, is not a story of mere growth or mere decay but that of both. "For us," says he "the irony of the situation lies in the fact that the very existence which has created the values whose passing I regret has also created the agencies which are destroying them. The cata-

strophe has unfolded inexorably from the environment I have described and the experiences I am going to relate. There is a unity, an unbroken chain of cause and effect, running through the whole process which if it is a fatalistic cast is fatalistic only in the sense that character is fate. We began the journey towards where we have arrived from what we did and experienced in our earlier years, which is only another way of saying that in this autobiography I shall have no phase of pure growth to set against a phase of unrelieved decay. In our existence growth and decay have been intermingled in an inseparable embrace. We have lived with mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage. But the hour has come when life, if there has ever been any principle of life in us, must part company with its baleful mate and go its way. The marriage can no longer endure. Either we end it to be resorted to cleanness, or it ends itself in a w i t c h e s, sabbath.”² Thus Nirad C. Chaudhuri wants to picture the double-facedness of life. Besides that his main aim is to highlight the environmental condition determining the character of the individual. In spite of the philosophical awareness of the paradoxes of life, Chaudhuri, as far as possible, wants to portray an objective picture of life around him. Since Chaudhuri is not a writer of a textbook on ethnology, his selection of material is decided by the writer’s point of view. His scientific views may be borrowed from anthropology, ethnology and history etc. But his *differentia* and *forte* as an autobiographer lie in his empirical confirmation of the scientific theories. This is evident in his words. “Since it has been laid down as the basic principle of this book that environment shall have precedence over its product, I shall begin by describing three places which exerted the deepest influence on my boyhood, and form, so to say, the buried foundations of my later life.”³ **The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian** offers not only

the story of Chaudhuri's individual life but it creates a vivid picture of Bengali culture with all its diverse strains. Hence, the justification of the author's designation of his work as 'descriptive ethnology.'

That man is the product of his environment has become a common place truth in social psychology. Man's behaviour is decided by the hereditary factors and environmental circumstances. That is the reason why man's thinking, feeling and action differ from nation to nation, race to race and time to time. Human culture is nothing but the manifestation of the highest form of his thoughts, feelings, custom, beliefs, entertainments, occupations and artistic impulses etc. Thus the term 'culture' includes everything that belongs to a particular race or community of human beings. Whereas the study of the culture of a major community or race is known as cultural anthropology, that of the culture of a minor community has come to be known as ethnology. The relationship between man and his environment is so thick that they can hardly be separated from each other. Nirad C. Chaudhuri wants to delineate his own character in relation to the environment which includes Bengali culture, Muslim culture and British culture and so on. His interest is not in the isolated individual but in the relationship between cultures which are brought together by historical forces and affect the individual life. Chaudhuri makes it clear. "The story I want to tell is the story of the struggle of a civilization with a hostile environment, in which the destiny of British rule in India became necessarily involved. My main intention is thus historical, and since I have written the account with the utmost honesty and accuracy of which I am capable, the intention in my mind has thus become mingled with the aspiration that the book may be regarded as a contribution to contemporary history." 4

A brief outline of culture may be helpful for the clear understanding of the problem. In spite of the innumerable definitions of culture, one of the best early definitions was offered by E. B. Tylor according to whom, culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.⁵ In other words culture is the sum total of everything that is to be seen in life. It is the quintessence of all that a man thinks, feels, does, and creates. To borrow that famous phrase from Matthew Arnold, culture consists of sweetness and light of a particular community of people. The study of 'minor' cultures and 'contemporary primitives' has been growing very popular in the countries like America in the recent years.

The significance, the novelty, the charm and the limitation of a particular culture may be understood only when it is compared with other cultures. The distinction of a culture becomes clear only when it is contrasted with other cultures. But before a comparative study of cultures is attempted it is mandatory on the part of anthropologists and anthropological writers to observe the cultural traits of a group minutely and enumerate them consciously and explicitly. The study of human cultures, regardless of their being large or small, is based upon the supposition that culture is meaningful and throws light upon the nature of human life. The ethnological study of a culture is interested not so much in recording the traits of a culture for themselves as in revealing the cultural universals through the cultural peculiarities. That accounts for the life-long devotion of the great anthropologists like Malinowski, Levi Strauss, Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead etc for the study of the 'contemporary primitives' like the Pueblos and Mexicans etc.

Nirad C. Chaudhuri is undoubtedly the first Indian writer to attempt the ethnologically oriented works. It is

through this rare combination of literature and science that Chaudhuri has been able to give a clear and convincing picture of the Indian society in his works. That explains his popularity in the western countries and unpopularity in the native country. His unpopularity in India is ascribable partly to his realistic way of writing and partly to the readers' ignorance, puritanism and fanaticism. Once again it has to be clarified that what irritates the Indian reader is not so much the scientific data (however paltry it may be) that he provides as the dispassionate way in which he analyses and interprets the human problems.

The Bengali culture, if there is one such accepted by anthropologists, chosen by him for the ethnological description and analysis becomes interesting to only those who are aware of such an approach to culture. Freeing himself from the indifference resultant upon the unfamiliarity Chaudhuri adapts the travelogist's eye for minute details of life. A travelogist can easily do this because of his previous unfamiliarity with the people he meets. But for a native it is not so easy to do. If at all he wants to do so, he has to forget that he is an insider and adapt the psychology of an outsider as far as the minute observation of things is concerned. In my opinion, Chaudhuri has done this job successfully and superbly.

The Bengali culture, as depicted by Chaudhuri stands out as distinct from other cultures or groups of the Indian continent. Though Indian culture is loosely referred to as a single entity, ethnologically speaking, it is a strange mixture of diverse ethnic groups. Though it is true that such ethnic distinctions are not studied as systematically in India as, for example, in America, the fact that the diverse ethnic groups remain different from one another may be felt by all those who employ an ethnologically oriented approach to the problem. In spite of being part of Hindu

culture, the Bengalis have developed their own particular customs, habits, and beliefs etc which are geographically and historically conditioned. Whereas history may denote the essential oneness of culture, geography definitely shows the apparent diversity of culture. The so called apparent diversity assumes great importance in ethnic studies because we have to study the invisible values only through the visible manifestation of them.

For the sake of clarity and convenience the ethnological idiom can be employed in the present analysis. The word 'culture' may be replaced by the word 'group.' It is an ethnological truth that a group of people becomes conscious of itself only when it comes into contact with another group due to a variety of reasons like the political, the economic and the social etc. Two or more than two groups being to react, respond, rebel or reconcile only after coming into contact with one another. Again 'coming into contact' may be of two kinds; one mental; two physical. The contact between two groups may result in four kinds of relationship. One, whenever two groups come into contact with each other the native group may be attracted towards the alien group and learn some of the customs and habits of the latter. This is known as acculturation of the native group. Two, the native group may be fascinated by the alien group to such an extent that it may set out to imitate the latter in toto thereby forgetting its own native tenets. This process is known as deculturation of the native group. Three, the native group may try to preserve its distinction and identity consciously from the very beginning of its contact with the alien group. This process is said to be the enculturation of the native group. Four, the native group may first imitate the alien group and then after a few decades decide to go back to its original customs and habits. This process is said to be the reculturation of the native group.⁶

•

The ethnic processes of acculturation, enculturation, deculturation and reculturation are connected with historical forces and movements in Chaudhuri's autobiography. The **Autobiography of an Unknown Indian** offers us a picture of not merely a bi-cultural confrontation but even more complicated tri-cultural encounter. The Bengalis (Hindus), the Muslims and the Britishers (Christians) are involved in a triangular love-hate relationship in Chaudhuri's world. If, for the convenience of discussion the three communities are accepted as three groups, Chaudhuri's delineation of the multi-cultural phenomenon becomes clearer to the reader. The Bengalis (Bengali Hindus) are the 'native group' whereas the Muslims and the Britishers are the 'alien groups' with one difference i. e. the Muslims are not as alien as the Britishers in India. Naturally, when the three groups are brought together by historical forces, the problems, the advantages and disadvantages of diverse kinds are created in the social intercourses among them. Nirad C. Chaudhuri with his ethnologically oriented approach to life records many of the details of human life generally unnoticed by non-ethnological writers.

Nirad C. Chaudhuri himself is a product of the environment in that he is a Bengali whose life is strongly affected by his social intercourse with Muslims and Britishers which was again decided by the historical forces of the world. Thus an obscure and hence 'unknown' Indian like Nirad C. Chaudhuri living in a corner of Bengal situated in a corner of a vast country, again situated in a corner of a continent is the product of the hereditary and historical forces and geographical surroundings. Chaudhuri wants to reveal the environment in revealing the individual character. But one speciality of his is to be noted by the reader. Far from going from environment to the individual like a text-book writer, he follows the creative writer's method of going from the individual to the environment. Since the 'individual point of view'

is kept up throughout the work, it cannot be mistaken for a tract. The complaint of some critics about Chaudhuri's lack of originality in borrowing his views from sociology and anthropology can easily be dismissed as unsympathetic, unintelligent and uncritical accusation.

If ethnology means the study of 'culture' of any race or community however minor it may be, Chaudhuri is really interested in the ethnic description of 'Bengali' culture. He has tried to enumerate in his **Autobiography of an Unknown Indian** many of the details of culture elaborately defined by Herskovitz who says "A short and useful delineation of the concept is: culture is the man-made part of the environment. Implicit here is the recognition that man's life is lived in a natural habitat and a social "environment." It also implies that culture is more than a biological phenomenon. Culture includes all the elements in man's mature endowment that he has acquired from his group by conscious learning or by a conditioning process—techniques of various kinds, social and other institutions, beliefs and patterned modes of conduct. Culture, in short can be contrasted with the raw-materials, outer and inner, from which it derives. Resources presented by the natural world are shaped to meet existing needs, while inborn traits are so molded as to derive out of inherent endowment the reflexes that are preponderant in the overt manifestations of behaviour".⁷ Culture can thus be said to be the efflorescence of every kind of potentiality that man is endowed with.

Chaudhuri with his ability for vivid description of the environment creates the local colour in a very precise manner. He gives almost a photographic, precise and microscopic view of the picturesqueness of the geographical life around him. He creates the local atmosphere by enumerating all the things and items that have captured his attention. The elephants disporting in the river, the monsoon affected

landscape, the frogs, the crows, the ants, the centipedes and the Nightblooming Flower of sadness offer a picture of the Bengali atmosphere. The common animals of Bengal were snakes, cats, leopards and tigers.

The geographers and the anthropologists declare that the house patterns and structures are decided by the geographical conditions of the area. Our common sense tells us that whereas the houses of the rainy belts have sloping roofs, those of the plains have flat ones. Even the material used for the construction is the one supplied by the immediate geographical resources like wood, stone, bamboos etc. Chaudhuri gives a detailed picture of the Bengali houses, which had mud-floors. He describes his birth place Kishorgunj as 'a country town' and differentiates it from the English country town that he has been able to guess from his reading. It was "only a normal specimen of its class. The village had the thatched cottages slowly giving place to the huts with corrugated iron roofs. These were flimsy huts and there was not much difference between the country and the town."⁸ The architecture and the maintenance of houses reveal the aesthetic taste of the people of a particular culture. They throw light upon the history, the geography, the sociology and the economics of their life. According to Chaudhuri the aristocratic mansions were quite commodious and were modelled upon the European styles and contained the most important thing i. e. the drawing room. "The most ambitious piece in these houses was always the drawing room"⁹ But the house of the middle-class people differed from the aristocratic mansions and are referred to by Chaudhuri as 'human hives' consisting of three groups of members of the family. Sometimes the same room was used as kitchen, store-room and lumber-room. Whereas the entrances of the aristocratic mansions were ugly, the entrances and the insides of the middle-class houses were tidy. The culture of a community can be understood by the pictures and photos with which they decorate their

houses. The Bengalis, says Chaudhuri, were habituated to using the religious and mythological figures. "These were mostly coloured pictures of the gods and goddesses, very alluringly amatory, if of Krishna and Radha, and if of Kali very minatory and blood-curdling, in spite of her nudity."¹⁰ Another photo inevitably to be seen in every house "would be the portrait of the departed father or mother."¹¹ These photos testify to the Bengalis' religious bent of mind and their reverence for the ancestors respectively.

Cultural anthropology studies even the physiognomy of the different races of the world. Such a study is based upon the scientific theory that the physiognomy is suggestive of the historical, geographical, genetic and economic factors deciding the culture of the particular race. Even in the same race the physiognomical differences can be seen due to the geographical diversity. This is especially true of Indians or Hindus. The modern Hindus whatever may be the extent of the hybridization between the Aryans and the Dravidians in the past, are not physiognomically identical all over the country. A Punjabi is definitely different from a Madrasi, and a Kashmiri, from a Karnatakian. One can easily identify the locality of a person by studying his physical structure. Such a study assumes a great importance in ethnology. Chaudhuri's photographically minute observation has captured these details. An average Bengali, according to him, will be tall and fair. Though Chaudhuri has not cared to offer the details of the male physiognomy, he has not forgotten to study the female one. The Bengalis share with other Indians the mythological habit of comparing human beings with gods and goddesses to denote the height of beauty or virtue. Referring to the female beauty of Bengal, Chaudhuri says, "The traditional type of female beauty, accepted as the ideal all over rural Bengal, was derived from the iconography of Mahayana Buddhism and Puranic Hinduism. By this criterion a Bengali beauty was likened

to a goddess, which meant that she had an oval face, wide at the forehead and pointed at the chin, long and rather narrow eyes with a perceptible slant, thin but fully modelled lips and a complexion pronouncedly yellow with no tinge of rose, rather like beaten gold. Even now one can pick out Bengali girls who are exactly true to this type." ¹² And Chaudhuri continues, "But the Calcutta type was different. It was rounder, fleshier and rosier." ¹³ The truth of these words can be understood only when Bengalis are compared and contrasted with other Indians. The Malayalis, for example, are dark with their receding foreheads and protruding chins and dark and thick lips. Whereas the Madrasis are dark, fat and have round faces, the Karnatakians are, by and large, brownish, lean and lank and have relatively round faces.

Familial life is an important part of the wider i. e. social life of a particular race or community. In fact, family is a mini society in itself. It contains all that is to be seen in the wider world of human beings. Chaudhuri who has an ethnological awareness of this factor, has enumerated innumerable traits of the Bengali family life. The Bengali child seemed to be too serious to be playful. "The children of the wealthy in Calcutta appeared to be unendowed even with boyish playfulness." ¹⁴ This is probably attributable to the puritanical attitude passed on from parents to children. Biologists can explain the why of this phenomenon. It was customary for a Bengali young fellow to address his father by the honorific 'sir' and not by the simple father. The Bengali familial code of behaviour was obsessed with extreme puritanism. "Nothing disappointed me," says Chaudhuri, "more in 1907 at the age of nine than not to have been permitted to go near a bride, in fact to have been turned out after having sneaked into the room in which she was, because her status in relation to mine was that of a daughter-in-law. I saw not only relatives but relatives two

generations in advance of me." ¹⁵ Because of the ridiculous extremity of puritanism, Nirad at the age of nine was not allowed to be near a bride. It would be a sin if he did so. The joint family system of India creates a good deal of confusion to the non-Indians. The diversity of familial relation in a family provides a good humour for the westerners. "At five years old" says Chaudhuri, "I was the uncle of half a dozen grown-ups and was addressed as such by them. At twelve I became the grand-uncle of a baby which was not so very far removed from me by filiation."¹⁶ The diversity of blood relation created confusion in the minds of the children who consequently addressed their fathers as 'brothers' and brothers as 'uncles' etc. The parental selfishness is another striking feature of the Bengali family. Whereas the women and children had to live on "the plainest and the most monotonous diet, while the elders savoured no end of delicacies in their private room."¹⁷ Another allied feature of the Bengali family is the absence of natural affection between parents and children. Both the parties appeared to be too serious to be amicable. Since Nirad belonged to the poor family his parents did not care to preserve his horoscope. Therefore his own date of birth was not recorded at all. The aristocratic families were very particular about the preservation of horoscopes of the children. The young women of Bengal had to go through the pre-delivery purificatory rites. This ceremony had "to be performed only after the first monthly course of a girl after her marriage and was euphemistically called the 'second marriage' "¹⁸ When the same woman was carrying, she had to go through another ceremony called the 'wish-ceremony' in which the women relatives would invite the young expectant girl for partaking of milk pudding and receipt of presents. The Bengali father resembles the Ben Jonsonian type called the 'tyrannical father' whose son was only too eager to get rid of him. The plight of the Bengali son-in-law is pitiable indeed. "As to the young husband, he had no *locus standi* whatever except to sneak at night to his wife. Nobody took

any account of him for any other purpose." 19 The jealousy and hatred between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law are very common in Indian society. In Bengali families also the archetypal figures of mother-in-law and daughter-in-law are the dominant ones who have to 'reign' or to 'serve' by turns. The private life of the parents was taboo in Bengal as also in other parts of India. " ...it is implicit in the very nature of the relationship that large parts of a father's or a mother's character, personality and life should remain as unknown country to the son and that he should shrink from probing into these parts with a reluctance which is somewhat akin to a healthy man's revulsion from incest." 20

Every race has its own distinct social code of behaviour, comprising of social habits, manners, etiquettes etc. The social behaviour changes from race to race and nation to nation. This is borne out by the researches in the field of sociology and social anthropology. The Bengalis also had their own indigenous social life which was distinct in spite of being similar to that of other Indians. The following are a few strands of the Bengali society enumerated by Chaudhuri. In spite of the ubiquitous class-consciousness, the Bengali society was also ridden with communal consciousness. Bengalis shared this malady with other Hindus. Staunch believers in **Varnasrama**, as the Bengalis were, their social behaviour was deeply affected by this kind of obsession. " ... at Banagram," says Chaudhuri, " we felt conscious of our birth. This is not wholly correct. For the blue blood of a Chaudhuri of Banagram was acknowledged as readily at Kishorgunj and elsewhere as it was taken for granted at Banagram." 21 In spite of the inter-caste marriages in Bengal, the communal consciousness was very powerful in that society. Pitying was one of the widely practised and appreciated social manners in Bengal. Sometimes pitying resulted in self-pity. One day his friend's wife said to Mrs. Chaudhuri that the latter did not look well. Chaudhuri offers a socio-

psychological explanation of the custom, "... to say 'You do not look well' is the most polite, friendly and considerate remark that we can make on meeting an acquaintance, and one which will be appreciated by the person addressed with almost a lump in his throat. On the other hand, to ignore his self-pity and assume that he is hale and hearty is to rival the heartless gruffness of the Gryphon in his attitude towards the Mock Turtle."²² According to the social etiquettes, the male friends were received only at the front rooms, whereas the female friends were allowed into kitchens and bedrooms. Chaudhuri's keen and subtle observation makes him remark that there was no real social life in Bengal. What the Bengalis had was gregariousness rather than sociableness. It is very difficult to be clearer than Chaudhuri who says, "There was very little social life among the Bengalis of Calcutta, as understood even in the more frivolous connotation of the words 'society' and 'monde'. No afternoon parties, no dinners, no at home and of course, no dances, enlivened their existence. The heaviest social exertion in this sense that they could or would undergo was to pay formal calls. But there was something to offset this deficiency. What the native of the city lacked in sociability he made up in gregariousness."²³ Another feature connected with the Bengalis' gregariousness is garrulity. They were 'very facile' in their speech and gossiped endlessly. In this respect they resemble the South Karnatakians. Garrulity in itself is not bad. But what is annoying about it is that in Bengal it is not accompanied by real heartiness. Garrulity is unfortunately clubbed with heartlessness which is the result of herd instinct and callous urbanization. Opportunism and power-mongering are the worst traits of Bengali society. Chaudhuri's bitterness about them is vented out in his words, "The Bengalis; more especially the Bengalis of Calcutta were and still remain some of the finest virtuosi of factiousness. There is hardly any activity into which they do not practise, and hardly any activity into which

it has not wormed its way. Municipalities, universities, learned societies, political parties, public offices, business concerns, clubs and even schools are rent by cliques, and are always splitting up like protozoa. To be in the ruling clique means a temporary monopoly of all the advantages that these institutions offer and to be outside it is to be deprived for the time being of all opportunities, rights, facilities, in a corresponding measure. " 24

Religion, whether organised or unorganised, happens to be one of the important features of every culture. Though Bengalis had their regular religion called Hinduism, they differed from other Hindus in the practice of that religion because of their ethnic peculiarities. Religion, in fact, had permeated every field of their life. It is extremely difficult to distinguish between their religious activities and secular ones. They followed their religion at all the levels i.e. the ritualistic, the philosophical and the metaphysical. Especially the ritualistic aspect of their religion was very popular with the Bengali masses. The photos and pictures in their houses were mostly of gods and goddesses. Besides, they worshipped different deities at different temples and conducted fairs and festivals at different times of the year. Goddess Kali is a favourite deity of Bengal. The car festival of Goddess Kali, the car festival and the swing festival of Krishna, Ganesh and Kartik Festival and Durga Puja were the most famous religious festivals of Bengal. Especially during Durga Puja and Kali festival goat and buffalo sacrifices were conducted with great enthusiasm. The religious superstitions also played a great role in their life. One of the superstitions believed in by them was to avoid the calamity foretold in the horoscope by giving the widest possible publicity to it. The Bengalis, like the other Hindus, were very proud to know that their religion was so great that it lent itself to the scientific analysis by the western scholars. Their religious fanaticism went to the extent of 'grotesqueness' and 'scientific claptrap'. "Every Hindu

custom and every Hindu taboo", says Chaudhuri, "found its justification in some theory of electricity and magnetism. At times even the science of bacteriology, new at the time, was invoked. It was proclaimed that if a Hindu kept a pigtail it was only as an electro-magnetic will; if he bathed in the Ganges it was because an unspecified European (for preference German) scientist had demonstrated that Ganges water killed bacteria instantaneously; if he fasted at full and new moon it was only to counteract the gravitational forces of the sun and the moon; the Diwali illumination was supposed to be a collective lighting of fire for burning up poisonous gases given off by the earth on that evening." ²⁵

Thin indeed is the line of demarcation between the religious activities and the artistic ones in Bengal. Sometimes they overlap each other. The artistic sensibility always had a religious tinge about it. They had a special liking for the religious and mythological themes. That is the reason why Michael Madhusudhan Dutta composed his famous epic called **Meghanada Vadha Kavva**. Similarly R. C. Dutt wrote the English versions of the **Ramayana** and the **Mahabharata**. Among the mythological plays staged in Bengal **Vilwamangal** was the most famous one, as **Sri Krishna Parijata** is very famous in Karnataka. Even their music was devotional in nature and was used for the glorification of gods and goddesses. Besides these, there were also folk-music, folk-drama and folk rituals.

The life of the Bengalis was deeply affected by their philosophy. Their staunch belief in the theory of karma some times degenerated into fatalism. Sometimes their religion appeared to be a mere farce because of the essential spirit missing in it. These were some of the striking features of Bengali culture enumerated by Chaudhuri. But Bengalis were not the only group in Bengal. Historical forces had made it inevitable for them to rub along with the other alien cultural groups like the Muslim and the British. The Bengalis had naturally to undergo the stages of acculturation, deculturation

and reculturation in their relation with the alien groups. They did not mind living with Muslims. They liked the individual Muslim friends in their neighbourhood. Chaudhuri used to address a Muslim friend of his as **Dulaba Sabib** Diwan Alimdad khan. The Bengalis even went to the extent of preaching communal harmony. But they would hate the Muslims only because of the historical memories. They had a historical hatred for the Muslims who, according to them, had harrassed the Hindus in the past. Besides the Bengalis did not like certain habits of the Muslim race. They, for example, did not like the Muslim habit of circumcision. Thus the Bengalis had an ambivalent attitude towards the Muslims.

The same kind of ambivalent attitude was cherished towards the British. When the British had come into Bengal, the Bengalis had a liking and fascination for the alien culture which appeared to be new and strange. Hence their imitation of certain traits of British culture. As part of the process of acculturation the Bengalis assimilated the following features of the English culture in their own life. Many of the Bengalis were attracted by the British things like the steel trunks. They came to like the British games like the cricket and biliards. The battleship was one of the symbols of British culture. It had become a fashion for the Bengalis to hang the photos of British leaders and officers who were connected with Indian adminstration. The acculturation of Bengali culture was not confined to the assimilation of the physical items alone in their culture but it extended to the psychological level also. Language which is the instrument of communication plays a great role in the interaction of two cultures. As a result of the colonial relationship with the British, the Bengalis had inevitably been drawn towards the English language. Since language is inextricable from culture, the Bengalis, in the process of learning the English language, came to acquire the British way of thinking also. As the British culture had the attraction of novelty for the Bengalis, the latter had

begun to admire everything that was British. They, not excluding Chaudhuri, were attracted by the glamour of the magnificent names of British personalities of diverse professions. These personalities included great litteratuers like Shakespeare, Milton, and Burke etc; regal dignitaries like Queen Victoria, Napoleon and Prince Albert etc; great politicians like Gladstone, Lord Rosebery and Julius Caesar. Such British men and women became the symbols of highest achievements of British culture for Benglis. In spite of the difficulty of mastering the English syntax aad phonetics they struggled hard to study that alien language colonially handed to them. The most attractive item of British culture that captured their attention was the British i.e. fair complexlon. The British garments like suits, hats and skirts appeared strange and bewitching for them. The English woman was a matter of great curiosity for the Bengali youngsters. Her physical appearance was something very strange and unusual for them. "Mrs Nathan ... gave us our first sight of an English woman after we had become old enough to remember things. The resultant excitement was indescribable. We hardly talked about anything else but her blue eyes, her flaxen hair, her dress and her hat for the whole day."²⁶

After the attraction of the British novelty had worn out, the acculturation of Bengali culture began to decrease gradually. Slowly the Bengalis started analysing the motives and intentions of the British rulers in India. As they steadily realised the underlying imperialistic policy of the rulers, they began to shed their illusions. Their realisation that the relation between themselves and the British was not one between friend and friend but one between master and servant i. e. between the colonizer and the colonized, their attitude towards the alien culture underwent a change. Their love for them started reverting to hatred. Hence the change from understanding to misinterpretation, blackmailing and malicious mythifying. Their judgements of the British life

came to be coloured by their own raw emotion of hatred for them. This kind of reversal of attitude is a very common stage in the relation between the colonizer and the colonized all over the world. The native culture, far from appreciating the traits of the alien culture, begins to misinterpret them and tries to keep itself free from the contamination by the alien culture. The Bengalis' depreciation of the British culture may be seen in the following details. The first thing that struck the Bengalis as peculiarly English is the fair complexion. Because of the robust physiognomy and corpuscles, the Britishers looked like 'monkeys' or 'bunder log' to them. "this monkey analogy had deeper and less innocent antecedents." The jealousy expresses itself in the invention of ridiculously ingenious and malicious myths. One of the old teachers of Chaudhuri goes to the extent of declaring in the classroom that "the English race were of a she-monkey by a demon born."²⁷ Chaudhuri is very clear in his analysis of the Indian attitude towards the British. "The prevalent attitude towards Englishmen of our people was one of irrational and unconquerable hatred."²⁸ The 'tiger' analogy also is very common. The jealousy, the hatred, the helplessness and the wishful thinking of the Bengalis have been beautifully captured by Chaudhuri in the following similes. "A meeting of Englishmen is represented as a meeting of tigers, but the indigenes are shown as monkeys discreetly hiding themselves among the branches and leaves. When the tigers disperse, the monkeys swagger out and declare that they will now hold their meeting and abuse the tigers and they do so. Finally, the meeting is closed with the observation that after getting such a fusillade of bad language all the tigers must be dead in their lairs."²⁹ The Bengalis' jealousy of the British complexion expressed itself in the construction of a malicious myth according to which the British children are black but later on they are fried in wine and consequently become white ones. Another way of satisfying the Bengali ego was to compare the fair coloured

race to the leprous. The malicious comparison was most enjoyed by the patriotic fanatics: "One knee of Mother India is adorned by Tilak, the other by Das, but the white are spread all over her body as a disfiguring skin-disease."³⁰ Similarly the Bengalis' purity-mania made them wrongly believe that there was not a single chaste woman in the entire British country. Sometimes the Bengali misinterpretation of the British culture was the result not so much of malice as of ignorance. When the picture of Mr. Churchill was shown to a nephew of Chaudhuri, the latter designated the former as a 'band-master'. Chaudhuri's analysis of the Bengali psychology in relation to the Britishers is as true as objective. Referring to the Bengali he says "His deep-seated xenophobia is roused. He is intolerably humiliated and in his unforgiving envy and hatred he seeks to obliterate the foreigner's superiority by casting on it the shame of the most loathsome disease which can afflict a man. The demented creature tries to console himself with the illusion that if in this world there is a foreigner fairer than he, it is only because the foreigner is a leper."³¹

When the native culture realises that it should not imitate the traits of the alien culture any longer and that the alien culture is not really interested in the welfare of the native culture, it either begins to cleanse itself of the contamination by the alien culture or to maintain its own purity by acquiring a new consciousness of the greatness of its own culture and tradition. This may be known as 'revival of culture' or 'renaissance'. The Bengalis did not go to the extent of unlearning and dispossessing whatever they had learnt and acquired from the British culture. But they became aware of their own indigenous and distinct culture. The process of cultural reawakening was expedited by the social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and proselytisers like Swami Vivekananda. Especially Swami Vivekananda did a lot of missionary work for whipping up the latent patriotism and self-respect in

Hindus of those days. This kind of propagandistic exhortation was complemented by the artistic activities of Rabindranath Tagore and the philosophical writings of Sri Aurobindo. A greater philip to this revivalism was provided by the political awakening through out the country led by Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders in India and by Subhas Chandra Bose outside the country. As a result of all these happenings the Bengalis like other Indians began to hanker for political independence. Hence the permeation of political consciousness in many a field of their life. They made literature a means of patriotic propaganda and wrote patriotic songs and novels. Bankim Chandra Chatterji was the greatest Bengali novelist, who wrote with keenest possible contemporary consciousness. They employed even music to sing the patriotic songs. Inspired by the European Orientalists they began to study the Indian religious scriptures like the **Vedas**, **Upanishads** and others with a new zeal, confidence and consciousness.

Thus **The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian** offers us not only the life-sketch of an individual but autobiography of a culture. Since ethnology is said to be the autobiography of a race or a culture, Chaudhuri's work provides a description of a culture seen through the individual's point of view, the author is perfectly justified in designating his work more as an experiment in descriptive ethnology than as an autobiography.

REFERENCES

- 1) Nirad C. Chaudhuri, **The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian**. (New Delhi : Jaico Publishing Company, 1972.) p. 131.
- 2) Ibid, p. 131-2
- 3) Ibid, p. xiii
- 4) Ibid, p. ix

- 5) Quoted by Melville J. Herskovitz in **Cultural Anthropology**. (New Delhi : Oxford and IBH Publishing Co. 1969.) p. 305.
- 6) Jerry D. Rose, **Peoples : The Ethnic Dimensions in Human Relations**. (Chicago ; Rand Mc. Nally College Publishing Company, 1976.) pp. 41-51.
- 7) Melville J. Herskovitz, **Cultural Anthropology**; (New Delhi Oxford and IBH Publishing Co. 1969.) pp. 305-6.
- 8) Chaudhuri, **The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian**. p. 155.
- 9) Ibid, p. 128.
- 10) Ibid, p. 391.
- 11) Ibid, p. 391.
- 12) Ibid, p. 378.
- 13) Ibid, p. 378.
- 14) Ibid, p. 385.
- 15) Ibid, p. 51.
- 16) Ibid, p. 51.
- 17) Ibid, p. 74.
- 18) Ibid, p. 133.
- 19) Ibid, p. 141.
- 20) Ibid, p. 143.
- 21) Ibid, p. 55.
- 22) Ibid, p. 137.
- 23) Ibid, p. 397.
- 24) Ibid, p. 401.
- 25) Ibid, p. 208.
- 26) Ibid, p. 121.
- 27) Ibid, p. 119.
- 28) Ibid, p. 119.
- 29) Ibid, p. 119.
- 30) Ibid, p. 125.
- 31) Ibid, p. 130.

CHAPTER II

A PASSAGE TO ENGLAND :

A TRAVELOGUE

Travelogue as an art-form is conspicuous by its absence in the realm of Indo-English letters. The lack of this art-form in Indo-English literature is probably the result of negligence and lack of recognition that is due to this form. One of the implicit reasons for the negligence of this literary form seems to be rooted in the Indian view of life which is conditioned by the Indian i. e. Hindu philosophy which enjoins upon the believer the inward or spiritual journey and indirectly prevents him from travelling in the external world. In other words, the Hindu philosophy holds the view that the best knowledge that is possible for man is the self-knowledge which can be had wherever one is born or existentially made to stay. Unlike the medieval European, the traditional Indian does not believe in the knowledge that can be acquired through journey or travel. The medieval Europeans believed that travel is part of education. It is on account of this basic cultural difference between the East and the West that the travelogue as a literary form is discouraged or encouraged according to the philosophical attitude of a particular nation. The journey or travel in its secular aspect is quite absent in traditional Indian culture, although it comes as part of the religious activities. The journey or pilgrimage to the holy shrines and places has an explicit religious intention behind it. Moreover the journey or pilgrimage comes only at the last stage of a Hindu's life and gives him a sense of fulfilment and completeness. This journey is generally not encouraged

as a secular programme of the acquisition of knowledge in traditional India. One might even risk an opinion that the travelogue which is the result of the travel that is not encouraged in Indo-English literature mainly because of the hangover of the traditionalism of Indian philosophy or religion. It may be a matter of surprise to note that even the best educated but traditional Hindus, sometimes, do not want to cross the black waters in spite of being offered prestigious scholarships from western countries simply because their tradition interprets such a travel as a sin or sacrilege. That explains the strong influence of superstition upon the traditional Hindu and accounts for the lack of sufficient growth of the literature of travel in Indo-English letters.

Nirad C. Chaudhuri is an exception to this phenomenon partly because he is not a traditional Hindu and partly because he is a man of remarkable originality and courage. **A Passage to England** is an important landmark in the form of travelogue and as such invites comparison with other famous works of travellers of the world like Fahien and Huen Tsang etc. But what is more noteworthy about **A Passage to England** is that it has certain other qualities in it which are not normally found in other travelogues of the world like, for example, critical analysis and scientific description in addition to poetic and philosophical observation. The characteristic features of Chaudhuri's remarkable travelogue may be analysed at some length in the following paragraphs.

A Passage to England is, of course, the result of Chaudhuri's trip to England during his fifty seventh year at the invitation by the British Broadcasting Corporation. The trip obviously is of very short duration of five weeks in the spring of 1955. The first thing that strikes the attention of the reader is the brevity of the journey which therefore automatically sharpens the traveller's sensibility & intensifies his experience with the strange atmosphere. Unlike the famous travellers like Fahien and Huen Tsang who spent

months and years together in the foreign countries, Chaudhuri is compelled by the exigencies of modern life to avail himself of only thirty-five days for his foreign trip. It is this brevity of trip that causes an extra-ordinary alertness in Chaudhuri and enables him to absorb the maximum possible experience of the strange country, customs, manners and government and so on. It is this great intensity of experience caused at least partially by brevity of his trip that he describes when he says "In that short space of time I saw more paintings, statues and works of art in general, more plays, fine buildings, gardens and beautiful landscapes, heard more poetry and music, ate and drank better, and altogether had a more exciting and interesting time than in all the rest of my life." (P. 9) Mere intensity of experience is not the sole feature of this travelogue. It is ideally matched by the wide range of variety which smacks of the encyclopaedic. A man of variegated interests as Chaudhuri is, his sensibility can absorb anything and everything that is presented before him. The bewildering variety of themes (in comparison with the relative brevity of his trip) in **A Passage to England** is the product as much of richness of the objective world as of that of the subjective capacity of the author. Chaudhuri's mind can, in this sense, be compared to a colour-camera as contrasted with an ordinary black-and-white-camera which is able to capture the variegated colourfulness of the world only because of the presence of the ingredients of colour in its film.

One of the most striking features of **A Passage to England** as also of other travelogues is the immediacy of experience which is intensified by the novelty and the contrast that it provides to the traveller's native experience. This is matched by Chaudhuri's sensibility which is sharpened by his encyclopaedic reading of a wide range of subjects from art to ammunition and from poetry to politics etc. It is because of this rare combination of a rich sensibility encountered

with a rich atmosphere that Chaudhuri is able to produce a work of art of substantial worth. The first impression of Chaudhuri when he lands in England is that of the British weather which provides a sharp contrast to the Indian weather in which he is brought up. Chaudhuri is so sensitive that he notices it at the earliest possible opportunity. The strange combination of light and temperature creates an illusion of unrealistic strangeness and oddity for Chaudhuri. The geography of England obviously makes a very deep impression upon him. He therefore says, "Everything in England presents itself to our eyes in a manner different from visual phenomena on the plains of India. We get a curious sense of the reality of the third dimension which is perhaps most easily illustrated with reference to trees". (P. 26) Similarly when Chaudhuri walks to the Hyde Park he notices a place near Albion Gate and notices the strangeness again. He says "But the whole scene affected me in a very queer way and trying to account for this sensation of strangeness and even oddity. I found that to my eyes the houses were rising more steeply and perpendicularly from the pavement, forming a skyline and altogether standing more four-square than anything in the way of houses I had seen doing in my own country, even in a big modern city like Calcutta." (P. 27). He further continues to say that "The impression of solidity was so strong that if I had had a hammer in my hand I should have walked along unconsciously tapping the houses with it, and in a mood of impatience, which endless rows of brick and stone often generate" (P. 27). All this strangeness of atmosphere is not only noticed by Chaudhuri's keen sense of observation but is even rightly designated by his knowledge which is informed by the encyclopaedic reading of art and architecture and so on. That explains why he describes the impression of depth and solidity of the British weather in terms of art-criticism, when he refers to the "three dimensionality of the western buildings" (P. 27). The thick fog and

cloudiness of the British weather gives depth to the human perception of them and makes the buildings appear more solid and sturdy and concrete than they really are. This phenomenon is rightly described by Chaudhuri as cubistic. **A Passage to England** therefore attains the height of a standard travelogue as it combines the author's unusually sharp sensibility, sense of minute observation and encyclopaedic reading and shows his ability to relate all of them relevantly to the external world into which he is thrown. Like other writers of travelogues, he describes the scenery very minutely but unlike them, he goes a step ahead in critically evaluating them also.

Once the unusualness of the British weather is noticed by Chaudhuri at the very outset, he goes on observing the different aspects of English life like geography, people, art, architecture, economics, politics, religion and love etc in course of his tour. That explains the comprehensive range of his vision and the sharpness of his sensibility. He, for example, notices the striking features of the geography of the British country. His remark about the density of the English weather has already been discussed. Next, he observes the close connection between Man and Nature and the intimacy between village and town. He also notices that the greenery of Britain is not one of trees or shrubs but that of the grass. He is obviously fascinated by the British greenery of grass. He finds that there is more peace in the English woods than in the Indian ones. His keen observation of the salient features of London is very significant. He designates London as archetypal city which is in his opinion, conscious of its appearance like a man. This great city is big and complex and historical and modern at the same time. It contains mist, domes and cupolas and is closely connected with the industrial order and is known for immensity, gravitation and mass. He also points out the unpredictability of the British weather.

Chaudhuri observes the economic aspect also of the British life. He finds that the British markets contain a bewildering variety and abundance of goods from the highest to the lowest quality and importance. Similarly he notices the great variety of food also. A man of keen observation as he is, he cannot be blind to the snobbery of the Bond Street in London.

Chaudhuri's observation is equally keen in the field of British politics also. He rightly remarks that an average Britishman is a John Bull at heart, with his double face of conservatism and radicalism. Chaudhuri cannot help appreciating the concept and practice of the Welfare State in Britain. Likewise he also comes to admire the advanced agriculture and animal husbandry encouraged so much by the British government. He is really impressed by the unassuming nature of Churchill.

The architectural pieces of England have a special fascination for Chaudhuri who is quite well-versed in this field. He is careful enough to notice the incongruity of the fusion of different architectural styles like the Roman and the Mediterranean etc. He points out how the Roman basilica and the Italian palazzo had been transformed by the British into the Gothic cathedral and the countryhouse respectively.

Similarly, Chaudhuri absorbs the cultural life of Britain expressed in terms of various arts like antiquities, painting, music and drama. He, for example, visits the Fitzwilliam Museum among others, sees a variety of paintings including *The Nativity of Francesco*, hears a number of musical compositions including *Messiah* and sees famous incunabula. Besides he witnesses a number of plays of Shakespeare enacted on the British stage and appreciates the excellent spectacle and beautiful language of the same. But he does not forget to mention the unfortunate commercialization of Shakespeare

in Stratford-upon-Avon. He also admires the excellent enactments of Racine's plays like *Athalie*. He even visits a Savage Club in Bristol. Thus Chaudhuri acquaints himself with the panorama of British culture.

As for religion, Chaudhuri visits many Churches and notices the fact that religion and economics are separated in England unlike in India. He also observes that in England the upper-classes are more religious than the common people. He even sees the religious significance in the secular activities of British life. Coronation, according to him, is a secular ritual and games and sports are a ritualization of physical exercise.

The British love, of course, does not escape Chaudhuri's attention. His observation shows that love was going on everywhere and at all times in England. Love was of self-abandoned kind. He remarks that love-making is as much social as biological in the West. He further remarks that whereas the idealization of sex-relation is the work of man in Europe, it is the work of woman in India.

All these physical details testify to the fact that *A Passage to England*, like many other travelogues in many other languages is an important work in that it has captured the picture of the contemporary England which no doubt assumes an inevitable historical significance and enables the non-British reader to visualise the image of the country which he has not visited. Chaudhuri has obviously absorbed all the major features of British life through his photographic and panoramic observation. But Chaudhuri will not be Chaudhuri if he were to remain content with this much only. His greatness lies in the fact that in spite of his meticulous record of the fleeting life of Britain he attempts to offer a picture of the timeless England through the description of the relatively permanent features of the British national character. In this regard, Chaudhuri grows from the level

of a mere journalist to the height of a philosopher. One of the significant features of Chaudhuri's personality as also of his writing is that he never imitates others or their views however fascinating or repulsive they may be. He is always willing to respond to a situation or phenomenon in a fresh and first hand fashion. That is the reason why he is only too willing to revise his opinions he had borrowed from books about the English people and their culture when he is made to encounter the same empirically. He has neither the cowardice nor the hypocrisy nor the snobbery of aligning his first hand experience with the preconceived notions acquired through the reading of English literature and writing. A romantic realist as he is, he does not mind seeing the harsh reality in the face and tries even to see the beauty in it. One of the most important instances of this habit of Chaudhuri may be seen with regard to the British complexion. He, like all Indians, had developed a notion about the British people from reading their literature that they are very handsome and pretty and even ethereal and very impressive etc. But his face-to-face encounter with them shows him the falsity of his preconceived notions. He finds that there is nothing special about the appearance of Englishmen, and that they are not remarkable in any way but look like clerks and workmen. "Judged by their clothes they could have been anything from clerks to high officials in India, but I assumed that they were English workmen." (P. 79) Nor is Chaudhuri impressed by their complexion. Like an art-critic analysing the chiarascuro of a painting, Chaudhuri attributes the unimpressiveness of the English complexion which is nothing but a combination of white and pink colours and which therefore upsets the balance between light and shade on the face and appears like one block of light which is not a mark of beauty. "The pink Western faces send out, at least to our eyes almost equal light from all points and surfaces, and thus the features tend to be flattened out." (P. 85) Similarly he is disillusioned about

the English ladies also. He feels that the British chamber maids are better than the men-sahibs. That is why he is impelled to ask, "But where are your beautiful women, whom old painters painted and the poets raved about? where are they to be seen." (P. 83) He is frank enough to point out that the English women are plain and dowdy in spite of their furry and other elegance. He is rather disappointed by the dull and flattened out effect of their white faces into which lipstick and rouge merge. These observations by Chaudhuri illustrate his ability, sincerity, courage and willingness to revise the *a priori* knowledge in the light of the *a fortiori* one which contradistinguishes his travelogue from a textbook of anthropology of the British people.

After recording his impressions about the external appearance of the English people, Chaudhuri goes on to comment upon the general features of the English character, which naturally contradistinguish them from the natives of other countries. In fact, they even provide a sharp contrast to the Indian character of which Chaudhuri is only too keenly aware. Some of the major features of the English national character may be expatiated here. Lack of inhibition in the matters of sex or love is one of the most striking features of English life. The main reason why Chaudhuri notices this aspect so unfailingly is the fact that he comes from a puritanically inhibited country, India. He therefore clarifies it when he says, "This statement would appear to be very odd unless it is remembered that I am a Hindu; and that in our society it is very difficult to observe the workings of love in human beings and to watch love-making at first hand is virtually impossible." (P. 123) Since Chaudhuri comes from such an inhibitive background, he is instantly made to observe the phenomenon that is contrary to his own country's. He finds that love manifests itself in an uninhibited fashion in England. There is no restriction of either time or place or rules or principles. Mr. Chaudhuri records it without any fear of

seeming indecent. "I also saw that love-making was an easily observable activity. In fact, it was going on every where and at all times." I have seen young people falling on one another, crying, and kissing on a studded pedestrian crossing in a wide Paris thoroughfare, thundering with motor traffic ... I saw the same spectacle in England, even in the Cambridge Backs, almost under the shadow of King's College Chapel. The exhibition is more self-abandoned by the standards of each nation: it makes Englishmen forget their dignity and Frenchmen their intelligence." (P. 125). Love-making thus happens to be a socially approved public activity in England and testifies to their free behaviour.

Silence is another important feature of the English character. Mr. Chaudhuri observes this phenomenon quite keenly and says that the English youngman acquires the 'negative attitude' quite early in life when he is advised constantly by his elders about the 'don'ts in life.' Chaudhuri naturally provides a contrast by referring to the Indian young man who pretends to obey his elders in their presence and follows the exactly opposite way in their absence. In England even the most rebellious youth cultivates this restraint. It is probably because of these injunctions—social, moral and so on—that the Englishman follows a restrained life later in his life. Their social life is marked by silence as they usually keep their work and social life separate. Chaudhuri who comes from a garrulous country, is puzzled by the un-exhibitive nature of the English people. He says, "Another habit of theirs perplexes us and at times causes social awkwardness. They do not disclose their position in the world. I have met distinguished people, but unless I knew who they were I should never have been able to guess that they had achieved anything at all. If they are thinkers they do not hold forth, if they are statesmen they do not disclose programmes for reforming the world, a man who is not well-up in a subject might not be able to discover that an English-

man is an expert on it. This makes it difficult for us to decide how much civility to mete out to them." (P. 98) The importance of this feature of English character can be understood only if it is contrasted with the Indian habit of declaring one's position, degrees, achievements, views, feelings, prejudices etc as openly as possible with an element of pride concealed or otherwise.

The silence of English character is connected with another habit i. e. of understatement which is typical of their life and occupies an important position in their grammar also. Chaudhuri quotes a few events to demonstrate their habit of understatement. Once he meets an English intellectual at his home and on seeing the books on the selves compliments him by saying "How beautifully they are bound " (P. 98). The Englishman seems to be rather embarrassed and only says 'They were presented to me by the Swedish Academy' (P. 98) in an apologetic tone. An Indian in his position would have given the whole history of the book and book-writing in an elated fashion. On another occasion Chaudhuri is taken by an Englishman to a lake and is shown a 'mallard' a 'gorse' and a 'braken' without explaining their meaning at all. On yet another occasion Chaudhuri is shown the tapestry after Rubens in the hall of King's College and the Gate of Honour at Caius by two different Englishmen who never explain the meaning of the same to him. "The fact is that when an Englishman is friendly he imputes himself and considers all explanations as rudeness." (P. 103).

Absorption in small things, love of concrete things and sensitiveness to the inherent aspects of stone and metal etc. form part of the microscopic imagination of the English people. Chaudhuri is rather puzzled by this aspect of their behaviour. But nonetheless his anthropological imagination enables him to explain it in terms of the influence of the weather on the human behaviour. The unpredictable weather of England which restricts the Englishman's sight of the

horizon and enervates his abstract imagination, enables him to accept the surprises and develop a concrete imagination. Chaudhuri explains it quite lucidly, "Now to come to the main point. I think the weather has very largely entered into the formation of the Englishman's mind, and the training of his sensibilities. It has made him responsive to changes in the environment, capable of meeting surprises of all kinds, both pleasant and unpleasant, and of taking contretemps with good humour; above all, it has made him observant of and susceptible to concrete details." (P. 109). Chaudhuri explains further. "I was very much intrigued by his absorption in small things. A book, a knocker, a hinge, a paw foot to a chair, not to speak of a whole piece of furniture or a wrought iron gate, seemed to have an irresistible fascination for him." (P. 109). The English exhibit the same tendency i. e. microscopic observation with regard to the objects like wood, stone, metal or glass. They seem to prefer the naturalness of things to their improvement by man. "The same characteristic is illustrated by the extra-ordinary sensitiveness that the English people show to the inherent attributes of wood, stone, metal or glass. They seem to be drawn by them as cats are by the texture of velvet and satin. We in the tropics would never have dreamt of leaving the beams exposed in a stately room like the Solar at Penshurst Place, or of putting a bronze bushel measurer in it, even though it might have been cast from the guns of the Spanish Armada. (P. 110). The microscopic attitude of the British finds expression in their architecture also. It may be easily guessed that the geocentric imagination conditioned by the English weather is at work in almost all the fields of their life. Chaudhuri says. "The interiors of the English houses, especially the great ones, also give evidence of the love of concrete details. They are in a way possible only in that climate and weather. They were made by and meant for a people who had to spend long evenings indoors, sometimes day after day, when the mind would be benumbed by its own

emptiness unless it could crawl from one object to another along a continuous chain of interest—furniture, China, glass, plate, pictures, ornaments, fireplaces and other fixtures” (P. 110). The English weather thus plays an important role in shaping the behaviour of the Englishmen. “There can be no doubt that the English weather has fostered a pronounced degree of sensitiveness to nuances and made both men and things more mellow.” (P. 111). All these details testify to the concrete and microscopic imagination of the English people which forms part of their national character.

Spending is a positive urge in an Englishman which is contrary to the Indian habit of hoarding. The Englishman wants to enjoy life by spending money without any hesitation because, as Chaudhuri points out, “England appeared to be a country of easy money, in the moralist’s sense of the term.” (P. 116) Since England is a country of well established economic order which is supported by the moral order, commercial honesty and unsuspiciousness, the Englishman enjoys a sense of economic security denied to an Indian. Mr. Chaudhuri offers a few examples to illustrate this phenomenon. When he offers his cheque in one of the English banks, the clerk gives him the amount without even verifying the signature and balance. Similarly a friend of Chaudhuri from B. B. C. gives him a large sum as an advance and asks him to write some talks for the B. B. C. in course of time. What is to be noted here is the fact that a public body like the B. B. C. trusts even a stranger like Mr. Chaudhuri with this money without having any guarantee about the fulfilment of the contract. These instances are enough evidence of the basic moral integrity which helps the Englishman maintain the economic order without the least contamination. This phenomenon appears to be rather strange to Mr. Chaudhuri who comes from a country where “money-making is an open conspiracy ...” (P. 115) and

economics and commerce are conditioned by downright immorality and corruption.

Colour prejudice is another attitude ingrained in the British character. The English child who is relatively more free than the adult Englishman from social decency expresses the colour prejudice more abandonly than the adult. It is interesting to know this from Chaudhuri's own words, "As I was coming out of Canterbury Cathedral I observed a little English boy of about six sitting on the grass and looking at me with an intense gaze, like a lion cub watching a distant zebra. When I came near him he began to rise slowly on his knees, and while still half kneeling raised his arm, pointed a finger at me and cried out in his sharp treble, 'You're from Africa.' (P. 133). This example holds a mirror to the deep-seated colour prejudice of the English race although it is not exhibited everywhere and at every place because of diplomatic nature of the human relations between people of two different countries.

Social life in England is always compartmentalised and has to be conducted only through proper channel. Mr. Nirad Chaudhuri remarks that "... .. English social life is still English social life, and trying to enter it is like entering a club. Physical nearness means very little there. In my London hotel, which was not large, I did not notice anyone making friends with the other inmates. An African, obviously a highly educated man, always took his meals alone, and even I did not go up and talk to him, falling in, I suppose, with the spirit of the society." (P.136). Unlike the Indians who make friends within no time over the dining table or across the corridor, the Englishmen do not indulge in conversation simply because of physical nearness. In other words, the English social life is characterised by commonness of interests, equality of status and unwillingness to communicate.

The Englishmen attach a great significance to the physical exercise again, understandably, to keep themselves physically fit and to shake the numbness of limbs caused by the cold weather. The physical exercise is of course an English parallel to the Indian yoga. They make a religion of the physical labour. Mr. Chaudhuri, therefore, comments that "There is something monastic in the English attitude to physical labour." (P. 141). "When we Hindus thought of physical exertion as a means of spiritual catharsis, we indulged in yoga. Of course, in England, too, physical exercise has been ritualised in the form of games and sports, and perhaps most so in the centres of intellectual training." (P. 142). It is the regular indulgence in physical labour that keeps the Englishmen so healthy and cheerful. This makes them extraverts and provides a contrast to the Indians who are, by and large, introverts and melancholic. It might therefore be said without any hesitation that extraversion is part of their national character.

The intellectual life of the Englishman is marked by unpretentiousness in contrast to the tall claims of the Indian intellectual. Mr. Chaudhuri says, "There is the same unpretentiousness in intellectual life so far as it forms part of general culture." (P. 179). He supports this observation with an illustration of a blind professor of England who writes to Mr. Chaudhuri about his *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* and expresses his frank views without any literary pose or diplomacy. "Time after time I wanted to rush off to you and say. 'I thoroughly agree with you' or 'I don't believe that' Indeed, at one time, I thought of making notes in order that in writing to you I could mention all the points that occurred to me, but the only way is really more discussion, preferably at the Savile Club, over a bottle of the best." (P. 179) The unpretentiousness of the Englishman as experienced by Mr. Chaudhuri could be understood only if one

has any knowledge of the conceited behaviour of an Indian by contrast.

Politically the Englishmen seem to live in the present life only and have very little thought of the future. Mr. Chaudhuri who asks the question about the national destiny of England repeatedly, at last gets an answer from a British lady who explains the loss of the English political ambition as follows. "You see, Mr. Chaudhuri, we have had very bad times and we have come through, though we hardly knew how to. We have also recovered more rapidly than we could have believed to be possible. I think that is why we are enjoying the present for a little while. I am sure we are not really thoughtless about the future." (P. 234). The generality of the English seem to have lost their political zest and ambition and provide a good contrast for the Indians who want to involve themselves with political life actively either pragmatically or ideologically, because in India the political order is the highest order and influences all other orders of life.

The English political life is marked by a dualism. This dual aspect of English political character is, according to Mr. Chaudhuri, represented by John Bull who "like Janus, always had two faces, the conservative and the radical." (P. 137). Although conservatism and radicalism are antithetical to each other, they are professed together by the Englishman and add irony to his character. This quality is found not merely in political leaders, but in the working class also. It is expressed not only in public international life but in private local life also. That is why Mr. Chaudhuri is compelled to say that John Bull is 'Made in England', "But if I think that John Bull lives on, I have something else too in mind, and John Bull, not in his relation with foreign people and the outside world, but John at home in his private capacity, as an English personality." (P. 138).

The Englishman cannot overcome this dualism and cannot be a typical Englishman without it.

The love of historical civilisation seems to be another dominant feature of their culture and hence character. That explains their great historical sense and their unwillingness to think of the future. Unlike the Indians who have a great history with little historical consciousness, the English have a great history with a greater historical consciousness. Mr Chaudhuri therefore remarks that the enormous man-power that they have created with their science has made them recoil from it and immerse themselves in historic civilisation by way of self-protection. "This leaves to all western nations, and Englishmen among them, only one thing to fall back on: their historic civilisation. As soon as I came to this point in my thinking I also understood the real meaning of all that I had seen in England and France—the crowds at the classical plays, concerts, picture galleries and exhibitions, the interest in architecture, gardens and landscape, loyalty to religion and the *mos majorum*; the care bestowed on the interpretation and preservation of the national heritage; the love and piety inspired by all the aspects of the historic civilisation including even its politics." (P. 230). Sometimes this preoccupation with historic civilisation turns out to be only a snobbish interest in old things. Their culture-vulturism is expressed in their turning away from the modern civilisation created by material progress towards the historic and cultural life. "It is the number and prosperity of the shops dealing in antiques, old books, and second-hand furniture. Judged by this test the people of England are very civilised, for I found these shops everywhere stocking goods for all purses." (P. 173). Historic consciousness to be expressed now in genuine and now in snobbish manner happens to be an important ingredient of the English character.

Insularity can be said to be one of the most typical qualities of the Englishman. The English insularity is easily comparable to the Brahmanical parochialism in India. That probably gives them a psychological consolation in the modern world which is slowly moving towards the international way of life. Mr Chaudhuri says that "... the Englishman is at his strongest and best when he is most insular. Even in olden days this made a thoroughgoing English imperialist a man of two minds, and the Little Englander trait has won." (P. 204). Whereas the Englishman's relation with the outside world is marked by insularity, his relation with his own i. e. English world is characterised by grumbling. Mr Chaudhuri rightly opines that 'the national habit of grumbling is alternated with irritation, moodiness and gaiety.

Mr Chaudhuri thus offers a descriptive picture of English environment and an analytical picture of the English character. In spite of the extreme shortness of his travel in England, he has shown the maximum possible operation of his perceptive and cognitive faculties supported, of course, by his encyclopaedic reading, historical imagination and remarkable memory, the result of which is the creation of the picture not only of the temporally and spatially bound variegated England but also of the timeless, spaceless and universal England. Chaudhuri the painter and Chaudhuri the philosopher have joined hands to produce *A Passage to England* which is undoubtedly an excellent product of his panoramic as well as microscopic observation of life and which as such, attains the stature of not merely the best travelogue but of the best treatise on English character.

REFERENCES

*All the references to the text are from *A Passage to England*, (Bombay: Jaico Publishing House, 1974.)

CHAPTER III

ESSAY AS SATIRE :

THE CONTINENT OF CIRCE

There is no sensible Indian who is not delighted, shocked and irritated by the powerful satire **The Continent of Circe** written by one of the most solid thinkers that India has ever produced. Nirad C. Chaudhuri is like a highly sensitive musical instrument which cannot help responding to even the slightest possible whiff's of air. This does not mean that he inherited it from his birth. Though the essence of it is a matter of inheritance, the rich variety and subtlety of it is the result of conscious effort on the part of Chaudhuri to absorb the phenomenal world through his senses and train himself to look at the world with extreme alertness. That is why Chaudhuri is said to be more Indian than the Indians and more British than the Britishers themselves as far as his sensitivity is concerned. K. R. Srinivas Iyengar is right in describing him. "He is the gadfly, he is the Geiger counter looking for hidden obliquities of self-deception, he is the fiercely honest and unsparing critic of men and morals and manners in contemporary India. The truth about him seems to be that he is at once more Indian than most Indians and more English than many Englishmen" 1

A highly sensitive soul as he is, Chaudhuri could not help looking around him and recording his responses to them. **The Continent of Circe** is the product of very keen observation, contemplation and analysis of the nature and problems of the vast continent called India consisting of a variety of countries in it. It can easily be considered as a powerful satire because of the presence of the many strains of satirical

writing in it. Satire may express itself in a diversity of literary forms like poetry, prose, fiction and drama etc. Similarly satire may be expressed in a variety of techniques also like the allegorical, the symbolic, and the realistic etc. Satires may be written in different styles also. There may be descriptive satires or analytical satires, or descriptive-analytical satires. Similarly there can be crude satires and sophisticated satires also. There can be satires proper and satirical works. Chaudhuri's **The Continent of Circe** may be designated as a descriptive-analytical satirical work. Chaudhuri does not want to call it a satire because his intention is to try to 'understand' the bewildering continent called India. That is the reason why he defines his work as an essay. 'This book', says Chaudhuri, "is an essay in the primary meaning of the word, a trial in exposition which cannot but be sketchy and tentative"². The confession here only testifies to Chaudhuri's tongue-in-cheek humility and therefore should not be taken on its face value. The form of the 'essay' should not be taken to mean the essay of Bacon or of Montaigne or of Emerson. The essay that Chaudhuri writes is not of the length of two pages to twentyfive pages but runs into three hundred and seventy six pages of close print. Naturally Chaudhuri's 'essay' resembles Hobbes' **Essay on the Human Understanding** in its length. He justifiably calls it 'an essay on the peoples of India'. Chaudhuri is right in designating his work as an essay because his main intention is to endeavour to understand the mysterious and puzzling country of which he himself is a native. To live in a country is not to understand it. Even when one wants to understand one's country there is no guarantee that one understands it properly if at all he can do so. This is especially true in the case of India which is known for its contradictions, riddles, and peculiarities. India defies understanding. In this context trying to understand it becomes one of the greatest challenges of life for an Indian. Chaudhuri deserves congratulations on his bold venture of trying to understand his country. He is therefore, perfectly right in calling

his work 'an essay'. It easily fits in the definition of the essay. "In general, it is a composition, usually in prose... on a restricted topic".³

Though the 'essay' that he has written is half descriptive and half-analytical in its style, the metaphorical title of the work offers us the picture of its satirical nature. It easily reminds us of the other famous satires of the world like **The Gulliver's Travel**, **The Animal Farm**, **The Battle of Books**, **Erehwon** etc. **The Continent of Circe**, obviously, reveals the fact that the vast continent of India is identified with the demoness, Circe. Nobody can fail to understand its satirical undertones. But the main difference between **The Continent of Circe** and other satires like **The Gulliver's Travels** is also to be noted. Whereas Jonathan Swift follows the method of allegorising the characters, situations and places. Chaudhuri follows that of realistic description, and analysis. In other words, **The Gulliver's Travels** is a purely satirical allegory, but **The Continent of Circe** is a satirical essay containing occasional metaphorical references. Nonetheless **The Continent of Circe** may be studied as a satire as it contains a great deal of satirical attitude and stuff in it.

All over the world satires are written only when and because the authors are disappointed with the prevalent conditions of life, be they social, economic, political or religious etc. But those who are happy with the conditions of life will prefer to write patriotic and even chauvenistic stuff and never think of venturing into the challenging, though negative, form of satirical writing. "... it criticises, unmasks, subverts the world we know. Satire attacks because man is, or least some men are, engaged in a ceaseless battle against evil or dullness or (Frye) against some 'form of romanticism or the imposing of over-simplified ideals on experience'. Man may not win, but he must go on fighting; in the fight is life. Thus from mockery to despair-and by the very battle proving

hope-directly or indirectly satire wages war against Chaos, the mighty Anarch" 4.

Having accepted *The Continent of Circe* as a satire, one has to examine as to what kind of a method the author employs in satirising the people of his choice. Broadly speaking there are two methods of satirical writing. One way is to satirise the life of a people by transferring them to an imaginary world so that the satirist can escape the danger of being harassed, or punished or imprisoned or even killed by the people he has criticised. The method of creating an imaginary world is decided by a variety of factors like the temperament of the writer, the nature of the society that he lives in and the demand of the burning problems of his country etc. The second way to satirise the people is to lay bare all the weaknesses and dark spots of a people in a direct fashion i.e. not by creating an imaginary world but by being historical, scientific and realistic. This method also is decided by the temperament of the author and the nature of the people chosen for satirisation. Of the two methods Chaudhuri, undoubtedly follows the second one. The reason for this is obviously and mainly ascribable to Chaudhuri's bent of mind. In other words, a man of sterling quality as he is, Chaudhuri cannot help having solid scholarship of almost encyclopaedic range. Again, as Chaudhuri is a student of history and anthropology he could not help using them in his own keen observation and contemplation of life around him. As a result of the rare and strange combination of these elements in his personality Chaudhuri could, without doubt, acquire a highly sharpened sensibility which has become an object of envy and admiration in Indian literary circles.

Satire is invariably occasioned by the author's disappointment with the prevalent conditions of life. It does not however mean that a satirist is always a pessimist. On the contrary the satirist is always an optimist at heart and his so called pessimism is only the apparent product of the failure of society to

live up to its ideals. Even though the satirist finds fault with the society and seems angry with it, his implicit intention is to point to the ideal society or utopia that he is so much secretly in love with. This principle is especially applicable to Chaudhuri because of the frequent accusation of him as a pessimist and a cynic by the Indian critics. But to dismiss one as a pessimist or cynic is not to understand one. The aim of criticism is not to dismiss the author with half a dozen catchy words and phrases but to analyse and understand the subtle and sophisticated pattern of meaning supported by the underlying motives and intentions. The business of criticism that is responsible is to help the reader to enter into the spirit of the author's work of art and not to turn away from it. This is no less applicable to satire than to other forms of literature. An attempt, therefore, has been made in the present article to understand through analysis Chaudhuri's satire **The Continent of Circe**.

Chaudhuri subtitles his work as 'an essay on the Peoples of India.' This is quite in keeping with the anthropological view of India not as a country consisting of a people but as a continent with a multitude of peoples or ethnic diversity. Obviously Chaudhuri's aim is to try to understand the varied society of India. In his attempt to describe through analysis the conditions of Indian life he cannot help making incisive remarks on Indian life and character, which contribute to the satirical atmosphere of the work. His views may be examined in the following paragraphs.

Chaudhuri begins his book with a note about the justifiable curiosity of the foreigners to know the Indian culture and character. That explains the perpetual flow of foreign tourists, journalists, travellers, diplomats, novelists and photographers into the Indian continent. But Chaudhuri points out the unfortunate failure of all these foreign enthusiasts to understand the puzzles and riddles of the Indian life in spite of their remarkable sense of observation and sympathy. Chaudhuri

points out the epistemological difficulty in understanding the great country. He even suggests an epistemology for all those who want to understand India. The epistemology suggested by Chaudhuri is more relevant to the foreign admirers of India than to the Indians themselves. For it is the foreigners and not the Indians who want to know India. Chaudhuri borrows an example from **The Arabian Knights**, in order to illustrate his epistemology. Just as the Prince Diamond had to carry with him the magic weapons offered by the king's daughter with the help of which he could survive the terrible blasts of Flying Simurg's bum and finally reach the city of Wakak, the foreigners should, Chaudhuri suggests, arm themselves with various weapons in order to overcome the difficulties in 'knowing' the bewildering country. But once the basic hindrances are overcome, the foreigner is sure to have a vision of the panorama of the Indian landscape. "I think", says Chaudhuri, "the genii who guard the secrets of our country, life, and civilization put us to the same test before they will allow us to see real India. But when they do carry us up what a vision it is!"⁵ Those who want to understand India should overcome their intolerance of filth, squeamishness, contradictions and riddles of the country before they can, if ever, have an over all view of the Indian life. Many a time the knowledge seeker will be stuck up at the very beginning stage of his quest and there is no guarantee that he will have a comprehensive if not a complete or final view of the huge country. The epistemology suggested by Chaudhuri is really very difficult to practise for a variety of reasons,

Chaudhuri himself has arrived at the already suggested epistemology after undergoing a number of such difficulties. He is in fact said to be in a fix because he has to act as an inside-outsider in the sense that by virtue of his birth he is an insider and has the first hand experience of the conditions of life in his country and by virtue of his so called 'Anglomania' or the consciously acquired English sensibility he is an outsider who wants to look at the country from a pragmatic and rational

point of view which is ill-suited to a country which can, at best, lend itself either to sub-rational or supra-rational interpretation. Nonetheless Chaudhuri ventures into the challenging, though exhausting odyssey of trying to know the heart of India. He is sufficiently well armed to carry on the task. In the process of this adventure Chaudhuri cannot help formulating his own opinions into principles which correspond to those of social psychology and anthropology. The intention in this article is to concentrate on the satirical aspect of **The Continent of Circe** and examine Chaudhuri's observations and opinions about the Indian life and character. An original and a clear thinker as he is, Chaudhuri offers a very clear-cut analysis of the Indian society which may be examined in some detail here.

After a great deal of patient and careful observation of the life in his country Chaudhuri arrives at certain conclusions about the national culture and character. At the very outset he clarifies the confusion between the words like 'Hindu' and 'Indian'. He is right in pointing out how the adjective 'Indian' is merely political in its connotation and is inadequate to convey the other implications. He therefore, rightly prefers the adjective 'Hindu' which conveys the cultural traits of the dominant community of India. Consequently Chaudhuri's observation of Indian life becomes synonymous with that of the Hindus' life. Having established the basic hypothesis of his book, Chaudhuri goes on examining the society and its dominant traits. The first feature that strikes his attention is the Hindu duality which is irreparable. Says he, "...the duality of the Hindu existence is like the cat-and-dog life of maladjusted married couple who can neither separate nor live together." In as much as Chaudhuri is himself a Hindu he is also a victim of this duality. The Hindu has been making the duality more and more pronounced with the march of years. Chaudhuri is very sour about the ever widening gap between the Hindu ideals and the Hindu practice and the consequent compromise

and hypocrisy that have become the dominant strains of the Hindu's personality and hence culture.

Chaudhuri satirises the Indian society by showing the contrast between the cherished ideals of Hinduism and the actual day-to-day practice of the Hindus. In a country where the ideals of Hinduism are expounded so prominently in the **Vedas**, the **Upanishads** and the **Bhagvadgita**, the people are naturally expected to live up to them. But on the contrary, as Chaudhuri points out, the Hindus are the stark materialists and can be more materialistic than the so called materialistic society of the West itself. That is the reason why money and official position count far more than any spiritual height or achievement in India. Chaudhuri offers himself as the living example of a man who is not likely to be respected in his country for lacking both money and power, the two great pillars of Indian materialism. When interviewed by an American lady about non-fiction, Khushwant Singh replies, "In non-fiction? Without a doubt Nirad Chaudhuri... A bitterman, a poor man. He doesn't even own a typewriter. He borrows mine a week at a time"² Chaudhuri continues, "My poverty is, of course, well known in New Delhi & much further afield, and therefore I was not prepared to see it bruited about by so august a body as the American Women's Club of Delhi. Why did the impressive board of twelve American women who were jointly looking after the magazine think it necessary to publish such small talk about a man who was even smaller by their standards, who had neither of the two things they understood and respected : namely, money and official power?"³ In fact this satire is more applicable to Indians who never cared to notice him than to the American ladies who had the courtesy to interview him.

Chaudhuri is absolutely right in his satirisation of the commonest malady that Indians have cultivated i.e. their dependence on white experts for everything ranging from cosmetic

to the cosmic. In fact it is an indirect and sometimes even direct recognition of their own inability and of the superiority of the Western talent. Sometimes this madness of Indians reaches ridiculous height. They never trust the authenticity of Indian talent and the durability or quality of Indian things. Books and books can be written on this subject. Chaudhuri is very bitter about this aspect of the Indian character. He says, "But there is nothing which frightens the present Indian ruling class more than the idea of doing anything without the advice and help of white experts. So we have them, and they range from the specialists who advise us about taxation and contraception, to those who build our dams and steel plants. Even a Japanese gardener was brought over to convert a public park, which was being grossly neglected by the Delhi municipality, into a Japanese garden, why, the Japanese himself could not understand"⁹. Obviously Chaudhuri's attack is on the Indian lack of confidence in themselves as a nation.

Indians are not consistent in their behaviour, because on the one hand they depend upon the foreigners and on the other, they dread them. Thus xenolatry and xenophobia are found simultaneously in Indian character and culture. When the barbarians of the Central Asia came and attacked the Indians, the Hindus were utterly humiliated. "Their domination intolerably humiliated the proud Hindu order and it was in dealing with them that it added to its intense pride of race and culture, that violent xenophobia which henceforward became a fixed trait of the Hindu outlook. The compound of fear, hatred, contempt and humiliation was embodied in the notion of *Mlenchha*, the unclean and uncivilized foreigner."¹⁰ Consequently the Hindus became conceited and began to hate all the foreigners regardless of their being barbarians or Muslims or others. The radical change from the historical xenophobia to the modern xenolatry is ridiculous and absurd. Chaudhuri has rightly satirised these qualities of Hindus by showing them through his perceptive historical observation.

Chaudhuri's keen observation and subtle analysis of the Hindu life helps him to lay bare the pseudo-trappings acquired by the majority of the Hindus. He points out the hollowness, the superficiality and artificiality of the Hindus' Westernization. He is perfectly right when he says that the Hindu Westernization is purely technical. The Hindus have not really assimilated the Western scientific spirit in their blood system. Their westernization is confined only to certain exteriorities of culture such as the Western clothes, eating manners, sports, entertainments, etc. It is very intelligent of Chaudhuri to have pointed out the paradox of the Hindu Westernization. The Indians who have not gone abroad are more westernized than those who have. "In fact, I do not meet more Hindus with a Westernized mind among those who have been educated in the West than I do among those who have remained in India"¹

The pseudo-Westernization of the Hindus is allied to their Anglicisation also. Chaudhuri is very bitter about and angry with the anglicised middle class Hindus, who in their madness for Anglicization do not mind deHinduising or deIndianizing themselves. Such Anglicized Hindus are found in the following four categories 1) The Officers of the Armed Forces 2) The Bureaucratic, Managerial and Professional Elite 3) The Technicians 4) The Youth in schools. What Chaudhuri says about the Officer corps is applicable to all the Anglicized Hindus. "But they are the most Anglicized Hindus today in their behaviour and manner of living. They are also the Hindus who know least about Hindu way and traditions and are the most indifferent to all things Hindu so far as these can be present in the consciousness"². Chaudhuri attributes this lack of cultural and national awareness of Hindus to the alien education they receive at the convent schools and other English medium schools which deliberately or otherwise teach the British manners, etiquettes, habits and styles etc. and deIndianise them thoroughly. Chaudhuri attacks that even the imitation by Hindus of such British traits is not really

genuine, because the military education is not suited to the national character of India. Even the British traits like self-restraint, reticence, fair-play and strong will are not cultivated by the Hindus in the real sense of the term and remain rather skin deep. The Anglicized Hindus are notorious for their madness for 'Scotch' whisky. Chaudhuri castigates the terrible class-consciousness of the Anglicized officers and their 'I know, I know' philosophy. The Anglomania is not confined to military officers alone but extends to the entire middle class society of India. Chaudhuri satirises the Hindu girls' madness for convent schools and their desire to marry the IAS Officers. Chaudhuri's observation about the Anglicized Hindus is as bitter as true: "All these men combine the Hindu pride of caste with the English pride of class and they can be very unpleasant"¹³ Chaudhuri's perceptiveness can be seen in his satirical enumeration of the general features of the Anglicized Hindus. Timidity, the madness for English clothes, especially the tie, the use of English language, the delight in the mass-made popular amusements, Western vulgarity and viciousness are the dominant features of this snobbish class. Besides, they are revolutionary only in the reverse gear and have no principles. Chaudhuri is frank and bold enough to say that the person who was responsible for the dominance of the Anglicized Middle class Hindus was none other than Jawaharlal Nehru himself. Says Chaudhuri, "Nehru would not be Nehru without that language"¹⁴, i. e. the English language. Chaudhuri's satire on the unHinduness of the Hindus or the unIndianness of the Indians is quite clear and obvious.

The Indian's madness for the alien language is again something that poses special problems. Many Indian writers desire to write about their country in the English language. But this venture more often than not turns out to be a failure, because of two reasons: one, the Indians cannot achieve the mastery over the alien tongue in the real sense of the term, because as

Chaudhuri points out in his *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* they can manage to enrich their vocabulary but can never overcome the difficulty with regard to the English prepositions and structure as they are accustomed to the inflective languages of India; two; even when they acquire a tolerable mastery over the English language they will not be able to write typically Indian novels because in the very process of learning the English language (mostly in convent schools) they will have deIndianized and anglicized themselves so much that they fail to capture the true Indian spirit in their works. These two problems have to be faced by every Indian writer who cares to be sincere in his profession. Says Chaudhuri, "Over and above in order to be novelists in English, these Indian writers are faced by a problem of writing for tackling which they have neither the knowledge nor the strength of mind. The life, the mind, and the behaviour of Indians are so strange for the people of the West that if these are described in ordinary English the books would be unintelligible to English-speaking readers, and unacceptable to British or American publishers. Most Indian writers solve this problem, not by choosing a genuine Indian subject and creating an adequate Western idiom to express it, but by selecting wholly artificial themes which the Western world takes to be Indian, and by dealing with them in the manner of contemporary Western writers. To put it briefly, they try to see their country and society in the way Englishmen or Americans do and write about India in the jargon of the same masters. The result is an inefficient imitation of the novels about India written by Western novelists. India is far too big a subject for such frippery"¹⁵

Chaudhuri attacks the Hindus' ever readiness to imitate anything that is unHindu or un-Indian; because of their crass ignorance of their own culture. Another malady the Hindus suffer from is the Americanization. As Chaudhuri points out, the modern Indians, unlike the ancient and medieval Indians, have lost their sense of cultural identity and are only too

willing to surrender themselves to the alien life-styles which came in their perview. The industrialization of India an "under-developed country" has easily paved the way for the Americanization of Hindus.

The Indians are guilty of neglecting the two most important features of their country, i.e. Hinduism and agriculture. Chaudhuri is absolutely right in his attack. In the India of the present days the Hindus have come to acquire a view that following their religious practices or trying to understand them or cultivating the land are below their dignity and are supposed to be meant only for the illiterate. The Hindus will not turn their attention to these things until some foreigners recommend them.

Chaudhuri's rational attitude to life easily detects the riddles of the Indian continent. India is a land of riddles for all those who want to 'think' about it. Chaudhuri shows how the Indians, by and large, are 'lackadaisical in action as well as thought'. There seems to be no connection whatever between the Indian's tall talk and the squeamish and ugly existence. The Indian suffers from 'an indefinite sickness of heart'. India is 'a country which exacts robustness or inflicts neurosis' Chaudhuri's anger, bitterness, and concern are expressed in his words. "I declare everyday that a man who cannot endure dirt, dust, stench, noise, ugliness, heat and cold has no right to live in India. I would say that no man can be regarded as a fit citizen of India until he has conquered squeamishness to the point of being indifferent to the presence of filthy lepers in various stages of decomposition within a hundred yards, or not minding the sight of ubiquitous human excreta everywhere, even in a big city"¹⁶

Chaudhuri attacks the supreme fanaticism of the Hindus which has prevented them from growing in the social and cultural sense. They, says Chaudhuri, suffer from a sense of genetic superiority. There is nothing wrong with the

fanaticism if it does inspire a race to do something creative and progressive. But the Hindu fanaticism is negative in the sense that it enables the Hindu to rationalize or slur over his mistakes and weaknesses by holding a picture of the golden past before him. The Aryans, i.e. the ancestors of the modern Hindus, believed that "they were not only a chosen people, but **the people**: that their way of life was divinely ordained and eternal: that it was superior to all others; that there was an unbridgeable gulf between them and the older inhabitants of the country, as well as foreigners"¹⁷

Talking, as contradistinguished from acting seems to be the common quality of the Hindus. Talk, small talk and tall talk are very generously indulged in by Hindus because they have lost their zest for action. Talking is indulged by everyone in India from the highest to the lowest fields of life. The example is set by the Hindu politicians, religious leaders, and other social reformers. Chaudhuri satirically says that all these categories of men are trained in the same institute. Whereas the **Gurus** offer **bhang** to their **chelas**, the secular **Gurus** offer something similar to the nation. Says he, "The secular Hindu **Gurus** have not given up the tradition, but the drug they offer is different. It is the most harmful drug made in India to day, which if taken in large quantities— and the quantities administered are large— completely destroys the faculties of thinking and observing. I shall call it Logosane, a meaningless, tasteless, colourless, but intellectually asphyxiating substance, turned out from the only really efficient mass-production factory established in India since independence, namely the Nationalized Factory of words"¹⁸.

There is nothing wrong with talking provided talking involves thinking talking means talking; sense and thinking means right thinking. But Chaudhuri's satire consists in showing the irony of the Hindu (or Indian), talking. In India one (including the foreigner) is made to listen to the torrent of words. Most often the Hindus mean the opposite

of what they say. The meaning of the words is inversely proportionate to the quantity of the vocabulary they employ. That is why Chaudhuri wants to warn the foreigner not to take these words on their face value. "I only caution him against the *anexetastos logos*, the unexamined word. He can listen to everything so long as he is exercising criticism"¹⁹. Obviously Chaudhuri implies that the Hindus or Indians in general do not show the signs of serious or rational thinking in their talking. It may be said that they suffer from logorrhoea. Chaudhuri's anger at the superficiality, emptiness and glibness of the Hindu talkativeness is as obvious as justified.

That India is a land of contradictions is a basic hypothesis of the Chaudhurian satire. In every field of Hindu culture and at every stage of Hindu behaviour contradictions loom large in number. For every value that the Hindu teaches there is a counter value that he practises. This phenomenon may be seen in everything that the Hindu is and does. Chaudhuri points out the ambivalent view of the aborigines by the Hindu, and the element of contradiction in the Hindu behaviour. The Hindu does not have any affection or appreciation for the aborigines of his country. He has nothing but utter contempt for them. But the paradox is that the Hindu has always shown a special weakness for the aboriginal women. "The Hindu contempt for the aborigines in modern times was not softened even by their notorious lust for their women"²⁰.

Chaudhuri exposes the Hindu snobbery about the fair complexion. The ancient Hindus did not abhor the dark complexion. On the contrary dark complexion was considered a mark of beauty. The Indian epic *Mahabharata* shows how Lord Krishna was deemed as handsome because of his dark-complexion. But in the modern days the Hindus probably because of their contact with foreigners, have developed a snobbish partiality for the fair complexion, which has added

to the social problem in India. This problem becomes acute especially in the case of dark girls who are "the unsaleable goods in the marriage market" ²¹.

Contradictions like chauvenism and servile imitation are again to be seen in Indian life. Chaudhuri points out the failure of the Indian to follow one of these two consistently. On the one hand the Hindu tomtoms about his golden age of the past and pretends to look down upon the so called materialistic progress of the west. On the other hand, he wants to prove his modernity and assert his self-respect by industrializing his own country which gives him a stature in the international world. The result of this contradiction is that he is neither really patriotic nor really internationalistic in his attitude. Chaudhuri satirises this aspect and attributes it to the Hindu's 'insatiable greed for money'. The Hindu who is proverbially known as a spiritualistic man is at heart a Mammon worshipper. He wants to forget his inferiority-complex by possessing as much money as possible. There is an inevitable connection between the Mammon worship and industrialization in India. Chaudhuri satirises this malady through an historical analogy. "Hindu nationalism is indeed a very powerful force behind the industrial revolution in India, but it is not **the most** powerful, and indeed cannot be because it is basically negative. A far stronger force, in actual fact the only positive force, is the Hindu's insatiable greed for money. King Dollar who is inciting King Paisa does not know either himself or his new 'Royal Brother'. The American industrialist, even when he is aware of no other motivation except acquisition of money, is the old European Conquistador in a new incarnation. He is the Genghiz Khan of the age of economics" ²². Chaudhuri's bitterness and anger are evident in his summarization of the true Indian spirit, "His spirit is best symbolized by the adulteration of food, medicine, and whatever else can be

adulterated" ²³. The unscrupulousness and lack of purity in all the fields of the Hindu life are too familiar to be illustrated.

India is no doubt known as the land of spirituality, of innumerable gods and godmen etc. All that is true but in a reverse gear. That the India of ancient days was a country of the highest kind of religious consciousness to be expressed in her logic, philosophy and metaphysics etc. is beyond controversy. Chaudhuri does not deny that at all. What Mr. Chaudhuri wants to point out and that bitterly too is the conspicuous gap between the ancient Hindu spirituality and the modern Hindu superficiality and farce. Chaudhuri is often mistaken by Indian critics for a cynic, a pessimist and a bater of Indian religion and philosophy. A bit of clarification is needed here. Mr. Chaudhuri's complaint is not so much against the Hindu religion and philosophy (i. e. ideals) as against the Hindus who do not unfortunately live up to those ideals in the real sense of the term. Mr. Chaudhuri's point of view is similar to that of Soren Kirkegaard who attacks not Christianity but Christians who do not really live up to the Christian ideals. Mr. Chaudhuri shows the modern Hindus' double-guilt: either the Hindus follow the values that are opposed to their professed ideals or make a farce of the ideals by clinging to the ritualistic aspect of them without following their intrinsic worth. The result of this phenomenon is the ridiculous and absurd blankness and hollowness of the Hindu existence. Any sensible man could perceive these contradictions, illogicalities and irrationalities. Dr. Mulk Raj Anand, and Mr. Khushwant Singh have castigated these features in their works. Mr. V. S. Naipaul also has done it in his **An Area of Darkness**. Mr. Chaudhuri's keen sense of observation has enabled him to enumerate them and hold them responsible for the behaviour of the modern Hindu.

The fanaticism of the Hindu ancient or modern is a very familiar feature. The Hindus have always deemed themselves to be superior to other races genetically, socially and culturally. The Hindu fanaticism of superiority has been noticed by many a foreign traveller. Mr. Chaudhuri quotes Alberuni who visited India in the eleventh century and who says "Their haughtiness is such that, if you tell them of any science or scholar in Khurasan and Persis, they will think you to be both an ignoramus and a liar" ²⁴.

The Hindu philosophy which was the result of the actual life and not a mere theory has obviously depth and stature to it. Mr. Chaudhuri points out how in Indian religion there is a philosophization of suffering. But the main target of his attack are Hindus who employ this philosophy for the rationalization of their mistakes, and weaknesses which accounts for their lack of progress in all the fields of their life. The justification of the suffering both of body and of mind was the cause of the cultivation of other allied religious virtues. The mortification of flesh is such a value, according to which man is supposed to defy all the comforts of life. The naked sadhus of India are an example of this practice, and are called 'gymn sophists' by Alexander the Great. Mr. Chaudhuri is not blind to the causes of such practices. Enabled by his anthropological approach, he offers the scientific reason for that. "What, however, nobody seems to suspect is the possibility that this impressive mortification of the flesh through the sacrifice of creature comforts, cleanliness, and appearance might have been due to the climate and weather of India" ²⁵. Chaudhuri quotes the examples of Naga sanyasis and naked sadhus and shows how the mortification of flesh results in the defiance of filth. "... the Hindu holy men made indifference to filth an essential attribute of saintliness" ²⁶. It is because of the influence of this philosophy that the Hindu has been desensitized and hardened to the ubiquitous dirt and squalor and made to

live a life of supreme resignation. It does not mean that Chaudhuri finds fault with their religion but he castigates Hindus for making a farce of their religion by employing the religious principles for the wrong purposes. That is why he says, "In India, owing to the climate and weather, the correlation between space, solitude, beauty, and human dignity has been even closer. Here crowding mercilessly piles up squalor, while immensity and starkness can raise even the irresistible and choking dust of the Gangetic plain to the height of a sad and ascetic majesty, and make it look like grey snow or hoarfrost, as if it were the material counterpart of that ashen resignation which is perhaps the Hindu's purest mood" ²⁷.

Chaudhuri rightly shows how in India everything is ultimately connected with religion. The Indian sociology, politics, economics are all affected by the religion. In **To Live or Not To Live** Chaudhuri makes a bitter and jocular remark that in India a man would not hesitate to murder another man if you said to him that it is part of his religion. Thus they have a tendency to sanctifying everything, because sanctification will make up for the pitfalls of their thinking and action. Chaudhuri puts it beautifully. "The Hindus discovered quite early in their existence in India that they could not preserve any delicate sensibility without making it a part of piety, nor could they keep up effort without making it a religious duty. To make things secular in this country is to make them weak, vulgar, and eroded" ²⁸. Again within the realm of religion itself, the contradictions are likely to reach absurd extremities. Mr. Chaudhuri illustrates the extremity of the purity-mania with an example of a woman of his acquaintance who "used to wash the bed clothes—not sheets or pillow-cases, but quilts and mattresses—every morning even in winter" ²⁹. The mystical indifference to filth and squalor is another religious value which has damaged the Hindu sense of beauty and hygiene. Innumerable examples

of this may be seen in the Hindu hagiographies (written or oral versions). Mr. Chaudhuri quotes from his own experience and reading to illustrate them. Eating faeces without the slightest sense of disgust is cited as part of the saintly achievement. One can easily see how this extreme sense of mystical indifference damages the Hindu sense of sanitation and hygiene. This accounts for the Hindu tolerance of the ubiquitous presence of excreta on the gutter sides and dark and deserted spots of Indian cities and villages. The Hindu obsession with the sub-rational and suprarational thinking has incapacitated him of any kind of rational thinking and behaviour. Hence his supreme belief in magic and supernaturalism. Mr. Chaudhuri is very frank in his remark. "Even today Hindu religious beliefs and practices retain a direct magical character, and are imbued with the spirit of animism, homoeopathic magic and spells". Further he comments upon their irrationality. "In India, Nature's relentless enmity to man has destroyed his self-confidence and completely undermined his faith in rational measures. Thus it happens that whenever he is in trouble and even when rational means exist and are applied, the Hindu will never remain satisfied with that, but calls in the supernatural, sometimes as an auxiliary and sometimes even as the principal ally"³⁰. Chaudhuri satirises the Hindu emphasis on the negation of the world. He is perfectly right in his analysis of the Hindu character. The Hindu defiance and indifference to dirt, squalour, and suffering are affected by the negative note of the Hindu philosophy which makes him believe in the law of karma. Thus ultimately the philosophy is twisted to the Hindu's convenience and rationalization. Says Chaudhuri, "As for the philosophical remedy, I have already said that it made itself unacceptable by its unrelieved nihilism. It preached the negation of the world without putting anything in its place, a mistake Christianity never committed"³¹. Many Hindu zealots and patriots are not merely irritated but hurt by the Chaudhurian analysis. But Chaudhuri's ques-

tion is—If the Hindu philosophy is optimistic and positive in its approach why is it that it has not enabled him to be on par with others in the modern world in the field of knowledge, i. e. science, technology, art, literature, architecture etc? Economic poverty alone is not responsible for the Hindu retrogression. Chaudhuri poses a rational question for which he wants a rational answer and not the supra-rational or mythological answer to be usually given by the Hindu proseletyzers. Again contradictions are to be seen at every step in Hindu life. On the one hand the Hindus preach and practise the principle of world-negation and on the contrary they fight for their communal rights and privileges. Caste-consciousness is an example of this. In spite of the constitutional declaration of India as a secular country, the Hindus still believe in the hierarchy of **Varna** system much to the chagrin of the down-trodden. It is because of this rampant casteism of the caste-Hindus that the **Sudras** are compelled to embrace Islam or Christianity. Again the religious conversions in India add to the socio-economic problems and psychological dilemmas. Taking the example of the conversion of the aboriginals to Christianity, Chaudhuri rightly points out the emergence of the new problems. "It was seen that, as soon as the aboriginal adopted Christianity, he became a different man. He lost his free spirit, and acquired the mental cast of a Hindu of the depressed classes. He began, on the one hand, to nurse grievances, on the other to depend more and more on his foreign Christian patron. He fell a prey to the inferiority complex, something which he had never done before with all the hostility of the Hindus arrayed against his"³². Chaudhuri would have pointed out the recent agitation in Kerala by the caste Hindus against the conversion of the **Sudras** to Islam. The religious values and beliefs, however contradictory they may be, are bound to affect the general psychology and behaviour of the Hindu. The features commonly to be found in the modern Hindu, of course, form his national character.

Chaudhuri not merely points out the weaknesses of the Hindu character like a true satirist but tries to account for them like an anthropologist. While he accuses the Hindu of being completely enervated, he also tries to explain it and attributes it to the rigour of the tropical climate of India. The enervation of the Hindu is ascribable as much to his philosophy of non-action as to the exacting climate of his country. It is because of the lack of energy that the Hindu has been incapable of achieving anything great and worthwhile in any field of life. This is especially so in the case of industrialization. Says Chaudhuri "The Hindu order in its present state has neither the energy, physical and mental, nor the organizing capacity, nor perhaps the intelligence to carry through the type of industrialization which is now contemplated" ³³. The physical and mental enervation paved the way for the moral enervation also. That is why Chaudhuri castigates the Hindu's moral weakness. The Hindu lack of integrity is noticed especially by the foreigners who expect great virtues in him. The Britishers came to hate these qualities of Hindus. Says Chaudhuri, "Never did this exhibition of contempt and anger cease so long as British rule remained a live thing in India. 'Degraded, perverse, grotesque, contradictory' - were some of the milder adjectives used. The 'effeminate Hindu' was a stock phrase. The Hindus were regarded as untruthful, dishonest, and shifty and often described as such to their face" ³⁴. Double-dealing, hypocrisy and fraud are the staple qualities of the Hindu personality. This accounts for Chaudhuri's anger in his satirisation which is very true though a little exaggerated. "From this follows a corollary that if you see a Hindu who appears to be pleased with himself and with the world around him, **be on guard**, for you are then facing a thorough rascal, all the more dangerous because of his bland plausibility. I think it was Plato who said that a rich man could never be a good man. I shall say that it is virtually impossible for an optimistic and self satisfied Hindu to be a good Hindu" ³⁵. Chaudhuri's

satire of Hindus is to be seen in the enumeration of the undesirables in Hindu culture and character. That India has been a land of irrationality has been noticed by many people with a scientific bent of mind. Chaudhuri is certainly not new in repeating the observation. But his originality lies in the intensity of his experience and fine and clear cut analysis of the phenomenon under his observation. He illustrates the element of irrationality with examples both ancient and modern. He shows how the irrational element is so blatant in Manu's **Dharmashastra**. A noble exposition of the Brahmanic way of life, the **Laws of Manu** has many irrational ideas. "It actually says that if a man steals silk he becomes a partridge, but by stealing dyed cloth he becomes not any kind of partridge but only a francolin partridge (black partridge). Some other threatened metempsychoses are— for stealing cotton cloth a man becomes a crane, but by stealing linen he becomes a frog" ³⁶. One can easily see how the 'why' of such particular metempsychoses is not made known to the reader and therefore they remain unconvincing because of the irrational element in them. Chaudhuri shows how even the modern politicians, professors and secularists pore over horoscopes in private life though they pretend not to care for that in public life. Chaudhuri quotes the examples of the modern Hindu's conduct of a great Yajna at Delhi, "the Brahmanic sacrifice to avert the destruction of the world at the beginning of February, the year being 1962" ³⁷. The great irony of this Yajna is that it is conducted by the spiritualistic Hindus with the help of the dollar of the materialistic Americans. Chaudhuri makes bold to say that there is no thinking proper among the Hindus. He says "There is no such thing as thinking properly so called among the Hindus, for it is a faculty of the mind developed only in Greece, and exercised only by the heirs of the Greeks. A very large part of what is called Hindu thinking is wholly speculation or just mush." ³⁸

Contradictions loom large in Indian life both private and public. Chaudhuri's sharp intelligence is ever ready to detect

them. The Hindu attitude towards sex is quite equivocal and contradictory. On the one hand sex is looked upon as something ugly and a positive hindrance in the attainment of spiritual bliss etc. This accounts for the high respect with which values like 'celibacy', 'virginity', 'chastity', were held. On the other hand sex was frankly accepted as a means of procreation or sensuous gratification which may at its highest lead to spiritual bliss etc. Thus sex-gratification and sexual abstinence have been found together in Hindu life. Chaudhuri exhausts his historical learning to illustrate these contradictions from the Vedic times to the modern time. He shows how "In India every ruling power has in past showed its particular taste in women. The Moguls, for instance, preferred Kashmiri beauties, the British, Muslim and Aboriginal girls, and the Hindus would rather have women of European descent, after they had outgrown their earlier taste for Muslim mistresses"³⁹. The paradox about 'sexual purity' in India is that it is confined only to the physical level. Most often it is nothing but sex-obsessed chastity. One can easily see how this kind of double standard breeds hypocrisy among the people.

The same kind of contradiction may be seen in the Hindu's day-to-day social behaviour. Quarrelsomeness is a common feature of the Hindu personality. Especially women are notorious for that. Quarrels take place in India between men and women, the old and the young, the kith and kin, neighbours and strangers. The reasons for such quarrels range from the serious issues like money, gold, property, woman or power to the silly ones like getting a seat in a bus or train. Chaudhuri has provided a number of such examples from his experience. What is most paradoxical and strange about these quarrels

is that they do not last long. They do not make the quarreling fellows permanent enemies. On the contrary they make them close friends within five minutes after the quarrel is over. Chaudhuri evokes mild humour by illustrating the 'callous charity' of the querulous parties. The Hindus do not mind using the foulest possible language most of which is sex-centred. Says Chaudhuri, "Somehow an alkali is always present with the acid of Hindu life; it is a marvellous and boundless tolerance of bad language and blows, which is some sort of a conditioned reflex of forgiveness. The Hindus possess a faculty for callous charity. Two passengers in a railway compartment who have fought with shameless selfishness for seats, will, as soon as they have cooled off, offer betel, cigarettes, and even sweets to each other, and be friends for the rest of a long journey of, say, eight hundred miles. In the families the sun hardly ever rises on anger. After a brawl lasting till midnight not only peace but even harmony seems to be restored the next morning"⁴⁰. Quarrelsomeness and callous charity go on alternating in the Hindu's behaviour.

Another contradiction may be seen with regard to the Hindu view of violence. Probably because of the great influence of Mahatma Gandhi on the Indian life, India has come to be known as the land of non-violence. But Chaudhuri points out how non-violence is a negative adjective implying the age-old practice of violence in India. He shows how violence was common in India from the epic age to the modern one. The paraphernalia of war like the warriors going to the battle field, their murder there, the lamentation of wives, the rape and robbery and imprisonment have been discussed by Chaudhuri at great length which cannot be enumerated within the limited scope of this article. The war between Aryans and non-Aryans; Hindus and Muslims: Hindu and

Hindus; Hindus and foreigners etc. have been cited by Chaudhuri. He especially draws our attention to the Gandhian principle, "In its application to the Indian nationalist movement, the Gandhian doctrine of non-violence led to some of the bloodiest riots, one of which compelled him in 1922 to call off the Non-cooperation movement"⁴¹. Chaudhuri laughs at the way the Hindus justify their wars as **Dharma Yuddha** and even go to the extent of teaching the moral to the foreigners who have evolved the ultra-modern war-technology. The Hindus did not mind serving the non-vegetarian food to the foreign visitors in the Ashoka Hotel of Delhi named after an Apostle of peace and non-violence. The bewildering contradictions of Indian life are attributed by Chaudhuri to the Hindu's psychological turbulence. He says, "Lifelong observation has convinced me that there is a streak of insanity in the Hindus and that nobody will arrive at a correct appraisal of Hindu private and public behaviour on the supposition that they have a normal personality"⁴².

Thus the Hindu character defies understanding and remains a puzzle to the rational observer. The contradictory nature of the Hindu culture accounts for the double-standard, hypocrisy, compromises, rationalizations which become inevitable. Chaudhuri employs the mythological metaphor to describe this phenomenon "It is on account of the presence of such opposites that I have taken the Roman God Janus as the symbol of the Hindu character. But it does not present only two faces. It has a whole series of them, going in pairs. For this reason the Hindu personality might be called not even Janus Quadrifrons, but Janus Multifrons"⁴³.

This is the way Chaudhuri has analysed the Hindu culture and character which are marked by contradictions, compromises, riddles and irrationalities etc. The inevitability

of these contradictory strands of the Hindu culture have been pointed out by Chaudhuri very subtly and ably. He concludes his satire by explicitly ascribing the puzzling nature of the Hindu to the evil effect of the demoness called Circe. The Hindus have come under the spell of the demoness and that explains their negative life and character. Chaudhuri employs metaphorical language to express his satirical vision. The Hindus are at the mercy of the evil Goddess. Says he, "They stood at the gate of the goddess with flowing tresses, and heard her, Circe, sweetly singing before her loom, as she walked to and fro weaving an imperishable web, gorgeous and dazzling, such as only goddesses can make"⁴⁴. The Hindus seem to have lost their rationality, principles, heroism, piety and spirituality as they have been devitalised by the goddess. Chaudhuri continues, "She lived on the island of Aeaëa, and so she has in India. Men have stood at her gate, and called to be admitted, and to all she has opened her shining doors. She has taken them in, given them seats, and served food. But with the food she has also mixed the drug which makes them forget their country. Then she has turned them into brute beasts"⁴⁵. Circe had cast her spell on Chaudhuri quite early in his life. There is no doubt that every Hindu has come under Circe's spell. But is there no escape from that? There is. Chaudhuri says he found the answer for this question when in 1955 he visited the west, and realized that "we Hindus were Europeans enslaved by a tropical country"⁴⁶. The only way for Hindus to escape from Circe's spell is to 'recover at least our old European spirit'. He says that the 'Brown Colonialism' of the Anglicized Hindus will not help them completely. The best way to be happy is for Hindus to cease to think themselves as Orientals. Chaudhuri's satirical approach makes him compare the Hindus to beasts and even to Yahoos. Himself a beast

of this kind, Chaudhuri warns his fellowmen, "Listen to a fellow-beast who has been lucky enough to find freedom and wants you to be free"⁴⁷. Chaudhuri's concern and love for Hindus is quite evident here. He castigates the negative traits of this race because of his express desire to make them conscious of their true nature and overcome the difficulties. But the paradox is the fellow-Hindus do not care for his words because of Circe's spell. "With a refinement of cruelty Circe has kept them in the human shape but in a form which is even more repulsive than that of the Yahoos of Swift"⁴⁸. One difference between Swiftian Yahoos and Hindu Yahoos is that the former were not responsible for their ugliness, whereas the latter definitely are. Even when he tries to awaken his fellow men, they do not bother to listen to him. That explains Chaudhuri's height of bitterness and anger. "I have recovered my Ariel's body from Sycorax, the terrible and malevolent hag who stands behind Circe in India. So I can and should ignore the Yahoos. But I would save the fellow beasts. They do not however, listen to me. They honk, neigh, bellow, bleat, or grunt and scamper away to their scrub, stable, byre, pen and sty"⁴⁹. And Circe, the Sourceress is happy to see the completeness of her handiwork.

The Continent of Circe is an excellent satire ever written by an Indian writer in English. It can compare with any successful satire in English literature. It stands on par with other works like **The Animal Farm**, **The Gulliver's Travels**, and **Erehwon** etc. But a significant difference between **The Continent of Circe** and other satires cited above, is that whereas in those satires the technique of allegorization is followed throughout, in **The Continent of Circe** it is followed only partially. In other words, in **The Continent of Circe** the minute and elaborate treat-

ment of the theme is realistic (i.e. historical, and anthropological etc) though the overall pattern of the work is one of allegory, the result of Chaudhuri's imagination. This is probably because of his personal intention. He calls it an 'essay' as he wants to try to understand the nature of the peoples of India. Naturally then the discursive element of the essay is framed with the allegorical pattern. Choudhuri's satire is an inevitable product of his essay. In other words his aim is not to castigate so much as to understand the Indians. But in the process of understanding his countrymen Chaudhuri could not help satirising them. Hence the discursive allegory of **The Continent of Circe**. But unfortunately many Indian critics fail to understand Chaudhuri's satire because of their prejudices. Robert De Souza represents the unsympathetic Indians' point of view when he complains about Chaudhuri, "His criticism of the peoples of India may be welcome to certain extent and in due proportion, but it will not serve a healthy purpose. He satirically criticises the peoples of India but does not suggest adequate means to remedy the situation. He seems to delight only in fault finding though he is apologetic here and there to disguise his cynical attitude"⁵⁰. It may be said that the aim of a satirist is to present a picture of life and consequently awaken the people concerned from their slumber. Again the so-called cynicism of a satirist is nothing but the obverse side of his optimism and idealism. Paul Verghese makes the same mistake when he says "**The Continent of Circe** is clearly not history; it is not a disinterested assessment of the Hindu character, it is not even a satire, but only bitterness"⁵¹. Paul Verghese fails to read between the lines of the book and mistakes the spirit of Chaudhuri's argument. A minimum knowledge of the psychology of bitterness will help the critics like Paul Verghese to clear their misconceptions. A man

will be angry and bitter with a people only when the latter fail to practise their high ideals. A man hates a people only when he sees a dichotomy between their philosophy and their actual way of life which falls short of it. A man cannot exhaust his energy and scholarship in understanding and criticising a people if he has nothing but contempt for them as Paul Verghese assumes. The bitterness and anger are the obverse side of Chaudhuri's love and concern for his countrymen. Satire implies an unwritten utopia. Paul Verghese cannot stomach Chaudhuri's castigating remarks because he belongs to the victims of Circe who, according to Chaudhuri's implication, cannot accept truth until it is sugarcoated.

REFERENCES

- 1) K. R. Srinivas Iyengar, **Indian writing in English** (Bombay : Asia Publishing House, 1973) p. 591.
- 2) Nirad C. Chaudhuri, **The Continent of Circe** (Bombay : Jaico Publishing House, 1974) p 1
- 3) Joseph T Shiplay, **Dictionary of World Literary Terms** (London : George Allen & Unwin, 1970) p 106.
- 4) Ibid, p. 289
- 5) Chaudhuri, **The Continent of Circe**, p. 25.
- 6) Ibid, p. 1.
- 7) Ibid, p. 2.
- 8) Ibid, p. 2.
- 9) Ibid, p. 11.
- 10) Ibid, p. 56.
- 11) Ibid, p. 340.
- 12) Ibid p 341.
- 13) Ibid, P. 353.
- 14) Ibid, p. 357.
- 15) Ibid, p. 14.
- 16) Ibid, p. 22.
- 17) Ibid, p. 28.
- 18) Ibid, p. 31.

- 19) Ibid, p. 31.
- 20) Ibid, p. 73.
- 21) Ibid, p. 25.
- 22) Ibid, p. 84.
- 23) Ibid, p. 88.
- 24) Ibid, p. 211.
- 25) Ibid, p. 211.
- 26) Ibid, p. 211,
- 27) Ibid, p. 81.
- 28) Ibid, p. 208.
- 29) Ibid, p. 213.
- 30) Ibid, p. 218.
- 31) Ibid, p. 220.
- 32) Ibid, p. 88.
- 33) Ibid, p. 89.
- 34) Ibid, p. 94.
- 35) Ibid, p. 152.
- 36) Ibid, p. 103.
- 37) Ibid, p. 104.
- 38) Ibid, p. 174.
- 39) Ibid, p. 319.
- 40) Ibid, p. 276.
- 41) Ibid, p. 130.
- 42) Ibid, p. 132.
- 43) Ibid, p. 106.
- 44) Ibid, p. 372.
- 45) Ibid, p. 372.
- 46) Ibid, p. 373.
- 47) Ibid, p. 374.
- 48) Ibid, p. 375.
- 49) Ibid, p. 376.
- 50) Robert de Souza, *Goa and the Continent of Circé*, (Bombay : Wilco Publishing House, 1973), p. 194.
- 51) Paul Verghese, *Nirad C. Chaudhuri*, (New Delhi : Arnold Heinemann, 1973), p. 95.

CHAPTER IV

TO LIVE OR NOT TO LIVE :

AN ESSAY

No man with a keen sense of observation of life around him and a deliberate analysis of the observed phenomenon can escape the Hamletian dilemma which presupposes an awareness of the contradiction between appearance and reality, between the falsification of the traditionally sanctioned values and the simultaneous inevitability of a given phenomenon. A man who is caught in the strange context such as this cannot help responding to it in the Hamletian manner. Nirad C. Chaudhuri has the courage to see the problem in the face and try to understand and analyse it however ugly and unsolvable though it may be. There is a greater heroism in having the Hamletian knowledge of reality than in being satisfied with the ignorance of the same. As Aristotle says it is always desirable to have the knowledge of reality although it is quite ugly and harsh. Chaudhuri who is known for his objective analysis of the Indian society is compelled to raise a Hamletian problem. **To Live or Not to Live** is an essay which shows Chaudhuri's attempt to understand and account for the peculiar problems of the Indian society which make it difficult for a sensitive man to continue to live meaningfully in that society. Again the book need not be mistaken for a textbook of social psychology, as it is the embodiment of Chaudhuri's personal vision which is the result of the life-long

observation and which may correspond to the impersonal vision of sociologists and psychologists. What makes his essay personal is the fact that his generalisations about the Indian society are based upon his personal experience with people, events and situations of the Indian society. His observations are **a fortiori** rather than **a priori** and hence assume an authenticity of individual vision as contrasted with that of scientific and hence universal vision. The ingredients of Chaudhuri's vision of life as embodied in **To Live or Not to Live** may be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Chaudhuri begins his 'informal' and 'discursive' book with a discussion of basic question about living a meaningful life in India. Both the social and the family life fall within the large framework of human life. 'That is why I have put these two aspects of living under a title which raises the general question of living soundly, living to some purpose—which alone is **living** to me, living unsoundly being in my view not **living** at all. In short, I would not deal with social and family life without raising the basic question: Do we live at all?' (P. 7). Chaudhuri thus raises the fundamental and epistemological question about life because it is the epistemology which gives a sense of direction and vocation to all the aspects of life and makes it a matter of beauty and joy for ever. Since Chaudhuri, like many other sensitive men, has felt the presence of a great lacuna between the Indian ideals and the actual Indian practice, he cannot but ask the basic question again and again. Life in India has become so paradoxical and farcical that one who wants to relate the actual values practised to the ideals professed, one is bound to have a Hamletian question as to whether to live or not to live in such a context of multiple contradictions. The Hamletian condition forced upon Chaudhuri

is based upon his life-long observation and a corscious analysis of the content of that observation. The details of his experience with Indian life could be enumerated as follows.

Life in India is not to be understood as a matter of intellectual awareness. On the contrary, it is one of intellectual blindness. Chaudhuri, therefore, describes the life in India as 'uncritical living'. "We live uncritically, without paying heed to Plato's famous dictum: The uncriticised (or un-examined) life is not worth living". (p.8). Life in India is marked by a general lack of idealism and is therefore characterised by negative qualities like eccentricity, stupid vanity, malice, spite and so on. The conspicuous gap between the tall ideals traditionally professed by the Indians and the stark materialism of their pragmatic life is bitterly noted and attacked by Chaudhuri in the manner in which the seventeenth century England and the nineteenth century England were attacked by Milton and Charles Dickens respectively. Chaudhuri's extraordinary sensitiveness to life around him is proportionately matched by his courage to see the ugliness of life in the face and to withstand the shock that is caused by the minute analysis of reality. The overall impression of Chaudhuri about Indian life is that money plays an extraordinary role in the life of the major groups of society like the youths, the intellectuals and the politicians. Money, thus becomes the keynote of the Indian society, of human relation, of enjoyment and of achievement. The Indians, according to Chaudhuri can do anything and everything for money and are the potential sharks or swindlers.

The dominant feature of Indian life could be conspicuously noticed in the large cities of the country like Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. These large cities

in Chaudhuri's opinion, exhibit the main ingredients of Indian character in a major key, whereas the minor cities or towns or villages do the same in a minor key. The difference between the Indian metropolis and the Indian village is one of degree rather than of kind. The great cities exhibit certain features and qualities of Indian character which create an atmosphere of Indianness in all the fields of life. A great city is said to be a great desert where the individuality is lost in the mass life and the generalities of life look more conspicuous than the idiosyncracies. Since there is a uniformity among the great cities of India, the description or analysis of one city can as well represent that of other cities also. Chaudhuri who is existentially compelled to stay in Delhi for a large part of his life, has obviously chosen to analyse the archetypal megalopolis of India. The first thing that strikes Chaudhuri's attention is the planning of the city of Delhi. In fact as noticed by him, there is no organization at all in the capital city. Delhi which ought to be exemplary to other cities of India, is ironically enough, the most ill-organised city in the country. Chaudhuri rightly says that it is organised--if at all it is organised—only biologically and is like a go-getting machine. "... So far as Delhi is organised, it is so mechanically and biologically. It is a gigantic go-getting machine, as such it has the terrifying complexity of a modern computer with its logic elements, transistors, thermistors, capacitors, resistors and so on." (P. 20-21). Obviously Chaudhuri has implicitly shown the lack of artistry in the structure of Delhi. Even the American professor who is interviewed by Chaudhuri confesses his own puzzle about the city. Says he, "... I saw something today which I cannot understand. It was all disorganisation and confusion and squalor." (P. 21). The drabness and the absence of sophistication of Delhi are

aptly described by Chaudhuri who says that "... Delhi ... was a crude descendant of Damascus, Baghdad or even the new Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar, through Pataliputra, Ujjayini and Kanyakubja and of course, Muslim Delhi." (P. 23).

After pointing out the structure of the city of Delhi, Chaudhuri captures the essential spirit and nature of the city. Delhi enjoys a special importance in the life of India on account of the role it plays in the lives of the Indians in different fields of life. Delhi, for example, is an industrial city with all the paraphernalia and is on par with other industrial cities like Bombay, Calcutta or Madras. But what distinguishes it from other cities is its political importance. Chaudhuri has highlighted two features of Delhi which are of extraordinary importance. The bureaucratic government and the centralisation of all the political administration are the striking features of the city of Delhi. It is this speciality that contradistinguishes it from the other great cities of India. Delhi, therefore, can be compared to the brain of the body of India. These two aspects are the manifestation of the great monster. Chaudhuri, as usual, employs the satirical language in describing this phenomenon. "The second force behind the growth of Delhi is a formidable Estatism, which might be called the advent of the Leviathan in this country - Ah! an incompetent Leviathan, not the Hobbsian. Socialism is only a euphemism for it, or rather a cloak." (p. 25) Then he points out the most striking features of these aspects of Delhi. The bureaucratic set up of India, of which Delhi is the seat, is represented by the clerical job for which every educated Indian, generally hankers. Thus the creation of clerical jobs was part of the expansion of the class interest of the urban land and

moneyless middle class. The worst feature of this bureaucratic system is the extraordinary and artificial importance given to the man who never does the basic work and the consequent delay, check and dilution of the process of work. This principle holds water in all the bureaucratic units of Indian life. Chaudhuri, therefore, points out the conspicuous feature of this set up symbolized by the top level administration of Delhi. "The most significant expansion has taken place at the top, in the more highly paid ranks. As a result for every clerk who does some original work there are about five stages of supervision by highly paid superiors. This also was bound to happen in the interest of the politicians. Most of them were members of the middle class who failed to get government jobs, and therefore, so far as worldly status is concerned, they regarded themselves as men who had been unfairly deprived of their legitimate inheritance. For this reason, after getting power, they do not show any disinclination to live wholly on the public revenues." (p. 26) Thus clericalism happens to be the keynote of the Indian administration as well as a means of livelihood for the middle-class people. Centralization which is the second major aspect of Delhi is again the conspicuous feature of Indian political administration. Chaudhuri's attribution of centralisation to the four causes is a clear evidence of his historical sense and insight into the Indian's psychology. The centralization is caused by (1) the unwillingness of the Indian to delegate power to the others; (2) the distrust by the central government of the provincial governments; (3) need for the formulation of a foreign policy paving the way for foreign help and (4) the hang-over of the pan-Indian feeling. Chaudhuri depicts the Indian political behaviour in describing the capital city of Delhi. One can obviously see a combination of satire and description in his writing.

After providing a description of political aspects of Delhi, Chaudhuri proceeds to offer a visual picture of the great city, which testifies to his minute observation and keen perception. Like a philosopher he points out the contradictory nature of Delhi when he says that it is metropolitan as well as provincial. One can see the resident aliens who come to India from foreign countries for political and non-political visits, as well as the provincials like Tamilians, Maharashtrians, Bengalis or Punjabis, who "never submerge their provincial identity in a pan-Indian identity, and very largely confine their social life to fellow-provincials." (p. 37). Obviously Chaudhuri's keen observation confirms the view that Delhi, like London, is a city of contradictions. Another peculiarity of this great city according to him is the pervading commercial and feminine atmosphere. "Due to this routine, the external impression of human life in Delhi, is, in the first instance, all bazaar, and next all feminine. It is not the man-about-town but the woman-about-town who sets the tone of urban life, and gives to it its movement, colour, and charm." (p. 32) Another contradiction of Delhi, as pointed out by Chaudhuri, is the simultaneous presence of Islamic culture and superficial westernization. "Delhi is of the Islamic Middle East with a modern veneer. It is really Cairo of Tulunid, Mameluke, or Fatimid times, and Baghdad of Abbasid times, disguised by a superficial Westernization" (p. 33) Similarly the splendour of Delhi is contrasted by the 'expanse of drabness'. Chaudhuri's description of Delhi provides us with an archetypal picture of a great city which is, like life itself, full of contradictions of diverse types. His portrait of Delhi throws light as much about the life at Delhi as about the social and political behaviour of Indians.

He then turns his attention from Delhi to the social life in India. His observations again show his insight into human nature, his wide reading and his awareness of social psychology of Indians. "The Hindu Society", according to him, "is basically genetic in its outlook, and looks upon social life only as an extension of the family, clan or tribe. It is very difficult for us to get out of this mould of social life, which is really tribalism and to acquire genuinely social behaviour." (p 41) None who is acquainted with the Indian society can deny the truth of Chaudhuri's observation. He illustrates it by pointing out how the Indians in the streets address one another as **bhai**, or **bahn** or **baba**.

Marriages, illnesses and death anniversaries are very important occasions of the Indian social life. Far from being the celebrations of the events concerned, these occasions are turned by Indians, rather farcically, into those of pomp and show and prestige and what not. Chaudhuri therefore, does not generally attend the wedding of his friends or relatives. "Rather than go through that experience I prefer to be a Diogenes" (p.44) Wedding ceremonies in India are occasions for showing off one's wealth and stature. Therefore wedding invitations are sent even to strangers who happen to be big officers. Sometimes weddings serve as occasions for intimidating bride's or the bridegroom's side. Nowadays this habit has been "extended into a general attempt at intimidating neighbours, relations, and clients into a proper respect or fear of the host's wealth and position." (p.46) Some of the wedding invitations contain special sentences like "some central Ministers are expected to attend", and the host's bureaucratic servility to his superiors and his arrogance towards his inferiors are comic and irritating simultaneously. Like marriages death-anniversaries also are turned

into occasions of pomp and show. Far from making people unhappy, deaths in some families act as good riddances and add to the happiness of the surviving members like sons, and daughters-in-law etc. Sometimes the surviving relatives are very insensitive to the death of a person. Chaudhuri offers an instance of how the people behave comically and practically even at the funeral ceremony at the burning ghats at Delhi. Again, deaths have a serious impact on the sexual life of the surviving members who are likely to indulge in sex in order to forget their sorrow of having lost somebody. Likewise illnesses are important events in Indian life in that whenever a person in a family is taken ill, it becomes mandatory on the part of the relatives and friends to go and see, and console and enhearten him and the members of his family. But even this is turned by Indians into a farce. "It is the traditional Indian habit of making illness, and more especially a serious illness, as frivolous a social gathering as a cocktail party in New Delhi." (p 52) The visitors who flock to the house of illness are quite likely to forget the sick man and indulge in their gossip and noise. This is how Mr. Chaudhuri shows the farcicality of the main events of Indian social life which testifies to his keen observation and sharp thinking. He is able to support his general observations of life with the examples of his own personal experiences.

Chaudhuri switches his attention on to the social behaviour of Indians. The first feature of the Indian behaviour is the ridiculous acceptance of his inferiority, which paradoxically enough, masquerades as superiority complex. Chaudhuri is never tired of repeating the fact that the Indian is notorious for his lack of perception which is the result of the lack of social education. "The Hindu society never learned to value man as man, as an

individual, as a personality, without reference to his worldly status." (p. 59) It is basically because of this exaggerated importance attached to the economic status of man, that the Hindus cannot understand the total behaviour of man. Even their description of a man's character is so simple and elementary. Their poverty of perception could be seen in their description of a man's character in a word or two. "What I cannot explain about my people is their extraordinary insensitiveness to points of character. 'He is a good or a bad man' is the final summing up of a man's character with us, and I have hardly been able to get any idea of another man's personality from the talk I hear at secondhand about him." (p. 59)

The economic poverty or wealth of the Indians plays a very significant role in deciding their behaviour. Whereas poverty makes them cherish the ideas of class-hatred, wealth instigates them to show it off on all the possible occasions such as large parties. This leads Mr. Chaudhuri to comment upon their behaviour. According to him, the Indians are not properly educated in the social behaviour. They can be very sociable in streets and bazaars but not in close gatherings as they lack the capacity for intelligent conversation. In India, there are, roughly speaking, two approaches to talking. According to one, they believe in the notion that the stature of a man consists in his being a taciturn. It may even be said that taciturnity is proportionate to his dignity. "To withhold *Kathamrta* or nectar of speech, is recognized as a means of asserting one's importance." (p. 63) By contrast, talking and talking incessantly is the mark of the undignified people. The Indian attitude towards talking may be said to be quite utilitarian, in that it is employed either for out and out pornographic purpose or for the profitarian purpose or for that of self-aggrandizement. The Indians are generally

very fond of talking smut which provides a compensation for their sex-starvation. "In them, perhaps the most innocent and friendly thing is the lading out of smut, which becomes more salacious among the 'England-returned' ones, who have been able to shed either their 'ingenuous shame' or Hindu prudery through their stay abroad." (p. 63) Another typicality of the Indian indulgence in smut is that more often than not it is directed against the absent ones, and is therefore eloquent of the talker's malice. Otherwise talking is employed only for utilitarian purposes like move-making, matchmaking, disputations among pandits, homilies from holymen and altercations between doctrinaires or competitions. All these habits go to prove Mr Chaudhuri's conclusion that the Indian social behaviour is marked by gregariousness rather than by genuine sociability.

Chaudhuri, then, jumps from the wider entity i. e., society to the one of the most important components of that entity i. e., woman. He has chosen to comment upon woman as she happens to form one half of the totality of life as much in India as anywhere else. But woman has been an object of special interest and concern in India because of the ambivalent approach of men towards her which is again caused by the rigid puritanical background. In spite of the modern introduction of democracy into the Indian society Mr. Chaudhuri is forced to say that "there is hardly any intercommunication between the sexes." (p. 69) He is right when he points out the reverse method of improvement of relation between men and women in India. As it is, there is no social mingling between the two sexes, and the Indian authorities have wrongly taken a decision to solve the problem by putting the cart before the horse i. e., by introducing co-education before

paving the way for social mingling. This observation obviously holds a mirror to Mr. Chaudhuri's sociological imagination. There is indeed, no doubt that the Indians suffer from 'an acute sex-consciousness' (p. 70) which is easily attributable to their puritanical upbringing and atmosphere. That is why there is bound to be a perpetual tension between their natural instincts and their puritanical code of behaviour. Mr. Chaudhuri, therefore, remarks, "As things stand, any kind of natural and friendly intercourse between men and women has been made very difficult, if not impossible. The accepted code of conduct is to keep mum about women in public, and talk smut in private" (p. 71). Obviously talking smut in privacy is the natural result of the public restriction and disapproval of the exchange of views and feelings between men and women. It is because of the unusual social restriction about sex, that the Indians become sex-obsessed and therefore begin to read **Kama Sutra** repeatedly. Mr. Chaudhuri's historical sense enables him to clarify the fact that **Kama Sutra** was originally meant for the courtesans of India, but it is wrongly read by one and all in the modern days. In spite of the sexual taboos in India, paradoxically enough, sexual promiscuity could be seen on a large scale there. Mr. Chaudhuri offers one of his own experiences in Delhi office where a pretty-girl-steno-typist was the object of rivalry between his male colleagues. The popularity of the concepts like 'boyfriend', 'girlfriend', 'call girl' and 'dating' etc., is the sign of the promiscuity concealed or otherwise. Mr. Chaudhuri's keen observation cannot be rejected by anyone who has an awareness of the Indian society. He points out the shift of promiscuity from one area to the other. "What has really happened is that the area of the irregularity shifted. Thus, instead of being confined to family relationship, it has spilled out into social relationships, so that the liaisons are now with the friend's wife, instead of being with the sister-in-law. In other words, it is a change in the

veneer." (p. 77) The puritanical restriction which is responsible for the secret solutions sought for by men and women, should, according to Chaudhuri, be relaxed a little so that social mingling might be made possible. "We have driven the only alternative to arranged marriages of the traditional type, which is love-making, into the streets and parks, and made lovers literally street walkers. I would have unrestricted meeting between men and women for this purpose even at the risk of having some adultery". (p. 78) Chaudhuri's observation about the Indian women is quite in keeping with his observation about the Indian life in general. Women's beauty, according to him, is not generally attended by the proportionate mental or spiritual beauty. There can, of course, be exceptions to this, but the general rule is quite unmistakable. The appearance of a woman in India can be quite deceptive and may be quite contrary to her inner nature. Chaudhuri offers a personal example. Once he saw an elegant woman clad in sepia and gold saree walking in a garden of Delhi and naturally thought her to be quite graceful and aesthetic minded as she carried a bunch of flowers with her. But as he went ahead for a while, he saw her stealing the flowers from a tree in the roadside compound. He was rather puzzled to see her chased by the shaggy mongrel and running away giggling. Chaudhuri has obviously shown the contradiction in that lady between her sweet appearance and her ugly behaviour. It is this dichotomy in character that is described by him as 'dimorphism'.

Chaudhuri's discussion of the joint-family system of India is full of subtle observation and incisive remarks. "At its best the joint family is co-operative society based on the blood tie and a smaller and more closely knit replica of the village community." (p. 100) The joint family system produces a particular type of behaviour in its fact, it is a miniworld in itself. Family quarrels

caused by women folk are quite common in it. The women who take the initiative in the querulous adventures seek the help of their husband-dogs. Most often it is the pent-up emotion caused by the cumulative quarrels that eventually creates divisions in the family. One of the aberrations of the Hindu society is the peculiar relation between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law. In fact, a wild kind of a law of vindictiveness is always operative in the Indian family where the daughter-in-law is ill-treated by the mother-in-law in the first half of their life and the mother-in-law is ill-treated by the daughter-in-law in the latter part of their life. Thus both of them have to undergo the two stages of serving and reigning in the reverse order. Chaudhuri's sociological imagination helps him to remark that the joint family has a tendency to erode and undermine the spirit of adventure and self-help in its members. The relationship between the different members of the joint family is governed by factors like sex, status and age. For example a son in the family will be more communicative with his wife and mother than with his brother's wife or his father or with the children. Chaudhuri's subtle observation shows that there is generally more intercommunication between women than between men. The mothers discuss anything and everything before their daughters but the fathers do not do so before their sons. One more peculiarity of the Indian joint family is that the grandchildren are generally closer with the grandparents than with the parents. Mr. Chaudhuri then discusses the problems and conditions of the working women in India. These women are rather forced by the circumstances to earn their livelihood and keep themselves and the members of their family away from the wolf. Sometimes their salary helps them to save some amount cumulatively until it grows big enough to be an attractive dowry for the

highly-stationed grooms. Thus employment of woman seems to be a stop-gap arrangement. Mr. Chaudhuri describes the condition of the working girl and the change of the locale very convincingly. "In my young days, when a girl was withdrawn from school or college in anticipation of marriage, we used to say that she was in the waiting room. At present a far larger number of girls are to be seen in the same waiting room, but it is now an office, and not the home. A bigger difference is that for many the train does not arrive at all; formerly, at the worst, it was unpunctual." (p. 138) Thus the feminine resort to a job is ultimately connected with the problem of marriage. India which is undergoing a transition from traditional to modern way of life, the educated woman who is neither purely traditional nor purely emancipated will have to lead a life of forced spinsterhood or to seek surreptitious satisfaction without losing her dignity in the society. Most of the time she will be waiting for something great to happen in her path of husband-hunting. Thus, late marriage of girls is invariably encouraged by the matrimonial Micawberism. Another reason for the girls' attraction for jobs is the economic independence which they enjoy and the consequent love and obligation of the members of her family who depend upon her earning. "In a living society even the relatives of a girl do not feel embarrassed to be under financial obligation to her lover." (p. 150) The married working women are more independent and arrogant than the jobless housewives. Mr. Chaudhuri shows how it is a Western imitation. "... the Indian phenomenon is really derivative. Its practical emergence is due substantially to the impact of Western influences, and its apologia is wholly imported. To cut the matter short, as in political ideas, economic organization, literature and art, or fashion, here too we are faced with a case of imitation, the working woman being

only the economic counterpart of the woman in jeans." (p. 146) Again the kinds of jobs preferred by the modern women are only desk-jobs and not the heavy ones like agricultural or industrial or military ones. Mr. Chaudhuri points out the three main-interests of the married working woman in a priority order. "In the emotional life of our womenfolk three loves- for husband, for child, for *saris*-constitute a harmonic triad, in which the last love is the treble, the second middle register, and the first the bass note." (p. 153) Whereas love of money is the characteristic quality of the working girl, love of clothes happens to be the dominant feature of the married working woman.

The marriage in Hindu society is attended by certain peculiar characteristics. It has typical antecedents and consequences in Hindu society. Whereas in ancient India marriage was basically meant for the procreation of children in the modern India it has come to mean a "means of enjoying the pleasure of sexual intercourse without the attendant risk of conception." (p. 158) Mr. Chaudhuri has obviously shown how procreation the primary goal of ancient marriage has become the secondary one in modern matrimonial world. This phenomenon shows the extra importance given to the sexual aspect of marriage. Mr. Chaudhuri says that the very origin of matrimonial attraction is sexual in nature. He uses his typical aesthetic vocabulary to describe this process. Love, which eventually paves the way for marriage, has a 'geometrical basis' (p. 159) Since, more often than not, love begins on the visual level, the sight of the feminine body plays a very important role in the amorous process. "The geometry of linear curves and of linear curves and of spheroids is, in a manner of speaking, interwoven with love". Since falling in love is caused and intensified by the curvilinearity of the pattern of the feminine body the inward beauty or grace or sublimity transcending

the physical attractiveness are not at all cared for in India. Thus love is rooted in the visualness of beauty and physicalness of attraction. It is this superficial attraction that sets a number of young men to daydreaming. Thus physical or sexual attraction plays a very important role in love from the boys or girls' point of view. But when the same has to be referred to the family for sanction the economic consideration also creeps in. Mr. Chaudhuri rightly remarks, "the marriages are sordid scrambles for money." (p. 170) In the matrimonial bargain the bride's father pays an undue attention to the economic status of the groom's family and never cares for the groom's mental or moral achievements. Mr. Chaudhuri, therefore, says that "In my young days some fathers and mothers talked about the character or talents of the young men, nowadays nobody pays any attention to these things." (p. 171)

Having discussed the antecedents of marriage, Mr. Chaudhuri goes to analyse the consequences of marriage as seen in the routine life of couple. Since most of the marriages are made possible only on account of mutual physical attraction, they are sure to crumble as the foundation of physical attraction wears into nothingness. Marriage at this stage remains only as a technical one which is marked by the absence of true vitality. The husband and the wife cease to be so and begin to take a neighbourly interest in each other. Mr. Chaudhuri's presentation of this phenomenon is so clear that it needs no addition. "After the physical attraction has worn off most husbands and wives feel only a neighbourly interest in each other and sometimes also neighbourly animosity and hatred.... As married life advances, it ceases not only to be a marriage of true minds, but even of bodies. In many

families the physical revulsion of old husbands and wives from one another shows itself painfully." (p. 172) Another important feature of Indian society is the secretiveness of lust. The only difference is that whereas some people begin with it, some others end with it. The sex-starved young men and women and the sexually dissatisfied married couple will be always trying to have underground means of satisfaction without tarnishing their image in society. Mr Chaudhuri rightly remarks that "In Hindu society, so long as appearances are saved, nothing is wrong." (p. 177) In some aristocratic or snobbish families the couple will be practising prostitution with mutual connivance or understanding. That is why the slogans like "Bourgeois marriage is legalized prostitution" written by the young-men on the walls of women's college are more a dream than a satire.

Mr. Chaudhuri's views, again, on the Indian unitary family are very insightful. He says that the dominant note of Indian family is staticity which discourages all kinds of liveliness. "Most Indian homes are stagnant, stuffy, or even stifling in their psychological staticity and for this reason if a member of the family happens to possess a lively spirit he is driven out from the home to show it in places which cannot be civilized in its expression. The wet blanket is thrown about so relentlessly at home that few persons treat it as anything but a lair to sleep or an eating house which supplies such bad food that good living has become identified with wish frequenting meretricious restaurants where cuisine is never looked upon as the first attraction." (p. 185) The absence of interests and boredom are the two important features of the Indian family. Sometimes the interests of the young men and women are curbed by the parents. "I have always

been dismayed by the indifference to hobbies shown by my countrymen. Actually, many parents consider them to be moral delinquency in their children, and never allow them to have them when the children are obedient." (p. 186) This kind of suppression of the interests of the youngmen and women is responsible for the cumulative frustration which asserts itself at the earliest opportunity. "The revolt of the youth in India begins with the suppression of their interest in early childhood." (p. 187) The things of the mind like literature, art, music, drama etc. are not generally encouraged by the parents who think that everything except an earning of livelihood is redundant and even a waste. Many times Indian family life involves soulless living together, without a renewal of love and faith in the members. Thus a sensitive man is likely to be terribly lonely in spite of being surrounded by his kith and kin. Mr. Chaudhuri offers a conjugal instance to illustrate the problem of maintenance of the family. "To send off a wife to her father's house, as it is customary to do in Hindu society, may be like sending a car for periodic overhaul to a garage, but to live with her calls for a different kind of attention, which, to continue the analogy of the car, is like providing cooling and lubrication all the time the engine is running. Try to run it without these and it will not be long before it disintegrates." (p.192) The Indians have a remarkable talent for being unhappy and making others unhappy. Mr. Chaudhuri suggests that it is better to have a divorce than to endure constant nagging and bickering. He therefore says, "I would rather die of family cholera, which is divorce, than have its dyspepsia, which is bickering." (p.193)

The essay **To Live or Not to Live** is discursive, analytical, explicatory and elaborate in its style and helps the

reader to understand the man-woman relationship from a liberal point of view. The clarity of views expressed in this essay is remarkable and speaks of Chaudhuri's sharp intelligence and stunning scholarship behind it

*All the references to the text are from *To Live or Not to Live*, (Delhi : Hind Pocket Books, 1970).

CHAPTER V.

THE INTELLECTUAL IN INDIA

Nirad C Chaudhuri has put forth his ideas very frankly about the nature of the Indian intellectuals, their limitations and achievements etc. Within the limited space of a monograph Mr. Chaudhuri has attempted to present an overall picture of the intellectual life of Indians in its historical and contemporary context. As usual Mr. Chaudhuri expresses his own distinct views about this issue which are not mere imitation of others's ones. His views on this problem are strongly supported by his own knowledge of history of India in particular and of the world in general. Again his views are marked by the extraordinary freedom from inhibition and chauvenism that is typical of his personality. He has divided the monograph into seven chapters. Tracing the intellectual traditions in India at the beginning of the twentieth century, Mr Chaudhuri points out the absence of purely intellectual pursuit in the country. He shows how the Hindus' concept of intellectual life consisted merely in the personal pursuit of philosophical or Vedantic knowledge which had no direct bearing on the day to day life. Thus knowledge, according to Mr. Chaudhuri, was inextricably connected with morality. Again knowledge, be it medical or philosophical, was presented in the hard integument of Sanskrit which was not to be uncovered easily by the layman. Then Chaudhuri points out how the intellectual pursuit of the Hindu was never basically rationalistic, but more often than not suprarational and at times sub-rational also.

Thus the Hindu pursuit of knowledge consisted either in the supra-rational thinking or in textual explications, but never in purely rationalistic analysis. This approach, in Mr. Chaudhuri's opinion, is represented by Iswara Chandra Vidyasagar and Dayanand Saraswati both of whom continued their basically traditional intellectual movements in spite of their being influenced by the Western humanitarianism. They went back to the Vedic texts for fresh interpretations and empirical application of theoretical principles. Dayananda Saraswati's monotheistic philosophy and his establishment of the Arya Samaj are evidence enough of traditional and moralistic approach.

The Muslim approach is not different from the Indian in its traditional and moralistic attitude to knowledge. Mr. Chaudhuri shows rightly how the Muslims, in spite of their Westernization and desire for a progressive ideology remained basically traditional and wanted a Muslim way of life. As compared with the Hindus, the Muslims were more rigid than the Hindus. "In fact the perpetuation of the Islamic way of life was their aim, although they wanted it to become progressive, that is to say, receptive of Western influence in certain matters." (p.6) Some of the very important Muslims like Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Nawab Abdul Latif, Nawab Ali Ali, Sayed Amir Ali, Monammed Ali Jinnah, and Iqbal are the embodiments of the Islamic traditionalism in India.

The third and modern tradition at the beginning of twentieth century in India is of the westernized Hindus. "It owed nothing at all to the older Hindu or Muslim traditions, and was one of the very rare instances to be found in history, of the wholesale transplantation of the modes of thinking evolved by one culture-complex to a

society belonging to and inheriting quite a different one." (p. 8) The Westernization of the Hindus was, of course, caused and expedited by the British rule in India. "If the Hindus were influenced by the western civilization the question would arise as to why they did not adopt the scientific outlook. Mr. Chaudhuri's sharp intelligence and subtle observation enable him to account for the problem. He rightly points out that "The missionaries did much more towards the spreading of European ideas, because they were interested in establishing Christianity, but they had no interest in preaching European rationalism." (p. 9) The Hindus who were influenced by the European ideologies were more than willing to neglect or even reject the traditional Hindu values. It is because of this modernization which is synonymous with Westernization that there arose a great gap and alienation between the traditional pundits and the modern scholars. Raja Rammohan Roy is the supreme example of this spirit. In spite of his traditional background, "he was Western in outlook, and he adopted utilitarianism as his political and social philosophy." (p. 10) As part of the modernisation of the Hindu life, the acquisition of and the mastery over the English language became essential. This principle was operative in the field of letters also. "Prose was created for the first time in all the literary languages, which had so far embodied all their creation in poetry. Genres of European literature-fiction, short-story and novel, essays, literary criticism-were all introduced and acclimatized, and its readers gradually lost all taste for writings of the traditional type." (p. 11). One of the striking features of the third phase of the Indian intellectualism is the entrance of politics into it. Thus Mr Chaudhuri points out how the three phases of Indian intellectuals were dominated by religion, (Western) literature and politics respectively.

The Indian renaissance, according to Mr. Chaudhuri is influenced by two phenomena : (i) the alien rule and (ii) the impact of Western ideas and culture. This renaissance gave a new awareness to the Indians about their peculiar situation and consequently Indians began to ask new questions about their national self-respect and their adaptation to the Western culture etc. Mr. Chaudhuri is quite objective and frank when he says that these Indians had been attracted towards the Western schools of thought because the old Hindu thought had come to be devoid of any creativity. Chaudhuri therefore says that the Indians began to cultivate the European ideologies like Liberalism and Conservatism. But the paradox of the Indian behaviour is soon pointed out when Chaudhuri shows the lack of clear difference between these ideologies. He shows how the most liberal Indian can be or turn out to be a conservative at heart or at critical moments of his life. Chaudhuri says, "The opposition between the Liberals and the Conservatives was much more over the range of innovation and the pace at which this was to be brought about, than over fundamentals. No Hindu conservative opposed the introduction of monotheism or disputed its superiority to image worship, he even advocated the adoption of Western science and some forms of knowledge relating to the external world, and he was for education in institutions of the Western type." (p. 17) Another dominant obsession of the Indians is pointed out by Mr. Chaudhuri in a very perceptive fashion. He shows how the Indians are always preoccupied with the 'mind' or 'psychological approach'. That is the reason why the Indians can never think of an Industrial Revolution, but on the contrary, believe in the 'psychological approach to political question'. (p. 19) Mr. Chaudhuri cites Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Tagore as embodiments

of this approach and shows how 'personality' and 'character' became ends in themselves. Since religion was the major preoccupation of the nineteenth century Hindu, the leaders like Roy attributed a number of Indian social evils to the superstitions of Hindu religion and fought against them. The effect of this kind of thinking on the part of Indian reformers, according to Mr. Chaudhuri, was a gradual rejection of polytheism and acceptance of monotheism.

Next, Chaudhuri shows how the 'literary culture' came to have an important place in the Indian life. The 'cultured man' and the 'educated man' became synonymous phrases. The education of an Indian consisted in the imitation of the social, political and economic ideas of the Western world. The western ideologies like Liberalism and Humanitarianism became very popular in India. The Indian thinkers like R. C. Dutt and Dadabhai Naoroji began to discuss the ideas of exploitation and industrialization etc. Mr Chaudhuri rightly deplors the fact that "even the negative ideology of Indian nationalism was imitative." (p. 24) He further shows how the Indians borrowed their idea of Aryan superiority from the European Orientalists, and their idea of Dravidian ancestry from the European historians of India. Thus in all these details of the Indian literary culture the Indians show a strong tendency towards imitation rather than original thinking.

Another paradox of Indian society, according to Chaudhuri, is the fact that the minority of intellectuals in India forms part of the ruling class, whereas the uneducated masses "have been the eternal Sudras, and if they continue in this state, they will not play a significant part in any future conflict of cultures in India." (p. 28) The majority of the dominant minority' are to be found

in the liberal professions and the higher ranks of civil service. Mr. Chaudhuri's keen observation enables him to remark that the women of India remained outside the current of the intellectual life. "As a rule, even in families whose menfolk were actively carrying on the new intellectual activities the women led a traditional life." (p. 30) After showing the disharmony between the middle-class and the intelligentsia, Mr Chaudhuri points out the qualitative limitations of the latter in a very frank manner. He says that most of the Indian intellectuals are interested in the so-called pursuit of knowledge for utilitarian reasons like earning a livelihood or wealth or power. Some of them do so for snobbish purposes. Mr Chaudhuri shows how the social aspirants want to be seen carrying Darwin's **The Origin of Species** or Bergson's **Creative Evolution** with them. Even the 'great' scientists of India cannot do without superstitious rites. Says Chaudhuri, "Even a professor of physics would not think that it was inconsistent with his vocation to wear an amulet. Highly Westernized barristers would utter spells before the image of Ganesa, the god of worldly success, and burn incense before it every morning so that his professional work might be successful." (p. 32) Another feature that is associated with the Indian intellectuals, according to Chaudhuri, is the feeling of overstrain, because the intellectual activities are historically speaking, only of recent origin. The effect of this overstrain is to be seen in three ways. One, a cessation of all creative intellectual effort after a certain stage. Even the brilliant scholars give up their work as soon as they attain a secure position in their jobs. "Among Indian professors there are very few who produce new works after their first research thesis." (p. 33) Two, the Indian intellectuals who have received Western education either at home or abroad

maintain double standards. They, for example, apply very rigorous standards of analysis to Western works of history, philosophy or literature etc., but begin to be chauvenistic and hortative in the case of Indian counterparts. Third, they revert to the traditional Hinduism. "There is a saying that to scratch the Russian is to find the Tarter, it could also be said that to scratch an elderly Indian intellectual was to discover the Hindu" (p. 33)

The new type of intellectual work in India brought certain changes in the working conditions of people. Certain professions like law, medicine and teaching became more remunerative than they were in the past in India, although, it must be remembered, they were not as remunerative as in the West. Another bane of the Indian education is frankly pointed out by Mr Chaudhuri when he says that the intellectual height of a man in India is always measured in terms of the class or grade that he secures in the examination rather than the original work that he produces subsequently. The teacher never feels the necessity to do original writing and publication. Teaching in India is synonymous with transferring of established knowledge from books to students without any addition to it. Whatever may be the qualitative limitation of educated class in India, there is no doubt that it has contributed to the cultural stratification of India and has become one of so many other minorities.

Having given a broad outline of the Indian intellectual phenomenon, Mr Chaudhuri examines the various reasons for this decay and attributes them to the 'general stagnancy'. "The general mood in India over the state of education is one of deep gloom." (p.39). Mr. Chaudhuri is absolutely right when he says that there is no outstanding intellectual in India below the age of fifty or

sixty and that no original interpretation of Indian history or other aspects of India is offered in spite of the artificial spate of theses in the Universities. One of the striking features of the Indian scholarship is its imitativeness. It is really a matter of paradox that the Indians always try in vain to adopt the Western ideas and make a mess of knowledge. But this phenomenon does not make Mr. Chaudhuri blind to the remarkable achievement of Indians in the field of mathematics and physics.

Another difference between the Western intellectual and the Indian pointed out by Mr. Chaudhuri shows his historical sense, subtle observation and psychological knowledge. He says that whereas the 'Western intellectual works against a tradition of scholarship started from the days of Charlemagne and the Carolingian renaissance, the Indian intellectual works in a relative vacuum and his achievements are rather precocious and come to an early end. Mr. Chaudhuri observes rightly, "... such of them as took to the new activities showed an amazing precocity, but precocity is a risky thing, because it often brings untimely decay in its train in personal as well as national development. The Indian intellectuals created what might be called a mental *tour de force*, an achievement comparable to those of the Indian magicians who plant a mango tree and make it grow fruit before the spectators. Such a growth brings in exhaustion and contributes to rapid decay." (p.43) After making this historical observation Mr. Chaudhuri examines the details of the Indian intellectual phenomenon. The Indian intellectuals are unable to do any sustained work because of a variety of reasons. For example, the food that the Indian middle class intellectuals take is entirely unsuited to give them the vigour that is required for hard work. Then, they have no privacy at home because of the overcrowded

nature of their joint-family. Since they are compelled by family-responsibility and poverty to earn money all the time, they have no rest at all. Likewise he finds no stimulating atmosphere in the universities also. Thus Mr. Chaudhuri relates the intellectual poverty of Indians to their economic poverty. "Thus the intellectual insolvency and the economic insolvency of the middle class have been running along parallel course during the last thirty years, each keeping pace with the other and helping each other." (p 46)

In spite of the little intellectual work that is going on in India because of the Western impact, there is no growth of the rationalistic intellectualism in India because Mr. Chaudhuri rightly says, "It is the authoritarian and intuitionist leanings of the Hindu mind which makes it unintellectual and sometimes positively anti-intellectual." (p.46) The Hindu mind follows either sub-rational or supra-rational method in the understanding of the truth of life. That is the reason why the seeking of knowledge is always connected with a sense of secrecy, esoterism, grotesqueness, authoritarianism and intuitionism represented in the Hindu's knowledge of the Veda. The common man in India always preferred a man of occult powers to a man well-versed in the Veda. Such intuitionist and occultist tendencies of the Hindu mind naturally curbed the exercise of objective and pure kind of rationalism.

Even the influence of the Western science on the Hindu knowledge is confined only to the field of technology. Far from adapting the scientific spirit, the Hindus pursued only the Western technology and the popular culture of the west in the form of the western recreations like cinema, and sport. The influence of films has been

very adverse on the Indian life. Mr Chaudhuri, therefore, says that "On the whole, the cinema, both through foreign and Indian films, has been the greatest instrument of the degradation of every kind of cultural activity in this country." (p. 51) Likewise, the pre-Gandhian and the Gandhian nationalisms did much to undermine the intellectual approach. Whereas the pre-Gandhian nationalism made the intellectuals partisan in spirit, the Gandhian nationalism lowered the intellectual life of Indians by leading them back to the naive intuitionism:

In the next chapter Mr Chaudhuri shows with facts and figures, how it is not possible for an intellectual to earn his livelihood purely on his intellectual achievements, and how this problem becomes more acute in an 'anti-intellectual' country like India. He points out how the bureaucracy or the film industry positively harm the intellectual side of a man's personality. Finally he shows that in spite of the anti-intellectual atmosphere in India one can pursue his intellectual ideals and one of the best examples of this possibility is Mr Chaudhuri himself who started his publication at the age of 54 or so.

Mr. Chaudhuri points out the stagnant atmosphere of the Indian intellectual world. The Indian Universities which are supposed to provide the highest kind of intellectual training or orientation have miserably failed in the task. "They are intellectually stagnant. The Indian academic world is laden with a deep somnolence without the justification of deep positions: it is mental vacuum, and, not vintage port, which produces the abstracted air on the faces of the professors." (p. 64) The same kind of stagnancy and lifelessness is to be seen in the Indian journalism. Bureaucracy, of course, worsens the situation. All relationship between the employer and the employee

is marked by the monster of malevolence manifesting itself in envy and authoritarianism, which mar the spirit of free thinking in people, especially in the young intellectuals. Mr. Chaudhuri offers his own official life in the Delhi AIR as an example of suffering the consequences of envy and revenge by his colleagues and superiors. Another hindrance in the life of the Indian intellectual is the peculiar nature of his wife. According to Mr. Chaudhuri there are two kinds of wives in India: one, the harpy "who looks upon any activity in the husband other than earning money and ever more money as a sin against marriage vow." (p. 71); two, the empty-headed and frivolous gad-about "who regards quiet home-life and quiet work as the same sin." (p. 71) The Indian intellectual has to be a Prometheus if at all he has to achieve anything in his life in spite of his wife.

In the next chapter Mr. Chaudhuri offers certain suggestions to the young Indians who aspire to write in English. He asks them not to have 'an egregious snobbery or xenolatry' but try to be native both in theme and in style. He points out how the foreign publishers are not sure of the sales of books on India even in India. Mr. Chaudhuri enheartens the Indian writer to continue his writing and to have a lot of patience. He asks the writer to find a publisher suitable to the theme of his book. He suggests that young Indian writers should try to write in natural English and not affect the artificial one. He warns that "... the self-conscious, showy, and ultra-fashionable English which many young writers of English in India affect will fall completely flat". (p. 78) The style of the book should express the personality behind it. This is possible, according to Chaudhuri, only when the writer has achieved a technical mastery over the English language including the natural rhythms of the language. To be able to attract the attention of the Western

readers, the Indian must write not only with competence but with distinction and should have sufficient sincerity in his accomplishment.

*

*

*

All the references to the text are from **The Intellectual in India**, (New Delhi : Associated Publishing House, 1967).



CHAPTER VI

CHAUDHURI'S PROSE STYLE

Of all the Indo-English non-fiction writers Mr. Nirad C. Chaudhuri is, perhaps the best because of his robust thinking and clarity of style. His popularity both in India and abroad depends as much upon his controversial views as upon his uninhibited and fearless style. In spite of having started his writing career rather late in his life, he has written extensively by now and achieved an international reputation. Like all men of originality and strong conviction he has expressed his views boldly and incurred the wrath of many and earned the admiration of a few. In spite of the contradictory responses of the readers towards his writing Mr. Chaudhuri simply cannot be neglected. The present article is intended to highlight the striking features of his prose style which is, of course, coloured and conditioned by his satiric vision of life.

Chaudhuri's prose-style can be easily contradistinguished from Sri Aurobindo's, Tagore's, Radhakrishnan's or Khushwant Singh's. His style can be defined negatively also. His prose-style has neither the epic grandeur of Sri Aurobindo's, nor the lyrical delicacy of Tagore's nor the idealistic elevation of Radhakrishnan's nor the passionate fervour of Raja Ram Mohan Roy's, nor the ebulliance of Vivekananda's, nor the penchant brevity of Khushwant Singh's. What then is the distinctiveness of Mr. Chaudhuri's prose style?

Since Chaudhuri is a man of keen perception and thinking his language is marked by concreteness of diction. The words that he employs for the communication of his thought are always concrete, precise or pin-pointed and never vague, ambivalent or obscure. Describing his house at Kishorgunj, Mr. Chaudhuri says, : "The land on which the house stood was about two acres, with a frontage of about sixty yards. The plot was thus deep one and it was divided up into three portions: the front or outer house, the inner house and back, which was orchard, bamboo plantation and waste land, mostly overgrown with weed. The real nucleus of the house was the inner courtyard, kept, as I have already related, religiously clean of grass. But there was a coconut tree in one corner of it. The coconut is a rather rare palm in our district and so the tree in our inner yard was not cut down at the time of building the house as I saw guavas being." In this regard his perception of the phenomenal world attains almost photographic minuteness and vividness and testifies to his precise use of abundant vocabulary. He never lacks the nomenclature that is required for the expression of the big and the small; the clear and the hazy; the near and the distant. This quality of Mr. Chaudhuri cannot be found in any other Indo-English prose-writer. His style is as realistic as elaborate. In spite of the similarity between the prose-styles of Mr. Chaudhuri and Mr. Khushwant Singh as far as realism is concerned, there is a subtle difference between the two. Whereas Mr. Chaudhuri's style is characterised by elaboration, Mr. Khushwant Singh's is marked by relative brevity. That explains the reason why Chaudhuri makes slow reading and Singh, fast reading. A good contrast to Chaudhuri's style could be seen in Vivekananda and Radhakrishnan whose styles are marked by emotional and imaginative

outpouring. Reading Chaudhuri's works is like entering into a mountainous area of arid climate whereas reading Vivekananda and Radhakrishnan is like entering into a hill-station in an area of humid climate. The same difference might be shown in a different manner. For example, reading Chaudhuri is like witnessing the Indian newsreel which shows reality in its stark nakedness, whereas reading Vivekananda or Radhakrishnan is like watching a commercial Hindi film (a romantic-Hindi film will be a tautology) which shows reality richly covered in gorgeous clothes of idealism.

Since Chaudhuri is a solid and comprehensive thinker he cannot help thinking about large issues of life in an elaborate fashion. Thus because of his serious temperament used to sustained thinking and the gravity of the issues selected for treatment, he uses large periods or paragraphs. His is not a hurried and therefore short thinking but a steady and therefore continuous thinking. The paragraphs of his books tend to be quite elaborate some times running into pages. In this regard he is easily comparable to Edmund Burke, Bertrand Russell, Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and Radhakrishnan. Chaudhuri has an epic mind which thinks of large entities and their interrelation.

The concreteness of Chaudhuri's style is naturally ascribable to his use of concrete words i. e. nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs. Another striking feature of his prose is his scholarly style. The use of non-English (not necessarily always foreign) words, phrases, and sentences is a conspicuous aspect of his writing. For example he uses the Sanskrit words like *nagarika*, *pitri-bhakti*, *tamasik*, *dharma*, *snataka*, *sagnika*, *pritunitambini*, *pina-payodhara*, *purusayita* etc; the Hindi words and phrases like *Ek rupiya chanda* *ane*, *kilo*, *dada*, *didi*, *bhai*, *bon*, *mahal* etc; the Bengal

words like *kartago*, *kothey gele*, etc; the Urdu words like *sherwani*, *pajama*, *shagird* etc; the Greek words and phrases like *Megale polis*, *megale cremia*, etc; the Latin words like *magna civitas*, *magna solitudo*, *vanitas*, *vanitatum*, *gartia*, *salus*, *pudenda muliebra* etc; the French words and phrases like *Les absents ont toujours tort*, *coeur*, *fau pas*, *pere de famille*; *rez-de-chaussee* etc; the German words like *Sturm und Drang*, *weltenschauung* etc; the Italian words like *via dolorosa*, *alfresco* etc; the Scottish words like *auld lang syne* etc. Chaudhuri's use of such a wide range of words from many languages other than English is really an evidence of his extraordinarily wide reading. Far from using these words merely to show off his knowledge he resorts to this method only in order to achieve brevity, exactitude and sometimes local colour. In this context Chaudhuri is easily comparable to Khushwant Singh though the latter uses them less frequently than the former. Readers who are not familiar with the non-English words are likely to be dismayed and therefore to dislike him. Many times the readers are not qualified to read Chaudhuri on account of their unlimited ignorance.

Another feature allied to the use of non-English words is the use of quotations at relevant spots. These quotations are so many in number that they cannot be reproduced here for lack of space. Quotations in Chaudhuri unlike in many lesser Indo-English writers, are used not as decorations but as integral parts of the main argument. He uses them at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of the essay and weaves them so closely with the web of his thought that they cannot be removed without damaging the overall pattern of the essay. He uses these quotations either to support his own argument or to refute an idea or ideology that runs counter to his. One of the

specialities of Chaudhuri is the habit of changing a word or two in the quotation and give it a Chaudhurian slant. This kind of intellectual grafting gives a fresh meaning to the sentences and holds a mirror to Chaudhuri's creativity. A couple of examples will suffice to prove this. "There is a saying that to scratch the Russian is to find the Tarter, it could also be said that to scratch an elderly Indian intellectual was to discover the Hindu."² "Of course, there is the Greek proverb, 'Call no man happy until he is dead', which may be represented into 'Don't say that anyone has survived until he is dead.'"³

The wide use of non-English words, phrases and quotations points to the extra-ordinary scholarship underlying them. Chaudhuri's vision is panoramic and is supported by his encyclopaedic knowledge. Whenever he discusses a topic he will be aware of and making references to a number of aspects of the same almost simultaneously. He is never given to thinking in terms of isolated entities. On the contrary, he will be thinking about it as part of a universal phenomenon and with the help of his encyclopaedic knowledge, will be able to connect the particular to the general. For example when he discusses the problem of Indian marriage, he refers to the social, economic, psychological and other aspects and suggests or demonstrates similarities and contrasts with the Western counterparts.

Since Chaudhuri is basically a student of history he exhibits his sound knowledge of the great historical movements and patterns of the world. Besides, he has his own theory of man based upon his knowledge of history. In this sense he is easily comparable to Carlyle. Whereas Carlyle believed in the theory that the entire history of the world is nothing but the history of great lives, Chaudhuri

believes in the view that man is nothing but a product of historical and environmental forces. Whereas Carlyle is a romantic, Chaudhuri is an anti-romantic and hence the difference of emphasis in their theories. It is this kind of historical perspective that enables Chaudhuri to place the events or persons in their proper context and show their relation with the wider world. The historical substratum of Chaudhuri's arguments prevents him from mythifying and glorifying the persons or events under discussion. His vision of life is, therefore, essentially earth-bound. For example, he endeavours to connect the present Indian life with the three great movements that swept the world: the Indo-Aryan movement; the Indo-Turkish and the Indo-British. Nobody can deny the validity of Chaudhuri's theory.

Although Chaudhuri is primarily a student of history he cannot be labelled as a historian. The anti-Chaudhuri critics of India make a lot of ado about this aspect of his personality. Their view is obviously a prejudiced one. What distinguishes Chaudhuri from the historians proper is the personal note that he brings into his writings. All his articles and books have the Chaudhurian climate only on account of the personal anecdotes of his life. His books are the honest records of his response to the world around him. His childhood in the native village Kishorgunj; his graduate days at Calcutta, his service in the AIR of Delhi; his trip to England etc have enabled him to gather extra-ordinary and rich experience which are made all the more meaningful by his sharp perception and wide reading. These personal experiences of Chaudhuri naturally enable him to see them in the light of his encyclopaedic knowledge. It is these personal anecdotes that give him the status of a creative writer and make

him comparable to the great essayists of the world like Addison, Steele, J. S. Mill and Bertrand Russels.

One of the most important methods of Chaudhuri is the analysis and not mere description of his personal experience. He never describes the experience and leaves it at that. On the contrary he describes it only to analyse it in terms of psychology, ethnology, sociology, anthropology and history. Chaudhuri's prose, therefore, can be labelled as analytical or expository prose. He uses the analytical method of these sciences without using the jargon indigeneous to them. For example, when he discusses the Bengali customs, fairs and festivals that he had seen in his childhood, he tries to describe them analytically and ethnologically. When he sees the Hindu-Muslim riot in Calcutta, he analyses it in the light of his historical knowledge. When he observes the lethargy of the Indians, he analyses it in geographical-historical-sociological terms. When he notices the Indian rituals and purity mania etc., he analyses them in terms of the psychology of religion. Thus Chaudhuri's personal experiences come to be presented through the prism of his scholarship.

One of the happy things about Chaudhuri is that the native charm of his mind outshines the rich garment of his scholarship. In spite of his wide reading, he never ceases to make fresh observations and original comments about the things, persons and situations that come his way. He likes life very seriously and thinks seriously. That is the reason why many statements that he makes come to have the stature of epigrams. His books and articles bristle with innumerable epigrams. A few examples will suffice: "In Hindu society, so long as appearances are saved, nothing is wrong."⁴ "We Hindus only tolerate

or endure changes, but never sanction them.''⁵ "There is a style and genius in prostitution as there is in all other human activities.'"⁶

Although Chaudhuri is a vigorous intellectual and an incisive analyst he cannot help using the similes and metaphors whenever he wants to convince the readers about a particular aspect of his topic. These similes and metaphors or images contribute as much to the reader's understanding as to the beauty of his prose. They add grace and charm to his otherwise exhausting style. It may be said that the similes and metaphors are like pretty shrubs and plants which lessen the pain of walking on a rocky mountain under the hot sun. What kind of similes, metaphors and images does he employ in his writings? He uses a bewildering variety of metaphors and similes from various branches of knowledge which is eloquent of his wide experience as well as his voracious reading. The list of the different fields of knowledge from which he has borrowed his images is so large that it cannot be discussed here in detail for lack of space. He uses the athletic and the military images; the scientific, the technological, the medical, the agricultural, the horticultural and entomological images; the geographical, the navigational, the zoological, the aquatic and the chemical images; the historical, the architectural and the archeological images; the sanitary, the cosmetic, the sexual, the matrimonial images; the economic, the numismatic and governmental images; the religious, the magical, the mythical and the supernatural images; the scholastic and the commercial images and so on. Obviously, a detailed analysis of all these images requires to be covered by a separate article. But here only four examples can be seen from branches which are not commonly cited by the

critics of Chaudhuri. Here is an athletic image: "The English politics gave me the feeling that I was watching a swimming pool"⁷. A scholastic image may be seen in Chaudhuri's description of Robert Clive: "The poor boy and the son of a pretty attorney wanted to show in England the prizes he had won in India, as any school-boy does."⁸ An architectural image may be seen in his description of the Indian journalists: "Most Indian editors are as monumental as temple-idols and their monumentality is accentuated by the high salaries they are getting in these days."⁹ A sanitary image may be seen in his description of the Indian wife: "So, one might say that for most Hindu husbands the wife is a beautiful bath of gleaming porcelain, with both cold and hot water taps, with this difference, however, that the taps are not under control but flow as they list and by turns the husband is bathed in a cool spray of love or scalded in a geyser of anger."¹⁰

Another striking feature of Chaudhuri's prose-style is the freedom from fear and inhibition of any sort, which is determined partly by the topic that he selects for discussion and partly by his own temperament which is satirical. He can criticise or admire anything and everything without being afraid of any race, community, institution, region or government. He can criticise the Hindus, the Indian Christians, the Eurasians and the Muslims without any fear of these groups. He can point out the mistakes in the personal as well as governmental behaviour of Mr. Nehru who was in power as the Prime Minister of India. He can show negative aspects of the English culture and people when he is right inside the English country. He can describe the drabness of Indian life as meticulously as Bernard Shaw did of English life in his plays.

He can discuss sexual matters like coitus and venereal disease with the same ease with which he discusses religion and history. He shocks the smug and the complacent, irritates the hypocrites: hurts the idealists and whips the slothful and slumberous sentimentalists. Because of his courage to see the problems in the face, he does not shy away from the ugly, the indecent and the discordant. The kind of uninhibited boldness shown by Chaudhuri can never be expected in other Indo-English authors like Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo or Radhakrishnan. The only writer comparable to Chaudhuri in this regard is Mr. Khushwant Singh.

These are the components of Chaudhuri's prose style. There are many Indian critics who deliberately exaggerate the negative side of his style. Whereas one group of them accuse him of using the pedantic style, the other group dub his style as merely journalistic. But these views are equally unsympathetic and testify to the critics' inability and unwillingness to understand and enjoy Chaudhuri's style. Most often the Indian critics at least are not well-equipped to understand him because of their own temperamental or educational limitations. There is another set of critics who complain that Chaudhuri uses not English but Greco-Roman style. Robert de Souza says that "...the style of the book smacks of a mixture of the Greco-Latin and the Indian-- a result of outgrown dump of a book-worm. And surely the Goans know not such a language which its author calls English."¹¹ But whatever style is used by Chaudhuri, it is the natural style of an Indian who has learnt his English through dictionaries and Indian teachers and who has not de-Indianised and Anglicised himself to use the snobbish style. Most of the Indian haters of Chaudhuri belong to the Anglicised class whose

superficiality and hollowness are ruthlessly exposed by him. Chaudhuri offers a real test to the critic to see whether he can achieve a psychic distance in understanding Chaudhuri in spite of being hurt by his views.

REFERENCES

- 1 Nirad C. Chaudhuri, **The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian**, (Bombay: Jaico Publishing House, 1973), p.20.
- 2 Nirad C. Chaudhuri, **The Intellectual in India**, (New Delhi: Associated Publishing House, 1967), p.33.
- 3 Ibid. p.55.
- 4 Nirad C. Chaudhuri, **To Live or Not to Live**, (Delhi: Hind Pocket Books, 1970), p. 177.
- 5 Ibid. p. 137.
- 6 Nirad C. Chaudhuri, **The Continent of Circe**, (Bombay: Jaico Publishing House, 1974), p. 315.
- 7 Nirad C. Chaudhuri, **A Passage to England**, (New Delhi: Orient Paperback, 1972), p. 200.
- 8 Nirad C. Chaudhuri, **Clive of India**, (Bombay: Jaico Publishing House, 1976), p.323.
- 9 Chaudhuri, **The Intellectual in India**, p. 65.
- 10 Chaudhuri, **The Continent of Circe**, p. 277.
- 11 Robert de Souza, **Goa and the Continent of Circe**, (Bombay: Wilco Publishing House, 1973), p. 176.



BOOKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

ENGLISH

1. Songs of Sarvajna
2. Sarvajna : The Omniscient Poet of Karnataks

KANNADA

1. Huchchuhole
2. Kollada Neralu
3. Paduvana Nadina Premavira
4. Jogibhavi
5. Nigudha Saudha
6. Govardhanaram

IN PREPARATION

1. Song of Allama
2. Jokumaraswami



