



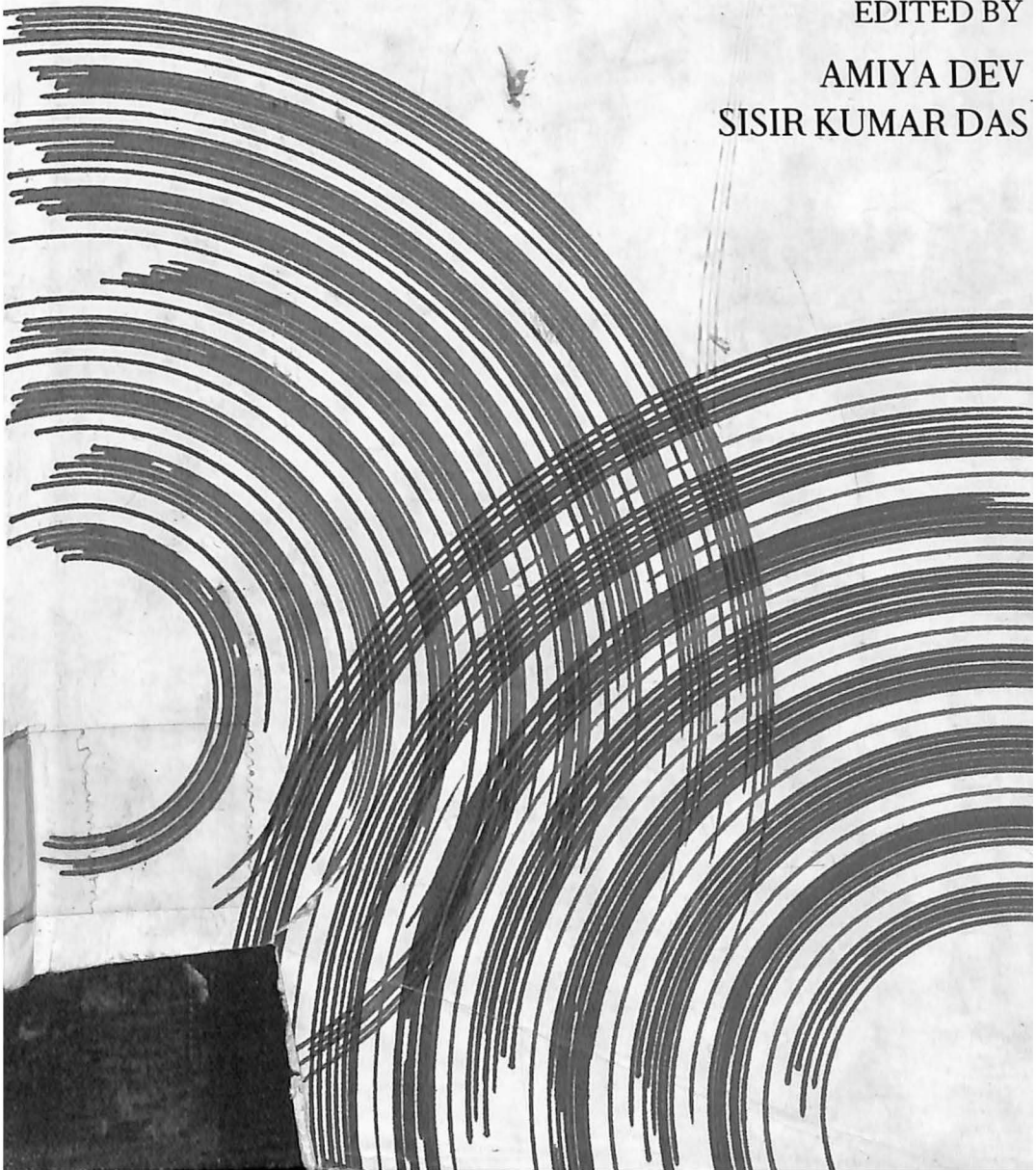
Indian Institute of Advanced Study,
Rashtrapati Nivas, Shimla

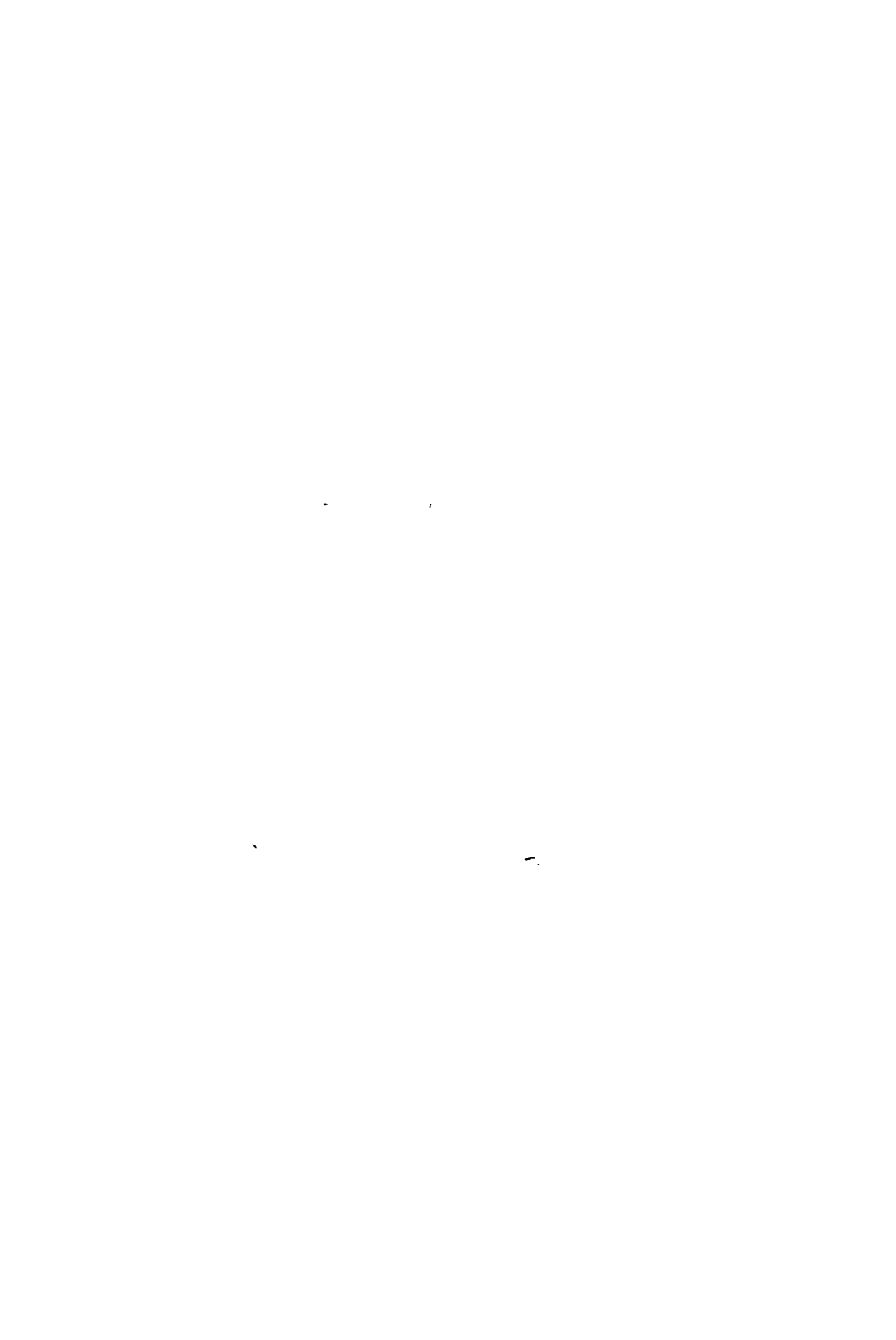
Comparative Literature

Theory and Practice

EDITED BY

AMIYA DEV
SISIR KUMAR DAS





**COMPARATIVE
LITERATURE**
Theory and Practice

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Theory and Practice

Edited by
AMIYA DEV
SISIR KUMAR DAS

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDY
SHIMLA

in association with

ALLIED PUBLISHERS

New Delhi Bombay Calcutta Madras Lucknow
Bangalore Hyderabad Ahmedabad

First published 1989

© Indian Institute of Advanced Study 1988

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form, or by any means, without written permission of the publisher.

Published by the Secretary for

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDY

Rashtrapati Nivas, Shimla 171 005

in association with

ALLIED PUBLISHERS PRIVATE LIMITED

Prarthna Flats, 1st floor, Navrangpura, Ahmedabad 380 009

15 J. N. Heredia Marg, Ballard Estate, Bombay 400 038

3-5-1129 Kachiguda Cross Road, Hyderabad 500 027

Patiala House, 16A Ashok Marg, Lucknow 226 001

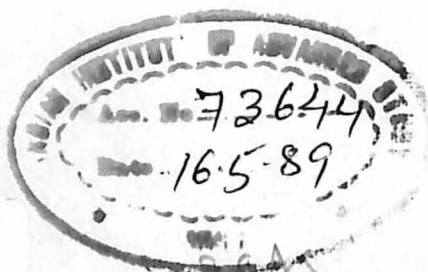
5th Main Road, Gandhinagar, Bangalore 560 009

17 Chittaranjan Avenue, Calcutta 700 072

13/14 Asaf Ali Road, New Delhi 110 002

751 Mount Road, Madras 600 002

ISBN 81-7023-017-9



Library

IIAS, Shimla

809 D 49 C-D 49 C: 1



00073644

Printed in India

by P. K. Ghosh at Eastend Printers

3 Dr Suresh Sarkar Road, Calcutta 700 014

Foreword

Even though Comparative Religion and Comparative Philosophy have failed to make much headway in our country it seems to me that there is every hope that Comparative Literature will fare better. I shall never cease to have faith in the civilizing power of literature, for who is there who does not love to hear a good story, or who does not respond to the magical rhythm of poetry? The role of literary studies in a liberal education needs to be rethought by university men and women in our day, and somewhere in those studies the comparative perspective must find a place since there are many cultures and many literatures. I may perhaps mention that the Institute of Advanced Study has chosen Comparative Literature and Comparative Religion as areas of special study in its current programme, in the belief that work in the universities can well be supplemented by research activities in these fields.

A brief word next about the word 'comparative'. I recall an important point made by Joachim Wach many decades ago when he delivered the Barrows Lectures in Calcutta on what he called the Comparative Study of Religion and where I was privileged to be present. He said that we needed to remember that neither religion, nor philosophy, nor literature could be comparative. It was our *study* of these subjects that was such. This orientation set a new trend as far as religious studies were concerned. The French adjective 'comparée' used in phrases like 'philosophie comparée' pinpoints through grammar the *activity* of comparing. It is we who engage in this activity, and comparing, needless to say, presupposes in-depth knowledge of the constituents compared.

This reminds me of a childhood problem which, although at first sight rather naïve and elementary, I believe still dogs us. I refer to our early examination experience of questions of three types—questions in which we are asked either to compare, to contrast, or to discuss. I must confess that I always preferred being asked to 'discuss'. Although questions on com-

parison looked easier, I found that it was in fact not so. If you describe X first, and then Y, you face the hurdle of repetition when you put the two together, and the whole exercise often falls flat. Sometimes the examinee is asked to compare *and* contrast, and there too the task of arrangement is deceptively simple. I suggest that the same problems still arise at the research level and that this is why the whole question of a *framework* for studies in subjects like Comparative Literature has become so crucial.

While students of literature have always been able to cross time, comparatists are in fact asking us to cross space as well. It is true that *intertextuality* shows itself in many contemporary works, and this is particularly the case whenever complexity is regarded as a virtue. In this connection I would like to make a plea for *contextuality* in literary studies. For example, I should hope an Indian student of Racine would know quite a lot about French classical drama, history, civilization and the rest.

It strikes me that, in India, a sort of pendulum often operates between allegiance to what is regarded as *suddha* (call this purism if you will) and the assimilative ethos. Applied to our present concerns, this takes the form of single language allegiance and on the other hand a desire to absorb the best/the latest, from wherever it may come. These can alternate in one and the same individual at different times. Put in more simple language, the new, the alien, is quite often digested. But after this has happened there may be a sudden and even bitter reaction against the element assimilated. If the comparatist can help us overcome some of these phobias it will be all to the good.

The pendulum effect apart, two other images come to mind. One is the lens or filter idea. We so often use the familiar as a lens through which we see the other. I do not speak of analogy here, for this is a far more rational process. Since many of us wear glasses, this leads me to my second image. It was in the context of comparative religion that the late John Robinson, in his Teape Lectures delivered in Delhi a few years ago, used the idea of bifocal vision. This might be an idea congenial to the comparatist. We need to look closely and also need long sight. It is indeed a misfortune to be short-sighted. Anything which prevents us from being that, whether

comparative literature or any other comparative study, should serve us well.

The difficulties that face the comparatist are, I feel, symptomatic of the modern Indian's attempt to grapple with the intercultural heritage to which he is heir. Cultural confusion, complexes about Indianness, retreats from some aspects of westernization along with total absorption of certain other aspects—all these are symptoms of the same syndrome. The comparatist can widen our horizons and provide us with tools with which we can delve into both the nation-wide and the world-wide heritage to which we are all heir.

Comparative Literature as a discipline should enable us to savour the richness of the literatures *within* national boundaries and also help us to go *beyond* those boundaries. In this way it is a discipline which bears a dual responsibility. The besetting dangers of our times are parochialism and regionalism on the one hand, and xenophobia on the other. If educated people succumb to either or both of these, there can be no hope for the country. Comparative studies take their stand on the appreciation of otherness and the delightful discovery of what is akin. I hope that the contributions in this volume will work towards an extension of sensibility and an enlargement of sympathy, belonging as they do to a discipline which can help to expand the understanding of the common reader, and, at research level, provide fresh insight into both commonality and difference in the many mansions of literature.

MARGARET CHATTERJEE
*Director, Indian Institute
of Advanced Study*

Editorial Note

This book is an outcome of the seminar held at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla on 22–26 June 1987 on ‘Comparative Literature: Theory and Practice’—outcome but not the proceedings in the ordinary sense. For the discussion that followed the presentation of the papers has been left out. Besides, we had to deprive ourselves of some papers for the more compelling reasons of scope and focus. Instead, a few papers were invited to fill up the most obvious gaps. We wanted our papers to be studies of texts, genres, themes or movements, transcending the restrictions of a monolingual critical framework, or to raise theoretical issues related to comparative criticism. Our purpose was to give our exercise as good a shape as possible and offer our readers a book, not a seminar transcript.

The four sections into which the book has been divided are self-explanatory. The first deals with the broad ‘why’ and ‘what’ of comparative literature, its orientations and ‘schools’. Omissions here are regretted, though they have adequate reference elsewhere. The second section is devoted to what is still considered the prime rationale of comparative literature, inter-literariness or literary relations. The third takes up mainly a few concrete cases of reception, themes, genres and movements; and the fourth is concerned with literary theory, translation and historiography. It will be presumptuous to claim any completeness—we are far from that. But we have consistently focused on the Indian situation and on the relevance of comparative literature to India. If we have achieved anything, it is in this consistency.

As editors, we have also tried to attain a stylistic consistency. But whenever we did any minor touches, we took special care not to tamper with our authors’ originality, for we knew that the book was more theirs than ours.

We are grateful to Professor Yue Daiyun of Peking and Shenzhen Universities, Professor Marián Gálík of Bratislava, and Professor Tan Chung of Jawaharlal Nehru University for

responding warmly to our invitation and contributing three important papers. We are also grateful to Professor Margaret Chatterjee, Director, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, for her foreword and for making this publication possible. We thank our other contributors for revising their papers after presentation at the seminar and for providing all necessary documentation. We thank the publication unit of the Institute too for compiling the manuscripts, and all others who helped us in copy-editing and proof-reading. And we take this opportunity to express our gratitude to two persons involved with the production of this book—to Sri Prabhat Kumar Ghosh, who suggested a good many stylistic improvements, and to Sri Buddhadev Bhattacharya, who did the overall supervision as well as the layout and the design. They were our mentors and the least that can be said is that we enjoyed working with them.

AMIYA DEV

SISIR KUMAR DAS

Contents

Foreword	v
Editorial Note	ix

I ORIENTATIONS

✓ 1	Muses in Isolation <i>Sisir Kumar Das</i>	3
2	The French School of Comparative Literature <i>Subha Dasgupta</i>	19
3	Comparative Literature: The Canadian Debate <i>Chandra Mohan</i>	27
4	Prospects of Chinese Comparative Literature <i>Yue Daiyun</i>	37
5	Comparative Literature: Towards a Non-Logocentric Paradigm <i>Gurbhagat Singh</i>	71
6	Comparative Literature: The Indian Context <i>Nirmala Jain</i>	79
✓ 7	Indian Comparative Literature and Its Pedagogical Implications <i>Devinder Mohan</i>	87
✓ 8	Why Comparative Indian Literature? <i>Sisir Kumar Das</i>	94

II INTERLITERARINESS

✓ 9	The Bonds and Bounds of a Literary Tradition <i>Lachman M. Khubchandani</i>	107
-----	--	-----

10	East–West Interliterariness: A Theoretical Sketch and a Historical Overview <i>Marián Gálik</i>	116
11	Intertextuality and Influence: Connections and Boundaries <i>Jaidev</i>	129
✓12	A Theoretical Framework for Influence Study in the Indo-Anglian Context <i>Bhalchandra Nemade</i>	141
13	The Divine Vapour and the Holy Rapes: Problems of Influence Studies in a Colonial Context <i>Swapan Majumdar</i>	148
III RECEPTION, THEMES, GENRES AND MOVEMENTS		
14	The Indian Cultural Factor in the Development of Chinese Fiction <i>Tan Chung</i>	159
✓15	The Hispanic Response to Tagore <i>Shyama Prasad Ganguly</i>	191
✓16	Towards a Concept of the Indian Novel: A Thematic Construct <i>Satendra R. Singh</i>	201
17	The Rise and Fall of <i>Chandragupta</i> : The Hindi Response to Dwijendralal Roy <i>Jayanti Chattopadhyay</i>	219
✓18	Literary Themes and Comparative Literature <i>Amiya Dev</i>	232
19	The Cognition of the Self: A Critical Review of Some Post-Independence Hindi and Urdu Short Stories <i>Sukrita Paul Kumar</i>	240

Contents

xiii

- 20 The Emergence of Modernity in Gujarati and Bengali Poetry
Bholabhai Patel 251

IV LITERARY THEORY, LITERARY HISTORY
AND TRANSLATION

- 21 The Relevance of Indian Literary Theory
Nishikant D. Mirajkar 263
- 22 *Rasa* in the Theatre and Its Validity
Indra Nath Choudhuri 285
- ✓ 23 Comparative Literary Theory: An Indian Perspective
K. Chellappan 295
- 24 A Reflection on the Translatability of Poetry and the Odyssey of a Song
Pabitra Kumar Roy 307
- ✓ 25 Literary History from Below
Amiya Dev 319
- Contributors 329



I Orientations

I

Muses in Isolation

SISIR KUMAR DAS

[I thank the Director of Indian Institute of Advanced Study for organizing a seminar on Comparative Literature which is being attended by the leading comparatists of India and by scholars interested in this discipline. This is certainly an important step towards the establishment of comparative literature, a discipline yet to receive the academic attention it deserves. Votaries of this discipline are still very few, and scepticism about its validity is still very wide in academic circles. However, there has been a sudden emergence of enthusiasm for the subject amongst our literary scholars and quite a few associations of comparative literature have come into existence in recent years. This, undoubtedly, is a welcome sign. But enthusiasm alone is not enough, unless it is tempered by academic rigour. Since there are only a few—a very few indeed—trained and committed comparatists in the country, comparative literature can easily degenerate into literary diletantism. It is necessary for the comparatists to define their area of operation as precisely as possible and to identify the basic concerns of their subject. The IIAS has given them an opportunity, and on behalf of the scholars present here I express my gratitude to the Institute and particularly to its philosopher director Professor Margaret Chatterjee.

Some of you will surely recall that this Institute, when Professor Niharranjan Ray was its director, did organize a seminar on Indian Literature in 1970. In terms of magnitude and range that seminar, devoted exclusively to the problems of Indian literary studies, was unprecedented. Among the many distinguished scholars and writers participating in that seminar were V. Raghavan, Sunitikumar Chatterji, Krishna Kripalani, Umashankar Joshi, A. K. Ramanujan, Nihar-

ranjan Ray and also the present director of the Institute. The theme of that seminar was apparently different from that of the present one, but at a deeper level similar, if not identical. I consider this seminar a continuation, more or less, of the exercise that began in 1970, which is to identify a new area in our literary studies.

I have been asked by the Director to initiate the seminar. Although I am neither a trained comparatist nor a specialist in any area of literary study, I have agreed to do so because I feel that comparative literature has a role to play in our academic life, a role in bridging the widening gap between the specialists of literature and the common reader. Mine are the observations of a common reader, which may appear superficial and impractical to the comparatists as well as to the scholars of single literatures. But before they start their deliberations it may not be totally useless for them to remember that if the study of literature is to be meaningful, they cannot ignore the voice of the common reader for whom literature is not fragmented by cultures and nationalities and not even languages.]

Eighty years ago Rabindranath Tagore spoke about comparative literature, a discipline still in search of its identity and academic recognition in the West, and vaguely known in India. The sincerity of Tagore's intention was not doubted by anyone, but in the absence of a concrete programme no one dared to introduce a course in comparative literature in Indian universities. Even half a century later, when a department of comparative literature was established for the first time in this country, many eyebrows were raised and many more openly questioned the legitimacy of its academic status. And today, thirty-one years after the institution of that department, although the number of universities in India has almost doubled, the number of the departments of comparative literature has not increased. However, this arithmetic does not tell us the whole truth about the changes in attitudes in our literature faculties. During the last fifteen years or so several associations have come up, and several departments of single literature have introduced courses that are known as Comparative Literature. These are indications of a new urge for

the reorganization of the existing literature faculties. It is the appropriate time, therefore, to think about the right place of comparative literature in our universities or in our educational system. It is not enough to decide whether there should be a department of comparative literature in a university, but it is more important to visualize its relationship with other literature departments. The most important issue before us is not the study of comparative literature for its own sake, but the study of literature itself, which has become stereotyped and subservient to the vested interests of academic critics obscuring its main purpose. The emphasis has shifted from appreciation of verbal beauty and sharpening of the power of perception to accumulation of information about literature, and the latest jargons of different schools of criticism are contending with one another, each loudly claiming its infallibility. Alfred Whitehead once wrote: 'The great English universities under whose direct authority school children are examined in plays of Shakespeare, to the certain destruction of their enjoyment, should be prosecuted for soul murder.'¹ Comparative literature will be pointless if the study of literature becomes stultified.

What we must examine now are the ways and means through which our teaching of literature can be reorganized and how comparative literature can be related to the whole exercise. The study of literature can be a meaningful as well as a legitimate academic exercise only when it is directed to our needs, private as well as social. So can the study of comparative literature. The importance of the study of national literatures in an academic curriculum needs no pleading, they being the manifestation of the national consciousness, depositaries of living experience of the people and a part of their total social activity. But what is the role of comparative literature in our literature faculties which are neatly subdivided according to affiliations with a particular language or a particular culture?

I shall try to argue the case for a new orientation in the teaching of literature which is relevant to the immediate social needs of the people as well as a reflection of our increasing awareness of the power and value of literatures of other cultures. The strength of my argument, if any, is derived from the insights that the comparative studies of literatures during the last few centuries have given to literary scholars. We know

the great social role that national literatures have played in different countries. We also know the possibilities of a subversive role of literature in either creating a sense of cultural superiority or perpetuating the blind forces of parochialism. The study of national literature is not enough for any nation. No national literature, howsoever powerful, is sufficient to counteract the innate provincialism of man; no national literature, no single literature, howsoever rich, is rich enough to present the highest literary achievements of man. The study of literature, then, has to be directed towards these two goals, one dependent on the other, namely, an enlargement of taste and an inheritance of the total achievement of literature. Educationists may still have their reservations about the desirability of departmental autonomy of comparative literature, but their refusal to reorganize the existing departments of literatures, the usefulness of which is questioned by the exponents of comparative literature, will ultimately make them irrelevant to our academic life.

Perhaps in no other age in human history has there been a keener awareness about the magnitude and variety of literature produced in different languages of the world. The ancient Greek, happy with his own literary achievement, did not have the slightest desire to know about the literatures of the 'barbarians'. The ancient Indian remained ignorant about the literatures in the neighbouring lands; and there is hardly any evidence that he showed any interest in the language in which Socrates spoke and Sophocles wrote, even when the generals of Alexander ruled a part of India for more than a century. China remained free from any foreign contamination for many centuries since the composition of *I-Ching* or the Book of Changes, and only in the third century after Christ did she become interested in another literary tradition, the Buddhist. The exclusiveness of the ancients began to break down gradually with changes in political and religious life; the impact of one literature on another became a part of the creative process, conscious or unconscious. With the revolution in the system of transport and communication, making the world a much smaller place, we realized the immensity of the world of literature. The translations of Asian classics into European languages and vice versa, whatever their quality, have created a

silent revolution the intensity of which is yet to be recognized. Seen in this context, Goethe's eloquent plea for world-literature seems not only appropriate but almost inevitable. Now almost at the close of the twentieth century, any serious reader of literature happens to be more knowledgeable about the literatures of various nations than his counterpart in the preceding centuries. The greatest singular effect of the availability of significant works of literatures of different nations in translation is a liberalization and an enlargement of taste.

The majority of the readers are, however, still indifferent to literatures of alien cultures. The library of an average European reader contains books written in his own language and translations from other European languages. Very rarely would he read a work in Tamil or Hindi, Korean or Arabic. In the Third World where the elite is obliged to learn a Western language—English, French, Spanish, Portuguese or Dutch—the reader may respond to the literature written in one of these languages, though the readership in East European or African or Asian literatures is extremely limited. Nevertheless, never before in history has there been so much demand for learning foreign languages—which eventually leads a few to the study of foreign literatures—and never before has there been such a phenomenal growth in volume of translated literature. And all this, along with the growth of bilingual situations, continuous migrations of people from one country to another and political propaganda through literature, has contributed to the growth of a new awareness of literatures of other countries. Films, too, have played a significant role in a different way. Not only does cinema exploit many narrative techniques extensively used in literature, but more often than not, adopt great works of literature as its most crucial component. Many people in the world today are familiar with *Pather Panchali*, though only a few have read the novel. I do not disagree that such familiarity is entirely different from familiarity with a literary text, but that cinema adds to one's awareness of the beauty and richness of literature cannot be denied. A Japanese who watches *The Blood of Throne* may not have a proper idea of the Shakespearean text which supplies its narrative content, but he will certainly realize that a literary tradition distinct from his own is not necessarily entirely alien to his artistic perception.

The fact is that through various means, in addition to translations and adaptations from different languages, literatures of the world tend to converge towards certain points. It is no longer impossible for the common reader to read and enjoy literatures of other countries, despite their many differences. His reading may be inadequate and his understanding superficial; but his interest in other literatures is in itself valuable, an indicator of the extension and liberalization of his taste and value system. But has this extension and liberalization of taste been adequately reflected in our academic programmes of literary study? The universities all over the world, with a few exceptions as usual, have been blissfully ignorant of or indifferent to the changing attitudes outside their precincts. Literary studies still involve national literatures, English in England, French in France, Arabic in Egypt and so on, and only in some cases a few other literatures in addition to the national literatures because of certain historical reasons. Of course, certain changes have been made in the teaching of literature which recognize the relations existing between literature and the other arts, namely, music and painting. Literary criticism had borrowed concepts and terms from painting and music and architecture in the past which are now a part of critical terminology. Since the publication of Eisenstein's seminal work on literature and the film, the concepts relating to cinematic narration have also been accepted by many discerning literary critics. The structuralists have used concepts of linguistics almost indiscriminately, and several schools of criticism with moorings in existentialism or phenomenology are trying to make literary study almost a branch of philosophy. While literary criticism is so keen to learn from all other disciplines including the other arts, it remains an enigma why there is so much reluctance and apprehension in interactions between one literature and another. Our world of literary study in the universities remains as narrow as it was a century ago, in spite of the fact that our knowledge of the literatures of the world has been rapidly expanding. Should we not, then, reorganize our literature departments and modernize them to cope with the changing aspirations of people and to relate them to the total literary activity of the human race? I think comparative literature,

which is not different from the study of single literatures so far as the critical methodology is concerned, but differs only in matter and attitude, can play a vital role in the reorganization of our literature faculties and in the teaching of literature.

There is hardly any university in India without at least three major departments of literature, one dealing with a classical literature, Sanskrit or Arabic or Persian, one with English, and one with a modern Indian literature. The department of classical literature in most of the Indian universities is actually a department of Sanskrit, though some universities have departments of Arabic and Persian, which once formed an integral unit of academic curriculum in India for a long period, like that of Greek and Latin in Europe since the renaissance. In many universities now, separate departments of Arabic and Persian have been created. Some of the universities in the country, therefore, have three departments of classical languages and literatures, Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian. In addition to Sanskrit, some universities have a full-fledged department of Pali as well.

Only a few European languages other than English, notably French, German and Russian, are taught in a number of universities, but barring a few, the departments of European languages or, for that matter, of any foreign language do not go beyond the routine work of language teaching. The only European literature—to be precise, the only foreign literature—that has taken a firm root in India is English. There is not a single university in the country without a department of English literature, nor is there a department of English literature which fails to attract a reasonable number of students.

Each Indian university has at least one department of a modern Indian literature, invariably the language of the region where the university is located. Some of them have a department of Hindi in addition to that of the language of the region, and in some cases a department also of another language whose speakers form a sizeable community in that area.

The place of literature in our academic institutions is determined partly by our religious and political past, and partly by our multilingual social fabric, as also by the economic prospects promised by these literatures. The situation is more or less universal and cannot claim any uniqueness. But what

is unique, perhaps, is the relative isolation in which these literature faculties function. Several literatures are taught and studied in the same university without any interrelation. Our classical departments, being complacent with the autonomy of their world, have virtually kept themselves imprisoned within the glory of antiquity, completely cut off from the living experience. Not only are literatures written in dead languages their province of enquiry, distancing them from departments dealing with living speech, but they almost refuse to make these ancient literatures a part of the experience of modern man. For instance, their faith in the infallibility of ancient criticism is so strong that the use of the modern critical apparatus to evaluate an ancient literature is often considered sacrilegious. In order to keep the ancient literature alive, one is obliged to renew its contact with the modern. The Western scholar of Greek literature has not only realized the importance of translating the ancient works again and again into modern languages, but has made the modern languages the exclusive medium of the critical analysis of the ancient texts. His continuous search for the relevance of the ancient to the modern, not to speak of his success in discovering the modernity of the ancient, is a salutary academic exercise of great social value. We do not have counterparts of Murray and Kitto, Wilamowitz and Jaeger. This is neither to belittle the achievements of our classical scholars nor to suggest that a scholar should abandon his primary concerns to meet the demands of a particular time. But unless a scholar also succeeds in establishing the relevance of his discipline to his contemporary reality, he fails to serve the cause of scholarship. I am aware that there are areas of knowledge where value cannot be measured in terms of immediate utility alone. But the legitimacy of the study of literature as an academic discipline is derived from its power to relate to the needs of life. If our classical literary study fails to stem the widening gap between the ancient and the modern, which is to some extent inevitable, then it also fails to serve the needs of the discipline itself. One of the ways of achieving that is to relate it to the studies of modern literatures, so that its value can be judged not within its own confines and by canons fixed long ago, but within a larger literary universe and by canons deriving out of a more diverse literary experience.

The English literary studies in India also suffer from a different kind of exclusiveness that has roots in our colonial past. English literature was introduced to our academic institutions by our political masters and we responded to it passionately. The passion for it was not entirely because of its literary power which was never questioned, even during the period when we were in the grip of the strongest racial bitterness, but because it was the language of power. It was, and to a great extent still is, possible for an Indian student of English literature to be totally ignorant of any Indian literature without any qualms. The study of English literature had acquired a special prestige in the past because of its close association with the British power and because it served the social aspirations of an elite seeking the patronage of that power. There has been a change in the political situation in the country since then, but the elite in India still seeks its respectability in terms of its Western links. English literature provides that link and a section of the elite is anxious to preserve its exclusiveness for that very reason. The only major change in our academic study of English literature in recent years is an extension of our interest to American literature. That the English studies in India should seek their respectability in close links with the Anglo-American literary world may be defended on academic grounds. But their academic relevance must not depend only on the needs of an elite unconcerned with the literary heritage of this country.

Lest I be misunderstood, I should like to emphasize that I am not advocating for a ban on the study of English literature on the plea that it is a foreign literature or that it is the literature of the people who once ruled us. What I am asking for is the rationale of English literary studies in India. First of all, we must make a distinction between the teaching of the English language and the teaching of English literature. The rationale behind the teaching of the English language is clear and strong. It is a world language and it is also one of the most powerful languages of the world. It will be an act of imbecility not to strengthen the teaching of the English language in India. The methods of teaching that language and the duration of that teaching are matters I leave to our language experts. I will earnestly plead for its permanent retention in our educational system. But this I cannot say about the teaching of English

literature. It is to be studied not because we want to continue it as a part of our academic tradition imposed upon us by a foreign government, but because of its intrinsic greatness as literature. But that greatness will be of little value if English studies remain exclusive, not related to the literary life of the country, and turn into an instrument of alienation. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o in an essay entitled 'On the Abolition of the English Department' wrote, 'We see no reason why English literature should have priority over and above other European literatures where we are concerned. The Russian novel of the nineteenth century should and must be taught. Selections from American, German, and other literatures should also be introduced. In other words English writings will be taught in their European context and for their relevance to the East African perspective.'² If the words 'East African' are replaced by 'Indian', the spirit of the argument, I hope, still remains intact.

A few departments of English in our country are of late taking an interest in the body of English writings by Indians, generally known as Indian English literature. By incorporating this literature into the syllabus of English, these departments have inadvertently included an Indian literature into the exclusive preserve of Anglo-American literature. The departments of English, however, cannot go beyond that and certainly think it beneath their dignity to include Indian literatures written and produced in Indian languages even when they are superior to Indian English literature. The guardians of English literature in India would dismiss such a proposition as preposterous, pointing out that nothing that is not written in English can qualify for the academic attention of an English department. Or, in other words, literature departments are invariably language-bound. One can point out that by accepting Indian English literature, the departments of English have acknowledged that departments of English literature are no longer departments of *English* literature, but departments of literature written in English, which include American literature, Australian literature, African English literature as well as Indian English literature. Their linguistic unity is only a unity of medium and that can hardly wipe away their differences in thought and perception. Thus it is the pressure of time that has turned our departments of English to looking beyond

English literature and to recognizing the necessity of studying American literature or Commonwealth literature. They have changed their character from being departments of a single literature to departments of multiple literatures, though they desperately try to retain their monolingual character. One might ask sharply: should not the monolingual character of a literature department be preserved assiduously? Should a department of English include French and German, or Sanskrit and Hindi? Or, if I am arguing for such a lunatic proposition, why do I not straightaway plead for the abolition of all single literature departments? But I am not talking about the abolition of any existing departments, though I do not consider such a proposal either absurd or undesirable. What I am trying to point out is that the departments of English in many universities in India today have willy-nilly been converted into departments of multiple literatures. In that case, what prevents them from including French or German, Sanskrit or Hindi, their monolingual character being still retained, through the use of translated texts of these literatures? I will come back to this question, but before that let me also point out the kind of exclusiveness from which the departments of modern Indian literatures suffer.

Most modern Indian literatures were included in the university curriculum during the stormy days of our national movement. Mother tongues finding a place of honour in the halls of the stepmother was seen as an evidence of our successful patriotic effort. Patriotism served a useful purpose in the beginning, in building an edifice of literary scholarship: it gave us self-respect and pride necessary for the growth of a new discipline. But soon patriotism degenerated into chauvinism—linguistic identities became more pronounced than other dimensions of our identities and literary study preferred a vicious vernacular obscurantism to an enlightened cosmopolitanism. Critical rigour and breadth became the first casualties in the wake of linguistic patriotism, and the departments of modern Indian literatures became its worst victims. On top of that, the sneering attitude of the scholars of English literature towards Indian literatures, which is a lingering vestige of Macaulayean arrogance, makes the scholars of modern Indian literatures unnecessarily defensive to the extent of self-abase-

ment. The state of literary studies in India, then, is a state of exclusiveness of varying degrees. Exclusiveness of any kind, whether derived from a blind adherence to the past or from a borrowed pride of association with a supposedly superior Western culture or from a self-defeating linguistic patriotism, must be rejected. The only happy sign is that all the major departments of literature in India are subjected to pressure from both within and without for a change in outlook. Changes will come despite all resistance, and changes can be resisted only at the cost of being reduced to irrelevance. And this is the time when we need comparative literature most to help us reorganize and restructure our literature faculties.

The aims and objectives of the teaching of literature are different from those of the teaching of other arts, music and painting and dance and sculpture. A department of music, for example, produces not only musicologists but musicians as well. A school of painting aims at producing not only art historians or art critics, but painters too. A department of literature, on the contrary, does not aspire for training poets or novelists. The legitimacy of the teaching of literature, as opposed to the teaching of sciences and other arts, comes from its power to make one aware of the experience of living. Literature does not talk about truths that can be verified; it is a record of man's emotional response to nature and God and his fellow men; an evidence of his power of imagination and invention, and of his expression. Plato declared in his *Laws* (II, 659) that 'education is the drawing and guiding of children to that principle which has been pronounced correct by law and been confirmed as truly right by the experience of the best and oldest man.' He argued that poetry could form a part of education when it conformed to the law. Plato would not allow poets to challenge the law and would ask the legislators to prevail upon them if they did. Literature being an expression of the creative spirit can hardly be subservient to a fixed law, and has always expressed man's intense desire to know, to explore and to question. If literature has a place in education, it is primarily because we still think of a liberal education whose object is to liberate men from ignorance and prejudice and to help them retain their freedom through realization of their capacities as human beings. Literature can do many

things, it can instil patriotism and inspire man to heroic deeds, it can be used as an instrument of social change and of social integration; but the most important thing that it does is the liberalization of the mind. The teaching of literature, therefore, should be as broadbased and as comprehensive as possible. The departmental system, or, to use the phrase of E. R. Curtius, 'the pigeonholes of our universities', has made the study of literature, under the false pretence of safeguarding against superficiality, an exercise in narrow and stifling specialization. 'We have modernized the railroads', wrote Curtius in 1948, 'but not the system of transmitting tradition.'³ It will indeed be foolish to deny the value of specialization in any field including literary study, but it will be equally foolish to sing the virtues of isolationism in the realm of knowledge and arts.

Many years ago I saw a book called *Beacon Lights of Literature* published in 1953, edited by three American teachers of English, to be used in American high schools. This book was designed in a way that the editors thought 'would appeal to many of the moods, interests and situations of the widely diversified students of the American high schools'. Before the preparation of this work the editors made an extensive survey, and the materials selected covered the fields of both American and English literature and tried 'to give an increased appreciation for the culture other than our own'. In this book I found Ikhnaton's Hymn to the Sun beside a poem of Sappho, a poem of Po Chu-I beside two poems from *Gitanjali*; placed side by side were Homer and Virgil, Goethe and St John Perse and Jean de la Fontaine, a poem from old Japanese and one by Sarojini Naidu. The editors had a regulating principle in their selection of materials—'our American principles as a free people, as a people whose desire is to further the brotherhood of free people the world over'. The samples of twenty-seven various national literatures included in this volume were selected to suit the 'theme of American ideals and freedom' and the need of 'greater international understanding among all peoples who desire freedom'. One may or may not agree with these particular principles on the plea that they are American. The Indians can have their own ideals and their own priorities and the teaching of literature can be directed at those ideals and priorities. That such a selection presents various literary forms and types that

enrich one's literary experience cannot be denied. A student not familiar with rubaiyats or the haiku would never know the compactness that poetry can achieve; as one not acquainted with the *Agamemnon* or the *Oedipus Tyrannus* will never know the possibilities of the tragic form. Some universities in India include in their English course Greek tragedies as well as plays from continental literatures in translation. This is a tacit acknowledgement of the fact that a course in tragedy has to stretch beyond English literature and that such a course can be taught with the aid of translation. Why can't a student of Sanskrit literature read the Homeric epics in translation which will certainly provide him not only a new breadth of vision but an entry into a different world of epics? Why can't a student of Hindi literature read the Alwars and the Nayanmars and the Virasaivas and the Christian mystics such as San Juan de la Cruz along with Kabir, which will allow him to know mystic poetry in its fullness and to ascertain the uniqueness of the Hindi poet? What I am proposing is the introduction of courses in literature right from the high school stage which would include literatures of other countries along with the national literature. We do not want comparative literature as a prestigious alternative to English literature. We want comparative literature, which is basically a study of literatures in relation to one another, as an alternative to all kinds of exclusiveness to which the existing literature departments are a victim. We cannot have the kind of comparative literature we need until there is a radical change in our attitude. We have to make a choice between a total confinement within one literature and consequently within one culture, and a greater measure of freedom within many literatures representing many cultures. If we choose the former, comparative literature has no place in our literature faculties. If we choose the latter, we will also choose comparative literature, even if we do not use that nomenclature. 'That which we call a rose / By any other name would smell as sweet.'

I must now return to the question of language-literature relationship, because the purists point out the weakness of teaching literature without a sound knowledge of the language in which a literature is embedded. I am not disputing the integral relationship between a language and a literature and

I admit the incompleteness in understanding a literature without a sound knowledge of the language. That is the main reason why the teaching of literature should focus on literatures written in languages which the student has learnt at his mother's knee, languages through which he has perceived the phenomenal world, through which he is capable of expressing his deepest feelings. For an Indian student the teaching of literature has to be that of an Indian literature. But the study of literature cannot make one literature its only corpus. It has to extend. Since it is beyond the capacity of most individuals to acquire competence in several languages, literary study tends to be confined to a very limited corpus. But the realization of the vastness of the corpus on the one hand and the limited capacity of man in learning the languages of the world on the other, are bound to create a sense of inadequacy. In such a situation a compromise has to be found, and if translation promises that compromise, that should not be ignored. What I am suggesting is that the teaching of literature must have a hard core, which is the mother-tongue literature or national literature, but it must accommodate the literatures of other cultures, a part of which can be read in the languages they are written in, depending upon the student's capability, and a part in translation. This three-tier division of the corpus will take care of the shortcomings of the existing literary study confined to a one-language, one-culture, one-nation framework. This will also refute the charges against comparative literature as a corrupter of the purity of literary study and a patron of literary promiscuity. This will make our departments of literature firmly rooted in one language and one culture, and at the same time respond to all that is great and noble in other literatures. Must we preserve our existing practice of teaching literature in complete linguistic isolation and total indifference to the literatures of other nations, or should we try to expand the scope of literary study by relating other literatures to our own, and if necessary to change the departmental structure, if not dismantle it? The future of comparative literature in India will depend upon the answer we give to this question.

NOTES

1. Alfred N. Whitehead, *The Aims of Education and Other Essays* (New York: Mentor Books, 1951), pp. 66–7.
2. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, *Homecoming: Essays on African and Caribbean Literature, Culture and Politics* (New York: Lawrence Hill and Company, 1973), p. 148.
3. Ernst R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Pantheon Books, 1953), p. 16.

The French School of Comparative Literature

SUBHA DASGUPTA

Concerned with the dialectic of history and literary expression and constantly interacting with the ever-changing social, political, economic and intellectual images of the world, comparative literature has a character that is fluid, dynamic, non-congealed. It is this that makes it imperative to stand back at times and make a survey of a particular field of comparative literature. But there is a deeper necessity to come to an understanding of the transversal processes of reading, which is also coming to terms with comparative literature in totally different cultural areas, to chart out a way which would help one to realize the plurality of literature and the plurality of the extra-literary wholes into which literature inscribes itself.

Speaking about the French School of Comparative Literature, it is well to remind oneself of what Brunel, Pichois and Rousseau in *Qu'est-ce que la littérature comparée* have to say about the term 'French School'. The word 'French' in the terminology, they say, does not designate a nationality nor the language a particular school uses for its discourse, but a general orientation given to the subject. It is within parentheses that they are in favour of retaining the word, bringing to it the same value as the history of art attributes to 'school'. The French school, according to them, established the foundations of solid research, the necessity, before any interpretation, of an impeccable and minute chronology 'la principale difficulté n'étant pas d'établir des dates, mais de les choisir'¹ (the principal problem being not to establish dates, but to choose them)—the obligation of a supranational erudition backed by good linguistic knowledge, the reassembling of a multitude of

oft-neglected but connected facts pertaining to civilization. What Brunel, Pichois and Rousseau are doing perhaps is looking at the implications involved in the study of fortune, success, influence, source, opinion, image, for which the French school has been especially noted, from a point of view quite different from that expressed by René Wellek in 'The Crisis of Comparative Literature'.² The cause-and-effect positivist oriented study of 'influences' explained in its many nuances by one of the very early French comparatists, Paul Van Tieghem, in *La Littérature Comparée* (1931),³ was widely disseminated. The potentialities of the term were exploited even at that age by different nations in that they concentrated on those aspects of influence study which seemed pertinent to their cases. In Hungary, for instance, largely because of the work of Lajos Katona, the emphasis was on the study of sources and later on a search for originality. Both predilections could be traced to the demands of the establishment of a national character in literature, for it was only at the beginning of the nineteenth century that literary life in Hungary had started taking the form of an establishment with all its institutions—editors, journals, literary centres.

To return to the French school, the word 'influence' has gradually given way to the word 'reception'—the emphasis turning from the emitter to the receptor. This is true of all the different schools of comparative literature, mainly due to the Constance School and the work of Jauss and Iser—chiefly Robert Jauss's collection of essays *Literaturgeschichte als Provokation* (1970).⁴ One does find the word, but most often incidentally, in the writings of early comparatists—with the term really settling down in comparatist terminology after the Ninth Congress of ICLA, where a large section was devoted to 'Literary Communication and Reception'. However, many of the early practitioners including Van Tieghem, without using the word 'reception', suggest working along similar lines, taking cognizance of the process of communication. One is here especially reminded of Fernand Baldensperger and his work *Goethe en France*,⁵ emphasizing the role of the emitter, his *Les Orientations étrangères chez Honoré de Balzac*,⁶ emphasizing the role of the receptor and *Les Mouvements des idées dans l'émigration française*,⁷ emphasizing the role filled by intermediaries, in this

case by refugees. A large terminology, in fact, in recent years has charted out the direction of 'influence' studies in France; and as grouped by Yves Chevrel in the section on influence studies in *La Recherche en littérature générale et comparée en France: Aspects et problèmes*, they are: on the neutral level 'presence of X' and 'knowledge of X'; on the level of the emitter 'influence', 'fortune', 'reputation', 'diffusion', 'radiation'; on the level of the receptor 'reaction', 'critique', 'opinion', 'reading', 'orientation'. A third category deals with the notion of 'reproduction'—'face', 'reflection', 'mirror', 'image', 'resonance', 'echo' and perhaps 'mutation'.⁸ The list, he declares, is not exhaustive, but is an index to the rich explorations made in the area. Several notions from the Constance School referred to earlier, such as the aesthetic code, the changing of the horizon and the function of communication, form a part of many studies on reception—a good example is the thesis of Yves Chevrel, 'La Nouvelle et le roman naturalistes français en Allemagne'.⁹ Reception studies also often take into account studies of the transformation of the text (translation and adaptation) and the often interiorized aesthetic codes of a literary system at a particular moment unconsciously linked with the dominant ideology. An underlying hypothesis in many of the studies is that each literary system has its own course of evolution and the introduction of a foreign element necessarily disturbs the system. In this connection the role of the media in literary exchanges is also sometimes studied. The geographical space covered by reception studies, however, is not large. France is often studied as the receptor, while the next major group of works concentrates on England, the United States, Germany and Russia.

As opposed to reception studies, French comparatists have always shown a reticence towards thematic studies largely because of the matter-dominated nature of such works. The word 'thematology', of course, instead of *Stoffgeschichte*, has made the term more form or method oriented. Thematology has received a new impetus from the psychoanalytic as well as the stylistic schools of criticism, from Bakhtin and his theory of intertextuality, his thematico-formal study of the 'carnavalesque' and from the writings of Michel Riffaterre. The latter has shown the strong architectural composition of systems where a single lexical or syntactic component can give an

insight into the total system. Each 'theme' therefore can be studied as inscribed in a network of multiple signifying systems, as well as the place where the systems intercross. And yet the study would be incomplete, in fact impossible, if the reader's response, which is always variable, is not given due importance. According to the study made in *La Recherche en littérature générale et comparée en France: Aspects et problèmes*, the school of 'Annales' has also made a contribution to thematology in comparative literature studies. Countering the standpoint of the formalist critics, this school made several in-depth analyses of the nature of relations between certain social phenomena and cultural expressions. There were other historians as well who, inspired by structural anthropology, made systematic studies of key concepts also present in literature. The same study suggests four large areas of thematology: (a) researches on the imaginary (Pierre Citti, 'Un Aspect de l'imagination française dans le roman de 1890 à 1914',¹⁰ Max Milner, *La Fantasmagorie*¹¹); (b) studies centred on one or other of the great 'universal' thematics (Léon Riegel, *Guerre et Littérature*¹²); (c) studies in typology (Jacques Dugast, 'La Représentation de l'aristocratie dans les romans français et autrichiens 1914-1940'¹³); (d) work centred around key concepts (Philippe Chardin, *Le Roman de la conscience malheureuse*¹⁴). The last work cited is exemplary of the multidimensional study in thematology. Chardin studies the intellectual in the postwar era in twelve novels with *A la recherche des temps perdu*, *The Magic Mountain*, *L'Homme sans qualité* and *La Conscience de Zéno* as the principal texts. In his study he deals with problems faced by the intellectual on different levels of history inasmuch as he is part of an age not very far, yet far enough; on that of sociology, in that he is 'neither master, nor slave'; on the level of politics, that of citizenship; on that of religion, in the existence of mysticism without God; on that of psychology, of dissatisfied subjectivism and of the tragic split personality; of overweening verbosity, madness and suicide which hover over the 'Malheureuse Conscience'.

Comparative literature, however, has not yet produced a work on thematology of as important a stature as Foucault's *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*¹⁵ or of Jean Delumeau's study on fear in the West, *La Peur en Occident XIVème-XVIIème siècle: Une Cité assiégée*.¹⁶ In comparison with thematic studies

in the United States, France also shows a relative paucity of substantial work. But this is not the case with studies in myths, an analogous area of study often separated in France in terms of 'common-noun / proper-noun distinction'. They are taken up in the majority of cases as chiefly a literary phenomenon—their presence evaluated in the particular literary form—and are studied as revealing hidden symbolic and dramatic structures corresponding to the changing patterns of society.

The study of images—distinguished often as *imagology*—occupies a considerable area in French comparative literature studies. It consists in a study of the images of different cultural areas as manifested in literature. Again, these areas are Great Britain, the United States, Germany and Russia—to a certain extent Italy as well. As Daniel-Henri Pageaux writes in his thesis 'L'Espagne devant la conscience française au XVIIème siècle':¹⁷ 'Ainsi l' Histoire des idées, telle que l' entend la littérature comparée, a été complétée par une histoire des mentalités, des sensibilités, vue et traitée selon les moyens dont dispose un littéraire' (The history of ideas, as understood by comparative literature, is completed by a study of mentalities, sensibilities, seen and treated according to the means given by literature). In another article entitled 'Une perspective d'études en littérature comparée: l'imagerie culturelle',¹⁸ he speaks of the image as obliging the researcher to re-examine his system of values, to reflect on the other. He also proposes a methodology for the study of images in his article, which is based mainly on work done in semiotics by Umberto Eco.

Comparative literature activities in France today are carried on in a number of different centres concentrating on different problems of the subject. There are a few with specialization in particular linguistic fields—Spanish and Portuguese and a Slavic centre in Paris III, a Germanic one at Strasbourg II; others organized around a genre—the novel and the novelistic at the University of Picardy, the popular novel at Nancy II; still others centred around a problem such as the one at Tours on Literature and Nation and at Limoges on the emergence of new literatures, or of a method applied to a period such as the Centre of Research on the History of Comparative Literature. More ambitious than any of the above centres is that of Pierre Brunel in Paris IV, which tries to be inter-

university and pluridisciplinary, including comparatists, professors of French literature, specialists in ancient and modern languages, philosophers and historians. Broadly, there are four sections at his centre—(1) international literary relations, (2) modes of expression, (3) typology and semiotic comparisons, and (4) methods.¹⁹ The above survey gives a picture of the wide range covered by comparative literature, an enlargement which might be traced back to the impetus given by Etiemble's *Comparaison n'est pas raison: La Crise de la littérature comparée*.²⁰ A look at the entries in the *Revue de Littérature Comparée* also reinstates the picture. On the geographical sphere this expansion is marked by the journal's inclusion of at least one article from or on the Third World in each issue from the seventies, and several issues devoted to themes like 'autonomy of minority cultures', 'literature and nation' which gives a large space to the Orient, Czech structuralism and so forth. On other levels, the expansion is marked by numbers devoted to the *nouveau roman* or to the philosopher Bachelard and the implications of his philosophy in the realm of literary criticism.

The picture that emerges of the French School of Comparative Literature is quite similar to that of the American School in its groupings, its diversity and its liberalization. Yet minor details do emerge from a close survey of both the scenes—the comparative lack in France of studies in the domain of Literature and the Other Arts, for instance—which suggest the large differences in approach of the two schools. The American school brings a wide range and a broad grasp of things, although its diversity tends sometimes to lead to an anarchic situation, whereas the French school, at the cost of appearing limited and restrictive, emphasizes details and on rigorous methodology, and tries to look at literary phenomena from very close angles. Brunel, Pichois and Rousseau point out the two large general points of view working behind the American school—one, that the nation is open to the world, is desirous to accord to different cultures a sympathetic ear, but at the same time is conscious of its Western tradition. Secondly, that the Americans take stock of a vast panorama, from antiquity to the present moment and that they jealously want to preserve aesthetic and human values of literature as exultant spiritual conquests and plunge into the most eclectic methods and inter-

pretations without any fear of going wrong.²¹ The French school, on the contrary, tries to question all assumptions, to go forward with caution and to emphasize technique, even if not always in the modern sense. There are, of course, exceptions in the French school, as there would be in the American school—the phenomenal works of Paul Hazard in France, for instance, combine imaginative daring with vast erudition, the ideal blend for a comparative study. In recent years no daring work is seen in France, although the Escarpit directed *Dictionnaire international des termes littéraires* and the Jacques Voisine directed *La Prose dans les littératures de langues européennes au 'Teurnant' (1760-1820) du Siècle des Lumières* would be epoch-making in the history of comparative literature in their own right. In this context another trend in the French school comes to mind. In the area of literary history, as it appears in comparative literature, several studies concentrate on a particular author, and through a consideration of his work bring an exhaustive as well as a synthesizing approach to an epoch. A representative work is Victor Hell's *Friedrich von Schiller: Théories esthétiques et structures dramatiques*,²² where he studies the aesthetics of Schiller in the context of contemporary European aesthetics and then approaches the history of the turning-point of the Enlightenment, showing the continuities and the changes effected during that critical period.

It is important to emphasize at the beginning of this concluding paragraph that comparative literature survived in France as comparative and general literature—although the distinction between the two has not been taken very far since the time of Van Tieghem, the only conclusion arrived at being that reception studies should be kept out of the domains of general literature. Whatever the name, the work produced under the auspices of the French school in general, one might say, centres on the problematics of methodology, and in so doing reveals the complexities and the richness of the sphere of comparative literature studies. The text is at the centre of research, but not totally in a formalist-structuralist manner. In whichever area the comparatist of the French school might be working—that is, in the best works of the school, be it a study of opinion or of imagery, of rewriting the history of genres, of tentatively stepping out into the realm of poetics—

he is doing so from the triple point of view of intertextuality, context and history. Such a method is bound to evolve towards a decentralization, and perhaps towards a polysystem.

NOTES

1. P. Brunel, Cl. Pichois, A.-M. Rousseau, *Qu'est-ce que la littérature comparée* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1983), p. 60.
2. In *Comparative Literature: Proceedings of the Second Congress of the ICLA* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 1959), vol. I, pp. 149-59.
3. Paul Van Tieghem, *La Littérature Comparée* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1951), p. 118.
4. Robert Jauss, *Literaturgeschichte als Provokation* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970).
5. Fernand Baldensperger, *Goethe en France* (Paris: Hachette, 1904).
6. Baldensperger, *Les Orientations étrangères chez Honoré de Balzac* (Paris: Champion, 1927).
7. Baldensperger, *Le Mouvement des idées dans l'émigration française* (Paris: Plon, 1925).
8. Yves Chevrel, 'De l'Influence à la réception critique', in *La Recherche en littérature générale et comparée en France: Aspects et problèmes* (Paris: SFLGC, 1983), p. 92.
9. Chevrel, 'La Nouvelle et le roman naturalistes français en Allemagne' (Sorbonne: Thèse d'Etat, 1979).
10. Pierre Citti, 'Un Aspect de l'imagination française dans le roman de 1890 à 1914' (Sorbonne: Thèse d'Etat, 1982).
11. Max Milner, *La Fantasmagorie* (Paris: P.U.F., 1982).
12. Léon Riegel, *Guerre et littérature* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1978).
13. Jacques Dugast, 'La Représentation de l'aristocratie dans les romans français et autrichiens, 1914-1940' (Sorbonne: Thèse d'Etat).
14. Philippe Chardin, *Le Roman de la conscience malheureuse* (Paris: Droz, 1983).
15. Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* (Paris: Plon, 1961).
16. Jean Delumeau, *La Peur en Occident XIV^{ème}-XVII^{ème} siècle: Une Cité assiégée* (Paris: Fayard, 1978).
17. Daniel-Henri Pageaux, 'L'Espagne devant la conscience française au XVII^{ème} siècle' (Sorbonne: Thèse, 1975).
18. In *Synthesis*, VII (1981), pp. 169-85.
19. The information is taken from Brunel, Pichois and Rousseau, op. cit., p. 27.
20. René Etiemble, *Comparaison n'est pas raison: La Crise de la littérature comparée* (Paris: Gallimard, 1963).
21. See Brunel, Pichois and Rousseau, p. 28.
22. Victor Hell, *Friedrich von Schiller: Théories esthétiques et structures dramatiques* (Paris: Aubier, 1974).

Comparative Literature: The Canadian Debate

CHANDRA MOHAN

Canada has two main literatures written in two languages, English and French, which, in the words of M. V. Dimić, belong to the 'so-called founding nations, the French and the English, sharing, since the middle of the eighteenth century, the same geographic space, both participating in a general Western Judaeo-Christian / Greek-Latin heritage, and both with vital but diverse European roots and a typically colonial origin.'¹ In addition to these literatures certain other writings are also available in Canada in the tongues of more recent immigrants such as Ukranian, German, Norwegian, Icelandic, Yiddish and South Asians. The Canadian debate on comparative literature is a reflection of this multilingual situation which is essentially different from that in Belgium or India.

The comparative literature programmes were introduced to Canadian universities rather late, and the lateness is often ascribed to the conservative mood of the land and to the influence of British universities.² The University of Alberta, Edmonton, was the first and till now the only university to have a full-fledged department. The heading 'Comparative Literature' appeared for the first time in its academic calendar for the year 1961-62 with courses like Mediaeval Literature, Naturalism, and Franco-German Literary Relations. Professor Dimić informs us that a graduate master's programme was sponsored in 1964 and a doctoral one in 1965 by foreign language departments, English and Classics. The first course on the theory of literature was given in 1965 and others were added in 1966 (for example, Literary Stylistics and Poetics: The

Nature and Forms of Poetry). In 1969, a department was established—it had the full range of postgraduate activities. Within a year an undergraduate programme was added leading to B.A. Honours. Gradually basic courses in world literature and literary theory were offered as general options. In most universities, comparative literature came as an expansion of graduate programmes, sharing staff and facilities with English or French departments. For instance, in 1964, the Department of English at the Université de Sherbrooke, in co-operation with the Department of French Studies, offered a programme leading to the degree of Master of Arts in Comparative Canadian Studies.³

By now Canada has emerged as a nation of immigrants from various countries, and as such the scholarship attributed to the growth of comparative literature in the country has also been subjected to certain varying attitudes of the Canadian scholars 'who have been trained in France, the United States, Central and Eastern Europe and very recently in Canada'.⁴ As a result of this conglomeration the older and the middle generations of scholars have been acquainted with positivist philosophical studies, with the history of ideas, and phenomenological scholarship, with formalism, new criticism, hermeneutics and *Werkanalyse* (*Kunst der Interpretation*), as also with Marxist, sociological and psychological (psychoanalytical) perspectives, not forgetting the archetypal or myth criticism (mainly the Northrop Frye type).⁵ *The Canadian Encyclopaedia* (1985) mentions the names of eminent Canadian comparatists such as Northrop Frye, Eugene Joliat, Victor Graham, Paul Zumthor, D. M. Hayne, D. G. Jones, Ronald Sutherland, Philip Stratford, M. V. Dimić, E. D. Blodgett and the Quebec critic Clément Moisan, who have significantly rendered not only personal and institutional support to the development of comparative literature as a discipline, but also contributed a series of excellent books and monographs on the subject. It may also be mentioned that the *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*, the journal founded by the Canadian Comparative Literature Association and published by the Department of Comparative Literature, the University of Alberta, occupies an important place in the annals of comparative literature journals.

Quite akin to the 'late' growth of comparative literature in

Canada, comparative Canadian literature too, involving the study of the two main literatures of Canada, English and French, has been of a 'recent' origin, and the significant work in the area was made available not earlier than the late sixties. The main reason for the slow development of a comparative study of the Canadian literatures is the distinct linguistic situation in Canada, not similar to that in the countries (such as India or Belgium) conforming to the policies of bilingualism and multilingualism. Even the historians and political scientists find it quite difficult to rationalize the dilemma arising out of the policy of bilingualism and the official Language Act of Canada. John H. Redekop bluntly remarks that 'the policy of bilingualism has basically failed', and the reasons for the failure are its flawed implementation and linguistic antagonism inherent in the country, resulting in more disunity than unity. Of the ten provinces, he points out, only New Brunswick is officially bilingual, and even there, there is a great measure of resentment. Quebec, despite some judicial modification of the French Language Charter of 1977, is officially unilingual, and there is little possibility of its changing its language policy. Similarly Ontario, to use the words of Redekop, 'for electoral reasons' will not accept 'the official bilingualism any more than Quebec will'.⁶

The apprehensions entailed in such a linguistic situation, fully exploited by the political groups, are also shared by the literary critics and comparatists, who find it difficult to visualize the meeting points of the two literatures. Some eminent scholars of Canadian comparative literature have highlighted the cultural duality of the country. Commenting on 'Canada's Two Literatures', Philip Stratford, for instance, writes: 'It is necessary to add that no Quebec writer of any stature has even been conspicuously influenced by an English-Canadian or vice versa.'⁷ An often suggested image to represent the paradoxical duality of the two cultures is that of the double staircase 'which spiral around each other without ever coming into direct contact'.⁸ A. J. M. Smith, instead of pointing out interaction between the two literatures, suggests 'typological parallelisms'. In the preface to his anthology *The Oxford Book of Canadian Verse* (1960) he remarks: 'From earliest times Canadian poets, both French and English, have held, con-

sciously or unconsciously, to one of two distinct and sometimes divergent aims. One group has made an effort to express whatever is unique or local in Canadian life, while the other has concentrated on what it has in common with life everywhere.⁹

A school of thought represented by contemporary comparatists such as Philip Stratford, A. J. M. Smith and E. D. Blodgett has invariably expressed its helplessness in finding a satisfactory model for comparison of the two literatures. In a closely argued essay 'The Canadian Literature as a Literary Problem' (1985), E. D. Blodgett points out, almost on the line of Philip Stratford, the impractical aspects of comparative Canadian literature. 'Canada is not a unified country in either a political or a cultural sense', he writes, 'and therefore, to seek some common thread in its literatures is a vain enterprise, indeed.'¹⁰ It seems quite appropriate for Blodgett to use Margaret Atwood's lines: 'a duet / with two deaf singers' in the context of the two founding literatures of the country. The main thrust of Blodgett's argument in the essay (which represents an important modern school of thought) may be summed up briefly as follows:

It would be difficult for a Canadian comparatist to overlook the phenomenological and sociological problems raised by discussion on translation of both political and literary texts. . . . The resistance shown toward making translations from Canadian into Québécois poses one level of problem. . . . If the translator is a betrayer (quoting Italian pun) then that sense of betrayal as a cultural reality lies at the very heart of relations between Quebec and Canada, and it is . . . of more significance to the comparatist than the translated text itself.

Blodgett suggests what Canada needs is a

model that refuses to overlook the fragility of the metonymy that relates and separates our two major literatures. It should be like a grid of interwoven strands whose common threads relate and distinguish, but do not unify. The grid divides according to language, distinguishes according to culture, history and ideology. A 'language-grid' is precisely what runs between the nations of Canada.

He concludes with a proposal that

in case it is true that the present effort to unify Canada could in fact leave it in pieces, we should cultivate a co-operative separatism that

would prevent the kinds of ideological unity that the international and centrist schools seek. . . . I would transpose the structures of that model and remark that our threshold is at once historical and linguistic—two histories and two languages—each requiring the respective glance that guides any comparative method.¹¹

Of course, as asserted by Blodgett, certain convergences are visible between the two founding literatures, but the 'separatist' metaphor suggested by him denotes only one segment of the total exercise being done to vitalize the discipline of comparative Canadian literature. Happily, however, one notices the existence of another school of thought that has undertaken a series of studies and believes in the possibility of a binary relationship within the two literatures. The 'separatist' metaphor so frequent in the former school of thought meets its antithesis, the 'centralist' or 'mainstream' or 'single line' approach, in the latter. This approach has found favour with the school represented by no less eminent comparatists than Ronald Sutherland, D. G. Jones and Clément Moisan, who have demonstrated the existence of a literary kinship and mutual dependence upon each other in the literatures of Canada through their thematic studies.

In his works *Second Image: Comparative Studies in Quebec/Canadian Literature* (1971) and *The New Hero: Essays in Comparative Quebec/Canadian Literature* (1977), Ronald Sutherland vividly projects the Canadian comparatists' popular tendency to study the English-Canadian (Anglophone) and French-Canadian (Francophone) literatures through 'parallel analyses of principal themes'. He underlines certain common thematic patterns in the Canadian novel both English and French in the modern period. He envisages a well-knit design in the 'mainstream' of Canadian literature, which he describes as the Land and the Divine Order, the Breakup of the Old Order, the Search for the Vital Truth. This three-tier design not only covers major trends in both literatures, but also tends towards establishing certain binary relationships between the Anglophone and Francophone literatures. To quote his words, 'It can be safely said . . . that French-Canadian and English-Canadian novels of the twentieth century have traced a single basic line of ideological development, creating a whole spectrum of common images, attitudes and ideas.' He further points out that 'aside

from language, it is quite probable that there are at the moment no fundamental cultural differences between the two major ethnic groups of Canada. Cohen's *Beautiful Losers* could almost be a sequel to Godbout's *Le Couteau sur la table*.¹² Both these remarks forcefully argue in favour of the 'mainstream' approach.

Besides Sutherland, there are a few more eminent Canadian historians and literary critics who have tried out the thesis of the 'real or imaginary relationship' between the Anglophone and Francophone literatures and conformed to the 'mainstream' or 'centralist' approach to the study of Canadian literature. The English-Canadian scholar D. C. Jones in his book *Butterfly on Rock: A Study of Themes and Images in Canadian Literature* (1979) and the French-Canadian comparatist Clément Moisan in *Poésie des frontières: Etude comparée des poésie, canadienne et québécoise* (1979) have arrived at similar conclusions which are mutually compatible to the two literatures. While Jones points out how in the modern poetry of both literatures, the modernist movement has emerged as a strong reaction to the old 'garrison mentality' (quoting Northrop Frye's phrase) of the Canadians, Moisan postulates certain identical images, phrases and experiences, which, as he demonstrates, are the outcome of 'resistance' waged against the colonial situation since World War II; and both Francophone and Anglophone poets have reacted favourably to the idea of 'liberation'. On similar grounds it may be mentioned that *Two Solitudes* is a major novel of Canada by Hugh MacLennan which deals with the story of two races within one nation. The two protagonists forced into loneliness ultimately discover that 'love consists in this, that two solitudes protect, and touch and greet each other',¹³ and the novelist has endeavoured to allow the diverse forces find their harmony in the book. Moisan, Jones and MacLennan study the two cultures from a 'sociological perspective' and thus seem to follow the 'ideology of federalism' that Sutherland advocates in the following words: 'If the notable parallels in French-Canadian and English-Canadian literature have any significance at all, then it must be because there does exist a single common national mystique, a common set of conditioning forces, the mysterious apparatus of a single sense of identity.'¹⁴

On the basis of factual evidence partly mentioned in the

arguments of Sutherland and other scholars referred to above, it appears that a 'single sense of identity' has taken the shape of a fixed pivot in the entire corpus of Canadian literature around which the various approaches or responses to comparative studies inevitably revolve. A quest for Canadian identity has become a significant aspect of both the founding literatures and has added to the 'preoccupation' of the comparatists in both zones. For over two decades the Canadian writers, critics and comparatists have been grappling with this enigma and striving to answer the question: 'Who are we?' The answers offered have engaged the Canadian historians and critics in a search for 'new orientations in all areas of their nation's life'. As a matter of fact the Canadian philosophers, social scientists and creative writers have been preoccupied with defining and categorizing the political-social as well as the linguistic reasons for this activity. Robert Kroetsch, the noted novelist of West Canada, refers to this dilemma not merely as a regional or a prairie problem but as a *Canadian* one. He writes: 'Canadian writer's particular predicament is that he works with a language, within a literature, that appears to be authentically his own, and not a borrowing. But just as there was in the Latin word a concealed Greek experience, so there is in the Canadian word a concealed other experience, sometimes British and sometimes American.'¹⁵ Kroetsch's phrase 'concealed other experience' makes the Canadian writer (including the French-Canadian) conscious of a cultural ancestor and an ancestral voice. At another equally important level appears the question of individual identity when the autonomous existence of Quebec and Canada is ascertained. Margaret Atwood makes a deliberate attempt at creating a Canadian identity in her novel *Surfacing* where she describes a kind of retreat from white civilization into a purer natural world. As in the beginning of the novel the protagonist drives through northern Quebec with two friends and a lover, she notices 'white birches are dying, the disease is spreading up from the South'.¹⁶

As an answer to the all-pervasive question of 'self-identity', the study of Canadian literature involves a need for translation of Anglophone and Francophone texts and is related to the complexities of the Canadian cultural situation. In this context, the remarks made by E. D. Blodgett are significant. He assigns

two tasks to a modern Canadian comparatist: 'There are two fundamental preoccupations of Canadian comparatists: binary relationships between the two founding literatures and relationships between one or both these literatures and other literatures.'¹⁷ The first part of this statement, asking a Canadian comparatist to study 'binary relationships between the two founding literatures', has given rise to a 'separatist' or 'centralist' or 'mainstream' school of thought, as has already been referred to. The second preoccupation suggested by Blodgett demands the study of 'relationship between one or both these literatures and other literatures'. This aspect of comparative Canadian literature seems to have attained a greater magnitude and importance in the last few years. The comparative studies undertaken at various Canadian universities normally fall into three categories: (a) the study of influence/reception of the 'mother countries' in Europe, such as the study of Canadian literature in relation to British and French literatures; (b) the comparison of Canadian literature with other national literatures like American or German; (c) typological or ideological comparative studies with the literature of the Third World. And the recent works of Canadian scholars, for instance M. V. Dimić's 'Aspects of American and Canadian Gothicism', Eva-Marie Kröller's 'Walter Scott in America, English-Canada and Quebec' and W. H. New's 'Imperial Images: A Prologue to Commonwealth Poetry', are a strong evidence of the Canadian comparatists' attempts at resolving the problems separating the two approaches. Not only does J. M. Smith's introduction to *The Oxford Book of Canadian Verse* relate the French-Canadian poets Cremazie and Frechette to the English-Canadian poets Carman, Lampman and Scott, but his 'Preface' to *Modern Canadian Verse* relates some of the general tendencies of Canadian poetry to those of American or English poetry. While he observes that 'Canadian poetry in the fifties and sixties has become more like modern poetry in the United States, England and France',¹⁸ he realizes that it is time now to go beyond the regional or national periphery and 'join Canada to the world'. Smith's concept of 'the world' denotes the recent trend that shows a shared concern for the cosmopolitan or international and/or multilingual study of literary history, i.e. of broad currents of thought and style and of major schools.

Of late, certain pluralistic studies have been in circulation. For instance, Blodgett makes a prudent attempt to overcome the impasse of shared Francophone and Anglophone themes, first, by examining Ukranian and especially German texts and, second, by employing critical methods more various than thematic analysis.¹⁹

It may be stated therefore that the debate in Canada today centring round the federalist, centrist and pluralistic approaches to comparative literature is of vital interest to all students of comparative literature, and particularly to us in India, because of the growing linguistic tensions and politicization of linguistic problems, which are certainly going to affect our approaches to the study of literature.

NOTES

I gratefully acknowledge the information provided me by Professors M. V. Dimić and E. D. Blodgett which I have extensively used in writing this paper.

1. M. V. Dimić, 'The Canadian Example of Literature in More than One Language', unpublished talk (Edmonton, 1987), p. 3.
2. See M. V. Dimić, 'Comparative Literature in Canada', *Akadémiai Kiadó*, 12/1 (Budapest, 1985), p. 60.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
5. *Ibid.*
6. John H. Redekop, 'Dilemmas of Nationalism and National Unity in Canada since 1945', *Bulletin of Canadian Studies*, x, 1 (Spring, 1985), 7.
7. Philip Stratford, *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*, vi, 2 (Spring, 1979), 133.
8. The double staircase at the Château de Chambord, proposed by P. J. O. Chauveau. Quoted from *The Canadian Encyclopaedia* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1985), p. 391.
9. *The Oxford Book of Canadian Verse*, preface, p. xxiv.
10. E. D. Blodgett, 'The Canadian Literature as a Literary Problem', in *Configuration: Essays on the Canadian Literatures* (Downsview: ECW Press, 1982), p. 8.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 33-4.
12. Ronald Sutherland, *Second Image* (Toronto: New Press, 1971), p. 23.
13. Hugh MacLennan, *Two Solitudes* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1957), p. 93.
14. Sutherland, *Second Image*, p. 26.
15. Robert Kroetsch, 'Unhiding the Hidden: Recent Canadian Fiction', *Journal of Canadian Fiction*, iii, 3 (1974), 4.

16. Margaret Atwood, *Surfacing* (Markham, Ontario: Paper Jacks Ltd, 1973), p. 7.
17. Blodgett, op. cit., in *Configuration*, p. 32.
18. J. M. Smith (ed.), *Modern Canadian Verse* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1967), preface, p. xviii.
19. See 'Comparative Literature, Canadian', *The Canadian Encyclopaedia*, p. 391.

4

Prospects of Chinese Comparative Literature

YUE DAIYUN

The famous Second Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association took place in 1958 at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in the United States. At the congress the American scholar René Wellek delivered a challenging address entitled 'The Crisis of Comparative Literature',¹ which laid the foundation for his lifelong academic prestige in the field of comparative literature. Wellek believed that a work of art was a symbolic structure, but one possessing significance and value and requiring substantiation with meaning and value. As soon as this structure was formed, it stood apart from the mental process of the writer engaged in writing and became a substance of independent existence. He indicated that 'there is what has been rightly called an "ontological gap" between the writer's psychology and artistic work, and between life, society and the object of aesthetic appreciation. He called the study of art works 'intrinsic' and the study of the relationship between art and the writer's thought and of the relationship between art works and society 'extrinsic'. Obviously it is erroneous to differentiate in so clear-cut a way between art works and the writer and the environment of his social life and draw such a clear line of demarcation between that which is 'intrinsic' and that which is 'extrinsic' (Wellek later revised his viewpoint). Nevertheless, he had made an important contribution to the development of world comparative literature because he stressed that 'intrinsic' literary nature was the central question of aesthetics and indicated that literary research must take literature as a discipline to be studied, which differed from other human activities and their

products. On this basis he set forth 'the crisis of comparative literature'.

Wellek believed that this 'crisis' was revealed in the following aspects: (1) A man-made boundary between content and form. (2) A mechanistic conception of origin and influence. (3) A strong nationalistic desire to enumerate the merits of the literature of one's own country.

The crux of the so-called 'crisis' lies in the second point. At that time, as a discipline comparative literature had already a history of more than seventy years in Europe. French scholars in particular had achieved great success in the field, but most of them stressed that comparative literature dealt with the history of international relationships between literatures. Scholars of comparative literature stood on the frontiers of languages and nationalities and focused their attention on the mutual infiltration in subject matter, thought, books or feelings between two or several kinds of literature.² They even stressed that comparative literature in the main did not consider the value of originality of the works, but paid special attention to how every country and every writer evolved the *emprunts* they drew on.³

Thus they confined comparative literature to a very narrow scope and increasingly detached it from studies of literature itself. It is not strange, therefore, that Wellek attacked them for confining comparative literature to the study of 'foreign trade' between the literatures of two countries. This made comparative literature devote its attention only to the studies of external circumstances, second-rate writers, translations, travel notes and media, thus turning comparative literature into 'a mere subdiscipline investigating data about the foreign sources and reputations of writers'. It thus became impossible to study a work of literature in a comprehensive and integrated way because no single piece of literature can be entirely attributed to foreign influence or can be regarded as centre of influence that produces impact only in other countries. Such studies can only be detached from 'literature' itself and submerged as peripheral studies in research on social psychology and the history of culture.

Wellek opposed the definition of comparative literature proposed by Van Tieghem as the study of the mutual relations

between the literature of two countries. Van Tieghem considered general literature as viewing things from the perspective of the movements and trends that have swept the literature of several countries. However, there is, in fact, no difference in methodology between the two. The study of the influence of the British historical novelist Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) on France, for example, is itself a component of the study of historical novels in the period of Romanticism. Such artificial demarcations only cause confusion.

Wellek also criticized the tendency to regard comparative literature as the record of the merits of a culture and to make great efforts to expound and prove the multiple influences exercised by one's own country upon other countries. He singled out the phenomenon for condemnation that all those who wrote articles to trace the origin of the Russian poet Pushkin's story of a golden rooster back to a tale by the American writer Washington Irving have been reprimanded by politically dogmatic writers as cosmopolitanists, who lacked a basis for their own views and who prostrated themselves in worship of the West.

Although Wellek enunciated a question of great significance, he did not attempt to provide a reply. He simply stressed the fact that comparative literature had already become an established term which referred to literary research transcending the restrictions of literature in a particular country. Nevertheless, this point alone sufficed to open up an entirely new situation for the development of comparative literature in the United States.

Wellek's address caused an unprecedentedly strong reaction. Sharp criticism first came from the Soviet Union. A symposium on 'Literary Connections and Mutual Influence' was held in Moscow in January 1960, and an international congress on comparative literature in Eastern Europe was convened in Budapest in October 1962. Both the symposium and the congress focused on criticism of Wellek's 'formalism' and 'cosmopolitanism'. E. G. Neypokoeva, a research fellow at the Gorky Institute of World Literature in the Soviet Union, strongly reprimanded Wellek for 'blending national character with universal cosmopolitanism' and described his method of analysis as 'narrow formalism' that only stressed the art work

'itself'. She believed that 'the task set forth for comparative literature by Wellek was not a process of studying the living history of literature from the multifaceted perspective of the entire nation. Instead it "liberated" the works analysed from the social content and national characteristics that constituted the works. At the same time the national boundaries between different literatures were obliterated so that the distinctive contribution made by every nation to world art and culture was blended into a given man-made "global" literature.'⁴ E. G. Neypokoeva correctly stressed that Marxist comparative literature should bring to light the dialectical unity of universality and particularity in every national culture in order to achieve an in-depth understanding of the contribution of each to world culture and to determine the regularity of its development in different stages and under different social conditions, thus promoting further progress of the national culture richly imbued with democracy.⁵

The Crisis in Comparative Literature (original title: *Comparaison n'est pas raison: La Crise de la littérature comparée*) by René Etiemble, a famous French scholar of comparative literature, was published in the United States in 1966. As a matter of fact, Etiemble accepted most of Wellek's points. He proposed that comparative literature was a form of 'humanism', and stressed that the literature of various nations should be regarded as the common spiritual wealth of all mankind and as an interdependent entity. For Etiemble, comparative literature was the very undertaking that promoted mutual understanding between peoples and fostered the unity and progress of mankind. He maintained: 'The comparative study of literatures, even of those which have not reacted one upon the other, would contribute to contemporary literature.'⁶ For example, 'the comparative analysis of the structure of poems (whether the civilizations under study have or have not enjoyed historical relations) would permit us, perhaps, to discover the *sine qua non* qualities of the poem or novel *per se*.'⁷ He believed that 'the historical evolution of genres of literature' (namely, origin, influence and exchange) was as important as studying 'the nature and structure of each of the forms created for each genre in different civilizations'.⁸ In the area of methodology he stressed the following approach: 'By combining the two

methods which consider themselves diametrically opposed but which, in fact, must complement each other—the historical inquiry and the critical or aesthetic reflection.⁹ Therefore, it is both necessary to study such historical topics as ‘the diffusion of [Chinese] Taoism in Europe between the 18th and 20th centuries’ and the ‘influence of American cinema on French (or German or British) literature in the 20th century’ and to study theoretical topics without factual connection between each other, such as ‘comparative poetics of the Noh* and of tragedy’, or of ‘the kyogen† and the farce’. Etiemble said:

History and historicism are not always progressive, nor aesthetics always reactionary; it would help to develop a comparative literature which, combining the historical method with the critical spirit, . . . the prudence of the sociologist with the boldness of the aesthetician, would at last, at one stroke, give our discipline a worthy purpose and appropriate methods.¹⁰

Etiemble’s merit lies in linking up the study of influence which lays particular stress on the historical method, and parallel analysis which lays particular stress on aesthetic evaluation. He began to combine the two.

The findings reached by polemic in the past dozen years are truly embodied in ‘The Name and Nature of Comparative Literature’ written by Wellek himself in 1970 and in *Nouvelles tendances en littérature comparée*, a monograph by Haskell M. Block published in Paris in the same year. Wellek stressed that comparative literature was a genre of literary research without boundaries of language, ethics and politics, which aimed at studying all genres of literature from an international angle because all creative literary writings and experience had an aspect of unity. Therefore there existed the distant ideal of anticipating from the international angle the establishment of a global history of literature and global studies of literature. The scope of its research covered ‘historically unrelated pheno-

*Noh drama: a classic form of Japanese drama with choral music and dancing, using set themes, simple symbolic scenery, elaborately masked and costumed performers, and stylized acting.

†Kyogen: an ancient Japanese theatrical form, a dialogue with highly stylized movement for comic effect performed between the acts of Noh plays.

mena in language and style', as well as origins and influence in history.

Wellek said that studying the Chinese, Korean, Burmese and Persian narrative method or lyrical style was as perfectly justifiable as studying occasional contacts with the Orient, for instance, *L'Orphelin de la Chine* (based on *Zhaoshi Qu'er*) written by the philosopher Voltaire. In other words, comparative literature studied both the history of literature and theories and criticism. Consequently, the method used by comparative literature could not be confined to 'comparison' alone. Instead, various methods including description, the portrayal of characteristics, interpretation, narration, explanation and evaluation should be used as frequently as 'comparison'.¹¹

Block was more explicit, saying that comparative literature was mainly a prospect, a viewpoint and a firm conjecture to undertake literary research from an international perspective. Precisely because time endowed scholars with the status of world citizens, people could increasingly 'free themselves from the restrictions of a particular nation and a particular language so that literary research would draw closer to the essence of literature and turn more and more towards comparative literature'. He believed that researchers in comparative literature were indeed scholars specializing in international literature. He stressed that comparative literature embracing several disciplines was originally a frontier science and its characteristics lay in its 'frontier' nature. He opposed providing comparative literature with 'a precise, meticulous definition', 'elevating it to a quasi-scientific system' or 'imposing a system on a discipline not confined by any system'. Such approaches would cancel the 'frontier' nature of this discipline.¹²

Since the 1970s world comparative literature has, in the main, developed in its orientation in accordance with the open policy set forth by Wellek and Block. The discussion of the name and nature of comparative literature has been, more or less, brought to a temporary close. Whether exploring the common laws of literary development through the phenomena of different languages and different patterns of expression, or studying the origin and evolution of a particular literary phenomenon in an international context, comparative literature has made great progress.

The exploration of the common laws of literature has aroused the interest of many scholars. The Soviet scholar V. M. Zhirmunsky believed that the common course of the development of human society determined that literature also underwent a common course of development. 'Comparative literature was important precisely because the socially conditioned common laws of literary development could be determined through comparison.'¹³ Wellek also believed that 'Literature is one, as art and humanity are one; and in this conception lies the future of historical literary studies.' Therefore, 'it is important to think of literature as a totality and to trace the growth and development of literature without regard to linguistic distinctions.'¹⁴ Obviously their points of departure are different, but the common laws of literature they recognize and explore are identical. They have also achieved some success in studying the dissemination, acceptance and development of a given literary phenomenon from the perspective of world literature. The American literary critic William M. Payne said that the study of literature from an evolutionary perspective increasingly tended to become a kind of comparative study.

If a geological stratigraphy is disturbed or suddenly interrupted at a given location, it is possible to determine the continuity of strata at another location, and, in a similar fashion, after some clues of development in literary genres produced by a given nation have been sorted through, if we shift our research endeavours to other areas, we can start from this new point and better outline the sequence of these clues of development.¹⁵

In the explanation of the common laws of literature, comparative literature has tended increasingly towards theorization. In studying the dissemination, acceptance and development of a given literary phenomenon from the perspective of world literature, comparative literature has 'looked increasingly from an international perspective to the establishment of the global history of literature and global studies of literature'. This makes it impossible not to pay ever more attention to comparative studies and to the exploration of distant, broader and more different literary systems; for instance, Oriental and Western literary systems.

Since the world entered the 1980s comparative literature has

shown a very obvious tendency towards theorization. As Professor Earl Miner of Princeton University pointed out at a comparative literature symposium held in Beijing in 1983, and jointly attended by Chinese and American scholars, 'Over the past 15 years the highlight of progress has been to take literary theories as special topics and channel them into the category of comparative literature.'¹⁶ But as the general tendency in the development of contemporary world literature is pluralistic and fluid, no stable ideological system and theoretical authority can emerge in contemporary Western society where various new theories crop up with an increasingly rapid frequency and last for increasingly short periods. Moreover, the structures of theories are mostly based on theoretical hypotheses and are, to a certain extent, either isolated from the practice of creative writing or are ungainly phrases taken out of context to suit the purposes of these theoreticians. This phenomenon of theory for theory's sake and of theoretical beating about the bush has aroused the concern of a number of scholars. For instance, at the XIth Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association held in Paris in August 1985, although many scholars proposed the exploration of new theories related to narratology, intertextuality (phrases or sentences in a text that complement each other), semiotics and deconstruction, some authoritative scholars opposed such 'games of methodology'. Wellek, who had proposed 'The Crisis of Comparative Literature' and pushed the whole discipline to a new stage thirty years ago, severely condemned such methodologies at the congress for 'denying literature its aspect of the perception of life', for 'denying the experience of aesthetic sensibility' and 'being unhelpful for practical criticism'. In 'disintegrating literary works', he maintained, 'such literary theories only served to erect neoneohilistic ivory towers for opposing aesthetics.' He stressed that it was impossible for literary theories not to deal with evaluation and not to judge good and evil, beauty and ugliness, richness and impoverishment, ideology and artistry.

Owen Aldridge, former president of the American Comparative Literature Association, also opposed abstract theories and 'formalistic analyses' in isolation from the practical conditions of literary works. He stressed the necessity in literary research of valuing ethical standards.¹⁷ Evidently, the theoretic-

tical exploration of comparative literature was facing a new crisis and needed to move towards a new combination, one affirming that theoretical deduction itself helps to broaden people's thinking and has a far-reaching guiding significance while recognizing that theories must link up with value for them to be substantiated by specific evaluation.

The exploration of comparative literature of the East and the West has also made great progress in recent years. Successes include Professor Cyril Birch's comparative studies of Chinese and Western fiction and drama, 'Literary Theories of China' by Professor James J. Y. Liu (Liu Ruoyu) of Stanford University, 'Comparative Poetics' by Professor William Ye of the University of California, Earl Miner's studies of the relationship between Japanese literature and European and American literature, and Andrew Plake's studies of the art of narrative in Chinese fiction. Scholars of comparative literature in Hong Kong and Taiwan too have made useful contributions to the field.

The formulation of each new literary theory is an attempt to renovate old interpretations in a comprehensive fashion. These new theories are not content to remain in one corner, but are intended to provide an overall and macroscopic generalization of all types of literary phenomena, and to fit the demand that new theories could interpret the literature of both West and East. This phenomenon has aroused keen interest among Western scholars in Oriental literature. At the international symposium on 'Contemporary Methods of Criticism and Modern Chinese Fiction' held in Hawaii in December 1982, quite a number of scholars ventured to use new methods including the art of narration, structuralism, hermeneutics, semiotics, semantics and psychoanalysis to analyse modern Chinese fiction. These methodological ventures are all manifestations of this interest.

At the congress of the International Comparative Literature Association held in Paris in August 1985, 75-year-old Professor Etiemble delivered his last public address at an international congress. It was entitled 'The Revival of Comparative Literature in China'. He highly appreciated the development of comparative literature in China in the 1980s, which displays a vitality upon embarkation on its new journey. Etiemble said he

pinned great hope on this new venture. Unencumbered by a surfeit of pure theoretical deduction, comparative literature in China has a deep-rooted tradition of linking theory with practice. It is international in its orientation and will re-evaluate China's brilliant literary treasury from an entirely new cosmopolitan perspective. Hence it will make a more significant impact on world literature and will clarify the strands of development in literature throughout the world and make up for the faults in the entire 'stratigraphy' of literature resulting from the deficiency in the studies of Oriental literature. The awakening of comparative literature in China will, without doubt, greatly contribute to the development of world comparative literature. Professor Etiemble, whose decades of research in comparative literature qualify him as one of the most eminent scholars in the field, chose the 'Revival of Comparative Literature in China' as the topic of his last speech before retirement, clearly illustrating that he incisively discerned the trends in the development of world comparative literature and foresaw the prospects for comparative literature in China. If we say that the development of comparative literature registered its main achievement in France during its first stage and in the United States during the second stage, and further maintain that the vigorous growth of comparative literature between East and West and the return of theories to the practice of literature will be the principal characteristics during the next stage, will the main achievements of comparative literature in this next third stage occur in China?

REVIVAL OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE IN CHINA

Comparative literature is not a new thing in China. We shall not mention the studies of comparison, sifting, selection and mutual influence of literatures in the course of the blending of cultures of various nationalities in the domain of ancient China, for instance, the cultures of Jing-Chu (in present-day Hubei and Hunan provinces), Ba-Shu (in present-day Sichuan province), Qi-Lu (in present-day Shandong province) and Yan-Zhao (in present-day Hebei and Henan provinces). Nor shall we mention the relations between Indian ideology and culture and Chinese literature since the Wei and Jin Dynasties and

writings about translation and medium at that time. We will confine ourselves to recent times. Comparative literature in China can be traced back to Wang Guowei's 'F. W. Nietzsche and Arthur Schopenhauer' written in 1904 and Lu Xun's 'On the Demoniac Poets' and 'Cultural Bias' in 1907. In his essays Lu Xun studied the role of literature by comparing the characteristics of the literary development of different nationalities. He pointed out that the countries of ancient civilizations like India, Iran and Egypt became sparse in literature owing to the decline in their political conditions. Although Russia was also a land of literary silence, 'there was resonance in the silence of Russia'. Young German poets distilled their lofty enthusiasm of patriotism into 'powerful, resonant singing' to inspire people and make them seethe with fervour. The 'Demonic Poets' represented by Byron and Shelley went further. Their poems were 'aimed at resistance and aroused people to action'. They were 'calls to arms to which people responded enthusiastically'. (This belonged to parallel studies without factual connections.) He also studied the development of this school of demoniac poets in the national literatures of Poland and Hungary, and Byron's influence on Pushkin (1799-1837) and the Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1855). (This belonged to influence studies with factual connections.) Lu Xun finally concluded that it is of prime importance to examine oneself, but this must be paralleled by an understanding of others, so that when one attains a well-rounded comparison, one will naturally experience self-awakening. His point was that only through a multiplicity of connections and comparisons with world literature could a way be found to develop modern Chinese literature.

Mao Dun wrote the essays 'Leo Tolstoi and Russia Today' and 'Random Talks on Modern Russian Literature' in succession in 1919-20. In the two essays he first compared the literatures of Britain, France and Russia, 'the three great representatives of Western nations'. He pointed out: 'British literature is magnificent and elegant, and possesses superb literary beauty but its ideology does not dare trespass one step beyond so-called conventional morality.' He maintained that French men of letters were preferable because their statements about morality were somewhat freer; yet even they did not dare

portray what the world denounces as unreasonale and ridiculous. 'It is quite otherwise with Russian men of letters. They do not care about this and by no means compromise intuition or their conscience on account of the reprimands of the many.' He also pointed out that Leo Tolstoi and Henrik Ibsen had realism in common, but in 'speaking of the evils of society, Ibsen only exposed its mask while Leo Tolstoi proposed measures to provide relief to the socially oppressed. Ibsen dealt mostly with the corruption of middle class society while Tolstoi talked about society as a whole.' Modern Chinese literature itself has developed through such comparison and drawing on the experience of others.

Comparative literature appeared as a discipline in China in the late 1920s and the early 1930s. Professor I. A. Richards, then head of the English Literature Department of Cambridge University and a great master of New Criticism, gave two courses on 'Comparative Literature' and 'Literary Criticism' while teaching at Qinghua University in Beijing from 1929 to 1931. This was the first time that the term 'comparative literature' had appeared in China. At that time, Professor R. D. Jameson wrote a book entitled *Comparative Literature* in accordance with I. A. Richards's viewpoint and lecture notes. It mainly presented comparative studies of the literatures of Britain, France and Germany.

The Postgraduate Department of Qinghua University ran two categories of literature courses: special literary topics and studies of writers. The 'Special Topics of Comparative Literature' represented a significant subject among the special topics of literature. In addition to the course entitled 'Comparison of Chinese and Western Poetry' offered by Wu Mi, and 'Literature in the Period of Renaissance' given by Chen Yinke, there were courses entitled 'Western Background for Modern Chinese Literature' and 'Art of Translation'.¹⁸

Qinghua University trained a number of comparative literature scholars steeped in Chinese and Western literature, including Qian Zhonghsu, Ji Xianlin, Li Jianwu and Yang Yezhi—all students in that period. A short time afterwards, Fu Donghua and Dai Wangshu translated in succession 'the *Histoire des littératures comparées des origines au xx^e siècle* by Frédéric Loliée and *La Littérature Comparée* by Paul Van Tie-

ghem, systematically introducing the history, theories and methods of comparative literature to China. Liang Zongdai's *Poetry and Truth* was published in 1934, in which he, well versed in classical Chinese literature, explored Western literature from the comparative literary viewpoint. Chen Quan's work *Studies in Chinese and German Cultures* was published in 1936. It described and commented on the dissemination and influence of Chinese fiction, drama and lyrical poetry in Germany.

In the 1940s, suffering from the effects of war, much of this work came to a standstill, but scholars with a broad vision still saw the importance of 'advancing towards the world' in national development. The theories of Chinese comparative literature made progress on this line. For instance, in his famous essay 'The Historical Trend of Literature' Wen Yiduo dealt with the course of development of the four civilizations, represented by *Zhou* songs (the sacrificial songs of Western Zhou Dynasty) and *da ya* (Greater Refinement or dynastic music) in China's *Book of Songs*; *Rigveda*, the oldest and most important Hindu sacred book of India; the earliest Hebrew poems in the Old Testament; and the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the two ancient Greek epic poems attributed to Homer. He explained and proved how these four civilizations were born at approximately the same time, developed independently and then gradually flowed into one another, evolving and blending. He believed that 'this was the inevitable line of development in human history'. Wen Yiduo took pains to show that 'the vigorous beginnings of all four civilizations were reflected in literature'. He maintained that in China 'during the first stage of foreign influence, the Indian literary influence, introduced with Buddhism, consisted of fiction and drama'. It should be noted that already at that time Wen Yiduo stressed the great significance of 'reception' for the development of a national culture. He said: 'When native flowers have fully bloomed, they are bound to wither. So it is with all living things. As the ripples emanating from two cultures spread out, meet and interweave, new alien forms are bound eventually to force their entry. . . . New seeds come from outside and provide a fresh opportunity for regeneration.' Wen Yiduo believed that the three other civilizations he had discussed in that essay were daring when it came to 'giving', but pusillanimous in 'receiv-

ing'. Hence they fell into decline. 'China is bold to "give" but not over-timid in "receiving" and so retains mastery of its own civilization. . . . Having such mastery, is it not more important to consider "taking" than "giving"? It is therefore simply not sufficient to be not over-timid in "receiving"; it is essential to be truly bold in "receiving". . . . Past records presage future trends, and history already indicates the direction we must take—the direction of "receiving"'.¹⁹

Works which reveal the real achievements of comparative literature in the 1930s and 1940s were Zhu Guangqian's *Psychology of Literary Appreciation* (*Wenyi Xinlixue*) and *Poetics* (*Shi Lun*) as well as Qian Zhongshu's *On Poetry and Poetics* (*Tan Yi Lu*).

The Psychology of Literary Appreciation and *Poetics* are both in search of common laws that can be shown to govern the phenomena of Western as well as of Chinese literature and art. At the same time they employ theories percolated from Western literature to interpret Chinese literature and those condensed from Chinese literature to interpret Western literature. Take an example at random: With regard to the view that poetry, music and dancing can be traced to the same origin, the writer argued successfully that Greek poetry, dancing and music all originated from the sacrificial rites for Dionysus, and that the Australian corroboree was a similar fusion of fervent postures and melodies. He also proved that the Chinese *feng* (ancient ballads), *ya* (ceremonial music) and *song* (eulogy) in *The Book of Songs* differed because of differences in their music. Zhu Ziqing highly appreciated Zhu Guangqian's 'interpretative studies'. He believed that in *The Psychology of Literary Appreciation* Zhu Guangqian had used the Western theories of literature and art to present 'interesting, novel and original interpretations' of Chinese literature. Interestingly, he pointed out Zhu Guangqian's method of 'comprehension by analogy of images' to illustrate why Wu Daozi, in painting a mural, benefited from Fei Min's sword dance. He also used the German aesthetician Müller Freienfels' theories to show that the so-called 'personal state' (*you-wo zhi jing*) in *Renkian Cihua* (remarks on *Ci*-poetry in a man's world) by Wang Guowei is actually an 'impersonal state' (*wu-wo zhi jing*) and the so-called 'impersonal state' a 'personal state'.²⁰

Qian Zhongshu's *On Poetry and Poetics* uses, to an even greater extent, this research method of transcending differences between countries. In the preface he said: 'I quote extensively from Buddhist books and from European and American writings so that I can extrapolate other cases from a single instance' because 'there is a meeting of minds between East and West and scholars from South and North hold communion with one another in academic studies.' Whether explaining a principle or criticizing a theory, he always cited a wealth of facts for evidence from Chinese and foreign literatures. He never made isolated or absolute conclusions, a conclusion, for instance, that Chinese poetics stresses 'expression' whereas Western poetics stresses 'representation'. In his analysis of the concept of 'depiction of nature' (*moxie ziran*) his discussion ranged from Aristotle to the Tang Dynasty essayist and poet Han Yu, while his analysis of the concept of 'touching up nature' (*runshi ziran*) ranged from the ancient Greek rhetorician and orator Dion Chrysostom to the Tang poet Li He (Changji). These discussions sought to illustrate that China and other countries possess similar theories and hence there are universal laws.²¹ Another example is provided by his discussion of the question of ideology and expression, in which he not only cited the views concerning the relationship between the mind, the hand and things discernible in many Chinese theories of literature and art, but also drew upon the writings of Dante and Victor Hugo on this question. Only then did he criticize the Italian philosopher and critic Benedetto Croce for 'paying exclusive attention to mind, thereby ruling out matter'. It was in the context of this discussion that Qian Zhongshu also proposed that 'images and expressions are two things that combine as one', and that, therefore, it was a deficiency on Croce's part 'to attend to one thing and lose sight of the other'.²²

In short, Zhu Guangqian and Qian Zhongshu from the very beginning viewed literature from an international perspective and it was their work that laid a solid foundation for the revival of Chinese comparative literature in the 1980s. Once China correctly implemented its policy of 'opening to the outside world', and an international environment, requiring the bringing together of theory and practice and the strengthening

of the studies of comparative literature between the East and the West, emerged, comparative literature could make rapid progress in an entirely new manner in China.

The hallmark of the revival of Chinese comparative literature was the publication of Qian Zhongshu's four-volume work *Partial Views* in 1979. In an all-round and comprehensive way, and presenting abundant data, *Partial Views* embodies the characteristic of comparative literature as a 'frontier discipline' in the broadest and most open way and as a discipline 'unable to be subsumed in any scientific or literary research system'.

Partial Views was written during the ten disastrous years of the Cultural Revolution (1966-76). The whole work consists of 781 items constructed around ten ancient books including the *Correct Interpretation of the 'Book of Changes'* (*Zhouyi Zhengyi*) and the *Correct Interpretation of Mao's Edition of the 'Book of Songs'* (*Maoshi Zhengyi*). In it Qian cites well over a thousand works by some 800-odd foreign scholars and presents interpretations of his own findings on books by more than 3,000 Chinese and foreign writers.

The work's fundamental point of departure lies in Qian's firm belief that 'the various objects of the humanities mutually interconnect and infiltrate. They not only transcend national boundaries, but link different periods and connect different disciplines.'²³ Qian Zhongshu never attempted to impose a man-made 'system' on the objective world which is not subject to the restrictions of any man-made 'systems'. He believed that there was no benefit to be gained from exerting a great deal of effort in establishing comprehensive systems. In history 'only some fragmentary ideas are usually left from an entire theoretical system as things of value'.²⁴ But this does not mean a denial of laws. On the contrary Qian Zhongshu believed that 'art as a discipline is governed by unitary principles; art as a task branches out into a myriad of details.'²⁵ The real delight in academic studies lies in the discovery of those 'universal laws' concealed in the point of a needle or a grain of millet, but which 'can spread out to encompass mountains, rivers and the earth itself'.²⁶ The greatest contribution of *Partial Views* lies in the panorama of the past and the present that it offers as it ranges across the world to discover common important laws of literature from the viewpoint of overlooked significance like

'the point of a needle or a grain of millet'. This involves breaking through all sorts of academic boundaries (time, region, discipline and language) and opening up the entire realm of literature in order to seek the common 'poetic' and 'literary mind'. Qian Zhongshu believes that the common 'poetic mind' and 'literary mind' have an objective existence, in that what is called 'the identity of minds originates from the principle of things as they should be, while the latter originates from the necessity of things, that is, conformity to the inherent qualities of things'.²⁷

In exploring these common laws, Qian Zhongshu always proceeds from specific literary phenomena and does not infer by the deductive method. He said, 'I am interested in specific appreciation and evaluation of literature and art.'²⁸ In current world comparative literature, appreciation and evaluation run counter to the trend towards pure theoretical deductions. In literary appreciation and evaluation, Qian Zhongshu believed that the most fundamental thing was to study closely the 'text' of the literary work: 'If one ignores what is contained in the poem, looking for things beyond the poem and disdaining what is close at hand, one will seek throughout the heavens and in the Yellow Springs below the earth in the vain hope of making some finding. This method can be used to verify history or to preach but should not be applied to the discussion of poetry and poetics.'²⁹ In his view, 'to discuss poetry and poetics' one must proceed from the practical aspects of literary works. If one merely uses some strange new terms to mystify the discussion deliberately, the effort will be of no benefit. He cited some examples of contemporary French and American literary critics who inappropriately used structuralism, and he criticized the theories of Julia Kristeva and the like.³⁰

This does not mean that Qian Zhongshu does not pay attention to theories. On the contrary, he has always striven to eliminate the interference of details and minor issues and to grasp general strands underlying development of things. He advocates 'simplifying a multitude of things into two or three major issues' so that one can 'achieve a great insight', to which end 'there cannot be minor and scattered obstacles to obstruct one's view'.³¹ Only thus can one discover the fundamentals.

Consequently, he believes that Chinese-style comments have

the fundamental defect of often being 'preoccupied with details of rhetoric to the neglect of the basic principles of poetic creation'.³² He himself often makes great efforts to explore 'the origin of poetic creation' and is profoundly interested in the many new theories that appear abroad. Even in the ten tumultuous years when the policy of closing the country to the outside world was adopted, he still tried his best to utilize foreign theoretical findings when writing *Partial Views*. These findings were spread over many different fields including semantics, semiotics, stylistics, psychology, linguistics, culture, cultural anthropology, systematology and physiology.

Partial Views has not only explored the common 'poetic mind' and 'literary mind' of Chinese and Western literatures but has also achieved something unique in various aspects of comparative literature. Restricted by its subject matter, *Partial Views* is little concerned with studies of origin and influence; yet it expresses some very important views. Qian Zhongshu indicated that one must guard against 'forcibly grafting the peel of a melon to that of a prune'. Owing to very complicated circumstances, 'some theories conform to each other despite the fact that there is no relationship of transmission between them, as, for example, the theories of Lao Zi, Huang Zi and that of Sakyamuni. Some theories are openly antagonistic to each other but surreptitiously model themselves after each other. An example is provided by the relationship between the sham scriptures of Taoists (that appeared later than Wang Fu) and Buddhist sutras.' So one cannot say that 'two things trace back to the same origin when they fortuitously share the same theme', nor can one 'arbitrarily decide that two things have kinship when one sees a similarity in their appearance'. This would be similar to the view of those Qing Dynasty scholars who believed that all Western religions and sciences originated from 'monism', or that all political decrees and state systems derived from the *Book of Rites* (*Zhou Guan*).³³

In conducting such studies of origins, Qian Zhongshu himself often 'desisted as soon as he broached the subject', providing no far-fetched interpretations. For example, in discussing Charles Baudelaire, who said in a prose poem that 'By looking at a cat's eyes the Chinese know what time it is', Qian Zhongshu noted the origins of this idea in the 'Cat Section' of the

Youyang Miscellany (*Youyang Za Zu*) and in the *Notes about Lang Huan* (*Lang Huan Ji*).³⁴ In discussing the literary device in Western fiction which involves lovers imbibing potions which give every appearance of death so that the lovers can later be united in marriage, Qian Zhongshu cites the use of a similar device in the Tang Dynasty story 'Life Story of Liu' (*Wushang Zhuan*).³⁵ Although Qian Zhongshu talked little about studies of influence, this does not mean that he does not attach importance to it. He stressed: 'Comparative literature represents studies that transcend the scope of the literature of a particular nation. Consequently mutual relations between literatures of different countries naturally belong to the typical realm of comparative literature studies. . . . To develop our own comparative literature studies, one of the important tasks is to sort out the interrelationships between Chinese and foreign literature.'³⁶

Partial Views devotes many pages to the so-called interpretative studies for explaining Chinese literary phenomena by means of Western literary and artistic theories. Qian Zhongshu advocates both 'two-way interpretation' (whereby Chinese theories are also used to interpret Western works) and often proffers a sharp criticism of errors committed by foreign scholars in explaining Chinese theories but without an attempt to understand them thoroughly. For instance, he believed that *The Mirror of Literature: A Treasury of the Secrets of Literary Composition*, written by the Japanese scholar Henjoo Kongo, was 'actually like *Hare Garden Book* (*Tuyjian Ce*)* filled with superficial knowledge suitable only for the teaching of pupils by village school tutors'. He also pointed out that when Western scholars cited Lu Ji's *Exposition on Literature* (*Wen Fu*), 'they arrived at incorrect conclusions by false analogy often because translators did not comprehend the text correctly due to their ignorance.'³⁷

In interdisciplinary studies, Qian Zhongshu always emphasized intercommunication between different disciplines. As he early pointed out, 'We should enlist the help of those ever-changing disciplines, in particular psychology and physiology.'³⁸ *Partial Views* cites many examples of enlisting the help

*A book compiled during the Tang Dynasty and used as a textbook for children in village schools in the Five Dynasties (tenth century).

of different disciplines to expound and prove literary phenomena. For instance, at one point Qian interprets the 'Orphan of Zhao Family' (*Zhaoshi Qu'er*) by means of Western psychology's 'association by contiguity' and the physiological notion of 'conditioned reflex'. At another place in the same work he uses aesthetics, rhetoric and Indian logic to demonstrate how a fine poem depends on ambiguity.

Partial Views is also unique for its studies of translation. Qian Zhongshu said that 'faithfulness to the original' should include a 'fluid or flowing expression' and 'élan or flair'. A 'fluid or flowing expression' serves to achieve maximum 'faithfulness to the original', while 'élan or flair' only seeks to embellish the 'fluid or flowing expression'. To convey the content, bringing out the true meaning behind the words and expressing it in an appropriate style—this is faithfulness to the original. Translation with a fluid or flowing expression may not be fully faithful to the original, but no translation that is not fluid or flowing in expression can be truly faithful to the original.³⁹ Consequently, the highest criterion for literary translation is 'transformation'. Whoever transmits a work from the language of one country to that of another, and skilfully conceals all traces of strain due to differences in the habits of the two languages, yet entirely preserves the original flavour of the work, can be regarded to have achieved the state of 'transformation'. 'A translation should be so faithful to the original that, when read, it does not sound like a translation because the work in its original language, when read, would never have sounded like something which had gone through the translation process.'⁴⁰

In short, *Partial Views* has opened the way for the development of Chinese comparative literature in various respects. It runs counter to the trend towards 'theoretical withering' in current world comparative literature, and has registered trail-blazing and distinguished achievements in the development of Chinese and Western comparative literature by distilling the universally common 'literary mind' and 'poetic mind' in close integration with Chinese and Western art practice as such. If we say that the discipline of comparative literature requires the scholars engaged in it 'to possess extraordinary ability . . . and to be able to show more personality',⁴¹ Qian Zhongshu displays

just such a capability and personality. If we maintain that current comparative literature requires writing which will serve as a signal example, rather than abstract methodological formulae,⁴² then *Partial Views* precisely represents such an 'example'.

In the wake of *Partial Views*, four important works on comparative literature by four professors from Beijing University were published: Zong Baihua's *A Stroll in Aesthetics* (*Meixue Sanbu*, 1981), which is an original work in such interdisciplinary comparative studies as comparative aesthetics, poetry, painting and drama; Ji Xianlin's original exploration of the relations between Chinese and Indian literatures in the *Collected Writings on the History of Chinese and Indian Cultures* (*Zhong Yin Wenhushi Lunwenji*, 1982), setting an example for influence studies in Chinese comparative literature; Jin Kemu's *Collected Writings on Comparative Culture* (*Bijiao Wenhua Lunji*, 1984), containing a forceful comparison between *Rigveda* and *The Book of Songs* and an application of semiotics and hermeneutics in China, and opening up a new field for parallel and interpretative research in Chinese comparative literature; Yang Zhouhan's *Whetstone: Collected Critical Essays* (*Gong Yu Ji*, 1984), taking Chinese literature as a frame of reference and reinterpreting the works of Shakespeare, Milton and T. S. Eliot. *Collected Writings on British Culture* (*Yingguo Wenhua Lunji*) by Professor Fan Chunzhong of Nanjing University and *On the Creative Writing of 'Carving a Dragon at the Core of Literature'* (*Wenxin Diaolong Chuangzuo Lun*) by Wang Yuanhua of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences are both outstanding contributions to the revival of comparative literature in China.

As Haskell M. Block said, no realm of literary research can at present greater arouse people's interests or have more far-reaching prospects than comparative literature, and no other field can make stricter demands or involve people more emotionally.⁴³ People have been increasingly impressed with the difficulty of comparative literature. Precisely for this reason, an ever increasing number of outstanding young scholars are being recruited into the ranks. In the wake of *Lu Xun and Russian Literature* (*Lu Xun He Eluosi Wenxue*) by the young scholar Wang Furen, *Advancing Towards World Literature—Modern Chinese Writers and Foreign Literature* (*Zou Xiang Shijie*

Wenxue—Zhongguo Xiandai Zuojiu Yu Waiguo Wenxue), written almost entirely by young scholars around the age of thirty, was published in 1985. Looking at fiction, poetry, drama and prose, this lengthy work explores the way in which contemporary Chinese writers have assimilated influence from some 300-odd foreign writers. Whether judged from the perspective of comparative literature or of studies in contemporary Chinese literature, this book is trail-blazing. It illustrates to what extent comparative literature can enhance the literary acumen of a particular country and how literary scholars with a vision and an international perspective can make an outstanding contribution to comparative literature.

In short, a vigorous and vital contingent of scholars of Chinese comparative literature has been formed in the 1980s.⁴⁴ Meanwhile, Chinese comparative literature is gradually advancing towards the world. In 1982 three Chinese scholars attended the congress of world comparative literature held in New York City, and they submitted academic papers, one of which was published in the United States in the *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*.⁴⁵ A symposium on comparative literature jointly attended by Chinese and American scholars was held in 1983. Professor Yang Zhouhan was elected a Vice-President of the International Comparative Literature Association in 1985. Under such circumstances it became imperative that a comparative literature congress be held in China for specialists to gather and demonstrate their research, discuss and exchange their ideas and views in order that they might develop further.

A NEW STARTING POINT FOR CHINESE COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

The congress in which the Chinese Comparative Literature Association was founded and the first symposium of the association were both held in Shenzhen University on 29 October 1985. This congress, which reviewed the present condition of Chinese comparative literature studies, was also an academic interflow between Chinese and foreign scholars. It is through such review and exchange that Chinese comparative literature will make further progress.

Among the 121 papers received by the congress, most worthy of mention were those presenting achievements in comparative aesthetics and comparative studies of literature and art. In recent years China has conducted extensive comparative studies of Marxist aesthetics and the literature and art of various countries. Since 1930 most Chinese studies in this field had been based on data already processed by Soviet theoreticians, with a small amount coming from Japan. Some relevant works of Marx had been highlighted, the others having sunk into oblivion. Moreover, the situation of an acute and complicated class struggle did not allow us to be engaged in unhurried and objective studies. We may say that we have not yet established a Chinese Marxist aesthetic system. Hence we were entirely unprepared when in the late 1970s we were exposed to the extremely multiple and complicated realm of world Marxist aesthetics. As Hu Xiaoding said at the congress, 'When we squarely face the world, and modern Marxism and its history of development, we encounter people, events and problems concerning Marxist theory that have previously never been seriously studied.'

In the realms of aesthetics, literature and art, there are all sorts of viewpoints and theories. This presents dogmatists with confusion, and a crisis is yet an ideal opportunity for brave Marxists to develop and replenish themselves and to establish a Chinese Marxist aesthetic system through comparison and assessment. In fact, many Chinese scholars are advancing on this road. Li Zehou's *Criticism of Critical Philosophy—A Review of Immanuel Kant's Philosophy* (*Pipan Zhexue De Pipan*) is a good example. Liu Mingjiu's studies of Jean-Paul Sartre, Zhu Guangqian's studies of Giovanni Battista Vico, Ru Xin's *Sequel to the Collected Writings on the History of Western Aesthetics* (*Xifang Meixueshi luncong Xabian*) and Jiang Kongyang's *German Classical Aesthetics* (*Deguo Gudian Meixue*) are all successful endeavours. Some papers submitted to the congress also proposed that in order to advance further in the establishment of Marxist comparative aesthetics, it is necessary to discard Soviet dogmatism of the Andrey A. Zhdanov kind, and to study intensively the history of Marxist aesthetics, look at questions from the Marxist heights and take up the new challenge issued to Marxist aesthetics by that world.

Chinese comparative aesthetics and studies of literature and art have undertaken penetrating analyses, arriving at new answers to many previously posed questions, which is a measure of the progress of these disciplines. In the field of poetics, one scholar adopted a tripartite approach involving the comprehension of the intrinsic characteristics of art ('expression' and 're-presentation'), the comprehension of the psychological characteristics of artistic creativity ('mania', 'emptiness' and 'silence') and the comprehension of aesthetic effect ('purification' and 'materialization'). Individually, he interpreted the different characteristics of Chinese and Western poetics, indicating that Western poetics aimed at seeking 'expression' by means of 're-presentation', while Chinese poetics aimed at seeking 're-presentation' by means of 'expression'. The Western theory of 'mania' emphasized the subject's 'radiation' and 'creation', affording the subject an access to 'expression'. The Chinese theory of 'emptiness and silence' (*xu jing*) emphasized the 'wise assessment' (*mingjian*) and 'inner communion' (*neitong*) of the object and was identical with 're-presentation'. The Western theory of 'purification' emphasized the unity of the good and the beautiful, using morality to 'control' man's natural feelings so that man's development was integrated with social development. The Chinese theory of 'materialization' emphasized the unity of the beautiful and the true, and sought the free state of the unity of things and self so as to make man return to nature itself. Finally he pointed out that Western poetics excelled in the 'historical sense', while Chinese poetics excelled in the 'aesthetic sense'. Based on the unity of history and aesthetics, Chinese and Western poetics were being drawn to each other. Some other papers at the congress explored the same question from other angles and thus brought a greater depth to the discussion.

Another achievement of the Shenzhen congress was that the participants more or less agreed on the definition, scope and method of comparative literature. Previously there had been long-standing divergences of opinion. For instance, there had been a great disagreement whether comparative literature is so termed because it uses the method of comparison in literary study. The current consensus is that as a method 'comparison' is frequently used in literary theory, literary criticism and lit-

erary history—in all three of them. It cannot be used to distinguish a single discipline. Apart from the comparative method, comparative literature uses a large number of other methods including induction, deduction, description, interpretation, synthesis and counter-evidence. Sometimes no comparative method is at all used.

At the congress the participants discussed the question of the demarcation of the scope of comparative literature. It was felt that comparative literature should not be based on the political concept of a nation, particularly in a large multinational nation like China. One participant proposed that two systems of comparative studies be established in China. The system of domestic comparative studies should include comparative studies between the literature of the Hans and those of other nationalities, between the literature of the literati and folk literature, and comparative studies of the literature of various regions. The system of foreign comparative studies should include comparative studies between Chinese literature and those of other countries. Though quite a number of participants disagreed with this view, everyone agreed that comparative literature was, as such, an open structure and that it was possible to undertake studies first and let the discipline gradually take shape.

With regard to methodology the congress set forth the study of influences, parallel research and interpretative research as ~~three fundamentals~~ which won the approval of all participants. Someone cited the viewpoint of the Taiwanese scholars, indicating that the interpretative method utilizing Western systematic criticism to interpret Chinese literature and Chinese literary theories had been consistently adopted by Chinese scholars. As a matter of fact, we should conduct a two-way interpretative research. It should be applied not only to making foreign things serve China but also to making Chinese things serve other countries; that is, using Chinese literary theories to interpret foreign literature and foreign literary theories. In the latter endeavour, we can also discover new angles. This two-way method is possible precisely because literature itself possesses a common law of development, and mutual interpretation does help link up various 'literary minds'. But this is only confined to wherever the two modes overlap, since we cannot

forcibly impose one mode on another literature.

Some participants at the congress felt that in influence studies it was possible to demarcate a zone and confine oneself within it, which could be an 'insurmountable limitation'. But a good many participants did not agree with this viewpoint, maintaining that every method had its limitations and the question was whether it could give full play to its strong points. At present, influence studies have a great significance in China. They obviously aim at determining the mutual relationships between Chinese and foreign literatures. But, more importantly, we live in an era advancing towards a synthesis, and the mutual infiltration and convergence of cultures are increasingly becoming an inevitable necessity. And in the period of the May 4th Movement China embraced cultures from Europe, America, the Soviet Union, India, Persia and Japan. Drawn from widely different social systems and introduced within a short period, they made an impact on China's age-old unitary and extensive culture. Such a phenomenon is perhaps unique in world cultural history, especially when it is seen from the viewpoint of the new 'acceptance' theory and of the 'acceptance process' through 'factual association' regarding how Chinese culture sifted, selected, absorbed, embraced and transformed the foreign cultures. This is of great value in studying the convergence of the cultures of various countries in the world as well as the characteristics of our own culture (i.e. taking 'acceptance' as a mirror).

Finally, I should also mention that some of the deficiencies of Chinese comparative literature studies were rectified at this congress. The comparative studies of Oriental literatures, in particular, were given more prominence. The first characteristic of the papers on Oriental comparative literature was their wide range, covering the studies of mutual influences between Japan, Vietnam, India, Korea and China. Their second characteristic was their large number. There were, in all, twenty-two papers on Oriental comparative literature (including the papers on the literatures of China's minority nationalities). These accounted for twenty per cent of the papers presented at the congress. This large proportion illustrates the flourishing of Oriental studies. The third characteristic of the papers was the new realms they explored. For instance, 'A Glance at the Cul-

tural Exchange between Persia and Uygur in the Perspective of the Evolution from "Husraw to Sirrine" to "Parhad and Sirrine" ' and 'Preliminary Studies of the Relationship between Persian Literature and Arabian Literature' were both pioneering works expressing fresh views.

At this congress the literatures of China's minority nationalities figured on an unprecedentedly large scale. Scholars of minority nationality literatures have made great efforts since the establishment of the Research Society of Foreign Literature and Comparative Literature of China's National Minority Universities and Colleges, based at the Central-South China Institute of Nationalities. This congress highlighted their findings. As a paper at the congress said, China's minority nationalities live in border areas adjacent to other nations. To undertake comparative studies of minority nationality literatures is of especially great significance both for the literatures themselves and for developing a friendship between various nations. With the exception of 'Comparative Studies of the Dragon Stories between the Han Nationality and the Naxi Nationality', all papers dealing with minority literatures at the congress attempted comparative studies between minority nationalities' literatures and foreign literatures. For instance, '*Romeo and Juliet* and *Ebing and Sangle* (a long ancient narrative poem of China's Dai nationality)'; '*The War between Hor and Ling* and the *Iliad*'; '*King Gesar* and Homer's Epics', and 'A Comparative Study of the Heroic Mythology of China's Minority Nationalities and of Other Countries'.⁴⁶ The comparative literature of China's minority nationalities is a fertile and virgin field, and while at present we can only expect comparative studies of a general nature, its future seems fully assured.

Especially worthy of mention is the rapid development made in 'interdisciplinary' studies. Special attention has been paid to the relationship between literature and culture, which may perhaps be attributed to the statement made by the Dutch scholar Douwe Fokkema, president of the International Comparative Literature Association, that poetry and fiction are facing the challenge of cinema and television, while 'culture' too has a special significance in the 'post-imperialist' era in which we live. On this point Chen Shoucheng has described the disintegration of the Western cultural system and discussed

the revival of the Greek spirit in the concept of culture and the end of Hegelianism since Nietzsche. He has argued that culture has become the object of poetics of an entirely new meaning (hence literaturized) and that the mode of poetry has moved to the centre of a general concept of culture, thereby forming a new concept of culture (hence philosophized). This was a process of mutual infiltration and illumination. Culture was no longer the theoretical system in the old sense but was comprehended as a lively activity of existence full of creative power. Poetry was a mode of meaning, embodying the essence of this culture. The essay demonstrates three modes, namely, the Hemingway mode changing from the traditional to the contemporary consciousness of writing, the Wittgensteinian mode changing from a traditional to a contemporary cultural concept and the Heideggerian mode changing from cultural poetics to the cultural studies of poetry.

Interdisciplinary studies of poetry and painting have also some new findings. The theory of comparison of poetry and painting in the past, for example Gotthold Lessing's viewpoint as expressed in *Laokoön*, was endowed with a significance transcending culture. On the other hand, the theory of comparison of Chinese and Western poetry and painting is based on different art practices and unfolded on different cultural backgrounds. For example, the theory of comparison of ancient Chinese poetry and painting is based on the ancient lyrical poems and the landscape paintings of the literati, which differ from the epics and narrative paintings with which Lessing was concerned. Chinese art has always stressed man's silent communion with nature, which differs from the Western conception of art centred on man. The shading resulting from the ink splash technique in traditional Chinese landscape painting creates general gradations of composition and allows for the embracing of many nonrealistic factors because of the somewhat symbolic nature of the spatial framework. This differs still more from the dependence on colour and line in Western traditional oil painting and its great attention to 'imitation'. Consequently, the consensus of opinion at the congress was that while Lessing emphatically analysed the difference between the media of poetry and painting, the theory of Chinese poetry and painting emphasizes that the functions of presentation in

poetry and painting tend towards an identity.⁴⁷

In addition, papers on the comparative studies of Chinese and Western myths also made many creative breakthroughs. Some papers belonged to the studies of general literature; for instance, studies concerning the marksman hero* and the 'personified mythical ideal'. Among studies of pure general literature, one paper dealt with the diverse presentations of the image of the strongman Samson, the Israelite judge distinguished for his strength, in the Old Testament, in Milton's *Samson Agonistes* and in Mao Dun's *Samson's Vengeance*, while another examined the role of the 'wolf' as a symbol in different literary systems of the world.

Among the participants at the congress were fourteen foreign scholars who also submitted papers and took part in the discussions. For example, a paper by the French scholar Yves Chevrel dealt with the application of the 'reception' theory in comparative literature studies, discussing the basic contents of the theory and the questions to which scholars should pay attention in applying it to the study of comparative literature. This paper indicates that readers in fact adopt different approaches in 'receiving' a foreign work and the works of their own country. They often impose the literary mode of their own nation on foreign works, selecting and developing what is useful, discarding what is not, and remoulding the works in the process. These are precisely the objects of studies of comparative literature. Besides, it is difficult for scholars of comparative literature to yield to the phenomenological view that works only exist for the sake of reading, turning 'reception' into an isolated individual act of reading; for comparative literature hopes to bring literature within the scope of human activities as a whole and give full consideration to the practical conditions in which literary works are received by readers or an audience. The 'reception' theory also helps comparative literature scholars to have a deeper understanding of the receptors themselves of different countries. For instance, 'From Voltaire to Chateaubriand—*Paradise Lost* in French Literature' by G. Gillet takes

*Marksman hero: There are comparative studies of heroes in their marksmanship, for instance, between Houyi in Chinese myth and Heracles in Greek myth. Works in this field include 'Different Aspects of Marksman Heroes' by Xiao Bing, 'Personification of the Mythological Ideal' by Xie Xuanjun, and others.

the French reception to *Paradise Lost* as a mirror reflecting French fears concealed beneath the superficial phenomenon of optimism and progress. The 'reception' theory makes it possible to write a new history of literature that proceeds from the view of the reader. This history of literature should be constituted of three essential factors: creative writing—tradition—importation. For instance, French surrealism has rediscovered writers (tradition) formerly ignored while opening itself to Chinese literature (importation). Comparative literature serves precisely to study this process of 'creative writing—acceptance of tradition—importation' in the literature of different countries and to explore the interrelationship between various aspects of the process. The viewpoint of the 'reception' theory on 'never considering to have exhausted a literary work' and 'never considering to have exhausted literature', is of very great significance for comparative literature studies. The paper finally proposes that China consider conducting studies of how foreign literary works have been translated and introduced in the course of this century and how they have been received in China. Attention should be paid not only to the topic of a particular writer in another country but also to that of the literature of one country in another in a specific period. Such discussions of 'synchronicity' within a temporal framework often help us understand such interesting phenomena as the 'changed field of vision', the transformation of the 'reception screen' and 'reception conditions', and the 'turning points in history'.⁴⁸

The American scholar Earl Miner emphatically expounded and proved the relationship between 'reception' and 'influence', stressing that Western literary studies often proceed from a given hypothesis and inference, especially in the case of those 'deliberately mystifying' critics who often rely only on the hypotheses that have constantly changed in the past several centuries. Chinese poetics, on the other hand, devotes greater efforts to the studies of how a poet is moved emotionally or morally, how he expresses such waves of emotion in language, and how such portrayal of emotion influences readers.⁴⁹

In his paper on the studies of general literature, the German scholar Vera Polland explored various cultural, philosophical, social, psychological and literary questions revealed by works of

world literature which take diseases as their theme or subject matter. The paper points out that from these studies 'we obtain both explanations of diseases and the quintessence of various outlooks on life concerning the existence of healthy people and the significance and purposes of existence'. It also says: 'Diseases are first described scientifically and objectively as in medical science and here literature serves as the medium for transmitting both beauty and elegance, and the essential factor of the existing truth that is penetratingly recognized.' 'Thus art and medical science complement each other and become the frontier discipline and "interdisciplinary culture" of "man's" science.'⁵⁰

At the symposium too, foreign and Chinese scholars exchanged views. In the discussion on the studies of Lu Xun, for example, some Chinese scholars believed it to be an oversimplification in some papers to use romanticism, modernism and realism to sum up Lu Xun's former and later periods, because such labels are insufficient to fully interpret the complexity of Lu Xun's thought and expression. Some foreign scholars believed that the papers provided significant theoretical hypotheses by studying Lu Xun's thought through his 'acceptance' of the 'demoniac poets', the 'Symbol of Dejection' and *On Art* by Plekhanov. They also suggested that there be an over-all examination of Lu Xun's consistently complex personality.

Foreign scholars especially stressed that Lu Xun in his later years did not write poems in the vernacular language and that these later poems in classical Chinese could hardly be described as realistic. This therefore means that it is worth while examining how Lu Xun's romantic qualities in his early period had gradually developed or disappeared. In the discussion on the comparative studies between European realism and the realism during China's May 4th Movement, the foreign scholars agreed with the view in some papers that European realism did not possess that strong sense of historical mission possessed by Chinese realism, but, citing Leo Tolstoi as an example, they did not agree that the 'national spirit of self-examination' was the exclusive property of Chinese realism. These findings and academic viewpoints provided new methods, perspectives and new ways of thinking for us.

The Shenzhen congress both demonstrated the breadth and depth of Chinese comparative literature studies and brought together a contingent of younger researchers of comparative literature, endowed with lively and keen perceptions.⁵¹ The congress served as a sign indicating that the Chinese comparative literature studies had reached a new starting point. We can already discern the brilliant prospects for the development of Chinese comparative literature.

NOTES

1. René Wellek, 'The Crisis of Comparative Literature', in *Comparative Literature: Proceedings of the Second Congress of the ICLA* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 1959), vol. 1, pp. 149-59.
2. See Marius-François Guyard, *La Littérature Comparée* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1969).
3. See Jean-Marie Carré, 'Une Preface à la littérature comparée', *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*, 1 (1952).
4. E. G. Neypokoeva, 'The Methodology of Comparative Literature in the United States and Its Connections with Reactionary Sociology and Reactionary Aesthetics', *Translated Articles on Studies of Comparative Literature* (Chinese edition, Shanghai Yiwén Chubanshe, 1985), pp. 344-6.
5. Ibid.
6. René Etiemble, *The Crisis in Comparative Literature*, trans. Herbert Weisinger and George Joyaux (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1966), p. 55.
7. Ibid., pp. 54-5.
8. Ibid., p. 54.
9. Ibid., p. 57.
10. Ibid., p. 38.
11. See René Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1949), chapter 4.
12. Haskell M. Block, *Nouvelles tendances* (Paris: Nizet, 1970).
13. V. M. Zhirmunsky, in *Translated Essays on Studies of Comparative Literature*, p. 197.
14. Wellek and Warren, *Theory of Literature*, pp. 42, 41.
15. William M. Payne, in *Translated Essays on Studies of Comparative Literature*, p. 195.
16. Earl Miner, 'Some Subjects in the Theories and Methodology of Comparative Poetics and Comparative Literature', *Zhongguo Bijiao Wenxue* (Comparative Literature in China), 1, 249.
17. See Yang Zhouhan's article in *Wenyi Bao* (Journal of Literature and Art), 24 November 1985.
18. *Draft History of Qinghua University* (Zhonghua Shuju), p. 167.

19. Wen Yiduo, *Myth and Poetry* (Guji Chubanshe, 1956), pp. 201-6.
20. Zhu Guangqian, Preface to *The Psychology of Literary Appreciation*.
21. Qian Zhongshu, *On Poetry and Poetics* (Zhonghua Shuju, 1984), pp. 60-1.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 210-11, 536-7.
23. Qian Zhongshu, 'Poetry May Voice Complaints', *Wenxue Pinqlun* (Literary Review), 1 (1981).
24. Qian Zhongshu, *Four Old Essays*, pp. 26-7.
25. Qian Zhongshu, *Partial Views*, p. 1279.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 496.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
28. Qian Zhongshu, *Four Old Essays*, p. 7.
29. Qian Zhongshu, *Partial Views*, p. 110.
30. 'Qian Zhongshu Talks on Comparative Literature and the Comparison of Literatures', *Du Shu* (Book Reading), 10 (1981).
31. Qian Zhongshu, *Four Old Essays*, p. 3.
32. Qian Zhongshu, *Partial Views*, p. 1215.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 440.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 816.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 836.
36. 'Qian Zhongshu Talks on Comparative Literature and the Comparison of Literatures'.
37. Qian Zhongshu, *Partial Views*, pp. 1449, 1177.
38. Qian Zhongshu, 'Publishers Abroad', *Crescent (Xin Yue) Monthly*, iv, 5.
39. Qian Zhongshu, *Partial Views*, p. 1101.
40. Qian Zhongshu, *Four Old Essays*, pp. 62-3.
41. *Translated Essays on Studies of Comparative Literature*, p. 198.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 206.
43. *Ibid.*
44. The first Chinese Comparative Literature Association was founded at Beijing University in January 1981, with Qian Zhongshu as adviser and Ji Xianlin as president. The Association publishes the *Comparative Literature Series* and the *Beijing University Comparative Literature Association Newsletter*. The First National Comparative Literature Symposium was held in June 1983 under the sponsorship of Nankai University and Tianjin Teachers' University. Papers presented at the symposium later appeared in the *Collected Writings on Comparative Literature (Bijiao Wenxue Lunwenji)* published by Nankai University Press in 1984. *Zhongguo Bijiao Wenxue* (Chinese Comparative Literature), a national journal of comparative literature, with Ji Xianlin as editor-in-chief, was founded in Shanghai in 1984. An account of comparative literature publications was given in Yuan Haoyi's article 'Two Pillars of Comparative Literature' in *Zhongguo Shehui Kexue*, 4 (1985). Later, Guangxi University and Jinan University (Guangzhou) also held symposia on comparative literature. In addition local comparative literature associations were established in succession in Liaoning province and Shanghai. Up to June 1985 thirty-six colleges ran comparative literature courses.
45. Yue Daiyun, 'Teaching of Literary History in China and the Canon of

- Comparative Literature', *YCGL*, 31 (1982).
46. See Chen Shoucheng, 'China's Ethnic Writers and Foreign Literature'.
 47. See Hu Xiaoding, 'Mirror and Lamp: Demarcation Line between Poetics of the East and the West?'
 48. 'Reception Theory and Comparative Literature'; a Chinese translation of the article was carried in the *Comparative Views on Culture, Myth, Poem and Painting* (Shenzhen University, 1986).
 49. 'Reception and Influence', in *Comparative Views*.
 50. Vera Polland, 'Literature and Disease', in *Comparative Views*.
 51. Seventy per cent was of the age group 22-40.

Comparative Literature: Towards a Non-Logocentric Paradigm

GURBHAGAT SINGH

The crisis of literary theory in general and especially of the theory of comparative literature today is that the search for various kinds of 'universals' or 'unity' on which literary texts of different cultures were believed to have rested has suddenly become obsolete. When Auerbach talked of the 'vital unity of individual epochs',¹ he was undoubtedly denuding the invisible common ground of all literary epochs transcending their historical limits. Curtius's discovery of common 'topoi'² in European literature and René Wellek's 'consciousness of the unity of all literature'³ also appear to accept a certain centre from which all literary structures originate. This identitarian or centric theory can be taken back to Eliot's notion of tradition, Arnold's notion of European literature and Goethe's notion of *Weltliteratur*, finally rooted in his search for the ultimate plant he believed he had discovered in Italy.

This identitarian-universalist theory can be said to have sprung from the hegemonic needs of the rising industrial-capitalist class of Europe, from the pressures of a disintegrating Europe under the world wars, and from the ideological remnants of a medieval theocentric world-view that explained the universe as structured around a centre. The theory also drew inspiration from the Heideggerian kind of interest in Being in which the mind, history and cosmos could be integrated in language, less under a theological shadow and more with a secularized, existential consciousness, shaping in time.

It is not difficult for us to understand now that in its enthusiasm for 'unity' and the search for Being, this theory has remained anchored to an ensemble of fixed signifieds or a tran-

scendental signified capable of generating stable meanings with 'truth' and 'objectivity'. Jacques Derrida, the great French guru of Grammatology, has told us that this anchoring or reference to an ensemble of signifieds or a central signified, 'an absolute archia', delimits and closes off the play of literary signifiers.⁴ Instead of becoming a differential dissemination the literary text will remain nostalgic for a logocentre or the only origin of meaning. This obsession, conscious or unconscious, for the origin of stable meaning, Derrida has termed 'logocentrism'. The logocentrically interpreted sign's signifier or sound-aspect also gets related to a specific meaning and thereby to a signified of presence. As a result, language becomes 'phonocentric'. Derrida considers not only Saussure's semiology 'phonocentric'⁵ but also the entire Western intellectual tradition abnormally obsessed with logocentrism. Though John Searle and J. G. Merquior⁶ have recently disagreed with Derrida about his hermeneutic of the Western intellectual tradition, yet his attack is deadly, and in a very unsparing way he establishes that the logocentrism is Apollonian. It is to take the principle of form or pure Being as eternal and identitarian and thereby to stop the play of the literary sign in structure.

Taking his inspiration from both Heidegger and Nietzsche, Derrida asserts that the difference between Dionysus and Apollo is an 'original structure'.⁷ It cannot be restricted to history or form, meaning thereby that the difference between Apollo and Dionysus exists prior to any manifestation. It is a kind of 'semiotic essence', to use an expression from Merquior,⁸ that permeates all forms. It can also be said that the difference constitutes the *différance* that Derrida uses for both difference and deferment of meaning. Difference, then, is also responsible for Heidegger's 'ontological difference'—the excavation within Being or its 'erasure'. Derrida also extends it to his notion of writing or, better, an archetype or *Ur-Writing* that exists prior to any semiotic manifestation. The principle of writing or ontological difference, according to Derrida, is not static like Apollo. It is Dionysically dynamic. Nietzsche's Dionysus is the 'will to life rejoicing over its own inexhaustibility'.⁹ 'The affirmation of passing away and destroying . . . saying Yes to opposition and war; *becoming*, along with a radical repudiation of the very concept of being.'¹⁰ Combining Saussure and Heidegger,

Derrida redefines the Nietzschean Dionysus and states: 'Dionysus is worked by difference.'¹¹ Mark here the passive voice that Derrida uses to redefine Dionysus and make him Heideggerian and Saussurian while retaining the Nietzschean energy. He simultaneously destabilizes and structures the world of meaning. The assault on the centre is so very unmistakable.

While attacking the logocentric sign that gives primacy to 'voice' and 'presence', Derrida vitally asserts the 'epiphany of difference', as Peter Ackroyd phrases it in his book *Notes for a New Culture* (1976, p. 142). The significance of Derrida's *epiphanic difference* is that with a thunderbolt it has flashed the inadequacy of the logocentric paradigm.

Two main points radiate from this difference as an important contribution: (i) In his work *Dissemination* Derrida suggests: 'The reading must always aim at a certain relationship, unperceived by the writer, between what he commands and what he does not command of the languages that he uses.'¹² This is Derrida's perception of high tension or 'aporia', as both Jonathan Culler and Paul de Man term it. The text comes to a crisis point where its signs become 'blanks' but not in the expectation of any fulfilment. Commenting on Philip Sollers' *Numbers*, Derrida says: '*Numbers* are thus a kind of cabal or cabala in which the blanks will never be anything but provisionally filled in, one surface or square always remaining empty, open to the play of permutations, blanks barely glimpsed as blanks, (almost) pure spacing, going on forever and not in the expectation of any Messianic fulfilment.'¹³ The aporiastic sign is turned into a signifier liberated from the content of fulfilment that can threaten to be logocentric content. The pure literary signifier born out of its own play, which touches the fringes of history but still withdraws into ahistoricity, creates the possibility for the literary signifier to pass its own current, its own energy, that is non-originary and contextual. (ii) Difference resorts to 'the temporal and temporal mediation of a detour that suspends the accomplishment of desire or "will" or a way that annuls or tempers their effect'.¹⁴ It means that in difference that is 'neither simply active nor simply passive', the waylaying subject is also absent. A logico-mathematical kind of differential shapes up which is impersonal. It may be accused of being a Platonic-rational kind of structure; still it enables Derrida to

suggest that difference as willless spacing out is an 'endless calculus'.¹⁵ It is a movement of signification in play that fills the signifier.

So the most significant theoretical ideas of Derrida are that the literary text as an arrangement of signifiers is a gay play without any expectation of fulfilment and that this play is a movement of signification. If there is any fulfilment of the signifier at all, it is through this signification.

Derrida's distinction lies in elaborating the literary text and its signifier in terms of its own abundance obliterating the signified. Here he is at the wavelength of Lacan, who in his well-known symbol has defined the sign as S/s in which capital S stands for signifier and small s for signified.

Derrida's and Lacan's signifier, with its own abundance and annulment of signified or erasure of Being, is also the signifier of Jean-François Lyotard, who is the theorist of postmodernism. In his work *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, published in French in 1979 and in English translation in 1983, he elaborates the postmodern signifier as that which 'puts forward the unrepresentable in presentation itself'.¹⁶ It is not governed by pre-established rules. Its crusade is against 'totality'. Identifying himself with this mission of the signifier, Lyotard announces: 'Let us wage a war on totality, let us be witnesses to the unrepresentable; let us activate the difference, and save the honour of the name.'¹⁷

The post-structuralist and the postmodernist notions of signifier, empty, engaged in the presentation of the unrepresentable, structuring a differential suspending the accompaniment of will or desire, have ushered in a new era of literary theory. A possibility for understanding the literary text in a non-logocentric way has developed. If the text has no prior Being or rules to refer to, and its signifier generates its own essence through its gay game, then the text is a decentred monad that generates and radiates its energy through its special contextual arrangement. In spite of its being situated in its own cultural problematic, it tends even to erase that. For instance, let us take Thomas Mofolo's Sesotho novel *Chaka*, written around 1910.

The object of this novel is the passion and ambition of the great Zulu emperor Chaka. First, he is the son of passion born

out of his king-father Senzagakhona's irregular relationship with a woman, as he could not wait to bring her into a ritualized wedlock. Second, the son becomes fired with the ambition to establish an empire in which he is helped by a sorcerer, Isanusi, by injecting appropriate medicines into his body and by advising him to perform some rituals for the attainment of his objective. The most deadly advice is that Chaka has to kill the most beloved person whose blood is to be mixed with a medicine. Though Chaka realizes his ambition, yet at his peak he dies an alienated, broken and defeated man existentially. The entire novel operates not with any logical construct—rather its operator is a kind of metaphysical surrealism, a life-force's internalized movement that brings Chaka and Isanusi together. Both of them are instruments of that force—ideograms of an energy that cannot be reduced to a reason-bound form. The structure of the novel produces a metaphysicalized surrealist image, to take a clue from the well-known Africanist L. S. Senghor.¹⁸ But at the end, in the moral and existential defeat of Chaka, the absolute Dionysiac energy in which Africa is used to live is put to question. The constant tension between form or organizing an empire and the form-wrecking Dionysiac energy which is kept high-blown destabilizes the literary sign. The fictional sign here, by exhausting its own signified (abstraction of life-force), anticipates its limits but only by being what it is—that is, by being energetically situated in its cultural problematic. Thomas Mofolo's *Chaka*, thus, becomes an African signifier that, realizing itself through a tension in which a life-force dominates, ultimately draws a line around itself. This self-delimiting and culture-situated paradoxical structure makes this novel a decentred monad that cannot be hermeneuticized simply with the African paradigm. An intermixing of multicultural paradigms is called for.

Another classic example of how the literary text becomes a decentred monad and necessitates a non-logocentric paradigm is Whitman's text. Roy Harvey Pearce, a culture-oriented critic of America, once termed Whitman's text as American epic with an 'antinomian impulse', by which he meant a revolt within the puritanical paradigm; but it was Howard J. Waskow, who, in his *Explorations in Form*, published in 1966 (p. 14), suggested that Whitman was in fact working with two modes of

consciousness simultaneously—the monistic–organic, the birth of which was prepared by Kant, and the mechanistic–dualist, going back to Descartes, accepting the separateness of things. Both these modes impinge upon one another and qualify to generate a third mode that Waskow calls ‘bipolar unity’. In fact, in the last but one section of the ‘Song of Myself’ Whitman announces his contradiction:

Do I contradict myself?
Very well then I contradict myself,
(I am large, I contain multitudes.)¹⁰

These contradictory modes, the mechanist–dualist and the monistic–organic, which run simultaneously in Whitman, very effectively produce a sign that does not just hesitate about its signified, but annuls it—especially its reference to things *per se* or the organic–unitive Being. Whitman takes the reader beyond, but his drive to advance the reader to a Nothingness, if not abyss, has become possible by first going through what Roy Harvey Pearce has elaborated as the American paradigm—the culture’s way of theorizing the universe in contradictory modes—assimilating and synthesizing the best even if it is antagonistic. The point is that Whitman produces the unstable sign of the signifier with no specific signified by going through his culture system. That is how his text becomes a decentred monad—a unit of energy that radiates through its dis-unitive consciousness—though bringing its cultural seeing to a dead end. To comprehend this text that constantly takes the reader towards the Buddhist and Hindu modes, and even to the African sense of time if interpreted in John Mbiti’s way—*Sasa* (Swahili) flashing towards the past and future from the point of the present,²⁰ a special kind of synchrony—a larger critical theory is needed.

Walt Whitman’s text inspired the Panjabi poet and fiction-writer Puran Singh. He was magically fascinated by Whitman’s free verse and his tendency to circumvent the universe through a schizophrenic or contradictory two-modal consciousness, but when he adopted the free verse he transformed it. Though the two modes of Whitman with slight modifications, as accepting natural objects and sense in their ordinary beings and a meta-consciousness called ‘Guru-surt’, are intact in Puran Singh, still

the 'assertive' and participative strong 'I' of Whitman has been changed into Non-I or 'A-main'. Puran Singh's verse is organized by this Non-I and his characters like Icchran, Puran Bhagat and Sundran in his famous poem *Puran Bhagat* represent various aspects of Non-I or *Anāttā*. Icchran's maternal love for her much tortured saintly son Puran, falsely accused of having tried to rape his sexually frustrated stepmother Luna, is presented as Nirvikalpa Buddhist Samādhi (conceptless, intense concentration); Sundran, the lovelorn youthful princess who falls in love with the wandering yogi Puran, is presented as a yogini—the libidinal Freudian energy is transformed into a Buddhist-cum-Sikh energy in which libido is haloed by the willed divine.

This classic poem of Puran Singh, thus, frees free verse from Whitman's I-assertions by intensely participating in the otherness of his characters who approximate both social and cosmic tendencies. But in this transformative process Puran Singh's 'symbolic' characters, who grow to their statures internally, become signifiers and they free the poem from both the subjective and objective centres. Puran Singh has accomplished this by falling upon the resources of his cultural tradition. In other words, Puran Singh's decentred monad gets shaped by exhausting and liberating the creative and perceptive system of his own culture, but his effort cannot be appreciated unless the critical theory to deal with him includes in it the Western problematic and its resolution in Whitman, especially as it affected the creative medium.

What this discussion suggests is that the literary text becomes a decentred monad or a schizophrenic unit, radiating its special ironic, dualistic or, better, *viśiṣṭa-advaitic*, qualified non-dualistic, energy—to use this notion from Ramanuja—by being liberatively centred in its own cultural problematic. It responds to the contemporary paradigmatic crisis of its own discipline or of the various socio-economic formations, by stretching its own semiosis and poesis to the last limit. For that, a critical theory to explain this activity has to be *transcultural-non-logocentric*; otherwise it will bring back the same crisis-ridden paradigm and its presences, and undermine the text's liberative effort. It is especially true of the theory to be used for comparative studies. The matter of 'spiritual relations', 'in-

fluence', 'inspiration', 'affection', 'unity', etc. is to be re-considered. And that cannot be done unless the emphasis of the theory of comparative literature shifts from unity, semblance or identity to difference and emptiness. That means reconstructing the theory on how 'Dionysus is worked by difference'.

NOTES

1. Eric Auerbach, *Mimesis*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), pp. 443-4.
2. See Ernest R. Curtius, *Essays on European Literature*, trans. Michael Kowal (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973).
3. René Wellek, *Discriminations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), pp. 13-14.
4. Jacques Derrida, 'Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences', in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1973), pp. 278-9.
5. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 43.
6. See J. G. Merquior, *From Prague to Paris: A Critique of Structuralist and Post-Structuralist Thought* (London: Verso, 1986), p. 216.
7. Derrida, 'Force and Signification', in *Writing and Difference*, p. 28.
8. Merquior, *From Prague to Paris*, p. 217.
9. *Ecce Homo*, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, trans. and ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Viking Press, 1969), p. 273.
10. Ibid.
11. Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, p. 29.
12. Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982), p. 158.
13. Ibid., pp. 344-5.
14. Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, trans. David B. Elison (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p. 136.
15. Ibid., p. 135.
16. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), p. 81.
17. Ibid., p. 82.
18. See Sunday O. Anozie, *Structural Models and African Poetics: Towards a Pragmatic Theory of Literature* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 94.
19. Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*, ed. Sculley Bradley and Harold W. Blodgett (New Delhi: Prentice-Hall of India, 1986), p. 88.
20. See *Structural Models and African Poetics*, p. 55.

Comparative Literature: The Indian Context

NIRMALA JAIN

Comparative literature as a discipline implies transcending the frontiers of single languages and national literatures. For a comparatist, any literature is basically a literature which has to be studied with reference to other literatures, generally on a bi- or multilingual or national basis. After Goethe's proclamation in 1827 that national literature did not mean much any more and that the time for world literature was approaching, literary studies all over the world have gradually been moving towards deprovincialization, towards working together for a better literary and social consciousness. The growth of the departments of 'comparative studies' all over the world is, however, a twentieth-century phenomenon. In spite of the fact that during the Stalinist period, comparative literature was denounced as 'yet another form of bourgeois cosmopolitanism', the emphasis subsequently shifted back to coexistence. At a time when national exclusiveness and narrow-mindedness are being scorned at, and the march from provincial and national literatures is towards a universal literature, my attempt to confine this paper to Comparative Indian Literature alone warrants some clarification.

Before I proceed further, it would be relevant to ask the question whether it is only a matter of chance that Comparative Literature as a discipline in Indian universities has not flourished in the real sense, both quantitatively and qualitatively, to match with its development in the West. Against seven universities in Germany, all the major universities in France and quite a few more in Austria, Switzerland and East European countries like Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia, the

Soviet Union and as many as a hundred universities in North America alone, India cannot boast of even ten departments,* and a history of more than three decades. In fact, one should not feel shy of the hard fact that Comparative Literature as a subject of study has not yet taken root in the Indian academic system.

The procrastination has its roots in socio-political and economic determinants. All through the second half of the nineteenth and the first half of twentieth century, when the comparative method of literary studies was gradually gaining ground and flourishing in the West, India was under the yoke of colonial rule. What today appears to be an extremely complex multilingual literary situation was a multitude of vernaculars then, reduced to non-entities in spite of their wealth of written and oral literary traditions. The only Indian literature which enticed a number of Western Indologists and Orientalists as a cultural force to reckon with was Sanskrit. The written and oral traditions in other living languages evoked mainly a linguistic interest and provided material for surveys conducted in those areas. Later on, they served as a rich source of material for researchers in socio-anthropological fields, but that is another matter. The status accorded to the literatures in Indian languages in the academic system can be assessed by the fact that none of the modern Indian languages was thought to be a subject worth studying in Indian universities, at the post-graduate level, till the third decade of the twentieth century.†

The linguistic and literary situation that has evolved after Independence is peculiar and unparalleled. With fifteen recognized national languages, and innumerable spoken lan-

*[Jadavpur is the only university in India to have a full-fledged department of Comparative Literature. It was founded in 1956. The University of Delhi has an M.Phil. programme in Comparative Indian Literature, run by the Department of Modern Indian Languages. A few other universities have introduced one or two papers on comparative literature as part of their M.A. programme in English or in an Indian literature. One or two have also an M.Phil. now. Two universities have an 'English and Comparative Literature' department instead of a straight 'English' department—Madurai is one of them. South Gujarat University at Surat has just founded a comparative literature department, though its programme has not yet been announced.—Editors]

†[The teaching of modern Indian literatures at the postgraduate level began in 1919 when Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee, Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University, founded a department of Modern Indian Languages.—Editors]

guages with or without literary traditions, one gradually starts realizing that over the years a class of litterateurs and historians has emerged who are acting as dedicated and enthusiastic custodians of single literatures, each one keen to enhance the interest and position of its own constituency. Instead of comparing and complementing for fostering a better understanding of the multilingual awareness and consciousness, the champions of single literatures are found vying with each other for the status and supremacy once enjoyed by the literature of the ruling class. The multilingual consciousness, which has often been distinguished from a polyglot situation, is characterized by the paradoxical 'desire to be one and yet remain many'.

The business of conducting a comparative study of various literatures in the West and various national literatures in India is not quite the same. The fact that Indian literatures are a product of a multiracial and multicultural social-historical melange cannot be overlooked. Both those who have their roots in a common linguistic stock, and those who have stemmed from different linguistic stocks, share and are bound together by common sociocultural and historical bonds. The pertinent question is whether in order to get a real insight into this situation, a comparative study should or should not first operate on an intranational plane before moving on to an international plane. In other words, can any Indian national literature be understood as a singular entity in isolation, comparable to single non-Indian literatures? In this context, the fact that the impacts and influences on the Indian psyche have been more or less similar in various regions cannot be overlooked. There might have been some difference of degree and variation in chronology. In some cases it would be impossible to capture the spirit of a particular movement or a particular trend in its entirety, without reference to more than one literature. The case of *bhakti* in the medieval period and that of the renaissance in the modern age can be cited as examples.

This phenomenon is so peculiar to the Indian situation that any attempt to draw a parallel with the situation in Europe or with the multinational situation in the Soviet Union would be superficial. It can, however, be argued, and rightly, that the very political factor that was responsible for the suppression of vernaculars and their literatures is to be given credit for exercis-

ing an enormous influence on these very literatures for more than a century. Therefore, there can be no reckoning of any Indian literature without reference to this influence or impact. But, again, in this context a comparatist has to exercise caution. The approach of a comparatist dealing with the national psychology of the Third World countries has to be basically different from that of a French scholar, for instance, whose favourite theme is the reflection ('image' or 'mirage') of a nation or a national character in the mirror of another nation, and whose context is mainly European.

Political domination by a foreign nation may gradually, and probably unconsciously, nurture an inclination towards foreign things. This phenomenon is peculiar to those literatures that grow under political domination. The literary history in their case becomes an integral part of their political history.

The Indian situation is still more complex. The Indian author has a rich heritage of ancient literature preserved against many odds. He is not only emotionally committed to this heritage, but it has also become an obsession with him, guarding him consciously or unconsciously from Western influence. His psychology has to be seen in the light of an East-West tension, a tension, that is, between the natural built-in resistance and assertion of the indigenous and the temptation and aura of the modern and glamorous West. The whole question is somewhere linked with the crisis of identity. Hence, while defining the nature of the influence, it has to be borne in mind that the refractions and the metamorphosis which the influences undergo before they are reflected in another literature will be fundamentally different in this case from those in a one-to-one relationship between two or more literatures.

When I plead for the peculiarity of the Indian situation and stress the role of the indigenous elements, I should not be misunderstood to be propagating any kind of isolation and chauvinism. In fact the very essence of comparative literature is a cosmopolitan point of view. But it is one thing to study the tragic sense of Greek literature beside the pathos of Bhavabhūti's *Uttararāmacaritam*, and quite another to investigate the influence of the English Romantics like Shelley, Keats or Byron on Sumitranandan Pant. And it is yet another thing to consider

the influence of Rabindranath Tagore on Hindi romantic poetry, i.e. on 'Chhayavad'.

The study of 'parallels' and that of 'simultaneities' do not necessarily lead to tracking down influences. For anybody wanting to trace the unique characteristics of a work unconsciously starts comparing it almost automatically with similar works. But an identification of similarities does not necessarily mean discovering influences. It would in fact be difficult to claim that literary influence has already been unequivocally defined. But the basis for distinguishing a foreign influence as suggested by Joseph T. Shaw appears logical, particularly in the Indian context: 'An author may be considered to have been influenced by a foreign author when something from without can be demonstrated to have produced upon him and/or his works an effect his native literary tradition and personal development do not explain.'¹

For comparative literature in Indian universities the challenge is twofold—to study the elements of the native literary tradition with reference to foreign influence, and to study the various national literatures in the context of reciprocal influences. It is needless to add that the reciprocal relationship can only be appreciated on the basis of a perfect understanding of the common historical bond that plays the key role in the multilingual situation. Amiya Dev has explained this peculiar situation with the analogy of 'a pattern of various colours with links if one looks for them, but more than that, every single colour with an added common tinge'.² I would like to stretch the analogy a little further and compare the Indian situation with a collage, in which every unit has its own individual identity, but has a definite role in the bigger pattern. No unit can be appreciated singularly to the absolute exclusion of all others, and the neighbouring units mutually determine their characteristics and role. The bigger pattern, an amalgam of smaller units, assumes in itself the status of a single unit, which as 'Indian literature' is distinguishable from other literatures of the world. This concept can generate a lot of comparative studies. But the question is how to work them out.

A broad knowledge of several literatures is an accepted requirement for comparative literature. In the Indian situation a start may be made with one literature as a 'major' and two

others as 'minors'. In multilingual India, plurality is not limited to language alone; it extends to other areas of existence, social, religious, ethnic, etc. An event on a Pan-Indian level leaves behind an impact on the mind and life of the people more or less of the same quality in various regions. A sizeable area, therefore, overlaps each other in these literatures while reflecting and transmitting common influences, which is precisely the area of investigation for a scholar of comparative literature, though not the only one.

It has also been suggested that 'a recognizable Indian characteristic can be sorted out if all literatures of India are put through the sieve of thematic analysis'.³ It is a matter of common knowledge that a number of problems typical to the Indian society like the caste system, untouchability, religious superstitions, exploitation of women, middle class morality, rural poverty and urban unemployment, transition from an agrarian society to the urban-industrial situation, involving a concomitant transition from a traditional to a modern outlook—are all thematic areas that alone can provide valuable material for intranational comparison, not to mention the other spheres like author psychology, modes of expression, style, genres, etc.

My emphasis on intranational comparison is not for delimiting the perspective. In any case, as Henry H. H. Remak had observed in one of his articles, 'Comparative Literature superimposes a viable international perspective on literature seen as a national and personal creation . . .'.⁴ It only takes an effort to underline the peculiarity of the Indian situation, which, as Amiya Dev has rightly pointed out in the paper referred to above, is a multilingual and at the same time a Third World situation.

This peculiarity of the situation calls for evolving a corresponding method. The syllabus, the choice of overlapping areas, the literary acumen of those who are engaged in the task—all this probably requires a second look. From a syllabus drawn up at random, we have covered the long route to very ambitious programmes. But the role of 'intermediaries' is still a little more stressed than it probably should have been. Whereas the knowledge of more than one literature is a common requirement and practice among those who are engaged in the com-

parative study of literature in the West, the student of Indian universities can get away with a mastery of just one literature and that too of English alone. He either reads the literary texts through translation or gets away with reading not literature itself but about literature in another language. Translations in a comparative study are inevitable, particularly in the case of classical languages. But the question is, to what extent? An average Indian student of comparative literature rarely has direct access either to the classical texts or to the modern literatures in more than one language. The handicap is obvious.

In the absence of direct linguistic access to the text which is the actual basis for comparison, there is always an apprehension that the appreciation may be superficial and the conclusions derived not authentic. It would be relevant to quote Erwin Koppen, though from a different context: 'The role of Jack of all literary trades ill becomes a scholar of Comparative Literature.'⁵ Another doubt that very often comes to one's mind is whether we have really been able to define and demarcate the nature and scope of comparative literary studies in India. What kind of studies does the term suggest? The validity of this doubt can be proved by drawing up a list of the subjects on which articles appear in journals devoted to comparative literary studies. From anything to almost anything else can be passed off as a problem of comparative literature, so it seems.

We may have reservations and doubts about definitions, scope, nature, method, etc., but definitely not about the desirability of adopting and promoting comparative literature in India, as a major area of literary studies.

NOTES

1. Joseph T. Shaw, 'Literary Indebtedness and Comparative Literature', in Newton P. Stallknecht and Horst Frenz (eds.), *Comparative Literature: Method and Perspective* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1961), p. 65.
2. Amiya Dev, 'Comparative Indian Literature', in *The Idea of Comparative Literature in India* (Calcutta: Papyrus, 1984), p. 14.
3. Nabaneeta Dev Sen, *Counterpoints: Essays in Comparative Literature* (Calcutta: Prajna, 1984), p. 7.

4. Henry H. H. Remak, 'A Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages: Progress and Problems', *Synthesis*, III (1976), p. 13.
5. Erwin Koppen, 'Literary Theory in Comparative Literature and in the Study of Separate Literatures', in Naresh Guha (ed.), *Contributions to Comparative Literature: Germany and India* (Calcutta: Jadavpur University, 1973), p. 27.

Indian Comparative Literature and Its Pedagogical Implications

DEVINDER MOHAN

Comparative literature calls for the voice of finitude, the concrete culture of man as holy particulars (in Blake's sense) through history. It calls for the spell between orality and writing lost in single literatures in their islandlike autonomies. It calls for a dialogue while maintaining the individuality of cultures. It quests for differences to keep the dialogue going and hopes that 'I' and 'Thou' will never be one, and yet what is human in one culture will be transmitted to the other. It encounters texts across differences as well as identities, structures to maintain the mobility of man's finitude, to keep hearing his 'inexhaustible voice, still talking'.¹

Comparative literature and the finitude of being may synchronize in the intertextual text which Coleridge had thought about in the romantic period, a text not merely of literary influences but of the regenerative force that comes from what Michel Foucault has called the 'Archive' of sciences and humanities. Biological sciences, economics and philology deal with man's finitude, a kind of comparative form that creates its own episteme through the configuration of these disciplines. In his empirical knowledge man confronts the humanly circumstantial limitations of history as well as their transcendence. He creates the episteme for his surviving power which refers to the simultaneity of two processes embodied in 'an empirico-transcendental doublet'.² This episteme sets in motion his progressive totality towards gathering of what is divine in the worldly texts of various disciplines.

In the pedagogy of comparative literature the study of Western literatures is programmed in some American univer-

sities in capsular units, either as a genre study—drama, poetry or fiction as broad targets, or as the study of a historical age or movement, such as the Renaissance, Romanticism or Symbolism. In concentrating on a genre or a historical age, the student is grounded in a literature of his choice, his major. Then, according to the intercontinental importance of the genre or the age, two other literatures are taken as minors for combing out data within the programmed capsule. Under this umbrella also comes the study of literature and the other arts—literature and music or literature and painting, for instance.

But René Wellek has been concerned with the historical influence of Germany; René Etiemble has revived the study of the Middle Ages in the modern context; and Harry Levin has looked into refractions, into how the cultural mythologizing of a text is refracted under different slants. These three doyens of comparative literature have recast Western literary history in a certain collectivity of time and place. For Wellek the place is always Germany; not being able to overcome his nostalgia of place even on the imaginative level, he believes that Coleridge's critical theory was Kant reproduced in English. But Coleridge was more imaginative than Wellek in creating his own text within English literary history out of what Geoffrey Hartman calls the 'genius loci'³ of England, with reference, of course, to Plato, Aristotle and other Europeans—Kant for example—in the recasting crucible of the present. Similarly, Etiemble is rooted in France and Harry Levin in America for the 'genius loci' of their individual place and time, though the latter is more flexible for comparative effects and cultural recasting in the making of the text. Wellek merely accumulates facts and makes judgement in terms of their fixed value.

Let us consider the practical situation in the Indian and the Western academic world. In Indian universities, as also in many American universities, the English departments are not open to comparative studies. It is high time Indian universities evolved a comparative literature programme combining the literatures of the Indian languages offered by them. However, there is no harm in including such areas as literature and the other arts, or literature and ideas, or literature and anthropology for obvious interdisciplinary reasons. Indeed, what we often study is how to read, and the theories of reading emerge

from the context, the symbiotic system of the culture that makes the text. Art and literature have their own grammar, but an interplay of their cultural codes can be recognized through the voice of finitude that a discipline communicates. Blake's engravings and poems have their own codes. The comparative context emanates from the voices of finitude, each contributing to the dialogue. But we will be destroying the forms of the engravings and the poems if we reduce them to a content or to paraphrased information.

Thematology is a reductive science. It reduces two or three works from different languages or cultures to a common content. But literature survives as form. We may study Goethe's *Faust* and Marlowe's *Faustus* together, but the emotion evoked by the historical condition confronted by Goethe was certainly not the same as the emotion dramatized by Marlowe for an Elizabethan audience. Either emotion produced a particular form of drama: one is of a romantic temper, the other renaissance. Thematology only allows the content to destroy what the writer has transformed through his own subjectivity and the exteriority of the historical condition he has objectivized. It ignores the tradition of orality, the myth and the culture in each case. What the scholar needs to do is to maintain the artist in him and heed the voice of finitude through the difference or orality which the creative writer has embodied in his own manner.

Each writer gives form to the circumstantial reality of his space and time. And in one way or the other, the divine is suggested, through the proportion of the finitude and the being offered to the writer, and by way of the rupture he causes and the dispersion he achieves in making his form. This proportion might be the writer's creation of his episteme needed to communicate with historical time and posterity, episteme arrived at through two or three oralities, to the point of making his own in terms of the text.

Considering the prospects of comparative literature in Indian universities, it becomes imperative to put it under the umbrella of Indian literatures and Indian arts in terms of the proportional episteme of finitude and being. Studying devotional poetry in Indian languages makes sense, but teachers from all the related disciplines must come out of their isolated cells to

offer help in comprehension. The scholar can explore in terms of his 'major' literature so that he arrives at a certain form of empirico-transcendental doublet towards the episteme of finitude and being to keep pace with modernism and post-modernism in all literatures. This can be done by the study of semiotics.

Semiotics covers the whole range of codified signs from traffic signals to the complex process of reading. Any text is confronted as an intertextual phenomenon emerging out of cultural rites and symbols which function as codified signs. Modern man is himself the maker of the text by codifying the anthropological complexity of old myths in terms of the present place and time, by coping with the territorial reality of history with the shaping act of his mind. It is the structural propensity of man that codifies the elements of reality for the functional purpose of making the circumstantial reality intelligible. As Terence Hawkes says in his study of Vico:

... the physics of man 'reveals that men have created themselves', that 'the world of civil society has certainly been made by men, and that principles are therefore to be found within the modification of our human mind.' Man seen thus is characteristically and pre-eminently a 'maker', and New Science will thus concentrate on the close study of making or 'poeticizing'.⁴

The context of the maker lies in the making of a text out of the Word through worldliness within its circumstantial reality of the given time and space. All the disciplines of social sciences and humanities present a certain sense of immediacy, a presentational form of worldly reality. They communicate with each other in the mind of man, this worldliness being an approximation to the divine. In creating a common episteme through them, man passes from one configuration to another as his functional motion through history for the maker's act of fulfilment. This poeticizing capacity in naming the objects of historical reality in terms of his unique structural and functional understanding of things works through the semiotic relationship between things, words, symbols, images, archetypes, and further, between man's body and the sciences it involves, and time and the epistemological world they embody. The sciences and humanities are the signifiers of worldly reality which man

makes through encoding the finitude of life, labour and language.

In the Indian context, the historical reality is steeped in religious mythology, since man's life-force is generated through seasonal festivals, rites and rituals. Our philosophy, anthropology and literature are rooted in the worldly reality of the divine, the reality which the student of Indian comparative literature can understand by his poeticizing process of making a structural relationship between all the literatures and arts he opts for. 'The mental language', says Terence Hawkes, 'manifests itself as man's universal capacity not only to formulate structures, but also to submit his own nature to the demands of their structuring.'⁵ Indian comparative literature should have its own grammar of structuring, its encoding system, and create its own episteme of Indian worldliness. A comprehensive programme of comparative literature in India will consist in Indian studies, including biological and social sciences, but highlighting literatures, arts, and possibly linguistics, philosophy and history. The student can select one literature as his ground discipline and two or more philosophically or historically based literatures as significant accessories. In this context Indian writing in English seems to have a relevance. The Indian writer in English makes his own text within the English language without divorcing the mythology from its Indianness. Indian art films too use many of these disciplines by the codification of visual images. The images name what cannot be named in the parameters of language—divine flickers in the worldliness of mad historicity.

Finally, the text with regard to the creative episteme is already in the world, both the writer's and the reader's text, and is not under an erasure as proposed by Derrida. Since it is *in* the world, it is inevitably within the implications of the cosmos, therapeutically, existentially or in the direct act of divinization. Marx works it out from within man's potential to effect his economics. The text has a generative power which originates from the writer's poetic act of making it. This power perpetuates language against death, even through the annihilation of its own historicity. This power is more active in the Indian literary text, since culture and religion have never been divorced in any part of India. Even in the world of Beckett,

Camus and Sartre where God is dead, the transcendental doublet of the Indian reader will make him think of his own text of their text, his own context, his own episteme. What does Shelley mean when he says that art is imageless in *Prometheus Unbound*? Where does Dante's *Paradiso* lead us today? What is T. S. Eliot's experiential process in *The Waste Land* and *Four Quartets*? And what about our twentieth century writers, such as Tagore and Munshi Premchand? Does not their text generate the reader's own context, his intertextual episteme? How can we afford not to read them comparatively, even if through translation, and arrive at a dialogue between finitude and being? Only with the making of his comparative episteme does man maintain the banner of immortality by his inexhaustible voice, still talking.

NOTES

1. Quoted from William Faulkner's Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech, by Howard Mumford Jones in *Revolution and Romanticism* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press, Harvard University, 1974), p. 464.
2. For 'archive' see Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), part III, particularly ch. 5. Also consider the following statement from IV, 2: 'Archaeology is not in search of inventions; . . . it is to uncover the regularity of a discursive practice. A practice that is in operation, in the same way, in the work of their predecessors; a practice that takes account in their work not only of the most original affirmations . . . but also of those that they borrowed, even copied, from their predecessors' (pp. 144-5).

For the other concepts see Foucault's *Order of Things*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (London: Tavistock Publications, 1970). On p. 318 he says: ' . . . more fundamentally, our cultures crossed the threshold beyond which we recognize our modernity when finitude was conceived in an interminable cross-reference with itself. Though it is true, at the level of the various branches of knowledge, that finitude is always designated on the basis of man as a concrete being and on the basis of the empirical forms that can be assigned to his existence, nevertheless at the archaeological level, which reveals the general, historical *a priori* of each of those branches of knowledge, modern man—that man assignable in his corporeal, labouring, and speaking existence—is possible only as a figuration of finitude. Modern culture can conceive of man because it conceives of the finite on the basis of itself.' Foucault further writes on p. 319: 'Two kinds of analysis then came into being. There are those which operate within the space of body, and . . . function as a sort of transcendental

aesthetic; . . . There was also analysis that . . . functioned as a sort of transcendental dialectic; by this means it was shown that knowledge had historical, social, or economic conditions, that it was formed within the relations that are woven between men . . .'

3. See Geoffrey Hartman, *Beyond Formalism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), particularly the chapters on 'Romantic Poetry and Genius Loci' and 'Toward Literary History'.
4. Terence Hawkes, *Structuralism and Semiotics* (London: Methuen, 1977), p. 13.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 15. The idea is Vician and is preceded by a quote from Vico: 'There must in the nature of human institutions be a mental language common to all nations which uniformly grasps the substance of things feasible in human social life and expresses it with as many diverse modifications as these same things may have diverse aspects.'

Why Comparative Indian Literature?

SISIR KUMAR DAS

Since the beginning of this century a group of scholars have been trying to project the idea of an Indian literature, emphasizing the underlying unity of themes and forms and attitudes among the various literatures produced in different Indian languages during the last three thousand years or so. This is partly a manifestation of the Indian intellectual's anxiousness to discover the essential threads of unity in our multilingual and multireligious culture. Its impact on our literary studies, still fragmented into smaller linguistic units, is extremely limited, and certainly the idea of an Indian literature as conceived by Sri Aurobindo and others has failed to provide us with a critical framework to study Indian literatures together, except in viewing Indian literatures as expressions of a common heritage. Nevertheless, it has encouraged some of our scholars to identify certain themes and ideas and to see their ramifications in different literatures of India. Laudable though these attempts are in discovering the basic unity of the Indian creative mind, they are made at the risk of ignoring the plurality of expressions in our creative life.

Very recently another group of scholars is talking of comparative Indian literature, obviously to add a new dimension to our literary studies, and probably to create a framework within which the relations between various Indian literatures can be worked out. The word 'comparative', however, has created some confusion and one wonders whether it is being used to lend some respectability to the study of Indian languages by linking it up with comparative literature, still a Western discipline, or indeed to indicate the proper framework within which Indian literatures can be studied. The term Comparative Indian Literature, like comparative literature, is not self-

explanatory, and it is necessary not only to define the term 'Indian literature' but also to defend the necessity of the qualifier. If Indian literature means the sum total of literatures written in Indian languages, then it can hardly serve as a significant literary category. In order to make it a significant category, Indian literature must be taken as a complex of literary relations and any study of Indian literature must reflect that. It is not an enquiry into their unity alone, but also a study in their diversity which enables one to understand the nature of literary facts.

But it is not the precision of the nomenclature alone which demands our attention. We must try to find out the exact nature of the relation between comparative literature and comparative Indian literature. We must also try to see if there is an express necessity to study Indian literary relations within a comparative framework. Or, in other words, can an area of enquiry clearly demarcated by linguistic and political boundaries serve the basic demands of comparative literature? One can further ask, does not the area identified as Indian literature impose certain restrictions on the investigator and precondition him? Does it not, for example, make it obligatory for him to look for certain things because of an imposed expectancy of parallels and analogies? And, finally, why should a scholar of literature prefer Indian literature to comparative literature, which promises a greater scope and a wider perspective?

Comparative literature emerged as a new discipline to counteract the notion of the autonomy of national literatures. Its ultimate goal, though it is doubtful whether that can ever be achieved, is to visualize the total literary activities of man as a single universe. The minimum requisite of a comparative study is to start with at least two literatures, but this binary concern is hardly sufficient to meet the full demands of comparative literature, which views literatures produced in all languages and in all countries as an indivisible whole. A comparatist has to extend the area of investigation not only beyond one language and literature, but to as many as possible. The main dilemma of the comparatist, then, is to reconcile his idea of literature as a single universe of verbal expression with his ability to study it in its totality. Whatever be his professed aim, he has to make compromises and to delimit his area of investi-

gation according to his ability. This is one of the reasons why every comparatist is so anxious to make a serious distinction between comparative literature and world literature.

When Goethe spoke about *Weltliteratur* instead of European literature in 1827, his famous quatrain on the *Śakuntalā* was thirty-six years old and his *West-Östlicher Divan* eight years. And three years later he would be writing *Chinesisch-Deutsche Jahres und Tagezeiten*. A poet who attempted to bring together the literatures of different civilizations was also the first man in history to speak of *Weltliteratur*. 'National literature is now rather an unmeaning term', said Goethe in a conversation with Eckermann on 31 January 1827; 'the epoch of world-literature is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach.'¹ Goethe did not tell us how to hasten the approach of world literature nor did he say what exactly it meant. But we assume that by *Weltliteratur* he meant the memorable works in all languages of the world, rather than the assemblage of all literatures. The early exponent of Indian literature, too, must in all probability have meant the great works in the different languages of India, those which had withstood the test of time, rather than the total mass of writing in all Indian languages.

A comparatist is hardly in a position to exercise any aesthetic judgement in choosing the best works in all the languages of the world. He is concerned mainly with the relationships, the resemblances and differences between national literatures; with their convergences and divergences. He has to work within a rigorous framework to avoid subjective predilections and personal preferences. But at the same time he wants to arrive at a certain general understanding of literary activities of man and to help create a universal poetics. Goethe wanted the common reader to come out of the narrow confines of his language and geography and to enjoy the finest achievements of man. The comparatist also wants to come out of the confines of language and geography, but not so much to identify the best in all literatures as to understand the relationships between literatures in their totality. His goal too is 'world literature', not in the sense that Goethe or Rabindranath Tagore had used it, but in the sense of all literary traditions. The comparatist knows that comparative literature is a method of investigation, while world literature, as Goethe meant, is a body of valuable literary works.

He also knows that his method of investigation is not different from that used within a single literature. Comparative literature differs from the study of single literatures not in method, but in matter, attitude and perspective. It can go on extending its area of operation—its ultimate limit is the literatures of the whole world. Its strength and its weakness lie in its cosmopolitanism. ✓

Yet for the last hundred years the Western comparatist has kept himself restricted to Western literatures. If one goes through the corpus of works, already enormous in size, produced by him, one would wonder whether he is aware of the existence of any literatures other than his own. How is it that the votary of cosmopolitanism in literary study is a pathetic victim of parochialism? The contact between the literatures of the West and the East began very early in history. Europe came to know of Hebrew literature the day it accepted Christianity. The *Pañcatantra* reached Europe through its Arabic and Syrian versions before the Renaissance. La Fontaine in the second edition of his *Fables* (1678) acknowledged his debt to Pilpay. Europe's acquaintance with Arabic was even earlier. The court at Cordova in Spain in the eleventh century was a centre of Arabic literature; Spanish Arab poetry—particularly the works of Zaydun of Cordova (1003–70), Ibn Hazon (994–1063) or Mutamid—is now an integral part of the literary history of Spain. And by the end of the eighteenth century Europe discovered Sanskrit, which brought about a revolution in linguistics; and even in crude translation, ancient Indian works made a deep impact on some of the finest minds of the Western world. When comparative literature was established in the universities of Europe and America, translations of many works in Chinese and Japanese, and of course in Arabic and Persian, were available in European languages. François Jost admits that 'Western criticism . . . is still reluctant to integrate into the *corpus litteratur*, the literatures of so-called exotic continents, for no reason, however, other than ignorance of exotic civilizations and languages.'² But it cannot be only because of ignorance; it is more because of indifference, if not because of prejudice against these 'exotic civilizations' to some extent. To plead ignorance of Eastern literature may be a euphemism for Macaulayean arrogance; but it is also to disdain the labours of

hundreds of European scholars and translators and poets who worked on Arabic and Persian and Sanskrit and Chinese and Japanese, not to speak of other younger languages. The result is that comparative literature in the West began as comparative Western literature, and it remains so even today.

I am ready to admit that the charge of Eurocentrism against the Western comparatist is unfair and that his choice of European literatures as the main area of investigation has been prompted more by pragmatism than by prejudice against Oriental literatures. Reacting to Henry Remak's definition of comparative literature which indeed embraces a very wide field, and Etiemble's call for widening the scope of comparative literature, Ulrich Weisstein expressed his hesitation to 'extend the study of parallels to phenomena pertaining to two different civilizations'.³ The academic justification for excluding 'Oriental literatures' from comparative literature in the West comes from the necessity to avoid 'all ahistorical parallels based solely on speculation'.⁴ Although there is no reason why such studies will necessarily be based on speculation, one concedes the necessity of delimiting the area of comparative literature on the basis of certain principles. And if the criterion of *civilization* be accepted as a sound one, the European comparatist is within his rights to make Western literatures the sole area of his investigation. If he prefers to remain ignorant about other literatures, we need not worry. But if we have our comparative literature comprising the study of Indian literatures, that must be as valid as comparative literature in the West.

One can argue that comparative Western literature is the study of different national literatures, while comparative Indian literature is the study of literatures of one nation, or, according to some, of one national literature written in many languages. Is not comparative Indian literature, then, a retrograde step so far as the basic premise of comparative literature is concerned? When Europe tried to define the scope of comparative literature in terms of national literatures, it thought only of European nation-states which were, with the exception of Switzerland and Belgium, monolingual. Today, when we have a nation-state like India with many languages, or a country like the Soviet Union consisting of several nationalities speaking different languages, the principle of relationship between

national literatures needs revision. Neither language nor political boundary nor culture can be the sole criterion. The English and the Americans use the same language but they have different national literatures. Yet no comparatist would regard a study of British literature and American literature as comparative literature proper. Do French writings in Belgium, Switzerland and Canada form a part of French literature? Are Indian English writings a part of English literature? What will be our criterion, language or nationality? There is hardly any dependable criterion. Taking all this into consideration, comparative literature has to be both intralinguistic and interlinguistic. A study of the interrelation between Canadian French literature and French literature, or of that between American and British literature cannot be kept out of comparative literature simply because such studies are intralinguistic. Similarly a study of Bengali and Hindi cannot be dismissed from comparative literature because they form parts of one national literature. The binary dimensions of comparative literature will be determined at times in terms of nationality and culture, and at other times in terms of linguistic history. Political boundaries are flexible and are redrawn quite often. The identification of a literature merely on the criterion of political boundary or even nationality is hardly sound. Language, though more dependable than any other criterion, is also not foolproof, as one language can be the medium of two literatures, e.g. British and American. If, however, we agree to make language the sole criterion for the identification of literatures, we will certainly gain one kind of homogeneity, perhaps a more tangible one; but the idea of cultural homogeneity, on which Western comparative literature rests, will fall apart. When the very idea of national literature is being eroded from within, because of changes on the political and linguistic scene, comparative literature has to abandon that idea altogether. Even if the exponents of comparative literature still insist on the study of relationship between different national literatures rather than on literatures of any group of people, then they have to come to terms with nations which have many literatures or with national literatures written in many languages. India provides a case in point.

When I plead the case of comparative Indian literature as a

valid area of comparative literature, I do so not because comparative literature in the West is exclusively a study of Western literatures. We should try to resist all parochialism in literary studies, whether it emanates from the West or from the East. The validity of comparative Indian literature can be argued from two directions. Whatever be the goal of comparative literature, it must have a *terra firma*, a solid ground. Indian literatures, produced in Indian languages like Hindi or Tamil, Marathi or Assamese, alone provide that solid ground to start with. Literature deals with the concrete, not with abstractions. It is born of language and yet it goes beyond language; it is nourished by a culture. Its meaning and significance comes out of its relation with that culture. Any attempt towards a literary cosmopolitanism neglecting the literature or literatures that are components of a cultural history is bound to turn into diletantism. The lesson we must learn from the Western comparatist is the lesson of vigilance against diletantism. Our comparative literature must be comparative Indian literature because nothing else can be the basis for our literary study. This is not chauvinism, but only an affirmation of the relation between literature and people. We cannot study literature as a body of impersonal knowledge without any relation to the people or to the time to which we belong.

But the question can still be asked: Will not the study of Indian literatures alone breed a kind of literary patriotism or critical parochialism which must be avoided? The nature of Indian literature as evidenced by the history of the Indian people can help to provide an answer to this important question. Multilingualism is a fact of Indian society and of Indian literature. This multilingualism appears bewildering to the foreign students of India, and certainly occasions a grave concern in our politicians. But the literary history of India is a history of multilingual literary activity. Not only have different languages interacted with each other, giving rise to new literary styles, such as *manipravāla*, but they have also given birth to a new language and literature, such as Urdu. Not only have writers used two languages simultaneously, their mother tongue and a classical language, or a foreign language along with their native speech; but switched from one language to another, from Urdu to Hindi, from Oriya to Bengali, from

Marathi to Kannada, or from English to Bengali. Not only do we have texts which have been claimed as their own by different linguistic groups, for example, the *Charya* songs, or the songs of Mirabai; but texts have been written in more than one language, for example, the Sanskrit plays. There is hardly any other society we know of where languages belonging to so many families have operated side by side and interacted with each other for so many centuries.

But what is perhaps more significant for the student of literature is the frequent interaction between India and other civilizations. The relations between India and Greece, or India and China have yet to be investigated by literary scholars. The impact of Perso-Arabic literature on Indian letters, an impact which had its beginnings with the arrival of Sufi saints, and the interaction between Persian and various Indian literatures, encourage the Indian student to go beyond his geographical confines. The historical contact between two civilizations, the Indian and the Middle Eastern, and later on, the European, makes it imperative for any serious student of Indian literature to study the literary traditions of other countries. Any student of any single Indian literature, not to speak of the Indian comparatist, is obliged to go beyond his own literature, and quite often to study his own literature in relation to a literature belonging to a different civilization. The inherent nature of Indian literature, or of Indian literatures, demands wide literary perspective and there is no reason why the Indian comparatist should confine himself to his own literatures exclusively. Modern Indian literatures, exposed as they are to various thought currents and literary traditions coming from various parts of the world, can hardly allow any serious student to rest content with a narrow world. Comparative Indian literature not only justifies the need for literary study, but it provides the comparative study of literature with a new range and vision. The Indian contact with Western literatures is not confined to English alone. It is difficult to study a literature like Konkani without a reference to Portuguese; for Portuguese had a direct impact on the Indian languages spoken in Goa. The innumerable translations from European languages, French and Russian in particular, in various Indian languages, speak not only of the enthusiastic response of an enlightened readership in our

country but also recounts the story of a deep relationship between those literatures and ours. A text like the *Meghanadvadh Kavya*, unique in the history of literary relations involving two different civilizations, or the emergence of forms like *tragedy* and the *novel* in India, throws a challenge to the Indian comparatist to study Indian literature in relation to ancient Greek and modern European literature respectively. Indian literature is not merely Indian.

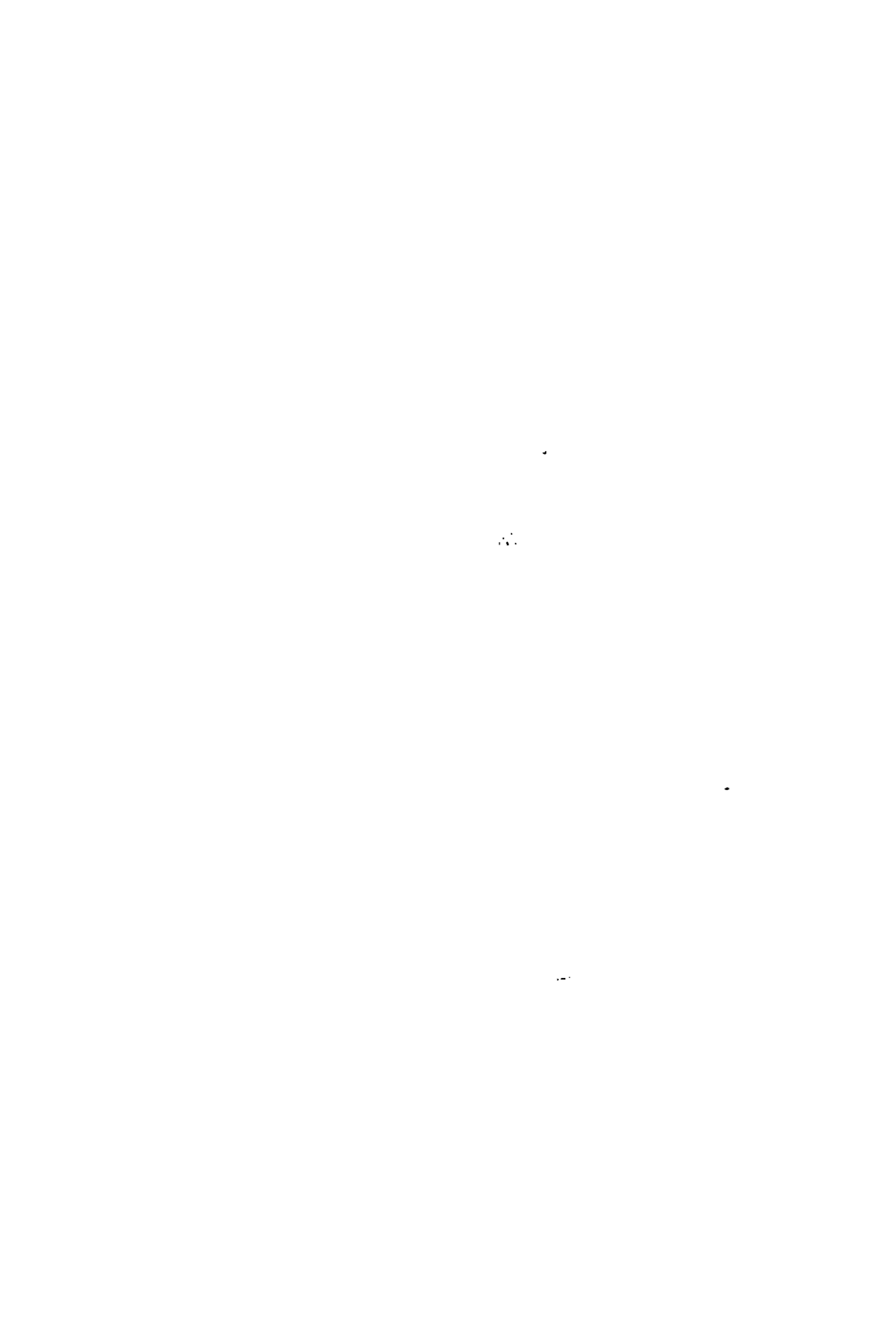
In a recent article, 'Towards Comparative Indian Literature', Amiya Dev said, 'Comparison is right reason for us because, one, we are multilingual, and two, we are Third World.'⁵ The fact of multilingualism is now more or less appreciated by Indian scholars. The Third World situation that lends Indian comparative literature a greater validity may need further comments. Professor Dev points out in this paper that the tools of Western comparison are hardly adequate to deal with our literary situation. For example, the categories 'influence' and 'imitation' and 'reception' and 'survival' need serious modification to suit the Third World literary situation. 'Influence' in our case is not confined to two authors or two texts, but is of entire literatures upon each other, and involved with larger questions of socio-political implications. The Third World situation has imposed certain psychological restrictions on us. Not only did we learn to venerate the language and literature of our colonial masters and were happy to be influenced by them, but we also believed in the infallibility of Western literary categories and applied them to our own literatures in order to gain respectability. In order to make literary studies free from these psychological restrictions, we need to look at our literatures from within, so that we can also respond to the literature of other parts of the world without any inhibition or prejudice. Our idea of comparative literature will emerge only when we take into account the historical situation in which we are placed. Our journey is not from comparative literature to comparative Indian literature, but from comparative Indian literature to comparative literature.

NOTES

1. Goethe, *Conversations with Eckermann*, trans. John Oxenford.
2. François Jost, *Introduction to Comparative Literature* (Indianapolis and New York: Pegasus, 1974), p. 29.
3. Ulrich Weisstein, *Comparative Literature and Literary Theory: Survey and Introduction* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1973), p. 7.
4. Horst Rüdiger, editorial remarks in *Arcadia*, 1 (1966), p. 3.
5. Amiya Dev, 'Towards Comparative Indian Literature', in K. A. Koshy (ed.), *Towards Comparative Indian Literature* (Aligarh: Department of Modern Indian Languages, Aligarh Muslim University, 1987), p. 19.



II Interliterariness



The Bonds and Bounds of a Literary Tradition

LACHMAN M. KHUBCHANDANI

Tradition provides a linguistic-cultural landscape in which a work of art is understood and appreciated. It gets directly related to the issues of *identity*—the roots. Any tradition, particularly a literary tradition, acknowledges an *organic unity* on the time-scale. The binding force of a literary tradition, in Kantian terms the 'collective consciousness' as conveyed through creative expression, can be identified with the help of various parameters, such as the linguistic structure, genres and styles, themes, cultural milieu, philosophical vision, ideology and geophysical space (country, region, continent). In this paper I confine myself to two such parameters, namely, language and culture, and discuss certain methodological issues of delineating the *boundaries* and identifying the *binding core* of a literary tradition.

The 'literate' world generally treats language in everyday life as a 'crystallized entity' with a distinct tradition often asserted in the form of the 'genius' of language, whose authentic version is embodied in its literary heritage, writing system, grammatical description, lexicon and other standardizing processes. Qualities of language in a literary creation are, however, quite different from those required in actual communication. A literary creation is an 'artefact'—utilizing speech as its raw material and crystallizing it within a language 'boundary'; it is distinguished from its use for everyday interaction, which is taken to be a 'fact'. To illustrate, in story-telling the context is not available as a fact, but is reconstructed and imagined through the use of language as an artefact; one carries a kind of aesthetic impression of the *designed* texture.

There has been a debate in linguistics concerning the divergent characteristics of 'speech process' as an ongoing activity, on the one hand, and 'language entity' as a social artefact, on the other. Such interplay of centripetal and centrifugal factors in a community provides a base for the natural growth of living language. In everyday life the use of language signifies the dialectics of our fitting the external world into the world of our own. 'The symbolic representation of experience', says Elizabeth Grugeon, 'whether in children's play or our own gossip, is of the same order as that of the novel, the poem or the song; all of these modes enable the onlooker to contemplate the possibilities and consequences of the experience portrayed.'¹ We must at the same time recognize with James Britton that 'while there is a continuity between gossip and literature, there is also a distinction. The poetic utterance is a construct or artefact, verbal object; gossip fulfils an immediate and expressive function: expressive language is loosely structured, free to fluctuate. However, both enable us to stand back and review the possibilities of experience.'²

In the course of time the written culture in contemporary societies, fortified with literature, has got isolated from the oral tradition, which is endowed with a rich cultural milieu of traditional societies.³ At this stage, it is necessary to take note of the characteristics of a continuum which runs from the structured poetic utterances to the expressions projected through 'folk' events, through creative expressions in school children's writings as well as in Great Literature.

This distinction makes us aware of the apparent paradox in the language use of plural societies. Very often the crystallizing of the preferred speech, guided mainly by literary styles and pressures from the elite in a community, helps in asserting the 'autonomy' of a particular variety (or varieties) in all domains of communication. Hindi and Urdu represent an interesting case where two socio-cultural styles of the same speech—Khariboli—belonging to the same region are identified as distinct language 'institutions'. These two *Ausbau* languages emerge by independent development, a 'malleable' characteristic of language as a communication device, in the same region from a common base, loosely known as Hindustani.

The distinction between standard Hindi and standard Urdu

is marked by the emphasis on allegiance to two different literary traditions and writing systems—Devanagari and Perso-Arabic. Linguistically, the differences between the two hinge mainly on the patterns of borrowing, Hindi drawing on Sanskrit, and Urdu on Perso-Arabic sources for their respective 'high' vocabularies. These borrowings have, to a certain extent, subsequently effected the phonological and derivational features of the two standards; but both still retain the common inflectional system, syntax and general lexicon. Patterns of borrowing in both these standard languages (Hindi and Urdu) are not as compartmentalized as are those of two distinctly prescribed literary standards of a Yugoslav language, Serbo-Croatian. Serbian is written in the Cyrillic script, and its literary tradition is marked by a rugged mountainous sensibility, the Slav Orthodox ethos and 'Oriental' Turkish influence during the medieval period. On the other hand, Croatian is written in the Roman script, and its literary sensibility cherishes the delicate imagery woven around the coastal and island environs, the Roman Catholic ethos, and 'Occidental' Germanic influences imbibed through the Austro-Hungarian empire.⁴

Though in socio-political terms, Serbo-Croatian (or Croato-Serbian, as insisted on by some Croatians for the sake of parity) is recognized as one language (with two scripts)—the main official language of Yugoslavia—Serbian (in Cyrillic) and Croatian (in Roman) are regarded as two independent literary traditions, characterizing a 'bi-modal' standardizing process within one language as an expression of their 'composite' linguistic identity. On the South Asian scene, however, Hindi and Urdu, though two styles of the same linguistic code, are recognized as two 'autonomous' language institutions with distinct political and cultural identities. In everyday communication one notices that Hindi and Urdu speakers, on the basis of diverse family and regional backgrounds, and with different social attitudes and types of education, can admix varied Sanskrit and Perso-Arabic characteristics with enormous possibilities as mere stylistic variations in speech and script. 'Hindi and Urdu therefore might best be characterized not in terms of actual speech, but as norms of ideal behaviour in the sociologist's sense.'⁵ This phenomenon highlights the arbitrariness

of demarcating the bounds of polygenetic traditions.

A plural society like India shows a considerable variation in speech through the ages, even across languages, related to the *identity* and *purpose* of interaction. For example, in Sanskrit plays royal male characters speak 'formal standard' Sanskrit (etymologically, 'well-cultivated' speech), royal females speak 'colloquial standard' Prakrit ('natural' speech) and commoners speak 'grassroots' Apabhramsha ('contaminated' speech). During the medieval period in Hindi *bhakti* poetry, the Awadhi variety was cultivated for the poetry on Rama and the Braj variety for the poetry on Krishna throughout the north-central Hindi belt.

During the course of history, pluralistic communities in India have organized their multilingual repertoire through various processes of language contact, such as code-switching and pidginization. *Sant* poets like Kabir, Nanak, Namdev, Mirabai, Farid, Shah Latif have expressed their devotion to the *nirguna* through a mixed genre called *Sadhukādi* with varying bases of Khariboli, Braj, Awadhi, Panjabi, Sindhi, Marathi, Rajasthani, etc. The Sikh scripture *Guru Granth Sahib* includes *Santbani* of many poets belonging to different regions of northern India—all bound by the common spiritual consciousness of *nirguna*, 'the Formless'. During the same period, Malayalam poetry is also attributed with the *maṇipravāla* genre, mixing 'gems and corals' from Sanskrit and Malayalam.

In such a pluricultural ethos no one variety can be associated with the dominant role of a 'standard' language appropriate to all occasions. In Hindi literature during the late nineteenth century, the preferable vehicle for *poetry* was Braj, and for *prose*, Khariboli, though the local speech of many Hindi stalwarts then, like Bharatendu of Varanasi, was Bhojpuri—a literary idiom in its own right. Owing to various historical accidents (religio-cultural ideologies, elite pressures, etc.), there have been considerable shifts in the nucleus of speech norms in the vast Hindustani region. It was only during the past one hundred years that the increasing rivalry between the Hindi and Urdu elites prompted Braj- and Awadhi-speaking elites to shift their patronage to Khariboli, the speech of the capital, Delhi, as a literary basis for Hindi; thus voluntarily reducing the Braj and Awadhi varieties, which flourished as

literary standards until then, to vernacular status. Similarly, the Illyrian movement among Croats in the Balkans during the last century prompted the Kajkavian-speaking elite to patronize the centrally located *Stokavian* variety as a literary norm of the Croatian language in order to pursue the unifying identity of the South Slavs, thus voluntarily reducing the Kajkavian variety, which had a rich literary heritage, to vernacular status.

It is evident that a number of historical associations lead a speech community to cherish all such speech varieties as part of its *shared* tradition through one or more 'language' labels. A community's identification through a particular language label in the midst of a diversified speech matrix could be regarded as a matter of idealization, conditioned by the *bonds* of tradition, much as the cockney speech of London and the Black speech of Louisiana, though mutually unintelligible in isolation, are related through the bonds of standard English, though the former shares the tradition of British English, and the latter of American English. At such a delicate level the notion of homogeneity, even in the speech behaviour of an individual, is only a *myth*.

We can now possibly correlate why a Hindi speaker regards works of creative writing of the entire Hindi-Urdu-Panjabi (HUP) region, also known as the Hindustani region, as belonging to the Hindi 'tradition', even though on the basis of their structural characteristics these writings can be classified as Braj, Awadhi, Maithili, Rajasthani (Dingal) and so on. Until a few decades ago, even writings in Panjabi, Lahndi (of Multan), including the holy scriptures of the Sikhs, were incorporated in the Hindi literary tradition. In fact, before the Partition the chief centres of Hindi literature were outside the narrow Khariboli belt. Similarly, the origins of the Urdu literary tradition can be traced to the writings of Khariboli in Perso-Arabic script from the Dakhkini region. The medieval Hindi and Urdu literary traditions may be said to represent a Pan-Indian ethos.

With the emergence of language chauvinism in the post-Independence period, there are now signs of a reversal of this trend in the Hindustani region. The most glaring example is that of the Panjabi-speaking region on the Indian as well as on

the Pakistani side, where three religio-cultural groups show preferences for aligning themselves with three different 'language traditions'—Panjabi, Hindi and Urdu.⁶

Another criterion for acknowledging the binding characteristics of a tradition among diverse expressions is the degree of 'inter-translatability' across languages and cultural heritages. The problems become more complex when literary pieces are translated into a language with vertically diverse structures and forms of expression, cultural patterns and values (such as translations from an Indian language into English).⁷ On this account contemporary Indian literature cutting across linguistic frontiers—belonging to the Indo-Aryan as well as to the Dravidian families—can be probed into to 'compare' the genius of each language expressing the bonds of shared experiences and common heritage in the plural Indian ethos.

On the other hand, East-West encounters through English or French or Spanish represent a case in reverse where diverse heritages, Western and non-Western, find expression within one language. The diversity of English literature as cultivated in many English-speaking countries, and also internalized in the non-English-speaking world as a fallout of the colonial experience, is being claimed as representing a 'universal' heritage. Consequently, the frontiers of English literature have been extended to accommodate even thought patterns, sensibility and a world-view 'alien' to those at its original source, i.e. of the British heritage.

During the initial stages, much of the English writing, asserting a world-view in clash with that of the native English, was characterized as 'ethnic' in an anthropological sense. It was the 'exotic' East or 'dark' Africa not depicting the 'authentic' English sensibility. In this regard, the cross-cultural conflict in Indo-English fiction is very often looked upon as an issue of ethnic importance. Thus, from the Western point of view, a Ruth Prawar Jhabvala is regarded as 'an outside-insider' and a Kamala Markandeya as 'an inside-outsider'.⁸ Today we find a similar criterion being applied to the *Dalit* literature in Marathi when comparing it with the mainstream 'universal' literary values cherished in Marathi literature.

This debate raises two fundamental issues about the *bounds* of a language in creative writing:

(a) Is it the 'grammar' (inflection-derivation and syntax) in which you write, or is it the symbolic representation of the ancestral heritage that counts in a literary expression? In other words, should the frontiers of a literary tradition be demarcated according to the *verbal* language, i.e. the linguistic structure, or on the basis of the *visionary* language, i.e. the patterns of sensitivity conveyed through symbolism?

(b) What are the problems of creativity in an adapted language? How to express ideas, customs, values, and other human experiences that have no equivalents in the native English-speaking environs?

It is indeed an *experiment* to transcend the frontiers of a language which are so vitally connected to the very basis of a 'native' culture. In the Indian context, Sethna calls such experience 'Indo-Anglian consciousness'; it envisages that 'the possibility of an Indian succeeding is ever present and is bound to get actualized some time or other . . . what evidently is necessary for poetic success in English is an intimacy somehow won with the language.'⁹

There has been an equally strong reaction to such 'transcending' creations. Raine poignantly points out the futility of such attempts, particularly in the realm of poetry:

English learned as a foreign language can never nourish the invisible roots of poetry. I feel this even about Tagore, and so did Yeats. I do not believe that we can—or if we could, that we have the right to—write poetry in a language other than our own.¹⁰

Every society assigns differential values to different components of speech. Virtues of silence and of argument are not the same in all societies. Non-native writers are easily marked out as having 'no intuitive sense of appropriateness' in the adopted language. Raine says, 'I have read no poetry by an Indian that does not seem to an English reader to be written by a foreigner. This I find even with Tagore, certainly with Sri Aurobindo.'¹¹

The Linguistic Relativity hypothesis of Sapir-Whorf about the structure of language influencing the world-view of its speakers proposes that an adapted language in the case of an author as well as the readers will always be an 'alienating force', as a loss of ancestral connections.

This crisis of identity finds expression in much of the Indian and African writing in English. Writers like Chinua Achebe and Bhabani Bhattacharya, well known for their self-avowed distinct world-views, often express their frustration: 'How can the Whiteman understand [a dispute concerning land] when he does not even speak our tongue?' (Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*). Bhattacharya too has a similar concern about the non-native sensibility: 'Even to render in English a certain thought-idiom common to the Indian mind becomes a big task, since the English language has a "genius" of its own.'¹²

The fact, however, undauntedly prevails that there has been a growing acceptance of English by many non-native speech groups spread over the former British colonies in spheres such as education, technology, journalism and creative writing as a medium of 'superposed' sensibility. There are signs of non-native varieties of English blossoming into expressions of a 'composite' identity by recognizing the *polycentric* dictions of African English, South Asian English and so on.

Under the changed circumstances, English in South Asia, on the one hand, is getting further detached from native English speakers; and, on the other, with the pulls of modernization, its scope and intensity of communication have been on the increase. It is necessary, therefore, to recognize the distinctness of South Asian English and promote the gradual stabilization of a pan-regional standard based on influential channels of communication. Indo-Anglian literary expression draws its vitality from cross-cultural plural traditions. In accepting the 'universal' English as a case of polygenesis, creative experiments in non-native Englishes can be legitimized without *necessarily* committing oneself to the 'native' heritage of English, as has been the case with Serbian and Croatian literary traditions under the Serbo-Croatian amalgam, discussed above. In this process, the Indo-Anglian tradition will first be seeking its moorings with the literary traditions of other Indian languages, and then only in the context of world literature will the Indo-Anglian tradition be comparable with the traditions of native English, both British and American, or African English, or, for that matter, of French or Spanish or Russian.

NOTES

1. Elizabeth Grugeon, 'Language in Literature', in A. Cashden and E. Grugeon (eds.), *Language in Education: A Source Book* (London: Open University Press, 1972).
2. James Britton, 'Their Language and Our Teaching', *English in Education*, IV, 2 (1970).
3. See Lachman M. Khubchandani, *Language, Education, Social Justice*, In Search of Tomorrow Series, vol. II (Pune: Centre for Communication Studies, 1981).
4. See Lachman M. Khubchandani, 'Yugoslavia: In Search of Identity', Fellows Forum, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla; included in *Theoretical Issues in Socio-linguistics*, Collected Papers, Mimeograph Series: *Studies in Linguistics*, vol. I (Pune: Centre for Communication Studies, 1972). 'Distinct characteristics of Serbian and Croatian literary standards are explicitly listed in various manuals based on the Novisad *Dogovor* (agreement) and a fair amount of vigilance is maintained among publication circles regarding its implementation through the "lektor" system, by which all writings presented in Serbian or Croatian are appraised according to the prescribed norms.' (Ibid.)
5. John J. Gumperez and C. M. Naim, 'Formal and Informal Standards in the Hindi Regional Language Area', in G. A. Ferguson and J. J. Gumperez (eds.), *Linguistic Diversity in South Asia*, special issue, *International Journal of American Linguistics*, xxvi, 3 (1960).
6. See Lachman M. Khubchandani, 'A Demographic Typology of Hindi, Urdu, Panjabi Speakers in South Asia', in W. C. McCormack and S. A. Wurm (eds.), *Language and Society: Anthropological Issues* (The Hague: Mouton, 1979).
7. See Lachman M. Khubchandani, 'Sindhi Anthology: A Review', *Indian and Foreign Review*, x, 10 (1973).
8. Ramesh Chaddha, 'A Cross-cultural Interaction in the Novels of Kamala Markandeya and Ruth Jhabvala: A Select Comparative Study', Ph.D. thesis, Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla, 1987.
9. Kathleen Raine and K. D. Sethna, *The English Language and the Indian Spirit: Correspondence between Raine and Sethna* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1986).
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Sudhakar Joshi, 'An Evening with Bhabani: Interview', *The Sunday Standard*, New Delhi, 27 April 1959.

East-West Interliterariness: A Theoretical Sketch and a Historical Overview

MARIÁN GÁLÍK

The concept of interliterariness in this paper is analogous to Dionyz Durisin's concept of literariness. That is to say, it may be regarded as an essential and inevitable quality of literature in the international realm.¹ Such is its ontological determination.

Another significant feature is the implied process, the temporal and spatial changes in the course of literary evolution. Individual literatures, from the oldest Sumerian and Egyptian to the most recent emerging ones, of Africa for instance, have ever been in a state that may be defined as a 'coming to be', and their interplay has ever been a *sine qua non* of their successful existence. Interliterariness is as such concerned with that part of the global literary process which leaves out the purely 'national' aspects of the literatures (or the aspects that define their individualities) and focuses, so to speak, on the geoliterary development as a whole. It involves all possibilities of literary impact, broad or not so broad. To put it more specifically, a literary fact may be the outcome of stimuli that have an extra-national character (thus surpassing the confines of a national, ethnic or individual literature) in their vertical or horizontal continuity. An interliterary impact is, as a rule, a prerequisite for a high-quality literary production, provided it satisfies the overall structural requirements of the receiving literature, which in themselves are a representation of the national, ethnic or individual characteristics.

Third and last, interliterariness is the expression of the human message implicit in all major literary works. Man's awareness of his humanity as a component of his make-up as a social being

dates back to the time of Confucius (551-479 B.C.), when it was referred to as a virtue called *ren* or human-heartedness, and to the time of Socrates (?469-399 B.C.) and Xenophon (?435-355 B.C.), who called it *filanthropia*.

When, several years ago, I was doing a study of the philosophical and ideological evolution of Lu Xun (1881-1936),² the father of modern Chinese literature and one of the greatest world cultural personalities of the first decades of our century, I tried to make my way through a short text of 1903, written in a difficult classical language. Its title is *Sibada zhi hun* (The Soul of Sparta) and it is on the borderline between an essay and a short story. It offers a fictitious epilogue to the famous battle of Thermopylae, which took place in August 480 B.C., i.e. nearly twenty-five centuries ago. Who would not remember, from his childhood years, that notorious sentence: 'Oh, pilgrim, tell the Lacedaemonians that we lie here dead as our laws bade us'! Lu Xun, a young student in Tokyo in 1903, wrote these pages to rally the hearts of his compatriots into a struggle against the domestic and foreign enemies of his homeland.

It was not the battle of Thermopylae, but that of Marathon (490 B.C.) and possibly those of Salamis and Plataea (479 B.C.) that formed the artistically conceived background to Aeschylus' tragedy *Persai* (*The Persians*). In this tragedy, Aeschylus gave an eye-witness account of the heroism of Greek citizens in their struggle to preserve freedom; suggested a comparison of the two social systems: the Greek—for the most part democratic, and the Persian—despotic; and also brought out the desire of the Greek *ethnos* for peace.

There is no reason why these two phenomena cannot be juxtaposed—one, the first significant encounter decisive for the subsequent world development and representing, several decades before classical Greek civilization reached its climax, a clash between progressive democracy and reactionary despotism; the other, the situation not only in China but practically all over Asia, Africa and even Europe during the period of imperialism, several decades before the decline of the world colonial system, which so strongly affected the life in both East and West. Aeschylus' tragedy is obviously a celebration of Greek heroism and wit. But in a vivid picture of Greek and Persian maidens, the father of Greek tragedy also symbolically

represented the culture of the Greek and the Persian *ethnos*. He placed the human qualities of the Greeks and the Persians on a single axiological plane and, in spite of the differences emanating from their national characteristics, underlined their cultural or literary equality.

Nevertheless, the history of East–West interliterariness began, not in 472 B.C. (seven years after Confucius' death) when *The Persians* was first staged, but earlier. In the second millennium B.C. Greek mythology, in both oral and written forms, had come under the impact of tales from the ancient Orient. As any comparison of the *Gilgamesh*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* would bear out, ancient epics too had possible genetic–contactual relationships as well as clear typological affinities. This, for instance, is reflected in the similar use of epithets and similes, and in similar themes, such as the abduction of a woman—Helen and Briseis in the *Iliad* and Sītā in the *Rāmāyaṇa*—or her seduction—Draupadī in the *Mahābhārata* and Penelope in the *Odyssey*—or the hero's dream affecting the epic action, or a heavenly messenger announcing something to other celestials or to terrestrials (Hermes in the *Odyssey* or Impaluri in the Hittite *Song on Ullikumi*). Also similar is the use of narrative within narrative, as so abundantly seen in the *Mahābhārata* and, though not so abundantly, in the *Gilgamesh* and the *Iliad*.

Another period in which interliterariness operated to a certain extent was the period prior to the advent of the Christian era, especially in the last three centuries before Christ. During Hellenism the contacts were sufficiently close, though not genetically so markedly manifest; for the territory unified for a very short time under the rule of Alexander the Great (356–323 B.C.) provided a meeting point for advanced literatures with a tradition of at least a few centuries. These literatures proved to be considerably self-contained and impermeable, both as systems and structures. The most vivid of them was Greek. The spirit present in the cultural and literary message of *The Persians* found its expression now in an active Hellenism. Whereas the previous mythic and epic impulse had travelled from the East to the West, Oriental literature written in Greek now became a common phenomenon, even though no work of Greek literature written in any of the Oriental languages be-

tween the Aegean Sea and the Punjab has survived. The same applies to translations: we know of Greek translations from Egyptian or Hebrew, but there is none from Greek into Oriental languages. The works produced in that period on the Asian ground—several volumes of the Old Testament for instance (*The Song of Songs* and others)—have nothing Greek in them, even though Greek literature had been known in those parts.

An important role in the Hellenist and post-Hellenist periods was played by the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the so-called Septuagint, whose style had an influence on the New Testament and on the Christian world as a whole. The monotheism professed by Christianity, the ideas of equality, love for one's fellow beings, the messianic spirit though oriented towards the world hereafter, the ethnic responsibility of an individual—all this fitted perfectly with the Hellenistic and the Roman cultural ideals, motivated not only by an interest in religious mysteries and new cults, but also by the possibility of social justice, individual self-fulfilment and salvation in the present and the future world. Christianity was better adapted to the West, and the West was where it eventually spread. At the time of its dissemination, Buddhism penetrated into Syria, Mesopotamia, Caucasus, Central Asia, the Far East; and Manichaeism—a blend of Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Buddhism—spread from Portugal to China. The Manichaeans, among other things, disseminated throughout medieval Europe the *topoi* of Asian, particularly Buddhist, origin. The famous Barlaam and Josaphat *Staff*, representing Gautama Buddha's legend in a Christian metamorphosis, was allegedly first discovered in a Manichaean text.³ Marco Polo too wrote about it in his *Travels (Il Milione)*.

During the Middle Ages, the literary impulses again reversed to an East–West direction. The 'barbarian' attacks on Greco-Roman civilization nearly destroyed the world of antiquity. However, a different situation prevailed in China or India, where it was easier to preserve the older traditions. For a time the East became more viable. The example can be offered of the Arabs with their rule over an immense territory from Spain to Central Asia, and their mediating role between Greco-Roman Antiquity and the Renaissance. 'Frontier' literatures emerged

at the borders of individual culture areas. From our point of view, the most important one was Andalusian, an amalgam of Arabic and Spanish. As an individual work, the most salient was the Sanskrit collection of tales, the *Pañcatantra* (probably collected between the third and fifth centuries A.D.). In the sixth century the book was translated into Middle Persian (Pahlavi), in the eighth into Arabic, under the title *Kalila and Dimna*, and in the eleventh into Greek from Arabic. Then in the twelfth century it was translated into Hebrew, and in the thirteenth into Latin from which it was rendered into a number of European languages, including Czech in 1528. Allegedly, there have been 200 translations until now into sixty languages. According to the eminent Russian Orientalist S. F. Oldenburg, the *Pañcatantra* 'became one of the most widely circulated books in the world after the Bible'.⁴ More than any other Oriental work of literature, it exercised a tremendous impact on the development of European literatures in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance (Petro Alfonso, Juan Manuel, Giovanni Boccaccio, Franco Sacchetti). Later it influenced European fables (La Fontaine, Krylov), and still later, some popular works of Leo Tolstoy.

The West 'found' itself again in the Renaissance. But the Renaissance would be unthinkable without Byzantium, which fell into the Turkish hands in 1453, without the Arabic intermediaries and their successors in Persia, Central Asia and Andalusia. The East had been rediscovered for Europe by the pioneers of great maritime expeditions—by the Portuguese, especially Vasco da Gama when he reached India's shores in 1499, bypassing the Turks who had ruled the Mediterranean up to the battle of Lepanto in 1571. These encounters of Western powers with Oriental countries at their ports were ominous, and portended world colonialism with its consequences for the less developed nations of Asia and Africa.

François Jost has identified one form of East-West interaction, during the colonial centuries, in literary exoticism. He argues that the term 'exotic' originated in Greece where the adjective 'eksotikos' generally meant 'foreign' and applied to all that was outside the state limits—a meaning close to that of 'barbaros' or 'barbarikos'.⁵ Voltaire wrote a dedicatory epistle to a Sultana Sheraa (in reality the Duchess du Maine in whose

Château at Anet his book, *Zadig: or Destiny. An Oriental Tale*, was written in 1747), in which he said that the French ladies of those days preferred to read 'the thousand and one nights and the thousand and one days'.⁶ He had in mind the *Thousand and One Nights* in ten volumes, translated into French by Antoine Galland and published in Paris between 1704 and 1712. This interest was a reflection of the European penetration into countries which, at that time, were remote and little known. The admiration was sometimes uncritical, as suggested by a poem concerned with another part of Asia and meant quite seriously:

Enough of Greece and Rome, th' exhausted store
Of either nation now can charm no more;

And further on:

On eagle wings the poet of tonight,
Soars for fresh virtues to the source of light,
To China's eastern realms: and boldly bears
Confucius' morals to Britannia's ears.⁷

The poem is from the preface to the play, *The Orphan of China*, by Arthur Murphy, which to an extent was an imitation of a Chinese play, *Zhaoshi qu'er* (The Orphan of Zhao), translated into French in 1731 by Father Joseph Henry Prémare as *L'Orphelin de la Maison Tchao*, and later adapted by William Hackett as *The Chinese Orphan: A Historical Tragedy* (1741), providing at the same time an ironic perspective on Voltaire's treatment in the play, *L'Orphelin de la Chine*. More than other countries of the Orient, China spelled attraction for the Europeans of the eighteenth century. In that period, the economic and political conditions made China the most prosperous country in the world. In addition to manufacturing, it employed the most up-to-date technology of the pre-industrial era. An unprecedented upswing was recorded in the development of the social sciences: a great many historical, literary and philosophical works were published, and projects which had no parallel in the contemporary world were implemented with the assistance of financial circles and the state. The reason for the decline that came about at the turn of the century (1800) was the contradiction between the unfulfilled interests of des-

otic emperors and the feudal social organization, on the one hand, and, on the other, the germs of capitalism that were present without an opportunity for development.⁸

Anyway, not everything produced in eighteenth and early nineteenth century Europe has a touch of exoticism. After having read the outstanding works of European Antiquity, and of English, French, Italian, Spanish, Persian, Indian and Chinese literatures, Goethe in 1827 formulated a concept of 'world literature'.⁹ But 'world literature' at that time was produced mostly in the West—Eastern literatures had not yet overcome their isolation. Only later, mainly in the second half of the nineteenth century, did the countries of Asia and North Africa begin to respond to the cultural impact of the West. The deteriorating political and economic situation and the threat of the liquidation of native social consciousness, and thus of cultural identity, motivated the native intelligentsia to voluntarily and purposefully expose themselves to the cultural impact of the more developed West. In its later phase, this impact made room for originality and was mostly adapted to the domestic conditions so that ethical values could be safeguarded, particularly in the cultural and literary spheres. The indigenous critical or creative literature, produced during the genesis and the period of initial development of modern Asian literatures, manifested a strong social commitment in all countries and a departure from the traditional notions of the aesthetic and ethical function of literature. Only a small portion, and that too not in every national literature, had a sufficiently high artistic standard. Substantial changes then took place in genre hierarchy. New genres came to be created and changes also occurred in literary technique and devices. In traditional Asian literatures the highest place in the hierarchy was usually occupied by poetry, often of a predominantly lyric character, as in China and Japan, or of a predominantly epic character, as in India and Iran. At the genesis of modern literature and during its initial development, the highest place came to be occupied by fiction and the essay.¹⁰

The next stage of development in Oriental literatures, designated the 'emancipation stage' by a Bratislavan team of researchers, is a follow-up of the first. In many Asian countries it began between 1887 and 1917, and ended during the World

War II. Essentially, this involved a more or less final extrication from the bounds of their own fettering traditions which, in view of their feudal normativeness, their outdated aesthetic attitudes and their affinity with old axiological requirements, no longer dynamically satisfied the demands of modern times. On the other hand, the anti-traditional tendencies act according to the feedback principle, and in an attempt to prevent the complete destruction of a nation's indigenous structure, induce a conscious, or at least an unconscious, contact with the traditional elements. As regards the creative imitation of literary achievements in Europe, a typical feature of the inter-literary process is its far greater variability as compared with the preceding period. This development was in harmony with the rise of modern literature, but the emphasis now was on the time-tested European forms and creative devices. For the most part literature became socially concerned, though modernist trends were accepted or adapted. Results more striking than in the preceding period were achieved along the axiological line. In Japan, the year 1887 might be considered the beginning of the 'emancipation stage' when Futabatei Shimei (1864-1909) completed the first part of his novel, *Uki gumo* (The Drifting Clouds). In China, in the year 1918, Lu Xun wrote and published his short story, 'Kuangren riji' (Diary of a Madman). In Bengali literature this period began with the works of Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) in the 1890s.

During this stage of development in modern Oriental literatures, the foreign impact proved stronger than in the preceding period, penetrating deeply into the form and content strata of literary works. For instance, the first great work of modern Asian literature, Futabatei's novel, would be impossible without the impact of nineteenth century Russian literature, particularly of the works of Goncharov, Turgenev, Dostoevsky and the literary critic Belinsky. Lu Xun, the father of modern Chinese literature, did not read Russian, but the German and Japanese languages helped him get acquainted with various literatures of the world. His first belletristic work in the vernacular, the 'Diary of a Madman', shows clear traces of Nietzsche (*Also sprach Zarathustra*), Andreev (*My Records*) and Garshin (*The Red Flower*). According to Amiya Dev, Tagore 'may have had well assimilated the influence', but has 'left

enough evidence of his reception to western literature'.¹¹ Not in vain did Per Halström, Member-Secretary of the Nobel Committee, say: 'It is certain, however, that no poet in Europe since the death of Goethe in 1832 can rival Tagore in noble humanity, in unaffected greatness, in classical tranquillity.'¹² For the European and American scholars, poets and readers of the time, the award of the Nobel Prize to Tagore (1913) meant the discovery of a new literary giant. They were not entirely familiar with the contents of his genius; yet the parallel with Goethe was convincing to them. W. B. Yeats and Ezra Pound admired him for his pantheism. It is possible to see an interesting parallel here with a major aspect of Goethe, his expression of a Spinozistic *Weltanschauung*. The European contemporaries of Tagore did not realize that the Bengali poet reminded them of Goethe, not because he had read Goethe closely and had a thorough knowledge of him, but because he inculcated a typologically similar, though historically distinct, tradition, namely, that of medieval Indian poet-philosophers like Kabir (?1440-1518).

In a similar manner, East-West synthesis also takes place in Western literatures, though to a lesser extent than in Asian and North African literatures. This has its reasons. For the time being the need for adoption is stronger in the Orient. Evidence to this effect is offered by many writers, but we shall briefly consider only three of them: Kateb Yacine (Algeria), Sadeq Hedayat (Iran) and Nick Joaquin (The Philippines).

Kateb's novel *Nedjma* depicts an imaginary history of Algerian life from the time of the legendary hero, Keblut, the alleged ancestor of the Algerians, up to the recent anti-imperialist and anticolonial struggles. The main character of the novel is Nedjma, the *femme fatale* of the Algerian people, one of the most splendid literary images of all times—an artistic variation on Carthaginian Salamambo, Susanna from the Old Testament and the Roman vestal. She is the daughter of a French woman, a Jewess, and one of her Arab lovers. A symbol of destruction and an evil omen, she is wife and cousin to her impotent husband, a woman eventually lost to everyone close to her.

Equally mythical is the world of the novelette, *The Blind Owl*, by Sadeq Hedayat, who too is a mythopoeic writer. He modi-

fies the myths handed down from the old times by adding greater or smaller degrees of subjective insight, in answer to his own creative demands. It is certain that he used the ancient Persian, Zoroastrian, and the old Indian, Saiva, mythology. His interest in Zoroastrianism was stimulated by his stay in Europe (some passages of his work clearly show an impact of Nietzsche) and he got acquainted with the Indian cults during the years he spent in Bombay. In the novelette there are two main figures: the unnamed narrator and his wife. The narrator is the son of an Indian woman who used to dance in front of a big *lingam*. His father was one of a twin. The narrator was brought up in the house of an aunt whose daughter became his wife. For him she is in part a narcotic mandrake, the metamorphosis of a seductress, an adulteress and vulgar love incarnate. At the end he turns her murderer and grave-digger.

Nick Joaquin's novel, *The Woman Who Had Two Navels*, tries creatively to utilize the ancient Greek mythologeme of Electra and Clytemnestra. This mode of literary presentation—i.e. the use of old mythological devices for modern literary creation—penetrated into many Latin American, Asian and African literatures in the 1950s and 1960s. It is of interest to note that the author in his novel does not draw on the rich treasury of mythological folklore of the Philippine nations, nationalities and ethnic groups, as is usual in Latin American and African literatures where such traditions and folkloric-mythological consciousness exert a decisive influence; for instance, in the works of Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Wole Soyenka. Instead, Joaquin turns to some singularly interpreted Indo-Chinese and European-Near Eastern mythical systems, connecting them with the modern national liberation movement of the Philippine people. Not a Trojan war is depicted in the novel, but a lost battle that was fought on 2 December 1890 in the Tirad Pass where the revolutionary hero, Gregorio del Pilar, was killed. Not a victorious Agamemnon's homecoming, but that of the defeated Philippine republicans. Electra's complexes and Clytemnestra's flirtations are conspicuous in the female roles: Connie and her mother, Concha. Concha is more immoral, cynical, malicious, cruel and passionate than Clytemnestra. She marries Connie to her own lover, Macho, thus exposing her to an incessant unconscious fear of incest, and a

sense of guilt and sin. The image of Connie embodies something of a psychic infantilism manifesting itself in a conviction of being an exceptional individual with two navels. This naïve belief comes from a singularly understood Indo-Chinese myth. From childhood Connie loved Biliken—the Carnival god—with two enormously long ear-lobes and a big naked belly. The description in the novel leads to the conclusion that this was either the figure of Buddha Maitreya (Milufo in Chinese) or Piluxian, the Buddha of Meditation (Vairocana in Sanskrit). Biliken was Connie's only refuge when she was a child. When later, as a grown-up woman, she saw Biliken with two bullet wounds in his belly, she identified herself with this image and unconsciously transformed them into two navels on her own body, thereby insisting on her exceptionality and justifying her alienation from society and from all human beings.

East–West synthesis is weaker in the case of European literatures; still the receiving role of Euro-American writers cannot be underestimated. Though many of them were subject to an impact of Oriental literatures and philosophies, and mostly from the classical period, we shall mention here and briefly characterize only three: Bertolt Brecht (1898–1956), Hermann Hesse (1877–1962) and Thomas Mann (1875–1955).

Brecht searched for his stimuli in Chinese and Japanese literature and philosophy. One of his best plays, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, is modelled on the classical Chinese play, *Huilanji* (The Chalk Circle), by Li Xingdao (late thirteenth century). He used the method of creative negation. He knew well how to cope with the false chinoiserie-like prejudices concerning the Chinese theatre and how to use his knowledge when trying to build his own concept of 'epic theatre'. While borrowing from Chinese or Japanese literature, Brecht remained a perfect 'Brechtian'. On the other hand, Hermann Hesse had lesser stimuli from Asian, namely, Indian and Chinese, literature. When creating his works, he did not resign his role as a critic, philosopher and literary scholar; yet his identification with some aspects of Oriental expression was so intense that in his novel, *Klingsor's Last Summer*, he appeared in the role of Hermann as a Chinese poet Tu Fu (712–70) and in the role of Klingsor as Tu Fu's friend—poet Li Bai (699–762). The novel *Joseph and His Brothers* by Thomas Mann is a masterpiece,

particularly in terms of East-West literary interaction. It is a humanist protest against the Nazi myth, elaborating the famous mythological theme from Moses' Genesis. Those who had struggled before him with this *Stoff* were the great Persian poets Ferdousi (?934-1020) and Jami (1414-92), and later on Goethe, Hofmannsthal, Richard Strauss and others. In both European and Arabic culture, Joseph is a recursive systemo-structural entity, organically associating the most significant elements, out of which grew the major part of world culture: Sumerian, Babylonian, Egyptian, Jewish, Greek and later European. Using the principle of mythical irony, Mann grounded his Joseph in his humanism and took the side of the nation at which the holocaust was aimed. The novel was an answer to Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and Rosenberg's *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts*. From the point of view of motivation and content it is so loaded that it will probably be fully grasped only by future scholarship, with a greater interliterary and intercultural insight.

In the course of literary history of more than twenty-five centuries (from Aeschylus to Thomas Mann), we have had a quick glance at the panorama of East-West interliterariness. It is probably necessary to say a few words here on the realizational aspect of interliterariness. Interliterary phenomena may be studied by the ordinary method of literary comparatistics, namely, by analyses of genetic-contactual relationships and typological affinities. We have only to keep in mind that they are not self-evident, that the method does not 'consequently express the interliterary process'.¹³ It is probable that in the future more attention will be devoted to the study of those elements in the interliterary process that are connected with the 'mechanics' of the supranational literary entities and inter-literary communities, up to the complicated issue of 'world literature'.

East-West interliterariness, owing to its temporal and spatial proportions, represents an immense field of research. This will enrich our knowledge of the interliterary process as such, and thus deepen our understanding of literature and help us realize its human message, the *ren* or *filanthropia* mentioned above.

NOTES

1. Dionyz Durisin, *Teória medziliterárneho procesu* (The Theory of Inter-literary Process) (Bratislava: Tatran, 1985), p. 16.
2. Marián Gálik, *Studies in Modern Chinese Intellectual History. III. Young Lu Xun 1902-1909*, Asian and African Studies, 21 (Bratislava, 1985), pp. 38-41.
3. See *Istoria usemirmoi literatury* (A History of World Literature), vol. 1 (Moscow: Nauka, 1983), p. 526.
4. *Istoria*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Nauka, 1984), p. 41.
5. François Jost, *Introduction to Comparative Literature* (Indianapolis and New York: Pegasus, 1974), p. 110.
6. Voltaire, *Zadig: or Destiny* (London and Hertford: Simson Shand Ltd, n.d.), p. 5.
7. Arthur Murphy, *The Orphan of China* (London: P. Vaillant, 1759). Quoted in C. Y. Cuadrado, 'Chinese and Western Theatre: Contrasts, Cross-currents and Convergences', Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois, 1978, p. 40.
8. See J. Gernet, *A History of Chinese Civilization* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 481.
9. *Goethes Gespräche mit Eckermann* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1955), p. 227.
10. See *Contributions to the Study of the Rise and Development of Modern Literatures in Asia*, vols. 1-3 (Prague: Academia, 1965-70).
11. Amiya Dev, 'The Concept of "Influence" in the Indian Context', in János Riesz, Peter Boerner and Bernhard Scholz (eds.), *Sensus Communis: Contemporary Trends in Comparative Literature* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1986), p. 227.
12. Krishna Kripalani, *Tagore: A Life* (Calcutta: Visvabharati, 1971), p. 133.
13. Dionyz Durisin, *Teória*, p. 246.

II

Intertextuality and Influence: Connections and Boundaries

JAIDEV

I

The present paper does not hope to resolve all the questions which a juxtaposing of intertextuality and influence raises in the mind. At the most, it aims at pinpointing these questions and speculating tentatively about their possible answers. At the very outset, it must be admitted that the approach here might appear to be too extreme, too exclusive. This is largely due to the fact that my use of the term influence is conditioned by my sense of contrast between this term and another, intertextuality. It is my concern with this contrast that accounts for the fact that 'influence' here appears as Influence (with a capital I), as a heavily simplified and perhaps over-animated entity. In any literary text, influence is not a single, simple phenomenon; rather, several influences coexist, coalesce, combine, clash; these are interliterary, intraliterary, also at times non-literary. There are also always degrees as well as kinds—creative and imitative, assimilated and superficial, strong and weak, and so on—of influence. Finally, all issues related to influence or reception can be seen linked with various socio-cultural ones having a bearing on the production of a text. If I ignore all these fascinating areas and keep to an abstract use of the terms, this is because I am more concerned with the terms at the definitional level than with the individual ramifications or variables of either of them.

The term influence has been in currency for centuries, but as a result it has become hazy and loose, so that a recent essay on T. S. Eliot measures Shakespeare's influence on him largely in terms of allusions and quotations from Shakespeare in

Eliot's poetry and criticism;¹ on the other hand, another recent work, on the influence of India on the Western Romantic imagination, approves of R. M. Hewitt's linkage between Sir William Jones's 'Hymn to Narayana' and Shelley's 'Hymn to Intellectual Beauty': '[Hewitt] was less concerned to find a particular phrase or image in support of [his conclusion] than to identify a common tone and sensibility.'² The other term, intertextuality, has not yet stabilized either in meaning or scope. As a result, we have post-structuralists in whose sweeping use of it all literature appears to be intertextual; every text is an intertext, the texts prior to it being a pretext for it: 'Every text takes shape as a mosaic of citation, every text is absorption and transformation of other texts.'³ Bakhtin and Barthes both include all literary relations, including influence, within the term intertextuality. John Sturrock sums up their position: 'One text contains all manner of allusions to or echoes from other texts; and the many kinds of relations that can be established between one text and others—quotations, parody, plagiarism, "influence"—are known collectively as "Intertextuality".'⁴ On the other hand, there are critics whose use of the term is very narrow indeed: '[Intertextuality] is not the same as allusion or "echo-hearing" in that discourses are transformed within the work and are often not direct quotations, but adaptations of the codes and languages available in the culture and its traditions.'⁵ This is not too helpful, since an allusion can have extended implications for the text. The allusion to the Lord's Prayer in the title of *The Power and the Glory* is not a localized matter. It enhances and clarifies the thematic pattern which proceeds by positing the power against the glory and culminates in overcoming the polarization and conjuncting together the power and the glory. The allusion, one feels, functions significantly enough to qualify for intertextuality. But is Graham Greene's use of the Lord's Prayer only a matter of intertextuality or is it also an acknowledgement of influence? How are intertextuality and influence different from each other? Are they two absolutely separable phenomena, and if not, then what are their connections, common zones, and boundaries? The paper seeks to confront these questions with the aid of a few graded case studies.

But first a clarification. It is not necessary for either in-

fluence or intertextuality to be explicitly stated or articulated in a text. David Kepesh, the comparatist-protagonist in Philip Roth's *The Breast*, claims to 'have out-Kafkaed Kafka' in his ailment which has its source in 'Teaching Gogol and Kafka every year—teaching "The Nose" and "Metamorphosis"'.⁶ By contrast, 'Metamorphosis' does not refer to 'The Nose', though the latter is clearly an influence on it. Conversely, all explicit references to other texts are not necessarily indicators of intertextuality or influence. Many such references can, at their worst, be a form of name dropping and, at their best, a shoddy way of insinuating the author's aspirations. Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* has a scene in which Eliot Rosewater tells Billy Pilgrim that 'everything there was to know about life was in *The Brothers Karamazov*' and then adds: 'But that isn't *enough* any more. . . .'⁷ As far as Vonnegut is concerned, Dostoyevsky is neither here nor there. Angus Wilson's first novel, *Hemlock and After*, alludes to *The Idiot* rather fetishistically, but a later novel, *Late Call*, is genuinely related to that novel both through influence and through an unarticulated but compelling intertextuality. Any similarity, allusion, quotation has to be significant in the overall design of the text to merit consideration as influence or intertextuality.

II

At the end of Muriel Spark's *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, Sandy Stranger is visited by a reporter who asks her regarding the main influences of her school days: 'Were they literary or political or personal? Was it Calvinism?'⁸ Sandy shocks the reader by acknowledging the influence of her teacher Jean Brodie. More than anyone else in Jean Brodie's group, Sandy rebelled against Miss Brodie and her plans. Sandy's whole effort had been to negate the influence of Jean Brodie; but in the end, the influence is discovered intact. Perhaps something similar could be said about Muriel Spark's own rejection of her childhood Edinburgh Calvinism, the rejection which took the form of conversion to Catholicism. Now, in literary texts, influence can often enter, in despite of the author. Also, the deeper and more assimilated it is, the more difficult it is for the author to regulate or for the reader to isolate.⁹ In Angus

Wilson's fiction, Dickens is an all-pervasive influence; he is felt everywhere but is difficult to pin down specifically. He is strongest as an influence on Wilson's minor, peripheral figures, but then in many novels he poaches on very un-Dickensian areas, too—areas like the liberal protagonists. The world of Wilson's fiction risks instability when the influence of Dickens violently clashes with another, that of the liberal realist tradition. Wilson is very, very conscious of the civil war inside him that is waged by the different, incompatible influences, but apparently he has not been able to regulate them. Can it be that influence, as distinguished from intertextuality, is a matter largely independent of one's will, the more difficult to regulate or resist because it is so free? Can it be that influence is? Can it be, in other words, that while influence may appear wholly synthesized, transformed, assimilated, it is not a matter of volition or choice on the part of the receptor, is not susceptible to conscious use? If this is true, then, it would follow that influence does not have to be even justifiable or functional in a text. Perhaps the only redeeming grace is that since its presence, in the first place, presupposes affinities in the ephebe, influence 'becomes' him. Harold Bloom is perhaps too extreme in asserting that poetry is the anxiety of influence. But surely it seems safe to argue that the artist, at least in part, is influence.

Influence: 'The Scarlet Letter' and 'Samskara'

What is the nature of relationship between *The Scarlet Letter* and *Samskara*? For all its differences from Hawthorne's text, *Samskara* at many places 'distracts' the reader's attention towards *The Scarlet Letter*. These distractions range all the way from verbal through situational, responsive, modal to structural and ideological. On seeing Chandri, Lakshmana's wife feels infuriated and wishes: 'Won't someone brand her face!',¹⁰ and the reader is reminded of an elderly puritan matron in *The Scarlet Letter* who says, 'At the very least, they should have put the brand of a hot iron on Hester Prynne's forehead.'¹¹ The conflict in Praneshacharya after he has surrendered to Chandri is Hawthornian, and so indeed is also the forest where the 'sin' takes place. Hawthorne's analysis of Dimmesdale's guilt which turns him into 'a shadow' (p. 107) seems to underlie Pranesh-

acharya's feeling 'as if he had become a stranger to himself' (p. 67). Both Dimmesdale and Praneshacharya desire to confess before their communities, rehearse the scene elaborately, but display a lack of courage and rationalize their failure by thinking of their sense of responsibility towards their trusting 'sheep'. In contrast, their partners in sin suffer no remorse or guilt: Hester endows the act with sanctity ('What we did had a consecration of its own' [p. 140]) and Chandri is 'a natural in pleasure, unaccustomed to self-reproach' (p. 68). More importantly, Ananthamurthy's ambivalence towards Brahminism is similar to Hawthorne's towards New England puritanism, and as in Hawthorne, it is accompanied by much compassion for the suffering, self-tormenting protagonist. In their use of a mixed mode which combines realism and allegory, the books are similar too.

The relationship between *The Scarlet Letter* and *Samskara* is not a case of mere similarities occasioned by a common theme. Nor is it only a case of literary awareness, as we find it in, say, David Storey's awareness of the opening scene of *Madame Bovary*, which makes him, in *Radcliffe*, consciously use the school scene in Flaubert for introducing his own ill-at-ease, misfitting protagonist's first day in school. In *Samskara*, literary awareness is only a symptom of an extensive influence which is not at all passive but very active, very alive and which engages the author, the ephebe, into a dialectical relationship so that even as Ananthamurthy's existential imagination 'interprets' the influence, it is also simultaneously conditioned by it, the influence. Literary awareness has consequences no doubt, but the dialectic is the main thing in the case of a significant influence. Too weak an influence on a strong ephebe might remain confined to mere localized effects; too strong an influence on a weak ephebe might generate pale fires or pathetic imitations. *Samskara* shows a strong ephebe encountering a strong influence. Existentialism constitutes another powerful influence for the ephebe here. That is why *Samskara* has sections, especially in part III, where its texture thins down considerably and the tone turns analytical and philosophical on the issue of freedom and its limits. The ending of the novel, thus, can be seen as an accommodation of the two separate strong precursors. It avoids a closure, but then does not rule

out the possibility of an ending as closed as in *The Scarlet Letter*.

Influence is not dependent on awareness in the ephebe. It can operate without his being or becoming conscious of it. Awareness can help the ephebe in touching it from the sides so as to try to channel it; it can also help him in preserving some private space for himself; but awareness cannot obstruct or resist influence. Awareness can thus be of some limited help in the ephebe's mediation of influence, but the mediation itself cannot be an absolutist, arbitrary and willed act. Should awareness tempt the ephebe into fighting against influence, the text risks splitting.

Influence and Intertextuality: 'The Tin Drum' and 'Midnight's Children'; and 'Emma' and 'The Middle Age of Mrs. Eliot'

One direction awareness in the ephebe can take is intertextuality. In contrast to influence, which largely discounts the individual volition and will, intertextuality suggests a wholly self-conscious and consciously managed activity. That quite often intertextuality involves other texts than the precursor or the influence is a situation too common and too simple to merit discussion. The situation gets problematic when intertextuality comes to involve (or shall we say, implicate) the precursor itself.

In its form, theme, technique, unusual narrator-protagonist and approach to history, *Midnight's Children* appears inconceivable without *The Tin Drum* having already been there. So strong is the precursor's hold on the ephebe here that at innumerable places *Midnight's Children* strikes one as overly derivative. Its multi-generation epic form, its going back in time to begin with the protagonist's grandparents, its miracle protagonist who is not subject to the human limitations of time, space and subjectivity, its juxtapositions of the protagonist's private crises and the nation's tragedies, its employment of polarities, its mixed mode, fragmented chronology, inversions of fairy tale motifs, games and self-reflexivity, its use of an insided reader-figure or interlocutor, its intention to demythologize history, as well as numerous local details like miracles, incests, adulteries, preserving jars, the hero's blue eyes—all

these and more come bearing a stamp of *The Tin Drum*. It is no accident that the books have to end because in *The Tin Drum* Oskar Matzerath runs out of 'virgin paper' on his thirtieth birthday and in *Midnight's Children* Saleem Sinai runs out of time on his thirtieth birthday.

How is the influence on *Midnight's Children* different from the influence on *Samskara*? The simple answer is, not in any significant way. *Midnight's Children* shows the ephebe's awareness of influence functioning in a different way than it does in *Samskara*. The awareness turns into self-consciousness in Rushdie, who parades the influence (actually, the influences, since *The Tin Drum* is not the only influence, though it decidedly is the strongest of all) by intertextuality. The result is that even though the awareness of influence does little to the influence itself, it nevertheless superimposes on the influence a private, controlled aspect, namely intertextuality. The intention is not to fight the influence but to confound the difference between what is intertextual, and therefore a matter of volition, and what is influence, a phenomenon that is autonomous, free, not susceptible to the dictates of the ephebe. Thus, the fact that both Oskar and Saleem manage to witness their mothers' adultery-trysts suggests the influence when we consider it along with a huge pile of other identical motifs; but the fact that Rushdie foregrounds the washing-chest or the car boot in which Saleem hides to observe the mother suggests intertextuality while connecting with the cupboard in *The Tin Drum*.¹² Intertextuality in *Midnight's Children* can impress the reader as a candid acknowledgement of the precursor, but may well be a desperate strategy of coping with an unstoppable influence, a variation on Harold Bloom's Apophrades or 'the return of the dead',¹³ a situation in which the ephebe gives the impression that 'the precursor was writing it'. *Samskara* does not appear so neurotically self-conscious as to spread over the influence a flashy cover of intertextuality. By contrast, *Midnight's Children* appears to generate the illusion that an Indianized Günter Grass has written it. Awareness of influence can thus lead to intertextuality, and may I add here that some of the parts of Rushdie's *Shame* similarly superimpose intertextuality over the influence of Milan Kundera's *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*.¹⁴

I am painfully aware that the above argument is simplistic. Given the highly intertextual nature of *The Tin Drum*, one could argue that *Midnight's Children* gets intertextuality itself as part of the package that is influence. Another objection to my argument would be that it is based on an outrageous isolation of just one influence, while in the text several influences operate in a very tied-up, knotted fashion. Still another objection would be of a different order: how can we ignore the cultural position of Rushdie which is presumably altogether different from Ananthamurthy's? Rushdie, after all, is a postmodernist, writing in a literary and cultural tradition where flaunting intertextuality and denying originality is a highly respectable activity. There is just no way of denying the validity of such objections. I would just add that its simplistcness notwithstanding, the generalized argument still holds true: awareness of influence need not, but can lead to intertextuality; and since intertextuality is a function, a method and device, it attracts the ephebe by its promise of freedom and free space. *Emma* is a central but wholly assimilated influence on Angus Wilson's *The Middle Age of Mrs. Eliot*, which seems to derive its overall structure and pattern (the protagonist's education which is difficult and chequered, owing to the peels of self-deception within her), as also its redemptive vision, from that precursor text. Awareness of influence leads Wilson to intertextually use *Emma* for creating a private space for himself in which he can preserve some autonomy and freedom. Intertextuality is thus used for some fine ironic and characterization purposes. Like Emma, Mrs Eliot is very self-assured and very self-deluded. Like Emma, she writes self-advertisements: 'Isable Archer, and Maggie Tulliver, . . . Emma, and Lily Dale—all these girls were her, only that, born in a later century, she had avoided their defeats; but their high spirits *and* their high hopes were hers exactly.'¹⁵ Not only does she imagine herself to be 'a natural Emma', she also pastiches her homosexual brother as 'Knightley and Mr. Woodhouse rolled into one'. Now, Wilson's quiet, seemingly-endorsing, ironic tone towards this alazon is Jane Austenian all right, but the intertextual use of *Emma* helps him in warning the reader against the tendency to effect easy, uncritical identifications with literary personalities. Intertextuality becomes a critique and criticism of a cultural

situation in which more and more people naïvely seek to literaturize life, seek to live life with ready-made, stylized, pastiche roles borrowed or lifted indiscriminately from literature. Indiscriminately consumed, even great books like *The Portrait of a Lady* and *Emma* can corrupt the reader. This kind of cultural criticism is achieved through intertextuality, but since it bears little impress of *Emma*, one can argue that intertextuality can afford the ephebe a private space.

Intertextuality: 'The Tempest' and 'The Collector'

Awareness of influence can lead to intertextuality and its freedom, but intertextuality cannot lead to influence. The law here is similar to the law of gravity. Influence passes into the personality, determines the vision; from the vision to the specifics, the motion is downward. Intertextuality, no matter how extensive, emanates from details and cannot rise up into the vision. It should not be inferred that I am judging either of them as better.

John Fowles's *The Collector* makes extensive use of *The Tempest* by way of parody, analogy, interpretation, and so on, but all along the use remains free from influence. *The Collector* is a critique of class situation in Welfare England. Its lower-class hero, Frederick Clegg, finds in the pool money a means of realizing his pastiche fantasies towards the upper-class, art-student heroine, ominously named Miranda. He kidnaps her and tries to force her into liking and loving him as though he were a latter-day Ferdinand. Fowles's Miranda is not Shakespearean either, but can play at the Shakespearean game and christens him Frederick Caliban. In her thoughts, she reflects her fury towards Welfare England in which Calibans, New People or the working classes have taken over the isle but in which there are no Prosperos left. To her, this signifies a brutal destruction of all beauty, sweetness and culture. In desperation, she accuses history and asks, 'Why should we tolerate their beastly Calibanity?'¹⁸ She dies at the end.

The structure of *The Collector* is a working out of a possibility inherent in *The Tempest*: suppose Caliban was not helpless but gained power over the intruder-rulers? For its more localized motifs, the novel shows the heroine hoping that if she could

only have an opportunity of educating and civilizing him, he might turn out to be a tolerably good person, thus forgetting what a fiasco Miranda's attempt to teach Caliban proved to be. Shakespeare's heroine had 'pitied thee, / Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour / One thing or other', but Caliban's profit was 'I know how to curse. The red plague rid thee / For learning me your language!' (Act 1, Scene 2, ll. 353-65). Similarly, dream, freedom and slavery are some of the verbal motifs from *The Tempest* which Fowles interprets for his specific purposes.

The Tempest is not the only text *The Collector* uses for its own needs. But the novel remains fully in control of all the texts it uses. *The Tempest* does not impose itself on Fowles; Fowles imposes himself on the play. A small paradox is that while intertextuality reduces the precursor to an insided function in the text, it prevents the text from claiming completeness. An intertextual text is an incomplete text whose meaning is dependent on the reader's consideration of it together with the precursor texts. By contrast, influence normally does not render the text incomplete, although of course the reader's knowledge of influence might be rewarded with additional, incremental meanings.

III

If we forget the author for a moment, we can say that both influence and intertextuality figure in the text and, as such, embody the meaning of the text by virtue of their place inside it. Their tendencies are different: intertextuality has a centrifugal tendency, influence has a centripetal one. Their implications for the artist are different, too: intertextuality serves, influence can dominate the author; intertextuality is like any other device or formal strategy, but influence need not be amenable to the author's volition or control. This is why very often influence is like destiny, irrevocable, unalterable, whereas intertextuality can serve any number of functions: renewing the genre, parody, adaptation, interpretation, and so on. Intertextuality can be a game, even a joke: influence is no laughing matter.

Not only does an understanding of influence reveal the make-up and functioning of the ephebe's artistic being or his affini-

ties, but it also enables one to place the text in an appropriate literary tradition; it thus helps one in defining the genealogy of the text. To the extent that influence enters the text through a dialectic with the ephebe's imagination, the functioning of influence constitutes one of the most immediate textual dimensions in which to search for self-reflexivity in the text: influence awareness, inter-influence conflicts, influence and affinities, the relative strength or weakness of influence vis-à-vis the ephebe, influence and anxiety, all these phenomena inside the text form a self-reflexive dimension and can tell us the way influence functions in there. Intertextuality, whether functioning as a means of interrogating the literary past, renewing old texts, inverting or parodying them, or of simply economically enriching the texture, also forms part of the self-reflexive dimension of the text. Intertextuality tends to make the text meta-criticism, a commentary on how texts are 'manufactured'. It is a most effective way of demonstrating how a new text recycles or rearranges the old texts, how literary production resembles bricolage. Self-reflexivity is thus the common area for both influence and intertextuality.

NOTES

1. Sudhakar Marathe, 'Eliot and Shakespeare: A New Perspective', in S. Nagarajan and S. Viswanathan (eds.), *Shakespeare in India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 79-98.
2. John Drew, *India and the Romantic Imagination* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 234.
3. Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics, and the Study of Literature* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 139.
4. John Sturrock, *Structuralism* (London: Paladin, 1986), p. 153.
5. Allon White, *The Uses of Obscurity: The Fiction of Early Modernism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 175.
6. Philip Roth, *The Breast* (1973; rpt. London: Corgi, 1973), pp. 110 and 84.
7. Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969; rpt. Frogmore: Granada, 1972), p. 71.
8. Muriel Spark, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1961; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), p. 128.
9. Cf. L. MacPike's conclusions on Dickens' influence on Dostoyevsky: 'When influence is assimilated creatively . . . it becomes part of the

- thought processes and creative processes, becomes entwined with the works and ideas of the borrower, and reappears in changed forms. The very changes, in fact, may make it difficult to pinpoint their sources . . .'; and 'Stavrogin's inability to reach any sort of synthesis mirrors Dostoevsky's own inability to transcend Steerforth's incipience. There seems to be no way to get beyond full potential, and Dostoevsky quite clearly shows, through Stavrogin, that incipience itself may be a special norm which cannot be transcended.' *Dostoevsky's Dickens: A Study of Literary Influence* (London: George Prior, 1981), pp. 198 and 193.
10. U. R. Ananthamurthy, *Samskara*, trans. A. K. Ramanujan (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 8.
 11. Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, ed. Sculley Bradley et al., 2nd ed. (1978; rpt. New Delhi: Prentice-Hall, 1986), p. 42.
 12. Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* (1980; rpt. London: Pan Books, 1982), see chapters 'Accidents in a Washing-chest' and 'At the Pioneer Cafe'; Günter Grass, *The Tin Drum*, trans. Ralph Manheim (1961; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), see chapters 'The Stockturm: Long-Distance Song Effects' and 'Good Friday Affair' in book 1.
 13. Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 15-16.
 14. The influence of *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* on *Shame* is discussed in some detail in my paper 'The Importance of Being Salman Rushdie', *Jadavpur Journal of Comparative Literature*, 25 (1987), pp. 112-25.
 15. Angus Wilson, *The Middle Age of Mrs. Eliot* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1958), p. 81.
 16. John Fowles, *The Collector* (1963; rpt. London: Pan, 1965), pp. 217-18.

A Theoretical Framework for Influence Study in the Indo-Anglian Context¹

BHALCHANDRA NEMADE

The influence of English on various Indian literatures has been circumstantially described by literary scholars, who generally agree that the nature of this culture contact was largely textual. However, scant attention is paid to the entire scale of influence mechanism.² The influence of English on Indian languages is invariably linked with a special kind of renaissance in the values of major Indian language communities, giving rise simultaneously and at different phases to various movements—from the political-sociological to the literary-aesthetic. What requires to be emphasized in this context is that linguistic acculturation as a part of culture contact associates itself with a number of psycho-linguistic and socio-linguistic processes, which we would call confrontations. An overall view of linguistic influence suggests that expansion in linguistic systems is a clear index of how society adjusts itself to the new conditions. It is, in plain words, a process of becoming equal to other developing languages. Minute linguistic changes in the various subsystems of language further influence the organization of text structures in literary works. Unfortunately, historical linguistics and descriptive linguistics in India are bogged down in the study of sound changes and microlinguistic categories, forgetting the fact that linguistics is necessarily textual. It treats the whole language, because language is both a semiotic code and an aesthetic code and the boundaries of these codes are socio-cultural phenomena. In contact comparative linguistics, we concentrate on the confrontation of the two linguistic systems—that of English and that of Marathi or any other Indian language. This would follow the study of the con-

frontations of other superstructures like the stylistic systems, aesthetic systems and cultural and historical traditions of the two cultures, as they are inevitably tagged to the linguistic features. The linguistic model thus can be used as a fundamental framework for the study of literary influence, drawing an analogy between the behaviour of a linguistic subsystem under influence and a literary-aesthetic subsystem of the native language under influence.

A framework of the linguistic influence should be able to account for the simultaneous occurrence of several socio-linguistic processes and phenomena. It is not always possible to carry out analysis of all the processes from inside the receiving language. Self-contained contexts exclusively internal to linguistic systems are often insufficient to account for several aspects of linguistic influence. It is for this reason that a multiple approach needs to be adopted. Influence studies are described in a vast scattered literary divergent; yet all the levels of description have to be complementary to one another. Such an approach would preclude attempts at mathematical formation and prevent parasitic tendencies which develop in undue adherence to one method only. Thus the multiple approach would include the following well-defined linguistic disciplines:

1. *Historical-linguistic*: to establish a reconstructed baseline of structural norms that existed prior to the contact with English. A descriptive model of all the different structural elements needs to be reconstructed for the purpose of their comparison with the stylistic features of the period after the contact with English. Select texts taken from eighteenth century Marathi prose and those from the nineteenth century serve as concrete data for detecting the influence of English on Marathi prose.

2. *Socio-linguistic*: to investigate the process that led to borrowing and change in the receiving language.

The medium of the transfer of linguistic features from English to an Indian language is most certainly the bilingual behaviour of the dominated group. There is a general agreement about the fact that bilingualism, whether textual or oral, is the first discernible sign of the beginning of linguistic influence. In a colonial situation some degree of biculturalism is

inevitably associated with bilingualism. However, when the degree of biculturalism increases in proportion to its possible usefulness, puristic resistance, supported by nativistic movements, begins to substitute the borrowed features by indigenous ones. This accounts for the sudden Sanskritization of Marathi during the period of English influence. The indiscriminate substitution of English loans by Sanskrit equivalents has not only damaged the phonaesthetic structure of Marathi, but also destroyed the rhythm of the sentence-structure considerably. Coinage, loan-translations and pidgin features demand contextualization in the receiving language structure.

Several borrowed features, mostly accepted as culture-tags, meet zero resistance in the receiving language. This clearly suggests the psycholinguistic processes of the borrowing community being raised to the level of the dominant culture. Interference of the alien features in the subsystems of the language, from the graphic to the syntactic, characterizes this phase of influence.

Borrowing may be erratic, but the next phase of change is systematic; it regularizes, rejects or retains the borrowings. Several motivational factors are evident in the textual analysis of borrowed English features—need, utility, urge, rhythm, humour, imitation, plagiarism, compulsion, fancy, prestige and so on.

This range of motivations can be very wide and may be explained only in terms of the period style which controls and regulates individual choices. What seems to eliminate finally the 'unwanted' borrowed features is the native speakers' inertia.

3. The third discipline which requires to be brought in is comparative descriptive linguistics. It prepares a model for functional analysis of the linguistic influence established by other methods discussed so far. The baseline, reconstructed for the purpose of comparison with the new features, is constantly referred to at this stage of investigation. Linguistic change may cause modification to one subsystem in order to accommodate a borrowed feature in the same or in a related subsystem. In this process, some of the homogeneous features of the receiving language structure are lost, creating holes in the system. For example, analysis of the graphic subsystem of modern Marathi prose shows that the English punctuation system has almost

destroyed the free and flexible word order of old Marathi prose, although it has gained in logical argumentation by using the comma, semicolon and quotation marks.

At this level, we have to carefully distinguish between (a) change due to borrowing, and (b) change due to internal development or other factors. Suspicious features can be verified by interlingual comparison, i.e. by detecting the sources in the English texts.

4. We have already entered the fourth discipline of literary stylistics, which may be effectively used to analyse literary texts written in various phases of the influence, so as to establish the occurrence of the entire range of borrowed literary-aesthetic categories—stylistic devices, motifs, imagery, literary forms and movements, symbols, and contents such as characters, plots and situations. Strictly speaking, this is the area of comparative literature and we nearly stand at the boundary of the linguistic methodology developed so far. Here the problem of investigation demands a different framework from the one we have adopted, because a purely nativistic viewpoint appears to be subjective and therefore unjust to the dynamics of the acculturation process on the one hand; and on the other, the Western notions of comparative viewpoint inculcate a kind of objectivity which may lead to bogus 'internationalism'. Evaluation of influence in relation to the dominated languages does not exist in comparative literary studies, because such studies are by and large Eurocentric.³ Moreover, the Indian scholars are themselves acculturated individuals, having no firm tradition of respectability in world literature today. Such is the dilemma.

In the long-term colonial type of culture contact, the language of the dominant group becomes the instrument of ethnic superiority. The dominant group use their language as the instrument of spreading their values, and the dominated, being left with no alternative, accept the value systems of the dominant as their own. Dharmananda Kosambi observes that the institutional superstructure in Indian civilization has perfected an efficient mechanism by which any dominant alien value systems are so completely absorbed into the native culture that the more hostile they are to the existing values, the more respectable they become with us.⁴ From the earliest recorded example of the worship of Indra, a Babylonian Kassi

destroyer who made the Indus Brahmins eat dog-flesh, to the present-day adoration of English culture, Kosambi sees a series of influences on India which make any upsurge of native creativity impossible. Even in the Indo-Anglian context, there is no evidence to judge by in primary and secondary sources whether the alien government imposed more English on the dominated Indians or the Indians themselves forced the British rulers to give them more English.

This discussion naturally does not add in any way to our framework, nor does it answer the dilemma we have pointed out. The proper question here should be: How to 'observe' the numerous shifts in the literary-aesthetic norms that have taken place since the advent of the English influence on our literatures? As observer-participants, can we make any statement on the loss of our rich oral traditions that have vanished by the touch of English text-oriented print culture? Jurij M. Lotman and others define the mechanism of culture as 'a system which transforms the outer sphere into the inner one'.⁵ With the tremendous onslaught of the outer sphere on our culture, what are we to transform into? Clearly, therefore, the first need for the influence study of literary texts is to establish a baseline with which to compare the change.

If this beginning is made, our comparatists will discover a local base rather than an international one. Comparative literature must transcend national boundaries, but it must begin within those national boundaries in order to transcend them at all. For example, in the land of Guru Nanak and Kabir and Tukaram we need not be groping after *secularism*, which we cannot even define properly. Having granted that the colonial contact has left India a low-value culture, the only way Indian literature may stand to gain centrality is to discover the great native forms, structures, themes and movements that existed prior to the colonial contact and establish them as *signifiers*. The Sanskrit epics, the collections of tales like the *Kathāsarit-sāgara* and the *Jātaka*, the Bhakti movement, the styles of Mahanubhava prose, the Vachanakaras, Ghalib and numerous folk poets—these have not been substantially brought under comparative literary study for the simple reason that we constantly work inside influence aesthetics, weighing out our literary commodity in foreign measures.

Finally, it may be added that the framework of influence study need not be a closed model. The taxonomic scale of any influence study will range from complete exclusion of foreign norms to complete inclusion of such norms into the native structure. Between the two poles there is a range of varying degrees of inclusion and exclusion. This proves that influences are system-following rather than system-forming. The native culture accepts only those features which it needs for its own growth. The fact that Indian languages, unlike those in the Americas and Ireland, have survived indicates that a new cycle following the period of influence may come into being.

NOTES

1. The framework outlined here is, however, not purely theoretical in conception. It is derived from the author's full-length study of the influence of English on nineteenth century Marathi prose (unpublished), and the conclusions drawn on the basis of the linguistic acculturation of Marathi have constituted the model, which may be applicable *mutatis mutandis* to other Indian languages.
2. See the following studies: Abdul Latif-Sayyid, *The Influence of English Literature on Urdu Literature* (London: Forster Groom, 1924); Priyaranjan Sen, *Western Influence in Bengali Literature* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1932); Hardev Bahri, *Persian Influence on Hindi* (Allahabad: Bharati Press, 1960); Vishvanath Mishra, *Hindi Bhasha aur Sahitya par Angreji Prabhav, 1870-1920* (Dehradun: Sahitya Sadan, 1963); K. M. George, *Western Influence on Malayalam Language and Literature* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1972).
3. Several fragmentary studies of linguistic acculturation may be cited in this context. See, for example, articles by Edward H. Spicer, 'Linguistic Aspects of Yaqui Acculturation', *American Anthropologist*, XLV, 3 (1943), 410-26; Jean Bassett Johnson, 'A Clear Case of Linguistic Acculturation', *American Anthropologist*, XLV, 3 (1943), 427-34; D. D. Lee, 'The Linguistic Aspect of Wintu Acculturation', *American Anthropologist*, XLV, 3 (1943), 435-40; George L. Trager, 'Spanish and English Loanwords in Taos', *International Journal of American Linguistics*, 4 (1944), 144-58; Joseph B. Casagrande, 'Camanche Linguistic Acculturation', I, *IJAL*, XX, 2 (1954), 140-51; II, *IJAL*, XX, 3 (1954), 217-37; Edward P. Dozier, 'Two Examples of Linguistic Acculturation: The Yaqui of Sonora and Arizona and the Tewa of New Mexico', *Language*, XXXII, 1 (1956), 146-57; Janet B. Sawyer, 'Aloofness from Spanish Influence in Texas English', *Word*, 15 (1959), pp. 270-81; Gerald D. Berreman, 'Alcut Reference Group Alienation, Mobility and Acculturation', *American Anthropologist*,

- LXVI, 2 (1964), 231–50; and Janet Byron, *Selection among Alternates in Language Standardization: The Case of Albanian* (The Hague: Mouton, 1976).
4. See *Hindi Sanskriti ani Ahimsa* (Bombay: Dharmananda Kosambi, 1935).
 5. 'Theses on the Semiotic Study of Cultures (as Applied to Slavic Texts)', in *The Tell-Tale Sign: A Survey of Semiotics*, ed. Thomas A. Sebeok (Lisse: The Peter de Ridder Press, 1975), p. 58.

The Divine Vapour and the Holy Rapes: Problems of Influence Studies in a Colonial Context

SWAPAN MAJUMDAR

Though influence studies have of late suffered a steady attack on the theoretical plane in Western critical circles, they still remain the handiest area in the praxis of literary comparatistics. If they are found deficient today, it is due more to a lack of well-defined methodology than conception.

The explicit object of influence studies is not to demonstrate a critic's acumen in detection of sources, nor to satisfy a reader's extraterritorial curiosity in authorial indebtedness, acknowledged or otherwise; but to understand the various designs and matrices, thrusts and drags of the creative process itself. But until recently, influence studies were done only to assess the potential originality of an author, or to measure the latitude of freedom a later author could avail of while working on earlier material. We should, however, remember that neither the robust ancients nor the delicate medieval poets were apologetic about any influence evinced in their works. For Longinus, the process of influence resembled an afflatus:

So, too, as though also issuing from sacred orifices, certain emanations are conveyed from the genius of the men of old into the souls of those who emulate them, and, breathing in these influences, even those who show very few signs of inspiration derive some degree of divine enthusiasm from the grandeur of their predecessors.¹

The purist opposition of originality and imitation is a relatively recent phenomenon.² From the late eighteenth century down to T. S. Eliot, it grew into a custom to look at influence as 'a kind of inundation, of invasion of the undeveloped personality

by the stronger personality of the poet',³ where the receptor was obviously not considered fit to hold a candle to the emitter. This observation may hold good in particular instances, but as a general principle such mechanical value judgement is far from acceptable.

Though the terms Influence and Imitation are often used in the same breath, the concepts require to be reinforced with extended semantic fields of application and in keeping with the changing times. I would like to suggest the following modification. Imitation may be said to operate where sufficient contact evidence is available between the emitter and the receptor, mostly through the medium of an intermediate object, seldom through direct personal affiliations. In other words, it exists in areas which the French School considers proper for literary comparison. Influence, on the other hand, may be discovered in areas which are deemed valid for comparative literature by the American School—that is, in areas where affinities are discerned without any contacts as such, or disjunctions, despite their use of similar themes. While Imitation is more positivist and has a temporal validity, Influence is more relativist and is perhaps 'polygenetic'⁴ in time. Imitation acts within a definite area and elicits an immediate and a direct response through textual echoes and reverberations; Influence works in an indefinite zone and stimulates a pervasive empathy in the compound psychic process of the receptor. Imitation may be studied in a one to one correspondence; Influence reveals simultaneous traces of absorption from multiple sources. While the one looks obvious, the other only reflects a distant glow. In summing up the differences between the two, I would reiterate what I said elsewhere,⁵ that these two do not cancel out each other, but are in fact successive, complementary stages of a gradual, cumulative process. Such influence relations begin with Imitation, then proceed through Reception on the course of either integration or differentiation, culminate in Impact—however perfect or abortive that may be—and are finally followed by Survival in successful cases. The same pattern is valid for both intra- and interliterary relations.

But the greatest deterrent to current influence studies is their lack of demarcation from reception studies. Both investigations practically rely on the same responses of the receptor, yet relish

the prestige of being two distinct and, as it were, independent methodologies. Here, too, I would propose a modality. Influence studies should be mainly restricted to the emitter—his literary fortune, the spectrum of meanings generated by him and interpretation, even mutilation, of his intentions through the ages; and they should try to account for the curves in the rise and fall of such fortunes. On the other hand, reception studies should focus on the receptor, on what the age demands of him and of his literary ideas and ideals, on what elevates and enkindles his imagination—in short, on his ‘elective affinities’⁶ that determine his apparently eclectic choices; they should try to discover a common thread running through his *oeuvre*, to decipher a pattern, to map out a psychology of inclination that contributes to the making of his creative personality. In both influence and reception studies, the object ought to be the creative authors themselves, and their texts the principal medium of exploration, though their ancillaries may well include other literary or non-literary receptors or emitters as the case may be. The result would lay open a treasure of permutations and combinations of Author/Text/Canon/Code/Convention and, equally important, their asymptotic and variable relationship with time. The determination of the method would vary according to the object of research.

If properly developed, these two methodologies, I believe, would be good enough to curb the excessive importance attached by the American School to the study of analogy. Founded on outward resemblances, not duly supported by an evidence of dependence, the search for analogies—leaving out the cases of ‘polygenesis’—is apt to run into inconsequential and unproductive, yet intellectually painstaking, exercises. Every age frames its canons, constructs a set of codes and conventions in addition to the prevalent ones, which, like commonplaces, are often shared by the writers of the new age. These elusive analogies may sometimes be taken as instances of influence. Finally, the methodologies as outlined above should also be able to take care of the five purposes of analogy studies with which Michael Moriarty has defended this new-fangled area of comparative literature.⁷

The Indian comparative literary scene over the last decade or so seems to have been infected by a similar, if not a

graver, tendency towards analogy hunting across two or more literatures. Except for the slender connective 'and' joining the two or the three names, it reaches nowhere near a comparative approach. Nevertheless, this should not be regarded as a reflection on the possibilities of influence studies in Indian literature. They are immense, much more than what Western literature can afford its scholars. Beyond its tripod of traditions—Greek—Roman—Christian—Western literature has, in fact, persisted in being essentially unstemmed, immune to interliterary relations. Each national component of Western literature has virtually been contented with intraliterary relations—both on the creative and critical planes. Yet they have fallen apart because the central gravity of tradition seems to have failed to hold them together. Not only is the living Western tradition Greek- or Latin-less, but its classics have virtually been abstracted to a dried-up repository of scholarly allusions alone. But in India the classical languages like Sanskrit and Pali, with their corpus of canons, codes and conventions constituting an age-old tradition, are at all events alive and still have the authority to determine the approval or rejection of a foreign element in its body. Furthermore, right from the Aryan invasions down to the imperialist expansions of Western powers on the subcontinent, its destiny has rendered it pervious to interliterary relations as well. Thus the Indian literary tradition today stands like the famous botanical specimen of *Ficus bengalensis*, with so many of its branches turned into roots that its original stem is hard to identify. And, no doubt, the transition brought about by such influxes could be best understood with the methodology of influence studies.

Indian literary history opens up a wondrous spectacle welcome to scholarly application of almost all the methodologies of influence studies. India being a federation of multilingual states, the inter- and intraliterary situations, since the emergence of Modern Indo-Aryan languages, do not always ask for different treatments.

During the pre-Modern period, abundant typological affinities in polygenesis are worth considering between genres like the Sanskrit epic and drama and their Greek analogues, the *Ākhyāyikā*/*Kathā* and the Novel, or between individuals like Kālidāsa and Shakespeare or Ghalib and Villon. The long line

of Rāmakathā from the *Daśaratha Jātaka* to Tulasidasa's *Rāmacarita-mānasa*, including the works of the great masters Vālmiki, Kālidāsa and Bhavabhūti, is a veritable example of deliberate poetic swerves from their predecessors to establish individual identity by breaking away from the set pattern and simultaneously replacing it with an innovative one. The Bhakti movement with its pervasive Pan-Indian sweep not only displays an adherence to a common tenet of faith, completely codified by canons of rhetoric, but also underlines a passage of internal contact relations. Nor would one fail to notice, on the interliterary level, the presence of Sufi mystic elements in the refrains of Bhakti poems, or to study aspects of similarities on the intraliterary level between, say, poetesses like Mahadevi Akka and Lal Ded, Andal and Mira. Even in the area of folk literature, the corpus of medieval romances like Mohua or Heer-Ranjha stands in close proximity to Sohrab-Rustam, Siri-Farhad or Laila-Majnun, who are but distant cousins of Tristan-Iseult, Aucassin-Nicolette or Paolo-Francesca. To conclude the cycle, the works of translation from the twin epics *Rāmāyana-Mahābhārata* and the *Bhāgavata* in different regional languages provide us with instances of 'kenosis'⁸—the repetition and discontinuity of which is again an unmistakable sign of the anxiety of influence. Since there is hardly any authentic testament to contact relations, interliterary situations, except for a few instances of Indo-Persian exchanges, happen to be polygenetic in nature, while the intraliterary relations fit the continuity model forwarded by the Czech theorist Dionyz Durisin in its full stretch.⁹ But with regard to the dissemination of Indian culture and its concomitant literature in the Far East, which has ample documented records, the influence model would undoubtedly yield good results.

Whatever the merits of such medieval influences, their choices at least were independent. With the beginning of the colonial period in the nineteenth century, intrinsic literary qualities might have developed as a matter of cross-fertilization between two dissimilar cultures, but the poets were certainly burdened with a host of unfamiliar sources, which they had no other option but to acculturate. The Western theories of influence studies fall short in problem-solving the peculiarities emanating from the extra-normal situation of colonialism.

Thanks to the efforts of Itamar Even-Zohar of the Porter Institute, Tel Aviv, the Polysystem Theory does take under coverage the literary experience of five-sixths of the people of this planet. The core problem, as understood by him, is:

Cultures that developed before others, and which belonged to nations which influenced, by prestige or direct domination, other nations, were taken as sources for more recent cultures (including more recently reconstructed ones). As a result, there inevitably emerged a discrepancy between the models transferred, which were often of a secondary type (for the obvious reason of the easier identification and hence the extraction of construction principles), and the original ones, as the latter most likely might have been pushed by that time from the centre of their own system to the periphery.¹⁰

The most singular characteristic of the Indian situation was that the alien system which pushed to the periphery the indigenous one was neither of the State, nor of Religion, nor of Law, but that of Education. Interactions with Western education elicited, as I have shown in a previous paper,¹¹ no less than three consecutive designs and counterdesigns (approval—rejection—adjustment), one overlapping another at certain points.

To my mind, for a comprehensive study of the present era of Indian literature, the methodology of reception studies would be more effective than that of influence studies, as variegated responses are of more consequence to us than interpretation of the sources. Secondly, rather than with the influence of an individual or of a genre, or, for that matter, of an artistic work, nineteenth century Indian literature was permeated with the impact of a non-artistic influence, viz. English education on a broad base sponsored by the British colonizers. The pedagogy of the imperialists was instrumental to the ushering of two far-reaching moves within Indian literatures: while on the inter-literary plane it exerted a direct influence, intraliterary transactions in its wake brought about almost simultaneously an indirect influence, which again contributed to no mean extent to the cementation of bonds between modern Indian literatures. For example, the Malayalam novelist C. V. Ramana Pillai's (1858–1922) *Marthanda Varma* (1891) might have come under a dual influence—the direct influence of Scott's *Ivanhoe* along with the indirect influence of Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay's

(1838-94) *Durgeshnandini* (1865) through an English translation (1880), which itself had been written under the direct influence of *Ivanhoe*. But the other effect was even more dominant. Long before the receptors had a direct contact with emitters, their reputation or literary fame had an overwhelming impact upon the former, so much so that a seat of honour was kept reserved for them. The instance of Shakespeare may be taken. Productions of Shakespeare, frequent salutary remarks about him and, of course, his inclusion in the syllabi paved the way for his literary fortune¹² on this subcontinent. But in not being fully corroborated by conviction and experience, nonetheless being parroted by tuition, most of these influences turned out to be infructuous. Reputation, too, like most influences, could not equalize a genuine impact. Coupled with this, the drags of the still active canons, codes and conventions of Sanskrit poetics resulted in cases of 'creative treason' where

it does not really add anything to the work of art. It is simply a shifting of values, a rearrangement of the poetic pattern. It is no longer the book as it was written, but it would be absurd to pretend that it is something else, something entirely foreign to the original creation.¹³

The relationship was further complicated by the double remove separating communication between the original author and the ultimate reader in the colonial situation, and increased the possibility of 'poetic misprision' by all means. The relation stood as follows: Author = Translator = Recipient Author = Reader. And we should remember that the latitudes of freedom for a translator and a creative author are not always compatible. This explains why, not only as a matter of negative influence during the second cycle of this relationship, but as a decisive method of overcoming the cultural differences, a general predilection for adaptation—in terms of the mass, the moment and the milieu—became evident in Indian literatures. Emulating Ovid, Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824-73) in his *Virangana Kavya* (1862) meticulously sought out characters from Indian *purāṇas* parallel to the heroines of *Epistulae Heroicum*, who do not only bear Indian names but betray an Indian sentiment, peculiar to the late nineteenth century ideals of emancipated womanhood, almost in a retroactive projection. Or Vijay Tendulkar's virtual reworking in *Silence! The Court is*

in *Session* of Durrenmatt's novel *Die Trappe*, received through Yaffe's dramatization *The Deadly Game*, may be taken as a spatial transportation of the twentieth century women's question to the Indian context.

Such approximations also drive home the point that, be it the method of influence studies or reception studies or typological affinities, if applied with proper caution and discretion—and of course with modification to cope with the Indian situation—it would throw a beaming light on Indian literary history and make manifest its unfathomable potentials through a thorough and meaningful understanding of our past heritage and present predicament. And maybe a fourth school of comparative literature, after the French, American and East European, would flourish from the homeland of Bharata.

A Note on the Title of the Paper

The title bears allusions to two parallel epic characters: the Pythian priestess at Delphi and Satyavati, the mother of Vyāsa. Both were impregnated behind a veil of divine vapour, and both events were considered 'holy rapes' by poets. On another level this latter phrase reminds us of a line from Thomas Carew on the impact of John Donne, whose 'brave soul . . . committed *holy rapes* upon our will'.

NOTES

1. Longinus, *On the Sublime*, ch. 13, trans. T. S. Dorsch, in *Classical Literary Criticism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), p. 119.
2. See Raymond Williams, 'Originality', *Keywords* (London: Croom Helm, 1976), pp. 192-3.
3. T. S. Eliot, 'Religion and Literature', *Selected Prose* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), p. 37.
4. Polygenesis: "polygenesis" . . . results in the creation of identical things by different people at different times.—K. K. Ruthven, 'Literary Influences', in *Critical Assumptions* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 130. This is the basic premise behind the study of Analogies or Affinities. Durisin and, after him, Prawer have divided the areas of affinities into social, literary and psychological.
5. Swapan Majumdar, 'Indian-Western Literary Relations: Problems of Prevalent Paradigms and Parameters', presented at a UGC Seminar at Jadavpur University, and now published in *Jadavpur Journal of Comparative Literature*, 25 (1987), pp. 21-8.

6. See Goethe, *Elective Affinities*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), pp. 13-14, 50-7.
7. The five purposes are: '(1) the establishment of literary norms which theoretically apply to all literature through comparisons drawn between different cultural traditions; (2) the discovery of historical facts shared by works of literature which were created within the same cultural tradition; (3) a technique to help foster critical and aesthetic appreciation of literature; (4) the use of analogy as a tool in the discovery of methods for studying literature by going outside literature to other disciplines; and (5) the study of literature in comparison with the other arts.'—Michael Moriarty, unpublished dissertation on 'The Uses of Analogy: An Essay in the Methodology of Comparative Literature', p. 103; quoted in Ulrich Weisstein, *Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1981), p. 132.
8. See Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 77-92.
9. Dionyz Durisin, *Theory of Literary Comparatistics* (Bratislava: Veda, 1984), pp. 320-4.
10. Itamar Even-Zohar, 'Polysystem Theory' (to be published shortly), p. 25.
11. Swapan Majumdar, 'Comparative Literature: Western Critical Premises and Indian Literary Practices', *Jadavpur Journal of Comparative Literature*, 23 (1985), pp. 63-72.
12. See Anna Balakian, 'Influence and Literary Fortune: The Equivocal Junction of Two Methods', *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*, 11 (1962), pp. 24-31. The present writer also worked on 'Shakespeare and the Syllabi', and his findings are recorded in a Bengali article in *Jadavpur Journal of Comparative Literature*, 20-21 (1982-83), pp. 94-117.
13. Robert Escarpit, "'Creative Treason" as a Key to Literature', *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*, 10 (1961), p. 20.

III Reception, Themes, Genres and Movements



The Indian Cultural Factor in the Development of Chinese Fiction

TAN CHUNG

This discussion will be guided by the following lines of reasoning. First, there is no unilinear movement in cultural history: a cultural phenomenon is not a straight line, nor a flat scene scenario; it presents a stereographic picture. One of the modern Chinese novels in controversy is Liu Xinwu's *Liti jiaocha qiao* (The flyover), first published in 1981.¹ The author views human life, human relations, human sentiments and motivations as a complex structure similar to the sight of a flyover with multi-directional movements and multidimensional interactions. When we view culture at a certain point, the stereo-dimensional picture of a flyover is at once in sight. Our second line of reasoning is not to view cultural entities as isolated independent phenomena of existence. Cultures are interconnected with and interreactive towards each other. It is this intercultural phenomenon which leads to the development of horizontal continuity. Just as the Chinese tradition of tea drinking created the best atmosphere in Britain in the eighteenth century for the development of freedom of speech whereas in China it has never been conducive to the growth of democracy, similarly some of the avant-garde trends in ancient Indian literature created a sea change on the Chinese literary scene, while their continuity in India becomes untraceable.

If we adopt the intercultural perspective and take for granted the horizontal continuity, then the stereographic picture is easier to draw. We can liken a cultural wave to a traffic wave. After a one-way moving traffic passes the flyover, it radiates into various directions—some vehicles may even move towards directions entirely opposite to their original.

Such a phenomenon is common in intercultural development. Let me give an example.

Indian Buddhism as a way of life is logically a movement which propagates a teetotal and vegetarian life-style. However, we have a story depicting the life of a time when the influence of Buddhism reached its zenith in China. The story is told as a true event by a renowned Buddhist master of the Tang Dynasty, and is enshrined in the Chinese *Tripitakas*, which are holy scriptures to Buddhists. Around the years 760-1, as the story goes, an obscure Buddhist monk took shelter in a country inn one evening, extremely exhausted. He ordered three litres of wine and half a kilogram of meat and consumed it. At night he got up and started chanting the scriptures, emitting golden rays from his mouth, which lighted up the rooms around like daylight. When he finished chanting, the golden rays went back into his mouth. Another Buddhist monk staying at the inn, who had earlier resented his unholy drink and diet, now asked his forgiveness and blessing.² Is this not a piece of Buddhist indoctrination which has quite deviated from the expected directions? But this is not an isolated example. We have reasons to believe that after the propagation of Buddhism in China both alcoholism and non-vegetarianism registered a phenomenal rise. Buddhism was instrumental to the breakdown of the orthodox Han Confucian moral structure, which, in turn, encouraged the carefree life-style of alcoholism and merry-making. In Tang China, Buddhist ideas became a favourite of the famous poets, along with alcohol and women. Li Bo and Bai Juyi were eminent examples of such a rather strange admixture.

I intend to describe the incoming of the Buddhist cultural wave to China as a wave of vehicles which interacted with different roadsigns when crossing the flyover of the Chinese national boundary. By such a description I wish to make two points. In the first place, the Buddhist cultural wave was a variety of cultural elements including religion, philosophy, phonetics, concepts, literature, science, arts, music, dance, medicine, sports, superstitions, magic, etc. The Chinese reacted to their arrival with a host of different moods and attitudes. Hence my second point is that each of these cultural elements travelled a different direction in China. Some might even have

gone back, but others have stayed and undergone various processes of interaction and transformation.

Let us return to the story I have quoted. There are at least two new cultural elements which originated from India. One is the *pañcaśīla* (five disciplines) type of life-style of non-alcoholism, vegetarianism, etc., which the Chinese Buddhist monks adopted as their model. The other element of the story is the supernatural power of Buddha-dharma that golden rays would be created from the mouth of its preacher. In this story we see contradictory Chinese receptions to the two elements: rejecting the first in order to play up the second. But this story is only an illustration of a particular mood of intercultural movement which cannot be made a universal law. In the overall stereographic picture there are always a number of different movements which cannot be categorized by one particular pattern.

I have also utilized this story to illustrate the Buddhist strategy of evangelization. This strategy is a property common to all religious preachings of India, viz. to appeal to people's fancy, to make them believe the unbelievable. Buddhist metaphysics, of whatever school it may be, is an inevitable indulgence in mysticism. All the different preachings of Buddhism are but the various expansions of the original myth, i.e. the Enlightenment at Bodh Gaya. The chemical compound of Buddhist theology is 30 per cent reasoning, and 70 per cent fiction. If we regard Buddhist literature as a high tide of ancient Indian literature, we can take it as masterpieces of fiction. In fact, this should not be viewed in isolation. India is the land of birth of great fiction, with the two epics as shining examples. The *Purāṇas* also are a fiction of another kind.

If we borrow the structuralist analysis to understand fiction, it is a two-stage operation of first *deconstructing* the world of human intelligibility, and then *reconstructing* a new world of cognizance.³ Buddhist literature is by and large a two-stage operation of this kind. In the first place, Buddhist preaching deconstructs the existing human value-system and describes the concrete attractions of life as 'illusion' (*māyā*). After that, it reconstructs a three-in-one universe consisting of the paradise of the celestial beings, the mundane world of the human beings and the hell of the ghosts who undergo barbarous and cruel punishment because of the sins they have committed in the human world.

In other words, what Buddhism has done is to transform the real into the illusory, and sell illusion as real life. This looks absurd, but has attracted and dominated the human mind for two millennia by now.

In the last two thousand years, the Buddhist evangelic movement has demonstrated a marvellous salesmanship in this regard. As no scientific proof can be produced to substantiate the new world-view, great pains have been taken to convince the human mind of the Buddhist fictional *reality*. One of the successful techniques is to narrate human stories, selling fiction for true stories—beginning with the *Jātaka* stories of the Buddha's own life. Here we have in Buddhist preaching an entire trade, as it were, of fiction-making.

Lest I sound too sceptical and irreverent about Buddhism, which has been the most powerful spiritual force of mankind and is still one of the greatest religions among men, I should add that there is honesty and sincerity in all the games of fiction in Buddhist teaching. First, the Buddhist deconstruction of the positive values of the mundane world acts as a curative to the materialist excesses of acquisitiveness, aggressiveness and avarice. Some of the Buddhist stories about Yamarāj's bringing to book the rich and powerful in their afterlife are instruments of social reform. Conversely, other Buddhist stories propagating the trip to paradise on the part of the suffering, oppressed, hardworking, kind and devoted ordinary souls are also well-meaning if not meliorating, depending upon how one looks at them. There is yet another aspect of the Indian character of Buddhist preaching. In a certain sense, Buddhism is the most elaborate justification of the Indian social tradition of *sannyāsa* (renunciation of worldly attachment). The Buddha and millions of his disciples have set a noble example of the Indian way of *sannyāsa*, which is also translated as 'homelessness'. The Indians who carried the Buddhist teachings to China were mostly such *sannyāsins*. Their exemplary behaviour not only won admiration among their Chinese hosts, who treated them as cultural ambassadors arriving from another country, but also enhanced the credibility of the fictitious stories preached by them.

Here, we must notice that the Chinese social milieu was quite different from that of ancient India. If Buddhism had nothing

else but the tradition of *sannyāsa* to offer, it would never have made an impact on China. As a dynamic religion, Buddhism quickly realized the new challenges and developed Mahāyānism, which gave Buddha's original teachings a worldly and materialist twist and became responsive to the social milieu of the non-Indian peoples from Central Asia to China. As a result, the fictional approach of Buddhism reached a fantastic height under the Mahāyāna masters. On the other hand, the Chinese felt as if Mahāyāna literature was specially written for them. They spent a lot of material and human resources to translate this literature into Chinese. As a result, the Chinese language today is the best repository of Mahāyāna literature, while India has almost totally lost it—as if having given it to China as dowry for the marriage between Mahāyānism and Chinese culture.

The height of fictionalization reached by Mahāyāna literature is worth spelling out. Before doing it, I should draw the reader's attention to the fact that my illustrations are entirely from Chinese language sources, viz. the Chinese translations of what was originally authored by ancient Indians. This naturally involves the question of authenticity. First, allowance should be made for some mistranslation and distortion. Secondly, as quite a number of texts were translated out of oral versions narrated by great Indian masters, there was the possibility of the Indian masters' modifying the sacred scriptures to enhance their appeal to the Chinese mind. One such great master was Kumārajīva (who died in China in 409 after spending nearly thirty years of a vigorous life of preaching and translation). He was the first director of China's Sūtra Translation Bureau, and the translations registered under his name are of the first order both in quality and quantity. A good number of the *sūtras* were orally recited by him without written texts. Before Kumārajīva was recalled by Lord Buddha, he vowed that he had been faithful to the holy scriptures, and that this would be upheld by the indestructibility of his tongue during his cremation. His biographer recorded that this came true with his tongue remaining intact while his body was reduced to ashes and the pyre had been burnt out.⁴ The story shows that there was high sensitivity about the accuracy of preaching and translation even at that time. Two great

Chinese master translators of Kumārajīva's calibre were the two famous pilgrims to India, Xuanzang (Hsuan-tsang) and Yijing (I-tsing) of the seventh century. As the accounts of India left by both of them are highly valued for their accuracy today, the accuracy of their translations too seems to be vouchsafed. We have to give the ancients the benefit of the doubt.

The picture of the world as depicted in Mahāyāna literature is truly fantastic. In the first place, there are graphic depictions of the other worlds. There is the World of Extreme Happiness in the west (*Sukhavatī*) where all the inhabitants are handsome and beautiful, and where palatial residences and culinary delicacies appear automatically at one's call. Everyone lives in palaces of his own wishing, in design, size, furniture and decorations. Any special dish of food would come at will. It disappears as soon as one thinks one has eaten. In this way one grows in beauty and strength, while no waste is excreted from the body. Instead of dirt the ground is covered by petals showered from the forest of jewel trees. The petals pile up as high as the height of seven persons. When one walks on it the foot sinks four fingers deep. As soon as the foot is lifted the petals come up to the original level. After a few hours the petals disappear under the ground, which remains spotlessly clean. Then new petals are showered on it again. In this world there is neither fire nor darkness. There is no day and night, no sun and moon. There is neither distinction, nor humbleness, nor authoritative deterrence. It is a land of gold, jewels, beautiful flowers, marvellous fragrance and melodious music.⁵

- There are thirty-three Heavens each of which is a wonderful abode for celestial men and women. These men and women go to Heaven because they extinguished their sensual desires. Celestial men and women, all handsome and beautiful, ageless and affectionate, mix freely, singing and dancing together keeping harmony and decorum. If anyone develops sensual desire, he or she is immediately sent down to the world of mankind. According to the scheme of Buddha-dharma this is a world of ordeal and struggle, which is quite true. What is unreal in the Buddhist scheme is that people who have accumulated merits of Buddha-dharma can go to Heaven for a happy sojourn of several hundred years after human life. But those

who fail to make the grade either remain, i.e. are reborn, on earth, or, if they have committed sins, are condemned in their next life to the species of beasts, or, even worse, to the sufferings of hell.

Some *sūtras* make an intermediate category between beasts and hell, i.e. the world of hungry ghosts. There are again two different worlds for them. Some of the hungry ghosts live among men, and they are those that can be seen at night. Others live far below the earth. There are thirty-six kinds of hungry ghosts all of whom have been condemned for their greed in previous life as men. The duration of the punishment is five hundred years according to its own calendar where a day and night is as long as ten human years.⁶

There are seven great hells for different kinds of sins committed. The greatest hell is the Avīcī Hell, which has sixteen different places of miseries. The hells are commanded by Yamarāj, who has an army of Yamarāj-men, including Yamarāj-messengers who direct the condemned to their places of punishment. The hells are places of blazing fire and freezing ice, of swords and spears and chains, of vicious birds and insects who feast on the victims, of intolerable dirt and foul smell. The Yamarāj-men are cruel executioners who boil the victims in cauldrons or throw them into the jungle to feed lions, tigers and pythons. The duration of suffering in hell varies from hundreds to thousands of years.⁷

Another fictional feature described by Mahāyāna literature is the humanization of animals, who are not only as intelligent as men but also interfere in human life, which the Chinese felt quite refreshing. Another supernatural phenomenon is, of course, the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and Deva-rājas, many of whom have a human origin but have attained a superman status and are liberated from the ordeals of mankind because of their prolonged accumulation of the merits of Buddha-dharma. By the same token, animals too can accumulate merit and be elevated to higher physical forms.

All this created a revolution in the world of intelligibility among the Chinese. A new universe was created in their minds. The impact was twofold. On the one hand, the Buddhist fiction about the Buddhas, the Bodhisattvas, rebirth, the option between heaven and hell, the metamorphoses of life, was all

spread universally in the country, particularly among the illiterate masses, and became ingrained in folklore. This development was independent of Buddhist evangelism. It was the Chinese mass absorption of the Indian stimuli. On the other hand, those who felt challenged by the increasing popularity of Buddhism tried to indigenize the alien stimuli, which resulted in the creation of many Chinese fictional concepts and symbols. These became known as the Taoist myth. To the Chinese masses, both the Indian myth and its Chinese imitation were equally attractive. The coexistence of the two mystic universes resulted in many movements of hybridization, acceptance, rejection, transfer of identity, and internalization. Chinese culture stood to gain in such a development.

In the wake of popularization of Buddhism in China there was an unmistakable trend in the development of Chinese literature. Chinese prose writing used to be devoted to historical accounts and philosophical discourses. It used to be historiography-oriented. While Chinese historiography continued to develop after the popularization of Buddhism, a new element began to creep into Chinese historical accounts, the element of fiction. In the Indian literary tradition there was a strong dose of hagiography even when true history was recounted. This hagiographic element first infiltrated into China's Buddhist historiography, and then into Chinese historiography as well. First, the admixture of fiction with history was made in the Buddhist scriptures that got translated into Chinese and provided the source of infection. Then, as I have shown in the story above and also in the instance of Kumārajīva, fantastic anecdotes became a part of the history of Buddhist development in China. The infection then spread further to the general historical accounts of China. I shall illustrate this spread of infection.

In Chinese Buddhist historiography, fiction was introduced in the following aspects. First, there are various ways of demonstrating that Buddha-dharma possesses a kind of supernatural power which is at once overwhelming and awe-striking. This supernatural power is manifested in the form of magic light or fragrance or deterrence against evil forces. The story that I cited at the outset belongs to this category. Secondly, there is a clever and judicious use of the appearance of the

Bodhisattva in times of crisis. The appearance of the Bodhisattva is generally ephemeral and often in a dream. Here one should point out that the use of dreams is a favourite technique in Indian art and literature from the earliest instance of Māyādevī, the Buddha's mother, down to the present-day stories and movies. It may be said that the Chinese became conscious of the merit of this dream-technique only after the popularization of ancient Indian Buddhist literature in China.

The most famous Chinese dream-story is that of the Han Emperor Ming (58-75 A.D.), who dreamt of a golden figure hovering over his palace. The imperial court debated the significance of this dream and concluded that it was a manifestation of the spiritual power of the Buddha. Then the court decided to send a delegation to India to invite some Indian monks to preach the Buddha's teachings in China. This story created a tradition that Buddhism went to China as an official guest. Modern scholars are divided in their attitude towards this story. Foreign scholars mostly dismiss it as fiction because it never figured in the imperial historiography of the Han Dynasty. However, Chinese scholars do not wish to deny the historical value of the story.⁸ I may add here that although the story could not be traced to the imperial documents of Han, the famous Tang Emperor Taizong (626-49) referred to it as if it was confirmed history.⁹ I do not wish to create the impression that the dream was a true story. The powerful impact of this very dream may lead us to conclude that it was the Indian technique that has worked wonders.

Let me narrate another dream story:

. . . For four nights and five days there was not a drop of water to wet the throat. Both his mouth and stomach were burning, and he fainted several times, unable to march forward. He then lay down on the sand and silently chanted the name of Avalokitesvara. He persisted in the chanting though totally exhausted. . . . On the fifth midnight, he was suddenly touched by a cool breeze, as if he was enjoying a bath in cold water. He could open his eyes, and his horse could rise up. As he felt comfortable, he could get some sleep. In his dream he saw a bodhisattva several tens of feet tall holding a lance and shouting at him: 'Should struggle and march, and not be lying there!' The dharma-master was startled and woke up. After travelling about five kilometres the horse suddenly changed route

and could not be controlled. Several kilometres away they found a patch of green grass. He got down and the horse ate the grass voraciously. Ten steps away from the grass there was a pond of sweet water clear like a mirror. He went down and drank it and life returned to his body. He and his steed had their energy restored. He figured out that the water and the grass should not have been there in the desert. They had grown from the compassion of the bodhi-sattva. This belongs to the phenomenon of miracle born out of devotion.¹⁰

The story is about the famous pilgrim Xuanzang's journey to India across the desert, as narrated by his two disciples, Huili and Yanzong, in the famous account generally known among Western scholars as the 'Life' of the Tripitaka Master—a work greatly valued by Indian historians. The technique employed in the narrative has the effect of a true story, though of course, it cannot be endorsed by any scientific reckoning.

Xuanzang had two imperial patrons, the Tang Emperor Taizong and his son and successor, Emperor Gaozong (649–83). There was a dream-story about the two emperors as told by another Tang ruler, Empress Wu (reigning 684–704), who was one of Emperor Taizong's imperial ladies to become the queen of Emperor Gaozong. Empress Wu narrated in her epitaph for Emperor Gaozong that when the latter was conceived, the queen mother dreamed about a dragon having climbed on to the imperial bed and rested on the chest of the imperial father. The dragon turned into a bird with golden wings. The queen mother exclaimed that it was the symbol of the quintessence of the sun which was the manifestation of the intention of the Heaven that the conceived child would love the universe.¹¹ By this account, Empress Wu became one of the earliest Chinese writers to employ the dream-technique to eulogize a Chinese ruler, thereby formally introducing it to Chinese historiography.

Another new trend in Chinese prose writing, not unrelated to the popularization of Buddhist literature, was the increasing use of fantastic stories, even regarded as a new genre named 'zhiguai' (accounts of the fantastic)—a significant development of post-Han literature. Lu Xun (Lu Hsun), the great modern Chinese writer, was an expert on this topic. He traced out the Indian sources of a Chinese story written by Wu Jun (Wu

Chun; 469–520) about a fantastic scholar. The scholar got into the goose cage of a traveller without increasing the weight of the burden. Furthermore, the scholar could sit comfortably in the cage which was much smaller than his size. The strange thing was that neither the scholar shrank, nor the cage expanded. During rest time, the scholar produced from his mouth first the utensils, then food and drinks, then a girl (his wife) to make merry with. Even more fantastic was that, seeing the scholar asleep, the girl produced from her mouth her own boy friend to enjoy. At the end of the story, the girl first swallowed up her boy friend and was then swallowed up by her husband, the scholar. Next, the scholar put the utensils back to their original place too, leaving out a tray which he presented to his bearer as a souvenir. Lu Xun quoted a famous Tang scholar saying that the novel features of the story came from Indian sources. He went a step further to trace the source of the oral magic to *Jiuza piyu jing* or *Samyukta-avadāna-sūtra*, and that of the weightlessness and sizelessness to *Guan Fo sanmei jing* or *Samādhi-sāgara-sūtra*.¹²

Lu Xun noticed another phenomenon about the new trend of Chinese prose writing, i.e. the post-Han writers' indulging in fiction writing, but circulating their stories as the works of famous Han writers. He considered literary forgery to be a Chinese scholarly tradition, thriving from the Han till the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644). 'The scholars did this for their own amusement, to show off their talent or to claim that they had acquired some rare manuscript; the alchemists did this to spread superstition, utilizing these "ancient" texts to impress the credulous.'¹³ There is some truth in what he said, but this is not all a profound analysis.

To have an overview of Chinese cultural development, we must treat the Han Dynasty (206 B.C. – 220 A.D.) as a kind of watershed. Han and its short predecessor dynasty Qin (221–206 B.C.) laid the foundation of the Chinese empire. It was the inauguration of a great tradition. However, with the collapse of Han there came a prolonged period of disintegration in China till she was reunited by Sui (589–618), again a short dynasty to be followed by the mighty Tang Dynasty (618–907). The names of Han and Tang have become symbols of Chinese culture. Buddhism, which was introduced to China in the

middle of Han, thrived during the period of distintegration, and attained its climax during Tang. We could attribute Buddhism as a destabilizing factor of Han and a consolidating factor of Sui-Tang, which is a subject beyond our present discussion. However, the post-Han period may be treated as an open-door period in Chinese history. There was much fresh air in intellectual life. A part of this fresh air arrived from India across the Himalayas, which is amply demonstrated in the 'fictional' mood in post-Han literature. This 'fictional' mood encouraged the writers to put their avant-garde creations under the brand of Han authorship, not only to enhance their credibility, but also to keep their works of art within the Chinese mainstream.

Returning to our stereographic perspective, it may be legitimate to argue that the Buddhist cultural wave ramified into several forces in various directions in the Chinese social milieu. There is no gainsaying that it occupied a considerable ground in China's spiritual superstructure after the downfall of the Han empire and the eclipse of Confucian spiritualism, which I cannot discuss in this essay. Suffice it to say that if there was a genuine change in spiritual values, there would be a corresponding development of new ways of life, new ethos, new temperaments, etc. There was a new literary temperament among post-Han writers, particularly the prose writers, which I may describe as a 'fiction temperament'—a 'delight in fantasy and fun' by paraphrasing Virginia Woolf's famous observation.¹⁴ The shift from Han prose to post-Han prose was from pedantic serenity to mock-serious liberalism, from conventional prudence to unconventional flippancy, if viewed from a conservative viewpoint. Let us spell out this point with some illustrations.

There was a story which figured in two famous post-Han works, *Xijing zaji* (Miscellaneous accounts of the western capital) by Ge Hong (284-364) and *Shishuo xinyu* (New words of social talk) by Lui Hiqing (403-44). The powerful Han Emperor Wu (141-87 B.C.) wanted to sentence his wet-nurse to death because of her lapse into bad behaviour. The old nurse requested help from the humorous courtier, Dongfang Shuo (154-93 B.C.). The courtier, who knew the temperament of the emperor well, said that His Majesty resented any

entreaty on others' behalf. He asked the nurse to gaze at him in the presence of the emperor. When she did so, Dongfang Shuo told the nurse that her days were numbered, since the emperor had grown up and would not recall his having been fed milk by her in his childhood. The emperor heard these words and remembered his childhood. He felt for the nurse and pardoned her.¹⁵

Besides commending the cleverness of Dongfang Shuo, the story paid a left-handed compliment to Emperor Wu, which would not have been regarded as correct and proper in Han historiography. Obviously, the story was not meant to be treated as a serious historical episode, and few, if any, have taken it as a true story. Incidentally, Lu Xun made a significant observation on the social background of the appearance of the second work, *Shishuo xinyu*. He said: 'This was due to the spread of Buddhism which advocated otherworldliness, as well as to the popularity of Taoism. Rebels against Buddhism might turn to Taoism, but the escapist tendency was the same; for these two religions which warred against each other also played into each other's hands. And so arose the fashion of "liberal talk".'¹⁶ Lu Xun's main concern was the escapist attitude towards life as demonstrated by both Buddhism and Taoism. My concern is totally different. I see in this trend of 'liberal talk' an element of avant-garde progressiveness, a break from conservatism and stereotyped literature. In this way, the Chinese writers developed a kind of 'fiction temperament' which was conducive to the growth of a new genre.

There were more links between Buddhist literature and this new trend of 'fiction temperament'. In the parlance of modern and conventional critics, the new genre of Chinese literature, a sample of which I have just described, is called 'xiaoshuo biji', which may be rendered as 'small talks'. It is interesting to note that the genre has conventionally included a serious historical work left behind by the famous fifth century Chinese pilgrim to India, Faxian (Fa-hien), viz. *Foguo ji* (Records of the Buddhist countries). It is much valued by Indian historians, who would never have thought that this important source of ancient Indian history could be treated as a kind of fiction by Chinese literary critics.

If we examine things closely, Faxian's *Foguo ji* should belong

to the new category of post-Han fictional literature, because it contains no less fiction than its non-Buddhist counterpart. For that matter, Xuanzang's even more famous account of India and other Buddhist countries, entitled *Da Tang xiyu ji* (Accounts of western countries during the Great Tang), is equally an admixture of facts and fiction. To be fair to these two great travellers, they did faithfully record what they had heard on their journeys rather than fabricate anything on their own. Moreover, they believed in the fantastic stories which they had heard and faithfully reproduced, just as they believed in the fantastic things said about Buddha-dharma and the bodhisattvas in the scriptures. Their writings belong to the best tradition of Buddhist literature as handed on by the ancient Indians to the Chinese. Here we have discovered another link between Indian Buddhist literature and the Chinese post-Han new genre of 'small talks', since Faxian's work shared the Indian heritage on the one hand and symbolized the growth of Chinese fiction on the other.

There was yet another work of the new genre which had a close link with Buddhism. It was entitled *Loyang jialan ji* (Accounts of Buddhist temples in Loyang), written by Yang Xuanzhi. The work is now regarded as a very important historical account of the changing fortunes of the Buddhist institutions in Loyang, the capital city of many dynasties, with a vertical coverage from the Han Emperor Ming's dream and the subsequent arrival of the Indian monks and scriptures and the establishment of the earliest Buddhist monastery in China (if the convention is to be believed), i.e. the Monastery of White Horses in Loyang, down to the author's own time in the sixth century. About the author we know little. It seems he was a government official of the Topa Wei Dynasty (386-534) whose capital was Loyang. He was definitely not a Buddhist monk. Whether he was a lay believer of Buddhism is difficult to decide. This fact adds to the merit of the work, since we can more readily give the benefit of the doubt to its objectivity. Yet, like Faxian's work, Yang Xuanzhi's account can justifiably be included in the same category of fiction because of the many fantastic stories he had reproduced in the work. For instance, there is the account of a gigantic wooden pagoda of nine storeys and 900 feet high in the Yongning Monastery. In

534 the pagoda caught fire and burnt for three months. Later the same pagoda was seen on the sea, shining magnificently. There are also accounts of Buddhist monks being recalled to hell by Yamarāj. One monk was resurrected seven days after his death. He recounted his experience in Yamarāj's office. He saw Yamarāj awarding some monks a passage to paradise, but sending others to hell. He himself was released and sent back to mankind because of an oversight in his dossier.¹⁷ Here, once again, we have traced the Indian sources of post-Han Chinese fiction. Let me give two more examples.

Stories in *Sou shen ji* (Accounts in search of spirits), written by a scientist, Gan Bao, of the fourth century, are quite refreshing and extraordinary. There was one Liu An who was resurrected from death for three days in his youth. He gained the power of prediction from his three-day holiday from life. There was a groom who stayed by the stable. One day his horse's face turned human. In it Liu An saw a warning of a disaster. He asked the groom to hurry home but not enter it. Instead, he should stand one and a half kilometres away and raise an alarm, which he did. After all his family members had rushed out of the house, it collapsed; but none was hurt. Liu An further advised the groom that three feet under the walls of his house there were three stone pillars that should not be removed, and the thing buried underneath should not be seen. Without seeing it his family would become rich, otherwise it would become poor. For it was a sacred dragon (*shen-long*). The groom could not overcome his curiosity, and he dug up the stone pillars. A pillar-size red thing immediately flew away. The groom became poor as predicted by Liu An.

Another man saw a wounded snake struggling on hot sand during a journey. He got down from his horse, picked up the snake and took it to the river. He said to the snake: 'If you are the child of the sacred dragon, you can protect me.' After two months, when he passed the same place on his return journey, a child stood in his path and offered him a precious pearl. He declined, thinking it improper to take anything from a child. That night he dreamt of the child telling him that he was the very snake which he had saved and requesting him to accept the present. When he woke up he found the pearl beside the pillow.¹⁸

These two stories contain a common reference to *shenlong* (the sacred dragon), one of whose earliest identifications in non-Buddhist Chinese writings was with the snake. In the Chinese translations of Buddhist scriptures as well as in the Chinese pilgrims' accounts of India, almost every word for the Indian *nāga* (snake) was rendered into the Chinese *long* (dragon). In a way, it was the Indian *nāga* which provided the Chinese link between the snake and the dragon. So there is an element of *nāga* in the two stories.

It is also clearly shown in the two stories that the snake/dragon was treated as a symbol of fortune and power. This is refreshingly new in comparison with the Han and pre-Han stories. In *Shiji* (Records of a historian), the first great Chinese historical annals authored by Sima Qian (one of the greatest historians of China who lived in the second century B.C.), there is the story of two 'sacred dragons' leaving their saliva in the ancient Chinese palace, which was responsible for the birth of the most disastrous queen in Chinese history, Baosi. There is another famous story in *Shiji* of the first Han emperor killing a snake to start his career.

The second story in Gao Bao's *Sou shen ji* has the moral of a good deed bringing its reward, which is the teaching of the famous Buddhist doctrine of *karma*. There are many such stories in Buddhist literature and its Chinese translations, but the story cited above is one of the earliest in non-Buddhist literature. In later years, the message of *karma* became one of the strongest stimuli in Chinese fiction.

Another element in the two stories is the role of animals in fiction. Ancient India had the reputation of creating the immortal stories of the *Pañcatantra*, which, some scholars think, had spread to China more than two thousand years ago. Buddhist literature is replete with animal stories. It is well established but relatively unknown that the famous twelve animal symbols for specific years and hours in East and Southeast Asia originated from Indian mythology, which was introduced into China through Buddhism, and then popularized by China in the entire region. The animal symbolism in Chinese literature evidently gained popularity after the spread of Buddhist teachings. I shall return to this point later.

Coming down to Tang literature, I have discussed elsewhere

my conception of the Tang golden culture as the horizontal continuity of the golden culture of India's Gupta age.¹⁹ Here I confine myself to the development of fiction. There are three jewels of Tang literature: (1) poetry, (2) *chuanqi* (which literally means 'transmitting fantastic stories', but has been translated as 'prose romance'), and (3) *bianwen* (a new genre recently discovered from the Tang manuscripts preserved at Dunhuang). Fiction claimed two of the three jewels.

The Tang *chuanqi* prose romance was the development of post-Han fiction to a higher stage and it became a vogue among scholars. Incidentally, the Tang Dynasty was the first government to recruit its imperial officers through a universal examination system, which was not only a distinctive characteristic of Chinese culture, but the ancestor of all the civil examination systems of the modern world. It was not regarded improper that the candidates for the imperial examinations should cultivate the examiners to impress them. It was a general practice that the candidates introduced themselves to the examiners by carrying a prose romance written on a roll of paper as their first present to the latter. Buddhism had contributed to the popularization of learning beyond established scholarly families who used to monopolize the Han officialdom. The Tang Empire had the distinction of breaking the monopoly of the big families (mostly from Confucius' birthplace), enabling the humbly born to rise to high official positions. The prose romances figured in this social transformation by injecting new cultural ingredients into China's great tradition.

It is easy to trace Indian influence on this new genre of Tang prose romances. There is the famous story of the dragon-king's daughter by Li Chaowei of the eighth century. It is a romance between a career-seeking young man named Liu Yi and the dragon-king's daughter. The story begins with the chance meeting of the two, and Liu Yi's carrying a message for the girl to the dragon-king's palace at the bottom of China's biggest sweet-water lake, Dongting, in Hunan province. The trip changes Liu Yi's life altogether. Because of the rich gift of jewels from the dragon-king for the service rendered, he no longer strives for a career, but lives comfortably by selling off the jewels. The dragon-king's daughter pursues him without his knowing it, and finally gets married to him. They live an

amphibian life, travelling freely between the aquatic dragon world and the terrestrial human world, with Liu Yi enjoying the fabulous wealth and longevity of the dragons.²⁰

This has become one of the most popular stories in China, and has since been staged in various vernacular dramas many thousands of times. It was the first of its kind in Chinese literature. That the story has an Indian origin can be proved by a comparison with another story by Li Chaowei's senior contemporary, Xuanzang. In his *Da Tang xiyu ji*, the pilgrim narrates a similar story which he has heard in the ancient state of Uddiyana (present Afghanistan and Pakistan). There is a dragon-pond at the foot of Lamboura Mountain. A tired traveller, an exiled descendant of the Buddha's Sakya race, has a love affair with the daughter of the dragon-king of the pond. They get married. The dragon-king (Xuanzang actually describes him as *shenlong*, the sacred dragon) gives the son-in-law a sword, who uses it to assassinate the king of Uddiyana and usurp his throne. The dragon's daughter becomes the queen of Uddiyana and presents him with a son who succeeds the Sakya descendant as a famous king of Uddiyana.²¹

Xuanzang's story was supposed to have taken place before the Buddha's *nirvāṇa* (passing away). In Indian Buddhist literature, the 'dragon-king', i.e. *nāgarāj* (the Chinese translations have transformed the *nāga* into 'dragon'), plays an active role. The Chinese translations of the scriptures make frequent references to *longnu* (whose Sanskrit origin is *nāgakanyā*), which literally means 'dragon's daughter', but is generally used to describe the female dragons. Similarly, the 'dragon-pond' (the Chinese translation probably of the Sanskrit *nāga-vara*) is also a frequent allusion in Buddhist literature. It is almost certain that before the introduction of Buddhist literature to China, the concepts of dragon-king, dragon-daughter and dragon-pond were totally unknown to the Chinese, although the dragon legend had been there for a long time. It is obvious that Li Chaowei's story was an adaptation of Xuanzang's.

But the significance of Li Chaowei's story, which marks the inauguration of a powerful folklore in China, is not just confined to the introduction of the three concepts. Li's story has solemnized in Chinese folklore the matrimonial alliance between the human world and the dragon world. The alliance, as

depicted by Li Chaowei, was very advantageous to men, as they could share the benefits of the wealth and longevity of the dragon race. In this aspect, Li Chaowei made an improvement upon Xuanzang's story. In the latter, the dragon-king's daughter explained to her human wooer that she had been born to the dragon race because of a disaster, and that the dragons belonged to the inferior species of the 'beasts' (*chu*) who could not marry human beings. This 'beast' stigma of the dragon disappeared in Li Chaowei's story. This conceptual revolution is also reflected in another difference between the two stories. In Xuanzang's story, though the dragon's daughter could transform herself into a beautiful girl to seduce the Sakya, the inhabitants of the dragon's palace including the dragon-king had ugly snake figures, which made the Sakya feel uncomfortable. Even the beautiful daughter of the dragon-king would show nine snake hoods when the Sakya had intercourse with her at night. The Sakya was so annoyed at this that one night, when his wife was asleep, he cut off her snake hoods, which was a foolish act because it cut short the longevity of his own descendants and caused blindness to his wife. But in Li Chaowei's story the inmates of the dragon's palace could appear in perfect human form, although when a dragon became infuriated, he would resume his dragon figure and move at lightning speed. The dragon-king's daughter not only possessed a perfect human figure, but had a beauty which was perfect according to human standards. The description of the dragon's palace in Li Chaowei's story resembles that of Heaven in Buddhist literature. Li Chaowei also adopted the Buddhist concept of a time-lag showing that what was an experience of a few minutes in the dragon's palace was a period of several months in the human world (an adaptation of the time-lag in Buddhist scriptures between heavenly and human life).

The conceptual revolution about dragon and man that I have just discussed was not a mere personal contribution of Li Chaowei, but was a ramification of the changed social ethos of the Tang Empire. It was the Tang emperors who began identifying themselves as a dragon race and started the vogue of wearing dragon robes and sleeping on dragon beds. This new vogue, in turn, established a firm tradition in China of identifying the dragon as a symbol of power, wealth and longe-

vity. Today people all over the world identify China with the symbol of the dragon, but very few know that this had its origin in the *nāga* legend of ancient India.

The dream became a distinctive motif in Tang prose romances. There are two famous dream stories which had as wide an impact on Chinese culture as the dragon-daughter story. 'Zhen zhong ji' (A story in the pillow), written by Shen Jiji (750?-800?), became another trend-setter. The well-known 'golden millet dream' in China's great tradition was created by this story, which, probably, had been more effective in propagating the Buddhist philosophy of 'śūnyatā' (void) than dozens of Buddhist scriptures. A young scholar with ambition and in quest of fame and wealth became friendly with a fellow traveller at an inn. The latter, though shabbily dressed, was an enlightened priest and a master of spiritualism. He and the young scholar started an argument on the meaning of enjoyment while the inn-keeper was cooking the golden millet for them. The old spiritual master then gave the young scholar a pillow to lay his head on. When the latter did as asked, a new heaven and a new earth were unfolded to his vision. He first married a rich and beautiful wife, and gathered a fortune. Then he succeeded in passing the imperial examination, and started on a distinguished imperial career. But he incurred the jealousy of fellow officials, who alleged that he had committed treason. When he got the news, he attempted suicide but was saved by his wife. While the others involved in the case were executed, he was saved from the death sentence through his friends' help. Later, the emperor discovered that he had been wronged, and rehabilitated him, promoted him, and made him a duke. He was blessed with five sons and many grandchildren, and became the head of a prominent clan. He acquired much land and other properties, and enjoyed the company of women, had his pleasures and lived luxuriously. But his health failed. Before his death he received a warm and affectionate citation from the emperor. He passed away after seeing the citation. At this point, the young man woke up from his dream while the golden millet was still being cooked. When the old master asked him about the meaning of enjoyment of life, he readily agreed that whatever looks attractive must come to an end.²²

The second dream story, entitled 'Nanke taishou zhuan' (A story of the Governor of the Southern Branch Province), was written by Li Gongzuo (770?-850?). A rich scholar indulged in alcohol and women, and fell sick. When he went to bed one night, he was caught in an extraordinary adventure. Two messengers from the king of the Scholartree-Safety Kingdom came with a royal invitation. He was driven in a horse-carriage with a dozen escorts to the king's capital through a hole in the old scholartree opposite his house. He saw golden letters inscribed on the gates of the city: 'Da Huai'an guo' (The Great Scholartree-Safety Kingdom). He was taken to the guest house amidst the usher's loud announcement of the arrival of the bridegroom for the princess. Then, he was taken for an audience with the king and the queen. The king was a giant with a dignified bearing, and was wearing a red crown. Then he was married to the princess, who was as pretty as a goddess. He was then posted as the Governor of Nanke (Southern Branch) Province, which took him to another city where he saw the large golden letters of 'Capital City of Nanke (Southern Branch) Province' on the gates. Then, he ruled the province for two decades without any mishap. Then, there was an invasion from a neighbouring country, and his general was defeated. He wrote to the king owning his guilt and got the king's pardon. Then, the princess died. He asked the king's permission to return to the state capital, which was granted. Then, there was a rumour that a great disaster would befall the state because of some person of an alien origin. His escorts were withdrawn, and he was confined to his residence. Then, the king suggested that he should return to his own home. When he said that he was in his own home, the king laughed and said that he belonged to mankind, not where he was. So the scholar was escorted back, and at that time he woke up from his dream. When his adventure began, two friends of his were washing their feet beside his cot. After the adventure ended, he found his friends still there, washing their feet. He told his friends what had happened to him. The friends asked the servants to dig out the hole in the scholartree, and found an extensive ant nest which looked like a city. In one place, they discovered two giant ants with red heads from whom other ants kept a distance. So this was the capital city of the 'Scholartree-Safety Kingdom'

and the giant ants the king and the queen of it. The hole extended to a branch in the southern direction where they discovered another nest which looked like an earthen city. This must be the Nanke Province, for the name of Nanke means 'southern branch'. There was more evidence to prove that his dream adventure lasting what seemed almost a lifetime was hardly an hour's trip through the ants' kingdom. The digging out operation resulted in the destruction of the ants' kingdom inside the scholartree and thus proved true the rumour which the hero of the story had heard in the Scholartree-Safety Kingdom, that the kingdom was to be destroyed on account of an alien. All this made the hero realize the hollowness of life's fortunes, and he gave up indulging in alcohol and women.²³

This is not just a dream story, but something more. The story suggests that a man's adventure in the ants' kingdom is both a dream and a reality. There are many details in the story which demonstrate that there is a lot of correspondence between the ants' world and the human world. For instance, in the ants' kingdom a pretty girl who became the hero's mistress told him that she had met him earlier on several occasions which the hero could recollect. The hero also met two old acquaintances who helped him a lot in his governorship of the Nanke province. After the adventure was over, he made inquiries about the two men and found out that both had died recently, which implies that they had continued their lives as ants. The story, thus, openly preaches the Indian concepts of afterlife vicissitudes and of life being one and the same (whether in mankind or in other animal and vegetable kingdoms), which is the *raison d'être* of the Indian value-system of *ahimsā* (non-killing) and *karuṇā* (compassion). Like the dragon-daughter story, this one also expounds the Indian concept of a time-lag between the different worlds. It further complements the other story by showing that while a period of long duration in men's life is only a short span of time in the dragon's palace, the opposite is true of mankind and its emmet counterpart. Perhaps this hierarchical order is a Chinese contribution to the original Indian idea which meant only to discriminate between the gods and the human beings. However, by assigning an inferior role to the ants' kingdom in the time scale, the story has no intention of minimizing the charm of their life. Even

after the death of his princess-wife, his giving up the provincial governorship, his being deprived of escorts and placed under restriction after the currency of a rumour which was against his stay, the hero of the story was hardly in a mood to leave his second home. The girls of the ants' kingdom were particularly charming, sentimental, social and intelligent.

Another story in the same genre and a trend-setter was written by Shen Jiji, the author who wrote the story of the golden millet dream. This story, 'Renshi zhuan' (A story of Lady Ren), depicts a romance between a young man and a fox. The fox, who was vain enough to call herself 'Lady Ren', emerged in the beginning of the story as an enchantress whose game was to seduce lone walkers at night to have sex at her den in the debris inside an uninhabited compound. A jobless man, Zheng Liu, was once seduced by the fox, in whose den he spent a night. Next morning he discovered the truth. But the experience of that night and the enchanting beauty of the fox Lady Ren had overwhelmed him. Some days later, in course of another nocturnal wandering in crowded places, he spotted his dream girl. The fox-girl, who knew that Zheng had discovered her true identity, tried to avoid him, but could not. On ascertaining Zheng's true love for her even after knowing that she was a fox, Lady Ren agreed to be his mistress. She had so much worldly wisdom that the two set up comfortably in a rented house. Then Zheng Liu got a government job and insisted on taking her to the place of his new assignment. On their trip a group of hounds dragged her down from the horse and killed her. After narrating the story, the author commended highly the fox's devotion to her lover, which put many women to shame.²⁴

The story was a forerunner of a whole category of fiction in Chinese literature which introduced foxes and ghosts as contenders with Chinese women for the true love of men. The allegorical element of this category deserves our attention. In Shen Jiji's story, the author conveys to his reader through the figure of the fox that much of the feminine charm and seductiveness is illusory—a creation of the fox-enchantresses—without men's discovering it. But the author also uses the example of Lady Ren to highlight the human spirit of self-sacrifice, courage and fidelity, and implies that they are easy

for a fox to acquire, but difficult for human beings to retain. The author also endows the fox with an extraordinary capacity to survive as a faithful wife and a triumphant social lady in a wicked male-chauvinist society. The hero's brother-in-law, rich, powerful and the hero's patron, was a man who wanted to possess any beautiful woman he came to know of, and could always have his way. On knowing of his poor, good-for-nothing brother-in-law having a wife who was prettier than any human beauty, he could not restrain his desire to rape her. Lady Ren not only foiled the attempt tactfully, but turned the villain into a generous friend and admirer. We can see in it the author's implicit criticism of Chinese women's docility and willing enslavement to their oppressors.

Again, we can trace the Indian influence in this new category of fiction. In a Buddhist scripture entitled *Xiuxing daodi* (Cultivation for the *Bodhi-pṛthivī* or land of enlightenment) *sūtra*, translated by the Indian monk Dharmarakṣa (who arrived in China in 266 and died there in 313), there is the story of a man whose wife was a ghost and fed on human blood and flesh. When told so, the man could not believe it, for his wife was very pretty, charming and affectionate. But he decided to find out the truth for himself. That night he pretended to be fast asleep. His wife got up and went out of the town to the graveyard. She took off her clothes and ornaments and turned into an ugly ghost. More horrid was the sight of her devouring corpses. The husband, who had shadowed her to the spot, saw everything with his own eyes. He returned home before his wife and pretended to be sleeping soundly when his wife came back. When the husband saw her beautiful sleeping figure, he again felt love for her. The next moment he was seized with the horror of the graveyard scene.²⁵

In Yang Xuanzhi's *Loyang jialan ji*, which I have cited above, we find an account of a fox scare in the capital Loyang in 517. It was rumoured that more than 130 men who walked at night and accosted pretty women on the road had their hair cut by the latter. There was a man who used to wonder why his wife never undressed while sleeping at night, even three years after their marriage. One night, when his wife was asleep, he undressed her and found her with a big fox tail. The wife was annoyed by the discovery. She cut off the husband's hair and

ran away. When the neighbours joined the chase, she turned into a fox and escaped.²⁶

I suspect that these two accounts, and more of such to be discovered later, can help establish the Indian origin of the development of Chinese fiction about foxes and ghosts turning into pretty and charming, courageous and enterprising Chinese wives, as inaugurated by Shen Jiji's masterpiece about Lady Ren. About the Buddhist connection of the fox, I have found a significant reference in a pious work entitled 'Shijia pu' (An account of the life of Sakyamuni), authored by a famous Chinese monk-scholar, Seng You (445-518). Seng You narrated that during the Buddha's meditation under the bodhi-tree at Bodh Gaya, three enchantresses arrived on the spot to seduce him and prevent him from attaining Enlightenment. The Buddha resorted to his magical powers and made the three enchantresses vomit the heads of snakes, foxes, and dogs respectively.²⁷ If we regard Seng You as an authority on Buddhist legends, the first fox who turned an enchantress had belonged to those who failed to prevent Prince Siddhartha from becoming the Buddha.

If we can establish the link between the Buddhist stories and the Chinese fox and ghost stories harbingered by Shen Jiji's Lady Ren, we have once again an illustration of my stereographic scenario of how Chinese culture has stood the Buddhist teaching on its head. In Buddhist fiction, the ghost and the fox turning into an enchantress is meant to warn the male disciples that enchanting women could be an obnoxious illusion, hence not attractive at all. But Shen Jiji and his emulators in later ages have got the message topsy-turvy. The fox and the ghost have been transformed to symbolize the real fascinations of life in Chinese literature.

Let me now come to the third jewel of Tang literature, which is loosely identified as *bianwen* (literally, 'writings about changes'), the meaning and the origin of which name have been a topic of controversy for many decades. Besides, there are many other aspects of this new genre which have not emerged clearly from scholarly investigations and debates. For our present purpose, we take note that this was an entirely new kind of literary creation which was closely associated with the popular preaching of Buddhism during the Tang Dynasty. A

major part of the works of this new literature openly propagates Buddhism or deals with Buddhist topics. There are also non-Buddhist works which have a measure of moral advice with an overt or a covert Buddhist imprint. Another characteristic of this literature is its emulation of Indian Buddhist literature by reinforcing with verse stanzas the prose text of fiction.

These special features of *bianwen* literature undoubtedly show an Indian cultural influence. Its another extraordinary feature is its not belonging to the great tradition of China. Nowhere had it been referred to before its fragmented remains were discovered in the beginning of the present century. Among the works unearthed, we cannot identify a single authorship. What is more, the prose of this literature is colloquial and unpolished, which is unusual in China's literary tradition. Many scholars are of the opinion that this was a literature which essentially belonged to the little tradition, i.e. a literature for the benefit of the illiterate masses of China. The works were not signed because they were not meant to be published or circulated in written form, as the masses could not read them. Yet they were composed for the masses, to be orally presented to them. In some of the manuscripts we see words written in the margin indicating the portions to be sung, instead of being read. It is clear that these manuscripts which form the matrix of *bianwen* literature today were originally written scripts for oral performances before mass gatherings. What kind of oral performances? Logically, they were by Buddhist preachers. In the Tang historical records we find references to Buddhist preachers' indulgence in what was termed *suchang* (literally vulgar chanting), to be differentiated from the usual *jiangjing* (expounding the *sūtras*). Some Tang accounts say that such 'vulgar chanting' sessions were extremely popular, as they were 'vulgar' and even 'obscene'. Thousands of people turned out to listen, spilling over the compounds of monasteries and causing traffic jams. Eventually, the Tang municipal government of the capital, Chang'an, had to impose a ban on such performances. This was probably the reason why *bianwen* literature did not survive beyond the Tang Dynasty.

However short-lived it might be, this 'vulgar' performance and its accompanying literature signified that a new era in the

development of Chinese culture had arrived. In this new era, culture was no longer confined to the educated higher strata, but shared its services with the illiterate masses. In other words, *bianwen* literature bears evidence to a significant socio-cultural revolution in China. The coming of this revolution was inseparable from the enduring and painstaking efforts of the Buddhist community to popularize the teachings of Buddha-dharma, which, in itself, was a cultural movement and a mass campaign for educating the uninitiated. With the illiterate masses, scholastic bombardment would be counterproductive. Vivid illustrations had to be resorted to. The 'vulgar' preaching during Tang was the right technique for this endeavour. Thus, this preaching and its accompanying literature of *bianwen* were instrumental to the socio-cultural revolution.²⁸

Although we have discussed the three jewels of Tang golden literature separately, they are, by no means, to be viewed as watertight compartments. All the three genres were moving along the same direction of acquiring larger mass bases as well as having more feedback from the masses. All the three had expanded their universe by internalizing a host of Indian symbols and stimuli. I have referred to the growing 'fiction temperament' among post-Han Chinese writers. Not only did the development of Tang prose romance and *bianwen* witness the continuation of this growth, but even Tang poetry caught the infection. Tang poems contained allusions to many contemporary and historical anecdotes. The famous poet, Bai Juyi (772-846), composed a long poem, 'Changhen ge' (Song of eternal regret), to depict the romance between the Tang Emperor Xuanzong (712-55) and Lady Yang. The poem proceeds from Lady Yang's being born an exceptional beauty to a humble family. It dwells on her being selected as an imperial mistress, her eclipsing all the three thousand beauties of the palace, her cornering royal favour for her entire family, her making the imperial ruler neglect his administrative duties, and finally, her being executed in a mini-mutiny. But Bai's romantic poem does not end here. It continues to depict the emperor's loneliness and yearning for his lost beloved. This is followed by a fantastic, imaginative account of a magic master being sent out to the other worlds in search of the departed soul. The master succeeded in locating her among the fairies

residing on an island in the sea. The last part of the poem is a vivid description of the visit of the Tang emissary to the fairy who had been Lady Yang in her previous life. The visit evoked emotion and excitement in the fairy, who recounted the joint vow by the emperor and herself that they would stick to each other in life and die together. The poem ends with this note of eternal regret that high as the emperor's stature was, he could not keep his word.²⁹

We see in this poem the essential ingredient of fiction. Furthermore, Bai Juyi's near contemporary, Chen Hong (who lived in the late ninth and early tenth century), composed a prose romance entitled 'Changhen zhuan' (A story of eternal regret), not only adopting faithfully the theme of Bai's long poem, but also including Bai's poem at the end of the story.³⁰ There is a theory that the fiction of Lady Yang was already a popular story during Bai Juyi's time (soon after Lady Yang had died), which provided material for Bai Juyi's masterpiece. Whatever it may be, Bai's 'Changhen ge' can be regarded as a cross between poetry and fiction. Or, a *verse romance*, as compared to prose romance.

If we have found in Bai Juyi a great poet with an element of 'fiction temperament', it may have something to do with his absorption of a dose of Indian influence. In his late life, he became a devoted Buddhist. He contributed not a little to the building of Buddhist temples, and the preparation of preaching materials. He was a regular caller at the Buddhist shrines and a keen disciple of Buddha-dharma. He regarded himself as a lay Buddhist, i.e. an *upāsaka*, and called himself 'Letian jushi' (*Devānanda upāsaka*) and 'Xiangshan jushi' (*Gandhamādana upāsaka*), both of a strong Indian flavour. He was well known in Chinese history as Bai Letian, i.e. 'White Devānanda'. The two places to which he would like to go after his life were: (1) 'Xifang jile shijie' (*Sukhavatī*) and (2) 'Dousuo tian' (Tusida Heaven).³¹ With all this, his contribution to the development of Chinese fiction had a sure Indian connection.

Here, we again see the significance of our flyover scenario. Poetry, prose romance and *bianwen* were three different streams of traffic. They flowed together, crossed their ways, and got mixed up on their onward journeys after crossing the flyover. After Tang, prose romance continued to develop during the

Song Dynasty (960–1279), but *bianwen* ceased to exist. However, we find the Song prose romance acquiring a new feature from Tang *bianwen*, namely, intermingling verses with its prose texts. Often the verses so intermingled are famous quotations from Tang poetry.

The Tang Empire was both a strong military power and a prosperous economy of trade and commerce. In comparison, the Song Empire, the last but one Chinese empire under native rule, was militarily much weaker, but commercially much more prosperous. Thus the continuous prosperity of trade and commerce in China helped develop an unmistakable urban culture. Urban recreation centres catering to the masses sprang up, and story-telling became an important content in the new recreation. This was known as *shuohua* (literally 'talking', but actually a generic term for a variety of entertainments in which story-telling formed a major part). The accompanying literature of this new entertainment was called *huaben* (meaning 'talking scripts'). This *huaben* literature can be treated as a direct descendant of Tang *bianwen* literature. Both were colloquial, 'vulgar' and popular; both were written not for printed circulation, but for oral performances; hence the works are generally anonymous. The only major difference is that Song *huaben* literature gained recognition from China's great tradition. History provided a place for them. Scholars of high societies began to read and comment on them. From this point onwards, the creative genius in Chinese literature became more and more fiction-conscious and mass-oriented. Vulgar literature was heading for a gala development. China was to become the first great novel-writing nation of the world.

The *shuohua* recreation had already started in late Tang. It reached its climax during Song, and maintained its tempo afterwards. The Song Dynasty was a watershed, because *shuohua*—story-telling—became a gainful profession and stood independently as an economic activity. Long before the birth of modern capitalism, fiction had turned into a commodity in China. Its marketplace during Song was known as *wazi* (literally 'tiled place'), which was a kind of theatre, or, even more precisely, a complex of performing areas. There were initially four major kinds of performances: (1) telling Buddhist stories,

which was a modified form of preaching, (2) telling historical anecdotes, (3) general story-telling without any limitation in themes, and (4) entertainment other than story-telling, such as riddles, martial arts, etc. The first kind, which provided the link between Tang 'vulgar' preaching and the Song cultural trade, declined gradually, while the second and third kinds paved the way for the birth of the novel. However, if we look at the great novels created later, we find *San guo yanyi* (Romance of three kingdoms) an exclusive historical novel, and *Xi you ji* (Pilgrimage to the west) an exclusive Buddhist novel re-enacting the legend of Xuanzang's pilgrimage to India. On martial arts a separate genre of fiction has been developed for the last several hundred years which is going strong even in communist China today. All this makes us conclude that the foursome cultural commodity in the Song market has laid the solid foundation for China's development into a great novel-producing culture.

Summing up, China's historical record of having developed a 'fiction temperament' for the last eighteen centuries, a commodity trade of story-telling for the last ten centuries, of having produced masterpieces of fiction continuously for the last fourteen centuries, and great novels for the last five centuries, can entitle her to be regarded as the leading novel-producing nation of the world. But, as our presentation bears out, she has been much indebted to Indian culture for winning this distinction. Paradoxically, Indian civilization, which started with such an impressive record as a highly imaginative and creative culture in fiction-making in ancient times, had left practically no novel-producing heritage to draw upon when great writers like Bankimchandra Chatterji and others began to establish the new genre of novel in the nineteenth century. The reasons for such a totally different course in the development of Indian novels as compared with that in neighbouring China are up to my Indian colleagues to investigate.

NOTES

1. This short novel is included in a series entitled 'Xin shiqi zhengming zuopin congshu' (Series of controversial works in the new era), in the

- book entitled *Wanxia xiaoshide shihou* (When the evening twilight disappears) (Changchun, 1986), pp. 342-477.
2. Huiying, 'Dafangguangfo huayanjing ganying zhuan' (Records of the sacred power of *Avatamsaka-sūtra*), in *Taisho Daizokyo* (Tokyo, 1927), vol. LI, p. 175.
 3. See Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics, and the Study of Literature* (London, 1975), pp. 189-90.
 4. Huijiao, 'Gaoseng zhuan' (Biographies of eminent monks), in *Taisho Daizokyo*, vol. I, p. 323.
 5. *Dabao ji jing* (*Mahāratnakūṭa-sūtra*), trans. Bodhiruci of India, in *Taisho Daizokyo*, vol. XI, pp. 95-7.
 6. *Zhengfa nianchu jing* (*Saddharma-smṛtyapasthāna-sūtra*), trans. Gautama-prajñāruci of India, in *Taisho Daizokyo*, vol. XVII, pp. 92-3.
 7. *Ibid.*, pp. 74-8.
 8. Discussed in E. Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China* (Leiden, 1972), vol. I, p. 22. Zürcher has not pointed out that there is consistency in Buddhist historiography about the credibility of this 'apocryphal' story.
 9. 'Da Tang sanzang shengjiao xu' (Preface to the sacred teachings of the *tripiṭakas* during the Great Tang Dynasty), in *Qinding quan Tangwen* (Royal edition of collected works of Tang essays), comp. 1814, edition preserved in Peking University Library, *juan x*, p. 7A.
 10. Huili and Yanzong, *Da ci'engi sanzang fashi zhuan* (Biography of the *Tripiṭaka* Master of the Great Monastery of Mother's Compassion) (reprint, Beijing, 1983), p. 17.
 11. Empress Wu, 'Qianling shusheng ji' (Epitaph of Emperor Gaozong's mausoleum), in *Qinding quan Tangshu*, *juan xcvi*, p. 8A.
 12. *Lu Xun quanji* (Collected works of Lu Xun) (Beijing, 1981), vol. IX, pp. 49-50; and its English translation in Lu Hsun, *A Brief History of Chinese Fiction* (Peking, 1976), pp. 53-5.
 13. *A Brief History of Chinese Fiction*, p. 27.
 14. Virginia Woolf's original words are: 'English fiction . . . bears witness to our natural delight in humour and comedy . . .' in her 'Modern Fiction', *English Critical Essays: Twentieth Century* (London, 1935), p. 398.
 15. Jiang Shejing (comp.), *Lidai xiaoshuo biji xuan* (Selection of notes of small talks through history) (Hong Kong, 1976), vol. I (Han, Wei and Six Dynasties), pp. 54, 151.
 16. *A Brief History of Chinese Fiction*, p. 66.
 17. Yang Xuanzhi, *Loyang jialan ji*, *juan I* and *II*; see Fan Xiangyong (annotator), *Loyang jialan ji jiaozhu* (Annotated edition of the accounts of Buddhist temples in Loyang) (Shanghai, 1978), pp. I, 12, 79-81.
 18. Jiang Shejing, *op. cit.*, p. 66.
 19. Tan Chung, 'Indian Source of Tang Golden Culture', *China Report*, xxiii, 2 (1987), 141-55.
 20. Li Chaowei, 'Liu Yi zhuan' (The story of Liu Yi), in Lu Xun (comp.), *Tang Song chuanqi ji* (A collection of prose romances of Tang and Song periods) (Beijing, 1956), pp. 51-63.

21. Xuanzang, *Da Tang xiyu ji, juan 3*, in Ji Xianlin et al. (annotators), *Da Tang xiyuji jiaozhu* (Annotated edition of the accounts of the western countries during the Great Tang) (Beijing, 1985) pp. 290-4.
22. Shen Jiji, 'Zhen zhong ji', in Lu Xun (comp.), op. cit., pp. 29-33.
23. Ibid., pp. 81-91: Li Gongzuo, 'Nanke taishou zhuan' (A story of the the Governor of the Southern Branch Province).
24. Ibid., pp. 33-42: Shen Jiji, 'Renshi zhuan' (A story of Lady Ren).
25. Zhu Fahu (trans. Dharmarakṣa), 'Xiuxing daodi jing' (Sūtra for cultivation of Bodhi-prthivi), in *Taisho Daizokyo*, vol. xv, p. 221.
26. *Loyang jialan ji, juan iv*, in Fan Xiangyong, op. cit., pp. 204-5.
27. Sen You, 'Shijia pu' (An account of the life of Sakyamuni), in *Taisho Daizokyo*, vol. I, p. 17.
28. Cf. Huang I-shu, '“Bianwen”—A Genre of Chinese Literature with Indian Influence', *China Report*, xxiii, 3 (July-Sept. 1987).
29. *Quan Tangshi* (Collected works of Tang poetry) (reprint, Beijing, 1960), vol. xiii, pp. 4816-20.
30. Ibid.; Lu Xun (comp.), op. cit., pp. 110-17.
31. Zhuhong (comp.), 'Wangsheng ji' (A collection of past lives), in *Taisho Daizokyo*, vol. LI, p. 141.

The Hispanic Response to Tagore

SHYAMA PRASAD GANGULY

Unlike in most parts of the West, where one observed a tapering off of Tagore enthusiasm within a comparatively short span of time after the award of the Nobel Prize, whatever be the reasons—the inadequacy of translation, a fast change of taste or an unfavourable socio-political situation, the Hispanic response, particularly in Spain and Argentina, did not suffer such decline. The growth in the popularity of Tagore can be measured either in terms of his readership or in terms of the successive number and editions of his works in translation, the gradual awareness of his concerns and of his writings other than purely literary, the variety of people undertaking translation of his books or of books about him, and above all, in terms of the heated debate on the relevance of his ideas and view of life. This last question is of utmost importance, for it lends credence to the hypothesis that at least in Spain the increasing popularity was partly due to a tension arising out of two confronting and opposing responses—one overwhelmingly positive, mainly based on literary considerations, and the other grossly negative, mainly based on the socio-political implications of his ideas in the then European context. Such a confrontation of responses in which the first seems to have prevailed, finally giving rise to a renewed consideration of Tagore's relevance by many young Spanish poets today, was the hallmark of his reception by Spanish intellectuals and artists in the post-Nobel Prize decade.

Before going into the exegesis of these responses, let me point out that unlike in many other parts of the world, the first Spanish translations of Tagore were of the books *Hundred Poems of Kabir*¹ and *The Crescent Moon*² in 1915—and not of *Gitanjali*—independently done in Argentina and Spain, by Joaquin

V. Gonzalez and by Zenobia Camprubi in collaboration with Juan Ramón Jiménez. While the last-named two authors' commitment to Tagore laid the foundation of the Hispanic response as such, Joaquin V. Gonzalez must be given his due not only for being perhaps the first to understand medieval Indian *bhakti* through Tagore, but also for the cultural purpose behind his translation. The translation was inspired by a personal commitment to studying and propagating the concept of love and brotherhood in the hatred-ridden climate of his country. The relevance of Kabir's (and consequently of Tagore's) world-view, apparently based on simple but strong and effective verses, gave to one of Argentina's finest men of letters the justification for bringing out Tagore in Spanish. Some of Joaquin V. Gonzalez's ideas may be quoted from his preface.

In the observation of our own [Argentine] life, the ancestral exaggeration of hatred appeared to me in all its horrible nakedness and violence and as a result inflamed my passion for the study of everything that could lead to harmony, benevolence, tolerance among men . . . and I have been preaching this in all forms. . . . When I read Tagore after reading Leonardo da Vinci my delight was uncontrollable . . . in *Sadhana* Tagore tells us that love . . . is the perfection of conscience . . . Tagore transfuses the soul of Kabir in his book [*Hundred Poems of Kabir*] . . . Undoubtedly this philosophy (that in love all contradictions of existence get fused and lost . . . only in love one finds invariable unity and duality. Love is one and both the things at the same time. Love is action and rest at the same time. Our heart constantly shifts position till it finds love and only then it rests) . . . is rigorously scientific. It perceives love as the only indivisible essence which takes forms without changing the originary virtue. This is the reality that transcends the Indian poems in which it is not always possible to draw the dividing line between what the mind could imagine as divine, pure and abstract love and the mystic love in which the former gets impregnated with humanity and nature, as if surging from it, spiritualizing itself towards divinity or the Infinite, thus returning to its primitive source. And human love may be said to be consecrated by the supreme ray of the only and eternal love spread over all things of the world. Only one love impregnates the whole universe . . . blind, blind are those who hope to see it with the light of reason, of that reason which is the cause of separation.³

Tagore reception in Argentina in particular, and the Spanish world in general, is normally associated with the name of Victoria Ocampo. While her fruitful association with Tagore produced a rich reciprocal harvest in terms of mutually inspiring creative responses, the rightful place of Gonzalez's effort to lay the foundation of Tagore reception in Argentina needs to be emphasized. Many such instances of unnoticed association work in silence to prepare the soil for a 'reception'.

Before we go on to talk about Tagore reception in Spain, another curious factor may be mentioned. This relates to the complementary yet decisive role of personalities coming from other disciplines, interested in cultural questions and having an open-ended attitude towards currents of thought from outside. Such was the role of the famous philosopher Ortega y Gasset, whose new humanism helped intellectuals interpret the potentialities of Tagore's creations. In this process his own style, with its clarity and charm, came to contain a part of Tagore's magic. It is of course true that in Tagore, Ortega saw an ideal support for his own philosophy of reality, based on 'vital reason', and for how he thought it was manifested in individual human life. He was perhaps the first Spaniard to attempt a philosophical exegesis of some of Tagore's writings. His famous and fascinating epistolary discourse on Amal in *The Post Office*, addressed to Zenobia Camprubi, helped Tagore to be seen in a different light. Besides, his contacts with all major Latin American thinkers of the age, in all probability, served to play a significant catalytic role in preparing the ground for Tagore reception in Argentina. This is also evident from Joaquin V. Gonzalez's book.

Although it is not necessary to consider the details of the positive (literary) reception to Tagore in Spain—the evidence is astoundingly clear—yet we may summarize the impact by reproducing the following:

The moment of Tagore's appearance in Spain was crucial to Spanish poetry. The great Ruben [Dario] was dead and the neck of the modernist swan had been twisted, although it continued producing agonizing songs from second-ranking poets, stiff as they were with their accent on the anti-penultimate syllables and weary of pagan deities. Spain was looking for a more intimate and natural poetry, dismounted from the cold target or artificial marble.... After

slender spirits, princesses and Bacchantes [of modernist poetry], Tagore erupted [in the minds of Spanish readers] with his sun, his sky, his cloud, his half-open flower, his sleeping child and his crescent moon. . . . The poetic material used by Tagore carried the promise of communicating to the ears a poetry full of fragrance of the sunny fields, of sudden springs, of peace of solitude and a dialogue with God, a poetry that was called upon to shake and freshen up a little the plaster-ridden dry Spanish poetry of that period. From the Bengali poet, through Juan Ramón, many of the poets of the succeeding generation drank an exquisite juice, and in the author of *The Gardener* the Chilean Pablo Neruda learnt . . . his first blind and suggestive enumeration of plants and animals which were later to impress his readers so much.

This extensive quotation is taken from the introduction to 'Rabindranath Tagore in Spanish' by a well-known Spanish critic, poet and biographer,⁴ close to the Nobel laureate Juan Ramón Jiménez, who along with Zenobia Camprubi is known to have introduced Tagore to Spain. It is an eloquent testimony to Tagore's relevance there.

This reception from a country which Tagore could not visit is discernible not merely in terms of the deep emotional attachment that Jiménez developed towards Tagore, giving his own creative career a new unfolding, but also in terms of Spain's response to the diverse aspects of Tagore's genius. Thus Ortega y Gasset, while responding to Tagore's genius, finds an unprecedented vision of a child in works like *The Crescent Moon* and *The Post Office*. This celebration of childhood had for him such an eternal and universal dimension that Tagore was immediately seen as the representative of a universal spirit. Ortega y Gasset's famous analysis of what Amal actually represents,⁵ in a philosophical sense of the term, presented to the Spaniards the deep perceptions of an eastern 'David' (Tagore) who would knock open the door of all sensibilities in spite of all 'vigilant guards' against outside ideas. In the purely literary sphere one could take the example of the lyrical prologues that Juan Ramón wrote to the translations done by him and Zenobia.⁶ Indeed the 'lyrical colophones' are an ample proof of the way in which Juan Ramón wanted to understand Tagore; and are yet unexplored areas for comprehending the poetic world of Juan Ramón and the place of

Tagore in that world.⁷ Of course, another important factor was the close affinity between Jiménez's Andalusian sensibility and Tagore's Bengali. It was felt so deeply that Tagore became 'the spiritual companion' of the Jiménez couple.⁸

However, my purpose here is not to show the instances of response and affinity aroused by Tagore. Working on the idea of a dynamic tension of opposites, stimulating 'reception' and giving it movement, what perhaps is more important is to examine the negative critical responses. Only that will show the synthesis of the total reception and the resultant potential for survival due to the dialectical pulls of factors that always determine the continuity of any phenomenon.

Before that, one more word about another factor underlying the historical reality of Spain that possibly contributed to the positive reception to Tagore. In Spanish literature the period 1900 to 1936 has been characterized as 'silver'.⁹ It represented a new thrust in literary, artistic and scientific movements. After the loss of the last vestiges of the Spanish Empire in the Americas, there was a resurgence of self-evaluation and critical enquiry. While the national culture did promote the growth of regional cultures, the reception of a more reformist-liberal approach through a special 'institutionalist' attention from the central power got under way. One of the major influences on the first nucleus of writers of the twentieth century was Christian Krause, the German philosopher (1781-1832) whose ideas led them to an attempt to identify the Spanish national mentality. The Krausist philosophy of rationalism and new humanism and the *Institución libre de enseñanza*, established earlier to promote a reformist spirit in all spheres, opened the floodgates of movements, philosophies, ideologies, fashions and cultural tendencies coming from foreign lands. That is not to deny the parallel attempt at reformation through analysis and comprehension of the intrinsic characteristics of the *ser español* (the Spanish being), meant to be an expression of critical and constructive patriotism. It was the rationalist philosophy of Krause that became the foundation of philosophers like Ortega y Gasset and Unamuno. The institutionalist spirit laid great stress on love for education and combined it with a 'cult' of the child, which, according to Unamuno, 'was one of the most neglected but at the same time the most necessary amongst

us'.¹⁰ The fact that the 'veneration of the child meant respect for the future' became an accepted slogan, may explain why Tagore's evocation of the child carried so much appeal among Spaniards. The institutionalist spirit also led to the establishment of other institutions with emphasis on free expression of thought and exchange of ideas, and for bringing together the leading minds of the day.¹¹ The *Residencia de estudiantes* and the *Residencia de senoritas* were two such institutes. It was in the melting-pot of these institutes, where scholars, writers and students of all types met, that Tagore was discussed with an abundant zeal after Zenobia had brought the English translations to the knowledge of Juan Ramón, the leading figure of the *Residencia de estudiantes* at that time. It is in these institutes that a philosopher like Ortega y Gasset with his background in (Krausist) 'vital reason' and a new open humanism was also active. And the same may be said of the famous doctor, Gregorio Marañón, whose eulogy of Tagore was another factor in the latter's positive reception.

Now, it is in the negative critical response to Tagore that we must find the opposing pull to sustain our hypothesis. While on the one hand there were the Jiménez couple, Gregorio Marañón and Ortega y Gasset, who found in Tagore enough material to replace the 'twisted neck' of Dario's 'modernism', there were also towering literary personalities like Emilia Pardo Bazan and Eugenio D'Ors to represent the other trend which subjected Tagore to an extremely critical evaluation—so much so that Jiménez in the end was forced to remark firmly:

We believe Tagore is one of the greatest poets of the world with all the qualities and defects of an oriental mystic. In Spain some ignorant [imprudent] persons have spread a campaign which was certainly not directed [only] against Tagore. In any case, we have on our side the aesthetic aristocracy from everywhere: Yeats, Gide . . .¹²

What is this campaign that Juan Ramón is referring to? The answer can be found in two representative opinions, in fact three, if a much later one is also included. Considering the stature of these critics in the Spanish literary circles of the time, and the extent of their polemics, one recognizes the quality of Tagore reception in Spain.

The most important criticism comes from the famous novelist

Emilia Pardo Bazan, the Spanish equivalent of Emile Zola. In, perhaps, one of her last pieces of writing,¹³ she took Tagore to task for representing a passive philosophy of life belonging to a race which was given to dreaming with open eyes, a race symbolizing beatified *nirvāna*. While underlining the importance of action in contemporary life, she thought that it was because of these (dreamers) that India 'did not occupy the rightful place which its philological aristocracy, pure and noble ethnography, territorial expanse and a splendorous nature had given her'. Almost to counter the progressively prevailing opinion about the fresh air that Tagore had supposedly brought to the 'plaster-ridden dry Spanish poetry of the time', she refuted any claims of newness or effectiveness in the philosophy of Tagore. The impactful mystic content of Tagore's God, she held, was purely subjective, an emotion turned into divinity. Even the Spanish mystics were not so given to meditation, but were men of ardent activity, and were concrete and sure about their subject. She even challenged the universality of Tagore's poetry and was only ready to give him credit for what it contained of local and national colour. She thought that it was emotion that predominated in his lyrics, and his verses did not need any mystic props for appreciation. Tagore was thought to be always carrying on a dialogue with something invisible and idealized. His poetry 'escaped from the crevices of the soul as easily as water from a basket'.

Emilia Pardo Bazan asked the Spanish public to give credence to only those aspects of Tagore which were based on some degree of reality. She even hinted that Tagore had imitated the Belgian poet Maeterlinck, especially in *The King of the Dark Chamber*, though without Maeterlinck's grip of reality. Anyway, her criticism of the plays was a little less strong and she was ready to accept those plays which reflected the 'spirit of an ancient land'. In *Sacrifice*, for instance, she saw such a reflection where, in spite of Tagore's pacifist intentions, Goddess Kali had the prime focus, representing eternal war and destruction.

Another very respected figure of the time, Eugenio D'Ors, accused Tagore of being an emblem of timidity through an excessive sentimentalism, which made his work a 'pillow of feathers'. He thought that in order to create an interest,

Tagore's poetry needed to be shaken up and jolted down. All this was, of course, an indirect criticism of Juan Ramón, who was accused of having 'gone to sleep' with his head on the 'pillow of feathers'.

While these opinions are indicative of an intense controversy on Tagore, it should be borne in mind that they were only reactions based on a fractional knowledge of Tagore's multifaceted genius. Only some of his works had been translated. Besides, by this time Tagore had embarked on a new creative phase about which the Spanish public would only come to know later, and that too partially. This is perhaps another important aspect of Tagore's continued reception in Spain—the gradual unfolding of the knowledge of his diverse splendour. We thus find Jiménez Martos asking, in 1961, 'if the Spaniards at all knew anything about this new Tagore of *Meditaciones* [*Sadhana*] as a sociologist, political thinker, essayist, etc.'¹⁴

As we have seen, the socio-political history of the Spanish nation after the loss of its last vestiges of colonial power gave rise to a surge in critical thought, and the course of an awakening of a vigorous dynamism was under debate. We are also aware that in the first quarter of the twentieth century, many parts of Europe were given to espouse the cult of violence in the name of nationalism. The political processes in Spain could not escape this tendency and there were signs of a sharp division. A detailed picture of this situation would throw more light on the question of reception to Tagore's ideas and their wider implications, but there is no doubt that his unshakeable commitment to pacifism and to love made him suspect in the eyes of those who thought it natural and human to make history through bullets. Nor is it surprising that a naturalist-realist author like Pardo Bazan should have judged Tagore on the basis of real and material concerns. It is, of course, a different matter that subsequent generations should feel the need of studying Tagore's works, anew and in a different perspective, as offering an alternative for the human race. Such is the nature of history. But such was also the obsession of a small minority of Spanish intellectuals that their diehard attitude, ever ready to paint Tagore's appearance before Europeans in the manner of a ghost of mystical renunciation and theosophic delinquency, kept on attacking what in their evaluation was his

passive and inert philosophy. The undercurrent of this attitude persisted for a long time. In a comment published immediately after Tagore's death, journalist and critic Juan Aparicio, contrasting Tagore's life to the short, dartlike existence of a man of action engaged in war, condemned his long career of a flower of which 'not a single petal remained'.¹⁵ Tagore was even thought of as a faithful agent of Anglo-Saxon rulers who used him to their advantage. His pacifist stand was accused of spreading a 'quietening virus' of anti-patriotic universalism through the introduction of his 'toxin' in Spain, which was anathema to the supposed new renaissance that glorified war. Such apprehension in the name of Tagore during the rise of fascism should hardly surprise us.

We have given above only a few examples of the extremely critical reaction to Tagore in Spain. Of greater significance is the attitude of a large number of Spanish writers, philosophers and poets who received and disseminated Tagore's works.¹⁶ Curiously but understandably, most of them chose to appreciate Tagore on the merit of his literary and cultural significance as well as for the wider implications of his output for man's enrichment. Many of them knew what his position would be in defence of political 'causes', and that his name should figure in the short list of signatories along with Gide, Hemingway and Romain Rolland to the manifesto of solidarity published in favour of the Republicans was natural. There were others who felt that Tagore was the symbol and harbinger of a new spring in arts and letters soon after the trenches of war had been levelled.

From the effort made above to reflect upon some historical factors as the underlying causes of the continuity of Tagore reception in Spain, it is perhaps possible to see that the same dialectical and dynamic impulses were at play in this survival process as were characteristic of Tagore's own evolution and responses vis-à-vis his confrontation with the experience of painful contradictions of human life.

NOTES

1. Joaquín V. González, *Cien poemas de Kabir: versión inglesa de R. Tagore* (Buenos Aires, 1915).
2. Zenobia Camprubi and Juan Ramón Jiménez, *La luna nueva* (Madrid: Imprenta Clásica Española, 1915).
3. González, *Cien poemas*, pp. 43–8; translation mine.
4. Francisco Garfias, 'Rabindranath Tagore en Español', in *Recuerdos* (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, 1961), pp. 9–10; translation mine.
5. José Ortega y Gasset, 'Estafeta romántica, un poeta indo', *El Sol* (hoja literaria), 27 January, 3 February, 31 March 1918; included in Rabindranath Tagore, *Obra escojida* (Madrid: Aguilar, 1955) under the title 'Epistolario liminar'. Translation mine.
6. Included in *Obra escojida*.
7. For a detailed analysis of this point, see Sisir Kumar Das and Shyama Prasad Ganguly, *Saswata Mauchak: Rabindranath O Spain* (Calcutta: Papyrus, 1987).
8. That is what Zenobia Camprubi said in one of her letters to Tagore.
9. The 'golden age' of Spanish literature was in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.
10. Miguel de Unamuno, 'Conferencia en el círculo Mercantil de Malaga' (20 – VIII – 1906), vol. 7, *Obras completas*, ed. M. G. Blanco (Madrid: Aguado, 1958). Translation mine.
11. Education and national concerns formed the basis of many essays written by intellectuals in those years.
12. A note preserved in the personal archives of Juan Ramón Jiménez. Included in Garfias, op. cit. Translation mine.
13. Emilia Pardo Bazan, 'Un poco de crítica: La obra de Tagore', *El ABC*, 4 May 1921.
14. Jiménez Martos, 'Rabindranath, Meditaciones', *Estafeta literaria*, 15 November 1961.
15. Juan Aparacio, 'La saeta y la flor', *Pueblo*, 19 August 1941.
16. For a comprehensive idea of the Hispanic response to Tagore, see *Hispanic Horizon*, Journal of the Centre of Spanish Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, 4 (Winter 1986–87).

Towards a Concept of the Indian Novel: A Thematic Construct

SATENDRA R. SINGH

I

In the postcolonial situation, the free countries of the New World with European link languages were faced with the problem of their literary identity. Would they ever be able to sever the linguistic umbilical cord that made their literatures because of their languages—English, Spanish or Portuguese? Would they be able to possess an independent national language that would guarantee their literary independence? There are speculations that America thought of reviving Hebrew or Greek or, like Brazil and Argentina, to opt for an Amerindian language,¹ to have a separate cultural, literary and national identity. But the debate ended with the conviction that language, being 'shaped by the ideas, perceptions and feelings of those who use it',² will achieve an independent status, thus creating for them independent national literatures. The rest is history; for American English, Brazilian Portuguese and Argentinian Spanish exist, and they all have their independent literatures. The literary problems that these countries in their immediate postcolonial context confronted were both similar to and radically different from ours.

The similarity lies in the desire to create or 'discover' and possess a literature expressive of the national will and representative of its socio-cultural milieu and, therefore, distinctly unique. The pronounced differences reside in their having no literary heritage other than the European, whereas ours was so rich and diverse that to study it the fascinated Europeans created a new discipline termed Indology. The European contact that destroyed Amerindian cultures rejuvenated our

languages and literatures, gave a new stimulus to our cultural and economic pursuits, made life more secular, more concerned with the here and now rather than with the purely spiritual, inculcated in us a questioning, evaluative and investigative attitude, and opened up new creative vistas with the introduction of new literary genres. With Independence, we inherited a multilingual and a multiliterary situation, and though the Constitution accepted Hindi as a link language there could not be any 'link literature'. Hence the Indian littérateur was confronted with a formidable problem. Can there be a national literature in a multiliterary context? Faced with a similar task, the Soviet Union imparted to the literature in the Russian language the status of a national literature, which automatically reduced literatures in other Soviet languages 'to the status of provincial literatures'³—a solution unimaginable in the Indian context. Consequently, Indian scholars, thinking in terms of Indianness, delved into the past, resurrected the pronouncements of those who had talked of the Indianness of Indian literature, held conferences and seminars, wrote books and articles,⁴ and reminded themselves and the Indian intelligentsia of the great synthesizing and assimilative power of the Indian genius that was antagonistic to the balkanization of thought and culture; till V. K. Gokak firmly established the concept,⁵ despite the dissenting note of the Niharranjan Ray school.⁶ Yet, like King Charles' head, it continues to pop up.

Convinced that the Indian scene was a minuscule world literary scene, the Indian literati pinned their faith in comparative literature, hoping that its methodology will broadbase the study of monolingual Indian literatures, and that with more of translations available, a translingual study of Indian literatures will produce an Indian literature. Thus was born the concept of comparative Indian literature, with the Indianist⁷ advocating translingual 'latitudinal' rather than monolingual 'longitudinal' studies that, apart from emphasizing mutual interactions, relatedness, influences and reciprocal cross-fertilization of monolingual literatures, would also demonstrate not only their interdependence but also the centripetal and centrifugal tendencies or forces that monolingual literatures embody. But, because the European comparatists focused on literary histories,⁸ the Indianists too became similarly obsessed.⁹ The

potential of various existing literary models was studied and rejected, and new approaches suggested. The comparative Indian literature concept of studying two or more Indian language literatures, aimed at broadening one's perspective by enabling one to transcend spatial and linguistic considerations to investigate 'trends and movements . . . and to see the relations between literatures and other spheres of activity',¹⁰ resulted in most regressive comparative scholarship, partly encouraged by the Sahitya Akademi short-cut approaches to Indian literature¹¹ that its journal *Indian Literature* also helps to perpetuate. From such studies emerged the curious mathematical concept of Indian literature that independent studies of Assamese + Bengali + other Indian language literatures are Indian literature. This concept of Indian literature as 'the sum total of the literatures produced in the Indian languages'¹² led to a distortion in comparative Indian literature that culminated in its most philistine maturity in the monumental two-volume sisyphian prodigy of the Kerala Sahitya Akademi, fancifully entitled *Comparative Indian Literature* despite the editor's admission that 'comparative studies as such are not attempted in these volumes'.¹³ The admission is literally so correct that even the minimal requirement of comparative literature, the study of two or more language literatures, is not there; for no contributor has dared to step beyond his monolingual literature. If I may use an analogy, the entire exercise is like the centre spread of most Indian newspapers, the general survey taking the place of the editorial column and the other sixteen or odd columns (especially of the modern period) devoted to monolingual literatures genrewise, with the buck once again, Nagendra-like, passed on to the poor reader who should himself establish the Indianness of Indian literature, which the editors and the contributors ought to have done.¹⁴ Comparative Indian literature is at crossroads today; a sort of stagnation seems to have crept in, so much so that one of the most optimistic Indianists at a recent conference spoke of 'a crisis in Comparative Indian Literature studies'.¹⁵ Perhaps, the pessimism emanates from the Indianists' bias for a literary history, nowhere yet in sight, and the consequent failure to concentrate on the literary components—the novel, the short story, drama, poetry, etc.—that ought to constitute the desired

history. If the primary preoccupation had been less ambitious, then with a focus on a genre, say, the novel, we could have taken the first concrete, practical and pragmatic step; but because this has not been done, the Indian literature concept is paradoxically as real and as elusive as it ever has been.

II

To talk of an Indian novel, as yet an undefined, undiscovered and unexplored phenomenon, may perhaps seem anachronistic when the West is debating whether 'the novel ended with Flaubert and with James',¹⁶ or whether, having lost all generic differences with James and more particularly with Djuna Barnes' *Nightwood*, it has reached 'a point where it is practically indistinguishable from poetry'.¹⁷ Nevertheless, in this extremist polemics, cultro-literary critics like Lionel Trilling refuse to subscribe to the view 'that the novel is dead'¹⁸ or is dying. Whatever be the fate of the novel in the West, in contemporary India it is a living, developing and mutating literary genre that, since its nativization in the Indian multilingual literary milieu, has been mingling cultures, liberating the Indian mind from the bondage of restrictive traditional taboos and pieties, while enriching Indian literatures, entertaining and instructing the reading public, and challenging and revealing the creative potentialities of the Indian writers. Yet, no critical attempt has been made to define the Indian novel, to consider and validate or otherwise render the concept, though there are stray works with the title 'The Novel in India'—the title itself being indicative and expressive of the dilemma whether in the multilingual literary context one can at all think of the Indian novel. *The Novel in India*, edited by Iqbal Bhaktiyar with a preface by Sophia Wadia, and patterned on the 'additive' concept of Indian literary history, contains thirteen essays in English on novels in thirteen different Indian languages, with an apology why more could not be included; and categorically states that 'the volume should present to the student of literatures source material rarely to be found gathered together regarding the progress of the novel in many Indian languages'.¹⁹ The gathering is motivated by the 'accessibility' purpose, and the editor has no other objective in mind. However, it has a

perceptive survey by R. K. Srinivasa Iyengar that attempts a synoptic, integrated account of the novel in India. Designed to be specific studies in 'the literature of six of the major languages . . . Bengali, Hindi, Malayalam, Marathi, Tamil and Urdu',²⁰ the book, edited by T. W. Clark, assesses novelists whose works when translated could 'bear comparison with those of many novelists of other nations' but who 'lie unheralded behind a language barrier which few Western readers are ever likely to surmount'.²¹ The same barrier exists for the Indian reader, the Indian critic and the Indian novel. A rather Quixotic title, *Modern Indian Fiction*, is given by the editors Saros Cowasjee and Vasant A. Shahane to their book, which contains brief critical reviews of the works of eight Indo-Anglian writers, followed by extracts from two of their works, with the obvious intention of claiming for the Indo-Anglian novel a representative role on behalf of fiction in India.

As demonstrated above, the novel in India has primarily been studied in its monolingual literary tradition, where its evolution and maturity have been studied in the context of that literature. The novelist, too, is placed and studied within his linguistic tradition, and his works and their significance are evaluated in relation to other works and writers in that language. The comparative methodology as applied to monoliterary studies enabled forays into reception, influence, impact and affinity studies. Therefore, now and then, sorties were made into other literatures, chiefly Western, with attempts being rarely made to elucidate the assimilation of the borrowed matter into the native culture and ethos; thus not much meaning was given to what was borrowed and no consideration was shown to what was rejected.

The uniqueness of the Indian literary situation demands a completely different approach. No single Indian literature is complete in itself, so no study of the novels within the single language context can do justice to the genre or to the writers because of their common cultural heritage. Each novel or writer can, therefore, be properly understood only within the widest context of the Indian socio-cultural, economic, political and literary process. Not only a more comprehensive influence aesthetics that accounts for the acculturation process, showing how the foreign borrowings have been absorbed in the Indian

mainstream or rejected and how various Indian literatures or novels have been acting and interacting, but also one that conducts analogy, affinity or kinship studies is essential for the investigation of Indian literature and the novel. Such a study should be in a multilingual context and the methodology *ipso facto* comparative. The Indianist must always remember that an Indian writer is three-quarters inside his culture and one-quarter outside it, and that the Indian part is partly within his linguistic-cum-geographical milieu and partly outside it in the Pan-Indian tradition; and ask why he should be tied down to one linguistic region solely because his country does not have a monolingual literature. A comparative study of the novel in India should be thematological, for only such a study can determine the Indianness of the Indian novel and give the Indianist empirical evidence to authenticate the concept of the Indian novel. Hesitant steps taken in this direction have resulted more in quantity than in quality.²² Rare exceptions apart, these have been as regressive and uncomparative as the pursuits in the Indian literature concept. Mostly novels from two language literatures have been studied, and nowhere is an attempt made to go beyond these confines. Themes are seen in relation to two language literatures, not in relation to a Pan-Indian context.

Can we take one more bold step forward? Can there be a third approach or, more precisely, a comparative study without the linguistic criterion, a way that eliminates the linguistic tag that the comparative study of two or more language literatures involve? Amiya Dev, speaking in the context of Indian literature, states:

It may be wrong to begin with Indian literature, for literature is language-based, to start with, though not language-contained. Indian literature is an inference that we can arrive at on a collocation of Indian literatures, an inference that can be shaped into a pedagogy.

But it may be better to call it comparative Indian literature. For Indian literature in this sense is not literature; in order to be literature it will have to be an aggregate of all literatures, which of course is absurd. True, we can find out the highest common factor and call it the essential Indian literature, but will that be a full-bodied literature or simply a roll of abstracts? Besides, as long as we cannot cook up a language called Indian, there cannot be an Indian literature as such.

So Indian literature in this sense is an idea, a pedagogy, a viewing of two or more literatures together. And since this is primarily done by means of comparison, comparative Indian literature sounds more scientific.²³

Applied to the novel, Amiya Dev's observations would suggest that there cannot be any Indian novel, for there is no Indian language and hence no corpus to be investigated. The concept exists only in relation to the novels in Indian language literatures; so we can only think of comparative Indian novel (whatever that may be); the Indian novel concept is a pedagogy, an inference we can arrive at. But then he himself gives a clue for the corpus of the Indian novel or literature in the concession that 'literature is language-based to start with, *though not language-contained*' (emphasis mine). Therefore, our approach should be different from the language-linked literary determinism born out of the Western literary and political realities, within the ambit of which even the postcolonial North and South American countries had to validate their national literatures. Their models will not serve our purpose, though they may suggest solutions. Edward Dimock warns, 'To understand Indian literature, then, one must understand its context and one must define Indian literature not only in terms of its quality but also in terms of its sometimes unique aims.'²⁴ The Chicago school critics, taking plot, character and genre as the chief characteristics of the novel, give less importance to language and regard it as 'a material cause or occasion of poetry',²⁵ unlike the New Critics who give more importance to language than to content. Perhaps our literary salvation, to begin with, lies in the Chicago School approach to literature. The tremendous commonality of interest in Indian literatures or novels should make us think whether it is so because of or in spite of the languages concerned. If language is a cultural phenomenon, so is literature, which is conditioned and determined by its locale, the socio-economic, political and cultural forces, as well as by the writer's personality. There is an inexhaustible store of shared images, symbols, myths, themes, situations, events, solutions and trends among the Indian novels, and these 'do not spring from the language itself but from the life lived by the speakers'.²⁶ The complex and rapid changes in contemporary India through physical and ideo-

logical urbanization and modernity are affecting the entire nation with their multifarious effects and are giving new situations, characters, metaphors, symbols and themes to the Indian novel. The novel, being the genre closest to life, reflects the agony and ecstasy that the contemporary urban age and the industrialization process initiate. Obviously, then, even a monoliterary novel in the Indian context cannot exist in isolation from the totality of the Indian experience.

The novel or, for that matter, any literary work in India has a dual identity, linguistic and non-linguistic, and it is in this sense (not in Meenakshi Mukherjee's sense²⁷) that the Indian novel is a 'twice-born' polyphonic fiction. The novel in India, besides being a Hindi, Marathi, Tamil or Bengali novel, is also an Indian novel, dealing with an Indian situation, or is a work of an Indian writer who is himself a product of the Indian consciousness and so views events and themes from an Indian perspective. Hence, it is imperative to delink the text from its restrictive linguistic identity and to liberate the author from his merely regional literary habitat. The Indianist must think 'Indianly', and instead of being drawn to the monolingual, the local or the provincial, he must draw himself, his author and the novels he investigates to the large Indian centre and so become and make his concerns national. To do justice to the novelist, his creative powers and his works, we must place them in national and even, where necessary, in international literary perspective. All novels written in all Indian languages are Indian novels, and hence the required corpus for our study. The Indianist should so equip himself as to see intuitively the local and the Pan-Indian, and should account for and emphasize equally the regional and the local spirit as much as the national, and establish between them vital living relationships. He must know how, where and when to look for right comparisons, and how to make clear the relations between the contraries and to close distances between the regional and the national, the monolingual and the Pan-Indian. True, the accessibility problem is there, but this can be and has to be overcome through translations and the bilingual or the trilingual characteristic of the Indianist. This paper neither asks for nor advocates the abolition of the Indian monolingual literary studies of the novel. They will and must continue. For such

studies, as inherent in them, will determine the writer's works in his linguistic tradition; will take care of the language element that the Pan-Indian focus eliminates; and will account for intertextual relations, new themes, characters, locale and innovations in techniques that contribute to the development of the genre in the language in which he writes. These will serve as secondary source materials, will assist the Indianist in determining the Pan-Indian status of the novelist, and it will indeed be academically exciting to see whether on the wider Pan-Indian canvas the unilingual writers retain their monolingual literary prominence.

The Indian novel as identified, defined and determined by us should be studied through the comparative methodology of 'rapprochement'. Giving thematology the maximum possible flexibility, the approach should subject the novels to close thematic scrutinies. It should focus on affinities and resemblances, on analogies without contact, on the recurrent symbols, myths, patterns, *topoi*, character-types, concepts and images. It should use the influence aesthetics to see how particular identifiable, intellectual, social, political, economic, philosophical or religious movements and shared joys and sorrows have determined the themes of the novel. Where the contacts, direct or through the intermediaries, are apparent and the novels cluster because of the themes, the unity of themes should become the organizing principle and the focus should be on the changing fortunes of the themes studied. A supralinguistic juxtaposition of Indian novels will reveal multiple themes that bind them together.

I now give a classification of themes which when seen in juxtaposition with the multilingual literary samples in the footnotes will establish the thematic Indianness of the Indian novel beyond doubt. The linguistic tags are for identification purpose only; otherwise all novels are and should be treated as Indian novels.

COMMON THEMES IN INDIAN NOVELS

*A. Rural themes/themes pertaining to the village or rural life*²⁸

1. The landlord-tenant relationship.
2. Economic exploitation of the peasant.

3. Gandhian/Marxist impact on rural life.
4. Untouchability in rural life.
5. Rural life and politics.
6. Women in the rural context.
7. Natural calamities affecting rural life.²⁹
8. Physical and ideological intrusion of urban capitalist factors/ structures into rural life.
9. Changing village life and modern technology.

B. *Political themes: (i) Pre-Independence*³⁰

1. Revolutionary.
2. Gandhian.
3. Gandhian and Revolutionary.

(ii) *Post-Independence*³¹

1. Politics and corruption.
2. Politics and oppression.
3. Socialists and capitalists.
4. Politics and the media.
5. Women and politics.
6. Students and politics.
7. Class struggle and leftist politics.
8. Politics and villages.
9. Elections.

C. *The partition theme*,³² with focus (i) on horrendous communal riots, panic exodus, resettlement problems, refugees, their fear, anguish, sorrow and uprootedness; (ii) on psychology, philosophy, religion and politics that symbolize man's highest achievements but become his deadliest enemies.

D. *Studies of the lives of various communities*

1. Life of the fishing community.³³
2. Life in plantations.³⁴
3. Tribal life and the lives of small localized communities.³⁵
4. Social customs and lives of particular communities and sects: (i) Syrian Christian;³⁶ (ii) Brahmans;³⁷ (iii) Muslim life;³⁸ (iv) the life of the Untouchable.³⁹

E. *The river and the life determined by it: river personified as a*

female power, seen as a mother and as a fertility source, and as a hostile force.⁴⁰

F. *Urban themes*

1. Growth and expansion of cities; urbanization and industrialization and their impact on man and his environment.⁴¹
2. Slum life with concentration on subhuman, animal existence and the struggle for survival.⁴²
3. Disillusionment with urban life.⁴³
4. Impact of urbanization on the joint family.⁴⁴
5. Housing problem and its impact on the individual, the family and the quality of life lived.⁴⁵
6. Unemployment and its impact on the individual, on the relationships in the family, on crime and the law and order problem.⁴⁶
7. Clashing interests of the capitalist/industrialist and the working class, resulting in strikes, demonstrations, gheraos, violence and struggle between the capitalist and the working class; strikes, lockouts and trade unions.⁴⁷
8. Urban youth related problems; archaic educational system, erosion of moral values, campus problems, youth violence and unrest, drug addiction, exploitation of the youth.⁴⁸
9. Socio-political and bureaucratic corruption, commercialization of justice, police brutalities and economic crimes.⁴⁹
10. Craze for money and material possessions.⁵⁰
11. Tradition and modernity; changing values, upper and middle class westernization and imitation of foreign ways of life.⁵¹
12. Impact of urbanization on man and on man-woman relationships.⁵²

The above classification of themes, by no means exhaustive, is determined by diverse life-related problems, forces and pressures that are at play in the complex worlds of the novelists' creation—the worlds that, to a large extent, reflect and comment on the world they inhabit. But because the created worlds are peopled with men and women, the novelists focus on the vicissitudes in their lives and their relationships as pat-

tered by their reactions to men and situations in the worlds they live in. Hence, it is quite possible to have a personality-based thematics, somewhat as follows:

Village-based novels

1. The landlord/the zamindar.
2. The farmer.
3. The landless peasant.
4. The rural woman.
5. The village moneylender/shopkeeper.
6. The urban exploiter functioning in rural environment.
7. The untouchable.
8. The Gandhian figure.
9. The Marxist figure etc.

Man in the urban context

1. Modern man seen in the context of a myth or a symbol.⁵³
2. Dehumanized man.⁵⁴
3. The Hamlets: indecisive alienated man living melancholy and introverted existences.⁵⁵
4. The success man.
5. The rebel.
6. The politician or the *Neta*
7. The bureaucrat.
8. The business executive etc.

Woman in the Indian novel

1. The mother.
2. The traditional woman and/or the submissive wife.
3. Modern woman.
4. The working woman.
5. The spinster.
6. The widow.⁵⁶
7. The courtesan⁵⁷ or the sex object.

An extension of the personality-based theme in the socio-intellectual and/or personal contexts can be seen in

Man-woman relationships

1. Concept of marriage: arranged marriages, love marriages,

mismatched marriages, marriage as a redundant social institution.

2. Premarital and postmarital or extramarital sex.
3. Erosion of conjugal cohesion.
4. Divorce and remarriage.
5. The impact of the third person intrusion on conjugal life (need not be a lover or a beloved; could be parents, in-laws, brothers, sisters, etc.)

Other themes

1. The Swami/Guru/Sannyasi/Godman.
2. The child in the Indian novel.

To effectively do justice to the diverse common thematic concerns⁵⁸ and to clearly depict the marked differences as well, the thematic approach should have at least four different texts, ideally from the non-contiguous Indian languages for its primary focus, and about double the number as satellite novels or secondary texts to elucidate and interpret the main texts and to indicate their theme-related common pursuits and divergences. The Indianist may, for example, if he is studying the river theme, make a comparative study of it in *Kalindi*, *Man and Rivers*, *Ganga Maiya* and *Velugu Vinela Godavari*, or *Gramayana*, with the secondary texts preferably from other language literatures, with the objective of focusing mainly on the selected primary texts. Alternatively, he may study the theme diachronically or historically; for this he may journey into classical literature, into the cult of the river gods and goddesses, see how the remnants of the cult still survive despite the demythicization of this very powerful natural phenomenon and force that man encounters. He may also, if he so desires, voyage into the Western river novels like George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* and Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* for thematological comparisons, and/or he may consider Nirad C. Chaudhuri's rather ingenious thesis that the Indian attachment to the river is the survival of the pre-Indian Aryan memories of the Danube.⁵⁹ The thematic critic must also be aware of the pitfalls of his approach. He is in 'danger of missing the forest by hunting for leaves of a certain shape or colour'⁶⁰ and, therefore, he may overlook the central or more important themes

and concentrate on a theme of minor significance. A study of the widow in *Gora* will not tell us much about the novel, and Premchand's *Godan* will get equally distorted if we interpret it merely as a creative writer's response to the significance of the cow in Indian life. Another problem is that the minor texts may become more important than the major ones, thus involving both under- and overinterpretation.

It may be said that by eliminating linguistic distinctions in order to create an Indian literature or an Indian novel, I have made it in a way 'monolingual' and yet I advocate a comparative methodology for its study when comparative literature, as generally understood, is a study of two or more language literatures. But let us not be nagging and doctrinaire. The thematics of the Indian novel demands a comparative study, and let us, without being apologetic of the approach, remind ourselves that the comparative literature discipline considers the most important literary relationship to be that between literature and life; and let us also not forget that the novel is the genre closest to life. What we need, therefore, is an academic culture that makes us think, act, speak, write and evaluate 'Indianly'. Such an academic culture opens up new vistas, and 'tis not too late to seek a newer world.'

NOTES

1. David T. Haberly, 'The Search for National Language: A Problem in the Comparative History of Postcolonial Literatures', *Comparative Literature Studies*, 11 (1974), p. 90.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
3. Max Hayward and E. Z. Crowley (eds.), *Soviet Literature in the Sixties: A Symposium* (London: Methuen, 1965), p. 100.
4. Nagendra, *Indian Literature* (Agra: Lakshmi Narayan and Sons, 1959); 'The Basic Elements of Unity', *The Hindustan Times Magazine*, 24 April 1977.
5. V. K. Gokak, *The Concept of Indian Literature* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1978).
6. The conviction that the Indian Literature concept is a myth; for literature and language being inseparable, India has as many literatures as there are languages. *Indian Literature: Proceedings of a Seminar*, ed. Arabinda Poddar (Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1972), p. 19.

7. The term is used to designate a student of Comparative Indian Literature.
8. See A. Owen Aldridge (ed.), *Comparative Literature: Matter and Method* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1969), p. 2.
9. See Sujit Mukherjee, *Towards a Literary History of India* (Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1975).
10. Aldridge, op. cit., p. 1.
11. *Contemporary Indian Literature*, which, within a single volume, has independent essays on sixteen different language literatures.
12. K. M. George (Chief Editor), *Comparative Indian Literature*, vol. 1, (Madras: Kerala Sahitya Akademi and Macmillan India Ltd., 1984), p. ix.
13. *Ibid.*, p. xi.
14. '... these surveys and critical evaluations will facilitate comparative studies in depth and help students discover the texture of our literatures focusing attention on their common strands and distinctive features.' *Ibid.*, p. xi.
15. Sisir Kumar Das, in his observations at the INCLA-CILA Congress held at Jamia Millia, New Delhi, in January 1987.
16. T. S. Eliot, 'Ulysses, Order and Myth', in *Critiques and Essays on Modern Fiction 1920-1951*, ed. John W. Aldridge (New York: Ronald, 1952), p. 426.
17. Joseph Frank, 'Spatial Form in the Modern Novel', *The Sewanee Review*, 53 (1943), p. 456.
18. Lionel Trilling, *The Liberal Imagination* (London: Mercury Books, 1964), p. 255.
19. Iqbal Bhaktiyar (ed.), *The Novel in India* (Bombay: P.E.N. and I.C.C.R., 1964); preface by Sophia Wadia.
20. T. W. Clark (ed.), *The Novel in India* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1970), p. 9.
21. *Ibid.*
22. Some examples of such works in Hindi are: Shanti Swaroop Gupta's perceptive thematic approach in *Hindi tatha Marathi Upnyason ka Tulnatmak Adhyayan* (Delhi: Bhartiya Sahitya Mandir, 1965). The same cannot be said of another thematic study *Hindi aur Marathi ke Samajik Upnyason ka Tulnatmak Adhyayan* (Ajmer: Krishna Brothers, 1969) by C. M. Bandivadekar, which topicwise narrates a theme first in Hindi, then in Marathi novels, followed by some general comparative statements. Equally dissatisfying is Chalasani Subbarao's *Hindi aur Telugu ke Swatantrayapoorna Etihāsik Upnyason ka Tulnatmak Adhyayan* (Agra: Pragati Prakashan, 1970). Among other works are *Hindi Marathi ke Etihāsik Upnyas* (Kanpur: Pustak Sansthan, 1976) by Chandra Kant Barje, *Hindi tatha Telugu Lekhikayon ke Upnyas (Tulnatmak Adhyayan)* by K. Leelawati (Waltair: Andhra University Press, 1982) and Jagannath Ojha's *Hindi Upnyas aur Saratchandra* (Patna: Anupam, 1979).
23. Amiya Dev, *The Idea of Comparative Literature in India* (Calcutta: Papyrus, 1984), pp. 51-2.
24. Edward C. Dimock, Jr. (ed.), *The Literatures of India: An Introduction*

- (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 42.
25. René Wellek, 'Philosophy and Postwar American Criticism', in *Comparative Literature: Matter and Method*, p. 11.
 26. Sujit Mukherjee, op. cit., p. 8.
 27. *The Twice Born Fiction* (New Delhi: Arnold Heinemann, 1974), preface to 2nd edn., p. 6.
 28. ASSAMESE: *Nadai*; BENGALI: *Kalindi, Ganadevata, Dairath, Banpalasir Padabali*; GUJARATI: *Liludi Dharthi*; HINDI: *Rangbhoomi, Karmabhoomi, Godan, Rag Darbari, Maila Anchal*; INDO-ANGLIAN: *The Village, So Many Hungers, Kanthapura*; KANNADA: *Gramayana, Marali Mannige* (Back to the Soil); MARATHI: *Sat Lakhatil Ek, Grambiche Bapu, Sarai, Ulka*; ORIYA: *Natindi, Matimatala*; PUNJABI: *Lokdushman, Andra*; TAMIL: *Putten Vidu, Cayavanam, Poi Thevu*; TELUGU: *Chellara Devullu, Daga Padina Tammudu*; URDU: *Khet Jage, Ek Chadar Mailee See*.
 29. Novels dealing with famine and its impact: BENGALI: *He Mor Durbhagha Desh*; GUJARATI: *Manavini Bhavai*; HINDI: *Mahakaal*; INDO-ANGLIAN: *So Many Hungers, He Who Rides a Tiger, Nectar in a Sieve*; MARATHI: *Pad re Panya*; ORIYA: *Ha Anna*. Diseases like plague and cholera and the havoc they cause: KANNADA: *Samskara*; TELUGU: *Chivaraku Migiledi*.
 30. BENGALI: *Dhatri Devata, Jagari, 42, Chinha*; HINDI: *Rangbhoomi, Karmabhoomi, Nai Imarat, Deshdrohi, Bayalees*; INDO-ANGLIAN: *So Many Hungers, Kanthapura, Kandan the Patriot*; KANNADA: *Rakta Tarpana, Hemavati, Pataka*; MARATHI: *Nalini, Muktatma, Ajcha Prasana*; ORIYA: *Kana Mamu, Pratibha*; TAMIL: *Tyagabhumi*; TELUGU: *Ahobaliyan*; URDU: *Aag ka Darya, Lahoo ka Phool*.
 31. BENGALI: *Mukhyamantri, Rag Vairab, Manush, Nishit Feri*; HINDI: *Ek Aur Mukhyamantri, Kali Andhi, Ukhre Hue Log, Apne Log, Rag Darbari*; INDO-ANGLIAN: *Storm in Chandigarh, A Situation in New Delhi, Dusk Before Dawn, Abhimanyu*; MALAYALAM: *Arohanam, Syndicate, Bharatan*; MARATHI: *Bumbai Dinak, Simhasan, Pailtur, Mrigjala ti Nauka*; ORIYA: *Mundamekhala, Gramadana*; PUNJABI: *Lahoo di Loo*; TAMIL: *Poratangal*; TELUGU: *Rakshshi Ni Peru Rajakiyama, Mareechika, Samata*.
 32. BENGALI: *Rakter Badale Rakto, Uttarayan*; HINDI: *Tamas, Jhootah Sach, Do Duniya*; INDO-ANGLIAN: *Azadi, Train to Pakistan*; MALAYALAM: *Bhrantelayam*; MARATHI: *Sunita*; URDU: *Gaddar, Aur Insaan Mar Gaya*.
 33. ASSAMESE: *Ei Padumani*; BENGALI: *Padmanadir Majhi, Ganga, Titas Ekti Nadir Nam*; HINDI: *Varuna ke Bete, Sagar Lahren aur Manushya*; INDO-ANGLIAN: *Pleasure City*; MALAYALAM: *Chemmeen*; ORIYA: *Samudrika*.
 34. Tea Plantations—ASSAMESE: *Sejui Patar Kahini*; INDO-ANGLIAN: *Two Leaves and a Bud*; TAMIL: *Tunbakkeni*. Rubber Plantations—TAMIL: *Palmara Kattinile*.
 35. ASSAMESE: *U Khun Janga*; HINDI: *Kabtak Pukaroon, Jungal ke Phool*; MARATHI: *Bangarwadi, Bali, Fakira*; URDU: *Ek Aurat Hazar Diwane*.
 36. MALAYALAM: *Pariskarappati*.
 37. BENGALI: *Annapurnar Mandir*; KANNADA: *Samskara*; MALAYALAM: *Aphante Makal*; TAMIL: *Kamalambal, Padmavati Charitram*; TELUGU: *Brahmaneeekam*.

38. HINDI: *Adha Gaon*; INDO-ANGLIAN: *Twilight in Delhi*; MALAYALAM: *Balayakalaskhi*; SINDHI: *Latifa*; URDU: *Tehrhi Lakeer*.
39. HINDI: *Karmabhoomi, Godan, Budhua ki Beti*; INDO-ANGLIAN: *Untouchable, Kanthapura, Children of God*; KANNADA: *Comana Dudi, Samskara*; MALAYALAM: *Haridasi, Tottiyute Makan*; MARATHI: *Achoot, Hadaki-Hadvale, Ajun Vjadayacha Aahe*; ORIYA: *Harijana*; TELUGU: *Mallapali, Matru Mandiramu*.
40. ASSAMESE: *Sei Nadi Niravadhi*; BENGALI: *Hansulibanker Upakatha, Kalindi, Ichamati, Ganga, Titas Ekti Nadir Nam*; HINDI: *Bahtee Ganga, Ganga Maiya*; INDO-ANGLIAN: *Men and Rivers, Murgan the Tiller, Kanthapura, The Serpent and the Rope*; KANNADA: *Gramayana*; TELUGU: *Velugu Vinela Godavari*.
41. BENGALI: *Alaler Gharer Dulal, Kadi Diye Kinlam, Bikinir Hath, Jagaddal*, references in *Gora* and *Nivedanamidam*; HINDI: *Rangbhoomi, Apne Log, Rag Darbari*; INDO-ANGLIAN: *Nectar in a Sieve, Pleasure City, And Gazelles Leaping, The Vermilion Boat*, R. K. Narayan's Malgudi novels; KONKANI: *Achcheva*; MARATHI: references in *Achoot*.
42. BENGALI: *Pankha*; HINDI: *Apne Log, Andhere Band Kamre*; INDO-ANGLIAN: parts of *Coolie, Voices in the City*; MALAYALAM: *Arohanam*; MARATHI: *Chakra, Wasti Wadhate Ahe, Mahimachi Khadi*; TELUGU: *Machi Chedu*.
43. ASSAMESE: *Chaknaiya*; BENGALI: *Mai Samrat Hu*; HINDI: *Kata Hua Aasmaan, Subah ke Bhoole*; INDO-ANGLIAN: *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*; MARATHI: *Aparajite*; TELUGU: *Daga Padina Tammudu*.
44. BENGALI: *Baisakher Niruddesh Megh, Kolkatar Kachei*; HINDI: *Bhoole Bisre Chitra*; INDO-ANGLIAN: *A House Full of People, Haveli*; MALAYALAM: *Indulekha*; SINDHI: *Zindagian Jerah*; TELUGU: *Satyavaticharitam*.
45. BENGALI: *Setubandha*; HINDI: *Yeh bhi Nahin, Makaan*; INDO-ANGLIAN: *The Foreigner*; MARATHI: *One Room Kitchen*.
46. BENGALI: *Mai Samrat Hu, Pratidwandi, Jana Aranya*; HINDI: *Jahaz ka Panchee, Gali Aage Murtee Hai*; INDO-ANGLIAN: *The Foreigner*; MALAYALAM: *Sabdanal*; TELUGU: *Mulla Podalu*.
47. BENGALI: *Seemabaddha, Bikinir Hath, Junagar Steel*; HINDI: *Deshdrohi, Rangbhoomi, Godan*, INDO-ANGLIAN: *Coolie, The Tiger's Daughter, A Handful of Rice*; ORIYA: *Coolie*; PUNJABI: *Jagrata*.
48. BENGALI: *Alaler Gharer Dulal, Nirastra, Jadubangsha*; GUJARATI: *Trijo Soor*; HINDI: *Gali Aage Murtee Hai, Apne Log, Kata Hua Aasmaan*; INDO-ANGLIAN: *Kanthapura, So Many Hungers, Abhimanyu, The Curfew*; KANNADA: *Vikshappa*; MARATHI: *Ugawatiche Rang*; TAMIL: *Poratangal*; TELUGU: *Mareechika*.
49. BENGALI: *Alaler Gharer Dulal, Pratidwandi, Gora*; HINDI: *Apne Log, Rag Darbari*; INDO-ANGLIAN: *The Apprentice, The Foreigner*; KANNADA: *Biruku*; MALAYALAM: *Mantram*; MARATHI: *Bumbai Dinak*; PUNJABI: *Rangmahal*; TAMIL: *Poi Thevu*; TELUGU: *Hang Me Quick, Daga Padina Tammudu*.
50. BENGALI: *Alaler Gharer Dulal, Paysa Parameshwar, Kaal Chakra*; HINDI: *Amrit Aur Vish, Apne Log, Ukhde Hue Log*; INDO-ANGLIAN: *The Financial Expert, He Who Rides a Tiger*; MALAYALAM: *Kalam, Vanavasam*; MARATHI: *Bumbai Dinak, Daulat*; PUNJABI: *Gallan Din Raat Dian*; SINDHI: *Chandi-*

- yajo Chamko; TAMIL: *Chittara Pavnani, Tanthira Poomi*; URDU: *Chhata Beta*.
51. ASSAMESE: *Chaknaiya, Uttar Megh*; BENGALI: *Gora, Dristipat, Mahanagar*; GUJARATI: *Sat Paglan Akashman*; HINDI: *Bhoole Bisre Chitra, Sara Aakash, Kali Andhi, Sagar Lahren aur Manushya, Subah ke Bhoole*; INDO-ANGLIAN: *Two Virgins, The Strange Case of Billy Biswas, Haveli*; MALAYALAM: *Thudakkam, Verukal*; MARATHI: *Aparajite, Teen Tarun*.
52. BENGALI: *Gora, Mahanagar, Bibar, Phire Dekha*; HINDI: *Andhere Band Kamre, Ek Choohe ki Maut, Pachpan Khambe Lal Diwaren, Bhoole Bisre Chitra*; INDO-ANGLIAN: *Coolie, An Autumn Leaf, The Day in Shadow, Abhimanyu*; MALAYALAM: *Verukal*; MARATHI: *Panlakshat Kon Gheto Atah, Yayati, Bumbai Dinak*; TAMIL: *Chittara Pavnani, Poratangal*; TELUGU: *Alpajivi, Hang Me Quick*.
53. INDO-ANGLIAN: *Abhimanyu, Prajapati*; MALAYALAM: *Aswathama*; MARATHI: *Yayati*; ASSAMESE: *Jatayu*, about a husband sexually attracted towards his sister-in-law, and *Dushyantar Chuma* (The Kiss of Dushyanta), about the Electra-complex, do not seem to have anything in common with their originals indicated in the title.
54. DOGRI: *Nanga Rukh*; HINDI: *Nanga Sahar, Ek Choohe ki Maut*; MALAYALAM: *A Minus B*.
55. BENGALI: *Bibar, Nirjan Saikate, Ghunpoka*; GUJARATI: *Anikhet*; HINDI: *Kata Hua Aasmaan, Na Aanevala Kal*; INDO-ANGLIAN: *Voices in the City*; MALAYALAM: *Marna Sartificate*; TELUGU: *Alpajivi*.
56. BENGALI: *Bishabriksha, Chokher Bali, Dui Meru*; HINDI: *Vardaan, Karma-bhoomi, Muktipath*; MARATHI: *Pan Lakshat Kon Gheto, Sushilecha Devi, Vidhva Kumari*; ORIYA: *Kanaklata*; SINDHI: *Vidhwa*; TAMIL: *Chandrikanaiyin Kathai, Jivanamsan* ('Alimony').
57. BENGALI: *Devdas, Bibar, Nishipadma, Jana Aranya, Pratiwandhi*; HINDI: *Sevasadan, Teen Warsh, Tyagpatra, Murdaghar*; INDO-ANGLIAN: *Coolie, So Many Hungers, He Who Rides a Tiger*; PUNJABI: *Tooti Veena*; URDU: *Umrao Jan Ada*.
58. More patterns would have emerged if I had included the thematics of the Indian historical novels as well.
59. Nirad C. Chaudhuri, *The Continent of Circe* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1965), pp. 165-8.
60. *Comparative Literature: Matter and Method*, p. 107.

The Rise and Fall of *Chandragupta*:
The Hindi Response to
Dwijendralal Roy

JAYANTI CHATTOPADHYAY

I

Critics and historians of Hindi drama often speak of the impact of the Bengali dramatist Dwijendralal Roy (1863-1913) on Hindi readers and playwrights in the second and the third decades of the twentieth century, generally known as the era of Jaishankar Prasad (1890-1937).¹ It was through the works of Dwijendralal that the traits of Shakespearean drama were transmitted to Hindi plays. Some even feel that the Bengali author exerted an undue influence on the Hindi drama of the period. 'The influence of Dwijendralal Roy has become so deep-rooted', wrote a critic in 1930, 'that for years no other dramatists' works have even been taken into consideration.'²

Looking at the contemporary literary scene, it is not difficult to understand the uneasiness contained in these words. Published in quick succession between 1913 and 1925, the Hindi translations of Dwijendralal's plays had gained a widespread popularity. They were frequently staged by amateur theatre groups,³ and were often highly acclaimed by critics. Dramatists writing on historical themes acknowledged him as their main source of inspiration.⁴ He was even compared to Jaishankar Prasad, occasionally to the latter's disadvantage.⁵ In 1937, an anonymous translator of one of Dwijendralal's plays described him as 'the greatest dramatist of India'.⁶ Perhaps no other Bengali author achieved such quick and immense success in Hindi drama, neither before nor after.

What, however, seems equally interesting is that by the end

of the third decade a reaction against Dwijendralal and his school of writing was slowly setting in. The veiled criticism quoted above became more pronounced—almost blunt—in the remarks of Laxmi Narayan Misra (b. 1903), also an important playwright of the Jaishankar era. In the preface to his play *Mukti ka Rahasya* (1932) Laxmi Narayan vehemently criticized Dwijendralal and his Hindi followers. He felt that Dwijendralal's works were based on improbabilities and falsehood, and had little or no connection with life or reality. 'This blind and unjudging dramatist', he further alleged, 'has misguided many and has corrupted modern Hindi drama beyond measure.' Laxmi Narayan himself broke away from the tradition of historical plays and started a new trend known as 'problem plays' on the patterns of Ibsen and Shaw. For lack of evidence the views of other rising dramatists are hard to ascertain. Nonetheless, with the progress of time Dwijendralal's plays ceased to enjoy the same kind of popularity as before, though they were not altogether abandoned by Hindi readers.⁷ Hindi playwrights were now responding to various other influences, seeking new subjects and new modes of expression. In other words, a new chapter was beginning in the history of Hindi drama, independent of Dwijendralal's influence.

To a student of literature this phenomenon of initial response and subsequent rejection poses an interesting problem. D. L. Roy (as Dwijendralal Roy is popularly known) was not the first Bengali dramatist to be translated into Hindi. The translation from Bengali had in fact begun in the previous century with Bharatendu Harishchandra (1850-85), the father of modern Hindi drama. The entire corpus of Hindi drama before him had consisted of a dozen works on mythological themes. In the short span of his life, Bharatendu did a monumental service: by bringing in new themes, synthesizing folk and Western forms, by translating from various languages and at the same time writing original plays, he established the genre on a firm footing. Of the sixteen plays ascribed to him, at least two are rendered from the Bengali.⁸ Besides, acting on his initiative, his contemporaries did large-scale rendering.⁹ As artistic creations, their plays were not inferior to Dwijendralal's; yet they failed to fetch the same kind of response from Hindi readers. In the first place, what had prompted Hindi readers

and dramatists to respond to D. L. Roy so enthusiastically? And why, in spite of such response, was he rejected after some time? The present paper is an attempt to answer these questions.

II

A writer of farces and mythological plays, Dwijendralal Roy shifted to historical plays at the turn of the century. Using well-known episodes of gallantry and self-sacrifice from the Hindu and Mughal periods, he wrote seven plays between 1905 and 1915.¹⁰ They were steeped in nationalism and patriotic feelings. From its very beginning, nationalism in our country generated an unprecedented interest among the educated. Textbooks were written in large numbers, and historical and semi-historical themes found a dominant place in literary genres as well. To writers and readers, any tale of past bravery was a vindication of their inner strength and aroused feelings of hope and confidence. The glorious past of Rajputs and Marhattas gained a Pan-Indian popularity, and Rana Pratap and Shivaji became national heroes. Since it was not possible to openly criticize the British Government, the invader-invaded relationship took the form of a Rajput-Mughal or Marhatta-Mughal conflict, the Mughals being depicted as cruel and depraved invaders. Thus, the dominant note of Indian literature during the second half of the nineteenth century was 'Hindu nationalism'. Concern for the ethnic identity of the Hindus and the idea of India as a Hindu nation was a bias from which even great writers like Bankimchandra Chatterji or Bharatendu Harishchandra were not entirely free. Instances in Bankimchandra's works reflecting such an attitude are too well known to be repeated here. Though Bharatendu at times talks of a greater national identity, his 'clarion call' was Hindi-Hindu-Hindustan. On the other hand, if a writer had nobler and more liberal sentiments he was criticized, at least by the conservative section of society, and the work in question was at times rejected. The fate of Jyotirindranath Tagore's play *Ashrumati* (1879) is a notable instance of such public censure. In this play, Ashrumati, daughter of Rana Pratap, falls in love with Akbar's son Salim, and declares boldly, 'I do not know a

Rajput or a Mussalman, I only know whom my heart desires.' This episode was taken by critics 'as a slur cast on the sacred memory of the Maharana who had been revered highly by Hindu society'. And ultimately the publisher of the Hindi translation had to withdraw the book.¹¹

But the political and cultural climate of Bengal was quite different when Dwijendralal wrote his historical plays. Those were the days of the Swadeshi movement when Bengal was surcharged with feelings of both nationalism and communal harmony. People rose against Lord Curzon's Partition plan of Bengal. It also became necessary to resist the steady growth of Muslim separatism. The anger and anguish of the Bengalis found literary expression in the songs of Rabindranath Tagore, Mukunda Das and Rajanikanta Sen. Like Dwijendralal, Girishchandra Ghose and Kshirodeprasad Vidyabinode too, along with many minor dramatists, switched over to historical plays from mythological, social and romantic operas. But Dwijendralal's works surpassed all others' in popularity and stage success. Steeped in patriotism and communal harmony, these plays served the need of the hour admirably, and the enthralled audience was oblivious of the inconsistencies of ideas expressed in them, and of the liberties taken with the facts of history—defects that seem glaring and obvious to the serious student of literature. It seemed that Dwijendralal spoke of communal harmony, universal brotherhood and militant nationalism almost in the same breath. For instance, the characters Manasi and Satyavati in *Mewar-Patan* (1908) seem to propagate two contradictory ideas, the former condemning war and advocating peace, the latter inciting the Rana to wage war against the Mughal emperor. And they have been portrayed with the same enthusiasm and fervour, which confuses the reader about the author's intention. Secondly, though Dwijendralal constantly preaches the message of equality, he misses no opportunity to establish the cultural and intellectual superiority of Indians. And to propound this he has not only created anachronistic characters—both men and women, but has also given a new dimension to well-known historical personages. For instance, in *Durgadas* (1906) he portrays Aurangzeb as a religious fanatic throughout the play, but in one of his soliloquies we get a glimpse of the Mughal emperor's secret dream—unity of

Hindus and Muslims. Again, Alexander in *Chandragupta* (1911) describes in the most exalted terms the natural beauty of the land and the nobility of the people he has come to conquer. Thus, in his historical plays D. L. Roy presents a world where contradictory ideals like communal harmony, universal brotherhood and militant nationalism are propounded simultaneously; where characters are engaged in the noblest as well as in the most heinous deeds; where melodious songs alternate with ornate prose. In short, it was a colourful and melodramatic world.

At a cursory glance, the world reflected in most of the Hindi historical plays written during the Jaishankar Prasad era seems rich and varied. The settings of these plays shift from vague and faraway times to more well-known periods of Indian history. While Premchand tells the story of the battle of Karbala in his play of the same name (1924), Bechan Sharma Ugra depicts in *Muhamad Isa* (1922) Jesus Christ's visit to India to learn the philosophy of the East—an incident absolutely fictitious. Others concentrated on Hindu valour, on Hindu kings like Harsha and Chandragupta, or on Rana Pratap, Shivaji and Rajsingh of the Mughal period. On a closer observation, however, the two batches show more similarities than dissimilarities. It is needless to say that these plays were all written for the same purpose. The authors were using the past setting for reasons of the present, and by depicting incidents of bravery and nobility they were trying to generate nationalist and patriotic feelings among their audience and readers. The earlier playwrights had done the same to glorify the Hindu ideals. The authors we are concerned with here were writing from a different standpoint; or perhaps it would be better to say that they had a contradiction in their viewpoint. On the one hand, they were praising their country and their people in superlative terms—the bloody sacrifices of their past heroes; on the other, they were highlighting unity and the feeling of harmony between Hindus and Muslims of the past, ignoring historical facts. In other words, the kind of nationalism these authors were propagating in their plays had a close affinity with the patriotism propounded by D. L. Roy a few years earlier; and the literary devices they used for this purpose were not different from his. A detailed comparison of the literary

devices is not possible in this short paper. What I propose to do instead is to discuss some significant features common to both.

At the outset, one notes that the historical episodes used by D. L. Roy have also been utilized by Hindi playwrights. The story of the Hindu king Chandragupta Maurya and his minister Chanakya, as told by D. L. Roy in *Chandragupta*, has been used in at least three Hindi plays of the period: *Chandragupta* (1915) by Badrinath Bhatta, *Chandragupta Maurya* (1931) by Udayshankar Bhatta and *Chandragupta* (1931) by Jaishankar Prasad. Jaishankar even moulds his fictitious characters on the model of the characters created in the Bengali play. Thus, his Philip and Cornelia remind us of Dwijendralal's Antigonus and Helen, and his Sinharan and Kalyani are sure echoes of Dwijendralal's Chandraketu and Chhaya. Again, the story of *Pratap-Pratijna* (1928) by Jagannath Prasad Milinda bears many similarities with Dwijendralal's *Rana Pratapsingha* (1905). D. L. Roy's story of a brave Hindu chieftain in *Durgadas* was borrowed by Durga Prasad Gupta for *Mahamaya* (1924). Similarly, in *Ajit Singh* Chatur Sen Sastri depicts a character who has not only the same noble traits but also the same name as Durgadas.

We have mentioned that in *Chandragupta* D. L. Roy imagines a situation where Alexander the Great is all praise for India. On several occasions in the Hindi plays, foreign characters appear as ardent admirers of India and Indians. The Greek characters Antipater and Diana in Laxmi Narayan Misra's *Ashok* (1926), Alexander and Cornelia in Jaishankar Prasad's *Chandragupta*, Seleucus in Sudarsan's *Sikandar*, Hiuen Tsang in Jaishankar's *Rajyashree* (1915) and in Sett Govindadas's *Harsha* (1931), Chand Khan in Harikrishna's *Rakshabandhan* (1934), Premi and Jesus Christ in Ugra's *Muhamad Isa*—all are admirers of the natural beauties of our land and the nobility of our people.

The depiction of communal harmony through action, speech or songs was another aspect which these writers shared with D. L. Roy. And like him they did not hesitate to twist or distort history if it suited their purpose. In D. L. Roy's *Nurjahan* (1907), for example, Shahjahan is overwhelmed by the broad-minded nobility of Hindus and declares that the Hindu and the Muslim are like two brothers. In his *Shivasadhana* (1937)

Harikrishna Premi, the most ardent portrayer of Hindu-Muslim unity among the Hindi playwrights, shows Shivaji paying his respects to Afzal Khan, which goes against all historical evidence available to us. However, in this matter the Bengali playwright's attitude seemed more liberal than that of his Hindi counterparts. One can take the instance of Kalyani in *Mewar-Patan*. This Rajput woman loves her husband Mahabat Khan, though he has embraced Islam, sworn allegiance to the Mughal emperor and enmity to his own land and people. For this Kalyani is thrown out by her father, but she remains devoted to Mahabat Khan against all odds. Such liberalism is not found in the Hindi playwrights. In the same play D. L. Roy has also depicted Satyavati, an advocate of militancy, who induces the Rana and other Rajputs to wage war against the Mughals and wrest freedom for their land. In the Hindi plays we find many sisters of Satyavati but none of Kalyani.¹² Champa, the twelve-year-old daughter of Rana Pratap in Dasarath Ojha's *Chittor ki Devi*, rejects Akbar's offer of peace and says that the Rajputs have learnt to sign their names with their swords on the bloody leaves. But perhaps the D. L. Roy character that inspired the Hindi writers most was the princess of Mewar. A woman of spiritual disposition and with a strong romantic strain, the princess Manasi is above all worldly meanness, so much so that she cannot even understand the passionate outbursts of her beloved, Ajay. With more or less variation, this character has been drawn by most of the Hindi playwrights.¹³

It seems a little strange that while being akin to D. L. Roy in characterization and in presentation of ideas, the Hindi playwrights remained indifferent to the external structure of his plays. He had adopted all the features—at least all the external features—of Shakespearean drama, particularly in plot construction and scene division. But the Hindi dramatists seemed unsure of their form of drama. For instance, the number of acts in their plays varied from three to five. Badrinath Bhatta's *Chandragupta* had five acts, Sett Govindadas's *Harsha* four, and Premi's *Rakshabandhan* only three. Besides, some used Western terms like 'act' and 'scene'; others still followed the Sanskrit tradition and had a 'maṅgalācaraṇa' and a 'bharatavākya' at the beginning and the end of their plays. Almost all had a

very large number of songs and a great many scenes, not all of which were actable on the stage. For example, Premchand's *Karbala* has a scene depicting a big caravan of camels, horses and men. Again, Sett Govindadas has long and detailed stage directions in the manner of Ibsen and Shaw, while others are satisfied with only a line or two. Thus, though the critics often say that Shakespearean dramaturgy reached Hindi drama through D. L. Roy, Hindi drama as such does not bear it out, at least in any ostensible manner. Most of it, in fact, had an unwieldy structure and showed an indiscriminate use of ancient Indian and Western techniques.

Yet it would be wrong to say that the Hindi plays have no similarity at all with D. L. Roy's in matters of form and technique. They may not have the same overall structure; yet in their use of ornate and Sanskritized language, of long soliloquies, in their abundance of patriotic songs, and composition of sensational scenes, the Hindi plays have much in common with D. L. Roy's. The metaphor and the epithets are so similar in some passages that the Hindi seems to be a mere translation of the Bengali.¹⁴

In short, in spite of the many differences that exist between them, the Hindi plays, when approached after a reading of D. L. Roy, give us the impression of an analogous, if not identical, world, though with contours quite exaggerated.

III

Coming back to the main point of our inquiry, we may say that this impact of Dwijendralal Roy on the Hindi dramatists of the Jaishankar Prasad era was the result of several factors acting together. Perhaps the most important of them was the prevalent political atmosphere. We may recall that India was passing through great political turmoil during the second and the third decades of this century. On the one hand, the sentiments of the Muslims were deeply agitated by the dismemberment of Turkey and the Khilafat movement that had been organized by a group of them; on the other, the passing of the Revolutionary Arms Act and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, both in 1919, had created a strong wave of discontent and hatred against the British Government throughout the country. It was at this

crucial juncture that Gandhi emerged as the undisputed leader of the Indian National Congress. He had called for a country-wide mass movement. His ideals and his attitude towards the Khilafat movement aroused enthusiasm among the writers. But Hindi dramatists who wanted to express their feeling through their writings were faced with a dilemma. Since the death of Bharatendu (1885), no significant playwright had appeared on the scene, and consequently Hindi drama was passing through a barren period. On the other hand, the anti-Muslim stance in the historical plays of Bharatendu, Radhakrishna Das and a few others was quite contrary to the spirit of the hour. It was perhaps only natural that the rising dramatists should turn to other literatures, especially Bengali, for it offered them a rich crop of translation for model and inspiration. And while Girishchandra Ghose and Kshirodeprasad Vidyabinode had concentrated mainly on the history and heroes of Bengal, Dwijendralal used incidents and characters that had a Pan-Indian appeal. Hence the choice fell on him.

The condition of Hindi drama and stage was another reason for Dwijendralal Roy's popularity with Hindi writers and readers. It was the heyday of the Parsi theatre. Staging mythological and social plays and mutilated versions of Shakespearean drama in a very crude way, this theatre was drawing big crowds. And in the absence of a proper leader, the budding playwrights were consciously or unconsciously imitating the technique of commercial plays—a tendency that had been severely criticized by well-known literary critics like Mahavir Prasad Dvivedi. These playwrights now found a better alternative in the translations of D. L. Roy, which had all the ingredients of popular theatre—songs for all seasons, a large number of sensational scenes and long soliloquies overcharged with emotion—but were totally free from the vulgarity and obscenity of the Parsi theatre.

That many of these writers remained unaffected by the external structure of D. L. Roy's plays was also due to the fact that the Hindi-speaking areas had no public stage as such and that most of these plays had little or no chance of being staged, their authors thus getting little or no experience of production. Such limitations might to an extent have determined the external structure of the plays. 'If only a professional stage

was available,' writes Birendra Narayan in his *Hindi Drama and Stage* (1981), '*Chandragupta* [of Jaishankar Prasad] could not have been a long play of forty-four scenes divided into four acts.'

However, exposure to D. L. Roy did not affect all Hindi playwrights in the same way. What is said above is true of the literary playwright, the playwright who was content with the play as a piece of literature. But there were also those who became playwrights from actual theatre experience—from actors or musicians, such as Durgaprasad Gupta and Shivaram Dasgupta. They seemed to be faithful to D. L. Roy's structure.

But all these generalizations go wrong when we come to Jaishankar Prasad, the greatest dramatist of the era. A versatile writer, Jaishankar Prasad was also one of the main exponents of *Chhayavad*, a major movement in twentieth century Hindi poetry, inspired mainly by Rabindranath Tagore. However, his career as a dramatist provides us with an interesting instance of acceptance to avoidance to final overcoming of an influence.

Jaishankar Prasad knew Bengali and thus had direct access to the works of D. L. Roy. That he was also affected by them is quite clear from a few of his earlier plays. The theme of *Kalyani Parinay* (1912), for example, has the same story as D. L. Roy's *Chandragupta* in a concise form. But at the same time he began building up a resistance to that influence. In conformity with the spirit of the period he set all his plays in the past, but it was always a Hindu past. Medieval India, which figured several times in D. L. Roy, and at his instance in a good many Hindi plays, propagating Hindu-Muslim unity, was not even once used by Jaishankar Prasad. He referred to communal harmony only obliquely under the guise of Aryan-non-Aryan conflict in *Janmejaya ka Nagyajna* (1926). In *Ajatsatru* (1922), he tried another method to avoid D. L. Roy's influence. Instead of accepting a Shakespearean impact through the latter (as his contemporaries had done), he turned to Shakespeare himself and took King Lear as his model in creating the character of Bimbisara. But it is in his last two plays, *Chandragupta* (1931) and *Dhruvaswamini* (1933), that Jaishankar Prasad finally succeeds in discovering his own idiom. It may seem illogical that one who has been so religiously avoiding

D. L. Roy's themes should take up the same story, use the same title and almost the same scheme of characters at the end of his career. The choice, therefore, can be assumed to be deliberate. He did not hesitate to use a similar style—even similar metaphors and images. But all these external similarities make the internal difference more pronounced. The characters of the chief protagonists, Chandragupta and Chanakya, and their relationship have not been portrayed with the same brush. The messages they propagate are also different. His last play *Dhruvaswamini* is still more confident. Of all his plays it is the most compact and most skilfully woven. Set against the background of the Gupta period, it actually deals with a contemporary theme, for it challenges the basic concept of Indian marriage—its religious sanctity. In fact, in this play Jaishankar Prasad finally breaks away from D. L. Roy and Shakespeare, and approaches the realism of Ibsen.

Perhaps, being a contemporary of Jaishankar Prasad, Laxmi Narayan Misra could not conceive of this change worked out by the former. Or, maybe like Jaishankar Prasad he too was suffering from the anxiety of having been influenced by D. L. Roy. His first play, *Ashok* (1926), was by his own admission 'a result of reading Jaishankar Prasad'. Whatever be the reason, he reacted in his own way and began by mounting an attack on Jaishankar Prasad, D. L. Roy, and eventually Shakespeare. He felt very strongly that D. L. Roy and Jaishankar Prasad's romantic idealism would be totally ineffective in resolving the problems of the present. He also disapproved of long soliloquies, asides and too many songs, as well as of murder, suicide, combats and such other events as prohibited by Sanskrit dramaturgy. Laxmi Narayan Misra dealt mostly with man-woman relationship and the emancipation of woman. It must be conceded that his plays were free of what he condemned in others. He seldom introduced songs and avoided frequent asides and soliloquies. Instead of being long and poetical, his dialogues were terse and closer to everyday speech. Still he failed to portray what he professed in his prefaces. His strong idealism came in the way of a faithful representation of life and turned him into a conservative. Besides, while rejecting the impact of one he fell into the trap of another. He criticized Jaishankar Prasad and Dwijendralal for adopting Shakespear-

ean technique and violating the Indian tradition; but he himself came under the influence of Ibsen and Shaw. In place of romantic historical plays he introduced an equally foreign concept—‘problem plays’.

But Laxmi Narayan Misra need not have been over-enthusiastic in rejecting historical plays. For their popularity was already on the decline. In March 1931, Gandhi suspended the movement that had been launched under the banner of Purna Swaraj, and asked the political workers to go back to their villages. With the changed political situation historical plays with political overtones became superfluous. They made room for plays on social themes.

The ‘heyday’ of long historical plays with many acts and multiple scenes was thus over, and a new chapter in the history of Hindi drama was ushered in, particularly with the one-act plays on social themes. Gone were the days of Chandragupta, Shivaji and Rana Pratap; the common man with his day-to-day problems gradually began to emerge.

NOTES

1. See:

- (a) Kalidas Kapur, *Sahitya Samiksa* (1940), p. 18.
 - (b) Ramkrishna Shukla Silimukh, *Prasad ki Natyakala* (1930), p. 42.
 - (c) Dinesh Narayan Upadhyay, *Hamari Natya Parampara* (1940), p. 78.
 - (d) Sibnath, *Hindi Natak ka Vikas* (1951), pp. 30-1.
 - (e) Visvanathprasad Misra, *Hindi me Natya Sahitya ka Vikas* (1930), pp. 34-5.
 - (f) Gulab Rai, *Hindi Natya Vimarsha* (1945), p. 61.
 - (g) Dr Nagendra, *Adhunik Hindi Natak* (1960), p. 3.
 - (h) Dasarath Ojha, *Hindi Natak: Udbhav ar Vikas* (1953), p. 300.
 - (i) Indranath Madan, *Modern Hindi Literature* (1939), p. 89.
 - (j) Satyendra Taneja, *Hindi Natak Punarmulyankan* (1971), p. 189.
 - (k) Birendra Narayan, *Hindi Drama and Stage* (1981), pp. 182-3.
2. Silimukh, *Prasad ki Natyakala*, p. 42.
 3. See Somnath Gupta, *Hindi Natak Sahitya ka Itihas* (1951), p. 225.
 4. For example, Premchand in the preface to *Karbala*; Chatur Sen Sastri, *Amar Singh*, p. 12; Ugra and Milinda in ‘Hindi Natak aur Unke Natak: Unki Apne Kalamse’, *Sahitya Sandesh* (July-August 1955), pp. 93-4, had expressed their debt to D. L. Roy. Durgadas Gupta and Shivram Dasgupta have also expressed their indebtedness to him.
 5. See Krishnananda Gupta, *Prasadji ke Do Natak* (1932), p. 18.
 6. *Sinhal Vijaya* (1937), published by Asoke Printing Press, Delhi.

7. Most of the translations had editions till the 1960s.
8. *Vidya Sundar* (1868): original of the same title by Maharaja Jotindra Mohun Tagore; *Bharat Janani* (1877): the original author's name not known.
9. Lala Srinivas, *Prahlad Charit* (1888) and *Sangyogita Swayambar* (1885); Keshabram Bhatt, *Sajjad Sabul* (1877) and *Samsad Sausen* (1880)—translations of Upendranath Das, *Sarat-Sarojini* (1875) and *Surendra Vinodini* (1876) respectively; Balkrishna Bhatta, *Padmavati* (1878), *Sarmistha* (1880)—original of the same title by Michael Madhusudan Dutt; Keshabram Panda and Keshabram Sastri, *Sarojini* (1880)—translation of the same title by Jyotirindranath Tagore; etc.
10. *Rana Pratapsingha* (1905), *Durgadas* (1906), *Nurjahan* (1907), *Mewar-Patan* (1908), *Shajahan* (1909), *Chandragupta* (1911), *Sinhal Vijay* (1915).
11. See Pandit Keshava Prasad Misra, in a letter dated 30 September 1901, quoted in Prabhat Kumar Bhattacharya, *Bangla Nataka Swadesikatar Prabhav* (1979), p. 238.
12. Karmavati in *Rakshabandhan*, Durgavati in *Durgavati* (1935), Chanchal in *Rajsingh* (1934), advocate militant nationalism.
13. Surama in *Rajyashree*, Manimala in *Janmejay ka Nagyajna*, Jebunnisa in *Shivasadhana*, Rajyashree in *Harsha*, Shanti in *Muhamad Isa*, Charu in *Rajsingh*, are some of the examples.
14. For instance:
 - (a) i. 'bharat amar bharat amar/ke bole ma tumi kripar patri' (D. L. Roy: India, my India, who says you are to be pitied!).
 - ii. 'bharatbarsh hamara pyara bharatbarsh hamara' (Badrinath Bhatta, *Chandragupta*: India, our dear India).
 - iii. 'pyare Rajasthan hamare pyare Rajasthan' (Milinda, *Pratap-Pratijna*: Dear Rajasthan, my dear Rajasthan).
 - (b) i. 'shirshe shubhra tushar kirit/sagar urmi gheria jangha' (D. L. Roy: on her head the white crown of snow/and around her waist ocean waves).
 - ii. 'us par sada him ka mukut subhra sundar sohata (Chandra Kanta Sharma, *Rajsingh*: on it adorns the eternal white crown of snow).
 - iii. 'jai bharat jai bharat jai mama pran-pate/bhal bishal chamatkrie sit-him-giri-raji' (Premchand, *Karbala*: glory to India, glory to India, glory to my lord of heart/your forehead is broad and beautiful with snow peaks).

Literary Themes and Comparative Literature

AMIYA DEV

I will take this up in two stretches. First, I will deal with the question of validity. Are thematic studies valid literary studies, or are they, as some would say, a mere tabulation or accountancy of extraneous givens, thus shunting literature towards folklore or mythology? That resolved, I will turn to the necessary interliterariness of thematic studies. I will show that the *Stoff- und Motivgeschichte* or that neologism 'thematology' is a legitimate domain of comparative literature. My illustrations will be taken from literatures nearer home. If, however, I quote a few instances from elsewhere, that will be to supplement my argument and in the spirit of the discipline. For though comparative literature is to sharpen our understanding of our own literatures, it is not to deaden our interest in others.

I

Let us begin this section with a brief reflection on the first four *sargas* of the *Vālmiki-Rāmāyaṇa* where we have a perfect instance of the classical author-text-transmission-audience paradigm. But between author and text we also have a distinct *Stoff* or subject matter. Vālmiki's question to Nārada at the outset, 'ko'nvasmin sāmpratam loke . . .' (1.2), is a cue to that; and the most knowledgeable, 'trilokajña' (1.6) Nārada's answer comprising a whole *sarga*—'Ikṣvākuvarṇśaprabhavo Rāmo nāmo janaiḥ śrutaḥ . . .' (1.8-97)—the so-called 'Rāmacarita' (1.98), gives us, or rather gives Vālmiki, the 'vastu' (3.1). But between the 'carita' tasted as an exemplary career and the 'carita' turning into a *vastu* we have two crucial events: first, the

sudden surge of poetic inspiration in the sage Vālmīki through the utterance of poetic speech—the archetypal ‘mā niṣāda’—and second, Brahmā’s revelation to Vālmīki of the divinity of inspiration and behest to compose the life of Rāma: ‘vṛtaṁ kathaya Rāmasya yathā te Nārādācchrutam’ (2.33). It is only then that Vālmīki contemplates the *vastu* and does the composing—‘tat sarvaṁ tattvato dṛṣṭvā dharmeṇa sa mahāmatih / abhirāmasya Rāmasya tat sarvaṁ kartumudyataḥ’ (3.7). We have an abstract of this composition in twenty *ślokas*, a mere listing of the events. Finally, with the *kāvya* in hand—‘caturviṁśat sahasrāṇi ślokānāmuktavān ṛṣiḥ / tathā sargaśatān pañcaśaṭ kāṇḍāṇi tathottaram’ (4.2)—Vālmīki turns to the question of transmission and we have the two brothers Kuśī-Lava assigned the role of archetypal bards. The text is first sung to fellow sages and eventually to Rāma and his court. The appreciation is universal (‘tacchrutvā munayaḥ sarve vāspaparyākulekṣṇāḥ’ [4.15]; ‘śrotrāśrayasukhaṁ geyaṁ tadvabhau janasaṁsadi’ [4.34]).

That *vastu* has a place between author and text, or a place prior to author to motivate him towards text, may not be uncommon to classical aesthetic. Of course, the *vastu* may not always be actually placed on the table, as in the present archetype; there may be a broad mention only as in Kālidāsa’s ‘sūryaprabhavo varṁśah’, or a brief ‘argument’ as in Homer and Virgil and their later imitators. Even when there is no hint at all, a *vastu* may not be hard to infer. This is endorsed by both Bharata and Aristotle—Bharata with his primary focus on *avasthā* and his enumeration of *bhāvas*, Aristotle with his formal cause or the first differentia, that is, the object of imitation. Besides, in Aristotle there is a clear sanction for the ‘argument’. No doubt the structuralists today have a more analytic approach to the text, but don’t their pivot functions trace back to *Stoff*? Of course, all this presupposes an independent ontology of the text. When that is denied—and that is often the case now in literary philosophy—a separate existence cannot be acceded to *vastu*. However, if we take the phenomenological view of literature at the instance of Roman Ingarden, *vastu* does come in as part of actualizable *data*, especially on the level of ‘presented objectifications’. Of course, the *addenda*, without which the text is never concretized, are free of it. If, further,

the text is taken as a pure codification of our own consciousness, then *vastu* is perhaps embedded in our own history in the form of experience, even ideology. Naturally the error-piling on Derridaesque *aporia* would not cognize a *vastu*, even as dispensable *disjecta membra* of experience.

Notwithstanding such theory, the pragmatics of literary studies, I suspect, is quite *vastu*-conscious. If we make an analysis of literary reviews, of individual instances of practical criticism, of research carried out in the academe, or of such everyday matter as examination papers, we will realize the ubiquity of *vastu*-consciousness. The old espousal of form and content may be bad theory, but may not be bad praxis. Besides, the line between lore and literature may be a little forced. If lore, too, is a cluster of language constructs, then there is no reason why lore should not be considered an analogue of literature. After all, our ultimate commitment is not to literature or lore, but experience; and whatever fosters our understanding of experience, whether literature or lore or any other discourse, is welcome to us.

Stoff criticism is further authenticated by the fact that literature is often bred by literature. It may not merely be a case of 'tradition and the individual talent' à la Eliot and Bishnu Dey; solidier re-creations may also be there, and extensive pastiche. In such events the precursor is bereft of its dynamism and turned into a static structure so that a new dynamism may be breathed into its body. This appropriation of literature is analogous to the usual literary appropriation of other *Stoff*. And since literary history is a history of continuous accretions, the room for such appropriation is ever expansive. Ever more and more texts are recast as *Stoff*, but without losing their own life. Criticism enters here, to juxtapose new with old. An *Abhijñānaśakuntala*, for instance, with the Śakuntalā episode in the *Mahābhārata*; a Tagore lyric, 'Svapna', with Kālidāsa's *Meghadūta*; a poem of Subhash Mukhopadhyay's, 'Badhu', with Tagore's poem of the same title. What the critic looks for is how new differs from old, in what essentials and what accidentals. In other words, the critic is concerned with the *treatment* of the *Stoff*. And that in general is the thrust of *Stoff* criticism.

Stoff criticism is not mere *Stoff* mapping or *Stoff* indexing, nor

mere map reading or index hunting for *Stoff* identification. In other words, *Stoff* criticism is no mere inculcation of *Stoff*-mindedness. That is only a preliminary beyond which *Stoff* criticism is an inquiry into how *Stoff* becomes text. Its camera eye is focused on the region between *Stoff* and text. It is here that the critics of *Stoff* criticism go myopic, for they presume *Stoff* criticism to be incapable of genetic cognition and hence assign it only typology and morphology. Such diverse scholars and theorists as Croce, Baldensperger and Wellek have been opposed to *Stoff* criticism on the ground of this supposed limitation.¹ But Croce's antipathy/indifference can perhaps be traced to a monism, Baldensperger's to the positivist legacy inherited by his generation and Wellek's to his concern with literary ontology—as everywhere else in the realm of thought, they have primarily expressed their own predilections through their opposition to *Stoff* criticism. That *Stoff* criticism has nodes ranging from the purely mechanical to the purely interpretative needs to be reasserted in the face of this prevalent antipathy/indifference and its legacy. Even the mechanical part of the job is not entirely independent of the interpretative, for in no text does the *Stoff* lie *roh*, untransformed into a literary experience. In fact, *Stoff* criticism is partly an act of rationalization.

Stoff may sound synonymous with 'source', but is not so. For while a *Stoff* may be taken as a 'source', a 'source' cannot be taken as a *Stoff*. 'Source' is the prime mover, not necessarily the prime body. Mover or not, *Stoff* is the prime body. No text is conceivable without a *Stoff* or without an anti-*Stoff*—that is, the obverse of the notional *Stoff*. 'Source' may or may not move into the text. When it does, it becomes *Stoff*. *Stoff* is this more particular epistemology; 'source' is wider and so a little indeterminate. 'Source' is the provenance of the pure scholar, *Stoff* also asks for a critic. In fact, there may be more criticism than scholarship in the latter if the distinction is kept sharp. I suppose much of the antipathy/indifference to *Stoff* criticism arises out of a confusion of *Stoff* with 'source'. Since 'source' terminates at the gates of text, it is extraneous. *Stoff* is not; it belongs to the *sanctum sanctorum* of text. That granted, *Stoff* comes within the scope of Croce's 'intuition-expression', Baldensperger's genetic positivism and Wellek's ontology.

II

It may not be a coincidence that Croce, Baldensperger and Wellek are comparatists of the highest order—may not be because *Stoff*, whether approved or disapproved of as criticism, is a comparative literary matter. That celebrated statement of Croce's which one never tires of quoting, on the plurality of *Sophonisbe* as opposed to its supposed unity, bears witness to this. One can quote a hundred such *Sophonisbes* from both Indian and Western literatures to bear it out further. Indeed *Stoff* is interliterary in spirit; for being the abstract of an experience within one culture it is open to the literatures fed by that culture, and also to the literatures from other cultures if they are approachable in intercultural terms. And criticism makes sense only when the texts built around the same *Stoff* are put together. For instance, if Kumaran Asan's 'khandakavya' *Chandalabhikshuki*, and Tagore's dance drama *Chandalika*, both taken from the Buddhist *Śardūlakarṇāvadāna* and built around love and caste, are approached together, they will yield a lot more than if they are approached individually. Or Asan's last poem *Karuna* and Tagore's early lyric 'Abhisar', both based on the Upagupta *avadāna* and dealing with true compassion. Naturally, the comparison is in terms of the *Stoff*; that is, to see how the same *Stoff*, in spite of Croce, though perhaps not far from what he is saying, becomes two different experiences in the two texts. And since we cannot see enough in absolute, since a perspective is always necessary to supplement our vision, such comparison is indispensable. In that seemingly absurd comparison of Henry of Monmouth with Alexander the Great in terms of Wales and Macedon's geography, of the rivers flowing through Wales and Macedon, Shakespeare's Fluellen is both wrong and right. He is wrong in the method but right in the need felt for comparison—Fluellen's Henry has, so to speak, the same *Stoff* as Alexander.

Since *Stoff* is a direct or indirect product of experience and since experience is culture and history bound, *Stoff* has an independent cultural-historical ambit—independent, that is, of our essential task as *Stoff* critics which is text-oriented. In other words, *Stoffgeschichte*, rather *Stoff- und Motivgeschichte*, can be conceived of as a separate branch of investigation. And that

is what the comparative literature manuals are mainly engaged in, in their approach to literary themes. They either try to ascertain the typology of themes or their morphology. In the former instance they are concerned with the thematic range, stretching from the largest to the smallest unit. For example, falling in line with Elisabeth Frenzel, Raymond Trousson and Harry Levin, three major thematologists from two continents, Weisstein is most exhaustive in this: his range consists of *Stoff*, theme, motif, situation, *Bild* (image), *Zug* (trait), *topos*.² In the latter instance, the emphasis is on the diversity of areas from which themes generate. Pichois-Rousseau speak of the imaginary and the real, the imaginary consisting of 'le merveilleux folklorique', 'le fantastique livresque' and 'mythes', and the real of 'les types psychologiques et sociaux', 'personnages littéraires' and 'choses et situations'.³ Praver identifies a pentad of perennials, recurrent motifs, recurrent situations, types and literary representations.⁴ Considered part of general literature once, now of comparative or, at least, general cum comparative, *Stoffgeschichte* or its other appellation, thematology, has immense research potential. In fact, it is one of the rationales by which the literatures of this country are together approachable, justifying our search for an idea of Indian literature. On the Indian interliterary scene it is one of the staples of what has come to be known as comparative Indian literature.

Now, in Indian thematology, or should we say *vastutattva*, we can either draw up a matrix, idealized from our experience of mother tongue or first language literature, and take it to other literatures; or can go piecemeal in terms of our actual thematic encounters. The former will be a neater method, the latter will be more foolproof. Of course, our classical literatures will provide us with certain constants that may have in some cases their vestiges down to the present times. Our Perso-Arabic encounter, direct as well as indirect, and not necessarily uniform for all the literatures, has given us another stock of themes. That too can be put up as a constant. Further down in history our Western encounter has done the same, maybe to a larger extent. These can be our thematological or *vastutättvic* nodes in literary historical terms. But we can also think of other nodes in accordance with cultural-historical shifts—a second

set no less important, perhaps more, than the first. However, in all this it may not be impossible to conceive of a thematic system of general validity. At the centre of this system is placed Man. Then Man is circuited to God, World, Society, Family and Self—each individually. Naturally the charge in each circuit should vary from one historical period to another. In one period the Man-God circuit would dominate, in another the Man-Society or the Man-Family circuit. And in a more recent period we can see some charge in the Man-Self circuit as well. This system granted, we can work out the details.

For instance, the Man-God circuit takes a special charge in most Indian literatures between the eighth and the eighteenth centuries in the form of *bhakti*. Of all Indian *vastus* this has perhaps been the most extensive, beginning in the deep South and ending way up in the North and producing such great heights as the Tamil Alvars, the Kannada Virasaivas, the Marathi saint poets, Jayadeva, Tulasi, Surdas, Kabir, Mira and the Bengal Vaisnavas. Or, if we take a more recent *vastu* from the Man-Society circuit, the passage from the village to the city, we will also come across an extensive manifestation, though not to the same degree. Of course, *bhakti* has a bearing on the Man-Society circuit as the passage from the village to the city, on the Man-Family circuit. From this last we can think of a *vastu* like the widow, or, more specifically, the widow in love, and mark, along with its extensiveness, its bearing on the Man-Society circuit. Quite a bit of the Man-World is reflected in much late nineteenth and early twentieth century poetry, again with a bearing on another circuit, the Man-Self circuit. It should be obvious that the proposed thematic system with its five circuits is not a neat unicentric pentad, but a pentagram or pentacle with pentagonal links among the circuits. This is important, for, apart from other things, it shows that no preconceived system is foolproof. The best system is naturally the one that emerges from our actual thematic encounters. That is what I would designate as the thematology or *vastutattva* from 'below'. But that can be arrived at only after a lot of research, biliterary, trilaterary or more.

It is high time we began that research.

NOTES

1. See Benedetto Croce's review of Charles Ricci's book *Sophonisbe dans la tragédie classique italienne et française* in *La Critica*, 2 (1904), pp. 483-6, referred to by Ulrich Weisstein, *Comparative Literature and Literary Theory: Survey and Introduction* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1973), p. 133; Fernand Baldensperger, 'Littérature Comparée: le mot et la chose', *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, 1 (1921), 5-29; René Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1961), p. 272.
2. Weisstein, *Comparative Literature and Literary Theory*, pp. 124-49.
3. Claude Pichois and A.-M. Rousseau, *La Littérature Comparée* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1967), pp. 145-53.
4. S. S. Prawer, *Comparative Literary Studies* (New York: Barnes and Nobles, 1973), pp. 99-113.

The Cognition of the Self: A Critical Review of Some Post-Independence Hindi and Urdu Short Stories

SUKRITA PAUL KUMAR

Ionesco, one of the foremost absurd dramatists, once made a very pithy and revealing statement: 'When the ordinary is re-presented, it has a sense of total "uncanniness".'¹ Thus, the extremely 'natural' and 'ordinary' characters of his play, *The Bald Soprano*, or of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* acquire a rather grotesque demeanour when re-presented in an art-form; while in life, the same kind of personalities are comprehended in general terms. They are perceived as mere functionaries which are like replaceable cogs in a wheel regardless of any individuality. Their essential humanity, in other words, is reduced to the general. But when creative intelligence consciously *selects* some from amongst the infinity of human beings and then focuses upon specific 'beings', each moving in his own orbit, then the contours of the individual self begin to emerge even through the modern *mass* life-order. The objectified human identities remain rather restricted and have no scope for growth if kept within a sociological framework. The individuals who make such society project no apparent 'self-consciousness'.

Unlike our ancestors, in the modern age we are not merely concerned with *knowing* the world. It is the comprehension and interpretation of the world that is *real* which we desire to achieve, stripping existence of its 'phoniness'. The rather false and smoky rings of security in which we tend to fix our identities actually get diffused when one's selfhood confronts experience directly. If clothed in heavy finery, however regal, the *real* cannot easily seep into the interiors of the human mind. It has to be stripped naked for a direct relatedness with the

other. Only then may the lifequake occur and the birth of individual perception or individual vision take place. This is what teaches man to apprehend 'natural causation'. He then exists not merely as 'extant' but is himself free, in a position to decide what *shall* exist.

We are perpetually in a process, a flux. So the changing knowledge also enforces a change in the consciousness of the receiver of knowledge. And the changing consciousness is of course ever seeking self-identity. The age-old Delphic maxim 'know thyself' picked up by Western existentialists has also been the keynote of all Indian philosophy. There is, however, a clear difference in the way the word 'self' is used in these two different traditions—'self' in Indian thought is not 'ego' or the empirical self. What is, however, to be especially noted is that in both traditions, the role of specific *individual* intelligence is recognized. It is that intelligence which defines reality in its unique way.

In the editorial of the April–June 1968 issue of *Indian Writing Today*, the writer discusses the differences between the novel and the short story: 'The difference between the novel and the short story is not of sheer length. It may best be compared with the difference between consciousness and self-consciousness. Consciousness points to something external, self-consciousness points inwards. The one is out-directed and the other is inner-directed.' Obviously, then, the short story offers a greater potential to sound the depths of the human psyche. Reading through the gamut of short stories written in Urdu and Hindi in the last three decades or so, I found myself many a time guilty of trespassing into somebody's private property: the inner domain of the psyche—the pastures where one may graze leisurely and informally, or the bedroom where one might spread out in any posture or attire, unobserved. I felt at times as though I overheard snatches of songs in a spontaneous and beautiful voice in the bathroom, the singer unaware of the listener's presence outside the bolted door.

Undoubtedly, the extent of integrity manifest in such an articulation of human experience lends authenticity to the inscapes explored in short stories. Following Independence, after cherishing hopes of reconstructing a new world, the Indian short story writer found himself in what Jagdish Shivpuri, an

eminent Hindi critic, calls 'a forest of convex mirrors'. The mirrors were erected by various philosophers and eminent literary men from the contemporary West as well as ancient Indian voices from the Vedas, the Upaniṣads and the two great epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. Then there were the popular images of India propagated by the West, which the sensitive Indian either totally owned or totally rejected.

In this paper, I have analysed some short stories which particularly appealed to me from the point of view of self-consciousness, through which the conscious Indian writer draws the outline of a sensibility which seems to remain in exile. Sometimes there are suggestions of homecoming. But, essentially, the wandering spirit, in keeping with the modern temper elsewhere in the world, only occasionally finds at some homely inn a temporary retreat. I hasten to add here that my selection of stories does not at all imply that there have been no other types of stories written in the same span of time. In fact, both in Urdu and Hindi, the writer has managed flights in diverse directions—into the past, to dig out old myths to interpret present reality, while at times he has delved into the future, giving an added dimension of meaning to the present. Intezar Hussain in Urdu, Mohan Rakesh and some others in Hindi have been keeping to the past to make it available for a better understanding of the present.

It is indeed interesting to see that there is less similarity between contemporary Hindi and Urdu poetry, especially in form, than between contemporary Hindi and Urdu short fiction. In this paper I shall attempt to show how in the short story of the two languages a similar sensibility gets projected despite the entirely different religious and cultural ethos from which they emanate. The quality of exploration into the inner space undertaken by some Indian writers links them to many others in the world. Anwar Moazzam, an Urdu critic, aptly remarks on the rather complicated nature of present-day writing: 'The object of modernism is to fill the gap between the "mind-ahead" and the "culture behind".'² Many a time the writer in this rather underdeveloped society only breaks his backbone under the dead weight of centuries-old tradition, medieval concepts and outdated social values. The stronger and the muscular writer is, however, capable of disengaging

himself from the barren but sticky soil to be able to acquire a critique of culture and a 'universal consciousness'. That is not to say that the characters and the vision that he may develop in his fiction have no specific cultural contexts. Ironically, whether it is Nirmal Verma's 'Parinde' (Birds), Krishan Chander's 'Aadh Ghante ka Khuda' (Those Thirty Minutes) or Joginder Paul's 'Panahgah' (Shelter), each of these stories is firmly rooted in the Indian soil.

I should like here to critically examine how Sadat Hasan Manto, the stalwart of modern Urdu short story, sensitively recorded the historical fact of India's partition in his well-known story 'Toba Tek Singh'.³ Strangely, he chooses for his canvas the psyche of some lunatics in a lunatic asylum to project the impact of the political decision of partition. A psyche that is unhinged from its social, moral and political framework perhaps operates, as the psychoanalyst would tell us, as the primal man, most authentic in his action and behaviour. The Muslim lunatic who yells 'Long Live Pakistan' puts such force in the slogan that he loses his balance and falls unconscious. The absurd meaninglessness of the political drama that is being enacted comes through so poignantly, for instance, in the action of one of the inmates who climbs up a tree and says, 'I don't want to live in Hindustan or Pakistan. They mean nothing to me. I am going to make my abode right here on this tree.' To some lunatics, the partition is an opportunity to shed their identities and get under the skin of heroes like Qaid-e-Azam or Master Tara Singh, thus declaring a total rejection of their own selves. Most of all, it is the uprooted psyche of a Sikh that becomes the artist's central concern in this story. This restive Sikh is never seen having a wink of sleep in all fifteen years of his stay in the asylum; his feet are swollen with constant standing and he speaks in structureless, chaotic sentences. He, however, repeats the same words placed in the same order and sequence over and over again, expressing perhaps the peculiar, formless reality of his existence. And, sure enough, some words do change as the fact of the partition reaches the depths of his consciousness: 'Pakistan Government' gets inserted first, which is eventually substituted by 'Toba Tek Singh', the place, he said, he had come from. He has an anguished and desperate yearning for knowing where Toba

Tek Singh is, whether in Pakistan or Hindustan. And when the lunatics are being sorted out so that they may be sent to either of the two countries, this Sikh, Bishen Singh, announces, 'Toba Tek Singh is here! Right here where I am standing.' He refuses to be sent to Hindustan since his personal relatedness, which is what is meaningful to him, is with Toba Tek Singh wherever that may be. If it is only in his psyche, well, he can remain stationary to remain there. Political decisions do not matter to his 'being'. At the end of the story, we see a row of lunatics of Pakistan on one side and another row of lunatics of Hindustan on the other, and between them, on a 'no-man's land', lies stretched Toba Tek Singh, for once horizontal, a spiritual exile for ever. Thus, the subconscious craving for a 'home' has been effectively translated into the form of a short story through the exposé of the 'pure' perception of a so-called lunatic's seemingly exaggerated and rather stubborn desire to escape the snares of a delusive present by relating to the genuine past. The innocence and spontaneity demonstrated in Bishen Singh could have been repressed in a conscious and sane person. Hence the choice of the lunatic whose unconscious brings up the real and the substantial in the self.

But then, lunacy is not the only path to the real. A perfectly normal Bhola Babu of Kashinath Singh's Hindi story 'Sukh' is one day struck as though by lightning when a ray of the setting sun, lending its warmth to his bald head, injects into him an aphrodisiac, as it were, and evokes an acute awareness of his existence. A rather mysterious sense hidden under his five senses activates him to the pores of his skin. He feels the warmth of the ray of the sun on the wall transferred to his palm, his cheeks. The pink shadow of the crimson sun has bathed the entire atmosphere—the walls outside, the grass, his own clothes—everything is painted pink. Bhola Babu has acquired a new soul! Strangely, this is really his Adamic self, man's old, old self, so fresh and new! His unconscious seems to emerge from out of the thicket of civilization. The setting of the sun outside has caused the rising of a new sun in him. Immediately, he has a compulsive desire to share this experience with others. With his rustic simplicity he tries to communicate this phenomenon to his wife, to a wayfarer, to the educated 'Jilhedar', but his message is not received. Ironically, Bhola has been a telegram

Babu all his life, delivering telegraphic messages to all, messages that were so easily received! The telegraphic message that his 'being' wishes to deliver cannot be apprehended by anyone.

His awareness which has vitalized his existence with a sense of wonder and beauty is, thus, essentially his own. His inability to reach out to the 'other', while in this 'new situation', detaches him from his friends, his society, his children and his wife. The sense of isolation literally nauseates him into rejecting the food that his wife offers him. He sinks into a depression, conscious of his alienated self, a self that has to bear the 'burden' of its altered state. Bhola Babu has to learn to cope with the new knowledge of himself. His associates, domestic or social, are no longer relevant to the realization of this significant aspect of his being. No wonder the story ends with Bhola Babu in a deep state of anguish. The motion of self-awareness does of course lead to the 'exile' situation where 'relatedness' with the other is an extremely arduous and a nearly impossible task. The individual is no longer a mass of conventions, but himself. Hence the loneliness as well as the dread! To use Marjorie Greene's expression, 'If dread means anything, it is the agony of that self whom Kierkegaard sought, who has lost the whole world but himself.'⁴

The moment of self-awareness in 'Sukh', full of spontaneity and freedom, reminds me of the Indian concept of Sakti. In his book *Existentialism and Indian Thought*, K. Guru Dutt draws a close parallel between the existentialist presentation of Being as 'energetic being' and the concept of *sphūrti* (gushing forth) in the realization of 'Sakti'. The inability to sustain this sense of being leads to anguish. I think the modern Indian writer, who like Kashinath Singh artistically projects an existential consciousness, is not necessarily operating under the direct command and influence of the modern trends in Western philosophy. Undoubtedly some tenets of Western philosophy do correspond to Indian thought, and thus roots for these philosophical ideas are available in this fertile soil.

The distracting and rather deceiving cares of day-to-day routine existence of a 'civilized' human being do not normally allow one to become one's authentic self. And, till such time as 'death' remains a non-reality, the highly 'personal' sense of existence does not dawn upon an individual. This brings to my

mind an Urdu short story 'Aadh Ghante ka Khuda' (translated as 'Those Thirty Minutes' by Jai Ratan) written by Krishan Chander.⁵ The story introduces at the outset the passionate love-hate relationship between Kashar and Mogri—on the one hand, undeniable *love* that is passion and blindness; and on the other, hatred that is equally passionate and emanates from the consciousness that they are enemies. Kashar comes to kill Mogri after she is suspected of spying and the Gadiali bridge blown up with dynamite. Krishan Chander describes how love and hate operate simultaneously when Kashar plunges the dagger up to the hilt in Mogri's heart soon after an impassioned sexual togetherness. Revengefully, Mogri's brothers chase him.

The story is more or less a simple and interesting narrative till the avalanche of rocks sweeps past the fleeing Kashar's head, making the earth shake under him. His body is literally entombed in the rocks, and straining all his physical resources, he realizes that he is at the end of his life's journey. There's a total abandonment of the soul by the body which 'refuses to obey his command any more'. To get to him, he realizes, his pursuers just needed half an hour. This is that fateful half-an-hour, the rich and wholesome half-an-hour of realization, of a descent into solitude. An island unto himself, he reminds one of Roquentin in Sartre's *Nausea*, who says at the end, 'I feel so far away from them, on the top of the hill. It seems as though I belong to another species.'⁶

In a matter of moments, Kashar recapitulates his past, from the days of his childhood to the present, and 'bit by bit, when he had paid off all debts, and settled all scores, all that was left to him was this half-an-hour which was really his own.' When brought face to face with death, the endless stream of tomorrows is a mirage. In the moment of confrontation with death when there is no future, the present is tremendously intensified. And the futility of one's self-protective activities comes home. Then there is freedom, the freedom of a child, of a new-born for whom life has just begun. I quote from the story: 'He [Kashar] felt light like a child insensate to all pain. He thought he would stretch his arms and give out a loud laugh. Could one be so fortunate as to have half an hour, which from beginning to end one could claim as one's own? . . . Half an hour of which he was the complete master.' Here is

where the identification of the self takes place. Here is where the essential dignity of man's existence too is established. Whether it is Tolstoy's novella *The Death of Ivan Ilych* or Krishan Chander's 'Those Thirty Minutes', the imminence of death seems to attain, first, the self's deliverance from bondage to 'other' people, and secondly, its release from the prison of 'clicking clocks'. The inescapable but universal truth regarding death is then accepted with a marked tranquillity. The story, keeping to this track of experience, ends with the following words: 'A surge of joy rushed through him. With complete abandon he relaxed his body and spread out his legs. Then he closed his eyes and patiently waited for Mogri's brothers.' This is indeed a fateful half-an-hour which grants Kashar an acquaintance with his own self and yields in him a quiet sense of power and confidence. Hence the title 'Aadh Ghante ka Khuda'—Lord of a full half-an-hour! Related to the depth of his consciousness, this half-an-hour can capture an eternity!

The experience of one's self, however, comes when it does, of its own. One cannot contrive such an experience. I quote from an Urdu story 'Rasai' (Access) by Joginder Paul: 'He was a master spy but all his life was a hide-out of death.' The story presents a universe of solitary planets revolving in their own orbits in space and time and establishing contacts with each other through suspicion, doubt and anticipation of total annihilation that man has set out for himself.

In this story, Ram Prasad is the master spy in the garb of a palmist, a powerful planet whose integral identity he is unable to establish, though he may be spying into the minds of his clients so easily. 'Qualified for a living death', through a constant striving for he does not know what, he is not convinced that he actually lives. He is in fact neither in himself nor in others: it is his scattered existence which detaches his body from his ghost and he is sure that he exists. 'Perhaps dying', he says, 'is existing without being anywhere.'

Interestingly, Jiwa Gandhi, another planet in the universe of 'Rasai', is Ram Prasad's intimate client first, and eventually pretends to be an accomplice. In her dancer's frame the incessant and persistent motion of the planet is imprisoned. And the author uses an extended metaphor when he explains the attraction between Jiwa and Ram as interplanetary attraction.

Ram deposits his secret papers nowhere, keeps his secrets locked in his mind, and later transfers a part of his office from his own mind to Jiwa's. Jiwa's philosophical detachment is brought home when she comes to arrest Ram at the end of the story. It is only when Ram has stepped out of the orbit of his delusive self and has passed through the dark tunnel of self-inflicted death that he becomes capable of realizing the vitality of life. I quote from the story: 'Life is ceaselessly revolving within its orbit and getting refreshed alternately—here is life, more and more of it everywhere. Nowhere do I see death here, not even a speck of it. . . . I've had an overwhelming desire to enter into this orbit of life once again.'

But then, after a total loss of the self, can life be realized? One sees in 'Rasai' a self seeking to define itself through a balancing act on a fine dividing thread between life and death. When he is actually living, death seems to be pulsating and appears more vital. But when the self crosses over to the other side into the anonymity of death, then it is life that vibrates. What redeems and makes such a self worth its while is the hero's essential curiosity projected through the metaphor of 'spying' which actually evolves into a powerful clue to the quest for a specific quality of the sense of being.

In Hindi, judging by Nirmal Verma's 'Parinde' (Birds) and Mohan Rakesh's 'Miss Pall', another dimension of the anguished self seems to have found a creative expression. Both Latika of 'Parinde' and Miss Pall of Mohan Rakesh's story are trapped in the cold freedom of their lonely souls. They are emotionally and spiritually dispossessed. Latika's movement from one empty corridor to another is in fact reflective of her sense of emptiness. The detached and rather cold bearing of the mountains around her matches with her own state of mind, which seems to have been devitalized with her frustration in love.

An unrelated refugee from the 'other world', Latika's suffering perhaps pushes her into the immediate reality of her own life. This 'self-consciousness' makes her impose her own sense of the unreal on her wards in the girls' hostel. Interestingly, she has companions in Dr Mukherjee and Mister Hubert in being 'Parinde'—rather lonesome birds, apparently 'waiting', not knowing for *what*, or *where* to go. Fluttering their wings in the

void, they seem to be flying to a strange land like birds in winter. The assertion of a positive note in Latika's apprehension of her situation is brought out rather subtly by Nirmal Verma at the end of the story. She tiptoes to her ward Julie's room at night and places that blue envelope with Julie's love letter under her pillow. This is perhaps an indication of the fact that Latika's consciousness has come to terms with her own reality separated from Julie's. That is to say, the confiscation of that letter was indeed an attempt at stealing away someone else's experience, which of course could never have worked.

In 'Parinde', the ethos, characters and physical atmosphere completely merge into one another to bring out the uncanniness of Latika's identity. Migratory birds symbolizing Latika's wandering spirit become the central motif of the story; the mountain peaks around match the insularity of the individuals. In fact, the perfect harmony between the atmosphere and the characters of the story makes 'Parinde' sound like a song. The pathos located in Latika's self, therefore, appears tension-free, suggestive of a meditative serenity.

In 'Miss Pall', Rakesh draws the portrait of a woman who is a total misfit in middle-class urban Indian society. Another spirit in exile! A person may tranquillize himself in the self-forgetful pleasures of life, but the iron reality of existence may thrust some individuals back into their own specific nudity for a direct confrontation with experience. This often leads him to an exclusive existence and a consequent sense of despair and pathos. The quest for the cognition of selfhood is indeed crucial for man to ultimately acquire the ability to cognize reality and seek to master it.

Long ago, in the first century A.D., Rabbi Hillel queried, 'If I am not for myself, who is for me? Yet being for myself, what am I? And if not now when?'⁸ Self-questioning such as this may deport an individual from his society, but he is ultimately nearer home in his inner scapes first and in society later.

Whether in Hindi or Urdu, it is heartening to note that despite a whole lot of critical and 'creative' deadwood, there are a number of short stories which articulate artistic expression of not only newer adjustments with newer contexts but also the striving to achieve the primal unity of all life. While the similarity of the vision in short fiction in both Hindi and Urdu

points to their identical cultural contexts, it also shows an alignment with the temper of twentieth century literature.

The selection of short stories that I made for this paper shows how the sensibility projected in Hindi and Urdu seems to be rooted in similar philosophical grounds. The sustenance for the organism that is evolved in this kind of short story is directly derived from its immediate environment. And that indeed speaks for the authenticity of the experience presented. Linguistic boundaries get mixed up, and though, as said above, the contexts are specific, it is the totality of human life that the writer desires to comprehend. In essence, therefore, the cognition of the self in the stories selected is not circumscribed within any religious, cultural or political boundaries.

NOTES

1. Ionesco's statement quoted in Benjamin Nelson and Toby E. Huff (eds.), *On the Roads to Modernity: Selected Writers* (New Jersey: Bowman and Littlefield, 1981), p. 203.
2. Anwar Moazzam, 'Urdu Short Story', *Indian Writing Today*, II, 2 (April-June 1968), 65.
3. Sadat Hasan Manto, 'Toba Tek Singh', trans. Jai Ratan, in Jai Ratan (ed.), *Modern Urdu Short Stories* (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1987).
4. Marjorie Greene, *Introduction to Existentialism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), pp. 74-5.
5. Krishan Chander, 'Those Thirty Minutes', trans. Jai Ratan, in *Modern Urdu Short Stories*.
6. Quoted by Sydney Mendel, *Roads to Consciousness* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1974), p. 201.
7. Joginder Paul, 'Access', trans. Krishna Paul and Shahab Afsar, *Indian Literature*, XXX, 2 (March-April 1979), 47-63.
8. Quoted by Sydney Mendel, op. cit., p. 252.

The Emergence of Modernity in Gujarati and Bengali Poetry

BHOLABHAI PATEL

Despite all the distinct traditions and national peculiarities that have contributed to affect the practice of poets, the 'modernity' of modern poetry is an international phenomenon.

—Michael Hamburger

I intend to analyse the crucial phase during which the 'modernity of modern poetry' emerged in Bengali and Gujarati literature. In purely chronological terms it did not overlap. In Bengali it was stretched in the late twenties and the thirties; in Gujarati the signs of modernity surfaced around the end of the fifties. This itself is an interesting feature of Indian literary history. My paper also proposes a footnote to that.

Modernism was, of course, a world-wide movement; but its beginnings were first seen in the literature and arts of Europe. However, its exact chronology is still a matter of dispute. Virginia Woolf once announced: 'In or about December 1910 human nature changed.'¹ But D. H. Lawrence felt: 'It was in 1915 the old world ended.'² Scholars have been more careful. Frank Kermode, for instance, said, 'Anybody who thinks what modernism now means will rightly look more closely at the period between 1907 and, say, 1925.'³ Richard Ellmann and Charles Feidelson found the roots of modernism back in the romantic era; but they suggested 1900 as the year of change-over.⁴ Cyril Connolly thought that the time-span of modernism had been 1880 to 1950. But he too underlined the years between 1910 and 1925 as the years of 'high season'.⁵ In brief, we can say that the first three decades of this century were the decades of the modernist movement in the West. Now, the

question before us is the question of the emergence of modernity and its time-span in Indian languages. It is needless to say that this modernist movement in Indian literature emerged as a result of the Western impact. Yet the tradition and the regional factors contributed a lot; otherwise the period of emergence of modernism in the literatures of Indian languages would have been the same as that in Europe. The modernist trends appeared somewhat earlier in Bengali than in Hindi, Gujarati or Marathi.

When did the first signs of modernism appear in Bengali? The 'high season' of the European modernist movement coincides with the peak of Rabindranath's career in Bengali, the years of *Gitanjali*. When writers in Europe were writing under a specific historical strain, Rabindranath was steeped in a kind of religious fervour. When Yeats wrote

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;

Rabindranath wrote

Thou hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure.

There is no fear of darkness or alienation or disintegration in him, as we find in the modernist writers of Europe at that time. When Ezra Pound and his contemporaries were issuing manifestos, Rabindranath came forward with his English translations of *Gitanjali* and was warmly welcomed by them. This was in a way a strange phenomenon. Although Rabindranath was in touch with Western poetry, he was not much influenced by it. Buddhadeva Bose has aptly remarked:

Heaven and earth he has, both life and death, but no death-in-life, no purgatory, no hell. This, if anything, this is what we miss in him, we who know the literature of the West. His vision comprehends suffering, earthly coils and earthly toils, jealousy, despair, greed, but not Eliot's 'horror and boredom'.⁶

In fact modernism emerged in Bengali as a revolt launched against Rabindranath by his junior contemporaries like Buddhadeva Bose, Achintyakumar Sengupta, Bishnu Dey, Jibananda Das and Sudhindranath Datta.

These poets suffered from an 'anxiety of influence'. During the third and fourth decades of this century this new generation

of poets tried to free themselves from the all-pervading influence of Rabindranath. For their inspiration they turned to those European poets whose names were linked to modernism. Jibanananda, the foremost poet after Rabindranath, said that Rabindranath, Bankim and the early tradition of Bengali literature looked dim in the bright light of the great Westerners; and Bishnu Dey felt that the deliverance of Bengali poetry did not lie in following Tagore, for there was a gulf between his and his successors' worlds. These poets announced the end of the Rabindra Era—'Rabindra yug asta hoye gecche.'

The Gujarati literary scene presented a different picture during this period. Gandhi visited India in 1908, with his book *Hind Swaraj* in Gujarati, which was one of the epoch-making books of the freedom movement. In 1916 Gandhi left Africa and settled in India. He founded an ashram in Ahmedabad. Since then for thirty years his influence on the literary and cultural life of Gujarat was very strong. Gandhi exhorted Gujarati writers to turn to the roots. It was obvious that under his influence Gujarati poets tended to stay away from the Western impact.

In 1920 Gandhi founded the Gujarat Vidyapeeth (one year before the foundation of Rabindranath's Visva-Bharati), which became a centre of political and cultural activities. Gandhi exercised a great influence through this institute. In the history of Gujarati literature the third and the fourth decades are known as the 'Gandhi era'. Marxism too exerted some influence in this period, but poets like Sundaram and Umashankar were swayed more by Gandhism than by Marxism. Gujarati poetry took a new turn, leaving behind Kavi Nanalal's romanticism. Another major voice, B. K. Thakore, though not influenced by Gandhism, influenced the younger generation by his poetic ideal of 'reflective poetry' ('vicharpradhan kavita'). Younger poets adopted this ideal as it suited well their subjects and themes inspired by Gandhi's idealism.

It is interesting to note that when in Bengal the younger generation revolted against Rabindranath, he was amply read and translated in Gujarat. However, he could not influence Gujarati poetry as deeply as he did Hindi poetry of the second and third decades, probably because of Gandhi's physical presence in Gujarat. As has been stated above, the reaction

against Rabindranath can be equated with the emergence of modernism in Bengali. It was propelled by the Western impact. This Western impact reached back to Baudelaire. Is it not ironical that a poet who was condemned by Tagore as a 'furniture poet' was honoured almost as a 'kavyaguru' by his successors?

Jibanananda Das shook off Rabindranath's influence totally and broke new ground. He did not aspire to be a modernist by making a conscious endeavour; the very ethos of his poetry, his symbols and images, and his sensibility by themselves made him a modernist. He seems to have been influenced by the movements of surrealism and impressionism. Jibanananda's originality lies in his unique imagery, which is quite different from that of Tagore. If we compare Tagore's 'Svapna' (A Dream) with 'Banalata Sen' by Jibanananda, dealing with an almost similar theme, the latter's originality and newness are immediately apparent. Rabindranath is a poet of spring and monsoon; Jibanananda is a poet of autumn (Hemanta) which stands for despair. And what is conveyed by *The Waste Land* of Eliot is conveyed by Jibanananda's 'Hemanta'. Some of his poems also show a little influence of Yeats.

Among the poets who rebelled against and consciously sought to liberate themselves from Tagore, Buddhadeva Bose was perhaps the most articulate. The magazine *Kallol* was a forum of this group of poets. Modernist poetry was the poetry of urban consciousness. This consciousness was first expressed in Baudelaire's *Tableaux parisiens*. Buddhadeva translated Baudelaire and Rilke in his later years, with long introductions and notes. His translations became a creative force for the next generation. In his own poems he made characteristic modernist use of ancient myths—'Damayanti', 'Draupadir Saḍi' and 'Asambhaber Gan' (Arjun) are only three examples.

Though strongly influenced by Marxist philosophy, Bishnu Dey imbibed the poetic techniques of modern Western poets, especially Eliot. In his essay, 'Mr Eliot among the Arjunas', he maintained that Eliot was the 'kavyaguru' of the new generation of Bengali poets. His poems abound in allusions like those of Eliot. Lila Ray has critically remarked that in this he out-Eliots Eliot. The very title of his first collection, *Urvashi O Artemis*, showed his attitude towards the simultaneity of Eastern

and Western myths. As against Tagore's conception of eternal beauty, Bishnu Dey's Urvashi symbolizes the transience of beauty and love. Through ancient myths he presented a profound sense of the time. Because of his allusions, his poems often become incomprehensible, a characteristic feature of modernist poetry.

Suddhindranath Datta, too, used ancient Indian myths like Buddhadeva and Bishnu Dey, but his style was classical. He found his poetic ideal in the French Symbolist movement, particularly in Mallarmé. He preferred the poetry of suggestion. Mallarmé had said: 'To name an object is to destroy three-quarters of the enjoyment of a poem, which is made up of the pleasure of guessing little by little; to suggest it—that is the ideal.'⁷ To achieve this ideal, the literal meaning of the word should be modified so as to suggest and convey something else. Like Valéry's, Sudhindranath's approach to life was nihilistic. His poems are full of expressions related to hell, shroud, dead body and *Angst*. His nihilistic vision is expressed in his famous poem 'Utpakhi' (Camel-bird) where he compares human life with a waste land:

You hear me well: and yet you try
 To hide within the desert's fold.
 Here shadows shrink until they die,
 While dead horizons cannot hold
 The quick mirage, and, never near,
 The cruel sky is mute and blue.
 The hunter stalks no phantom deer;
 He loses all by losing you.
 The sands are heedless. Why run on,
 When tell-tale footprints point your way?
 Your prehistoric friends are gone,
 And, all alone, you stand at bay.

(trans. author)

His is the poetry of scepticism and rationality. There is no God in his world. He did not believe in eternal love. He expressed the feeling of loneliness in this world in the following words: 'virup visve manush niyata ekaki' (man is ever alone in an alien world).

One characteristic common to these four poets was that they

were all teachers of English or of Comparative Literature—that is, they were close enough to Western literature. The West had made a great impact on their minds, but this impact functioned in a synthesized way. They blended their deep knowledge and love of Sanskrit literature with that of Baudelaire, Eliot, Valéry and other Western poets, so as to create a peculiar and unique modernist temper. It is interesting that this poetry was quite untouched by the nationalist struggle of the day or by Gandhi. Its politics was, by and large, Marxist.

Sundaram, Umashankar Joshi and Shrikrishnalal Shridharani were major Gujarati poets of the fourth decade of the twentieth century. Of them Shridharani had a Bengali connection; being a student of Santiniketan he showed the influence of Tagore. But the decisive influence arrived later. I have said above that Gujarati poets were not much influenced by Tagore during the third and fourth decades. However, it was at the end of the fourth decade that Tagore's influence proved pivotal. A collection of poems called *Bari Bahar* was published by Prahlad Parekh in 1940. As if in reaction to Gandhi's ideology, his poems appeared to be 'pure' and showed an inclination towards Tagore. Prahlad too was a student of Santiniketan. This new turn in Gujarati poetry found its culmination in Rajendra Shah, whose collection of poems, *Dhvani*, was published in 1951.

During the fourth and fifth decades Harishchandra Bhatta showed a keen awareness of continental modernist poetry. He wrote odes to modernist poets like Rilke and Baudelaire. This was a clear indication of the Gujarati reception to modernism. In his manuscript of the poem addressed to Baudelaire, he did not hesitate to write words such as 'To St Baudelaire—my favourite poet'. He composed poems on Rodin's well-known sculpture 'Kiss', and also on Greco-Roman mythological characters like Pegasus, Icarus and Narcissus. Though a scholar may find a European impact on his poems, nowhere would he find a theme that has not been internalized. Yet we would hesitate to call Harishchandra a modernist poet—his poetic technique is traditional, and by temperament he is a romantic.

But it was another such romantic poet that was turned into the first modernist poet in Gujarati by Baudelairean influence.

Niranjan Bhagat was a student of English literature and began publishing in the nineteen-fifties. He started writing with a romantic exuberance in imitation of Rabindranath's *Gitanjali*. He also endeavoured to compose lyrics in English. But his friendship with Harishchandra was instrumental to his intimate acquaintance with continental poets, particularly Baudelaire and Rilke. This acquaintance was a significant turning-point in Niranjan's poetry, and this also proved to be a pivotal event for Gujarati poetry in general. It now looked forward to modernism.

The ground, too, was prepared for a proper reception to modern Western poetry. Independence uncovered us totally, without any reservation. Independence and Partition, and with that urbanization and industrialization, shook the creative sensibility of the poet to the roots; and it became urgent for him to explore new poetic techniques to express his new and sharpened mental states. In the field of fiction, the writer on the one hand analysed social reality, and on the other employed the stream of consciousness. The poet experimented with various poetic forms. He moved from metre to free verse and from free verse to the prose poem. He was in tune with Baudelaire's urban consciousness, which sprouted in the soil of Gujarati poetry exactly after one hundred years. Niranjan Bhagat's *Praval Dvipa*, published in 1956, immediately reminded us of Baudelaire's *Tableaux parisiens*, published in 1856. And the impact of Rilke and Eliot was also significant and decisive—the poetic ideals of Symbolism were assimilated along with those of the Imagist movement. It may not be possible here to illustrate the resemblances and the parallelisms with Baudelaire's *Tableaux* in *Praval Dvipa*, a batch of poems dealing with the theme of the city. Niranjan Bhagat's *mahanagar* is not Paris, but Bombay. In a poem like 'Gayatri' he has communed with Baudelaire's true spirit. It is the first high peak achieved in Gujarati poetry in the years after Independence.

Niranjan Bhagat represented the avant-garde of modernism. Among the young Gujarati poets he popularized Baudelaire as well as other Western modernists like Rilke, Pound and Eliot. In a way he was the pioneer of Gujarati Imagism. In him we notice the influence of Rilke over and above that of Baudelaire. There are, in 'Die Stimmen: Neun Blätter mit einem Titel-

blatt' from Rilke's *Das Buch der Bilder*, monologues of a beggar, a blind man and a leper. Niranjan created such characters in *Praval Dvipa*. But the structure and the spirit of Niranjan's poetry are different from those of Rilke's.

Through Harishchandra, Umashankar Joshi was intimately acquainted with the modern European literary scene and modernist poets; yet it is curious that in his poems, composed during the thirties and forties, we do not find any modernist tendencies. It is only in 1956, in one of his poems 'Chhinna Bhinna Chhun' (Fragmented), that such a tendency became apparent:

I am fragmented—fallen apart
Like rhythm striving to throb in a poem without metre,
Like a pattern trying to emerge upon man's life-canvas
Like bread crumbs in several homes, not yet placed
in a beggar's bowl.

(trans. author)

This poet who had written a poem like 'Vishva-Shanti' in 1931, centring round Gandhi, wrote 'Fragmented' in 1956 under the impact of the modernist movement.

Poets like Priyakant Maniar were indirectly influenced through Niranjan Bhagat's poetry and criticism. The title of his first collection, *Pratik*, was appropriate to the poems collected in it. In another collection, *Ashabd Ratri*, Priyakant emerged as a poet of urban life. Hasmukh Pathak too belonged to the same group. In poetic technique he seemed to follow Eliot and sometimes even Dylan Thomas. However, Baudelaire remained the most influential poet for this generation. After 1960, Gujarati poetry once again took a turn and Baudelaire became more alive. This new turn was perceived after the publication of Suresh Joshi's journal *Kshitij*. In the beginning of the sixties Radheshyam Sharma's collection of prose-poems, *Aansu ane Chandaranu*, appeared, showing Baudelaire's influence. In one of Gulam Mohammad Sheikh's poems too, Suresh Joshi discerned a Baudelairean air. In Suresh Joshi's own poetry also, wherever he expresses the emotion of 'ennui', one can hear the echo of Baudelaire.

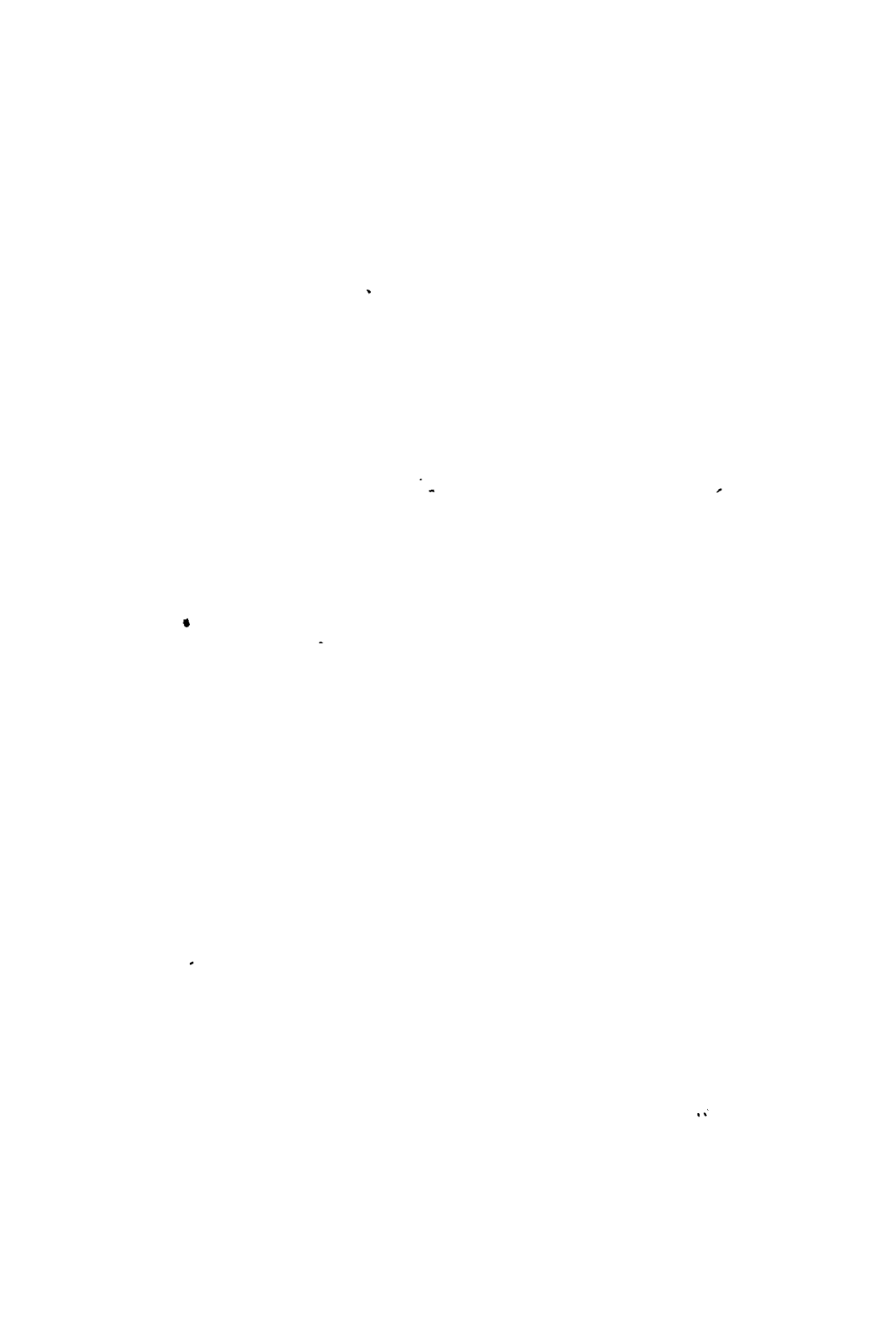
The translation of Baudelaire's poems into Bengali by Buddhadeva Bose appeared in book form in 1961. Almost at the

same time, Suresh Joshi's translations were published in Gujarati. It is quite possible that Suresh Joshi read Buddhadeva's translations. But the inner need of the Gujarati poet is clearly visible in these translations.

Modernism was widely spread in Gujarati poetry during the sixties; but it is not within my purview here. I have merely described the beginnings. Modernism, the international movement that had been manifest in Bengali in the third and fourth decades, arrived relatively late on the Gujarati scene, in the sixth decade. Besides, if the figure of Tagore, primarily as a poet and an aesthete, governed the literary scene in Bengal, in Gujarat it was Gandhi, the ascetic and the political activist, who guided the creative urge. The question for the comparatist is: how to interpret these facts? Beyond the emitters of influence, and the receptors—the individual writers—are wider horizons. What are these? I am concerned only with two literary traditions: the Bengali and the Gujarati. But surely it can be extended to other Indian literatures, and only then can we arrive at the full history of modernism in Indian literature.

NOTES

1. Virginia Woolf, quoted in Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane (eds.), *Modernism: 1890-1930* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), p. 33.
2. D. H. Lawrence, quoted in Bradbury and McFarlane, *Modernism*, p. 33.
3. Frank Kermode, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 32.
4. Richard Ellmann and Charles Feidelson, quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 32-3.
5. See Cyril Connolly, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 31.
6. Buddhadeva Bose, *An Acre of Green Grass* (1948, reprint, Calcutta: Papyrus, 1982), p. 24.
7. Translation from Mallarmé, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Henri Mondor (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), p. 869.



IV Literary Theory, Literary History and Translation



The Relevance of Indian Literary Theory

NISHIKANT D. MIRAJKAR

While applying the canons of comparative study to Indian literature, it is always presumed that Indian literature is one, though it is written in many languages. To establish this 'oneness' of Indian literature, different types of unity amongst literatures in different Indian languages are sought. Some even go to the extent of claiming that the 'Indianness' is the inevitable product of Indian culture developed through the common heritage of history, social environment, political situations and philosophical viewpoints emerging from the religious background. Leaving aside the extraliterary nature of the criterion, one is bound to face difficulties in accepting the claim; for the so-called oneness in these aspects of our heritage is only hypothetical. Amidst all these efforts, it is sad to note that proper attention is not being given to the fact that there was a well-disciplined literary theory which provided a common literary atmosphere to the creation of literature in different Indian languages, guided and regulated its norms of expression and influenced the outlook of Indian authors towards their creativity for a considerable period of time. Even when new doors were opened by Western influence, this theory was very much in the blood of the new creations. So Indian literary theory may, perhaps, be one of the root causes that moulded the peculiarity of Indian literature.

Secondly, a thorough study of the development of Indian literary theory may provide excellent material for a comparative study; for this theory never entirely focused on Sanskrit literature alone (as is commonly believed). A survey of illustrations used by these theorists will clarify this point. In the

formative period of Indian literary theory, rhetoricians from Bhāmaha to Rudraṭa (with only Vāmana as an exception) have used their own Sanskrit compositions as illustrations. In the next phase of systematization and application, from Ānandavardhana onwards, we find illustrations from famous Sanskrit poets as well as a lot of illustrations from Prakrit poetry. Ānandavardhana has used Prakrit illustrations quite profusely while explaining the minute shades of dhvani. The abundance of Prakrit illustrations is distinct from *Dhvanyāloka* to *Kāvyaṭīkā*; and the tradition continues till the fourteenth century through Hemacandra and Viśvanātha. Then Jagannātha (seventeenth century) does not give any Prakrit quotations; but in order to present novel nuances, he has used illustrations which are in fact Sanskrit renderings of Hindi or Persian poetry. Jagannātha was patronized by Emperor Shahjahan, who used to hold gatherings of Hindi, Persian and Sanskrit poets. So it will be interesting to note how Indian literary theory in Jagannātha benefited by the interactions of these literatures. Certainly there is a scope for comparative studies here.

Thirdly, the concepts and theories propounded by Indian critics may be modified and moulded to suit the demands of modern literature, so that they could furnish an ideal methodology to understand, appreciate and evaluate modern Indian literature. Perhaps this would be more appropriate and justified than borrowing Western critical tenets and thrusting them upon Indian literature. A suitably modified Indian literary theory will keep the soul of Indian literature within a closer reach. It is of course true that many Indian theories became static and dull in the course of time; but that is the result of the static attitude of later Indian critics, who never tried to weigh the significance of the well-set theories in the context of newly emerging trends in literature and to think of necessary modifications as a necessary condition of development. If the task is done even now, we can remove the boulder that blocked the flow of development of Indian literary theory.

An attempt is made here to present some such concepts from Indian literary theory. This is only to foster interest and motivate the necessary urge. How the concepts satisfy the various complexities of modern literature is beyond the scope of this paper.

The Span of Indian Literary Theory

The origin of Sanskrit poetics can be traced to the fifth century B.C. However, the foundation of Indian literary theory was laid down by the *Nāṭyaśāstra* of 'Bharata' in the first century A.D. This was a treatise on dramaturgy, and literary theory was an offshoot of it. The first work dedicated to the theory of literature was Bhāmaha's *Kāvya-lamkāra* in the sixth century A.D. Daṇḍin's *Kāvya-darśa* was a contemporary work. These were followed by Lollaṭa and Udbhaṭa in the next century, whose works are not available. The eighth century created a landmark in Vāmana's *Kāvya-lamkārasūtravṛtti*. It was followed by Śrīśaṅkuka and Rudraṭa. After fifty years, we find another landmark, i.e. Ānandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka*. The tenth century saw Rājaśekhara, Mukula, Pratihārendurāja, Bhaṭṭanāyaka, Bhaṭṭa-touta, Kuntaka and Dhanañjaya. Of these, Rājaśekhara was so genuine that we find some elements of modern criticism in his *Kāvya-mīmāṃsā*; but unfortunately, only the first chapter of the work is available. If the latter part of the book is still found out, it will bring into light many original ideas. Amongst other critics of this century, Kuntaka deserves a special mention for his theory of *vakrokti*. Then, on the border of the tenth and the eleventh century stands the greatest of Sanskrit critics, Abhinavagupta. His analysis of the manifestation of *rasa*, his indigenous concept of *mahārasa*, and his unparalleled advocacy of *dhvani*—all have a high place in the development of Indian literary theory. Bhoja, Mahimabhaṭṭa and Kṣemendra were junior contemporaries of Abhinavagupta. The twelfth century started with the most neatly presented treatise of poetics, Mammaṭa's *Kāvya-prakāśa*, and brought forward Ruyyaka, Hemacandra, Rāmacandra-Guṇacandra and Māṇikyacandra. The thirteenth century produced Jayaratha and Samudrabandha. After a gap of two centuries, we find Madhusūdanasarasvatī and Prabhākara in the sixteenth century. And lastly, the seventeenth century began with the profound scholar Appayadīkṣita and produced a gem in his junior contemporary, Jagannātha, who is chronologically the last word in Sanskrit poetics. Thus it was a continuous development of nearly fifteen hundred years.

The history of Indian literary theory reveals a steady progress from the broad to the minute, or from the general to the particular. Every critic picked up the cue from his predecessor

and analysed his theory into a more minute spectrum. Thus the so-called schools are not different confronting theories, but they are different stages of the development. The whole business of Indian literary theory is thus a continuous and congruent pattern of different harmonious concepts, ideas and viewpoints supplementary to each other.

Indian literary theory describes the element of poetic beauty and differentiates between poetic creation and external creation. It underlines that poetic genius is the cause of poetry and analyses the nature of poetic genius. It enumerates the functions of literature. It describes the methods of poetic expression and elaborates the senses of words. Then it carries on a scholarly debate on the body and soul of literature. It is here that various concepts like *guṇa* (excellence), *rīti* (style), *alamkāra* (embellishment), *rasa* (sentiment), *vakrokti* (deviating expression) and *oucīya* (appropriateness) are discussed. Indian literary theory also describes the characteristics of an ideal *rasika* or appreciative reader. Thus it deals with all the aspects of literary process: the speciality of the author, the peculiarity of the reader, the characteristics of the literary text and the nature of interrelations amongst these three. It attempts to strengthen the understanding of literature, direct the ways of appreciation and provide criteria for literary evaluation.

Experience of Poetic Beauty

Indian literary theory claims that literature gives *viśrāma* (rest) and *vinoda* (entertainment) or *harṣa* (joy) to the reader. Poetic beauty is the root cause of the supreme delight obtained from literature. The term *alamkāra* indicates beauty or charm of poetry in its broader sense. This confirms the fact that according to ancient thinkers, beauty is the essence of poetry. In a later period the scope of the term *alamkāra* became limited. But the importance of the principle of beauty did not as a result decrease. The term *alamkāra* was replaced by terms like *śobhā* (charm), *cārutā* (attractiveness) and *soundarya* (beauty).

Commenting on *Dhvanyāloka*'s term *pratibhāviśeṣam*, Abhinavagupta says, 'pratibhā apūrvavastunirmāṇakṣamā prajñā. Tasyāḥ viśeṣo rasāveśavaiśadya soundaryanirmāṇakṣamatvam.' The peculiarity of the poetic genius of great poets is that it con-

tains the purity of intellect, which gives an experience of beauty. Abhinavagupta means that the nature of poetry is in the beauty emerging from the purity of intellect. He defends *dhvani* against all other theories but affirms that *dhvani* too is bound to be beautiful. Bhaṭṭanāyaka, a staunch opponent of *dhvani*, ridicules this. Since there is no limit to suggested meaning, he says, we will have to assume that poetry exists everywhere, even in casual remarks like 'siṃha baṭuḥ'. Abhinavagupta replies that it is not so; for only that *dhvani* is regarded as poetry which has attained beauty through the marvellous association of the content, expression and composition, all appropriate to the context of the suggestible sentiment. You cannot claim anything to be poetry just because it contains *dhvani*. 'Tena sarvatrāpi dhvananasadbhāve'pi na tathā vyavahāraḥ . . . tena etad niravakāśaṃ yaduktaṃ hrdayadarpaṇe sarvatra tarhida kāvyavyavahāraḥ syāditi.' Abhinavagupta logically establishes the intimate relation between poetry and beauty by making two complementary statements: 'poetry exhibits beauty' and 'words and their meanings cannot attain the status of poetry unless they possess beauty'. When challenged that this will lead to the presumption that *cārutvaprātīti* or experience of beauty is the soul of poetry, Abhinavagupta readily welcomes the presumption, and remarks that there is no difference of opinion in this regard: 'yacca uktaṃ cārutvaprātītistarhi kāvyasyātmā syāt iti nāsti khalvayam vivādaḥ.'

Poetic beauty should not be misunderstood for the description of beautiful objects. This will be clear from the illustration in *Dhvanyāloka* and Abhinavagupta's comment upon it. The illustration occurs in the second Udyota of *Dhvanyāloka*:

kiṃ hāsyena na me prayāsyasi punaḥ prāptaściraḍdarśnam
keyaṃ niṣkaruṇa pravāsarucitā kenāsi dūrīkṛtaḥ /
svapnānteṣviti te vadan priyatamavyāsaktakaṇṭhagraho
buddhvā roditi riktabāhuvalayastāraṃ ripustrījanaḥ //

('Why don't you respond to my long-lost sight with a smile? What cruel interest in travel is this? Who is pulling you away?' . . . so uttering, as their dreams end, and longing to embrace their loved ones, enemy women lament loudly when they realize that their wrists are without bangles.)

Commenting upon this verse, Abhinavagupta says, 'na hi

tvayāhi ripavo hatāḥ, iti yāvanalanamkrto'yaṁ vākyārthaḥ tādrgayam, api tu sundarībhūtaḥ.' (The meaning is not conveyed as it might have been conveyed through a sentence like, 'O King, you have destroyed your enemies.' The meaning here has become beautiful.)

Recently a very strong and powerful movement in Marathi literature has emerged and it is Dalit writing. According to Dalit poets, poetry and political activity are inseparable. For them, poetry is an instrument in social and cultural change. Rebellion is the core of almost all Dalit poetry, presenting poignant sketches of agony and torture derived from cruel injustice and bitter hatred throughout the ages. Here is an illustration in translation from Namdev Dhasal:

O innumerable suns, burning in my blood!
 How long should I bear these utter bondages?
 Should I remain a war-prisoner till my death?
 Behold, O behold,
 The self-realization of the soil
 Has spread all over the sky.
 My soul has also shouted the victory-slogan.

O innumerable suns, burning in my blood,
 Come on, now,
 Start setting cities after cities on fire!

Now for a Dalit reader, the poem may be a real expression of his own attitude towards the unbearable situation; but its universal appeal lies in its poetic beauty, created by a congruent association of words, phrases and images capable of suggesting the violent sentiment of the poem. A non-Dalit reader appreciates the poem and accepts it as a piece of great literature on the basis of his experience of the poetic beauty in it, and not on the basis of its socio-political value. This is all the more true of a scholar doing the comparative study of Indian literature: he reads the poem without having the actual feeling of the typical environment in which it is created. Even for Marathi readers, Laksman Mane's autobiography *Upāra* is superior to Daya Pawar's autobiography *Baluta*, though both are Dalit and give the disgusting account of their miserable experiences with equal intensity and with equally unquestionable honesty. The reason has to be in the nature of poetic beauty.

Kaiśikī: The Business of Beauty

If we want to go into a further analysis of why *Upara* gives a deeper experience of poetic beauty than *Baluta*, we have to take into account the author's attitude or *vr̥tti* as revealed in his writing. There is a legend, narrated at the very beginning of the oldest treatise, namely, Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*. The legend goes as follows. In the Tretāyuga, all the devas, led by Indra, approached Brahmā and said, 'We wish to watch a play that would be pleasing to our ears and eyes.' Brahmā agreed to oblige and prepared Nāṭyaveda, choosing its essential parts from all the four Vedas. Then he called Indra and said, 'Give this Nāṭyaveda to those of your folks who are efficient (*kuśala*), elite (*vidagdha*), mature (*pragalbha*) and tireless (*jitaśrama*).' Indra, however, regretted, as there was no deva possessing all these characteristics. Then Brahmā gave the Nāṭyaveda to Bharata, who trained his sons accordingly and prepared a play-performance using *vr̥ttis* (attitudes), *bhāratī*, *ārabhaṭī* and *sātvatī*. Brahmā examined Bharata's preparations and said, 'Use also *kaiśikī* in this performance.' Bharata replied, 'My lord, a *kaiśikī* performance is not possible without female artistes.' Then Brahmā gave him *apsarās* proficient in *nāṭyā-lāṅkāra*.

The message of the legend is that a play (or any literary creation for that matter) is not possible without *kaiśikī* which pertains to the fine arts. Whatever may be the topic of a play or any other work of literature, it cannot acquire its form without *vaicitrya* or *lālitya*. The plot of Bharata's play-performance was the war between devas and asuras. The dominant sentiment was *vīra* (heroism) or *roudra* (wrath); but that also needed *kaiśikī*, in order to bring about *vaicitrya* or *lālitya*. *Kaiśikī* means the business of poetic beauty. 'Soundaryopayogī vyāpāraḥ kaiśikī vr̥tṭiḥ', says Abhinavagupta. He further declares that whatever *lālitya* exists in poetry, it is due only to *kaiśikī*. 'Evaṁ yatkiñcit lālityaṁ tat sarvaṁ kaiśikīvijṛmbhitam.' Actually, the attitude that expresses *vīra* or *roudra* is *ārabhaṭī*, but when these sentiments are expressed in a play or in any other literary work, the beauty or uniqueness is conveyed by *kaiśikī*. Whatever may be the sentiment, its expression requires poetic beauty. Therefore Abhinavagupta says, 'iti sarvatra kaiśikī

prāṇah' (*kaiśikī* is thus the source of life everywhere). Bharata also calls *kaiśikī* 'nr̥tyāṅgahārasampannā rasabhāva-kriyātmikā' and describes its symbols, the apsarās, as 'nāṭyālaṁ-kāracatura'.

This means that experiences, howsoever intense and honest they may be, cannot themselves become the subjects of poetic beauty. The attitude in the work of literature dealing with them is the key to the creation of poetic beauty. Unlike Laksman Mane, Daya Pawar is short of *kaiśikī*, which is why he does not attain Laksman Mane's height.

There is a danger here of assuming the *kaiśikī vṛtti* to be a sophisticating medium, on account of which the lively rustic experiences are to be artificially tuned so as to please the taste of white-collared, self-centred dwellers of ivory towers. But it is not so. *Kaiśikī* is the knack for presenting a set of experiences in such a manner as would transform them to a highly elevated level. As it can be strikingly felt in a masterpiece like Rabindranath Tagore's *Dakghar* (*The Post Office*) or Shivaram Karanth's *Mukajjiye Kanasagalu* (*Mukajji's Vision*), so can it sometimes be impressively functioning in folk literature. No wonder *kaiśikī* is responsible for the beautiful texture of Balkavi's *Phularani* or Jayadeva's *Gītagovindam*. Surely it is also the force behind the success of a tense play like Mohan Rakesh's *Adhe Adhure* or Vijay Tendulkar's *Gidhade*. When an author takes a vast canvas to depict the reality of life from many angles, say, for instance, in Pannalal Patel's *Manavini Bhavai* or Tarashankar Banerjee's *Ganadevata*, it is only *kaiśikī* which saves the work from being a boring replica of actual life and presents it in kaleidoscopic designs to create an astonishing instance of poetic beauty. Indian literary theory gives here something which inspires a creative author to become that source of magic touch which makes literature not only a mirror of real life, but a magic mirror.

A Viewpoint of Literature

The legend mentioned above from Bharata's *Nāṭyasāstra* goes further to describe something else. Bharata enacted his play in a festival named 'Indradhvaja'. The plot of the play was the victory of devas over dānavas. So daityas began to put up

obstructions during its performance. When asked by Brahmā, a daitya named Virūpākṣa said, 'You have prepared this Nāṭya-veda as desired by the devas. You have depicted a hatred (pratyādeśa) for us in it. You should not have done so.' Then Brahmā replied, 'O daityas, do not get angry or sad. Try to understand how I prepared the Nāṭyaveda:

bhavatām devatānām ca śubhāśubhavikalapakaḥ /
 karmabhāvānvayāpekṣi Nāṭyavedo mayā kṛtaḥ //
 naikāntato'tra bhavatām devānām cāpibhāvanam /
 trailokyasyāśya sarvasya nāṭyam bhāvānukīrtanam //
 kvacid dharmāḥ kvacit kriḍā kvacidarthaḥ kvacicchamaḥ /
 kvacid hāsyam kvacid yuddham kvacit kāmāḥ kvacid vadhaḥ //
 dharmo dharmapravṛttānām kāmāḥ kāmārthasevinām /
 nigrāho durvinītānām mattānām damanakriyā // . . .
 nānābhāvopasampannam nānāvasthāntarātmakam /
 lokavṛttānukaraṇam nāṭyametanmayā kṛtam //

(Nāṭyāśāstra, 1. 106-9, 112)

(This Nāṭyaveda, which shows the good and bad deeds of yours and of devas, has been prepared by me in the context of your actions, emotions and relations. There is no eccentric or rudimentary depiction on either side. *Nāṭya* presents the 'anukīrtana' (imitated display) of feeling from all the world. So there is at places the way of life, play and games at places, interpretation at places and solace at places. The religion of the religious people, the worldly desires of the materialistic ones, the determination of adamant persons and destruction of the violent ones—whatever is the nature of anybody in the world, it is so depicted in the *nāṭya*. The imitation of people's behaviour, rich with various feelings and related to different stages, will be found in the *nāṭya*.)

Therefore

yo'yaṁ svabhāvo lokasya sukhaduḥkhasamanvitaḥ /
 so'ṅgādyabhinayopetaḥ nāṭyamityabhidhiyate // (1.119)

(The nature of persons is found to be related to pleasures and sorrows in this world; the same, when 'upeta' or projected through expressions, is called *nāṭya*.)

The legend tells us what viewpoint we should adopt for literature. Daityas were provoked by the theme of devas' victory over them. They felt being insulted by the playwright. But their

anger was falsely originated. They connected the *nāṭya* with persons in reality. But Brahmā clarified the matter to them. *Nāṭya* does not give undue importance to devas, nor does it censure daityas. It is only an imitation of people's behaviour as observed everywhere. Different feelings and situations are depicted in *nāṭya*. These feelings and situations are presented as they are publicly known. In order to project publicly known situations, real persons have to be taken, but as mere symbols. *Nāṭya* is not an imitation of a person, it is the imitation of a person's condition ('avasthānukṛti'). That is why it is called 'anuvyavasāya'. Though the situations in *nāṭya* are projected through persons or characters, they must be appreciated irrespective of any personal connections. Those who cannot do this are incapable of enjoying a play-performance. 'Svaparagata-deśakālāvasthāveśa' (predominance of personal prejudice regarding place, time and situation) is a very great obstruction to appreciating sentiments ('rasavighna'). The impersonal existence of situations in literature is the basic principle in appreciation of sentiment ('rasāsvāda') and it is an established truth. When situations are expressed through mythological or historical characters, their impersonal nature need not be stressed. But if the situations are depicted through characters bearing modern titles, the author has to declare that all the characters are imaginary. The motive behind such declaration and that behind Brahmā's statement are the same; and that underlines the notion that situations in literature should be appreciated irrespective of personal prejudice.

When Vijay Tendulkar's *Ghasiram Kotwal* was performed on the Marathi stage for the first time, there was a violent reaction from a section of Maharashtra society which felt that Tendulkar (either deliberately or unintentionally) had projected Nana Phadnis in a twisted and morbid way so as to create a false and villainous impression of a great historical personality. Some turned their misguided efforts to analytical research to confirm that such morbid portraits in Tendulkar are from a particular caste and accused him of purposeful victimization of that caste. Tendulkar had to clarify that Nana Phadnis in his play is not a historical character, but a representative of a particular type of persons who grab every possible opportunity to quench their lust and greed, having sufficient base in legendary fiction. Vidyadhar Pundlik's short story 'Sati' also aroused similar

reactions on the pretext that he had given a perverted version of Savarkar's character. Evidently Bharata's viewpoint about depiction is most important with respect to modern literature.

Lokadharmī and Nāṭyadharmī

It is clear from above that literary characters and episodes are related to the real world; but it is also clear that they are modified in order that they have poetic beauty. These two contexts are termed 'lokadharmī' and 'nāṭyadharmī' by Bharata. Actually Bharata has discussed them as two types of 'nāṭyadharmā'. 'Lokadharmī' is associated with the physical business of the performance whereas 'nāṭyadharmī' is associated with the business of beauty in the play. About the nature and relations of 'lokadharmī' and 'nāṭyadharmī', Abhinavagupta says that both these types follow the nature of people. 'People' means 'common people', 'laymen', their nature being revealed in their attitudes and tendencies. Bharata first gave an idea of such attitudes and tendencies, and then advised that, when plays are performed in different regions, moods should be presented through suitable attitudes and tendencies, so that spectators would not find any hitch in their enjoyment. Both the types are related to these tendencies. A performance should be harmonious with the specialties of the concerned tendencies of the people; but at the same time it must be charged with beauty. The part of performance which is harmonious with the tendencies of the people is 'lokadharmī' and the part which supports beauty is 'nāṭyadharmī'.

Lokasvabhāvamevānuvartamānaṁ dharmidvayam. Loko janapada-vāsī janaḥ. Sa ca pravṛttikrameṇa prapañcitaḥ. Tatprasaṅgenaiva dharmī āyātā. Sa ca dvedhā. . . . (*Abhinavabhāratī*)

Really speaking, there is nothing but ordinary life in *nāṭya*. Even then, the playwright and the artistes charge the life-process with their imagination and make it beautiful. 'Lokadharmī' is the base of 'nāṭyadharmī'. The relation between 'lokadharmī' and 'nāṭyadharmī' is similar to that between a wall and a picture painted on it.

Yadyapi loukikadharmavyatirekeṇa nāṭye na kaściddharmāsti, ta-thāpi sa yatra lokāgataprakriyārañjanādhikyapṛādhānyam ādhiro-hayitum kavinaṭavyāpāre vaicitryaṁ svikurvan nāṭyadharmī ityu-

cyate. . . Loukikasya dharmasya mūlabhūtatvāt nāṭyadharmā vaicitryollekhabhittisthānatvāt iti lokadharmīmevadou lakṣayati. (*Abhivavabhāratī*)

It is true that a picture or colours cannot exist without the support of a wall, but a wall also cannot attain beauty without a picture or colours. In the same manner 'nāṭyadharmī' stands by the support of 'lokadharmī', but the beautiful expression of 'lokadharmī' is not possible without 'nāṭyadharmī'. This relation between the two 'dharmīs' helps us to understand the importance of their characteristics as described in *Nāṭyaśāstra*. These characteristics are as follows:

svabhāvabhāvopagataṃ, śuddhaṃ tvavikṛtaṃ tathā /
lokavārtākriyopetaṃ; aṅgalilāvivarjitaṃ //
svabhāvābhinayopetaṃ, nānāstriṇipuruṣāśrayam /
yadīdṛṣaṃ bhavennāṭyaṃ, lokadharmī tu sā smṛtā //
ativākya-kriyopetaṃ, atisattvātibhāvakaṃ /
lilāṅgāhārābhinayaṃ, nāṭyalakṣaṇalakṣitaṃ //
svarālaṃkārasaṃyuktaṃ, asvasthapuruṣāśrayam /
yadīdṛṣaṃ bhavennāṭyaṃ, nāṭyadharmī tu sā smṛtā //
(*Nāṭyaśāstra*, 13. 71-74)

Lokadharmī

1. Svabhāvabhāvopagata
(derived from the nature
of personality in reality)
2. Śuddha and Avikṛta
(pure and unaltered)
3. Lokavārtākriyopeta
(derived from famous or
well-known episodes)
4. Aṅgalilāvivarjita
(expressed by natural
actions)
5. Svabhāvābhinayopeta
(derived from characteristic
actions)
6. Nānāstriṇipuruṣāśraya
(based on various persons)

Nāṭyadharmī

1. Atisattva
(highly elevated)
2. Atibhāvaka
(highly evocative)
3. Ativākya-kriyopeta
(derived from the poet's
imagination)
4. Lilāṅgāhārābhinaya
(beautified by decent
or polished actions)
5. Svarālaṃkārasaṃyukta
(accompanied by dramatic
excellence)
6. Asvasthapuruṣāśraya
(based on studied and
developed personalities)

Nāṭya is the business of both playwright and actors. The playwright depicts real-life tendencies through his theme, in order to imitate different moods. This has been called 'lokavārtā-kriyopeta'. 'Lokavārtā' means public fame; and 'kriyā' means episode or action. This is 'lokadharmā'. The theme has some elements associated with 'lokavārtākriyā' and that part is 'lokadharmī'. But the playwright never describes the original episode just as it is. He uses his imagination and makes certain additions or alterations. This part of *nāṭya* is called 'ativākya-kriyopeta'. Such imaginary part of *nāṭya* is 'nāṭyadharmī'. We can take an illustration from plays based on the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Rāma went to the forest as ordered by Kaikayī and Daśaratha. According to the original *Rāmāyaṇa*, there was no role of Rāvaṇa in this episode. But Bhavabhūti has changed this in his *Mahāvīracarita*. He has shown that Rāvaṇa desired to ruin Rāma, and for that purpose he wanted to bring him to Daṇḍakāraṇya under any pretext. So he sent Śūrpaṇakhā to Rāma in the disguise of Mantharā. Rāma was just married and in Mithilā. Śūrpaṇakhā met him in Mithilā and pretended to convey Kaikayī's message about going to the distant forest. Here, Rāma proceeding to the forest in order to obey Kaikayī is 'lokavārtākriyopeta', so 'lokadharmī'. But the chain of causes behind the fact, as imagined by Bhavabhūti, is 'ativākya-kriyopeta' and hence 'nāṭyadharmī'. The spectator or reader feels that the change is appropriate for the major sentiment of the play, as the playwright wants to develop the conflict between two rivals and thus intensify the desired sentiment of heroism ('vīra').

As the writer makes changes in the theme, he also at times makes changes in the original attitudes of characters for reasons of creativity. According to the tendencies of people, there is a routine mould of nature. If the characters are historical, then their attitudes are already known. If the writer depicts these attitudes faithfully or according to general tendencies, then they are 'svabhāvabhāvopagata', 'śuddha' and 'avikṛta'. So that part is 'lokadharmī'. But even in this, the writer sometimes makes changes for the sake of poetic beauty and under the pressure of his creativity. This part is 'nāṭyadharmī'. Abhinavagupta has illustrated this point with the example of Vidūṣaka in the play *Tāpasa Vatsarāja*. Generally the Vidūṣaka

is impatient; he messes up everything; he is unable to maintain any secrecy. But the Vidūṣaka in *Tāpasa Vatsarāja* is shown to be serious like a minister and sincerely maintains the secrets he is entrusted with. This is a change suitable to the nature of the play. Another illustration may be taken from Bhāsa's plays, *Dūtavākya* and *Ūrubhaṅga*. Both have Duryodhana as one of their characters. Duryodhana in *Dūtavākya* is the same as in the *Mahābhārata*. His characterization is 'svabhāvabhāvopagata', 'śuddha' and 'avikṛta'. This is 'lokadharmī'. But in *Ūrubhaṅga*, Bhāsa has changed Duryodhana's character so much that we find him dropping his arrogant nature and becoming a noble person. Here Duryodhana's character is 'atisattva' and 'atibhāvaka'; hence 'nāṭyadharmī'. 'Nāṭyadharmī' has a vast province of literature. Whatever is shown by means of imagination is 'nāṭyadharmī'. A soliloquy, for instance, is 'nāṭyadharmī'. It is actually heard by other characters on the stage and also by the audience; but everybody assumes that it has been voiced only in the mind of the speaker. Whatever is implied in order to make the original more beautiful and more attractive is 'nāṭyadharmī'. The whole business of theatre, performed in order to express the original feelings and situations beautifully and effectively, is 'nāṭyadharmī'. Considering this Bharata says:

yo'yaṁ svabhāva lokasya sukhaduḥkhakriyātmakaḥ /
 so'ṅgābhinayasamīyukto nāṭyadharmī prakīrtitaḥ //
 (*Nāṭyaśāstra*, 13.81)

When the nature of persons, full of pleasures, sorrows and actions, gets associated with factors like music and acting, it becomes 'nāṭyadharmī'.

It should be obvious that when we take up the comparative study of Indian literature, we are bound to find striking similarities and a common structure in its 'lokadharmī' base; and it will really be interesting to record the different 'nāṭyadharmī' designs and their influence upon one another. There are also changes effected in the 'lokadharmī' which may be the results of various extraliterary factors like political shifts, social movements, economic struggles, etc., taking place in different periods in different regions of India. These changes ought to be very slow and moving from the outer spheres towards the

inner ones gradually, the core being consistent all the time as it is formed by a deep-rooted cultural heritage. Interestingly again, when such changes are taking place in the 'lokadharmī', the nāṭyadharmī' part will preserve its similarities.

For example, when a new genre like the novel was introduced to Indian literature, we find in the first phase of it a typical Indian structure in all the Indian languages. When powerful movements were taking place on the political and social fronts, the 'lokadharmī' or the life-styles and thought-processes of the Indian people were changing; but by then the novel was established in India, and these changing life-styles and thoughts were projected in the Indian novel with similar expressions in various languages. In the initial phase of the development of the modern novel or drama, we observe that adaptations were more popular than translations. Perhaps the retention was to keep the 'lokadharmī' adhering to the then established traditional literary taste.

Pratibhāsa: The Poetic Experience

Rājaśekhara states that the scope of the term 'meaning' is different in sciences and literature. It would be improper to infer that 'meaning' in sciences is 'truth', and that in literature it is 'untruth'. The sciences try to describe various objects in the universe as they exist in reality. Literature is not meant for such matter-of-fact description. A poet describes various objects of the universe as they appear to him or as he experiences them. The descriptions in sciences are 'svarūpanibandhana' (descriptions of the true nature), whereas those in literature are 'pratibhāsanibandhana' (descriptions of perceptions).

Kālidāsa describes the sky as 'asiśyāma' (shining blue as a sword blade) and Vālmīki describes the same object as 'nīlotpaladyuti' (shining as a blue lotus). This is not the 'svarūpavarṇana' of the sky; it is its 'pratibhāsanibaddha varṇana'. The poet describes the object as he experiences it. Moreover, a perception is never identical with the nature of the object. Had it been so, then the sun and the moon that look like discs to our eyes would not have been so big to be measured in terms of the earth. Perceptions of different objects are important from the

point of view of science as well, but in literature they are absolutely essential.

Na svarūpanibandhanamidam rūpamākāśasya salilādervā. Kintu pratibhāsanibandhanam. Na hi pratibhāsaḥ vastuni tādātmyena avatiṣṭhate. Yadi tathā syāt sūryacandramasormaṇḍale dṛṣṭyā paricchidyamānadvādaśāṅgulapramāṇe purāṇādyāgamaniveditadharāvalayamātram na staḥ iti yāyāvarīyah. Yathā pratibhāsam ca vastunaḥ svarūpam śāstrakāvyaornibandhopayogī kāyāni punaretanmayānyeva. (*Kāvya-mīmāṃsā*)

This sort of poetic perception or experience is not attached to the object with a bondage of identical existence. This does not mean that the experience is false. That poetic experience is consistent with common behaviour or common experience. So there is truth in it. Rājaśekhara has rightly shown here the difference between scientific reality and poetic reality.

One more thing to be noted is that poetic perception is not illusory. If somebody mistakes the perception for reality and tries to behave accordingly, then it will prove to be an illusion. A mirage or a shell resembling silver is not an illusion. It is a perception. But if we see a mirage and rush to quench our thirst, or if we take a shell to be a piece of silver and stretch our hand to grab it, then the perception is turned into an illusion. For here we try to establish the relation of identical nature between the object and the perception.

By calling poetic descriptions compositions of perception ('pratibhāsanibandhana'), Rājaśekhara is not merely exhibiting his learnedness; he is theorizing the entire process of embellishment. Perception is an experience and it bears truth in its own province as far as experience is concerned. The power of the direct meaning of a word (*abhidhā*) bears realistic truth. But the power of suggestion (*lakṣaṇā*) also bears truth, though it is different from *abhidhā*, for it too is an experience. The limits of truth for the perceptual poetic power and those for the suggestive power (*lakṣaṇā*) are the same. The poetic truth must be consistent with common experience, as is *lakṣaṇā*. This perceptual composition of poetry is at the base of figures of speech and is displayed in words through the power of suggestion. So the limits of perception and *lakṣaṇā* are true for figures of speech as well. Vāmana restricts a simile (*upamā*) to be

consistent with common experience on the one hand and to avoid improbability on the other. The idea behind these two restrictions is the same. The root of different figures of speech lies in the variety of perceptions displayed between the limits of consistency with common experience on the one hand and probability on the other. Different figures of speech emerge from the variety of experience of perception. There are many figures of speech based on similarity, but they acquire their different natures due to the variety of experience of perception. Sanskrit rhetoricians have made this point clear. When there is just an experience of similarity between two different objects, we have *upamā* (simile); when there is an experience of confusion due to similarity, we have *sasandeha*; when the confusion is experienced with utmost intensity, we have *utprekṣā*; if the experience leads to an identical perception of the two objects, we have *rūpaka* (metaphor); if the experience is such that the objects merge into one another, we have *atiśayokti*; if there is total denial of the actuals, we have *apahnuti*; and the denial of the actuals leads to action in a confused manner to give *bhrāntimān*. All these experiences are perceptual. A poet creates variety by means of these experiences. This is the extraordinary universe ('aloukika sṛṣṭi') created by him. Due to this varied experience, the poet's language gives a new taste every moment, even though he may be describing the same thing.

Bhaṭṭalollaṭa has said that there are innumerable senses in the world; but out of these, only relishing senses ('rasavat artha') are composed in poetry. Other senses are not included. Rājaśekhara comments upon this: 'Yes. There is no doubt that senses described in the poetry of great poets are relishing. But, from where is this relishing capacity imbibed in the senses? How to decide that some of the senses are basically relishing and some are not? And if we agree for a moment that such classification is possible and accept that senses belonging to objects like woman or sandalwood are relishing, even then you cannot say that there are no poets who can make these so-called relishing senses ridiculous by their ugly narration. On the contrary, we often find poets who make horrible objects like a funeral ground (śmaśāna) relishing by the magic of their narrative technique. Therefore, the relishing power of senses in poetry is not objective; it depends on the narration of a poet,

and the narration is indicative of the poet's experience.' To prove his point, Rājaśekhara cites a quotation from a Buddhist critic, Pālyakīrti:

yeṣāṃ vallabhayā samāṃ kṣaṇamiva sphārā kṣapā kṣiyate
teṣāṃ śītataṛaḥ śaśī virahīṇāmulkeva santāpakṛit /
asmākaṃ tu na vallabhā na virahaḥ tejomayabhraṃśinā-
mindū rājati darpaṇākṛtirayaṃ noṣṇo na vā śītalaḥ //

(He, whose night in winter too is spent like a short moment in the company of his beloved, may feel the moon soothing like nectar; whereas a person separated from the dear one may feel the same moon burning like a shooting star. But for persons like us—who have no beloved and no separation—the moon will only appear like a mirror, neither cool, nor hot.)

Thus, the relishing power of poetic senses depends on the poet's experience, just as poetic truth depends on it. Originally, objects are not relishing or non-relishing. Rājaśekhara has discussed this point very powerfully. Ānandavardhana also speaks in the same vein:

apāre kāvyasaṃsāre kavirekaḥ prajāpatiḥ /
yathāśmai rocate viśvaṃ tathaiva parivartate //
śṛṅgārī cet kavirjātaṃ sarvaṃ rasamayāṃ jagat /
sa eva vitarāgaścet nīrasaṃ sarvameva tat //

(In the extraordinary world of poetry, the poet is the God of creation. He transforms the world as he likes it. If the poet is fascinated, the whole world is relishing. If he loses interest, everything becomes boring.)

The experience of a poet is expressed in his narration. The perfect expression of this experience through words is called by Rājaśekhara the perfect fusion of words and senses, or 'sāhitya'.

Thus Indian literary theory was fully aware of the subjectivity of creative literature and respected the individuality of a poet's experience. Indian critics did not want to forget the intrinsic power of literature. When scholars like Krishna Kripalani say, 'It is true that the obsession of Sanskrit theorists with form, and their excessive faith in "culture" tended to narrow their vision to external embellishment and mannerisms of

elegance',* the allegation does not seem to be based on a proper and justifiable understanding of Indian literary theory. The mature fruits of the fully developed theory, viz. *dhvani* and *rasa*, can never be blamed as a vision of external embellishment. It will be exceeding the limits of space to discuss those concepts here in detail; but a brief account of Abhinavagupta's theory of *rasa* and his concept of *mahārasa* would not be out of place.

Abhinavagupta and the Concept of 'Mahārasa'

Bharata has described the process of *rasa* in his famous 'rasa-sūtra': 'vibhāvānubhāvavyabhicārisaṃyogādrasaṇiṣpattiḥ.' Different terms in this formula are explained as follows. *Bhāvas* are certain emotions agreeable ('anukūla') to sentiment. They are of two kinds: *sthāyī* and *vyabhicāri*. *Sthāyībhāvas* are certain basic propensities or stable moods: 'rati' (love), 'hāsa' (amusement), 'śoka' (pathos), 'krodha' (anger), 'utsāha' (energy), 'bhaya' (fear), 'jugupsa' (repugnance) and 'vismaya' (astonishment). *Vyabhicāri bhāvas*, also called *sañcāri bhāvas*, are those fleeting or transient emotions like 'harṣa' (joy), 'amarṣa' (rage), 'cintā' (worry), 'asūyā' (jealousy) etc. that help the development of *sthāyībhāvas*. The factors or causes which awaken or arouse *sthāyībhāvas* are called *vibhāvas*. *Anubhāvas* are the effects or results or outward indications or expressions of inner *sthāyībhāvas*, e.g. 'romāñca' (horripilation), 'sveda' (perspiration) etc.

Now, the last term of the 'sūtra', viz. 'niṣpatti', has been much debated upon by various interpreters. Four prominent interpretations are labelled as 'utpattivāda', 'anumitivāda', 'bhaktivāda' and 'abhivyaktivāda'. We shall not go into a detailed analysis of these interpretations here, but only restrict ourselves to Abhinavagupta's theory.

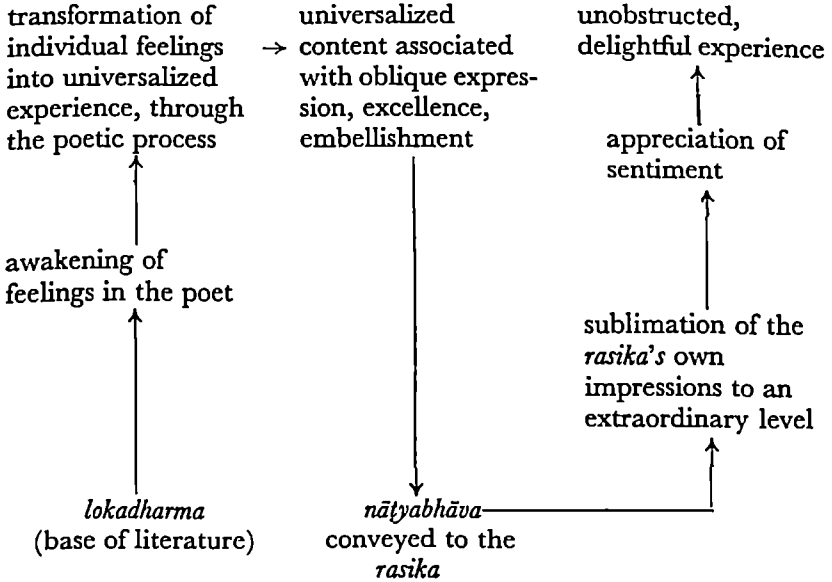
Abhinavagupta accepted the theory of *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa* (universalization) propounded by Bhaṭṭanāyaka. According to him, the 'nāṭyasthāyī' which is expressed by *vibhāvas* etc. is harmonious with the 'vāsanārūpa sthāyī' (the permanent mood of experienced desires) in the *rasika*. Of course, this 'vāsanārūpa sthāyī' in the *rasika* is not his ordinary organic

* 'Criteria of Literary Criticism in India', in Sujit Mukherjee (ed.), *The Idea of an Indian Literature* (Mysore: Central Institute of Indian Languages, 1981), p. 175.

experience. Abhinavagupta calls it 'sthāyī vilakṣaṇa', because it attains an elevated level at the time of appreciation. *Vibhāvas* also lose their personal context and appear at an impersonal level beyond the limitations of space and time. At this level the *vibhāvas* unite to induct the sense of poetry, the *rasika's* impressions are sublimated and the extraordinary process of appreciation begins. The 'parimita vyaktitva' (bounded personality) of the *rasika* is destroyed at the time of appreciation. He crosses the boundaries of space and time, reaches the point of universalization and has a heart-to-heart contact with the 'nāṭyabhāvas'. His own personal impressions of emotive experiences are charged with extraordinary sentiment and he begins to relish this state. So *rasa* or sentiment is a state of the *rasika's* mind wherein he relishes the extraordinary experience of having feelings and emotions in a highly elevated and sublime state. This experience of elevated emotions is neither personal nor impersonal. The *rasika* enters the *nāṭya* at a distinguished level. This entry is called 'anupraveśa'. He does not identify himself with any of the characters, but develops a bond of intimacy with the 'nāṭyavastu' or the total pattern of universalized sentiments. The difference between the ideal experience of literature and ordinary daily experiences is that the latter leads to some or other action, whereas the former is as such complete, though both have emotions and feelings. The ordinary meanings of the terms 'śṛṅgāra' (love), 'vīra' (heroism), 'raudra' (wrath) vanish in this state. So Abhinavagupta names this extraordinary elevated state 'mahārasa' (see p. 283).

Now, it is pertinent to ask how far this theory of *rasa* is useful to modern literature. Today's literature does not have the sole function of manifesting love or fear or such other feelings. Today the experience of a creative writer has become very complex and fine. Today's literature is created to establish some consistency in these complexities. Various factors influencing the poet's personality have become so varied and complex that even the poet himself is not totally aware of them. When he tries to express his impressions, they take the form of images that do not always establish sentiments. So it would be very difficult to conceive of modern literature in the framework of *rasa* theory.

Even then, on the basis of Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Abhinavagupta has discussed the creation of literature and experience of the reader so perfectly and scientifically that it sounds logical even today. The nature of literature might have changed, but the process of experiencing the 'lokadharmī' and transmitting the experience to the *rasika* has remained the same. So there is no harm in being optimistic that if proper modifications are done to Indian literary theory, we may find a highly suitable methodology to understand, appreciate and evaluate modern Indian literature. Even as it is, the knowledge of Indian literary theory is not only helpful but essential to the comparative study of Indian literature.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Sanskrit

1. Bharata, *Nāṭyaśāstra*, ed. Batuknath Sarma and Baladeva Upadhyaya, Kashi Sanskrit Series, 60, Varanasi, 1929.
2. ——— *Nāṭyaśāstra*, trans. Manomohan Ghosh, 2 vols., The Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1950 and 1961.

3. ——— *Nāṭyaśāstra*, commentary by Abhinavagupta, ed. M. Ramakrishna, vol. 3, Gackwad Oriental Series, 124, Baroda, 1954.
4. Bhāmaha, *Kāvyaḷamkāra*, ed. Batuknath Sarma and Baladeva Upadhyaya, Kashi Sanskrit Series, 61, Varanasi, 1928.
5. Vāmana, *Kāvyaḷamkārasūtravṛtti*, commentary by Acharya Vishveshwar, Delhi University, Delhi, 1954.
6. Ānandavardhana, *Dhvanyāloka*, Chowkhamba, Varanasi, 1940.
7. ——— *Dhvanyāloka*, commentary by Abhinavagupta, ed. Durga Prasad and Vasudev Laxman Shastri Panasikar, Kavyamala Series, 25, Bombay, 1911.
8. Rājasekhara, *Kāvyaḷamkāra*, 2nd ed., Chowkhamba, Varanasi, 1977.
9. Abhinavagupta, *Abhinavabhāratī*, commentary by Acharya Vishveshwar, Delhi University, Delhi, 1960.
10. Jagannātha, *Rasagaṅgādhara*, Chowkhamba, Varanasi, 1955.

English

11. P. V. Kane, *History of Sanskrit Poetics*, 4th ed., Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1971.
12. S. K. De, *History of Sanskrit Poetics*, 2nd ed., Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta, 1960.
13. V. Raghavan, *Studies on Some Concepts of the Alamkara Shastra*, Adyar Library Series, 33, rev. ed., Adyar, 1973.
14. ——— *Abhinavagupta and His Works*, Chowkhamba, Varanasi, 1980.

Marathi

15. G. T. Deshpande, *Bharatiya Sahityasastra*, Popular, Bombay, 1958.
16. S. R. Gadgil, *Kavyasastraḷpradīp*, School and College Book Stall, Kolhapur, 1965.
17. Madhukar Ashtikar, *Dhvanisiddhanta*, Hindu Dharma-Sanskriti Mandir, Nagpur, 1974.

Rasa in the Theatre and Its Validity

INDRA NATH CHOUDHURI

If you do not take it as a cliché, then let me assert once more that the study of literature is the study of man's struggles and aspirations. In India this struggle has been to know the inner reality of the self. According to this outlook we cannot understand the essence of man if we only regard him as a material entity.¹ He also aspires to go beyond in search of inner experience. Indian cultural history accepts the 'positive background', but through that also explains the transcendence of existence. In reality, therefore, life-denying and life-affirming have existed side by side in India. And these two elements have been taken to constitute the organic unity of the Indian world-view, which is said to have served as much the metaphysical as the practical requirements of the Indian people. Indian literature has sought to realize this synthesis and harmony between the worldly and the other-worldly, the positive and the transcendental. Let us take the example of Kālidāsa's *Śakuntalā*. In the first act, when King Duṣyanta enters the hermitage where Śakuntalā stays, he feels a presentiment, 'The hermitage is a tranquil place, yet my arm is throbbing. How can it be fulfilled here, or does fate have doors everywhere?' (I. 14). This only indicates that the king is attached to worldly love and pleasure. But by the time the drama reaches the seventh act the king has travelled a long way from worldly attachment to unbounded spirituality. So in the seventh act when the omen occurs again, he says, 'I have no hope for my desire, why does my arm throb in vain?' (VII. 14). Kālidāsa depicts in his drama the journey of man from attachment to non-attachment, from temporality to eternity, from flux to timelessness, from history to eternal truth. This is in fact a very dominant theme of Indian literature. One is bound to the

linear tension of history, but the desire is there to transcend to a 'beyond'. This is the basic form of the Indian theatre world which believes in a double time order—one that is connected with material reality or with historical time and therefore has a linear tension; the other that is connected with the sacred timeless and so has a cyclic rhythm. Man in the Indian theatre articulates both these concepts at one and the same time. His movements on the stage do not deny the real world, but then he frequently moves to another level—from the earthly to the heavenly, from the sensuous to the transcendental, from enjoyment to liberation. It is said of Tagore's *Raja* that it attempts to reconcile man to himself. Tagore takes Sudarshana from darkness to light and in the process she is purified. The audience then realizes the central meaning of the play as carried by the song: 'Life dances, dances death . . . emancipation dances, dances bondage.' Or take the example of *Tuglaq* by Girish Karnad, where the tragic failure of man dominates the scene. But even in his tragedy, even in his barbarism, man hears the prayers being offered to Allah. As the muezzin's call fades away at the end of the play, one finds Muhammad looking dazed and frightened, unable to comprehend where he is. He is trapped between the two levels—the worldly and the other-worldly.

These examples once again establish the fact that if literature is the product of a specific culture, then its merits must ultimately be assessed by measures arising out of that culture.² The theory of *rasa* is one such measure, an extremely useful one, particularly in the study of Indian drama, ancient and modern. It is a product of that cultural milieu which is still existent in spite of the many changes that have taken place over the centuries.

Bharata initiated the study of *rasa* as early as the second century B.C. or A.D. (he has been placed between them) with reference to the theatre (*nāṭya*). His theory of *nāṭya* is inseparably wedded to a view of life based on *yajña* (sacrifice).³ *Yajña* is a symbol of the operation that is performed on a universal level where enduring totality and changing history, or static equilibrium and dynamic change are held together, not in opposition but as complementary to each other. What *yajña* stands for is epitomized on the stage by *nāṭya* by the realization

of *rasa*. *Rasa* intensifies our awareness of the basic nature of the universe by drawing our attention to two main vehicles (*sthāyī* and *sañcārī bhāva*) of the theatrical experience. One is the purposive use of the sensuous, dominant or major form to suggest states of eternal 'being', and the other refers to variable motifs relating to certain laws of technique which allow improvisation, innovation and change. Through *sañcārī bhāvas*, an artist can interpret the permanent or major motifs (*sthāyī bhāva*) in as many ways as he likes, and present a picture of the world from his distinctive viewpoint.

The concept of *rasa* has a double dimension. On one hand it is an art-activity, and on the other it is a poetic or theatrical experience. Bharata says that a dramatist should apply the *sandhyāngas* (spans of the plot which provide a means of understanding the harmony of composition) in such a way that they evoke the proper aesthetic response.⁴ In fact the theory of *rasa* deals with the reception of a play to determine its theatrical value. The reception occurs as a process that creates meaning in which the instructions given in the dramatic appearance of a play are realized. With the help of the above double-dimension emerges a third dimension of *rasa* as a critical idiom. Here one may object that the theory of *rasa* can never become a critical idiom, because it only deals with aesthetic effect and cannot interpret the theatre. But any interpretation or dissection may give us wisdom, as from a dead body, whereas the job of criticism is to reinforce the unity of life and reconnect us with the text so that we can recognize and relish it. This is exactly what the theory does.

Bharata says that the theatre is a presentation of human nature (*bhāvānukīrtanam*), and one is not allowed to forget that the world of actuality forms the basis of the theatre. However, it is not an exact representation of life, but a presentation of human nature in its varied moods through forms of theatrical communication. It uses the raw material of life and then transforms it. Bharata says that the theatrical experience begins with the participation of the spectator in the presentation on the stage. The process of complete communication reaches its goal when the spectator is immersed in the *rasa*, when he becomes one with the experience.⁵ But this *rasāsvādanam*, or relishing of a happening, is based upon personal response or reproduction,

because *rasa* does not express but suggests ('bhogīkaraṇa vyāpāraśca kāvyasya rasaviśayo dhvanyātmaiva nānyat kiñcit'⁰); and as such, when the spectator is immersed in the *rasa*, and when he becomes one with the experience of the theatre, his analytical mind does not cease to analyse and interpret.

According to Bharata, the primary sources (*vibhāva*)—the actors (*ālambana vibhāva*) and the theatre setting (*uddīpana vibhāva*)—and the expression of various sensors (*anubhāva*) by the actors are the essential elements of the preliminary stage. They belong to the world of actuality, but on the stage become presentational of the all-encompassing reality of the theatrical universe. The performer through the presentational form (stylized acting, gorgeous setting, poetry, song, etc.) makes manifest the dramatist's primary forms (*sthāyī bhāva*), which are accompanied by the variable forms (*sañcārī bhāvas*). Now, all these ingredients are not theatre, but the dynamic inter-relationship (*samyoga*) of the ingredients developed in the process determines the theatrical experience, or what we call *rasa*. The success (*siddhi*) of the whole performance of a play depends on the unity between the stage and the actors, which, according to Bharata, depends on the histrionic representation (*abhinaya*), the conventions (*dharmī*), the styles (*vṛtti*), mannerism (*pravṛtti*), the notes (*svara*), the instrumental music (*attodya*), songs (*gāna*) and the theatricals (*raṅga saṁgraha*). All these are blended together into a dynamic relationship resulting in the emergence of a theatrical experience (*niṣpatti*). This, in other words, is the *siddhi* of art-activity. The emergence of *rasa* from the dramatic artefact can be sequentially represented diagrammatically as on page 289.

This art-activity answers certain basic questions about the theatre. First, the theatre is based on reality, but a mere imitation of reality is not what is shown on stage, because it will not impress the spectator with any sense of beauty. Mere imitation of external reality would not prove the worth of the writer. After all, the artist must raise everything up. The theatre is a plaything (*kriḍanīyakam*), a kind of diversion from the day-to-day drudgery of life, and so it involves the conventions of stylization (*nātyadharmitā*) more than the conventions of the representational world (*lokadharmitā*). The main point is that you are not watching life but only a theatrical version of it.

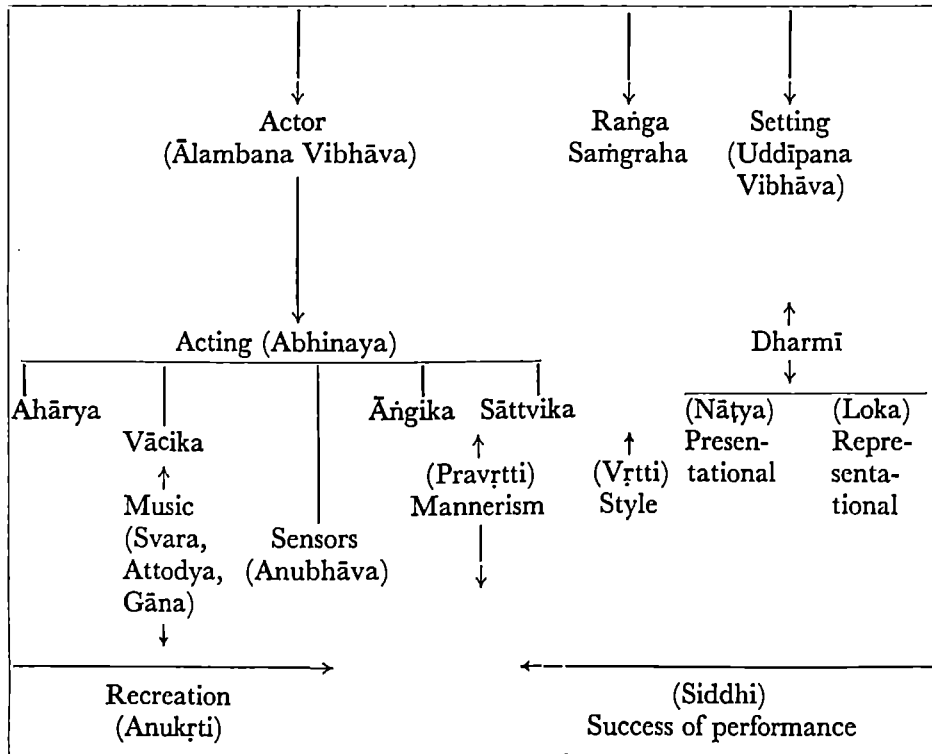
INTERMEDIARY LEVEL

STAGE

Raṅgaśīrṣa, Raṅgapīṭha, Mattāvaraṇī, Nepathya, Raṅga Maṇḍapa

Level I
Dramatic artefact which includes primary and variable forms

Level II
Spectator relishes emotional knowledge



Secondly, the central problem of the theatre or, for that matter, any literary form is to have unity, pattern or harmony; in other words, it is a matter of technique. The technique or the process of transforming a 'real' context into an aesthetic context is to make a moment of the dramatist's experience come to life in minds other than his own. *Rasa*, therefore, is the concretization of an experience into an art-form whose reality and effect are dependent upon the skill or technique with which the writer creates his world out of the raw material available to him. This proves the literariness of an artefact. Bharata does not make the mistake of regarding technique as something autonomous, because the purpose of the theatre is not to be, but to arouse a corresponding experience in the mind of the critical observer (*sumanas* or *prekṣaka*) which is ultimately transformed into an extra-worldly state (*aloukikāvasthā*) called *rasa*. The purpose is that the particulars of common experience may thereby be transformed into general ones, and thus readily induce a detached attitude in the spectator, which is the essential requirement of aesthetic experience.⁷ The transformation of common experience into general experience raises the power in the spectator of entering into the theatrical universe and imaginatively experiencing it. This process is known as *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa* or empathy. But the spectator does not identify completely, as explained later by Viśvanātha, because at the time of aesthetic experience, the identification is neither accepted nor negated:

parasya na parasyeti mameti na mameti ca
tadāsvāde vibhāvadeḥ paricchedo na vidyate.
(*Sāhityadarpaṇa*, III. 13)

There remains the transparent but adamant fourth wall that separates the spectator from the theatre, leading to the attainment of *rasa*. In other words, it is a conscious identification (*caitanyaśāntamāyātā*). The spectator retains a certain aesthetic distance which leads to the attainment of purposeful meaning (*artha*), so says Bharata; for without *rasa* there can be no true meaning. We feel for the fortunes of people who have no direct personal relation to us; while this does not decrease the intensity of the emotion, it affords us some distance and perspective. We can feel and at the same time observe from outside.

In fact, Bharata believes in theatrical communication, and so the richness and beauty of the visual form and the quality and equipment of the spectators are both important to him. So the 'essentialist' conception of literary art as well as the 'aesthetics of reception' is to be accepted in the context of Bharata's theory of *rasa*. However, later the *sahṛdaya* or the subject becomes more important. *Rasa* is not communicated but expressed. Abhinavagupta says that the object or the artefact is like a shower of rain and the subject or the spectator is like the dry earth, and that as the rain falls, comes the fragrance from within, which is *rasa*. This becomes possible when the *sahṛdaya* is one with the experience, when he has the *hṛdayasaṁvāda*. But one need not forget that this *rasāsvādam* or relish of a happening is based upon personal response or reproduction, because *rasa* does not only express but suggests—it is a subjective expression ('dhvanyamāna iti rasaḥ') and therefore when the spectator becomes one with the experience of the theatre, his analytical mind does not forget to analyse and interpret. It does not mean that *rasa* is spectator-oriented. Even Viśvanātha says, 'vākyaṁ rasātmakam kāvyam', which means *rasa* is in the object or the artefact. In fact, even in the case of *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*, the spectator can become one with the experience, provided (1) the linguistic representation or the form has the qualities to attract the spectator, and (2) the subject matter does not go against the universal value system or poetic truth. These two conditions again establish the importance of the object, and the whole process (*vyāpāra*) need to be accepted as an object-subject nexus.

Rasa as an art-activity or structure, and theatrical experience or effect are of course based on *dhvani* or the suggested or manifested meaning which governs the theatrical experience. *Dhvani* is in fact recoding the performance text (decoding is done at the stage of *abhidhā*, i.e. the signficative stage) so that the spectator may have multiple experiences. The response can be either predetermined as with musicals or popular plays all over the world where the codes control the emission of responses, or it may facilitate the restructuring of codes which changes the artefact into an aesthetic object. The spectator's very ability to apprehend important second-order meaning in his recoding of the performance text depends upon the extratheatrical and

general cultural values which certain objects, modes of discourse or forms of behaviour bear. Then only is the text changed into an aesthetic object. So it is said that the suggested *rasādi* may vary from one *rasika* to another, depending upon his sensibility and taste, though there is a modicum of commonness in aesthetic value.

The physical reality (*uddīpana vibhāva*) and the social referent (*ālambana vibhāva*) of the dramatic text are the initial points in the circuit of theatrical experience which act as a context towards the given structure. To it the social and cultural contexts of the spectator are added. While recoding the context for a meaning, the text is reconstructed by the receiver. In this way the performance text expresses a meaning or becomes an external sign or the aesthetic object of an emotional-dynamic system. It maintains an internal poetic logic, but emancipates itself from material reality. The emancipation from objective reality does not imply an emancipation from meaning. This meaning maintains a claim to truth while defying a direct comparison with reality. The *rasa* model in its ultimate effect unites emotion with meaning ('*nahi rasādṛte kvacidārtha pravartate*') so as to give us an experience (*harṣādi*) or emotional knowledge (aesthetic experience consists exclusively in knowledge as said by Abhinavagupta: '*rasanā ca bhodorūpiva*')⁸ to recognize the many facets of this world and indeed amaze ('*rasa saraḥ camatkāra*') the very faculties of eyes and ears. So poetic experience becomes personal, but it does not operate only on the emotional level because of *dhvani*. *Dhvani* emits a perspective (*bhavadṛṣṭi*), so the response is not subjective only—it has its base in the object. It is constituted by the relation between the object and the receiver. The *rasika* has the understanding of the *loka-hṛdaya*, so any response will act on the objective level. It will thus be evident that in the opinion of the masters, though *rasa* refers mainly to the *sahṛdaya*'s state of aesthetic enjoyment, it is virtually referred to as existing in the locus of the aesthetic object.

The theory of *rasa* is much abused because *rasa* is referred mainly to the *sahṛdaya*'s state of aesthetic enjoyment. This does not, however, seem to be the contention of Bharata, who proclaims that the sensitive spectator attains pleasure etc. (*harṣādi*); in other words, an emotional or aesthetic experience. The essence of aesthetic experience consists in the activity of relish-

ing (*āsvādyatvat*). The experience of relish cannot be absolutely unrelated, because it is only through the knowledge of the aesthetic presentation of art-activity or literariness that the experience emerges. The experience of relish is a mental phenomenon and is composed of the feelings (sympathetic, antipathetic, recollectional, pertaining to curiosity, reflectional or critical) that are evoked in the mind of the perceiver as a psychological reaction to his perception of a play.⁹ So *rasa* is the relish of the knowledge of the objective and aesthetic situation. In other words, it is an experience of theatrical beauty and not aesthetic bliss. As mentioned above, it is equated by the later poeticians with *camatkāra* or a state of consciousness;¹⁰ it is not a mystical experience, but an alchemical one, because if we have the ingredients, and if we know how to combine them on the stage, the desired effect is produced, and we are incited towards the beautiful with wonder and emotion.

But one may not forget that the theory of *rasa* with reference to the theatre is based on a mythic world-view where the existence of man is viewed on two levels—the worldly and the other-worldly. So the treatise of Bharata has also a mythological framework for explaining the quest of man for the ultimate through the temporal. This two-dimensional experience is in fact one of the dominating features of the Indian theatre. Besides, this double line of approach has created a poetics of theatre which is both pragmatic and metaphysical, realistic and speculative and therefore terms like *ānandam*, *āvaranamukti*, *nijasamvidviśrānti* with their spiritual connotations become an essential part of the study of *rasa* in the theatre. After all, the theatre like worship of God is a testament of joy—a celebration of life. This mythical view of life within a cultural framework is as relevant today as it was on the day when Bharata for the first time gave a discourse on *rasabhāva vikalpanam* to the 'Bharataputras' (actors) for restructuring the human experience as theatre.

To conclude, I would like to quote from the book *The Culture of Criticism and the Criticism of Culture* by Giles Gunn, Professor of English at the University of California, who says that all the recent forms of critical inquiry, from archetypal criticism to deconstruction, have shared a desire not simply to interpret otherness but through their own hermeneutic strategies to keep the sentiment or imagination of it alive. And they have done

so, because of a widely felt but deeply troubling apprehension, reflected alike in the most searching thought and most disturbing art of our time, that the idea of the 'other', like the experience of 'otherness', may be the most serious casualty of modern life itself.¹¹ This is not the place to attempt to defend such an assertion, but one may at least submit that the operative sensibility of most of the writers of the world has retained the mythic origins of their historic sense and as a result the critical idioms developed particularly in modern times have created an insight into the mythicality of human existence. It has become now all the more necessary because the status of words like 'truth' and 'reality' has turned out to be problematic. Mythic thoughts, in fact, are attempts to mediate the gaps between continuity and change and thereby authenticate the validity of the *rasa* model of theatrical experience even in today's context.

NOTES

1. See Abul Kalam Azad, 'Concept of Man in the East and the West', in *Speeches of Maulana Azad: 1947-55* (Delhi: Publications Division, Govt. of India, 1956).
2. See Sujit Mukherjee, *Towards a Literary History of India* (Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1975), p. 29.
3. See *Nāṭyaśāstra*, ed. M. Ramakrishna, vol. 1, Gaekwad Oriental Series, 36 (Baroda, 1926), 1.120.
4. See *Nāṭyaśāstra*, 1.107.
5. See *Nāṭyaśāstra*, xxxvii. 42.
6. Abhinavagupta, *Dhvanyālokalocana*, ed. and trans. R. S. Tripathi, 2 vols. (Varanasi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1963), p. 396.
7. See M. Hiriyana, *Art Experience* (Mysore: Kavyalaya Publishers, 1954), p. 47.
8. Abhinavagupta, *Abhinavabhāratī*, 1, trans. Nagendra (Delhi: Delhi University, 1960), p. 285.
9. See Rakesagupta, *Psychological Studies in Rasa* (Aligarh: Taravali Gupta, 1950), pp. 83-90.
10. As Viśvanātha records in *Sāhityadarpaṇa*, the term *camatkāra* was first used by Nārāyaṇa.
11. Giles Gunn, *The Culture of Criticism and the Criticism of Culture* (London: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 195.

Comparative Literary Theory: An Indian Perspective

K. CHELLAPPAN

Literary theory as a search for a coherent system or grammar of literature which can account for the evergrowing phenomenon of literary events across time and space is by definition bound to be comparative, as it seeks generalizations based on comparable events. As Wellek and Warren put it a few decades ago, 'We recognize that there is one poetry, one literature, comparable in all ages, developing, changing, full of possibilities. Literature is neither a series of unique works with nothing in common nor a series of works enclosed in time-cycles of Romanticism or Classicism, the age of Pope and the age of Wordsworth. Nor is it, of course, the "block-universe" of sameness and immutability which an older Classicism conceived as ideal.'¹ If the evolution of patterns, principles and criteria has been recognized long ago by historians of literatures or historicist critics, the need for synthesis of such categories across space has been recognized only by literary theorists, more particularly comparative literary theorists. But, again, we would not like to postulate a false dichotomy between literary theory and literary history. Literary theory needs literary history as well as criticism; just as literary history needs literary theory and criticism.

Comparative literature as conceived by scholars like Munteano means complementary synthesis of horizontal general literature and vertical history of ideas.² But we would like to emphasize the need for juxtaposing literatures of diverse cultures in order to arrive at a more inclusive literary theory; and here again there can be historical perspectives. Even Wellek and Warren's classic *Theory of Literature* only arrives at

generalizations on literature based on Western theories. The time has come to recognize theories developed independently.

Wellek himself emphasizes this in a later essay: 'We have risen above the limitations of traditional Western taste—the parochialism and relativism of such taste—into a realm if not of absolute then of universal art. There is such a realm, and the various historical manifestations are often far less historically limited in character than is assumed by historians interested mainly in making art serve a temporary social purpose and illuminate social history. Some Chinese or ancient Greek love lyrics on basic simple themes are hardly dateable in space or time except for their language.'³ But a clear call for synthesis of literary theories comes from Arthur Kunst: '... the ultimate object of a comparative study of Asian and European literatures should be the creation of a truly comprehensive theory of literature, based not on a knowledge of mutually reinforcing works from English, French, Spanish, German, and a few other languages, but on a knowledge of independently evolved imaginative traditions. This should be sufficient, at least, to give literary theory validity at the descriptive level.'⁴ But it is a formidable task; in all literary events there are two pulls, centripetal and centrifugal, and one can hope to achieve synthesis of only certain strata of experience, and therefore even descriptive adequacy in theory might be a remote goal. In this paper what we propose is to see the similarities and differences in a few basic concepts and categories of literature, Indian and Western, with special reference to Tolkappiyar, Bharata and Aristotle.

The pivotal concept of Western literary theory is imitation, whereas *Tolkappiyam*, the ancient grammar of literature in Tamil, classifies literature as pertaining to inner and outer life, 'Akam' and 'Puram'; and here again if the Western theory from Aristotle to Northrop Frye establishes modes in terms of objects of imitation who are 'men in action', the Tamil tradition gives importance to areas of human experience divided according to landscape. It speaks of three kinds of 'matter': (1) The Primal Matter or the framework which provides the ground of meaning (Muthar Porul)—Space and Time; (2) the Kernel Matter or the human agents and instruments (Karup Porul); and (3) the Intrinsic Matter—the theme that belongs to human life both

inner and outer (Urip Porul). There is a systematic correspondence between the various moods depicted as Urip Porul and the various aspects of nature which is more than the background. Tolkappiyar classifies landscape, time (Primal Matter) and lovers' moods (Intrinsic Matter) thus:

Landscape and the flower	Time		Intrinsic theme (Lover's moods)
	Season	Day	
Mullai (The Forest)	Rainy Season	Evening	Waiting and Domesticity
Kurinji (The Hill)	Later Rainy Season	Midnight	Lovers' Union
	Early Winter		
Marutham (The Field; and City Fringe)	All the Seasons?	Dawn	Conflict, Infidelity
Neythal (Seaside)	Summer	Sunset	Anxiety, Separation
Palai (The absence of these: forest etc.)	Summer/ Later Winter	Midday	Elopement, Separation from Parents

The similarity between this and Frye's classification is significant, which I have discussed in an earlier paper.⁵ Though Frye's major modes—mythic, romantic, tragic, comic and ironic—are based upon the divine-subhuman spectrum, he also says, 'In the solar cycle of the day, the seasonal cycle of the year, and the organic cycle of human life, there is a single pattern of significance. . . .' But whereas he thinks that 'out of [this], myth constructs a central narrative around a figure who is partly the Sun, partly vegetative fertility and partly a god or archetypal human being',⁶ Tolkappiyar's situations/archetypes are without mythic significance: the general setting,

character and emotion being linked together. In Frye's classics there is a hierarchic relationship, whereas in Tolkappiyar it is anagogic. Frye says, 'Civilization is not merely an imitation of nature, but the process of making a total human form out of nature and it is impelled by the force that we have just called desire.'⁷ His concept of archetype is basically Platonic reality, being the shadow of an ideal archetype.

In Tolkappiyar, archetypes are derived from the natural world. To be natural is human and the human significance is mediated through poetic conventions which are based on natural cycles or patterns of natural life. In Tolkappiyar's view life is not imitated, but mediated through art.

We may find a closer parallel to Tolkappiyar's concepts in Sanskrit aesthetics, though it pays more attention to emotions and that too in a metaphysical way. In Sanskrit, as in Greek, drama follows epics, though there is no Aristotelian concept of tragedy being superior to and more inclusive than epic. According to Bharata, the 'nāṭaka' is the imitation of things done in former times by gods and men, by kings and the great ones of the world. Based on that, J. A. B. Van Buitenen says, 'For his subject matter the author of the nāṭaka draws upon the epics and the purāṇas.'⁸ There is a superficial similarity between this and Aristotle's view. But according to *Nāṭyaśāstra*, 'Drama is a representation of the state of the three worlds.' Commenting upon this, V. Y. Katak says, 'The *Nāṭyaśāstra* further states that it is not exclusively a representation of man's activities but of those of gods and demons or daityas as well: That is to say, "nāṭya" is not a reflection or a camera-like imitation of man's virgin world. The world it reflects the state of, has already been impressed with the free play of man's imagination and peopled with its products. It is nothing short of the state of the three worlds that drama imitates.'⁹ And again with specific reference to imitation, he says that it 'is not here the simulation of the three-dimensional reality, the so-called world of man's activity in its raw condition, but rather a scrutiny, a refined sense of its "state", in other words, an apprehension of its Rasa or its true being.'¹⁰

If, in the concept of imitation of Aristotle, the distinction is between men superior or inferior to ourselves, the emphasis is not on moral greatness, though we would not agree with pro-

fessor Katak, who has said, 'If we take the entire tradition of Western drama as one, this distinction is seen to be not necessarily a matter of moral or spiritual excellence.'¹¹ But the Sanskrit tradition implies a concept of man purged of existential dimensions and they are not human types in the ordinary sense, but rather types of perfection. In the Western tradition, Frye's concept of hero is more inclusive—from mythic heroes to ordinary human beings. It is interesting to see that Frye's classification of human experience in terms of landscape also has close affinities with that of Tolkappiyar.

Again, if Aristotle's basic categories are tragedy (which also includes epic) and comedy, in the Indian tradition as represented by Bharata we have heroic and love poems, and in Tolkappiyar also we have the distinction between Puram and Akam poems. Both Bharata and Tolkappiyar see life as enactment of role in the structure of things (though Tolkappiyar does not give importance to hierarchy or the supernatural world), and both deal with the relationship between the hero and the heroine. In Sanskrit drama, '... no distinct notion of a protagonist and antagonist is found as in the Greek plays with their inbuilt struggle, but rather a *nāyaka*, a 'leader' or hero, and a *nāyikā*, a heroine, around whom the story unfolds.'¹² If Aristotle's imitation results in the perception of things as they are in the real world through form, Bharata's conception leads to the revelation of the ideal through the real. Bharata also speaks of 'sādṛśya' and 'pramāṇā', which emphasize likeness and ideal proportion. As Katak says, in Indian drama 'the likeness of anything to its artistic representation cannot be the likeness of nature but analogical or exemplary or both.'¹³ Tolkappiyar seems to be less concerned with the relationship between the object of imitation and aesthetic representation, because to him all reality is mediated—and what we see, though conventions, is reality.

Again, there are differences between Aristotle and the Indian theorists in the concept of action. Probability is the pivotal concept, and action shows a change both physical and psychic for which the hero is largely responsible, though caused mainly by error or flaw rather than by crime. But in Sanskrit drama, 'not only is the action... not real, it is not even a function of the characters themselves, who remain constant and uninvolved.

As had been seen, whatever dramatic imbroglio occurs is not because of defect of character, but from the arbitrary superimposition of chance, as the curse of Durvāsas; it is the proper business of the drama to dispel this, resolving the characters again into their original, constant state.¹⁴ The notions of 'karma' and curse provide an archetype which link various births and levels of existence. Tolkappiyar is mainly concerned with lyrical poetry and his categories are recurrent situations and emotions both in erotic and in heroic aspects of life. They are mini-dramas in the sense that in each poem an action is presented through a monologue; here again the action is suggested through the setting or emotional responses of the actors rather than actions. It is significant that no names are mentioned in Akam poetry.

Aristotle's theory speaks of plot or arrangement of the incidents as imitation of action, because tragedy is an imitation 'not of men, but of an action and of life'. In Bharata the goal is the evocation of emotion and not portrayal of the events, and most of the events turn out to be non-events. 'The organization of factors to sustain the dominant emotion proceeds on principles that bear little relation to a calculus of events. . . . The organization of the play, then, is not of the action at all. It is an organization of the elements of the nascent emotional tone, recast as the "will" or "volition" of the characters. Stream of consciousness is substituted for Aristotle's objective references.'¹⁵ If in Sanskrit we have 'vibhāva', the conditions of the emotion which include constituents such as background, the scene and the characters, in Tolkappiyar's theory we have the Primary Matter and Kernel Matter. In Sanskrit, 'the conditions of character and setting, then, are constant; other kinds of conditions vary to heighten the peculiar effect of a given scene.'¹⁶ Tamil Sangam poetry too has the same pattern: the constituents of the landscape as well as the characters provide the background and the human actions are interwoven with the natural background and appear as ripples in an otherwise stable cosmos. The speeches are more descriptive of the milieu than revealing of action, but suggest their state of mind—in a subtle way. There are speeches in *Śakuntalā* constituting 'the reactions of characters to their circumstantial milieus; they convey not only context, Vibhāva, but the sense or perception of that context.'¹⁷ The speech,

The gentle roe-deer, taught to trust in man,
 Unstartled to hear our voices. . . .
 Laved are the roots of trees by deep canals,
 Whose glassy waters tremble in the breeze;
 The sprouting verdure of upward curling smoke
 From burnt oblations; and on the new-mown lawns
 Around our car graze leisurely the fawns. (I. 13)

Translated by M. Monier-Williams, in *A Treasure of Asian Literature*, ed. John D. Yohannan (London: The New English Library Limited, 1956), p. 138

may very well be an Akam poem. Though Sangam poems have been seen as monologues, and *Cilappatikaram*, the first long dramatic epic in Tamil, as an extension of these monologues, their possible link with Sanskrit plays is yet to be established. Tolkappiyar uses the word 'Nāṭakam' and *Cilappatikaram* refers to 'Bharatam' and 'Nāṭakam'.

The preliminaries in *Śakuntalā* are chosen mainly to promote the major sentiment and that too in such a way that life portrayed is purged of its existential dross. The five formal elements and 'avasthās' also contribute to create a sense of equilibrium through unreality, which is higher truth. The whole conception is poetic—poetry here is not a dress to look at but a window to look through. Poetry retards not only the normal speed of action but its deliberate purpose; and unlike in Aristotelian concept there is more integral relationship between music, dance and poetry, and this finds its closest parallel in *Cilappatikaram*, in which we see the culmination of convergence of the Sangam poems which are dramatic lyrics and Sanskrit drama and epic. In Sangam poems themselves, the situations and scenery only embody/evoke an emotion, very much like the objective correlative of T. S. Eliot.¹⁸ Nature provides a metalanguage for the universal emotions, and the concepts of Ullurai and Iraicchi are the high-water mark of suggestion in dramatic poetry in the Indian tradition.¹⁹

The Aristotelian concept of catharsis has been compared with Bharata's *rasa* theory by Viswanathan and Katak, to mention only two. According to Edwin Gerow, 'It is at this point that the poetic theories of India and those of Greece most clearly differ; for Aristotle appears to wish to put the emotions of pity and fear into his audience, to "cleanse". A real emo-

tional transformation, a real experience, was intended. In Sanskrit drama emotion is tamed, cultivated, and sentimentalized.²⁰ In Sanskrit the emotion is never real, and the dominant emotion is said to live only in terms of cleverly chosen and sustained contrasts with other emotions. Thirty-three transitory emotions are said to suggest in different contexts different moods.²¹

There is an obvious parallel in T. S. Eliot, who says: 'This balance of contrasted emotion is in the dramatic situation to which the speech is pertinent, but that situation alone is inadequate to it. This is, so to speak, the structural emotion, provided by the drama. But the whole effect, the dominant tone, is due to the fact that a number of floating feelings, having an affinity to this emotion by no means superficially evident, have combined with it to give us a new art emotion.'²² For example, in plays of love, there is also another *rasa*, usually the sentiment of separation to mediate its intensity. The parallel with pity and terror also cannot be ignored, particularly in the interpretation of James Joyce, according to whom pity and terror are phases of the static tragic emotion in which the impulses to go to something and go from something are neutralized, and the mind is arrested and raised above desire and loathing.²³

But Tolkappiyar is closer to Bharata in his classification of artistic emotions to which he devotes an entire chapter, 'Meyppattiyal'. He talks of thirty-two states of which sixteen are external and sixteen are internal, and he also arrives at eight *rasas*, which are said to be the effect or change in the perceiver's mind. The concept of empathic participation is brought out by Seyitriyanar: 'Those who know the truth say that Meyppadu (or physical emotion) is the experience by the perceiver of what the actor (or one who experiences) enacts.'²⁴ Interestingly, Tolkappiyar too does not speak of Santa *rasa* as a separate *rasa* and he also arranges the eight *rasas* as contrasting pairs: Heroism and Fear; Ridicule and Wonder; etc. Even though Tolkappiyar does not explicitly refer to dramatic art, the references to gestures are there—the word 'Meyppadu' means the emotion in the body. Ilampuranar the commentator explicitly says that though 'Meyppadu' is more relevant to dramatic art, the writer also has to compose verses with this in

mind. In fact, it applies both to the poem and the reader. Even in Bharata, 'The entire drama has now been translated from the theatre to the audience; the theatre is no longer "object", but pretext for the interior play whose success is nothing but a state of mind, cleverly evoked through suggestion, realized as those latent aspects of the audience's emotional being that are the common and recurrent heritage of mankind.'²⁵ If in Aristotle the core is plot or the arrangement of events, which is an imitation of an action resulting in the purgation of emotions, in Sanskrit and Tamil traditions the poetic and the fictive art and generalized gestures free the very conditions of emotional life; 'the *rasa* is not a concrete emotion (*bhāva*), but rather the inversion of an emotion; the specific determinants of the emotion (place, time, circumstance, etc.) are so cast as to appear themselves as functions of the latent emotional state, and are generalized. A process of communication has taken place wherein the raw and largely incommunicable stuff of life has been transformed into a device for stating and exploring the very boundaries, the conditions of life itself.'²⁶ The archetype is not a pre-existing reality but what can be conceived or released poetically; the characters and the settings are also only 'pretexts and not contexts'. Here is a more or less mystic concept of art, the illusion of art coming to grips with the illusion of life. This is developed further by later philosophers, and in the Tamil tradition we find the convergence of ethics and aesthetics in Kamban's Rāma who is the embodiment of Śānta because in suffering all he suffers nothing, whereas all other characters represent human emotions and move towards his still feet still moving. The divine-human dichotomy is once again transcended in aesthetic terms.

Philip Wheelwright has interpreted mimesis as participative or threshold symbolism, and catharsis as 'a new living awareness—an *Erlebnis*—of what the plot of the drama most essentially is', and he adds that through catharsis the spectator grasps the essential mimesis, in which thematic images play a major role.²⁷

This brings it closer to the Indian concept of aesthetic experience, but still the differences are there. If, according to Aristotle, through the threshold situations the concrete universals are apprehended dimly or experienced to be tran-

scended, in the Indian view generic emotions are transcendently experienced. The Western notion gives importance to the individual becoming universal, but still remaining an individual. In the Indian view the drama is enacted simultaneously in the theatre of the cosmos and the mind of man as signified by the dance of Siva. Finally, the Western and Eastern views of poetic experience can also be related to the harmonious and melodic concepts of music. In David Lodge's terms, Western art is more metonymic, whereas Indian art is more metaphorical, though there is always an interpenetration of the two.

As we said in the beginning, no critical concepts can be completely culture-bound, and if Aristotle can reveal new dimensions in our analysis of Indian literature, Bharata and Tolkappiyar reveal new depths in Western writers because great art always transcends theories. In a sense Shakespearean comedy, particularly plays like *As You Like It* and *The Winter's Tale*, is closer to the Indian mind because of the closer link it establishes between nature and human nature. For characters in *As You Like It* do not develop, and differences between them are not 'real'. The action of the play seems to lead to recognition (or re-cognition) of an equilibrium and unity among characters which has always been there. In *The Winter's Tale* too, the intrusion of evil is only an illusion or a temporary (though for so many years) disturbance of the equilibrium. This only suggests the quintessential drama of the soul.

It would be appropriate to conclude this paper with some comments on T. S. Eliot, who has consciously tried to synthesize Eastern and Western concepts both in theory and practice. We have already referred to the affinities between his concepts of objective correlative and dramatic emotion and the corresponding Indian concepts. What has not yet been adequately seen is his application in his poetry and plays. To give just an example: In *Murder in the Cathedral* we have a synthesis of Greek tragedy and the Indian dramatic pattern. In this play, there are no events but only states, and the emotional unity is more important. The temporal order is replaced by a spatial linking of situations, suggesting that emotion and poetry do not accelerate action, but lead to the discovery of the underlying pattern. Finally, the presentation of human emotions in juxtaposition leads to the pure emotion. If the Knights re-

present the 'rajas' and the Chorus represent the 'tamas', Becket stands for equilibrium; but even in his case we do not see him experiencing them; we only perceive it through the gaps provided by poetry. Krishna Rayan has pointed out that there is no cause-effect relationship between the Chorus and Becket, but that they suggest the emotions of Becket.²⁸ We would go a step further and say that the real drama is in the interaction of Becket with others, and their purpose is not to humanize Becket's emotion but to be the metaphor for the quintessential action/emotion of Becket himself. If Becket suffers for them, they suffer through him: this metaphoric relationship is there between Becket and other characters also, which again is metaphoric of the relationship between God and Becket. All this is done through thematic imagery and cyclic movement, and in this the Christian myth and ritual are linked with the myth of vegetative god and the cycles of seasons.

In a sense, the wheel has come full circle. We are back in the world of Sangam poetry and Aeschylean drama, as in both the archetypal imagery is seasonal, vegetative and diurnal. But this does not and should not reduce literature to a monistic concept which is meaningless. Comparative literary theory seeks universals through particulars, which it interprets in a wider perspective. The intersection of the particular and the universal as well as of the historical and the timeless is essential to a comprehensive theory of literature which is in a triadic and reciprocal relationship with the atomism of analysis and relativist historicism.

NOTES

1. René Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), p. 43.
2. Basil Munteano, 'Littérature générale et histoire des idées', in *Littérature Générale et Histoire des Idées: Actes du Premier Congrès National de Littérature Comparée* (Paris, 1957).
3. René Wellek, 'Literary Theory, Criticism and History', in *20th Century Literary Criticism*, ed. David Lodge (London: Longman, 1972), pp. 561-2.
4. Arthur E. Kunst, 'Literatures of Asia', in *Comparative Literature: Method and Perspective*, ed. Newton P. Stallknecht and Horst Frenz (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973), p. 323.

5. K. Chellappan, 'Criticism: A Structuralist Perspective', in *Proceedings of the Thirteenth All India Conference of Dravidian Linguists* (Thanjavur: Tamil University Press, 1986), pp. 379-81.
6. Northrop Frye, 'The Archetypes of Literature', in *20th Century Literary Criticism*, p. 429.
7. ——— *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957).
8. J. A. B. Van Buitenen, 'Background and Types', in *The Literatures of India: An Introduction*, ed. Edward C. Dimock, Jr., Edwin Gerow, C. M. Naim et al. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), p. 88.
9. V. Y. Katak, 'Aristotle and Bharata: Western and Eastern Dramatic Modes', in *Literary Criticism: European and Indian Traditions*, ed. C. D. Narasimhaiah (Mysore: University of Mysore, 1965), pp. 108-9.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 109.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
12. *Literatures of India*, p. 84.
13. Katak, p. 110.
14. *Literatures of India*, p. 134.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 134, 135.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
17. *Ibid.*
18. See K. Chellappan, 'The "Playmate" in Tamil Akam Poetry', *Indian Literature*, xxiii, 5 (Sept.-Oct. 1980).
19. See K. Chellappan, 'Ullurai and Iraicchi in Tamil Poetics', *Indian Literature*, xxx, 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1987).
20. *Literatures of India*, p. 133.
21. See *ibid.*, p. 134.
22. T. S. Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', in *20th Century Literary Criticism*, p. 75.
23. James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (reprint, New York: The Viking Press, 1963), pp. 204-5.
24. A treatise on Tamil drama, 'Seyitriyanar'. Quoted in *Tolkappiyam*, ed. Ilampuranar (Tinneveli, 1951), p. 31.
25. *Literatures of India*, p. 224.
26. *Ibid.*
27. Philip Wheelright, 'Mimesis and Catharsis', in *Literary Criticism: Idea and Act*, ed. W. K. Wimsatt (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1972), p. 120.
28. Krishna Rayan, *Text and Sub-text* (New Delhi: Arnold Heinemann, 1987), p. 155.

A Reflection on the Translatability of Poetry and the Odyssey of a Song

PABITRA KUMAR ROY

I am not sure if Rabindranath Tagore looked back at Goethe when he formulated his notion of *Visva-sahitya*. But there is no doubt that his notion did spell what we of late have come to understand by 'Comparative Literature'. In the context of the present paper I propose to consider the epistemological and ontological issues that seem to arise from the case of a set of translations of a song by Tagore, and apropos of it say something about the translatability of poetry. The discipline of comparative literature has to a large extent to depend on the availability, and, for that matter, the possibility of translation of works of literature. The case of poetry appears to present problems that are paradigmatically philosophical in nature.

I

The concept of translation has come for a closer scrutiny in the wake of Quine's empirical theory of language. His thesis, better known as the indeterminacy of translation,¹ does not allow any rational core to subsist in and through languages. There are only conventions or traditional equations. The indeterminacy thesis has been in vogue and given currency by Donald Davidson² and Michael Dummett.³ It is only recently that John Searle⁴ has written a powerful rejoinder to Quine's thesis and argued to the effect that the act of translating is like understanding someone else or ourselves, and this requires a knowledge of intentional contents. And if such a knowledge is

possible, translation should also be possible. It is not the case, as Quine, Davidson and Dummett would like us to believe, that the interlinguistic passage is intentionally opaque. No man is an island.

But in spite of Searle's endeavour to restore the possibility of translation, the search for the semantic key to poetry has been on. From I. A. Richards' view about the essential incognitiveness of poetry to Empson's argument for its cognitivity, characterized, as poetry is, by ambiguity or ploysemic synthesis, is indeed a long way. Great poets have often given themselves to translating works of other poets. Goethe's translation of the *Odyssey*, Rilke's of Cino's sonnets, Pound's from the Chinese and the Italian, Hölderlin's of Sophocles are cases at hand. Tagore translated both himself and others. Yet the question is worth raising: what happens when a poem is translated? It is suggested that the poetic text is turned from one semantic system to another. To say this is to imply fidelity to the poetic letter. Marxist philosophers like Galvano della Volpe,⁵ following the lead of the Copenhagen school of linguistics, say that the literal is in its expressive and semantic texture a rigorous historical product. Hence the limitations on fidelity are to be found in the characteristics of the language from which and into which one is doing the translation. All these characteristics are not such as to make it at all or absolutely impossible to translate. One may recall in this connection what Goethe said, 'What is truly efficacious, deeply and firmly so, what really shapes and stimulates us, is what remains of the poet when he is translated into prose. What is then left is the pure and perfect content.'⁶ Those who like this note of optimism would take issue with Kant. In the *Critique of Judgment*, section 49, Kant brings his aestheticist criterion of poetry as 'purposiveness without purpose'—that is, as something not measurable or reducible to a determinate concept or end—to bear upon the problem of those 'aesthetical attributes of an object' which include metaphors and similes. That is to say, those 'secondary' and 'kindred' representations which 'arouse *more* thought than can be expressed in a concept *determined by word*'. Every 'aesthetical idea' is 'a representation [which] adds to a concept much *ineffable thought*, the *feeling* of which *quickens* the cognitive faculties, and with language binds up the spirit also'.⁷ It should be noted here that the poetic spirit is infused into language in the shape of feeling. Roman-

ticism, down to the Symbolism of Mallarmé, could ask for nothing better, a coherent reduction of language to the speech of the subject.

The matter is that the idea of the detachment of 'the pure and perfect content' of poetry from its rhythm and sound, that is, its external and instrumental elements, did not find favour with thinkers of idealist persuasion. Schopenhauer, for example, thought that the idea or thought of a poem and the words that embody it are as organically related as the foetus to the womb.⁸ Hence, he said, no alien sequence of words would ever revitalize the relation. The translator is an ineffectual angel; he cannot incarnate ideas in the manner of a poet. In short, the Romantic idea of poetry does not encourage the detachment of the general epistemological aspect of poetry from its semantically specific aspect. To take an extreme case, if Shelley's analogy of the 'fading coal' describes the phenomenon of poetry, then translation of a poem should only be cold cinders.

II

Translations have often been called creative errors. Chapman's Homer had moved Keats to write one of his famous sonnets, but it had been severely criticized by Matthew Arnold.⁹ And so was Pope's translation on the ground of deformation of Homer's thought and style. Arnold warned Ruskin not to transpose modern sentiment to the ancients. Eliot's merciless critique of the poetic version of Euripides à la Swinburne and William Morris, perpetrated by Gilbert Murray,¹⁰ could be taken as directed against negative cases of translation. Often demands are made of the translator to share the author's metaphysical beliefs. 'Is it not inconceivable that a good translation of Plato could be made by any nominalist?', asked Coomaraswamy.¹¹ This means that the problem of interpreting hermeneutically as well as literally presents itself to the translator. It appears that the translator is a sort of connoisseur and critic, and is required by Coomaraswamy to place himself at the original author's standpoint so as to see and judge with his eyes. This involves an understanding of the original author's intention. Both criticism and translation are to be done in terms of the 'ratio intentio'. One may cite Plato to support Coomaraswamy. Plato (*Laws*, 668c) said that the connoisseurs of poems must

know the essence of the intention of a work before they can judge its final values. Coomaraswamy does not think that it is possible to produce a worthy translation of Dante's *Commedia* while rejecting or disbelieving his purpose of composing it; that is, to lead men from the state of wretchedness to that of blessedness.

Sri Aurobindo¹² is a poet of considerable significance, and is no mean translator. His ideas concerning translation are worth noting. He appears to be inclined to the view that the translator can make his own poem out of the original. This is all the more legitimate because literal fidelity usually 'turns life into death, and poetic power into poverty and flatness'. He also allows the practice of rendering prose into poetry, for beauty's sake. Art could demand its converse as well. Translatability, for Sri Aurobindo, is not an absolute thesis; nothing of high poetic style in its perfection is translatable. An advocate of freedom, he gives the impression that translation is transmogrification, and yet he has been sensitive to errors of sense, importance of turn of language in translating poetry. But, finally, one translates only for himself and uses the text to be translated as poetic material of his own.

Some further remarks about translation may also be made. Translation is an interlingual affair, yet no two linguistic systems organize experience and perceive reality in an identical manner. The task of establishing equivalence between the source text and the target text, it appears advisable on the part of the translator of poetry at least, should be given up. Reading poetry is itself an act of creative transposition. The translator's job is one of transposing an alien aesthetic structure and personality into the key of his own personality and culture. A poet is said to be a medium between experience and expression. The translator should then be said to be a medium between one set of expressed experience and another. Every translation entails an element of interpretation through defamiliarization of language.

III

Sri Aurobindo took special notice of Tagore's translations of his own songs. He did so to show how poetry conserves and changes. The semantic dialectic of poetry, through the process

of translation, sets in motion the double rhythm of conservation and change.

One such instance of conservation and change has been Tagore's own English translation of one of his songs into poem number 30 in *The Gardener*. One who had listened to Tagore's own native and magical melody of *Tumi sandhyara meghamala* would see how much had gone with the change. *The Gardener*, no. 30, is only a piece of cadenced prose, even though the craftsmanship is delicate and subtle. Tagore himself had admitted that the *Gardener* pieces, in respect of the originals, are 'sometimes abridged and sometimes paraphrased'. So Pablo Neruda did ^{not} know that Tagore's *Gardener* piece had already been reborn with another soul. Taking it to be an original poem, he 'paraphrased' it into Spanish and this version is incorporated in his *20 Poemas de amor y una canción desesperada*. When W. S. Merwin translated the *20 Poemas* into English as *Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1969) Neruda's Spanish 'paraphrase' of Tagore's *Gardener*, no. 30, appeared as the poem numbered xvi. A contemporary Bengali poet, Sakti Chattopadhyay, has published an anthology of Neruda's love poems, entitled *Pablo Nerudar premer kavita* (Calcutta: Dey's Publishing, 1976). This anthology may be taken as a Bengali version of Merwin's English of Neruda's Spanish *20 Poemas*. Naturally enough, it contains a Bengali rendering of Merwin's English of Neruda's Spanish 'paraphrase' of Tagore's English 'translation' of his own Bengali song.

Now this odyssey of the song, *Tumi sandhyara meghamala*, presents the following texts for discussion:

- i. *Tumi sandhyara meghamala*
- ii. *The Gardener*, no. 30
- iii. *Twenty Love Poems*, no. xvi (A and B)
- iv. *Pablo Nerudar premer kavita*, p. 29

Neruda did ^{not} have an idea of the existence of Text i. The Macmillan edition of *The Gardener* does contain a notice to that effect. But it could only be known to Tagore *qua* translator. Neruda took Text ii to be the original. Since I do not know Spanish, I leave Neruda's Spanish 'paraphrase' out of my consideration. But if Text i is to be taken as the background

piece, then Texts II, III and IV are target pieces. Text III is a case of translation proper. Text IV is ambiguous, because Sakti Chattopadhyay does not mention his source. Whether he did the rendering from Neruda's Spanish or Merwin's English is a matter of guess. Transitively speaking, one might take Sakti Chattopadhyay's piece to be a Bengali translation of Tagore's Bengali song.

IV

The problem is: between the four texts, how many poems are there? Do the four texts embody the same poem just as various sentences can express the same proposition? This analogy will not do, since a poem, in spite of Goethe's insistence on 'the pure and perfect content' of poetry, is seldom a propositional entity. Its soul resides more in being overborne by suggestions, and less or hardly at all in the literalness of indicative sentences. Supposing that one argues that Texts II to IV are translations of Text I, how do we come to know that, except adventitiously? That is, except from notes appended to the texts? The argument is too strong to be dislodged, and is akin to Ryle's argument against the distinction between memory images as copies of past impressions. Again, one could argue that there is a family resemblance between Texts II to IV which accounts for their being treated as translations. But this argument could be answered in the following manner. It should be possible to come across three poems from three different languages so that a family resemblance could be noticeable among them. And in that case there would be no ground for considering them as 'translations' of a fourth poem in a fourth language. To argue on the basis of the alleged resemblance is to revive the ghost of the celebrated third man argument.

Let us consider the matter from another point of view. To say that Texts II to IV are different translations of Text I is to assert an informative statement. This statement would stand in different relations to Text I and Texts II to IV. In the case of Text I the statement should be of synthetic import. To say that a poem has a translation is to say something contingent about the poem, for it could be without any. The being of a poem in question is not touched by the fact that there is a translation of the poem. With regard to Texts II to IV the state-

ment ('Texts II to IV are translations of Text I') would be analytic. But what has been proposed to be said about Text I could equally be said about Texts II to IV.

On the basis of considerations such as submitted above, we could argue as under. The dimensions of a poem are multi-structured, and no translation should be expected to conquer its entire dominion of evocations. If there be a typical difference between the target and the background languages, then it should be admitted that their modes of being are diverse, and also that they are non-identical as poems. *The Gardener*, no. 30, and Neruda's 'paraphrase' are to be tasted not for the same relish. William Merwin, who translated Neruda, has written that verse translations presuppose that they may be read in some sense as independent writings.¹³ The knowledge that a certain poem is a translation of another does in no way add to the enjoyment of either. When a poet-translator is not caught between *self-imitation* and *impressionistic* imitations of his originals, he writes a new poem. So did Neruda in paraphrasing Tagore's *Gardener* piece. An analogy for the phenomenon could be derived from history of art. The concept of 'variation' has gained currency among writers of art-criticism. Leo Steinberg, in course of a chapter entitled 'The Algerian Women and Picasso at Large' in *Other Criteria*, has dealt with Picasso's variations on Delacroix's *Femmes d'Alger*. Delacroix did the painting twice (the Louvre, 1834 and the Montpeuier, 1849 versions). Picasso took off from both versions and made fifteen pictures, numerous drawings and carried a set of lithographs. They are all Picassoesque. The point is that a work of art can be a catalytic agent in bringing about another work of art. As between Delacroix and Picasso, so between Tagore and Neruda a passage from potentiality to actuality could at once be intuited.

But the neat Aristotelian categories do not perhaps adequately map the intricate relationship that obtains between background and target pieces in the case of translation. A memory of the background might be discovered reverberating in the body of the target piece. This may be a part of historical understanding, though not a necessary condition for an appreciation of the reborn soul of a new poem, often also called a translation.

APPENDIX 1

TEXT I

tumi	sandhyāra megh shānta sudur āmāra sādhera sādhanā,
mama	shunya-gagana-vihāri
āmi	āpana maner mādhuri mishāye tomāre karechhi rachanā—
tumi	āmāri je tumi āmāri
mama	asima-gagana-vihāri
mama	hṛdaya-rakta-ranjane tava charana diyechhi rāngiyā,
ayi	sandhyā-svapana-vihāri
tava	adhara eṅkechhi sudhāvishe mishe mama sukhadukha bhāngiyā—
tumi	āmāri je tumi āmāri,
mama	vijana-jivana-vihāri
mama	mohera svapana-anjana tava nayane diyechhi parāye,
ayi	mugdha nayana-vihāri
mama	sangita tava ange ange diyechhi jaḍāye jaḍāye
tumi	āmāri je tumi āmāri,
mama	jivana-marana-vihāri

[*For Texts I and IV we have tried as simplified a transliteration as possible. *Italic n* is used here to indicate nasalization.—Editors]

The poem is called ‘Mānas Pratimā’ and appears in Tagore’s collection of poems entitled *Kalpanā*. It was later recast by the poet himself as a song with various significant changes in diction (‘tumi sandhyāra meghamālā, tumi āmāra sādhera sādhanā, / mama shunyagaganavihāri | . . .’; another version: ‘tumi sandhyāra meghamālā, tumi āmāra nibhṛta sādhanā, / mama vijanagagana-vihāri | . . .’). It is uncertain whether Tagore paraphrased the poem or the song for *The Gardener*, no. 30.

APPENDIX 2

TEXT II

The Gardener, No. 30

You are the evening cloud floating in the sky of my dreams.
I paint you and fashion you ever with my love longings.
You are my own, my own, Dweller in my endless dreams!

Your feet are rosy-red with the glow of my heart's
 desire, Gleaner of my sunset songs!
Your lips are bitter-sweet with the taste of my wine
 of pain.
You are my own, my own, Dweller in my lonesome dreams!

With the shadow of my passion have I darkened your eyes,
 Haunter of the depth of my gaze!
I have caught you and wrapt you, my love, in the net of
 my music.
You are my own, my own, Dweller in my deathless dreams!

Indian edition, Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1919, pp. 58-9

APPENDIX 3

TEXT III (A)

En mi cielo al crepúsculo eres como una nube
y tu color y forma son como yo los quiero,
Eres mía, eres mía, mujer de labios dulces
y viven en tu vida mis infinitos sueños.

La lámpara de mi alma te sonrosa los pies
el agrio vino mío es más dulce en tus labios,
oh segadora de mi canción de atar decer
cómo te sienten mía mis sueños solitarios!

Eres mía, eres mía, voy gritando en la brisa
de la tarde, y el viento arrastra mi voz viuda.
cazadora del fondo de mis ojos, tu robo
estanca como el agua tu mirada nocturna.

En la red de mi música estás presa, amor mío,
 y mis redes de música son anchas como el cielo.
 Mi alma nace a la orilla de tus ojos de luto.
 En tus ojos de luto comienza el país del sueño.

From *20 Poemas de amor y una canción desesperada*, Editorial
 Losada, J. A., Buenos Aires, 1944

APPENDIX 4

TEXT III (B)

In My Sky At Twilight

This poem is a paraphrase of the 30th poem in
 Rabindranath Tagore's *The Gardener*.

In my sky at twilight you are like a cloud
 and your form and colour are the way I love them.
 You are mine, mine, woman with sweet lips
 and in your life my infinite dreams live.

The lamp of my soul dyes your feet,
 My sour wine is sweeter on your lips,
 oh reaper of my evening song,
 how solitary dreams believe you to be mine!

You are mine, mine, I go shouting it to the afternoon's
 wind, and the wind hauls on my widowed voice.
 Huntress of the depths of my eyes, your plunder
 stills your nocturnal regard as though it were water.

You are taken in the net of my music, my love,
 and my nets of music are wide as the sky.
 My soul is born on the shore of your eyes of mourning.
 In your eyes of mourning the land of dreams begins.

—Pablo Neruda

Translated by W. S. Merwin. From *Twenty Love Poems and
 a Song of Despair*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1969

APPENDIX 5

TEXT IV

Āmār Ākāshe Godhulibelāy

āmār ākāshe godhulibelāy, tumi chhile megh, megher matan
ār tomār dehasushama dehavarna—ṭhik jemaṅṭā āmi
bhālobāsi ṭhik teman |
tomār miṣṭi dui ṭhoṅṭ, nāri, ogulo āmār, ekānta āmār |
ār tomār jivane āmār asim svapna lukiye āchhe |

āmār ātmār pradip tomār padatal rāngiye dey
āmār amla surā tomār adhare adhare āro miṣṭi lāge
āmār sandhyāsangit tomāy niye rachita, āmār ekār svapna
kintu tumi āmār, tumi āmār |

tumi āmār, tumi āmār—eman chitkār chhuṅḍe dii
ai sandhyār bātāser dike, ār bātās āmār nirjan svare ghure
beḷāy
āmār chokher gabhire byādhini tumi, tomār dhvaṅsa
rāter samihake shānta kare, jal kare |

priya, tumi āmār gāner jāle dharā paḍechha, ār
āmār sangitjāl sārā ākāsh chhaḍiye
āmār ātmār janma hayechhe tomār chokher pāshe, shoke
ār tomār ai shokārta chokh thekei svapner desher shuru |

Translation of Texts III A-B by Sakti Chattopadhyay, from
Pāblo Nerudār Premier Kavita

NOTES

1. Willard V. O. Quine, *Word and Object* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1960), p. 39.
2. Donald Davidson, 'Radical Interpretation', *Dialectica*, xxviii (1973).
3. Michael Dummett, 'The Significance of Quine's Indeterminacy Thesis', *Synthesis*, xxxvii (1974).
4. John Searle, 'Indeterminacy, Empiricism and the First Person', *The Journal of Philosophy*, lxxiv (1978).
5. Galvano della Volpe, *The Critique of Taste*, trans. Michael Caesar (New York: Schocken Books, 1978).
6. Goethe, *Works*, xv (Zurich, 1953), p. 1085.
7. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. J. A. Bernard (London, 1892), pp. 199-201.
8. Schopenhauer, *Parera and Paralipomena*, II, trans. E. F. J. Payne (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 395.
9. Matthew Arnold, 'On Translating Homer', in *On the Classical Tradition*, ed. R. H. Super (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 1960), pp. 101-2.
10. T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays* (London: Faber, 1951), pp. 59 ff.
11. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, 'Intention', *The American Bookman* (Winter, 1944).
12. Sri Aurobindo, *Works*, 9 (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1971).
13. W. S. Merwin, in *On Translation*, ed. R. A. Brower (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959). Also *The Kenyon Review*, xvi (1954), pp. 497 ff.

Literary History from Below

AMIYA DEV

In his Erasmus Lectures at Harvard in 1983, now available in the Utrecht Publications in General and Comparative Literature, number 19,* Professor Douwe Fokkema has done an admirable thing: he has worked out a *rapprochement* between literary history and literary theory by proposing a semiotic approach to the former. He has enlarged upon Jurij Lotman and Umberto Eco's ideas of code. To Lotman's two primary—language and literature code—he has added a minimum of another three: genre code, group or sociocode and idiolect. And Eco's notion of codes one narrowing upon another, he has particularly applied to writers. Of the semiotic triad of semantic, syntactic and pragmatic, he has focused on the syntactic and pitched literary history in the sociocode. He has also endorsed the existence of a semiotic community but in the multiple, for at a given point in time three categories of literary texts are in his view available, the avant-garde, the canonized and popular or trivial. Literary history to him is the history of the avant-garde. This he has illustrated with a brief consideration of modernism and postmodernism in the West.

Professor Fokkema has repeatedly reminded us that a group or sociocode is not equivalent to a period code. Obviously his modernism or postmodernism is a matter of group or society, not of a period. But in so many words he does not tell us whether it is possible or is impossible to conceive a period code; he merely indicates the difficulty, even within the limits of Western literature. Now if periodization is left out, and if emphasis is laid only on movements and manifestoes, on group activities and literary societies, on all isms that have by now gathered,

**Literary History, Modernism, and Postmodernism* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1984).

then this approach is indeed foolproof. It takes care of the tricky question that Arthur Lovejoy once put to European Romanticism most decisively and, surely, more deftly than some of the pre-semiotic critics, including Henry Remak and Lillian Furst. It also comes to terms with the odd writer out by recording a primacy of the idiolect. But can periodization be entirely left out? It may not be impossible to think of Western literary history since the Renaissance in terms of a series of sociocides; but before that? And what about literary cultures where we have a lesser frequency of code shifts?

I am not here to offer a critique of Professor Fokkema's approach, but only to clear my own doubts. I fully agree with him that literary history is not a mere narrative. I also appreciate his reservations about the *Rezeptiongeschichte* à la Jauss: how can literary history be history only of the hermeneutics of individual texts? Possibly it is more a discourse than narrative, a discourse by means of which we arrive at an understanding of the literary phenomena as laid out in time. One of the most remarkable aspects of literary history is that unlike most other histories, it is temporally syncretic, that is, the past and the present are simultaneous in it. Along with diachronies we can speak of an inner synchrony: Kālidāsa and Tagore, Vālmiki and Tulasi are held together in a companionship. Of course the old historicist may ask, which Kālidāsa, which Vālmiki? Is this where Jauss comes in? I suppose no, for as far as they are texts they are there together. And if the reader's consciousness is counted, that too extends thither. If the reader is in history, then all that his consciousness embraces is also in history. However, Professor Fokkema has in a way handled this issue by, as I quoted above, indicating the simultaneity of the canonized and the avant-garde. My only problem is whether that epistemology is not a little simplified.

Perhaps one of the limitations of literary theory is that it tends to overlook literary sociology. Lotman's shift from language code to literature code may presuppose some sociology, but only presuppose, not spell out. Literary texts are productions and are therefore subject to the overall sociology of production. Professor Fokkema has twice quoted Lotman's definition of code as 'a closed set of meaningful units and rules governing their combination' (pp. 5, 6). Speaking particularly

of literature code, who determines these rules? Or are they self-determinant and thus universal? In other words, is literature code ever the same, or does it vary from time to time? If the latter, then there is some room for history in that as well. Further, as Professor Fokkema himself suspects, his genre code too is not entirely stable. What is *natak* to us today was not quite the *nāṭaka* to Kālidāsa, although we would call both *dr̥śyakāvya*. There was no *uṇanyas* or *kadambari* or *novel* or *novelkatha* in the Indian languages two hundred years ago. Room again for history. And as in the shifts in literature code, in such shifts in genre code as well, literary sociology has a hand. In the former we will take cognizance, for instance, of religion—its whole gamut of magic spells and ritual lore and myth, the word immanent—and of the waning of its authority and the rise of secularism. In the latter we will take cognizance of the communication revolutions from script to print and other social factors like literacy. In fact, without a consideration of such sociology, we cannot have enough foregrounding for the codes. It is like speaking of the *svadharmā* ('svadharme nidhanam śreyo paradharmo bhayāvahaḥ') of the *Gītā* without reference to its metaphysics.

Professor Fokkema's third category of texts at any given moment, *Trivialliteratur*, has full sociology, and if we wish to give it a place in literary history—and we should, for it too has a semiotic community, in fact a community much more considerable than in the case of the avant-garde or the canonized—we must take cognizance of that sociology. I suppose one thing should be settled at the outset. Is literature only the interplay of the avant-garde and the canonized, of what was avant-garde yesterday and is canonized today and is avant-garde today and will be canonized tomorrow? That is, is literature only that which is canon-bound? Or is it a number of things at the same time, reducible to the canonical and the non-canonical, heteroglossia of a kind? Much medieval Indian literature will have to be ruled out if we concede the first, and perhaps much medieval European literature as well. Bakhtin's *carnavalesque* will then be committed to subliterary archives. The very notion of the subliterary seems to be a product of canonical thinking. Should it not also apply in part to Shakespeare, who was said to have levels of audience? If that duality was true, then

Shakespeare must have had a mixed code, one part avant-garde, the other trivial.

This raises a related question about semiotic communities. Are semiotic communities exclusive of one another? I suppose there can be easy switchovers from the avant-garde to the canonized or vice versa. That is, the same semiotic community can deal with both, though there may be different levels of predictions. The real question is whether the semiotic community that deals with the avant-garde/canonized will also be able to deal with the trivial. Professor Fokkema does not go into that question, but his answer can be predicted. He will doubt any shifts here. But I am pretty confident from whatever knowledge I have of reading behaviour that such shifts are quite normal. I was told that the English poet W. H. Auden once passed on a batch of thrillers to the Bengali poet Buddhadeva Bose on board a flight inside India as an antidote to boredom. Apparently Auden was quite fond of such reading, while Buddhadeva Bose had not only no liking but a positive aversion to it. And we can quote scores of Auden and not many Buddhadeva Boses. The point is, however distinct our semiotic behaviour may be with respect to these two different semiotic areas, we are complex human psyches, and what looks distinct on the surface may not be all that distinct in the depths. So we should not perhaps speak of two different semiotic communities responding to the canonical and the non-canonical, but of two different semiotic behaviours, even if they coexist in the same psyche.

As regards the avant-garde, and, as I said above, Professor Fokkema's focus is on the avant-garde, he has fully identified the semiotic codes of modernism and postmodernism, but as sociocodes, not period codes. However, modernism and *post*-modernism do presuppose an obvious temporality and do not merely exist as individual sociocodes. In other words, they have a periodic link, for if modernism had not been there, postmodernism would not have followed. Besides, modernism too must have come after another sociocode, probably that of symbolism; and postmodernism too has already yielded to another code, whether pure post-postmodernism or new realism. So even though we are dealing with sociocodes, we cannot ignore the fact that they have a periodic connotation. What we may say, though, is that the particular sociocode is not the code

of the period as such but is surely one of the codes pertaining to the period. Perhaps the implication is that there is no one period code as such but that there is either a multiplicity or a duality of codes pertaining to a period. Are we then not to depict this multiplicity/duality? Or is it simply the multiplicity/duality of the codes of the avant-garde, the one-time avant-garde now canonized, and the trivial?

But there is a problem here, and Professor Fokkema seems to have sensed it, which explains his caution. What is a period? Are there clear determinants to define it? We often go according to the almanac and speak of centuries or decades. Again, we are analogical and take our cue from political history. At various times we have adopted various principles of periodization, but all as it were by proxy. For there probably is not anything as such called the literary period. In Indian literary history for instance, apropos of the nineteenth century—almanac and more—a historiographer of Professor Sisir Kumar Das's eminence cannot help reverting to such segments as 1800 (Fort William College) to 1835 (Macaulay's Education Minute); 1835 to 1857 (the foundation of three universities in the three presidencies); 1857 to 1885 (the foundation of the Indian National Congress); 1885 to 1910 (the publication of Tagore's *Gora*). He could not have been more thorough, and yet only one of these dates is purely literary. On our B.A. Honours syllabus at Jadavpur we have been pretty arbitrary with reference to Western literary history, though confined more or less to literary dates: A.D. 800–1400–1616–1749–1832–1910–. But surely this cannot be called periodization in any scientific sense. In the Bengali poetry, from the so-called moderns or from the thirties of this century the counting has been done in terms of decades without of course any sanction of a one to one correspondence between decades and styles. Still the search is there. Thus, if we cognize the absence of autonomous literary periods and periodize literary history by analogy or for convenience or arbitrarily, we will have to arrive at an understanding of our chosen periods by means of the unity or the plurality of codes that may prevail. If by our choice a certain period fully overlaps with one literary movement, then the sociocode will do for the period code. If not, we will have to pull together the plurality of codes. That will be a

minor modification of Professor Fokkema's method. For, if we simply go by sociocodes and not look for period codes, then our literary history may be partial, a history so to speak from 'above'.

It is true that literary history is not a surrogate history for literary events, that its task is not merely to lay down the chronicle of literature. Yet as history its aim is to understand the literary processes as laid out in time. That means, a literary historiography is in perfect order, though not necessarily a copy of general historiography. Obviously, as literary historians our responsibility is not merely to juxtapose the different diachronies but also to collect the synchronies out of them. Now, if literary facts were like natural facts, then a mapping together of the diachronies would have been enough for evincing the synchronies. But whatever laws literary facts may have of their own they are human acts, subject to human consistencies and inconsistencies. Literary historiography cannot therefore be a simple matrix, regular and predictable. Besides, in this country we have an extra problem. We are largely engaged in fitting a historiography to a mass of material for which it was not in the first place designed. True, historiography is a science and is thus universally applicable. But it is a human science which limits its universal applicability to human particularities. In other words, we must adapt this human science to the Indian situation. We cannot import categories, lock, stock and barrel. Renaissance, literary Renaissance, that is, was once our favourite apropos of nineteenth century Indian literature. There was a surge no doubt under the Western impact and perhaps a certain social transformation, but whether it took the quality of European 'Renaissance' is now doubted. Instead of anything as blanket as that, we are thinking now in terms of the conjunct category of continuity and change. Similarly, in respect of 'modernism', we cannot ignore that under a fresh Western impact between the twenties and the fifties of this century, and maybe with further social change, we *have* developed a degree of modernism; but is there no touch of bad faith in it, is it as comfortably pitted against canon as in the West? The point is, how smooth or how unfaltering will be our use of the term modernism? It also carries a consequence: if

modernism is fully acceptable, has it not been time now that we began speaking of postmodernism? But are we going to? If literary history were a course of imperatives, then such questions would be superfluous. That they are not and weigh full serious with us is proof on the reverse that literary history is not a course of imperatives. Even the staunchest determinist would not make that claim.

The idea of history from 'below' is in this context purely metaphoric. In fact, before 'below-above' I should have spoken of 'contripetal-contrifugal'. But the connotation would not have differed. As I have hinted, this is also seen in the matter of diachrony-synchrony. If we come from epistemology to material, our job for the most part turns out to be fitting the material into the framework of epistemology. This takes on special proportions here because of our multilingualism and multiliterariness. Naturally we cannot be hundred per cent equipped for full synchrony—that is, we have to often begin with individual diachronies. But there is a risk here of going centrifugal, of taking the other diachronies as mirrors of our own. If the movement *prayogvad* in Hindi poetry was largely a reaction to the movement *pragativad*, then we might expect a similar conjunct in other Indian languages. But that might not have been the case in most Indian languages. In some there might not have been any *pragati-prayog* situation to start with. In one at least, my own Bengali, where a lot of *pragati* and a lot of *prayog* were recorded, there was no historical structure as such of *prayog* in reaction to *pragati*. In fact the Bengali *prayog* was prior to the Bengali *pragati* and was in no way inimical to the latter. Not only that, but some of the best progressives were also the most experimentalists. In the seeming lapse into *prayog* in one or two literary pockets after the first spell of *pragati* was over, there was more a search for purity than experimentalism and without much mobilization either. If we take *pragati* and *prayog* as the principal modes of Bengali poetry since the middle of the 1930s, then, apart from moments of convergence, there may have been more dialogic than dialectic between them.

Such instances may not be rare. But naturally this cannot be an argument for fetishizing diachronies and desisting from synchronies. On the contrary, we must insist on synchronies but

at a depth. Perhaps what a linguist friend of mine calls the 'Chomsky-revolution' (I am not aware if this is internationally recognized) may come in handy here. Anyway, my self-assigned task here is not to work out any literary history as such, but merely to raise the question of its science. And I seem to have moved wide of my initial issue arising out of Professor Fokkema's semiotic approach. To retrace my steps, what I mean by literary history from below is a centripetal historiography where the emphasis is not on the neatness of the design, but on the inclusiveness of the material. This inclusiveness is reflected in the accommodation at a given point in time of all varieties of texts as legitimate semiotic areas. It is also reflected in the acceptance of the possibility of interpenetration of these areas or of a variety of semiotic behaviour on the part of the reader. It rules out all tendencies towards closure and fosters utmost openness. But that is not to say that it fosters anarchy, for historical consciousness is by definition anti-anarchic. It is a search for order from within the phenomena themselves. It is a denial of any kind of telos. Thus it turns history into not an enumeration of facts, for no such enumeration is ultimately possible, nor an account of general laws, for such generalization is by necessity exclusive; it turns history into a discourse by means of which the historian tries his understanding of the enormity and the diversity of the phenomena. It is not unrelated to his other areas of understanding; for instance, to his understanding of the socio-political reality. That is, ideology may not be a deterrent to this area of pragmatics, as long as it does not put any closure on the consciousness.

Now, as a discourse literary history too has its code. But it is a code where the semantic and the syntactic are, I suppose, not more than the pragmatic. For the literary historian does not only talk to other literary historians. As a discourse maker he has a larger audience. In other words, the semiotic community created by his discourse is potentially open. That will keep his code ever enhancing. It should reverberate in an ever-widening consciousness. This, I think, is the primary credential for the literary historian from below.

Will you believe me if I say that I too have been trying to make an open discourse? That is, instead of keeping within the

code provided so admirably by Professor Douwe Fokkema in his Erasmus Lectures at Harvard in 1983, I have moved out, and probably proposed only tangentially related semantic and syntactic. But all, I hope, at the behest of my consciousness, the prime source of pragmatic in historiographic reflection.

—

Contributors

- Jayanti Chattopadhyay: Reader in Bengali, University of Delhi
K. Chellappan: Professor of English, Bharathidasan University
Indra Nath Choudhuri: Secretary, Sahitya Akademi
Sisir Kumar Das: Tagore Professor of Bengali, University of Delhi
Subha Dasgupta: Lecturer in Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University
Amiya Dev: Professor of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University
Marián Gálik: Fellow, Literary Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava
Shyama Prasad Ganguly: Associate Professor of Spanish, Jawaharlal Nehru University
Jaidev: Reader in English, Himachal Pradesh University
Nirmala Jain: Professor of Hindi, University of Delhi
Lachman M. Khubchandani: Fellow, Indian Institute of Advanced Study
Sukrita Paul Kumar: Fellow, Indian Institute of Advanced Study
Swapán Majumdar: Reader in Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University
Nishikant D. Mirajkar: Reader in Marathi, University of Delhi
Chandra Mohan: Lecturer in English, Delhi College of Arts and Commerce
Devinder Mohan: Reader in English, Panjab University
Bhalchandra Nemade: Professor of English, Goa University
Bholabhai Patel: Professor of Hindi, Gujarat University
Pabitra Kumar Roy: Fellow, Indian Institute of Advanced Study
Gurbhagat Singh: Professor of English, Panjabi University
Satendra R. Singh: Lecturer in English, Hansraj College, Delhi
Tan Chung: Professor of Chinese, Jawaharlal Nehru University
Yue Daiyun: Professor of Comparative Literature, Peking and Shenzhen Universities