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Edited by :

ASLOOB AHMAD ANSARI

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CONTENTS

and distinguishing marks. Hence as in a formal definition, we find that an image is defined by class and *differentiae*, form and qualities.

This becomes clear when we point to a cumulonimbus in the sky and call it 'a towering, thundering cloud.' Here the image is classified and differentiated. However, the attributes 'towering, thundering' are sufficient to represent the motion of a cloud; thus the parts or qualities themselves can evoke the image.

This potential becomes clearer if we use their qualities as participles in the phrase 'his towering, thundering rage.' Here, nature associations are used to picture someone's emotion, and the image becomes metaphoric. That is, the image translates and evokes a specific mood. Although the class (cloud) has disappeared, the *differentiae* (towering, thundering) suffice to conjure up the image. In this active use of image, it has become conceptual. Therefore, we may conclude that there are as many *kinds* of images as there are senses, and there are as many *degrees* of image as those senses can detect in range and refinement.

It is probable that vision is mainly responsible for intensive and extensive perceptions. It perceives changes in light, space, and movement. However, it also senses delicate differences. If it first registers form, vision also detects gradations of brightness and nuance of colour. This may be why we first classify and then differentiate. By contrast, the auditory, olfactory, tactile, organic, and kinesthetic primarily detect and discriminate among delicate sensations.

We may conclude then that our noetic sense of things comes mainly from vision, although it too is quite capable of noting subtleties, while our affective awareness comes essentially from all our other senses.[2] This conclusion permits us to speak of the form and the feeling of a literary work, where feeling implies all at once : touch, emotion, and organic-kinesthetic state-of-being.

In intellection it is probable that both perceptual synesthesia and simultaneous perception take place concurrently.

What I mean is that a concept is usually the result of synesthesia, i.e., the cooperative effort of all the senses to fashion the concept into form and feeling. Hence a concept is the result of the integration of perceptual images.

At the same time, an image becomes truly conceptual as a result of simultaneous perception. That is, in addition to synesthesia, the object perceived is compared trans-temporally with all objects like it that the mind can remember. This is what is meant by simultaneous perception, the verification of images in time. Without understanding the act of cognition, we can never hope to grasp the meaning of the temporal modulation in metaphoric fiction which finalizes into form.

The virginal and consummated history of the sensorial picture shows that images are conceived not so much spatially as consecutively. Since conceptual counterparts, like sensory images, are formed all at once through synesthesia and through simultaneous image-confirmation, this would suggest that what matters among images is their trans-causal or trans-temporal relations.

This suggestion seems borne out by the realization that the true power and purpose of images in literature is to conjure up memories and to arouse expectations. Moreover, the way images function reminds one remarkably of E. Lambert's *Rückwendungen* (recollections) and *Vorausdeutungen* (foreshadowing) which as fictional techniques unite the past with the present and at times predict the future [3] Hence virtual images in literature are used not only for their meanings, but also for their ability to evoke mystery, memory, intimation, and the aura of prophecy,

These powers become evident when we realize that images are experienced in two main ways: in retrospect and in prospect.

Certain representations magnetize our attention because they seem surcharged with special meaning. Once a poem or tale has been read, these images beckon us to uncover the

reason they seemed to fulfil a particular purpose in the total experience of the story. Such we may call 'images in retrospect.' On the other hand, those images which impress us before the reading is completed are 'images in prospect.' These not only elicit expectations but also lead us to sense what the final experience will be. In other words, they seem signs and omens of a future significance. Both kinds of image are electric with temporal and transcendental meaning. Both modulate us through time till we realize they have changed us—either by intensifying our experience or by broadening our vision of the world.

Metaphor rests on the copulative *is* which has a deceptive semantic stability. Although the word *is* seems a perfectly clear basis for comparison in a sentence as 'The circle is round', it is hardly so in such a statement as 'My girl is beautiful.' Obviously context determines whether this copulative is to be understood in a noetic or affective way.

Then again the word *is* may replace sense copulatives as *feel, look, smell, sound, taste.* This fact is important when we recall that they function in characteristic ways which are antithetical. For instance, in such sentences as : 'The flower smelled sweet'. 'The milk tasted sour', 'The man felt angry', the copulatives are 'objective' in being rooted in the empirical, for the statements may be confirmed or denied by our senses. On the other hand, to the degree that these copulatives express doubt, opinion or feeling, they communicate vague notions and evoke ambivalent responses.

Furthermore, these copulatives vary in their so-called 'objectivity' or 'subjectivity' to the degree that they correspond to different senses. Words specifically associated with sight (*look, appear, seem*) express a degree of certainty in such sentences as 'This seems right', 'It appears unavoidable', 'She looks well.' However, these same sight words express doubt and evoke ambiguity because *seem, look* and *appear* also imply that there may be a very different reality beneath the appearance of things.

In addition to its ability to supplant sense copulatives, the word *is* embodies other properties and powers. It can indicate a transition or transformation from one state or condition to another as the copulative *become*. In such sentences as 'He became an artist', 'She became a mother', and 'The youth became a man' is the realization of a later, superior or more accomplished state, and the word *is* may imply this metamorphosis.

With the copulative *feel*, we have a term with a wide range of application, for it refers to the sense of touch, the visceral and to one's general state of being. Clearly the word *is* may replace *feel* in such representative declarations as 'The material feels soft', 'She feels sick' and 'He feels melancholy'.

Therefore, the word *is* is capable of taking the place of the copulatives of sight *(seem, appear look)*, those of sense *(taste, sound, smell)*, that of process *(become)*, and that of sensation-conception *(feel)*. Whenever we use *is* to supercede other copulatives, we see that the statement is made more emphatic, more certain, more stable — in appearance almost fixed and unquestionable. However, since all the copulatives which *is* may replace also register a degree of doubt, condition or contingency, the word *is* evokes antithetical responses and actually communicates both noetic and affective notions.

Finally, we need to mention the fact that sense copulatives have the power to act reflexively ('She looked angry'.) and transitively ('She looked at the flower'). Because of this potency, they possess a transformational power denied regular transitive verbs.

Since metaphor is based on the copulative *is*, metaphor expresses and evokes both noetic and affective modes of understanding.[4] Furthermore, since the copulative *is* embodies the translation and transformation of experience, metaphor has the same powers.

This fact becomes clearer if we contrast a comparison to a metaphor. For example, in the comparison 'The book is a dictionary', the statement serves logical purposes where the

species (dictionary) refers back to, is contained and confirmed by its class (book). Here the word *is* functions to translate. On the other hand, in the metaphoric clause

> My beloved is a black lilac,
> Scenting a Persian dream . . .

something out of the ordinary happens. Grammatically speaking, the word *is* functions differently here because it both *translates* a state or condition (the loved one is a flower) and *transforms* because the mysterious flower reveals some unforgettable quality of the beloved.

In other words, metaphor sets up a *conditional* world. The poet is saying *'If* you were in love as I am, *then* this woman would seem as a black lilac to you.' By the addition of '. . . scenting a Persian dream . . .', the poet means she seems this way in his exotic dreams.

However, the metaphor calls forth in us specific psychological effects as well. To begin with, the main image ('black lilac') creates a tension by upsetting our expectation, for no lilac in nature is black. Hence the image presents the reader with an enigma. Since the colour black connotes night, death, or evil, why is the poet's beloved associated with these obscure or ominous forces? The metaphor requires a Janus glance such as 'my beloved'←→'black lilac'. The reader continuously attempts to equate 'my beloved' with 'black lilac', or unite concept with perception, genus with species. Obviously, they do not fit together logically.[5]

Metaphor disrupts expected context. This must mean that it is an intentional distortion tending to break up normal syntax. Indeed, metaphoric language appears a wilful fragmentation and re-integration of language, a purposeful dis-association of sensations and images pulled together again by the adhesion of mood. This means then that metaphor not only records and transmutes experience; it embodies a vision which evokes a mutation of feeling in the reader because his own memories and responses are challenged. The reader must re-discover his own psychic depths if he is to recover the

meaning of the metaphor.

We may say then that the meta-logic of the metaphor fuses the perceptual and conceptual images into a pristine synthesis of feeling and form held in balance by emotive adhesion and syntactical cohesion.[6] Since the conscious use of metaphor is to express feeling as much as idea, metaphor is an image metamorphized by mystery and mood into a psycho-semantic significance. Hence metaphor is a modality of mood-meaning. If, as we enter its world, there seems a trend to disorder, disruption and complexity in metaphoric language, we learn in the end that a retrospective vision has shaped, directed and realized it into a suggestive semantic. In the same way, the images and symbols in metaphoric fiction unite and fashion experience into its ultimate forms.

The term *symbol* is used to describe an object typifying a quality, abstract idea, or the like. Employed consciously in literature, the word *symbol* has a complex meaning. 'This term ...refers to a manner of representation in which what is shown . . . means, by virtue of association, something more or something else . . . Thus a literary symbol unites an image and an idea or conception which that image suggests or evokes. . .'[7]

If we are to seize a fresh understanding of the term, however, we must re-examine our own experience of it. Let us proceed from the example we used under metaphor.

> My beloved is a black lilac
> Scenting a Persian dream . . .

By reason of the unfamiliar associations it evokes, the phrase 'black lilac' represents a more advanced stage of meaning or a richer concentration of significance.[8] Everyday experience warns us that the flower either must be supernatural or one born of imagination. Through the flower the poet is obviously seeking to convey some emotional or mystical meaning beyond the empirical or literal realities. The multi-meaning of symbol challenges the reader's intelligence and vigilance because it transforms his expectancies and experience.

However, from metaphor to symbol, does a further transformation take place ?

To help answer this, a brief glance at Christian symbolism may serve our purposes. In the medieval period when illiteracy dominated the Western world, the Church sought to instruct the people through a vast encyclopedia of symbols. Everything recalled or conjured up the most important event in the history of man—the descent of God upon the earth, his assuming flesh and bone, his terrible suffering as a human being, his death, resurrection, and final Ascension. This event or story is the context for nearly all religious symbols employed in the age.

To mention only the most familiar. Christian symbolism included : *animals* (the donkey, ox, dragon, fish, lamb, and dove) ; *plants* (the apple, tree, palm, rose, lily, and thorns) ; *colours* (blue, red, gold, green, purple, and white) ; *people* (the Christchild, Christ on the Cross, the four evangelists, fishermen) as well as *objects* and *concepts* (bread, fountain, books, demons, garden, hand, crib, nails, sword, staff, left and right, and numbers).

If we arbitrarily choose a few to search for a clue to the transformation they incarnate, we find the fish a symbol of Christ because the Greek word *ICHTHYS* (fish) represented the early Christian password *J*esous *Ch*ristos *T*heou *Hy*ios *S*oter. The dove represents the Holy Ghost in its obvious associations with flight, gentle presence, and the angelic. The apple reminds us of the sin of Adam and Eve and God's law but also, in paintings where the Christchild reaches for the apple, it is a symbol of His readiness to take upon Himself the sins of the world. The crown of thorns worn by Christ represents the sins He must bear for mankind. Near the Virgin a lily symbolizes her immaculate conception. The red garment Mary wears in medieval paintings symbolizes the blood of the sacrifice, and her blue garment recalls air, truth, the breath of life, and the Saviour Himself. Ears of corn or sheafs of wheat depict the bread of life, the Eucharist bread or Christ's body. Hence for the faithful, every symbol re-evoked the Event, his feelings for Christ and all the memories of those feelings.

What energizes these animals, plants, colours, people, objects, and concepts to become true symbols ? What empowers an image to transform into a symbol so as always to call forth a certain context ?

The change from image through metaphor to symbol occurs when an image becomes the sign of an unforgettable event. An image becomes memorable when it recalls the danger a man has passed through. It often reminds us of the power of death, and indirectly it reveals the cause and purpose of human destiny.

In order to survive and yet remain sane, the body imposes a hierarchy of vigilance upon us. Ordinary perceptual and conceptual images evoke a low degree of attention. We tend to ignore these, except if our need or their intensity puts us on the alert. An intense image automatically causes us to compare it with remembered bodily sensations. A conscious acknowledgment of the image means it has forced us to come to terms with it, and hence it produces a certain degree of danger or hope.

A metaphor does not equate a class with a species as in 'My house is a bungalow'. Rather, it affirms that two persons or things share a mutual quality, condition, or state. When a poet says, 'My love is a burning sunset', he is equating what is common between two phenomena: their fiery intensity, the multicoloured sensations they call forth, and the insight that the love, like the day, is slowly ending, never to return. The analogy emphasizes only what in the thing is powerful, striking, or indelible. If we take note of an image because of the imminence we associate with it, the metaphor illustrates the more immediate and impending.

A symbol is an image translated beyond metaphor into a complex, trans-causal and trans-temporal meaning. A conscious image calls forth an imminent degree of consciousness, a metaphor evokes an impending degree, and a symbol transcends these anterior stages, freeing them from contingency and doubt, by having found its final destiny. Hence the

imminent event has transformed the image and metaphor into a symbol with metaphysical meaning. Symol is an image-metaphor which has attained its essence.

Symbolization means then that an image must affect us before we can arrive at a new noetic state. The symbol is noetic in its ability to convey the same general experience, the memory and meaning of the event, whereas it is affective in recalling the anxiety or sorrow which found release in the death, change, or transfiguration of the hero. The symbol realizes its entelechy by seeking out its teleological purpose.

This comparative and superlative transformation of image and metaphor to symbol greatly resembles the idiomatic use we make : of adjectives (fine, finer, finest), of adverbs (swift, swifter, swiftest), and of verbs (walk, run, sprint). Such comparisons evoke degrees of the affective whereas the superlative affirms a noetic stage has been attained. In a like manner, metaphoric metamorphoses bear a striking resemblance to verbal concretization. For instance, gradations from the abstract to the specific (as man, soldier, general, Dwight D. Eisenhower) summon up corresponding degrees of interest and attention. Hence both literal and figurative language appear to function to evoke affective and noetic degrees of consciousness and understanding.

Therefore the symbol is a superlative form by reason of its *complexity* (it is trans-historical and trans-causal); by reason of its *intensity* (it can convey the same meanings to an event despite great spans of time); and by reasons of its *completeness* (it is a final transformation).

This potency leads us to comprehend that an image may go through successive stages to find final realization in a symbol. Like the hero in fiction seeking his purpose in the cosmos, the reader too may discover the ultimate meaning of his life in an image, metaphor or symbol.

Department of English
Free University of Iran
Tehran.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. J. T. Shipley, ed., *Dictionary of World Literature*, (Patterson, New Jersey, 1962), p. 219.
2. Whenever possible I have avoided using the words 'objective' and 'subjective' because they have become too ambiguous for the scrupulous and sensitive discussion of literary works. For a more precise vocabularly, the reader may wish to look up the terms 'indicative' and 'subjunctive' as employed in my dissertation, *The Subjective-Indicative Modality, A Contribution toward a Theory of Literature*, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, 1969.
3. Eberhard Lambert, *Bauformen des Erzahlens* (Stuffgart, 19[illegible]5).
4. The reader may wish to explore this subject further in chapter 8, 'Metaphor as mood, state of mind, and sybmol' and in chapter 9, 'Metaphor as Bond, Symbol, and Archetype' of my book, *A Philosophy of Literary Critcism, Volume I, Patterns of Comparison*, Exposition Press, N.Y., 1974.
5. The logical problem is that the genus cannot truly contain the species.
6. Idea predominates in prose; feeling holds sway in poetry.
7. A. Preminger, ed., *Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (New Jersey, 1965), p. 833.
8. Cf. William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (New York, 1966).

Piloo Nanavutty

BLAKE AND GNOSTIC LEGENDS

Denis Saurat, in *Blake and Modern Thought*, published in 1929, has shown some of the parallels between Blake and the Gnostics. Saurat's main sources are J. L. Mosheim's *Commentaries on the Affairs of the Christians before the time of Constantine the Great*, published in Latin at Helmstad in 1755. Mosheim was a popular author, and the three volumes of his Commentaries give a very full account of the Gnostics and their beliefs based on what the Church Fathers had written of them earlier.

Not only does Mosheim give information about the eighteenth century editions of his primary sources, the Church Fathers, but he is constantly referring to the critical works on Gnosticism by scholars of his own day. Among these are Jacques Basnage's *History of the Jews*, published in French in 1716, and almost immediately translated into English by Thomas Taylor and published in London, 1718; J. Bingham's *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, London, 1726; and Isaac de Beausobre's *Histoire critique de Manichée et du Manichéisme*, Amsterdam, 1734-39, 2 vols. Although Beausobre's main concern is with Manes and his doctrines, in the second volume of his study there is a detailed discussion on Basilides, Marcion and Bardesanes, well-known Gnostics who had formed separate schools in their day. One may recall that such books and their like were the theme of perpetual discussion at the Swedenborgian circles which Blake frequented.

The interest shown in Gnostic thought in the first half of the eighteenth century was continued and extended to the Coptic Gnostic manuscripts themselves. C G. Woide, the well-known Coptic scholar of the century, and Assistant Librarian

of the British Museum, made transcripts of several codices, such as the Bruce MS 96 at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, an English translation of which was not made till Charlotte A. Baynes published her work, entitled *A Coptic Gnostic Treatise* (Cambridge University Press, England) in 1933. Woide also transcribed certain Coptic manuscripts in the British Museum.

A very genuine interest in Coptic must have been evident in England, for George III was persuaded by Lord North and others to give Woide, a Pole, a subsidy to study Sahidic at Paris (1773-4). This enabled Woide on his return to England, to read, decipher and transcribe, many of the Gnostic documents written in Sahidic.

Unfortunately, Woide published very little in his life-time. In 1775, Oxford University brought out the *Lexicon Aegyptiaco-Latinum* which M. V. la Croze had drawn up and Christianus Schlotz had revised, and to which Woide added notes and indices. Three years later, in 1778, the Clarendon Press, Oxford, published, under Woide's supervision, Schlotz's *Grammatica Aegyptica utriusque Dialecti*, the Sahidic portion of the work being entirely Woide's.

In 1782 Woide was appointed Assistant Librarian to the British Museum, and in 1786, by order of the Trustees, John Nicols published a beautiful and expensive edition of a facsimile of the *Novum Testamentum Graecum* from the *Codex Alexandrinus*, or Codex A, at the British Museum. On May 5, 1786, Woide presented a copy to George III. Blake, who had his Bible always at hand and consulted it 'in several different languages,' as J. T. Smith, in *Nollekens and his Times*, mentions, probably saw a copy at John Johnsons's, the bookseller at St. Paul's Churchyard, at whose weekly dinners Blake met such men as Godwin, Tom Paine and Fuseli.

My two most exciting discoveries may now be mentioned. In that obscure and learned work, the *Grammatica Aegyptica utriusque Dialecti*, published in 1778, there are some curious plates engraved in black and white at the end of the volume. One of

these plates has the signature of Basire from whom Blake learnt to engrave. My second discovery relates to the publication of the *Appendix to the Alexandrian Codex*, begun by Woide and completed by Henry Ford, Reader in Arabic to the University of Oxford, and published at Oxford in 1799, nine years after Woide's death. The *Appendix* gives the first published reference to the acquirement of the *Askew Codex*, Codex A, by the British Museum in 1785. The Codex is now known as the *Pistis Sophia*, pistis meaning faith, and sophia divine wisdom. Woide made a transcript of the manuscript, and translated into Latin five out of the thirteen penitential psalms which Pistis Sophia sings for her deliverance. As far as I am aware, the first complete English translation of the *Pistis Sophia* was not made till 1896, when G. R. S. Mead published his book of that name.

Considering that Blake was apprenticed to James Basire from 1771-1778, and considering that Woide transcribed the text of the *Pistis Sophia*, and translated into Latin five of her penitential hymns, it is not unreasonable to believe that Blake may have known the contents of the Pistis Sophia and the Bruce MS 96. Besides, the mastery of such books as the *Lexicon Aegyptiaco-Latinum* and the *Grammatica Aegyptica utriusque Dialecti* would have enabled any individual to read the Gnostic documents themselves. Moreover, it is highly probable that sects such as the Swedenborgians, the Behmenites, the Rosicrucians and others would have invited men like Woide to talk to them on the contents of the Coptic Gnostic MSS of wich transcripts had been made. As one might expect, Woide belonged to several learned societies, as W.P. Courtney points out. No doubt, Woide lectured to these societies. He also attended numerous *conversaziones* where he is likely to have been questioned on his work. In this way, accounts of the contents of the Gnostic manuscripts may have been made known to a fairly wide public.

Nor should one forget that the Church Fathers were widely read throughout Europe, as the various editions of their works in the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries bear witness. Milton studied them carefully. Blake, who was so familiar

with Milton's works and greatly influenced by them, could hardly have failed to be struck by the following sentence from the *Areopagitica* :

> Who finds not that Iranaeus, Epiphanius, Jerome, and others discover more heresies than they can well confute, and that oft for heresy, which is the true opinion ?

Blake was probably in sympathy with Milton on this point, for Milton was being unorthodox in asserting that the Gnostic tenets were not heresies but truths. As Blake rebelled against the conventional interpretation of Christ's teachings, Milton's attitude towards the Gnostics would have appealed to him very much.

If there had not been such a keen interest in the writings of the Church Fathers it is highly unlikely that they would have been re-edited, and almost certain that these recent editions of their works would not have been mentioned in such a popular book as Mosheim's *Commentaries*.

II

I shall now compare the story of the Pistis Sophia with the ideas and imagery found in the Prophetic Books, showing how greatly Blake was influenced by the Gnostics.

Here is the story of the Pistis Sophia as found in the writings of the Church Fathers.

Irenaeus in his *Adversus Hereses* tells us that the Primary Aeon called Proarche, Propator or Bythus, projected in male and female pairs, the following : Nous (intelligence) and Altheia (truth). Nous and Altheia projected Logos and Zoe (the word and life), who in turn projected Anthropos and Ecclesia (Man and the Church). These make up the first Ogdoad. Even so, in Blake, the Four Zoas and their female counterparts make single entities : Los-Enitharmon, Urizen-Ahania, Luvah-Vala, Tharmas-Enion.

Logos and Zoe after producing Anthropos and Ecclesia, produce ten other pairs of Aeons, thus forming the Valentinian Dodecad. Anthropos and Ecclesia in turn produce six pairs

of Aeons, the last of these being Theletos and Sophia. These make up the thirty Aeons of the Pleroma or Fulness.

The Valentinians taught that only Nous, who sprang directly from the Heavenly Father, had immediate knowledge of Him, while to the other Aeons He was unknown. But, according to the Father's will, the other Aeons desired to know Him, but Sophia had this passion independently of her partner, Theletos, here personifying 'the Divine will and intention in Sophia's regard,' to quote Valentinus. She strove to approach the Father and enter into direct communion with Him. She also yearned to search into and comprehend the Father's nature and to copy Him in every way. Seeing that the other Aeons emanated beings through conjugal intercourse, but that the Father alone begat from Himself, Sophia also wished to copy Him in this, with the result that she became inovlved in ignorance and suffering and was in danger of being altogether dissolved, having transgressed the Divine limits placed round a created being.

Not having the power of the Unbegotten One, Sophia projected a formless, deficient substance, 'a formless fruit' to quote the original text. This 'formless fruit' had no masculine counterpart. This projection of Sophia was also named the Abortion or Ectroma, the idea being that she brought forth an abortive image of a perfect Aeon, herself.

Sophia was now thrown into great agony of mind, while the other Aeons, fearing that what was subsequently born from them would be equally formless and imperfect, were thrown into confusion, fear and ignorance.

The Father now ordered Nous and Altheia to project Christ and the Holy Spirit to bring back order inside the Pleroma, and Sophia was separated from her Ectroma.

The Father now projected another limit to act as a boundary separating the Pleroma from the Void or Hysterema into which the Ectroma had fallen:

> Then that the shapelessness of Ectroma might no way be apparent to the perfect Aeons, the Father again projected one Aeon (to wit)

the Cross, who having been born great from the great and perfect Father and projected as a guard and palisade to the Aeons, becomes the limit of the Pleroma containing within him all the thirty Aeons together . . . And he is called Horos because he separates the Pleroma from the Void (Hysterema) without; and Metocheus because he partakes also in the Hysterema, and Stauros because he is fixed unbendingly and unchangeably so that nothing from the Hysterema can abide near the Aeons who are within the Pleroma.

(*Hippol.*, VI. 31)

These limits are further explained in the *Excerptus ex Theodoto* 42:

The Stauros is the sign of the Boundary (or Horos) of the Pleroma. As Horos divides the lower world from the Pleroma so the Stauros separates the faithful from the unfaithful.

Horos restores the Mother Sophia to the Pleroma.

Once harmony and peace are restored within the Pleroma, all the Aeons glorify the Father and in gratitude for their deliverance offer to Him the joint Fruit of the pleroma, called Jesus. Now Christ and the Aeons in the Pleroma have compassion on the Ectroma, henceforth called the Sophia Without. She is in great perplexity. They send her Jesus as a spouse and he corrects her four passions : 'grief, fear, terror and ignorance'. Jesus imparts to her 'enformation in respect of Gnosis' and heals her passions, 'separating them from her but not so as to drive them out of thought altogether.' He next commingles and condenses these passions 'so as to transmute them from incorporeal passion into unorganised matter' so that they become 'concretions and corporeal structures'.

From the Sophia Without proceeds the Demiurgus who is all 'animal' or, as Hippolytus describes him, 'mindless and foolish.' He has the ordering of the physical universe and thinks he has created the Cosmos, boasting: 'I am God, and besides me there is none other' (*Hippol.*, VI. 33). The Sophia Without or Achamoth, however, corrects the opinion of the Demiurgus and persuades him to work with her in making all mankind turn again to the Father.

From Achamoth and Demiurgus proceed the three classes of men, 'spiritual, material and animal', or, in the original Gnostic terms, the pneumatic, the psychic, and the hylic.

The Valentinian story of the fall and redemption of Sophia elucidates many passages of Blake's Prophetic Books. Just as Sophia, without the help of her Syzygy or partner, can only produce an Abortion in trying to beget like the Unbegotton Father, so Urizen, in the *First Book of Urizen*, attempts to be like God, with the result that his world teems only with

> Portions of life, similitudes
> Of a foot or a hand or a head
> Or a heart or an eye. (*Urizen* : VIII.2)

Just as Sophia is incomplete apart from her partner Theletos, so Urizen is incomplete apart from his Emanation, Ahania.

Just as Pistis Sophia separates herself from her partner and creates an abortive creation of her own, a 'formless fruit', so Urizen creates his own abortive creation. And just as the other Aeons in the Pleroma are disturbed at the action of Pistis Sophia, even so the Eternals are indignant at the world of horrors created by Urizen. Just as Christ and the Holy Spirit separate Pistis Sophia and her 'formless fruit' from the Pleroma, so Urizen is separated from the Eternals :

> And Los round the dark globe of Urizen
> Kept watch for Eternals to confine
> The obscure separation alone ;
> For Eternity stood wide apart,
> As the stars are apart from the earth. (*Urizen* : III. 8)

The enclosing of Sophia in a space so as to separate her from her offspring, the Ectroma, can be compared with the enclosing of Urizen and Los by 'a cold solitude and dark void', which separates Urizen not only from the Enternals, but also from his abortive creation :

> a cold solitude and dark void
> The Eternal Prophet and Urizen clos'd (*Urizen:* V.4)

But it is in following Blake's symbol, Satan, that the terms 'space' and 'limits' are found charged with Gnostic significance.

At the very first mention of Satan in the Prophetic Books, the terms, 'Limit of Opacity' and 'Limit of Contraction' are used in connection with him. In *Vala*, Night IV, Blake describes how the corpse of Albion lies on the Rock of Ages, vegetating in 'monstrous forms of Death,' till Jesus comes and fixes the limits of human error and the limits of human weakness, so that eventually mankind may be redeemed from those states :

> The Saviour mild and gentle bent over the corse of Death,
> Saying 'If ye will Believe, your brother shall rise again.'
> And first he found the Limit of Opacity, and named it Satan,
> In Albion's bosom, for in every human bosom these limits stand.
> And next he found the Limit of Contraction, and nam'd it Adam,
> While yet those beings were not born nor knew of good or Evil,

Just as Horos surrounds the entire Pleroma and is said to contain it, so Satan is the 'Limit of Opacity,' because he contains within himself all human errors in their entirety.

Adam, the 'Limit of Contraction,' can be compared to the Gnostic Stauros or Cross, shaped like the letter, T, which forms a palisade round the Ectroma, or Sophia Without, preventing her from falling into the Abyss below. Even so, Blake's 'Limit of Contraction', symbolised in Adam, prevents man from falling below that state.

Again, in the Satan-Palambron myth, described in great detail by Blake in the first book of *Milton*, Enitharmon forms a space for Satan to protect him from his enemies:

> Enitharmon saw his tears . . .
> She form'd a space for Satan...
> Trembling she wept over the Space and clos'd it with a tender Moon. (*Milton* : I. 8)

Blake names the Space, Canaan, and describes it thus :

> The nature of a Female Space is this : it shrinks the Organs
> Of Life till they become Finite and Itself seems Infinite.
> (*Milton* : I. 11)

This is a very apt description of what the Stauros must have appeared to the Sophia Without. It is not surprising to find that a dozen lines after the description of the Female Space Blake actually lapses into using the Gnostic term, Eon, instead of 'Emanation.'

> He (Satan) set his face against Jerusalem to destory the Eon
> of Albion. (*Milton* : I. 12)

Again, in the early chapters of *Jerusalem*, Blake absentmindedly lapses into using the term, Eon. Albion

> wanders up and down
> Seeking for rest and finding none ! and hidden far within,
> His Eon weeping in the cold and desolated Earth.
> (*Jerusalem* : I. 19)

In the same Prophetic Book, Blake describes the 'sick Albion'

> Torn with black storms and ceaseless torrents of his own
> consuming fire,
> Within his breast his mighty Sons chain'd down and fill'd
> with cursings,
> And his dark Eon, that once fair crystal form divinely clear,
> Within his ribs producing serpents whose souls are flames of fire.
> (*Jerusalem* : II. 40)

The condensing of the passions of the Sophia Without, or Achamoth as she is now called, into hard concretions of matter, resembles the way in which the Spectre Sons of Albion condense their emanations.

> Hand and Hyle and Koban, Skofeld, Kox and Kotope
> labour mightily
> In the Wars of Babel and Shinar; all their Emanations
> were condens'd...
> . . . for the mighty Hand
> Condens'd his Emanations into hard, opake substances,
> And his infant thoughts and desires into cold dark cliffs of death.
> (*Jerusalem* : I. 8)

The uncompromising assertion of the Gnostics that Man *is* God, and God *is* Man, is also made by Blake. Iraneus, discussing the Ptolemaic School of Valentinians, says :

> There are yet others among them who declare that the Fore-father of the Wholes, the Fore-Source and the Primal-Unimaginable one is called Man (Anthropos) and that this is the great and abstruse mystery, namely, that the power which is above all others and contains the wholes in his embrace is termed Man : hence does the Saviour also style himself Son of Man.
>
> (*Iren.* I. vi. 3)

Again, Epiphanius, speaking of the Father of Truth, writes:

> The perfect ones named him in a familiar way, 'Man,' because he was the antitype of the pre-existing Unbegotten One.
>
> (*Panar.* 31. 5)

This assertion is also found in the Bruce MS 96 which Woide transcribed :

> And they understood the Mystery that became Man—because for this he was manifested, till they saw HIM who is indeed indivisible.

The Gnostic description of Christ as 'the power which is above all others and contains the wholes in his embrace,' and being termed Man, is typical of Blake's conception of Christ throughout the Prophetic Books. Perhaps, the most uncompromising statement is to be found in the *Everlasting Gospel* :

> And when he Humbled himself to God,
> Then descended the Cruel Rod.
> 'If thou humblest thyself, thou humblest me;
> Thou also dwell'st in Eternity.
> Thou art a Man, God is no more,
> Thy own humanity learn to adore,
> For that is my Spirit of Life. (*Everlasting Gospel*, d)

Further resemblances between Blake and the Gnostics are found when we turn to the Askew Codex, Codex A, which Woide transcribed, and from which he translated into Latin five out of the thirteen hymns sung by Pistis Sophia.

The Askew Codex contains five principal documents, as well as a fragment which may or may not have once formed a part of them. The first two documents can be read consecutively, and relate the story of Pistis Sophia. It is with these that the Prophetic Books show the most startling parallels, though resemblances between Blake and the other documents are also found.

The First Document opens with an introduction in narrative form, which informs us that after rising from the dead, Jesus spent eleven years in teaching his disciples the arrangement of the heavenly places as far as the First Mystery. While he is sitting with his disciples on the Mount of Olives, there comes upon him a 'Great Power of Light' which is the 'vesture' or Heavenly Nature which he had left in the Limit or Lower Boundary of the Upper Worlds on his descent to earth. This Light carries him away from his disciples. He flies up into the Height, and when he reaches the Boundary, he there assumes two other vestures which are necessary to enable him to continue to the two transcendental places which are higher than the Boundary.

The next day, Jesus clad in three vestures of dazzling light, returns to his disciples and tells them the story of the Pistis Sophia, describing the journey upward through the First Sphere directly above the Firmament, the Second, called Destiny, and the Twelve Aeons, which may be the signs of the Zodiac. The Kings or Tyrants of these Aeons rebel against Jesus, so he punishes them by taking away a third part of their power and altering their course so that mankind will no longer be able to foretell the future by means of the astrology and magic taught to them by the sinning angels.

Leaving their Place, Jesus ascends to the thirteenth Aeon and finds below it, Pistis Sophia, all alone, that is, without her syzygy or partner. She is mourning and grieving because she cannot get back to the thirteenth Aeon from which she fell when she left her spouse to pursue a light which she saw before her, and which she thought would enable her to mount to the Treasure-house of Light. This Treasure-house is in the Place

below the First Mystery, and in it the light taken from matter is stored.

The light which Sophia saw, however, was a false light sent into Chaos by one of the material Powers immediately above her. On her attempting to seize this light, she was set upon by violent emanations sent by that same evil power, so that she was deprived of her own light and could not return to her place in the thirteenth Aeon. In this misery, she sings penitential hymns to the 'Light of Lights,' to come to her aid. After the seventh hymn, Jesus, of his 'own self in mercifulness,' brings Sophia to a place 'widened a little in the Chaos' where she is more at ease. Finally, after the ninth 'Penitence,' Jesus is ordered by the First Mystery to help Sophia. He calls into being several new Powers who go into the Chaos to her assistance. They form a crown of light to her head so that her tormentors dare not come near her.

The archangels, Gabriel and Michael, now come to help Sophia. This rouses the 'self-willed God' (note the Gnostic phrase), and the other Powers in Chaos to make a fresh assault upon Sophia. Jesus then orders Michael and Gabriel to carry Pistis Sophia out of the Chaos, while he himself descends thither and smites her tormentors and renders them powerless to follow her. He then leads Sophia to the 'Place below the thirteenth Aeon' where he finds her on his ascension from the Mount of Olives. He warns her that she will again be tormented when the Gate of the Treasure-house of Light is set open. Apparently, this occurs when Jesus puts on his vesture of light. He then routs her enemies for the last time and restores her to her original Place in the thirteenth Aeon. Sophia sings her thirteenth, and final, song, not, this time, of repentance, but of praise and thanksgiving.

Such, in brief, is the story of Pistis Sophia as related in the Askew Codex. We can now examine the resemblances between this text and Blake's Prophetic Books.

The first striking resemblance is in the description of the 'veils' and 'gates' which open themselves to Christ as he

passes through various transcendental spheres, clothed in his dazzling vesture of light. These veils and gates are like those gates in Blake's City of Golgonooza, the city of Imagination and Art, which open on all sides inward into translucence. Los, the Prophet of Eternity, builds

> Golgonooza on the Lake of Udan Adan
> Upon the Limit of Translucence; (*Vala*, Night the Fifth)

while beneath

> Was open'd new heavens and a new earth, beneath and within
> Threefold, within the brain, within the heart, within the loins,
> A Threefold Atmosphere Sublime. (*Vala*, Night the Seventh)

Blake expressly states that

> Travellers from Eternity pass outward to Satan's seat,
> But travellers to Eternity pass inward to Golgonooza.
> (*Milton*: I. 19)

while

> in brain and heart and loins
> Gates open behind Satan's seat to the City of Golgonooza.
> (*Milton*: 1. 22)

A further resemblance between the Askew Codex and Blake is found in the result which follows the fight against Christ's vesture of light by the Rulers of the Twelve Aeons and Adamas the Tyrant.

> And the Adamas the great Tyrant with all the Tyrants who become in all the Aeons began to war without cause against the light and they knew not with whom they are warring, because that they were not seeing anyone except the light which surpassed greatly.
>
> It happened therefore that they having warred against the light, they all weakened (burned) one with another and fell down in the Aeons, they became as the earth-beings who are dead.
>
> (G. Horner, *Pistis Sophia*, London, 1924, p. 12)

Even so, in Blake, when Urizen gave 'the horses of Light' to Luvah in the East, all the Four Zoas fell in the centre in dire ruin and became as limited in their perceptions as mortal man.

In the three great Prophetic Books, *Vala*, *Milton* and *Jerusalem*, the Zoas fight among themselves and are weakened. Hence, they often do not understand the nature of the Divine Vision, fighting against it in their ignorance, till, bereft of all power, they appeal to God for help.

Again, just as the Twelve Rulers of the Aeons mock and persecute Pistis Sophia in her affliction, so the twelve Spectre Sons of Albion mock and persecute Jerusalem when she is lost in the Space, Canaan, and separated from her spouse, Albion, as Pistis Sophia is from hers.

The role of Adamas, the Tyrant, who eggs on the Twelve Rulers to torment Pistis Sophia, is played in Blake by Satan and Urizen who incite the Spectre Sons of Albion to continue in their cruelty to Jerusalem. And even as Adamas and the 'Self-willed Power' join forces in sending 'violent material emanations' into the Chaos where Pistis Sophia is wailing, so Urizen and Satan combine their bands of 'influences' to destroy Jerusalem.

It is jealousy and envy that are the causes of this vindictiveness in Adamas and the 'Self-willed Power.' Jealousy and envy are also the mainsprings of the behaviour of Albion's Twelve Sons and of Urizen and Satan.

Even the forms which these violent emanations, in the Gnostic text, take are curiously like the symbols Blake uses. For example, Pistis Sophia is frightened by a lion-face power, Ialdabaoth, 'half flame and half darkness,' and by 'a great serpent,' also a basilisk with seven heads, and a dragon-like power. The 'great serpent' in the Askew Codex is paralleled in Blake by the Serpent Ore, while the Polypus, which figures so largely in *Jerusalem*, has numerous heads or divisions, like the basilisk of the Gnostic document. Lastly, Urizen is often described as the 'Dragon Urizen', particularly in *Vala*, Nights VIII and IX.

The binding of Adamas, and the wicked Rulers by Ieou (Jesus), and the binding of Urizen by Los, form another resemblance between the Pistis Sophia and Blake.

In the Fourth Document of the Pistis Sophia it is said :

> And he (Ieou) took away Sabaoth the Adamas with his Rulers, those who worked not in the mysteries of the Light, but who continued working in the mysteries of the intercourse. He bound them in unto the Sphere. He bound eighteen hundred Rulers in every Aeon.
>
> (Horner, p. 181)

Blake, in *Vala*, Night IV, describes how Los forms hours, days, years.

> in chains of iron round the limbs of Urizen
> Linked hour to hour and day to night and night to day and year to year
>
> In periods of pulsative furor . . .
> And thus began the binding of Urizen.

The wailing, mourning and grieving of Pistis Sophia in Chaos bears a strong resemblance to the behaviour of Blake's Ahania and Enion.

The fifth chapter of *The Book of Ahania* opens with lines :

> The lamenting voice of Ahania
> Weeping upon the void !

Enion is often spoken of as a wraith weeping on the verge of Nonentity.' Night III of *Vala* ends with the following vivid description of Enion and Ahania:

> For now no more remain'd of Enion in the dismal air,
> Only a voice eternal wailing in the Elements—
> Where Enion, blind and age-bent, wandered, Ahania wanders now !
>
> She wanders in Eternal fear of falling into the indefinite;
> For her bright eyes behold the Abyss. Sometimes a little sleep
> Weighs down her eyelids; then she falls, then, starting wakes in fears
> Sleepless to wander round, repell'd on the margin of Non Entity.

This is a very exact description of what the Sophia Without suffers as she looks down into the Abyss and wails to Christ to save her from falling into it. It is significant that Blake writes the word, 'nonentity' as two words, giving an initial

capital letter to each word : Non with a capital 'N' and Entity with a capital 'E'.

Between Pistis Sophia herself and Blake's Jerusalem, there are also marked resemblances. As Pistis Sophia appeals to Jesus to deliver her from the darkness into which she has fallen, so Jerusalem, in the Prophetic Book of that name, is continually appealing to the Divine Vision to come to her aid and deliver her from the power of Satan and Urizen, Orc and Vala and Rahab. Just as the Gnostic Christ watches and protects Pistis Sophia throughout her sufferings, so the Blakean Christ is for ever hovering near Jerusalem, sustaining and comforting her in her many severe trials. Pistis Sophia is given back her own light and restored to her original 'place' in the thirteenth Aeon by Christ. Even so, Jerusalem is delivered by Jesus from her bondage, and restored, with Albion, into the 'bosom of the Divine Family' which was her original 'place' before Albion's fall.

Again, there are striking points in common between the Virgin of Light in the Gnostic document and Blake's Enitharmon. (See pl. 14 of the facsimile edition of *Jerusalem*, B. M. Copy.)

These similarities extend not only to the imagery and ideas, but also to the illustrations in Blake. For example, in *Jerusalem* : I. 14, we read :

> And Los beheld the mild Emanation, Jerusalem,
> eastward bending
> Her revolutions toward the Starry Wheels in maternal anguish,
> Like a pale cloud, arising from the arms of Beulah's Daughters.

The half-page illustration below these lines depicts a reclining male figure, head resting in the plam of his crooked left hand. Above him are double rainbow bands beneath which stands a fairy-like small girl, winged, enclosed in a luminous halo strewn with crescent moons and stars. Sun, Moon and Stars are also depicted to the left and right of the reclining figure.

The fairy figure could be Jerusalem descending to give a body to the 'sleeping Humanity' of Albion. Or, she could be

Enitharmon descending to give a body to the 'sleeping Humanity' of Los, symbolising Inspiration or Imagination.

What is so striking is the similarity between the visual depiction of this fairy figure and the description given in the Gnostic text of the Virgin of Light.

In the Askew Codex, one of the regions through which Chirst passes on being clothed with his light vesture, is the Middle Space wherein Powers are set over the reincarnation of souls and the redemption of mankind. The two leaders of this region are the great Iao the Good, and the Virgin of Light. It is she who provides the bodies for the souls of men, while the Great Iao the Good provides the forms. This is a general Gnostic conception that the female provides the bodies and the male the forms of the created beings. The Idea is implicit in the Valentinian story of the fall of Sophia and is also found in the Prophetic Books.

Enitharmon weaves the bodies for the Spectres of the dead, while Antamon gives the form.

> The little weeping Spectre stands on the threshold of Death
> Eternal, and sometimes two Spectres like lamps quivering...
> Antamon takes them into his beautiful flexible hands :
> As the Sower takes the Seed or as the Artist his clay
> Or fine wax, to mould artful a model for golden ornaments.
> The soft hands of Antamon draw the indelible line,
> Form immortal with golden pen, such as the Spectre admiring
> Puts on the sweet form; then smiles Antamon bright thro' his windows.
> The Daughters of beauty look up from their Loom and prepare
> The integument soft for its clothing with joy and delight.

Again in *Vala*, Night VIII, Blake writes :

> Also the vegetated bodies which Enitharmon wove
> Open'd within their hearts and in their loins and in their brain
> To Beulah . . .
> And some were woven single, and some twofold, and some threefold
> In Head or Heart or Reins, according to the fittest order
> Of most Merciful pity and compassion to the spectrous dead.

The Virgin of Light has seven other virgins as well as 'receivers' to assist her in her work. Even so, as we have seen, Enitharmon is helped in her work by the Daughters of Beulah.

The Virgin of Light chooses the most suitable bodies for these incarnating souls, so that they may evolve in the right direction, that is, desire to know and be near the Ineffable One, and thus she hastens their final redemption.

In the second document of the Askew Codex, Chirst, in replying to Mary Magdalene's question as to 'how hath the First Mystery the twelve mysteries,' says :

> Amen I say to you, The man who cometh out of the body whenever they (Receivers) should name this mystery for his sake, they will hasten quickly and remove him and deliver him up to one another, even until they take him (close) to the Virgin of the Light, and the Virgin of the Light will seal him with a seal being more excellent, which is this (the form of the seal is not given) : and in any month she will cause them to cast him into the body of a righteous (man), this who will find the Godhead of the truth with the mystery which is more excellent, and he will inherit the Kingdom of the Light.
>
> (Horner, p-120)

In the third document of the Askew Codex, the functions of the seven virgins of light and of the Receivers are thus described :

> And also are wont these Receivers . . . to take that soul up to the Virgin of the Light, and also is wont that soul, she is wont to give to the Virgin of the Light the seals with the glory of the hymn. And is wont the Virgin of the Light and with the seven other Virgins of the Light, they are all wont to prove that soul, and all to find their signs in her, with their seals, with their baptisms, with their chrisms. And is wont the Virgin of the Light, she is wont to seal that soul and the Receivers of the Light are wont to baptize that soul, and to give her the chrism spiritual. And are wont each of the Virgins of the Light, they are wont to seal her with their seals and also are wont the Receivers of the Light, they are wont to deliver her up to the great Sabaoth the Good, this who is at the gate of Life in the Place of those of the Right (hand) this whom they are wont to call the Father.
>
> (Horner, p. 146)

Blake does not always strictly adhere to the Gnostic theory that the female principle gives the bodies and the male the form to a created being. In *Jerusalem* : I. 18, Blake writes :

(For Vala produc'd the Bodies, Jerusalem gave the Souls)

This, of course, is logical, as Vala symbolises physical Nature, and Jerusalem the spiritual qualities in man.

Lastly, just as the Gnostic Christ has to cleanse his physical body given him by the female power, Barbelo, even so the Blakean Christ has to put off his 'maternal humanity' eternally.

In the First Document of the Askew Codex, Jesus addresses his mother thus :

Thou also Maria, this (one) who tookest form which (is) in the Barbelo according to the matter, and thou tookest likeness which (is) in the Virgin of the Light according to the Light, thou with the other Mariham the happy. And the darkness became because of thee, and also came out of thee the body of the matter in which I am becoming, this which I cleansed and I purified it.

(Horner, p. 57)

Blake seems to agree with this view, for in *Jerusalem* : IV. 89, he states :

A Vegetated Christ and a Virgin Eve are the Hermaphroditic
Blasphemy : by his Maternal Birth he is that Evil One
And his Maternal Humanity must be put off Eternally
Lest the Sexual Generation swallow up Regeneration.

Once again Blake emphasizes this point in *Milton* : I. 14 :

For then the Body of Death was perfected in hypocritic holiness
Around the Lamb, a Female Tabernacle woven in Cathedron's Looms.

Later, in the same Prophetic Book, he adds :

These are the Sexual Garments, the abomination of Desolation...
Which Jesus rent and now shall wholly purge away with Fire
Till Generation is swallowe'd up in Regeneration.'

(*Milton* : II.48)

III

Let us now turn to a comparison between the Bruce MS 96, also transcribed by Woide, and the Prophetic Books.

Unlike the story of the fall and redemption of Pistis Sophia, the Bruce MS 96 is a contemplative work embodying 'the meditation of a Gnostic philosopher on the Gnosis or Science of God, of the Universe and of Salvation' (Baynes, p. XXI).

The treatise opens with a description, in negative terms, of God in His Essence. The Father is 'ineffable, unutterable, inconceivable, invisible, immeasurable, infinite.' He desires to be manifest. 'Within his own self did he present himself to the mass of these (things) that were in him.' The mass of things are called his 'Members' and in order that they might dwell in the Father and know him (Baynes, p. 3).

> He made himself to be Space... because he is their Father, who did emanate them from his First Conception, *ennoia*, which became Space for them (*Ibid.*)

The author continues :

> Each one of his Members is accounted as a myriad. And each one saw him in the Son for the Father's perfections are his. And the Father sealed the Name of his Son within them, so that they shall know him within themselves. (Baynes, p. 12).

In the Prophetic Books, an identical use of the term, 'Members' is made by Blake in his composite symbol, the 'Council of God' which meets as one man, Jesus. In *Vala*, Night I, we read :

> Then those in Great Eternity met in the Council of God
> As one Man, for contracting their Exalted Senses
> They behold Multitude, or Expanding they behold as one,
> As One Man all the Universal family; and that one Man
> They call Jesus the Christ, and they in him and he in them
> Live in perfect harmony, in Eden the land of life.

Again, in *Jerusalem* : II. 38, the Divine Vision addresses Albion in these words :

> Albion ! Our wars are wars of life, and wounds of love
> With intellectual speares, and long winged arrows of thought.
> Mutual in one another's love and wrath all renewing
> We live as One Man; for contracting our infinite senses
> We behold multitude, or expanding, we behold as one,
> As One Man all the Universal Family, and that one man
> We call Jesus the Christ; and he in us, and we in him
> Live in perfect harmony in Eden, the land of life,
> Giving, receiving, and forgiving each other's trespasses.

In the Bruce MS, it is said that the nature of God, the Ineffable One, can never be known by man except through the manifestation of the Son. In Blake also, God the Father and God the Holy Ghost are qualities that are seen working in man's actions, but it is Jesus, the Saviour, who is the concrete manifestation of the Divine, and only through Jesus can God be known:

> He who would see the Divinity must see him in his children,
> One first, in friendship and love, then a Divine Family, and in the midst
> Jesus will appear. . . (*Jerusalem* : IV. 91)

Blake can be even more explicit :

> the Worship of God is honouring his gifts
> In other men and loving the greatest men best, each according
> To his Genius which is the Holy Ghost in Man; there is no other
> God than that God who is the intellectual fountain of Humanity.'
> (*Jerusalem* : IV. 91)

The Space which the Father creates for his Members is parallelled in Blake by Eden which is a projection from the Divine so that 'those in Great Eternity' may have a place to dwell in, and from there carry on an intense intellectual life, building Jerusalem, or spiritual perfection, in each other.

In the Bruce MS 96, having sealed the name of his Son in all the Members,

the Father took their whole likeness and he made it as a city or a Man. In him he protrayed the Universes, namely, all these Powers. Each one in the City knew him, each one gave myriads of praises to the Man or the City of the Father, who is in all things. And the Father took the praise, and he made it as the outer vesture of the Man.

(Baynes, p. 12)

The concept which the Cabalists developed into their Primeval Man, Adam Kadmon, whose body was believed to contain the entire universe, is foreshadowed by the Gnostic Man. Blake's Albion is built on this conception of the Adam Kadmon. An even closer likeness to this Gnostic Man is found in Blake's 'Eternal Man' who is a separate entity from Albion. Blake says little concerning the Eternal Man except to imply that since the fall of Adam into generation and death, the Eternal Man also suffers in the sufferings of mortal man. He, the Eternal Man, is seen

> in tree and herb and fish and bird and beast
> Collecting up the scatter'd portions of his immortal body
> Into the Elemental forms of every thing that grows . . .
> And in the cries of birth and in the groans of death his voice
> Is heard throughout the Universe; wherever a grass grows
> Or a leaf buds, the Eternal Man is seen, is heard, is felt,
> And all his sorrows, till he reassumes his ancient bliss.
>
> (*Vala*, Night IX)

Now the Bruce MS is unique in combining, under one symbol, the concepts of the Holy City and the Divine Man. The Adam Kadmon of the Cabala is not a city. In the Christian tradition, Jerusalem is represented as the Holy City, but never as the Divine Man, Jesus. Blake's Albion like the Adam Kadmon of the Cabala, contains in his limbs the entire Universe. When united to his emanation, Jerusalem, Albion is a city, for Jerusalem is described by Blake as 'a City yet a woman.' The regenerated Albion therefore bears a strong resemblance to the 'Man or City' of the Bruce MS.

There are also resemblances between the description of the Holy Pleroma in the Bruce MS and Blake's Golgonooza, the city of Imagination and Art.

Just as the Holy Pleroma has four gates, and four monads in each gate, and supporters and powers, enneads, decads and dodecads and pentads, even so, Blake's Golgonooza has four gates to the North, and four to the South, and four to the East and four to the West. The sixty four thousand Genii, Gnomes, Nymphs and Fairies who guard each gate, correspond to the various supporters and powers mentioned in the Bruce MS. And just as there is a special Guardian of the Holy Pleroma, so Los is the guardian of Golgonooza.

On the last page of the Bruce MS there is a description of the various Powers who are appointed over the Living Waters of Regeneration to purify souls. Among these are Pistis Sophia and the 'pre-living Jesus,' as well as four luminaries, namely, Eleleth, David, Oroiael and Harmozel.

In the Prophetic Books, one of the three daughters of Urizen is named Eleth which seems to be derived from Eleleth, believed to be a variant of Lilith, which was the name given to Eve after her fall, specially in medieval Christian texts. The symbolical significance of the three daughters of Urizen is still obscure.

In conclusion it can be said that Blake makes use of a great many Gnostic technical terms as found in the story of the fall of Pistis Sophia, while from the Bruce MS 96, he seems to borrow certain ideas and concepts. What is amazing is that he is closer to the original Latin and Greek versions of the works of the Church Fathers than he is to the summaries of their works as found in eighteenth century critical publications on Gnosticism, while resemblances between the Prophetic Books and the two Coptic Gnostic MSS. discussed are even closer than between the Prophetic Books and the writings of the Church Fathers.

New Delhi

Z. A. Usmani

THE THEME OF LOVE IN DANTE AND ELIOT

Dante and Eliot, each formidable in his own way, can be understood and appreciated better when they are put together on a common ground. This common ground is love which, for both the poets, is 'the cause and end of movement'. This is not to ignore the uniqueness of each poet ; but this uniqueness, like the uniqueness of any loving man, is comparable with regard to its general pattern, and we can say that both Dante and Eliot are poets of love—by which we do not mean that they are love-poets (though Dante seems to have started as one).

It will be rather impertinent to define love; but a reference can be made to Martin Buber's enlightening distinction between *I-Thou* and *I-It* (he defines love as 'the responsibility of an *I* for a *Thou*') and also to the observations of writers like Martin D' Arcy and Eric Gill, not to speak of all the religious, mystical and philosophical literature related to the subject. All this material would boil down to the following essentials that would bear universal testimony. First, love is a giving (and the taking is in the giving); it is a going out of the self to affirm the other in his indivisible, incomparable, unappropriable otherness : it means regarding the other, not as a mere object, an *It*, but as a *Thou*. Secondly, it involves an entering into relation with the other with the whole of one's being; a communion which is not possible with what we regard as a mere object. Thirdly, it involves an intimation of some transcendental or numinous reality through the loved one, the particular *Thou*, who becomes a glimpse-through to the *Eternal Thou* (God's image may be seen in him); and it is in this respect that Divine

Grace takes control of the heart. Thus love has three interrelated aspects for which the least unsatisfactory terms we can find are : Eros, Agape and Charis (they correspond to Father, Son and the Holy Ghost). Human love and divine love extend into and complete one another.

In fact, as Eliot puts it in his essay on Dante, 'the love of man and woman is only explained and made reasonable by the higher love or, else is simply the coupling of animals'. There is the same line of relation extending from Beatrice to God; and the 'overwhelming question' is not simply a question of 'death in love' for a woman but it is also a question of 'death in love' for God. There is no real love of the world without the love of God. And there is no real love of God without the love of the world. For 'he who does not love his neighbour, whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen ?' The loving man sees God and the world united and in loving the one he loves the other. Dante admits his love of the world while speaking of his love of God, and this in Paradise where he is beyond the 'shadow' and 'poison' of the flesh :

> All those toothgrips which have power to make the heart turn unto God, co-work upon my love; for the being of the world and my own being, the death that he sustained that I might live, and that which each believer hopeth, as do I, together with the aforesaid living consciousness, have drawn me from the sea of the perverted and placed me on the shore of the right love.
>
> The leaves wherewith all the garden of the eternal Gardener is leafed, I love in measure of the good that hath been proferred to them from him.[1]
>
> (*Paradiso* XXVI, 55-66.)

If I am not to be misunderstood, I would say that love is, more or less tacitly, an affirmation of the principle of Incarnation, which is, of course, different from believing in the historicity of the Christian Incarnation. Such an affirmation is in the nature of mythical experience having universal validity. In case some orthodox religion does not readily

sanction it, mysticism, within the bounds of that religion, does so : witness the cult of Sufism flourishing on the soil of Islam itself.

It is not love to deny the flesh ; but to affirm, in the flesh, the word-made-flesh is love. It is as a real woman that Dante's Beatrice becomes the bearer of divine blessings. Dante never loses sight of her physical beauty; on the other hand, as his vision gets more and more purified, she becomes more and more beautiful for him and reflects more and more perfectly the image of God. It is not the name of God but the name of Beatrice that moves him to step into the circle of fire in Purgatory. It is by looking into her eyes that he is transported into Paradise. The protagonist of the *Commedia* has made his will perfect and is regenerate, 'Pure and prepared to leap up to the stars'. Not so with the protagonist of *The Waste Land* who gets only a hint of the imparadising experience and fails because of his imperfect will :

> —Yet when we came back, late from the Hyacinth garden,
> Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not
> Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither
> Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,
> Looking into the heart of light, the silence.[2]

He fails because he perceives the silence but not the silent Word; because, with his imperfect will, he does not affirm the principle of Incarnation through Agape which is the point of intersection where all aspects of love meet. It is this principle that unites the temporal with the timeless, the finite with the infinite, the human with the divine. It is this principle that makes the *I-It* world into the Temple of the Lord.

> For Man is joined spirit and body,
> And therefore must serve as spirit and body.
> Visible and invisible, two worlds meet in Man;
> Visible and invisible must meet in His Temple :
> You must not deny the body. ('Choruses from *The Rock*', IX.)

There is no either-or in love. Love is not the rejection of the *I-It* world but a hallowing of it. It is not inimical to self-

interest, reason, science and the things of the world but only to worldliness, selfishness and *concupiscentia*. The *I-It* world is not evil, but to live exclusively in this world, in isolation from the wholeness of being that right love involves, is evil: and this is the lesson of Eliot's *Waste Land* and Dante's *Inferno*. The *I-It* world is necessary for human existence; but it must be included and transmuted by the world of love which is necessary for the very meaning of human existence. 'Without *It* man cannot live,' says Martin Buber, 'but he who lives with *It* alone is not a man'. Hence the command: 'Be in the world but be not of the world.'

There has never been any doubt about Dante being a poet of love—and he himself has declared as much :

> I am one who when love breathes within
> Give ear, and as he prompts take mode and pitch
> From him, and go and sing his mind to men.
>
> (*Purgatorio* XXIV, 52-54.)

But as regards Eliot, it was I.A. Richards who guided us to this most comprehensive perspective, though he misguided himself—a kind of Virgil in Eliot criticism lighting up for others, the path to love and remaining in darkness himself, to whom we can say what Statius says to Virgil in the *Purgatorio* :

> Thou wast as one who, travelling, bears by night
> A Lantern at his back, which cannot leaven
> His darkness yet he gives his followers light.
>
> (XXII, 67-69.)

Richards saw the significance of Canto XXVI of the *Purgatorio* for Eliot's poetry and made an attempt to describe Eliot's sense of his age as a 'persistent concern with sex, the problem of our generation, as religion was the problem of the last'. Instead of love Richards saw sex which contrasted in his mind with religion, both presenting themselves as 'problems'. He failed to see love—which does not dwell in sex, though sex may dwell in love. On Richards' remark Eliot wryly commented :

I readily admit the importance of Canto XXVI, and it was shrewd of Mr Richards to notice it; but in his contrast of sex and religion he makes a distinction which is too subtle for me to grasp. One might think that sex and religion were 'problems' like Free Trade and Imperial Preference; it seems odd that the human race should have gone on for so many thousands of years before it suddenly realised that religion and sex, one right after the other, presented problems.[3]

Both Dante and Eliot, each in his own way, are concerned with exploring the possibilities of regeneration through love. In the case of Dante the experience of the *Vita Nouva* is, indeed, the experience of a new life : and this is what *Vita Nouva* means. He felt he was exalted into a new man by the very sight of Beatrice :

I say that when I saw her coming from any direction, then, through the hope I had of receiving her wonderous salulation, no enemies were left to me, but rather I was filled with a fire of charity which made me forgive every one who had ever done me injury; and if at that moment I had been asked about anything whatsoever, I could only have answered '*Love*', with a countenance clothed in humility.

(*Vita Nouva* XI)

Beatrice's desire bore his love

along with it to seek the Good
Past which there is nothing to be eager for.[4]

(*Purgatorio* XXXI, 23-24.)

But with her death the life of *I-Thou* was lost and he strayed into the Dark Wood of an exclusive life of *I-It*,

seeking for
False phantoms of the good, which promise make
Of joy, but never fully pay the score.

(*Purgatorio* XXX, 130-32.)

These 'false phantoms', also referred to by Beatrice as 'some chit of a girl' (*pargoletta*), are the opposite of Beatrice, the 'true other', the *Thou*; they are symbolized by the Siren of Dante's dream in *Purgatorio* XIX. The implication is that there can be no right love without a realization of the 'true

other', or, to use Eliot's term, without a realization of the 'stranger'[5] in the 'always now'. It is in right love that we realize that the self and the world are renewed at every moment—

> See, now they vanish,
> The faces and places, with the self which, as it could, loved them,
> To become renewed, transfigured in another pattern.
> (*Little Gidding*, III.)

In the absence of right love we cannot know either the reality of the self or of the world—for the self can be known only by knowing the 'true other'. The 'false phantom' or Siren is a mere *It*, a projection upon the world of the mind's own desire. With it we are shut up in the prison of our own ego where 'the soul's spectre and the world's incubus whisper to each other the confession of their non-salvation'. This is what Hell is. In *The Cocktail Party* Edward testifies to it:

> What is hell ? Hell is oneself,
> Hell is alone, the other figures in it
> Merely projections. There is nothing to escape from
> And nothing to escape to. One is always alone.

In Dante, the Dark Wood that leads into Hell signifies, not any particular sin, but the hardness of heart which is the condition of all sins, the great refusal to see the reality outside the self. In this condition the spiritual progress of the protagonist is stopped by his own corruptions externalized as wild beasts. Beatrice, who is Grace, cannot reach him here; but there is hope for him so long as he may be reached at the natural level : poetry, reason, traditional morality, common decency or common prudence. And Virgil symbolizes all these. Commissioned by Beatrice, he comes to rescue him; commissioned by Beatrice, for Nature itself is subservient to Grace. The only way out of the Dark Wood is through Hell, through a knowledge of the darkness of one's own soul, of all the actual and the potential evil that is there. Both priests and psychotherapists testify to the necessity of this knowledge for the

renewal of personality. This is a knowledge of wrong love and the torment caused by it.[6] Dante realizes that God does not send anybody to Hell to inflict torment on him but that, because of wrong love, the soul itself makes a wrong choice, choosing some false, or transitory good and thwarting its innate desire for the whole good which is right love : and this causes torment for the soul, this unnatural constriction of the wholeness of the being. Love is the seed of both good and evil, as Virgil explains it in *Purgatorio* XVII. Love is a terrible responsibility, which becomes torment if not carried out.

> Who then devised the torment ? Love.
> Love is the unfamiliar Name
> Behind the hands that wove
> The intolerable shirt of flame
> Which human power cannot remove.
> We only live, only suspire
> Consumed by either fire or fire.
>
> (*Little Gidding*, IV.)

This is most beautifully said by Eliot. But in Dante the statement becomes experience itself by its assimilation to what has gone before in the poem : in the inscription on the Gate of Hell saying: 'Almighty Love created me'; the experience of Hell itself; and then the experience of half the ascent up the Mountain of Purgatory, through which ascent the fire of sin is put out by the refining fire of love. The knowledge of Hell impels the soul to go up the way of purgation, impels it to purge out wrong love through a wilful acceptance of the torment; impels it in this way to make perfect the Will or Judgment. It is only after this perfection of Nature that Grace—symbolized by Beatrice—can come to Man. After this perfection sin as sin is forgotten and is remembered only as an occasion of the manifestation of Divine Love : this is the function of Lethe and Eunoe in Dante. Sin becomes, so to say, the significant soil which is necessary for the growth of Active Virtue.[7] Sin is necessary for enriching and vitalizing the soul; for bringing us

into a deeper and more blessed relationship. 'Sin is Behovely' says Eliot, echoing Dame Julian of Norwich.

Virgil, with his secular culture, his reason and morality, can guide Man only up to the state of Natural Perfection in the Earthly Paradise; but to guide him beyond it requires love, that is, Faith, Charity and Hope, which are its three aspects. And so Virgil vanishes and Beatrice takes over as guide. The meeting with Beatrice is above all an affirmation of the principle of Incarnation, for she appears in place of the Holy Host in the Pageant of the Eucharist and the Twyform nature of the Gryphon is reflected in her eyes. It is Dante's *stupore*, his wondering adoration at the singularity or otherness of the loved one, that makes him realize the image of God in her; she becomes a glimpse-through to the *Eternal Thou*. Concerned with *final causes* as he is, Dante is out to explore, in the 'intellectual light' of such a moment, the meaning of all existence through a vision of universal hierarchy. The Beatrician Vision leads ultimately to the Beatific Vision which is the eternalizing of that moment in the contemplation of that Perfection beyond which nothing greater can be conceived for desiring. His ecstasy makes him transcend space and time to see the meaning of all existence in the Eternal Light. What he saw within its depths, he says he can report only incompletely and imperfectly :

> Within its depths I saw ingathered, bound by love in volume, the scattered leaves of all the Universe :
>
> substance and accidents and their relations, as though together fused, after such fashion that what I tell of is one simple flame.
>
> The Universal form of this complex I think I beheld . . .[8]
>
> (*Paradiso* XXXIII, 85-92.)

Then in that abyss of radiance he saw the three orbs of the Holy Trinity revealing the mystery of Incarnation :

> For I therein, methought, in its own hue
> Beheld our own image painted.
>
> (*Paradiso* XXXIII, 120-21.)

Here, in the mystery of Incarnation, Man's love is united with God's Love, man's will is united with God's will where 'will and power are one'.

> Here vigour failed the towering fantasy
> But yet the will rolled onward, like a wheel
> In even motion, by the love impelled,
> That moves the sun in heaven and all the stars.
>
> (*Paradiso* XXXIII, 132-35.)

In the light of the Incarnational principle Free Will and love are identified as one and the same.

In *Paradiso* VII Beatrice expounds the theological *raison d'etre* of Incarnation. She says that it was out of divine justice and mercy that God brought Himself to suffering the terrible humiliation of becoming Incarnate in Man : for after the Fall Man with his insufficiency could not have stooped so low in humility to make any atonement 'As high, he disobeying, thought to soar'; nor could have God pardoned him unconditionally against the demands of justice. By puting on mortal flesh to suffer as Man God showed not only his justice but also his infinite bounty in thus 'giving himself to make man capable of his return to life'.

On the Cornice of Sloth in Purgatory Dante requests Virgil to define love, Virgil, who has not known love himself and is damned for it, notwithstanding the fact that he has led a virtuous life on earth. He tells as much as reason can unfold, and rightly points out that love is the yearning of the soul for some image that our 'apprehension draws from some real fact', that is, from something really outside us which is the 'true other'.

> That yearning's love, 'tis nature doth secure
> Her bond in you, which pleasure knits anew.
>
> (*Purgatorio* XVII.)

But Virgil, the Perfect Natural Man, cannot see beyond 'nature', 'pleasure' and 'desire' to 'the expanding of love beyond desire'. Even Celia Coplestone, in *The Cocktail Party*, has known what Virgil never knew :

For what happened is remembered like a dream
In which one is exalted by intensity of loving
In the spirit, a vibration of delight
Without desire, for desire is fulfilled
In the delight of loving.

Having known only the Natural Virtues of Justice, Prudence, Temperance and Fortitude, Virgil knows nothing of the 'self-abandonment, the all-or-nothingness, the ecstasy' of love associated with the Celestial Virtues of Faith, Charity and Hope, which are nothing else than the three aspects of love: Eros, Agape and Charis—and he knows nothing of the mystery of Incarnation revealed through love. Nothing of the paradox of love 'costing not less than everything'. For him it would be irrational to love even your enemies, 'to trust when all is betrayed, to hope when things are desperate, to love the unloveable'. As Dorothy Sayers rightly points out, Virgil's best delineation of love, Dido's, for example, or, *that* for that matter even Plato's noblest passage upon love, cannot compare to the *Vita Nouva* sonnet quoted above, which Dante wrote as a young man.[9] Virgil's conception of love, incomplete as it is, needs to be baptized by an affirmation of the principle of Incarnation, by an apprehension of the Sacramental mystery of Agape. Of course, Virgil admits that love is the efficient cause of the universe—though he knows nothing of the final cause—and is the seed of both good and evil.

Virgil speaks of making perfect the will by making natural love or instinctive volition and rational love or conscious volition agree with each other, for which

You have a counsellor-power innate
Set there to guard the threshold of assent.

(*Purgatorio* XVIII, 62-63.)

This innate counsellor-power is the power of Free Judgment. But there is always a gulf between Man's Judgment or mere will and his power to perform something that the Judgment approves of, as St Paul knows too well ('For to will is present with me,

but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do'.) To this ugly gulf opening between will and power Virgil's philosophy can find no bridge. But the mystery of Incarnation revealed through love is the bridge that spans the gulf. And Beatrice shows how through the Incarnation, human nature is taken up by Grace into the Divine Nature, 'where will and power are one', so that the will can freely perform what the judgment freely chooses.

Here, at 'the point of intersection of the timeless/With time' Man's love becomes the answer to God's love and by being translated into right action, becomes the freedom from servitude to mere space-time existence,

> The release from action and suffering, release from the inner
> And the outer compulsion, yet surrounded
> By a grace of sense ...
>
> (*Burnt Norton*, II.)

> Here the impossible union
> Of spheres of existence is actual,
> Here the past and future
> Are conquered, and reconciled,
> Where action were otherwise movement
> Of that which is only moved
> And has in it no source of movement—
> Driven by daemonic, chthonic
> Powers. And right action is freedom
> From past and future also.
>
> (*The Dry Salvages*, V.)

For the loving man the intersection-point is here and now. He affirms the principle of Incarnation in right action through 'death in love', 'ardour and selflessness and self-surrender', in every here and now. His life itself is Incarnation, imaging the archetypal Incarnation of Christ's life on earth. It is a continual transformation of the potential or actual Hell of the soul into Purgatory, and therefore a continual regeneration into beatitude 'with the drawing of this Love and the voice of this Calling'.

Both Dante and Eliot maintain that love is both a *drawing* and a *calling*; both a *revelation* and a *demand*; both an Affirmation and a Negation : and the two are mutually inclusive and one and the same. Everything in the world is a sign, at the intersection-point, to draw us to God—even when we choose to be indifferent to the signs out of selfish desires and cling to worldly things to our own torment—and He who speaks in the signs is the Lord of the Voice.

Both Dante and Eliot start on an exploration of the meaning of existence in the light of *final causes* and come to see the meaning of everything in God: the Still Point of Love which is the cause and end of movement. Both the poets are concerned with regeneration of consciousness through love. But each finds things out in his own unique way. Dante does it through the consistent story of a mythical journey through the other world, envisaging all experience in its eternal aspect, and proceeds by an ever-increasing concretion and intensification to the ultimate vision of the Meaning. He takes no value for granted—and here lies his greatness—but explores every value through his mythical patterns of sensuous forms, and as his vision gets clearer and clearer the sensuous forms of his experience, the signs he perceives all along his way, point more and more intensely to the One Value, the One Point of Meaning : the One Love where all the loves are gathered, the Love that moves the sun and all the stars. He begins with a vision of wrong love and proceeds through a vision of its purgation to a vision of its exaltation and ecstasy in the Absolute Meaning. The end of his vision is a return to the *saeculum*, and with a perfect will moved by Love.

Eliot too follows the same course. He too has his Inferno, Purgatorio and Paradiso, though he only hints at the Paradiso and never soars into the Empyrean. Dante's three worlds have a metaphysical semblance, though they are extensions of the *saeculum* itself; but Eliot's world has usually the semblance of our own post-war civilization. Without having a consistent story to tell Eliot looks into Dante's three worlds by glimpses as

he looks into contemporary life and into his own soul; and he makes use of various myths as thematic structures to explore his central theme of regeneration through love. As Cassirer shows, all intuitive explorations of the human spirit range between two poles of the Ineffable : the Indeterminate and the Infinite. In Dante they range between the Beatrice of the *Vita Nouva* and the Beatrice of the *Paradiso*; in Eliot between the Overwhelming Question and the Still Point of Love.

Eliot begins with an undifferentiated uneasiness stirred up by an 'overwhelming question' which is later on identified as the question of 'death in love' of the egoistic personality. Hints of transcendence and regeneration, associated with symbols like 'hyacinths' and 'mermaids', are continually seen through the miasma of unregenerate experience, and the stirring of enquiry is expressed by the constant questionings of the *Prufrock* volume. The infernal vision, with its Dantean analogues, is most explicit in *Prufrock*, *Preludes*, *Rhapsody* and *Morning at the Window*. Special mention may be made of *Rhapsody* which, with its Dantean analogues of Gorgon-woman, Moon-Queen, smells of nether hell etc., parallels the first stage of Dante's journey through Hell that occurred between midnight and 4 a.m. on Holy Saturday morning. At the end of the vision comes the grim command to 'sleep, prepare for life', which is the 'the last twist of the Knife', a sharp, ironical reminder of preparing for regeneration, for the visionary who makes an ascent of his descent. As we come to the *Gerontion* volume the mind reacts with ironical anger and bitterness at the thoroughly corrupt state of love in a thoroughly corrupt society which is faced by the challenge of Christianity ('Christ the tiger'). The corruption is particularly marked by a dissociation of the sensibility into ('problems' of) 'body' and 'soul' 'sex' and 'religion' etc. It stabs us with sharp reminders of what might have been and provokes the mind to make perfect its will. In *The Waste Land* the infernal vision is penetrated by the purgatorial vision. As we realize the unregenerate situation in all its horror we also realize what is needed for regeneration : love and perfection of the will in relation to the three aspects

of love, Eros, Agape and Charis, which are declared by the Thunder as : Give, Sympathize, Control. After *The Waste Land* the emphasis is on the purgatorial discipline. *The Hollow Men* announces the death of the egoistic personality, the old guy (Fawkes-Kurtz), and, with half-juvenile, half-serious irony, looks forward to a vision of purgatorial cycling which begins, as in Dante, at five o'clock in the morning (of Easter Sunday). The Hollow Men look forward to 'death's other Kingdom' which is Purgatory and also back to 'death's dream kingdom' which is Hell. In their 'twilight Kingdom' of *saeculum* they realize that all the Kingdoms are 'Shadows' which fall between the Idea and the Reality. What is needed is a glimpse through these 'Shadows' or 'shadowy prefaces of reality', as Dante calls them ; they are signs and symbols through which Absolute Reality is seen (*For Thine is the Kingdom*). But the Hollow Men are sightless unless the Beatrician eyes reappear after their purgation and bring Grace to them. *Ash Wednesday* celebrates the process of purgation on the cornices of Avarice, Gluttony and Lust which are the three aspects of wrong or disordered love. For one thing, this poem, with its ambivalence, emphasizes the fact that the purgatorial and the infernal visions interpenetrate and that there is no once-for-all in the regenerative life of the 'lost heart' which is *drawn* by love towards the still centre of the Silent Word that the Lady points to. What matters is a continual perfection of the will. *Four Quartets* is a comprehensive vision of the regeneration or redemption of the world of Time through both the Affirmative and the Negative Ways of love, which go beyond selfish desires. The transient moments of Dantean *stupore*,[10] the 'unattended moments', that jerk us out of our enslavement to time and *draw* us towards the intersection-point along the Way of Affirmation are 'hints and guesses' of Incarnation;

> and the rest
> Is prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action,

through which we seek the intersection-point of Incarnation along the Way of Negation : and this is the Calling of love.

'With the drawing of this Love and the voice of this Calling' we shall move in our exploration of meaning from intersection-point to intersection-point, here and now,

> to arrive where we started
> And know the place for the first time,

undergoing a continual regeneration of consciousness at the 'world's end' which is the beginning, till we come to the vision of the Ultimate Meaning, of the joint exaltation of the human and the divine in the One Love—

> And all shall be well and
> All manner of things shall be well
> When the tongues of flame are in-folded
> Into the crowned Knot of fire
> And the fire and the rose are one.

The theme of regeneration of consciousness through love, as imaged through poetry, finds its apt analogue in the form and pattern of poetry itself. For art itself is a regeneration of consciousness through love. Eric Gill rightly observes that 'a work of art is the work of a lover. It is a lover's worship'. Dante's declaration in *Purgatorio* XXIV, quoted above, means the same thing. In love everything is realized as form, and art, as Cassirer puts it, is an intuition of the forms of things. It is a product of *I-Thou* relation, observes Buber. The artist says *Thou* to the form of his experience, which involves a *drawing* and a *calling*, a revelation and a discipline, and he carries out his responsibility towards this *Thou* by creating a work of art. There may be a gap between will and power, intention and achievement, form and its execution in the design. This may happen in art just as it may happen in the life of the individual. But here is Dante making use of the analogy of art to define the perfection of being which, by itself, ensures the ascent to God. The speaker is Beatrice :

> Among themselves all things
> Have order; and hence the form, which makes
> The universe resemble God . . .

All natures lean,
In this their order, diversely; some more,
Some less approaching to their primal source...
Yet it is true,
That as, oft-times, but ill accords the form
To the design of art, through sluggishness
Or unreplying matter; so this course
Is sometimes quitted by the creature, who
Hath power, directed thus, to bend elsewhere.

(*Paradiso* I, 100-27.)

The gap between will and power is bridged, in the case of art, too, by an affirmation of the principle of Incarnation. It means an affirmation of the uniqueness of the form, which images the Eternal Form where form and meaning are one through a pattern of words imaging the Still Word. Words that 'will not stay in place,/Will not stay still' and are assailed by the 'shrieking voices' of *I-It* language must reach the stillness of the Word, at the intersection-point of the temporal and the timeless, which is the beginning and the end of all human apprehension. To reach this stillness, in the face of the 'voices of temptation', is 'a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality',[11] a continual death in love of *I-It* consciousness, and hence its continual regeneration at the 'world's end'.

Only by the form, the pattern,
Can words or music reach
The stillness, as a Chinese jar still
Moves perpetually in its stillness. (*Burnt Norton*, V.)

Words must become 'the complete consort dancing together'. 'And every phrase/And sentence that is right'—

Every phrase and every sentence is an end and a beginning.
Every poem an epitaph.

(*Little Gidding*, V.)

With regard to the regeneration of consciousness in and through poetry the three inter-related aspects of love may be detsignate as : the Creative Word, he Incarnative Word and the

Redemptive Word; the Incarnative Word being the central reality where all the aspects of love meet : it is the Agape of the artist. In *Ash Wednesday* we find Eliot groping for these three aspects of the Word :

> The Word without a word, the Word within
> The world and for the world.

The degree of a poet's affirmation of this Trinity can be regarded as a measure of his greatness. The fact that in Dante's case this affirmation is most intensive and most extensive accounts for making him the greater of the two poets: in fact no poet has ever surpassed his greatness. What makes every detail of his pattern an enactment of myth is his most intensive and most extensive affirmation of the Incarnative Word. Herein lies the secret of his universality, so much admired by Eliot, which retains much of its force even in translation and makes his poetry the answer to man's deepest needs and aspirations; and also the secret of his enchantingly paradoxical simplicity that crystallizes in itself an infinity of meaning. Eliot has learnt the mythical method from Dante, though he is also aware of James Joyce's use of it. Usually, in his poem some myth operates as a structural control. But in some places—for example in the *Burbank* poem—the myth does not so completely fuse with the poetic pattern as to be enacted by it and its obfuscating allusions lie outside it without being assimilated into it as *gestalten.*

> The horses, under the axletree
> Beat up the dawn from Istria
> With even feet.

How are we to understand that this implies a horrible parody of regeneration, like the morning after in John Marston's *Antonio and Mellida*, Part Two, I, i? Here is the gap between intention and achievement, which does not exist in the case of Dante. Here the poetic pattern falls short of the form and is not completely transparent to the intended meaning. This complete transparency is achieved by Eliot in *Four Quartets* where the Logos myth permeates everything and reduces it to

A condition of complete simplicity
(Costing not less than everything),

while it enables Eliot to make his most profound and most comprehensive statement. In this poem Eliot turns philosophical statements into mythical intuitions of experiential reality. The philosophical statement is delimited with concrete experience so as to fuse the two into a transparent sensuous form. No poet does it on such a cosmic scale as Dante does, and Eliot has learnt it from him, though the example of Wordsworth was there in English poetry.

Eliot has borrowed his key symbols that are associated with the three inter-related aspects of love from Dante. As Genesius Jones points out, these symbols of Eros, Agape and Charis have been lifted from the last cantos of the *Purgatorio* which express the theme of love most explicity through the setting of the Earthly Paradise.[12] But for Dante and Eliot they have a conventional, mythical sanction. They are respectively : garden, food-ritual (the Eucharist) and light, music and water. In the early poetry which deals with the debasement of love resulting in the unregenerate state, these symbols appear in debased forms. For Eros there is a waste-land, a 'blackened street', a brothel or a 'bloody wood' etc.; for Agape there is an empty ritual of coffee or tea or some other communal activity marked by lack of communion and sympathy or by selfishness and violence; and for Charis there is dim light, fog, smoke, a 'twittering world', absence of water or presence of dirty water. In the later poetry they occur more often in their original forms. But the emphasis on purgatorial discipline introduces some changes too. Garden is descicated into desert and the two are interchangeable; Agape evokes the Eucharist or the 'Life of significant soil'; and there is the ambivalence of fire (lust) or fire (purifying love). Along with the usual symbols *Four Quartets* consumes the four elements, air (Eros), earth (Agape), and water and fire (Charis) in the Herakleitean fire which is revealed as Divine Love (discharged by the Stuka-dove) so as to bring about their regeneration at the world's end-Still Point.

In fact, Dante and Eliot supplement and complement each other in our mind. There is so much to learn from a study of Dante for an understanding of Eliot's poetry—for an understanding of its central theme of regeneration through love and its dynamics, its formulation through situations, symbols, allusions and epigraphs, and even the techniques of its formulation. From the epigraph of *Prufrock* to the vision of fire and rose at the end of *Four Quartets* there are Dantean reverberations throughout Eliot's poetry. Eliot repeatedly acknowledged the deepest influence that Dante had on him. But in his own way Eliot himself has made certain things more explicit—two truths of spiritual life in particular : there is no either-or and there is no once-for-all. His emphasis on the interpenetration of the infernal and the purgatorial visions, on the principle of Incarnation and on seeing history as a theophany; his conception of the intersection-point in every here and now, of 'the always now', of the transfiguration of the past, of the continual change of personality and of freedom from enslavement to Time not only through moments of *stupore* but also through right action (reinforced by the philosophy of the Gita); his celebration of both the Affirmative and the Negative Ways as one and the same, and of the fact that both may be either happy or unhappy or both; his advice to follow the 'unattended moments' with 'prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action'; his enrichment of the use of the analogy of art for defining the stillness of regenerate consciousness—these are some of the points on which a study of Eliot can enrich the understanding of Dante's poetry.

I have indicated the points of common concern at which the two poets touch each other on their common 'ground of beseeching' and the Still Point which is their end. These are only hints and guesses which might lead to a more comprehensive study of each poet.

It would be childish to see Eliot as a miniature Dante and Dante as a big Eliot. The poetry lies in the uniqueness of each 'sensous incarnation' (to use Wordsworth's phrase), in the uniqueness of a poet's forms of experience through which he

explores meanings and values, even when the general theme is the same. 'One of the unhappy necessities of human existence' —and not always unhappy either—is that we have "to find things out for ourselves". If it were not so, the statement of Dante would, at least for poets, have done once for all.[13]

Department of English
Aligarh Muslim University
Aligarh

NOTES

1. The translation is from the Temple Classics edition (London and New York). Other passages from the *Paradiso*, when not indicated otherwise, are from Cary's translation : *The Divine Comedy* (Oxford, 1910).
2. Cf. *La Figlia che Piange*.
3. *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (London, 1946), p. 127.
4. The quotations from the *Purgatorio* are from the translation of Dorothy L. Sayers, Penguin Books (Harmondsworth, 1955).
5. See 'Choruses from *The Rock*', *The Cocktail Party* and *Four Quartets*.
6. Obviously, this knowledge involves value-judgment.
7. Cf. Milton's concept of the Fortunate Fall in *Paradise Lost*, and also his remarks on virtue in the *Areopagitica*.
8. Temple Classics edition, *op. cit.*
9. See Dorothy L Sayers, *Further Papers on Dante* (London, 1957); particuiarly the chapters on Virgil and the Cornice of Sloth.
10. Cf. Wordsworth's spots-of-time experiences.
11. Eliot's famous essay, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' bears testimony to what is said here.
12. See Genesius Jones, *Approach to the Purpose* (London, 1964), pp. 87 *ff*.
13. T. S. Eliot, *Selected Prose*, Penguin Books (Harmondsworth, 1953), p. 182.

R. C. Sharma

The Ancient Mariner :

From the Wedding Feast to the Church

The opening lines of *The Ancient Mariner*

> It is an Ancient Mariner,
> And he stoppeth one of three

immediately divide the Wedding-Guest and the Ancient Mariner into two distinct types of humanity: one, youthful and gay, an average, commonplace individual; the other a voyager over the seas, the type of the primal man, rough-hewn, both in shape and mind, by long exposure to the power and influence of the primal forces of Nature, who strays into the world of ordinary men like a ghost from an unknown world to disturb its complacency and mirth. Such significance it would not be out of place to infer from the enduring interest of Wordsworth and Coleridge in Nature and Man and their debate about their interpenetration and mutual relationship.

The Ancient Mariner is not only a person from the bygone times, but is also distinguished by his physical features. Further, he is an intruder—an unwelcome intruder who suddenly, wilfully and without any ostensible reason, interrupts the gay routine of life—a set of persons heading to a Wedding Feast, an occasion of special conviviality, and communal rejoicing. The key appears to have been set at the very beginning by the strange encounter between an exceptional, primal individual, and a conventional, normal community with its common and everyday values. As the encounter is arranged to be dramatic, conflict at all levels is its essence and outcome.

There is an element of urgency in the movement and the purpose of the Wedding-Guest. Three reasons for it have been listed : The Feast is set; the Guests have met; and he is the next of kin. Interruption of any type in such a situation would have been unwelcome. But when it comes from such a stranger as the Ancient Mariner, and in such a fashion as his—'There was a ship'—which seemed to have no relevance whatever on earth to him, he is positively annoyed and brushes aside the Ancient Mariner violently—'Hold off ! unhand me, greybeard loon !'

The response of the Ancient Mariner is significant, and typical of his present state and role. Without a word, the least protest, 'Eftsoons his hand dropt he'. But the effect on the Wedding-Guest is still more startling—from a passion of resentment he sinks into a quietude of submission and resignation—sits on the stone, held by only the Ancient Mariner's 'glittering eye'—and 'like a three years' child' listens to him. 'The Mariner hath his will.' The conclusion is foreshadowed in the beginning, the process is clearly indicated. In the clash of the two sets of values symbolised by the Ancient Mariner and the Wedding-Guest—pertaining to the spirit and the flesh, respectively,—the former triumphs over the latter—triumphs not through force, but a magnetism which brings about a transformation of values and obligations which are more all-embracing, human and universal than those initially cherished by the Wedding-Guest. The Wedding-Guest's voyage is from a youthful adventure to his sole-self and of the Mariner from the Wedding-Feast to the Church.

II

There is a marked resemblance between the Ancient Mariner as he sets on his voyage and the Wedding-Guest hurrying to his feast. This is underlined by the repetitive use of the same phrases and images—the two predominant notes being merriment and noise: the ship was 'cheered' (by friends),

as in the case of the bride in the Wedding-Feast; and 'merrily' did the ship leave the familiar human surroundings—the kirk, the hill, the light-house. Everything looks bright and it sends a surge of impatient urgency through the breast of the Wedding-Guest—as he imagines the merry 'minstrelsy' nodding their heads and leading the bride into the hall. But the 'bright-eyed' Mariner holds him still. The Wedding-Guest's impatience is overcome by the 'loud roar of the blast' which drives the ship fast to the regions of the ice that 'cracked and growled, and roared and howled', and with its 'fearsome noises' seems to drown the merriment of the Wedding-Feast, carrying the ship and the mind far away from the regions habitable by man or beast to the far-off seas.

But it should be noted—and this appears to be a significant feature of the structure of *The Ancient Mariner*—that the poem keeps returning again and again to feasting, hospitality, and human fellowship. As a matter of fact, this recurring human strain provides anchor to the voyage of the human spirit: the glimpses of ordinary life wafting through the merry notes and tumult of the Wedding-Feast and the startled responses and the actions of the Wedding-Guest, a spirit timorous and innocent of the horrors of the sea. The Albatross who, in a way, symbolises the joyous life of nature is received like a guest with cheers by the heat-oppressed and frightened mariners and is offered food and hospitality, and accepted into the intimate circle of frolic and play. The bond is strengthened by the bird's ready response to the Mariner's gesture of good-will, and the bird's faith in that good-will. He is the guest, innocent and trusting. The Mariners are the hosts, loving and kind, and in a measure thankful to the Albatross for enlivening the monotony and boredom of their dreary existence, with the spirit of comraderie which his presence occasions. Here we have perfect equilibrium and harmony between human instinct and the spirit of Nature. It does not take much to infer that the bird who 'came through the fog' also represents Nature in its buoyant and benign aspects. This is suggested

by Nature turning up her smiling aspect to celebrate this harmony between Man and Nature: 'the ice did split,' and the helmsman steered the boat through, and the 'air burst into life'.

But this harmony turns out to be short-lived. The wilful and violent act of the Mariner who shoots the Albatross with his cross-bow disrupts it rudely. It is followed by a period of protracted suffering and woe. The agonised soul of the Mariner burns through the vivid recollection of the agony, which agony he shares with the Wedding-Guest. And through the alchemy of shared pain—one of the most enduring of human bonds—the Wedding-Guest is irresistibly drawn towards the Ancient Mariner who ceases to be the isolated figure he was but becomes a prototype of the suffering humanity. It is, therefore, essential to go over this part of the Mariner's tale in some detail in order to appreciate fully the developing relationship between the two of them which leads on to their identification. Needless to say that the process of this compulsive identification has not only been prompted but also hastened by the ministration of both awful and benign aspects of nature, and achieves its transcommunication to the Wedding-Guest in a most intimate manner. It also recalls to mind Wordsworth's faith in the power of nature to chasten and sublimate human nature through the twin process of law and impulse.

The Mariner's was an arduous journey, and the poem describes, in vivid and affective detail, the various stages of his agony, despair, recovery and regeneration. The Ancient Mariner who is wrenched by the agony caused by the memory of his sacrilege on life and Nature, recognises in the Wedding-Guest the proper object for its relief :

> I pass, like night, from land to land;
> I have strange powers of speech;
> That moment that his face I see,
> I know the man that must hear me
> To him my tale I teach.

This uncanny intuition makes the encounter between the Ancient Mariner and the Wedding-Guest less fortuitous than it

may appear to most at first. The Mariner isolates the Wedding-Guest because in the light of the insight he has acquired through experience he recognises him to be different from the other two guests. In other words, the Wedding-Guest is the type of person whose instinctive sympathy makes him respond to the tale of the Mariner and enables him to multiply his valuable insight. The Mariner must share it with others so as to be relieved of his tormenting agony which makes him 'pass like night, from land to land'. Thus the attraction of the Mariner to the Wedding-Guest, in the ultimate analysis, is that of the like to like—of the one who has learnt the *truth* to the one who is fit to learn, the *one* to whom he must *teach*. It is important to understand this point : the Mariner seeking another to *teach*, finding one who can learn, who can be moved to the depths of his being and be transformed later on.

If we accept this position, it inevitably leads us to another. The spell which the glittering eye of the Ancient Mariner casts on the Wedding-Guest ceases to be merely supernatural as it has often been assumed. It is more essentially human—a deeply touched spirit seeking to speak to another potentially akin, through the most expressive of the human organs, the eye. The habitual means of contact, the touch, having failed, the Mariner tries the next one more potent, the soul speaking through the eye. It holds the Guest who stands 'still'. But far more potent, the true vehicle of the Mariner's soul-experience, is his speech. His initial advantage, therefore, he reinforces with his 'tale'. It is the magic of his words which completely wins the attention and subdues the will of the Guest, which fact is visibly conveyed through his sitting down on the stone and listening to the Mariner 'like a three years' child.'

The equation between the Ancient Mariner and the Wedding-Guest is fully established as Part I of the poem concludes : the Guest's cry of profound concern at the agony of the Ancient Mariner expressing itself in the tortured look in his face, and the Mariner's sincere and spontaneous sharing of the secret—the 'mark' of his shame, the 'seal' of his sorrow—with him:

Why look'st thou so?—With my cross-bow
I shot the Albatross.

From now on the poem becomes the tale of two sensitive human beings who go together step by step through a dreadful exprience which not only brings them closer to each other but in the end makes them akin to the whole living universe, and fills their hearts with universal love.

III

The process of this transformation is most vividly and feelingly described through the Mariner's tale of his voyage and the dramatic responses of the Wedding-Guest to it at its most crucial moments. The Mariner relives his awful experience, and through the simple sincerity of his narrative makes it convincing to the Guest who identifies himself with the Mariner and suffers anguish, loneliness and horror with him. In fact, it is the presence of the Wedding-Guest in the poem, rather than the Mariner's mere narrative, which wins from us the 'willing suspension of disbelief' Coleridge aimed at. Here we have a wonderful example of how art works through empathy; because the Wedding-Guest believes, we believe. Coleridge has used this device most effectively at least in two of his other poems—*Love* and *Christabel*. In *Love*, the lover wins his Genevieve by telling her the tale of the cruel fate of 'That crazed that bold and that lovely Knight' who in vain wooed for 'ten long years' the 'Lady of the Land'. Genevieve is deeply moved as the narrative proceeds to describe the Knight as he lay on his death-bed.

His dying words—but when I reached
That tenderest strain of all the ditty,
My faltering voice and pausing harp
Disturbed her soul with pity! . . .
She wept with pity and delight,
She blushed with love and virgin-shame ;
And like the murmur of a dream,
I heard her breathe my name.

In *Christabel* again we have the host-guest relationship. Geraldine evokes the pity and sympathy of Christabel by telling her the tale of woe and of her present forlorn and helpless state. Christabel leads her into her castle and promises to 'guide and guard' her and conduct her 'safe and free' to her 'noble father's hall.'

IV

After acquiring a hold on the Wedding-Guest's attention the Mariner goes on uninterrupted with his narrative for the next two parts of the poem. The Guest listens to the Mariner spell-bound, fascinated by the vivid and minute description of the surroundings and natural phenomena, which description is rich in detail and is rendered highly affective by the deep personal involvement of the Mariner. His voice that keeps modulating makes palpable for the listener every emotional experience the Mariner undergoes, be it of joy or horror, suspense or expectancy, despair or anguish. The tempo rises slowly in the beginning, then suddenly, involving other Mariners, along with the Ancient Mariner, in his crime against love, hospitality and trust. With their inability to see beyond the immediate present, their conventional outlook, their addiction to omens and their habit of judging things by their appearances, they first approve and then denounce the heinous act of the Mariner. In both the cases they are guided by the appearances of the physical phenomena in so far as they affect their own interest—the wind blows, the fog clears and the 'glorious Sun uprist'—rather than by the nature of the act itself:

> And I had done an hellish thing,
> And it would work 'em woe :
> For all averred, I had killed the bird
> That made the breeze to blow.
> Ah wretch ! said they, the bird to slay,
> That made the breeze to blow !

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious Sun uprist:
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
'Twas right said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.

Then follows the doom. The ship reaches the Equator and is suddenly becalmed. The scorching sun, earlier hailed as glorious, nowbecomes the instrument of torture and punishment. The sea rots, burns like witches' oils, and death fires dance, and slimy things crawl with legs on the slimy sea. The Mariners, like Tantalus, are oppressed with thirst and suffer extremes of privation in the midst of plenty :

Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.

Appearances are no longer comfortable; fearful and heat-oppressed, now they see in their dreams the 'spirit' that plagues them so. To escape their sore distress, they try to throw the entire blame for the crime on the Ancient Mariner. Isolated from each other through the loss of speech, choked in their parched throats, they further segregate the Ancient Mariner from themselves by hanging the Albatross round his neck, and offer him as the scapegoat to the avenging spirit. This was, of course, as short-sighted an action on their part as the earlier ones. They foolishly believe that the consequences of acts once done can ever be 'surceased'. They wish to forget that they must bear their own part of the punishment as accomplices. With such blindness and gross vision they could not he the arbiters of fate.

Then follows a long wait, painful and weary; and then there appears a flicker of hope to the Ancient Mariner as he sees a speck on the horizon, which, as it moves nearer, assumes the shape of a ship. This rouses hopes of rescue and succour. Thoroughly conscious of his guilt and of the trouble he has brought to his crew, he wishes to expiate and compensate for all this. So he bites his arm and sucks his blood to slake his

throat and shouts with joy: 'A sail! a sail!' The crew begin to draw in their breath as if 'they were drinking all.' They look most grotesque as they grin with joy.

But soon all joy is blasted as it turns out to be a spectre ship. Death and Life-in-Death are playing dice on its board, with the Mariner and the other crew for stakes. Life-in-Death wins the Ancient Mariner and the others fall to the share of Death. One after one two hundred sailors dropped down dead, each cursing the Mariner with his eye.

> And every soul, it passed me by,
> Like the whizz of my cross-bow !

The Ancient Mariner is thus isolated to suffer life-in-death to expiate his crime. The torture of the others is over, his is to abide.

V

It is at this stage, at the beginning of Part IV, that the Wedding-Guest, horrified to realize that he is talking to a ghost, interrupts the Mariner. The poet makes him go over the peculiar physiognomical features of the Mariner which give him such an uncanny look. Perhaps it is deliberately done to recall physically to the mind of the reader the Mariner he had met at the beginning of the poem, lest he should miss the full impact of the terrible experience through which he has passed and which has left its permanent mark on him. The Mariner is definitely a marked individual: isolated from the rest of his fellow-beings for ever. Appearing almost in the very middle of the poem this interruption serves another artistic purpose. It helps to make credible both the Mariner's tale, which hereafter has more of the supernatural element in it, and the ultimate transformation of the Wedding-Guest. To know the Mariner is to believe him. The Wedding-Guest seems to have developed such trust in the Mariner, such belief in his integrity and sincerity, that the briefest, merely factual assurance : 'This body dropt not down', is enough to assuage

his worst fears. To reinforce this impression, it is repeated over again in the middle of Part V and almost in a similar situation.

From here on, as could be expected, the Mariner has to bear his cross alone. He is to be utterly isolated to make him fully realize the need of company and the beauty of life. The curse in the dead men's eyes adds to his agony and intensifies his desperate need for love and acceptance. The account of his loneliness is perhaps among the most terrible to be found in literature :

> Alone, alone, all, all alone,
> Alone on a wide wide sea !
> And never a saint took pity on
> My soul in agony.

Recalling it towards the close of the poem he says :

> O Wedding-Guest ! this soul hath been
> Alone on a wide wide sea :
> So lonely 'twas, that God Himself
> Scarce seemed there to be

He is condemned to realize that he is responsible for destroying what is beautiful in life, and to live in the midst of hate and disgusting ugliness, bereft of God's love and mercy :

> The many men, so beautiful !
> And they all dead did lie:
> And a thousand thousand slimy things
> Lived on ; and so did I.
>
> I looked upon the rotting sea,
> And drew my eyes away ;
> I looked upon the rotting deck,
> And there the dead men lay.
>
> I looked to heaven, and tried to pray
> But or ever a prayer had gusht,
> A wicked whisper came, and made
> My heart as dry as dust.
>
> I closed my lids, and kept them close,
> And the balls like pulses beat;
> For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky

Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

Forsaken by God and man and himself (the loss of sleep symbolises his self-alienation) he endures this agony for seven days and seven nights. He wishes for death, but even that boon is denied him. His heart has become dry as dust with disgust and self-accusation. The redemption, it is clear, can come only through love and admiration for Nature and living things. The process is set into motion by the witchery of the Moon. It has been pointed out by critics that the Sun and the Moon represent the malign and benign influences, respectively, in the poem. So far the Sun has been the chief influence, symbolizing God's rage and means of this chastisement of the Mariner. The witchery of the Moon now transforms the ocean, and the creatures of the ocean into things of ineffable beauty. And the Mariner's disgust for life changes into love and admiration. The water-snakes move 'in tracks of shining white', and as they rear their heads 'elfish light' falls off in 'hoary flakes'. His wonder and admiration grows as he watches them coil and swim in the ocean with their rich attire:

O happy living things ! no tongue
Their beauty might declare :
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware.

With this spontaneous gush of tender feelings in his heart, suddenly the miracle happens :

The selfsame moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

He enjoys gentle sleep and his body is refreshed with rain. He feels quite like a different person :

I was so light—almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed ghost.

The Mariner hears strange sounds, and 'the upper air burst into life'. Another miracle happens. The dead bodies of the sailors are inspired by blessed spirits and they work on the ropes and the ship moves on without the help of any breeze. At dawn they 'dropt their arms' and gathered round the mast and sweet, mingled sounds—sometimes like the skylarks' song, the 'sweet' jargoning' of all birds, like all instruments or a single flute or the angel's song—fill the air. The ship moves on all the time without any breeze. At noon all sweet sounds stop, and the ship stands still again. Then it makes a sudden bound and the Mariner is thrown into a swoon.

VI

But it is not to be the end of the Mariner's voyage of experience. A person who has lived through such an experience can never be the same again. It must continue to haunt him for ever. The Mariner is told of it—and the reader too—in a vision in which he hears Two Voices talking of his crime and of his fate. These Voices have been interpreted to be those of Judgment and Mercy. Though the worst is over, he will have to do still more penance. The curse is finally expiated, and his ship is driven within sight of his native land. He can hardly believe his eyes :

> Oh ! dream of joy ! is this indeed
> The lighthouse top I see ?
> Is this the hill ? is this the kirk ?
> Is this mine own countree ?

He has been through such strange experiences that it is hard for him to believe the testimony of his senses. To baffle him still, the heavenly spirits leave the dead bodies and appear in their own forms of light:

> Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
> And by the holy rood !
> A man all light, a seraph-man
> On every corse there stood.

A boat with the Pilot and the Pilot's boy and a Hermit on its board appears. This fills the Mariner with a joy the 'dead men could not blast.' He believes that the Hermit will shrive his soul and wash away the Albatross's blood.

But the ship with its strange signals from the forms of light and warped planks and its sails which resemble brown skeletons of leaves presents a strange sight to those in the boat. Its 'fiendish look' fills the Pilot with fear. But as the boat nears the ship, the ship sinks like lead into the sea. The Mariner's body swiftly floats into the boat. The Mariner is free: both the dead Albatross and the ghostly ship lie buried deep at the bottom of the sea.

VII

But this is no home-coming for the Mariner. In his own country he comes like a stranger, a ghost. He hungers for human company, having been cursed to live in the midst of the hateful looks of the dead so long. But the moment he takes the oars, he sends the Pilot's boy crazy. He 'laughs loud and long' and all the while his eyes 'go to and fro'.

> 'Ha ! ha !' quoth he, 'full plain I see,
> The Devil knows how to row'.

Here is another encounter significantly staged towards the conclusion of the poem between the Mariner and a fresh set of representatives of common humanity who represent two cross-sections of society, both unlikely to be frightened away by anything less than the devil himself. The strange looks of seafarers are nothing new to the pilot's boy or the hermit. But so ghastly is the appearance of the Mariner, and so hollow his voice that all the three new-comers are bewildered and crazed by fear. But the point which is often missed here is that Coleridge is completely silent about the Wedding-Guest. The Wedding-Guest has long since ceased to look upon the Mariner as a frightful visitant from another world. For him, he is not a person to be dreaded but an object of compassion. This is the measure of near-perfect humanity which the Wedding-Guest

has achieved through his sympathy and vicarious suffering, and which is far superior to the professional religiosity of the hermit. One wonders whether the hermit would not be the next Wedding-Guest for the Mariner's tale. The Hermit steps forth trembling from top to toe. The moment the Mariner asks him to shrive him, he crosses his brow and asks quickly:

'What manner of man art thou ?'

Ironically enough, the Mariner believed that he 'stood on the firm land' but he soon discovers to his dismay that in his own land, in his native place, he is a stranger. The very sight of him sends people crazy. His mind is wrenched with a woeful agony which 'forces' him to begin his tale, and then lets him free. Since then off and on this agony returns and till his 'ghastly tale, is told' his heart 'within him burns'. This is the penance that the First Voice ordained he must do for life. He bears the mark of Cain, as it were, on his brow and like Ishmael must roam from place to place, without anybody really harbouring him:

I pass like night from land to land.

It is also not difficult to infer that the Mariner is all the time brooding on his crime but nonetheless is not able to share it with anybody else. There is something so frightful about it that he must keep it to himself. In this context it may be added that many a time he was forced by an inner agony to make the confessional to any one who was capable of responding to him. Each time, the agony, writ large on his face, coupled with his strange appearance, gives him a ghostly look and scares his listener. But each time, as we learn in the case of the Wedding-Guest, it leaves the listener a changed man. Hence the use of the term 'teach' by the Mariner. It tends to suggest that with penance the 'teaching' of the tale brings a compensation, too, to the Mariner. He teaches to one person at least, at a time, and teaches it well, the great truth which he himself had learnt at such a terrible cost. Its mere enunciation:

He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all

lifts him above his own little self and leaves him free of both the sense of guilt and pain. He lives over again his own experience and reminds himself and teaches another how awful the consequences of violating the sanctity of life are. But what is remarkable is that the poem does not end upon a mere negative warning. It rises to a positive formulation of love for all creatures of God. The Mariner's suffereing results not in a negation but in an illumination. The Mariner's action has been impulsive and wilful but in no way calculatedly wicked. That he achieves such a formulation of love at the end bespeaks of his inherent goodness. His passing 'like night from land to land' also seems to reveal a concern for others who like himself may tend to act thoughtlessly. It is these who are exposed to much peril and are much more worth-saving. He has come to acquire an insight to spot such a person and to 'teach' him by his own example.

VIII

The Mariner, as has been mentioned above, hungers for human company. He would love to mingle with a group of people without being unduly noticed or marked out. A crowd is preferable to individuals, as it affords anonymity and commonalty more easily. 'The loud uproar' from the Wedding-Feast, and the 'little vesper bell' invite them to the feast and the church simultaneously. For the Mariner the choice is clear :

O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company !—

To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
And youths and maidens gay !

Having destroyed one of God's creatures, he has been forsaken by God, and by men (the dropping down dead of all his companions symbolizes this). His endeavour now is to be received into God's bosom; and all his emphasis is on *togetherness* and love. His love embraces all creatures, and makes no distinction between young and old. In fact, the way he dwells upon this aspect of human assembly indicates that the more mixed it is the merrier. The more heterogeneous a congregation, the more effectively it obliterates false distinctions.

Another thing which needs to be noticed is that the Mariner's experience has neither soured him nor turned him into a morose kill-joy. In the church the Mariner dwells on the cheerful and ceremonial aspects of human congregation and fondly mentions 'loving friends', and 'youths and maidens gay'—all together praying and bending to their Great Father. And lest it should be mistaken for a soulless ritual he explains what he means by prayer. For him to pray is to reach out in love towards all men and birds and beasts—as God does :

He prayeth best, who lovest best
All things both great and small.

Neither does the Mariner scorn nor does he run down the conviviality of the marriage-feast. He, in fact, appears to acknowledge its appeal and value. It too is an occasion for *togetherness*, for friends and relations rejoicing at the union of two human beings. It is significant to recall that it is the Mariner who reminds, at the end of his tale, the Wedding-Guest who is now altogether oblivious of the 'loud bassoon' and the 'merry minstrelsy', of the Wedding-feast and suggests to him to go there. The Mariner goes to the Church, leaving the Wedding-Guest free to make his own choice. Most probably he thinks that the Wedding-Guest would go to the Wedding-feast. But

it appears that the Mariner here under-estimates the power and effect of his own tale. The Wedding-Guest, who now awakens from its spell, is an entirely changed man. The transformation which has come over him is tellingly brought home to the reader when he indicates his own preference.

The Wedding-Guest turns from the Bridegroom's door. The effect on him of the tale and his contact with the Mariner has been too overwhelming to leave room for anything else. He returns home 'like one who has been stunned' and is of his 'sense forlorn'. He lives with the experience overnight, and rises next morning :

> A sadder and a wiser man.

He has learnt the tale. He has been completely transformed and will act not so much by 'impulse' as by the law of Love. Unlike the Mariner, he turns his back on a social gathering to be alone to absorb what he has heard and 'seen', and be the wiser for enlarging his sympathies so as to bring life at all levels within his loving embrace.

It is significant that the last lines of the poem refer to the Wedding-Guest and not to the Ancient Mariner. From the Wedding-feast to the Church thus encompasses the entire voyage of the Mariner as also the entire range of human experience —fear, sympathy and love, through which the Wedding-Guest moves along with him.

Department of English
Birla Institute of Technology
Pilani

A. A. Ansari

THE AMBIVALENCE OF CALIBAN

To regard *The Tempest* as primarily a 'Romance' amounts to an exaggeration of a half-truth only. It has all the background of Arcadia to it, and the wanderings, the disguises, the remoteness of context, the profusion of incident and the sense of mystery hovering over the passion between Ferdinand and Miranda—all these determine the tonal harmonies of the play. Recurrent use of words like 'dream', 'wonder' and 'sleep' contributes to a pervasive atmosphere which is other than earthly or mundane. Admittedly 'romance' as an important *motif* is very much there and it is reinforced by all the suggestions of the miraculous. But the romantic and the miraculous are part of a total design and are subservient to a larger pattern of expectations that the play sets up from the beginning. Even the mythical theme of restoration from death and ordeal by water (reverberations of which were presumably caught by Eliot in *The Waste Land*) which runs as the groundswell of the play is given weight and relevance through a full exploration of sin and evil. In other words 'romance' as an instrument of reconciliation provides only the outer envelope of the play; its real core consists of an ethical concern of tremendous dimensions. Prospero is the supreme, controlling power in the desert island where the main action of the play takes place. But through a quasi-monologue in which Prospero is reminiscencing about the past we are enabled to see in a flash-back how he had been rendered ineffective by the subtle machinations of his own brother, Antonio. His is the case of the priest-king or the contemplative imposed upon and driven out and cheated by the man of action. Consecrating himself to an ideal of perfection he was immersed in the close study of the

liberal arts and the world of books was the true orbit in which 'rapt and transported' he moved happily and with a sense of inner fulfilment. He grew indifferent to his divine right as king and,holding Antonio next only to Miranda in his affection, built an absolute trust on him. Being invested with full powers, and helped and abetted by Alonso, the king of Naples and an inveterate enemy of Prospero, Antonio, went the whole hog in consolidating his own position and throwing out the rightful duke of Milan. He met the requirements of his status punctiliously and held the officers of the duchy under his sway with such firmness that according to Prospero,

> now he was
> The ivy which had hid my princely trunk,
> And suck'd my verdure out on't.[1] (i,ii, 85-87)

The image of the ivy, climbing up the tree-trunk stealthily and depriving it of freshness and vitality little by little, is very precise and luminous. It concretizes the process through which Antonio managed to creep into the bosom of Prospero and deprived him, perfidiously,and through a secret alignment with Antonio, of ducal power and the energy and sustenance he drew from it. Bent upon removing even the semblance of 'delegation'and seating himself securely in the saddle Antonio embraced Naples as a ready ally. With calculated designs he bent his coronet to the crown in return for which Alonso eagerly supported him and provided ministers for shoving Prospero, along with Miranda, off Milan in 'the dead of darkness'. This is symbolic of a descent into hell, an irruption of the paradisal bliss and tranquility which had characterized life in Milan till that moment. In this Prospero is not the doer but one who is acted upon by others, a helpless victim of the devouring jealousy and 'ill-weav'd ambition' of his own brother. The latter's task was facilitated partly by Prospero's lack of sagacity in wordly matters and the magnanimity with which he had transferred the authority of the state to Antonio, and partly by the latter's adroit and cunning exploitation of the situation.

After settling down on the island the perspective changes positively. Prospero not only sets Ariel free of 'the cloven pine' where he had lain imprisoned for years by Sycorax, and holds Caliban—the product of the union of Sycorax and the devil—absolutely under his control, but he is also able to raise the providential storm which helps him bring all his former enemies to the remote island. They are landed there so safely, inspite of the ambiguous shipwreck, that 'not a hair perished', and as Gonzalo puts it : 'our garments seem now as fresh as when we were at Tunis at the marriage of your daughter, who is now Queen' (ii. i., 92-94). This Prospero has been able to accomplish as practiser of the white magic and with the help of his books of secret lore (Caliban anyway thought Prospero's supernatural powers to be dependent on them) he had been provided with by the kind-hearted Gonzalo. Prospero now holds the strings of power firmly in his hands and can dictate his terms to any one and whenever he chooses to. Antonio, who had already dislodged Prospero with a sleight of hand, now tries to pour poison into Sebastian's mind and provoke him follow the precedent he himself had established. Through secret manoeuvring he had succeeded in depriving Prospero and Miranda of their legitimate right of governance; now employing all his powers of persuasion to convince Sebastian of Ferdinand's supposed death he urges him to resolve upon disinheriting Claribel, his sister, who is married to the king of Tunis. Following Sebastian's final, though demurring, acceptance of Ferdinand's death and reacting against the premise that Claribel may be the next heir of Naples, Antonio puts all his rhetorical energy into pooh-poohing this wild surmise:

> She that is Queen of Tunis; she that dwells
> Ten leagues beyond man's life ; she that from Naples
> Can have no note, unless the sun were post,—
> The man i' th' moon's too slow,—till new-born chins
> Be rough and razorable; she that from whom

> We all were sea-swallow'd, though some cast again,
> And that by destiny, to perform an act
> Whereof what's past is prologue; what to come,
> In yours and my discharge. (ii, i, 241-48)

The sense of vast space between Tunis and Naples, which renders any possibility of communication ridiculous, is hinted at through the employment of hyperbolical images. These are woven into the texture of the verse skilfully in order to deepen the note of bitter cynicism at the expense of Sebastian's naivety. Antonio is engaged both in exploding this naivety and energizing Sebastian into prompt, vigorous, precipitate action—a kind of self-assertion against the freaks of chance or destiny. But before he is fully and finally nerved up Sebastian anticipates the possibility that the qualms of conscience might deflect him eventually from the path chosen by their mutual consent. And Antonio's reply, which seeks to lay down the demon of doubt in Sebastian's mind, is a classic one, for here the promptings of our moral nature are brushed aside as delusory, meaningless and irrelevant :

> Seb. But for your conscience.
> Ant. Ay, sir; where lies that? If't were a kibe,
> 'T would put me to my slipper : but I feel not
> This deity in my bosom ; twenty consciences,
> That stand 'twixt me and Milan, candied be they,
> And melt, ere they molest! (ii, i, 270-75)

This temptation scene in *The Tempest* has all the overtones of what transpires between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth; — concience is dismissed as less than a physical inconvenience which can anyway be removed mechanically and is denuded of any inner significance. To evacuate his bosom of the presence of 'this deity' (and the sneering touch is too biting to he missed here) is bound to pave the way for a cold-blooded murder. All finicky considerations of right and wrong, which are likely to retard simple, instantaneous action, ought to be given up. They are evocative of a sense of loathing and disgust

in a man who wants to pay off old scores. And Antonio is not content with merely ridiculing the abstract notion of conscience or even its emblematized form. Once the futility of all conceptualizing is taken into account and the mental cobwebs are removed, prompt execution of what is intended should follow. This proposed violence, forestalled by the timely intervention of Ariel, is a ghastly repetition and extension of the punishment which had been inflicted upon Prospero and Miranda when they were forcibly evicted from the dukedom of Milan. Again, in the one case Prospero was grossly victimized and was impotent to protect Miranda and himself against aggression ; in the other the murder of Alonso and Gonzalo is prevented through his own omniscience. In other words, from a state of complete passivity Prospero walks forward to the status of a prime mover, and looks like the magus of the Renaissance neo-Platonic tradition.

The theme of ingratitude which is at the centre in *King Lear* is also focalized in *The Tempest*, and Shakespeare plays variations on it in a single unified pattern. After being cast adrift on the uninhabited island Prospero comes to be recognized as its indisputable lord and master both by Ariel and Caliban. The latter, who is a creature of the base elements—earth and water—offers an antithesis to Ariel who is made of the finer ones—air and fire. Caliban's pedigree accounts both for his physical features and his moral depravity. He reminds us of Circe who, in the allegorical fables, turns men into beasts by subduing their reason to the supremacy of the senses. He is a true picture of deformity, and the uglier he grows, 'so his mind cankers' (iv, i, 191-92). While Caliban's proclivity towards magic and sorcery, being inherited on his mother's side, is an exercise of procedures towards profane and evil ends, Prospero's magic is of a neutral character, capable of being turned to both good and indifferent ends—a kind of theurgy which may sometimes be pressed into the service of religious ends. Prospero is rapt, secretive, unwordly as well as pragmatic, humane and business-like. He employs

Ariel for carrying out his delicate and sometimes arduous behests and Caliban has to do menial services for him, and the latter is also subjected, as a compensation, perhaps, to a process of education. He claims credit for acquainting Prospero with all the beauties and subtleties of the island which would otherwise have been hidden from the latter's view:

> and then I lov'd thee,
> And show'd thee all the qualities o' th' isle,
> The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile :
> Curs'd be I that did so! (i, ii, 338-41)

On Caliban's own showing it was Prospero who taught him the alphabets—the first rudiments of knowledge—language which is instrumental in clarifying vague and inchoate impressions, and thus be in possession of the medium for naming the objects— 'the bigger light' and 'the less'. It is through language that thought is provided with an outward vesture and it is in terms of the capacity to solidify this nebulous mass into precise images that the progress from primitivism to civilized living may be measured. And Caliban's ingratitude—no less astounding than that of Antonio—may be gauged by his own rejoinder to Prospero :

> You taught me language ; and my profit on't
> Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you
> For learning me your language ! (i, ii, 365-67)

He betrays his sensual impulses when he harbours the evil intention of raping Miranda—a radiant image of innocent chastity—as is alleged against him by Prospero :

> and lodg'd thee
> In mine own cell, till thou didst seek to violate
> The honour of my child. (i, ii, 348-50)

The element of brutishness in him is evidenced by the unabashed and unqualified perfidy of his reply :

> O ho, O ho ! would 't had been done !
> Thou didst prevent me ; I had peopled else
> This isle with Calibans. (i, ii, 351-53)

This constitutes an assertion of individuality on Caliban's part and his indulgence in animal instincts is part of his idea of freedom. And it is no less apparent that this freedom is passion-directed and leads on to complete nihilism.

Though the bestiality and irreducible earthiness of Caliban has already been glimpsed at as a necessary datum of his being, yet the way in which he is exposed to Trinculo's view is worth some attention :

> Here's neither bush nor shrub, to bear off any weather at all, and another storm brewing ; I hear it sing i' th' wind ; yond same black cloud, yond huge one, looks like a foul bombard that would shed his liquor. If it should thunder as it did before, I know not where to hide my head : yond same black cloud cannot choose but fall by pailfuls What have we here ? a man or a fish? dead or alive? A fish : he smells like a fish; a very ancient and fish-like smell; a kind of, not of the newest Poor-John. (ii, ii, 18-27)

Trinculo is caught in the midst of impending rain and thunder—'the black cloud' looking 'like a foul bombard' about to discharge its liquor. He does not know where to seek shelter against the fury of the elements that press upon him on all sides. The threat to security is mounting up steadily and there seems to be no likelihood of the abatement of the fury. While thus feeling miserable and impotent Trinculo catches a glimpse of Caliban and the context of the lines suggest that he is indistinguishable from the elements surrounding him. There is something of the sea-beast about him, a kind of monstrosity, a smack of the submarine life reaching back to the beginnings of time. He smells like a fish, thus creating an unsavoury effect, and the suggestion of the primordial life about him arrests our attention all at once. On closer scrutiny it is revealed that he is 'legg'd like a man and his fins like arms', and the palpable warmth exuding from him confirms that he is instinct with life. And yet this living clod of clay seems to subsist at the lowest level of sentience. This element of monstrosity—the fact of his being 'a mooncalf' —is thus underlined both in regard to his antecedents and the pattern of relationships in which he is involved.

Early in the play Miranda refers to Caliban thus :

> Abhorred slave,
> Which any print of goodness will not take,
> Being capable of all ill ! (i, ii, 353-55)

And this intuition is further confirmed in a later context by Prospero in almost identical terms :

> A devil, a born devil, on whose nature
> Nurture can never stick ; on whom my pains,
> Humanely taken, all, all lost, quite lost ; (iv, i, 189-90)

Miranda's statement, born of peevishneess, is couched in very general terms of good and evil; she is specific only to the extent of implying that Caliban is recalcitrant to all those civilizing influences Prospero and herself had been trying consistently to exercise on him. Part of her peevishness might have been engendered by the ingenuity and flow of the curses Caliban had been pouring upon his benefactor, or usurper, according to his own valuation. He is so much compact of evil that goodness has a precious little chance of penetrating through this opacity. For Prospero, equally piqued by his intransigence, the criterion of judgment is the antithesis between nature and nurture. Nature in this context is a complex idea, implying brute energy, the untamed beast in man, the potential of unbridled passions, and nurture is the process of imposing a limit upon what is unbounded and chaotic. It is also possible to conceive of nature as a fallen state—a state of gracelessness—which can be made good by the process of education or culture. It may as well be regarded as a condition of primitivism in which man was involved at the threshold of life and which may be lived through and transcended. While Miranda only expresses a sense of exasperation at how Caliban behaves, Prospero, indeed, is the spokesman of a kind of pessimism, for the unregenerate Nature, symbolized by Caliban, is not likely to undergo any radical transformation from within. Spenser in *The Faerie Queene* has been similarly concerned with the Nature-Grace polarity, for whereas nature implies an order of living in consonance with the naked human

impulsions on the mundane level, grace connotes a mode of consciousness shaped by the moral and religious absolutes. In *The Tempest* the nature-nurture antithesis reflects the rising scale from the primitive through the sophisticated to the ultimate; and Caliban seems to both Prospero and Miranda to frustrate all attempts 'to incorporate him into the new civilized order of moral realities.'[2]

Besides Caliban's ignoble designs against Miranda's chastity and his pouring forth an endless stream of curses on Prospero, his transfer of allegiance from Prospero to Stephano is rather symptomatic. The two of them represent two different spectra of values, and there is nothing in common between them. Caliban is seduced by 'the celestial liquor' to fall under the spell of Stephano's personality. His hailing of him as 'thou wondrous man' seems to be a travesty of Miranda's welcome of Ferdinand as 'a thing divine', though both are expressive of an ecstatic response to an idealized figure. This is preceded by a quick interchange between the two of them thus :

> Cal. Hast thou not dropp'd from heaven?
> Ste. Out o' the moon, I do assure thee : I was the man i'th' moon when time was.
> Cal. I have seen thee in her, and I do adore thee ;
> My mistress show'd me thee, and thy dog, and thy bush.
> (ii, ii, 137-42)

These lines reflect an element of child-like simplicity and the capacity to conjure up shapes and figures, aided by the visionary gleam of perception, conferred upon the unsophisticated. He is fascinated by Stephano, crowns him king in his own imagination, swears to be his true subject and his footlicker, and extends his ambition to the extent of joining him and Trinculo in a foul conspiracy against Prospero. The prospect of braining Prospero, possessing the 'nonpareil beauty', Miranda, and becoming the undisputed lord of the secluded retreat is kept dangling before Stephano by Caliban all the time. The radicality of destructiveness lying at the back of these designs explains the grandeur of evil embodied in Caliban, and this

picture is complementary to that of the naive primitive referred to a little earlier. This conspiracy is analogous to the one hatched by Antonio and Sebastian against the apparently defenceless victim, Alonso. To achieve this objective an alliance is forged between Stephano and Trinculo—'the parasites of civilization'[3] on the one hand, and Caliban—the primitive in whom violent and unpurged passions have swamped reason in a marass—on the other. Caliban resents subservience to Prospero and hankers after freedom consistently and is deluded into thinking that he will achieve his long-sought ambition by renouncing tutelage of one kind in favour of another. In other words, so irksome and humiliating to him are the menial services he has been subjected to by Prospero so far that he imagines he would be free if he were accepted as his protégé by Stephano. In return for this he promises : 'I'll show thee every fertile inch o' th' island' (ii, ii, 148), and further

> I'll show thee the best springs ; I'll pluck thee berries;
> I'll fish for thee, and get thee wood enough.
> A plague upon the tyrant that I serve! (ii, ii, 160-62)

He had earlier spoken to Prospero in a similar vein (i, ii, 338-341) while levelling the charge of usurpation against him and giving free scope to his imprecations. 'There is something visionary too about Caliban's feeling for freedom, even if he is mistaken in supposing that it will lie in serving Stephano.'[4] In the first part of this comment Foakes seems to go quite wide of the mark, for there is nothing 'visionary' about Caliban's aspiration to be set free of the tyrant Prospero. On the contrary, his aspiration is equivalent to a kind of anti-freedom, and is rooted in the anarchy of instincts. Prospero and Stephano represent two different categories of values and Caliban leaves us in no doubt about his order of preferences. By identifying himself with Stephano he casts himself in his image at least for the time being.

Prospero's 'filth as thou art' is a strong etching of Caliban's character, and yet inspite of this earthiness as well as a streak

of vindictiveness brutality and beauty are strangely blended in him, and contribute to his essential ambiguity. Reference was made earlier to the primordial quality of Caliban's life when he is discovered by Trinculo unawares and in a chance encounter. The moment he becomes real the evil in him gets blurred and does not remain an absolute evil; it assumes the attractiveness, almost the spirituality, of the primitive. One of the stage directions in iii, ii, 123 reads thus : *Ariel plays the tune on a tabor and pipe*, and this is followed by the ensuing lines :

> Ste. What is this same ?
> Trin. This is the tune of our catch, played by the picture of Nobody.
> Ste. If thou beest a man, show thyself in thy likeness : if thou beest a devil, take 't as thou list.
> Trin. O forgive me my sins !
> Ste. He that dies pays all debts : I defy thee. Mercy upon us !
> Cal. Art thou afeard ?
> Ste. No, monster, not I. (iii, ii, 124-32)

It is evident from the above that the responses both of Stephano and Trinculo to the sweet harmonious sounds flowing from Ariel's tabor are wavering and indeterminate; they are enmeshed in ambiguities. Both of them are at a loss to say where they emanate from, alternately imagining them to be produced either by a man or the devil. The unearthly music of Ariel leaves them in a complete muddle and their sense of discrimination remains suspended. Stephano, being the cleverer of the two, more wide-awake and sharp-witted, tries to hoodwink Caliban and refrains from committing himself anyway. Caliban's reaction, on the contrary, is more forthright and ingenuous and he seems to be perfectly at home in this island of strange and beautiful sounds. His imagination—that unique and subtle gift, that transforming power with which he has been endowed by Shakespeare—is set ablaze at once and he begins to dream of the unsuspected riches that the clouds are likely to pour upon him when he is in a state of trance. It is this capacity for travelling in unrealized worlds at the touch of

music and fancy that distinguishes him from his brazen-faced confederates and brings him near to Ariel :

> Be not afeard ; the isle is full of noises,
> Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight, and hurt not.
> Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
> Will hum about mine ears ; and sometimes voices,
> That, if I then had wak'd after long sleep,
> Will make me sleep again ; and then, in dreaming,
> The clouds methought would open, and show riches
> Ready to drop upon me ; that, when I wak'd,
> I cried to dream again. (iii, ii, 133-141)

This continuing sense of wonder, this responsiveness to the shimmering beauty of sounds and voices and this keen impulse to have the rapturous condition prolonged is, indeed, amazing and creates a feeling of blessedness. The alternation between sleep, waking and then sleeping again in order to be visited with dreams of surpassing beauty confers upon Caliban a unique distinction. He is capable of following the trail of a visionary gleam and soaring into transcendental regions. His sensitivity to music is borne out by Ariel himself in a later context thus :

> Then I beat my tabor;
> At which, like unback'd colts, they prick'd their ears,
> Advanc'd their eyelids, lifted up their noses
> As they smelt music : so I charm'd their ears,
> That, calf-like, they my lowing follow'd, through
> Tooth'd briers, sharp furzes, pricking goss, and thorns,
> Which enter'd their frail shins: (iv, i, 175-81)

This is apparently in reply to Prospero's query regarding how and where Ariel found 'these varlets' (Caliban and his confederates) but that the specific reference is, nevertheless, aimed at Caliban is brought out by Prospero's.

> Spirit,
> We must prepare to meet with Caliban. (iv, i, 165-66)

uttered a little earlier in the same context. 'They smelt music' is a clear instance of synesthesia, and the lines following closely upon this phrase demonstrate their complete and dazed

absorption into the sea of music around them. They seem to be hypnotized and rendered powerless and the sweet and ravishing airs seem to penetrate their whole being.

And Caliban is not merely capable of responding to tones and voices but also has the uncanny flair for pouring forth sophisticated verse as he does when he speaks to Stephano about the strange hiding-places of beauty in the island :

> I prithee, let me bring thee where crabs grow;
> And I with my long nails will dig thee pig-nuts ;
> Show thee a jay's nest, and instruct thee how
> To snare the nimble marmoset ; I'll bring thee
> To clustering filberts, and sometimes I'll get thee
> Young scamels from the rock. Wilt thou go with me ?
>
> (ii, ii, 167-72)

This is poetry elicited from the bowels of the earth when the gleam of the imagination plays upon it, and it has an exquisite touch of the marvellous upon it.

The process of regeneration in the play begins after the guilt of all Prospero's former enemies has been laid bare, evaluated and held up to the Judgment of Destiny. All of them are made to undergo penitence before they are able to qualify for forgiveness. Alonso, being a little less culpable than others, begins to have a growing realization that the whole harmony of nature is out to denounce him for his act of sacrilege against Prospero and Miranda. His desperation is carried to such an extent that he would rather 'lie mudded i' th' ooze' than survive his son with a guilt-laden conscience. Things are set going the moment Prospero surrenders his status as an adept or *illuminatus* and proclaims with the deepest conviction of his soul:

> Yet with my nobler reason 'gainst my fury
> Do I take part : the rarer action is
> In virtue than in vengeance:
>
> (v, i, 26-28)

Prospero's utterance is weighted not only with wisdom but also with super-human detachment and brings into exercise the

Christian concept of *Caritas* which necessarily follows upon *Castitas*. And yet Sebastian remains lukewarm and undecided and Antonio continues to retain his hard and hateful silence. He suffers from a sense of chagrin and defies any attempt at eradicating his ingrained obduracy. Only the two grotesques-Stephano and Trinculo—are exluded from Prospero's final gesture of graciousness as he consigns these two to the care of Alonso:

> Two of these fellows you
> Must know and own ; this thing of darkness I
> Acknowledge mine. (v, i, 274-76)

The possibility of this acknowledgment had been intuited very early in the play thus :

> But, as 'tis,
> We cannot miss him : (i, ii, 314-15)

And D. G. James comments shrewdly in this context thus : 'and the time will come when he will say : "this thing of darkness I acknowledge mine"; as St. Augustine in his *Confessions* knew well the darkness that was in him, set over against the light before which he trembled in love and awe.'[5] And Foakes also believes that Caliban externalizes Prospero's own propensity towards evil, and hence his acceptance of him is the recognition of the subdual of evil within his own self.[6]

Caliban is ultimately moved to speak very significantly when he says :

> and I'll be wise hereafter,
> And seek for grace. What a thrice-double ass
> Was I, to take this drunkard for a god,
> And worship this dull fool! (v,i, 294-97)

These lines are the fruit of a chastened impulse and mark a clear advance in perspicacity. The disillusionment that Caliban comes to experience regarding Stephano and Trinculo is partly caused by a sense of their discomfiture in the face of Prospero's superior strategy and partly by an instinctive perception that he, along with them, has been rotating in an endless chain of trivia. But 'darkness' as defined by James or Foakes

is neither peculiar to any extent being (Caliban or Prospero) or to an ideal validity (humanity in general); it is rather the enchainment of the self in the confusion of being and existence. An element of bravado is mingled in Prospero's assertion to acknowledge 'this thing of darkness', for evil cannot be completely rooted out, one can only hope to struggle for coming to terms with it and be prepared to face a kind of moral pathos. In fact two different configurations of evil are evoked by Shakespeare in Antonio and Caliban. In the former evil operates as an assertion of the empirical self-existence against the possible being or Existenz. He erects his sheer self-interest into a kind of god and regards that god as omnipotent; in him we come across the phenomenon of the absolutizing of pure existence which amounts to nothing but vacuity and negation. The will that determines his choice is, in Karl Jaspers's pregnant phrase, 'the will to the void.' Caliban, on the contrary, though no less involved in the shackles of self-existence, shrouding himself from the clear luminosity of reason and carrying his naked passion to the point of self-destruction, has implicit in him a spark of light. And this points up the way towards the attainment of purgation. It may with some justice be claimed that he is as much 'surrounded by the power of Prospero'[7] as Ariel offers a self-projection of his master. The 'grace' he resolves to seek is not just a theological category but is equivalent to the will to manifestation which is to be actualized by the alchemy of the imagination. In him one may perceive the marvellous equilibrium of those potencies and comprehensions that sustain one in the midst of the chaos of a bounded existence. He may, therefore, be regarded as symbolic of that ritual of promise which has been enacted more than once in Shakespeare's last plays.

Department of English
Aligarh Muslim University
Aligarh

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Salamatullah Khan

THE THEMATIC STRUCTURE OF *Samson Agonistes*

Samson Agonistes is too complex a poem to be used for topical reference, as it was done in a paper presented at a recent seminar on Milton.[1] Milton scholars have rejected the political and autobiographical approach to the poem even when they concede that close and obvious parallels exist between Samson and Milton, and at least one reference (692-704) is clearly to the government's reprisal on the leaders of the Commonwealth after the Restoration. Without the heroic memories of his own share in the Revolution and the consequent despair, Milton would have not been able to recreate the story of Samson with the same impressive energy as he does in *Samson Agonistes*.[2] But it is of dubious merit to carry the significance of the parallels any further, for Milton was without Samson's overwhelming sense of guilt in betraying the commandment of God. He was also too great the impersonal artist to be misled by his own feelings which he sublimated and there is nothing in the poem which is antithetical to the fable which Milton borrowed from the Old Testament (Judges : XIII-XVI). It is, therefore, more unfortunate to allude to Samson, however indirecty, in relation to certain events on the Indian sub-continent when no convincing parallel can safely be established.

The said essay also makes two self-contradictory statements. 'In the background of national calamity', writes the author, 'Samson who in Milton's play is seen progressively as more an individual concerned with his personal commitments to God, lost for a while something of his individuality, and became more of a national hero, a symbol of the nation's will

to survive.'[3] Later, describing Samson's victory as 'the final vindication of Israel's God,' the author states that 'Samson... is more a champion of God than of Israel'.[4] These statements repeat two old issues concerning the poem, first raised in the extremely nationalistic interpretation of the poem given by Sir Richard Jebb in the first decade of the present century.[5] Jebb had claimed that the central concern of the drama was that 'of a national champion, first victorious, then abased, then finally triumphant, in a national cause.'[6] According to Jebb, the drama in *Samson Agonistes* reaches its climax when 'Jehovah has prevailed over Dagon and Israel is avenged on Philistia.'[7] Apparently, Jebb echoed the claim made by an earlier critic, Edward Dowden, that 'the protagonist is in truth not Samson but Jehovah'.[8] These two claims, namely, that Samson is the national champion, and that the real struggle is between Jehovah and Dagon with Samson acting as God's Champion, have been convincingly countered. W.R. Parker, to quote one good example, argued as early as 1937, that it is Samson as an individual, and not as a national champion, who is the centre of interest in the poem. Race and nation, according to him, are of no importance, since Milton in pursuing the Greek ideal of characterization, has focused attention on Samson 'as a man'.[9] It is the physical and spiritual suffering of Samson which is Milton's major thematic concern, and not the contest between God and Dagon, which is incidental.[10]

It was Parker again who pointed out that *Samson Agonistes* is 'more than just an imitation of Greek tragedy.'[11] and this 'more' has been explored in the Chiristian tradition which, like the Greek tradition, is one of the major influences on the poem. It is generally agreed that *Samson Agonistes* is, as A.S.P. Woodhouse puts it, 'a tragedy, which, however scrupulously it adheres to classical conventions, is written unfalteringly from a Christian point of view.'[12] In the Christian tradition the main concern is the drama which is enacted in man's soul and its chief ingredients are repen-

tance and regeneration. Most critics of Milton agree that the central action in *Samson Agonistes* is an internal one which as Una Ellis-Fermor said, 'takes place entirely in the "theatre of the soul".'[13] Tillyard has stated that 'from Samson's case we may learn the process through which regeneration was affected. Humility, intellectual clarity and self-knowledge are the means.'[14] Couched in secular terms, Professor Tillyard's remark is not far from the Christian tradtion which seeks expiation of sin through repentance to achieve regeneration and God's grace. It is interesting to note the comparison Milton made in *Paradise Lost* between Samson and Adam and Eve after they had awakened from the sleep following their sensual play :

> So rose the *Danite* strong
> *Herculean Samson* from the Harlot-lap
> Of *Philistean Dalilah*, and wak'd
> Shorn of his strength, They destitute and bare
> Of all thir vertue. (IX, 1059-63)

Both Adam and Samson succeed in overcoming their despair and achieve regeneration through the same interrelated steps of repentance. My intention in this essay is, to study the thematic structure of *Samson Agonistes*, to restate some of the points made by other critics and trace Samson's regeneration through the various episodes of the drama. Without understanding this process of spritual progression, it is difficult to appreciate Samson's transformation from the brawny barbarian of Judges into a man of thoughtful conscience and truthful piety.

II

In the light of recent criticism,[15] it has become increasingly evident that the most significant approach to the thematic structure of *Samson Agonistes* can be made through the Christian tradition. It is through this approach that we can focus our attention on the middle of the poem (which Dr. Johnson missed or ignored) which dramatizes the spiritual growth of a fallen

man. The very opening lines of the poem are important from this point of view.

> A little onward lend thy guiding hand
> To these dark steps, a little further on ;
>
> but here I feel amends,
> The breath of Heav'n fresh-blowing, pure and sweet,
>
> (1-2, 9-10)

These lines are not limited to their literal meaning : the guiding hand is more than that of a fellow-slave and the breath of Heaven does not refer only to the air of the 'day-spring born'. Samson bewails the humiliation, both physical and spiritual, of his fallen state and recalls the promises made at his birth. Preceded and followed by these complaints, is the middle of his soliloquy which contains the seed of his regeneration.

> Yet stay, let me not rashly call in doubt
> Divine Prediction ; what if all foretold
> Had been fulfill'd but through mine own default,
> Whom have I to complain of but myself? (43-46)

Like the opening lines which express indirectly Samson's willingness and desire to seek divine guidance for his spiritual recovery, the lines quoted above show that his reason is yet unclouded and he can recognise his guilt and admit his own fault. Reviewing his past sin, he laments that he not only revealed the secret of his strength to Dalila but he also felt 'Proudly secure' forgetting that he was 'liable to fall' (55). In the midst of his lamentation he interrupts himself again to admit his guilt.

> But peace, I must not quarrel with the will
> Of highest dispensation, which herein
> Happy had ends above my reach to know. (60-62)

This admission of guilt is followed by Samson's lyrical outburst on blindness (67-109) beginning 'O loss of sight, of thee I most complain'. Perhaps, the impassioned eloquence of this passage owes something to Milton's own blindness, who

was eyeless in London and was metaphorically, if not literally, at the mill with slaves. But Samson's fall was steep enough and his personal lamentation, natural enough in itself, was not inconsistent with patience. Patience, according to Milton, is the virtue under which man bears the inevitable evils, and 'sensibility to pain, and even lamentation, are not inconsistent with true patience.'[16]

The Danite Chorus, which comes to console Samson, is struck by the miserable appearance and changed condition of the once powerful hero.

> See how he lies at random, carelessly diffus'd,
> With languish't head unpropt,
> As one past hope, abandon'd,
> And by himself given over. (118-21)

This description is, however, misleading in the sense that it judges Samson only by his external appearance. The Samson who in the most intense moments of grief refused to blame God for his suffering and who had the strength to admit his own fault twice in his soliloquy, can hardly be described as one 'past hope' or 'abandon'd'. At any rate, it is not in harmony with the gestures of moral responsibility which Samson makes in the soliloquy. But the Chorus, by its sympathy for Samson's sin of disobedience, provides him with the opportunity to rationalize and explain his sin. Samson's unusual choice to marry among the 'unclean' (321) was due to inner promptings of God (222-24) which was a sign of the grace of God in his unfallen state. After his fall, he was cut off from this 'intimate impulse' (223) till shortly before the catastrophe about which I shall speak later. The purpose of such a marriage was that 'I might begin *Israel's* Deliverence'. (225) That purpose was not achieved but that was not his fault. Samson has the 'intellectual clarity'[17] to explain that persuaded by his countrymen, he had yielded to the Philistines but when breaking his bond, he had killed the choicest youths of the enemy, his own people had failed to avail themselves of the opportunity to break their bondage

and be free. As the Chorus associates him with Gideon and Jephthah, he reproaches his people not so much for their betrayal of him as for their desertion of God's will (290-92). The concluding remark of the Chorus that

> Just are the ways of God,
> And justifiable to Men.
> (293-94)

expresses a belief which Samson must have thoroughly approved.

Manoa, like the Chorus, comes to console and bring good cheer to Samson. It is to be noted, however, that in the pervasive irony of the drama, each visitor produces the opposite of the intended effects. The Chorus in trying to minimize Samson's offence, had put forward the argument that 'wisest Men/Have err'd, and by bad Women been deceiv'd' (210-11). And this causes Samson to analyse his past guilt and the necessity of his deserved punishment. Manoa, in the fatherly concern for his son, raises the question of Samson's relationship with God and the justice of his punishment, (368-72) leading him to make a fuller and more comprehensive confession of his sin.

> Appoint not heavenly disposition, Father,
> Nothing of all these evils hath befall'n me
> But justly; I myself have brought them on,
> Sole Author I, sole cause. (373-76)

Samson dwells upon his 'vile folly' (377) in greater detail : how he profaned his vow to God by revealing it to 'my faithless enemy', (380) especially when he had been warned of betrayal by his experience with his first wife, how he had repelled Dalila's approaches three times and how finally wearied he had betrayed God's secret. Leaving the subject of the past, Manoa reminds Samson that he must take the blame of the public dishonour of God in the victory celebration of the Philistines to honour Dagon. Samson accepts the blame with apparent calm (448-53) and goes a step further saying that, by his example, he has created doubt and driven

the 'feeble hearts' to 'fall off and join with Idols' (455-56). But it is this realization of the magnitude and the consequences of his sin which, I think, turns the knife in his wound and fills him with a sense of utter helplessness later in, what Professor Bush calls, a 'prolonged lapse' in his 'steady upward progression,'[18] but of that I shall speak presently.

The chief anguish in Samson's life, thus, is spiritual and its centre is the soul. Manoa's plan for ransom and Samson's possible return to his country and home, evokes no favourable response from him and he politely and respectfully rejects the offer.

> Spare that proposal, Father, spare the trouble
> Of that solicitation ; let me here,
> As I deserve, pay on my punishment ;
> And expiate, if possible, my crime. (487-90)

Samson is thus not only convinced about the justice of his punishment but is also willing to patiently bear its utmost humiliation and suffering. Samson's speech after Manoa's departure (558-651) does constitute an impasse in the moral drama, even if I do not think it to be a prolonged lapse. Samson's longing for physical death, to relieve him of his spiritual agony with 'no redress' (619) and of 'wounds immedicable' (620), expresses his utter helplessness bordering on despair but it arises, I think, from Samson's realization that he is cut off from God's grace and has lost the providential protection and favour. God, he feels, 'hath cast me off as never known' (641) and 'Left me all helpless' (644). More anguished is the realization that he has brought dishonour to God and unintentional 'pomp' to Dagon, infecting the mind of the weak with the desire to become idolaters. The Chorus suggests that Samson cannot come out of his present state

> Unless he feels within
> Some source of consolation from above
> Secret refreshings, that repair his strength,
> And fainting spirits uphold. (463-66)

III

We have seen from the above analysis of the first two episodes that Samson by resisting the temptation to blame God and by bewailing and making a public confession of his sin, has fulfilled the first three steps of repentance : conviction, contrition and confession.[19] His confrontation with Dalila constitutes, I believe, his rejection of evil. Critics have often expressed sympathy for Dalila and she has been variously commented upon. At least one critic has been pleased to call himself '*advocatus Dalilae*'.[20] It is to be pointed out that Milton's contemporary readers would take a different view, for Dalila, according to Krouse,

> had a bad name in the tradition which was still alive and intact : she was well known from poem, broadside, and sermon as a deceitful, a treacherous, a dangerously clever sort of woman, skilful in blandishment and importunity. The readers for whom Milton wrote . . . were prepared for a Devil equipped with what appears on the surface to be the best of arguments.[21]

Samson refers to her in the earlier part of the poem as 'that specious Monster' (230); he now calls her 'my Traitress' (725) and 'Hyaena' (748). These epithets and Samson's treatment of Dalila in general seem harsh to the modern reader. But I believe they did not do so to Miltion's contemporary readers who were familiar with the Dalila legend as noted by Krouse. There is no doubt that Samson feels strong resentment at Dalila's approach and he does not conceal it, but he calms down gradually and even forgives her, although from a distance, not allowing her to touch his hand. It is to be noted, however, that Tillyard did not use the phrase 'settled ferocity' in this context.[22]

There is something inconsistent in her appearance as described by the Chorus and her professed repentance. She comes 'like a stately ship' (714) rigged with fineries 'so bedeck't, ornate, and gay,' (712) but as she comes close, she declines her head 'like a fair flower surcharg'd with dew'.

(728). She is apparently play-acting and is guilty of violating the sense of decorum, if not of outright hypocrisy. He rprotestations are also shallow and contradictory. She first says that she does not intend to extenuate her offence but has come only to seek Samson's pardon, and than immediately proceeds to accuse Samson of showing her the way to what she did. (One is reminded of Eve who used the same argument after the Fall to justify her disobedience). Then, almost in the same breath, she starts to plead as an insecure and frightened wife who in order to hold Samson firmly to her, sought to learn his secret to

> get into my power
> Thy key of strength and safety. (798-99)

If anything, this is a very clever extenuation of her offence. After getting a suitable rebuff from Samson, she changes her stratagem and pleads as a frightened citizen overwhelmed by the Philistine rulers who pressed how just it was

> How honourable, how glorious to entrap
> A common enemy, who had destroy'd
> Such numbers of our Nation . . . (855-57)

Failing to achieve her purpose even by this argument, she in the manner of the enchantresses of the Circe tradition, offers to look after Samson

> At home in leisure and domestic ease,
> Exempt from many a care and chance to which
> Eyesight exposes daily men abroad. (917-99)

This was a very potent blandishment which Dalila must have thought would succeed but as we have seen in his rejection of Manoa's offer that physical suffering was no longer Samson's concern, he forcefully rejects the temptation offered by Dalila. He cannot be, as he says,

> so unwary or accurst
> To bring my feet again into the snare
> Where once I have been caught. (930-32)

After her final rejection, Dalila turns in fury and tells Samson in no unambiguous terms that fame has a double mouth and she will stand defamed only among his people. But she will be remembered by her own people who will confer honour and reward upon her 'for the pity' (993). In her last speech she reveals her real self as she leaves us in no doubt that her repentance was fake and that she had come to extenuate her offence and not to seek Samson's pardon. There is ample justification for the comment of the Chorus that she was

> a manifest Serpent by her sting
> Discover'd in the end, till now conceal'd. (997-98)

The Chorus also aptly praises Samson for the clarity of his inward vision and moral courage in rejecting the temptation offered by Dalila, for

> beauty, though injurious, hath strange power,
> After offence returning, to regain
> Love once possest, nor can be easily
> Repuls't without much inward passion felt
> And secret sting of amorous remorse. (1003-7)

In rejecting Dalila, Samson has rejected evil, even if he does not say so and it is not surprising that he seems to come out of his deep despondency and his spirits are raised.

IV

Samson's occasional expression of despondency and helplessness, his repeated confessions of sin and his strong resentment at Dalila's approach, depict the turmoil of his soul striving to achieve his spiritual recovery. There is over-simplification in Tillyard's comment 'that Samson is from the very beginning of the play a 'saved man'.[23] Samson's spiritual agony is the measure of his individual effort for achieving his regeneration as, from the dramatic point of view, it saves his recovery from appearing artificial and contrived. By the time that Harapha comes, however, Samson has left behind his feeling

of helplessness and attains internal peace. Provoked by Harapha's braggadocio, Samson's will to act is revived. He challenges Harapha thrice but it is not a personal combat to prove his prowess as a warrior. The word 'agonistes' means something more than a contestant in public games. Samson wants to prove the superiority of his God over Dagon. Surprised by the courage and confidence of Samson whom Harapha expeed to have been broken and tamed by his blindness a dnensavemen t, he attributes Samson's assurance to 'some Magician's Art' (1133). Samson replies with quiet dignity that

> I know no spells, use no forbidden Arts;
> My trust is in the living God... (1139-40)

Questioning Samson's claim that he will be the proof of God's strength, Harapha taunts him how he can claim God's favour when he is enslaved, betrayed by his own nation and blinded by his enemies. Samson does not react with anger in the face of this provocation. As a sure sign that he is truly regenerate, he calmly replies :

> All these indignities, for such they are
> From thine, these evils I deserve and more
> Acknowledge them from God inflicted on me
> Justly, yet despair not of his final pardon
> Whose ear is ever open ; and his eye
> Gracious to re-admit the suppliant ;
> In confidence whereof I once again
> Defy thee to the trial of mortal fight
> By combat to decide whose God is God,
> Thine or whom I with Israel's Sons adore. (1168-77)

Samson's complete trust in God and his implicit faith in God's mercy, expressed for the first time in the poem, mark the upward progression of his spiritual restoration. During the earlier moments of darkness, he had felt deprived of God's protection and favour. He no longer does so, for his repentance has brought him to the stage of saving faith.

Samson had already learnt from Manoa the reason for the holiday's celebration and as the officer comes to take him to

the temple, Samson has valid reasons for refusing to go : as a Hebrew, he cannot participate in idolatrous religious rites. Before the officer returns, Samson feels inner promptings from God which persuade him to go with the messenger but he qualifies this decision by stating that he will do nothing

> that may dishonour
> Our Law, or stain my vow of *Nazarite*. (1385-86)

There is nothing 'abrupt'[24] in this decision, as pointed out by Tillyard. He writes: 'There is a dramatic improbability about Samson's final regeneration. His sudden resolution, due to inner prompting, to obey after all the lords' summons is too abrupt to be convincing: it seems to be taken too lightly'.[25] It may be pointed out that this is not the first occasion in Samson's life to act in harmony with the inner voice. God had once urged him through the same process to marry 'unclean' women and it was an action contrary to the rational interpretation of the Law. Again, if this drama is to be regarded as a record of the spiritual growth of a sinner, there is nothing 'light' about Samson's willing obedience to follow his inner voice prompted by God. Samson says that he was content to go, for

> Master's commands come with a power resistless
> To such as owe them absolute subjection;
> And for a life who will not change his purpose ?
> (1404-6)

These lines embody the grim irony of the situation. Samson pretends that he was going in obedience to the Philistine masters, to whom he owed absolute subjection, in order to save his life. But we know that, in fact, he was going in obedience to the true Master, God.

V

Samson who has been described as 'Patient but undaunted'. (1623) performs the required feats at the theatre of Gaza and

thus completes the expiation of his sin. In the intermission, while placing his arms around the two columns supporting the roof, he

> with head a while inclin'd
> And eyes fast fixt he stood, as one pray'd,
> Or some great matter in his mind revolve'd. (1636-38)

Samson's prayer before the catastrophe is in keeping with his regeneration. The tragic nature of the catastrophe has, however, been questioned by several critics. Ellis-Fermor writes :

> Few of us, if thinking in terms of experience and not of names, are content to call Samson's triumphant death a tragic catastrophe. How could we, indeed when 'nothing is here for tears'?... Milton oversets the balance in the direction of positive interpretation; by justifying the ways of God to man he leaves no room for tragic ecstasy.

Samson's regeneration and his recovery of God's grace surely constitute a triumph but he has won this triumph through physical and spiritual agony like saints and martyrs. And at the very moment that he wins a victory, he dies. His recovery or Milton's presentation of the ways of God, does not erode the tragic sense of waste at the end of the drama. Miss Elis-Fermor's complaint would have been justified if Samson had emerged unscathed from the ordeal, but he dies gloriously and, no doubt, tragically.

Again, it is often said, as pointed out by Professor Douglas Bush,[27] that a true Christian, by his belief in the providential God in the prospect of heavenly reward for the hero, is essentially incapable of writing a tragedy, for the basic postutates of a tragedy are negated by such beliefs. 'A deep religious feeling paramount', writes Paull Baum, 'and a high tragic spirit are antithetical.'[28] Broadly speaking, this claim may be true, but it can hardly be applied to Milton or to *Samson Agonistes.* Milton's belief in the workings of Providence and his justification of the ways of God, do not necessarily nullify the agony of Samson's suffering and death. And, surely, no heavenly reward is held out for Samson. To quote A.S.P.

Woodhouse's argument, Milton 'has made the way of repentance and restoration, the way back to God, also the way that leads inevitably to the catastrophe, and has thus achieved at a stroke the only kind of irony that is at once compatible with a Christian outlook and as potent as any be found in tragedy anywhere.'[29]

From the above analysis, it has been made clear, I hope, that Milton's major concern in *Samson Agonistes* was to depict the spiritual progression of a sinner and it is this concern which has the pivotal role in the thematic structure of the poem. The second semichorus says :

> But he though blind of sight,
> Despis'd and thought extinguish't quite,
> With inward eyes illuminated
> His fiery virtue rous'd
> From under ashes into sudden flame, . . .
> Like that self-begott'n bird
> In the *Arabian* woods embost,
> That no second knows nor third,
> And lay erewhile a Holocaust,
> From out her ashy womb now teem'd
> Revives, reflourishes, then vigorous most
> When most unactive deem'd,
> And though her body die, her fame survives,
> A secular bird ages of lives.
>
> (1687-1707)

Like the mythical bird, phoenix, Samson rises from the ashes of his own destruction and returns in explicit obedience to God.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Shakespear: The Critical Heritage, Vol. 3, *1733-1752*, edited by Brian Vickers, The Critical Heritage series (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul), 1975, £8.50, xii+487pp.

The third of the proposed six volumes devoted to Shakespeare in the Critical Heritage series brings the delineation of the Shakespeare mythos down to the mi d del decades of the eighteenth century. The record of these twenty or so years does not, of course, include achievements of a high order either in literary criticism or in matters related to the editing of the plays though in the theatre these were the years of Garrick's undisputed early successes. The present volume contains nothing as noteworthy as Rowe's pioneering biographical-editorial endeavour or as valuable as Johnson's judicial or Morgann's 'interpretative' criticism. Malone's editorial and textual achievements were as yet a distant prospect, and even the first systematic though rather inconsequential study of Shakespeare's sources (*Shakespeare Illustrated* by Johnson's friend Charlotte Lennox) was to appear a year or two later. The earlier volumes had revealed the growth of critical attitudes and stances during the seventeenth (1623-1692) and the early decades of the eighteenth century (1693-1733). That the entire project is a boon to the students of Shakespeare need hardly be stressed. The great landmarks of the eighteenth century Shakespeare criticism have no doubt been easy of access in the familiar Nicholl Smith and other collections but to a majority of general readers many of the items in the Critical Heritage volumes have not been more than tantalising references in scholarly footnotes. Professor Brian Vickers has of necessity taken recourse to selection (liberal as far as physically permissible), and has not aimed at including everything written

on Shakespeare during this period. The editor's task was evidently not very easy. The volume of occasional and ephemeral comment in journalistic, literary and quasi-literary writings and also in private correspondence and recorded conversation becomes enormous as the first century of predominantly middle-class readership moves towards the early variorums. Professor Vickers shrewdly edits his way through this plethora. His volumes cannot be described as rather more inclusive selections of early essays on Shakespeare *à la* D. Nicholl Smith, nor are they publications of a Shakespeare Criticism Reprint Society. The effort seems rather to be directed at recapturing the mood of, and retracing the complex pattern of attitudes obtaining in, the successive epochs till the emergence of the recognisably 'modern' stance towards Shakespeare. With such an assumption in mind one may occasionally be tempted to disagree with Professor Vickers's choice of material or rather with the extent of his choice. One may, for instance, feel mildly impatient at the number of pages devoted to the trivia from the notes in Warburton's disastrous edition of 1747, and also at the space alloted to the hostile criticism it invited, just and necessary though it was, and also occasionally brilliant in its exposure of Warburton's liberties in dealing with real or fancied textual cruces. Warburton's was a singular case, no doubt, and the clergyman's 'critical' fantasies do provide a measure of the difficulties experienced in an age when editorial method and textual criticism, Theobold's much-maligned though sound endeavours notwithstanding, were still in their infancy and the incomprehension of the lexical peculiarities of Elizabethan English matched only by a total ignorance of the theatrical, social and intellectual background of Shakespeare's plays. D. Nicholl Smith had included Warburton's Preface in his collection of eighteenth century essays for reasons that were probably far from complimentary to the editorial and other skills of the latter. He had perhaps less justification for doing so than Professor Vickers since excellence or at least significance was his only criterion. The present series is less rigorously

exclusive and aims, in the words of its General Editor, at 'a selection of the most important views, significant for their intrinsic critical worth or for their representative quality —perhaps even registering incomprehension'. A near total incomprehension of the editorial method is what Warburton's Preface so well registers, and caprice coupled with arrogance is what the notes in his edition so profusely record.

The declared principle of emendation was no doubt sound: '...where the old Copies failed me I have indulged nothing to Fancy or Imagination but have religiously observed the severe Canons of literal Criticism' (*Heritage*, pp. 223-24) but it was vitiated by wrong assumptions about Shakespeare's language. The very next paragraph refers to Shakespeare's '*licentious Use of Terms*, or *a hard or ungrammatical Construction*'. That this is in no way related to the generally unhistorical approach to literary problems common in the eighteenth century is evidenced by the awareness of 'the Proteus-nature. . .of ever-shifting language' in John Upton's *Critical Observations on Shakespeare* published only a year after Warburton's edition. 'Ben Jonson', says Upton, 'printed his English Grammar. If Shakespeare and Milton never published their rules yet they are not difficult to be traced from more accurate consideration of their writings. . .When these are known we shall be less liable to give a loose to fancy in indulging the licentious spirit of criticism, nor shall we then so much presume to judge what Shakespeare *ought* to have written as endeavour to discover and retrieve what he *did* write' (p. 308). Not that Warburton did not have his moments of stray insight in the notes (some of them listed in Professor Vickers's Introduction, p. 15), nor that he altogether lacked his share of an occasional 'noble emendation' (Johnson's complimentary reference to Warburton's 'Being a god, kissing carrion', *Hamlet*, 2.2.181, for F's and Q2's 'good kissing carrion'). The amount, however, of pure nonsense in the notes permitted to appear in the present volume seems rather disproportionate though some of it has a peculiar flavour of its own. On 'Long withering out a young man's revenue', *A Midsummer*

Night's Dream, 1.1.6, Warburton's note reads : '*Long withering out* is, certainly, not good English. I rather think *Shakespeare* wrote, *Long* WINTERING ON a young man's revenue'.

Thomas Birch, the translator of Pierre Bayle's *Dictionaire historie et critique*, had been furnished with manuscript remarks by Warbuton in which the reader had been promised a summary of the principles of textual criticism and 'a Glossary of the words in Shakespeare' in Warbuton's forthcoming edition. Since the promise was not kept by the editor himself, the need was supplied by one Thomas Edwards in the form of the ironical *Canons of Criticism, and Glossary* as a supplement to Warbuton's edition, and 'proper to be bound with it'. The period has hardly anything better to offer on the subject of textual criticism (negatively, of course) than these ironical principles derived from Warburton's practice. They must have contributed in their own way to the gradual enlightenment in editorial matters that was so slow of attainment from Rowe to Steevens and Malone. (Thomas Edwards, incidentally, had been trained for the law like Malone). The exposure makes delightful reading though, again, one feels that the sample of notes takes perhaps a little more space than needed to give a taste of their quality. The selection of material from the period under review is on the whole excellent. Where else can the general reader come across *in extenso* the anonymous *Remarks on the Tragedy of Hamlet* with its distinction of being the first detailed examination of the play as also with its other, rather dubious, distinction of being the first to raise the problem of the protagonist's delay? Here, between the same covers, we get Cibber's celebrated account of Betterton as Hamlet than which there is hardly anything finer in the theatrical criticism in the period—Professor Vickers's excerpts are more pointed though less extensive than those in Ward's anthology of dramatic criticism in the World's Classics series—Aaron Hill's theatre criticism of pre-Garrick days, Samuel Foote's shrewd assessment of Garrick's Lear and Quin's and Barry's Othellos, Johnson's *Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of 'Macbeth'*, an 'advertisement', so to

say, for the edition of 1765, John Upton's *Critical Observations onShakespeare* (justly praised by Professor Vickers), and, to round off, the second anonymous commentary on *Hamlet* (1752).

The general frame of reference in the period is still neo-classical though Rymer's version of the doctrine and the French influence have receded into the background and gradually fused into theoretical elements deriving largely from middle-class sentimentality and didacticism. This is evidenced by the interesting fact that though the chorus of protest against the application of the neo-classical 'Rules' to Shakespeare, especially those relating to the Unities, becomes powerful in the period under review, there is near unanimous censure of the great Copier of Nature for destroying the tragic solemnity of his plays through generic impurity. True, William Mason, whose plea for the revival of the Chorus was poohpoohed by his friend Gray, thought that 'good sense, as well as antiquity prescribed an adherence to the three great Unities'. The consensus of opinion had, however, come round to the view that Shakespeare's allegiance was to a higher principle of construction. Upton and William Guthrie in their limited literary way come as close to an intuitive grasp of the Coleridgian principle as it was possible in those days of the general Cartesian framework. (It appears, incidentally, that Professor Vickers has invested a quotation from William Guthrie—'The field of imagination lies higher than that of truth'—with a significance that is diametrically opposed to its real one. See pp. 4 and 198.) The way was thus cleared for Johnson's justly celebrated vindication of Shakespeare's disregard of the neo-classical Unities. Not so, however, as regards the mingling of genres. Professor Vickers has in his Introduction summed up the general stance adopted by the critics in the present volume (p. 2) and shown how it was a continuation of the critical attitudes in the preceding decades. What the Introduction, rather pitifully, refrains from doing is to provide a framework of relevant speculation for its excellent conspectus of trends and tendencies. The vehement con-

demnation of the mixture of comedy and tragedy in Shakespeare no doubt proceeded from a strict adherence to neo-classical tenets. But so did the doctrine of the Unities. The reason, therefore, that the age was less willing to condone the presence of humour (it had little liking for the sardonic) in scenes of tragic solemnity could perhaps be traced to something more deeply ingrained in its sensibility than the formal allegiance to a dogma. The age was incapacitated from appreciating the more masculine, peculiarly Shakespearian, flavour of tragedy by what it thought was refinement of taste but which, in fact, reflected its predominant sentimentalising strain. It could even be suggested that the analytical, atomistic approach to experience, so typical of the age, could not but have prevented it from approaching aright a more unitive vision. The Grave-diggers' scene in *Hamlet* was the great stumbling block. The sentimental urge towards solemnity condemned it as, in a later age, a rather different shade of sentimentalism was to excessively glorify it.

The Critical Heritage series enables us to come out of the shell of our own predilections and prepossessions so that we can see how different epochs have successively approached Shakespeare. That we can see how they erred is no guarantee of our own rectitude.

Department of English
Aligarh Muslim University
Aligarh

MAQBOOL H. KHAN

Vico & Herder : Two Studies in the History of Ideas, by Isaiah Berlin (London : The Hogarth Press), 1976, xxviii+228 p.p.

Isaiah Berlin's recent work *Vico & Herder* is a critical study of the leading ideas of two eighteenth century original minds—

the Italian Vico (1668-1744) and the German Herder (1744-1803). The importance of these two thinkers lies in the fact that they were the originators of some significant concepts which fully crystallised only in the nineteenth century and have become a part of the pervasive intellectual climate of our own times. Berlin shows with vigour and charm to what a large extent the ideas of Hegel, Marx, Dilthey, Scheler, Cassirer, and Collingwood are present in the writings of Vico and Herder.

Vico passed his entire life as a minor teacher of jurisprudence in Naples without anybody suspecting that a century after his death he would be acclaimed as one of the greatest and most original minds of all time. He was a cripple due to a childhood injury and lived in embittered poverty and isolation. His genius was brought to light only when the great nineteenth century French historian, Michelet, came under the spell of Vico's *magnum opus*, *The New Science*, first published in 1725. Even so, and despite the recognition accorded to him in the nineteenth century, Vico never had an impact on the intellectual scene, since by that time many of his bold and original ideas had found independent expression in such writers as Herder, Hegel, Comte, Marx, Ranke, Dilthey, etc. Vico was discovered, only to be neglected again. It is only in the twentieth century that, due to the immense editorial labours of the Italian scholar Nicolini (who was stimulated by Croce's interpretation of Vico) Vico's achievement and greatness have been properly realized.

(1) Vico's Theory of History. In his early phase Vico accepted Descartes' philosophy which gave primacy to Mathematics and the exact quantitative sciences based thereon. History was relegated to a very inferior position, since Descartes deemed it to be no more than conjecture and unverifiable travellers' tales. Descartes' paradigm of knowledge was Mathematics, followed by natural sciences like Mechanics, Physics, Chemistry, etc. in proportion to their mathematical rigour. The study, however, of Roman law and its long chequered past fascinated Vico, and he was therefore compelled either to exclude his favourite subject from the pale of knowledge or

revise the Cartesian theory. He did the latter, and in the course of doing so formulated his fundamental distinction between 'outer' and 'inner' knowledge, as also that between *explaining* an external event or sequence of events and *understanding* an internal human act as the expression of a motive, purpose, or need. In other words, Vico elaborated the distinction between a *cause* and a *reason.*

Vico virtually invented the concept of the understanding of what Dilthey and others call *verstehen,* Others before him, philologists, historians or jurists, may have had inklings of it; Vico alone brought it to light. No one after reading him will suppose that the sense in which we are said to understand a feeling, a gesture, a work of art, a man's character, or an entire civilization, the sense in which a man can be said to know what it is to be poor, to be jealous, or to be a lover, is (to say the least) the same as to know that one tree is taller than another, or that Hitler wrote *Mein Kampf.*

According to Vico, history is that branch of inner knowledge which deals with the origin and interrelations of social actions. These actions involve responses to the human situation and cover the language, religion, laws, art, myth, morality, etc. of the group. History is an attempt to understand these responses in the internal sense, i.e. to view them as the expressions of the inner workings of the mind of the people. History is, moreover, not merely an account and explanation of the successive stages of social organization but also an understanding of its correlated consciousness. Inner knowledge in this context does not mean *a priori* or even introspective awareness, but insight into the significance of external data—the monuments, laws, myths, art, literature and language of the period or people under study. History is thus both external investigation and internal understanding, and has its own rules and criteria of truth. It not only reconstructs the past but also leads to an understanding of the laws of the growth of society, i.e. Historical Sociology.

Berlin points out that many of Vico's actual historical reconstructions as well as his most celebrated theory of histori-

cal cycles as also his theory of the stages of historical growth are no longer valid in the light of later empirical investigation. Vico's merit, however, lies 'in asking new questions and throwing out new suggesions and establishing new categories the grasp of which has altered our ideas of what kind of facts are important for the understanding of history and why' (p.6). What is singnificantly valid in Vico is not so much his actual historical speculation as his conception of history as an attempt both to explain and to understand the past, and his views that the nature of a thing, event or action cannot be understood fully without studying its history in his comprehensive sense of the term.

(2) Historical Dynamism or Existentialism. Vico holds that man has no *a priori* essence or fixed attributes constituting his universal and timeless nature, but that man's nature is constituted by his historical existence presided over by Providence. He thus rejects both the medieval approach of theological essentialism and the classical and Enlightenment approach of humanistic essentialism or natural law. Vico thus anticipates nineteenth century historicism and twentieth century existentialism. 'The nature of man as of everything can be discovered by asking the question "What comes into being at what time in what manner?"' (p. 59). Again,'... what we call the nature of things is their history and that the nature of things is nothing other than their birth in certain times and in certain guises; when they are thus and thus, then things arise, and they are such as they are and not different' (pp. 141-42).

Historicism or what Jaspers calls historicity implies the plasticity of human response. The Enlightenment philosophers also believed in plasticity but they ignored historicity. They were bewitched by the power of reason in human affairs but ignored the historical contexts of its operation. Vico, and later on Herder, corrected this one-sided emphasis.

(3) Verum/Factum Theory of Knowledge. Vico holds that truth (verum) implies knowledge *per caussas*, i.e. not merely what is the case, but how or why this is so. Vico further

holds, in agreement with Scholastic thinkers, that this knowledge *per caussas* is possible only in respect of our own acts or creations and not of external events. In a sense scientific laws which explain the regular sequence of events is knowledge *per caussas*. But these laws only reduce the area of *de facto* sequences or co-presences without any further explanation. Thus the essential opaqueness and contingency of natural events remain. Only in the case of human actions and creations do we get knowledge *per caussas* and find them to be the necessary expressions of our inner life—our attitudes, motives, values, etc. Likewise what we call artifacts are made by us and we, as their marks or creators, know them *per caussas*, though our knowledge is obviously imperfect, relative to Divine knowledge. Berlin points out that what is new in Vico is not the concept of knowledge *per caussas* but its application to the study of history. Hobbes had also affirmed that Geometry and basic political truths were demonstrable because both Geometry and the commonwealth had been created by man rather than by God or nature. Vico deepened the principle of verum/factum by applying it to 'the growth in time of the collective or social consciousness of mankind particularly at its pre-rational and semi-conscious levels, to the dreams and myths and images that have dominated man's thoughts and feelings from his earliest beginnings' (p.26).

(4) Societal Life-style and Stages of Growth. Vico holds that every society has a unique life-style or functional unity expressed in all its areas of activity—art, religion, law, etc. This life-style becomes known when we study all the above facts of society with the help of intellectual imagination (fantasia) and sympathy.

Every society passes through phases or stages of growth in accordance with its laws. The concepts of life-style and of stages of growth severally and jointly imply the concept of societal anachronism, i.e. a feature which does not fit in with the spirit of the society at a particular stage of its growth. Vico criticises the Roman poet Lucretius and also Polybius and Voltaire for wishing religion out of existence due to the suffer-

ings caused by intolerance, and superstition. Vico's concept of the stages of growth of society implied the rejection of the view that 'men could have been rational, virtuous, wise, from the beginning... that religious obscurantism and ignorance which led to it were disastrous accidents which need never have occurred' (p. 70). Men are what they are in virtue of their historical development through stages which explain each other.

It is pertinent to ask how Vico reconciles his thoroughgoing Historicism with his Catholic Theism. The answer is that in the course of choosing and acting in the historical nexus man not only realizes his own conscious purposes but also quite unknowingly promotes the Divine plan. Providence works in and through history, much as the pure laws of economics did in the systems of Adam Smith and Bentham, or the cunning of Reason does in the case of Hegel. However over and above the unintended consequences of human actions, Vico posits 'a cosmic purposive tendency which moulds men's passions and desires into institutions and forms of social life in an intelligible pattern' (p. 75). Thus for Vico belief in God has a metaphysical or theological validity and not merely a psychological one.

(5) Theory of Symbolism. Of greatest interest, however, in our contemporary intellectual climate is Vico's theory of symbolism. Vico was the first to point out that 'humanness' or humanity of man consists in his capacity for characteristic responses to the environment in the form of symbol-using activities, of which language is the most obvious and crucial, but by no means the only one. Vico holds that music, dance, painting, architecture, myth, etc. are all symbolic systems created by man. Even morality and religion are human responses involving symbolic activity. All human responses express what man already is, and at the same time mould and shape his plastic and ever incomplete personality. Vico is the first to recognize the function of myths and also their importance for history. Vico boldly rejected the Renaissance and Enlightenment view that myths were poetic inven-

tions to give pleasure or were fables coined to lull the ignorant masses.

Much before Hamman, Schelling, Comte, Nietzsche or Durkheim Vico viewed myths as 'the concrete mode of expression of the collective imagination of early mankind, and for modern critics the richest of all sources of knowledge of the physical and mental habits and the social ways of their creators' (p. 53).

Still more arresting and significant is Vico's view that myths point out the way in which socio-economic realities were refracted through the consciousness of early man and also prompted him to act in a particular way. According to Vico, symbols and rites expressed 'resistance to some social pressure, or joy in procreation, or admiration for power, or craving for unity, or security, or victory over a rival group' (p. 57). In other words, myths performed the function of 'ideology' in the contemporary sense.

In regard to language Vico formulated the most original and suggestive ideas and theories—the primacy of poetry over prose, metaphor over description, imaginative universals over abstract general concepts, written symbols, or ideograms over spoken language, the three stages of language, to mention only the most arresting of his far-reaching observations.

Vico regarded metaphor as a fundamental category of viewing reality at a given stage of human development. But the rapidly advancing scientific temper of Western Europe prevented Vico's contemporaries and successors from appreciating his phenomenology of human response or symbolism. The situation in our times is not radically different, in view of the continuing supremacy of science and technology in human affairs.

(6) Theory of Imaginative Understanding (Fantasia): Vico holds that the basic similarity (as distinct from sameness) between men and their capacity for intellectual understanding and sympathy for others enables them to grasp (without any mystic powers) what other men, far removed from them in space and time, could or could not have done or thought or

felt in the circumstances in which they were placed. Vico's argument that the Romans could not have borrowed the Twelve Tables (the original Roman code of law) from Athens during the time of Solon is an argument based on the external conditions of the Greeks and Romans as well as our own imaginative understanding of how crude primitive people must have behaved in the light of our own experience of the behaviour of children, unlettered folk, unsophisticated adults, etc. This understanding is based upon observation of others, but it also presupposes an inner insight into what it means to be prudent or impulsive, rational or sentimental, detached or partisan, civilized or barbarous.

Berlin points out that although several leading intellects of the nineteenth century, Coleridge, Thomas Arnold, Flint, Marx, Dilthey recognized Vico's contribution, and Pareto, Georges Sorel, James Joyce, Yeats and Edmond Wilson testified to his genius, Vico was never read. As Berlin puts it, Vico 'is constantly rediscovered and as constantly laid aside. He remains unreadable and unread'.

Why did this happen in the last century and why is it so now ? Berlin points out that in his own age Vico's devaluation and neglect of natural science made him unpalatable to the sensibility of the Enlightenment, while his peculiar blend of Theism and Historicism made him suspect in traditional Catholic circles. Vico stood neither here nor there and had to defend himself against the charge of reaction as well as of atheism. Berlin says, 'Vico was remote from the scientific revolution of his time; his physics was the physics of Zeno, only remotely touched by imperfect acquaintance with Leibnitz. He seems to have had no notion of what Galileo had achieved and did not begin to grasp the effect of the new science upon the lives of men' (p.9).'The tension between Vico's Theism and his humanistic Historicism, between his conception of the cunning of Providence and his constant emphasis on the creative and selftransforming labours of men is not resolved in the New Science; to call it dialectical is only to conceal this fact by the use of a protentous term; Vico's Catholic interpre-

ters lay stress on the former, Michelet and humanist thinkers on the latter strain in his thought' (p. 82).

Another reason for Vico's neglect, according to Berlin, is Vico's inability to be clear and his ponderous style which he presumably acquired from scholastic writers. Vico lacked the gift of expressing his original ideas with clarity, a gift which was amply possessed by Plato and Tacitus, Bacon and Grotius all of whom Vico admired. Berlin sums up his estimate in these remarkably arresting words : 'In reading Vico it is constantly necessary to sift the chaff from the grain. This is not an easy task. All his philosophical works and the *Scienza Nuova*, in particular, are an amalgam of sense and non-sense . . , bold and novel thoughts cluttered with trivial fragments of a dead scholastic tradition, all jostling each other in the chaos of his astonishingly fertile but badly ordered and over-burdened mind' (p. 67).

The section on Herder in 'Berlins' book is considerably shorter than the one on Vico, since many of Herder's basic ideas had been anticipated by Vico. This does not in the least lessen Herder's originality, since he read Vico much after publishing his own views. Again, Herder read Vico in a rather perfunctory manner, as was done by Goethe and Hamman who was the friend, philosopher and guide of Herder.

The three original ideas or themes around which Berlin develops his exposition are Populism, Expressionism and Pluralism. Herder's rich and suggestive thinking on these themes constitutes his powerful and historically influential protest against the abstract rationalism and the cold scientific temper of the Enlightenment symbolized by Kant and Voltaire. Herder was particularly critical of the latter.

(1) Populism. Herder brilliantly develops Aristotle's bare thesis that man is a social animal by pointing out how the concrete humanity of the individual is shaped by the ethos and language of the group. Herder's emphasis on the group was never political. Nor was his populism opposed to universalism, though there is a measure of tension between the two. His opposition to nationalism is reflected in his words—'to brag of

one's country is the stupidest form of boastfulness. A nation is a wild garden, full of bad plants and good, vices and follies mingle with virtues and merit. What Don Quixote will break a lance for his Dulcinea?' (p.157).

It was probably Herder who coined the German word *Nationalismus* (nationalism) but what he meant was cultural group autonomy or populism. He could never forgive Rome for 'crushing the cultures of the peoples it had conquered, not even that of Carthage. He lamented over the fact that the Roman eagle... pecked out their eyes, devoured their inwards and covered their wretched corpses with its feeble wings'(p.160). He was severely critical of European imperialists and Christian missionaries who accepted 'the white man's burden' of civilizing others, since he unequivocally stood for free self-expression, rather than for the power-oriented nationalism of Fichte or Hegel. It is true, Herder cries : 'Germans, speak German ! Spew out the Seine's ugly slime' (p. 182). But then he would equally wish the French to spew out the slime from, say, classical Rome or Greece, and he readily sympathises with all persecuted minorities, Poles, Finns, Georgians, Jews, etc. struggling for political and cultural autonomy. Berlin says that even though in fact populism has often provided the soil for the growth of irrational and aggressive nationalism, the two cannot be equated.

(2) **Expressionism.** Herder holds that to be human is to express one's self in characteristic ways. Expression is always 'expression of', just as intention is always intention of, some thing. Self-expression is the expression of one's attitudes, aspirations, needs, tasks, values, etc. and this requires symbolic systems, chief of which is language. Without language there can be no thought, no communication, no social organization. At times Herder held that language was an evolutionary growth, but his Christian commitment led him to say that language was implanted at a fixed moment by a Divine act. In any case Herder's stress on the central singnificance and history of language promoted Comparative Linguistics and Philology

which became the pride of German scholarship in the nineteenth century.

Herder held that the key to understanding man and the human situation was not Logic and Metaphysics but Anthropology and Philology. He rejected Kant's conception of the synthetic *a priori* as well as his version of Transcendental Positivism. According to Herder's basic approach to what I may call Cultural Positivism, philosophical theories and controversies are futile and barren. They arise because philosophers (including Kant) use 'sharp artificial dichotomies that arbitrarily break up the interwoven, continuous, at times irregular, fluid, shapeless, often unanalysable states of affairs. Thus metaphysicians speak of man as rational, rather than as being less or more rational. Again, they pronounce man to be free or not free instead of showing in what respects and to what extent he is free and also not free. Philosophical answers are thus cast in an absolute Yes/No monistic mould. Herder rejects all rigid and neat *a priori* answers to artificial philosophical questions discussed by Enlightenment philosophers. His own approach is to view the organic complexity of both external reality and man's inner life without any rigid categorization which breaks the complex reality into discrete elements though they are not discrete in their ontological wholeness or in concrete reality. Herder is thus the originator of the theory of abstraction found in Bradley, Bergson, Whitehead, etc. Herder rejected bloodless essentialism in favour of a concrete existentialism; he rejected abstract ontology and epistemology in favour of Aesthetics, Philology and Anthropology.

Herder is also the father of the doctrine of the committed artist and one of the principal founders of the artistic movement in Germany called Sturm und Drang. Herder held that true art is not a profession but a way of life, which calls for complete authenticity in expression and a social obligation. Both the spirit of commercialism and the pursuit of success or popularity in the realm of art destroy its sacred character.

In like manner the social isolation of the artist or writer in the name of specialization or purity of art or scholarship is wrong. The artist or writer must not only create beauty or discover truth, but do so in a way which promotes social good. This implies that the artist first expresses with complete honesty and technical skill the nature of his milieu rather than preach. These ideas of Herder had the greatest impact on pre-Marxist Russian intellectuals and artists like Turgenev, Chekov, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, etc.

Herder's doctrine of the committed artist follows from two basic concepts—the unity of theory and practice and the concept of belonging. Herder says 'complete truth is always in the deed' (p.195). Herder's theory of belonging envisages no super-individual entity but only the presence of an all-pervasive style of life reflected in the habits of speech, food, social outlook, musical taste, moral notions and attitudes, etc. The notions of 'being at home' and of 'homelessness', 'emptiness', 'cosmopolitanism', 'nostalgia', 'alienation', 'cog in the machine', 'anonymity', 'dehumanization', etc., derive from Herder's basic concept of belonging and his account of what it is to live and act together, which is at the heart of populism. Herder has indeed so immensely developed and deepened the significance of Aristotle's expression 'social animal' as to drive it out of circulation. Together with Vico, Herder is the father of Cultural Anthropology as a value-free study. The significance of his concept of belonging is not always realized because 'it has entered too deeply into the texture of ordinary thinking'(p.199).

(3) **Pluraliam**—Herder put forward for the first time the view that civilizations are unique cultural patterns woven around a central core or *mittelpunkt* and that they are incommensurable autonomous wholes. This means that civilizations cannot be judged as higher or lower phases or stages of preparation in one continuous line of historical development, but that each civilization, as a unique cultural organism, has its own value and worth. Incommensurability does not rule out naming the elements of value and of disvalue in a society.

A total ban on evaluation is indeed neither possible nor desirable. But the evaluation should not be based upon external or heterogenetic criteria and norms, since this would violate the cultural autonomy of society. 'The Middle Ages are not a corridor to the Renaisance, nor is paganism an ante-room of Christianity. One culture is never a means to another: even if there is a sense in which mankind as a whole is advancing, each of the stages is an end in itself; men are never means to ends beyond themselves' (p. 189).

A significant implication of Cultural Pluralism is the rejection of the faith in the continuous progress and perfectibility of man. Herder does believe in advance (*fortgang*) which means that each society develops in its own way. Advance in his sense is not the external progress of successive societies towards a particular ideal, but rather internal progress towards orthogenetic ideals and goals. 'Each age is different and each has the centre of happiness within itself. . . The Middle Ages are full of abominations, errors, absurdities but also possess something solid, cohesive and majestic, which our age with its enervated coldness and human misery can scarcely understand. . . . There are many ways of life and many truths—to believe that everything is either true or false is a wretched general illusion of our progressive age' (p. 191). Herder speaks as if history were like a 'cosmic symphony of which each movement is significant in itself and of which, in any case, we cannot hear the whole, for God alone does so' (p. 192).

Berlin points out that Herder sometimes refers to man's ascent to *Humanitat* or ideal humanity in the Enlightenment sense. This means harmonious development of men towards the goal of the full realization of their potentialities. He also admits that according to some commentators the later Herder had outgrown his earlier concept of incommensurability of cultures. Yet, according to Berlin, in the final analysis, Herder rejects 'the single over-arching standard of values'. 'This is perhaps the sharpest blow ever delivered against classical philosophy of the West, to which the notion of perfection—the possibility, at least in principle, of universal timeless solutions of

problemsof value essential'(p.212). However neither Herder himself nor his contemporaries realized the full implications of his thesis until the Romantic Movement attempted to overthrow the authority of reason and dogma which supported the old order.

Berlin points out that for all his brilliance Herder's thought bristles with contradictions. Indeed, his great contemporary, Kant, often complained that Herder's formulations could not be pinned down to any exact meaning. Herder was often extremely impassioned in his denunciations of societies and individuals (notably of Voltaire), despite his theoretical ban on moralizing from a superior vantage-point. Yet, according to Berlin, Herder's uncanny Faust-like genius had amorphously divined what the serene rationalistic philosophers of the Enlightenment had failed to grasp and what came to the fore as the aftermath of the French Revolution in 1789—'the precariousness of human institutions; the disturbing phenomenon of apparently irresistable change; the clash of irreconcilable values and ideals; the insufficiency of simple formulas; the complexities of men and socities, the poetry of action, heroism, destruction, war; the effectiveness of mobs and of great men; the crucial role played by chance; the feebleness of reason before the power of fanatically belived doctrines; the unpredictability of events; the part played in history by unintended consequences; the ignorance of the workings of the sunken two thirds of the great human iceberg, of which only the visible portion had been studied by scientists and taken into account by the ideologists of the great Revolution' (p.215).

Department of Philosophy
Aligarh Muslim University
Aligarh

A. J. KHWAJA

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